

# JOURNAL OF SPANISH LANGUAGE MEDIA

Vol. 4 2011

ISSN: 1940-0810

UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH★TEXAS™

**Center for Spanish Language Media**  
**University of North Texas**  
**1155 Union Circle #310589**  
**Denton, TX 76203**

## *The Journal of Spanish Language Media*

A publication of the Center for Spanish Language Media  
The University of North Texas  
Denton, TX, USA

Dr. Alan B. Albarran, Director  
Christine M. Paswan, Editor

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.

For more information, please contact us at [spanishmedia@unt.edu](mailto:spanishmedia@unt.edu)

The *Journal of Spanish Language Media* is an annual electronic journal available at [www.spanishmedia.unt.edu](http://www.spanishmedia.unt.edu) and published by the Center for Spanish Language Media at the University of North Texas. As an electronic journal the *Journal of Spanish Language Media* publishes articles related to all aspects of the Spanish language media. The Journal of Spanish Language Media is peer reviewed.

All communications related to the journal should be sent to the Center for Spanish Language Media, University of North Texas, 1155 Union Circle #310589, Denton, TX 76203.

### **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 5<sup>th</sup> 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

### **Submission Deadlines**

The *Journal of Spanish Language Media*, depending on submission, to be posted on the website in January each year. To be considered, submissions should be submitted by September 1.

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)

## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

**Sindy Chapa**, Texas State University, USA

**Amy Jo Coffey**, University of Florida, USA

**Ethel Pis Diez**, Universidad Austral, Argentina

**Cristina Etayo**, Universidad de Navarra, Spain

**Paulo Faustino**, Media XXI, Portugal

**German Arango Forerro**, Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia

**Guillermo Gibens**, William Penn University, USA

**Monica Herrero**, Universidad de Navarra, Spain

**Maria Ignacia Irrazuriz**, Universidad de Los Andes, Chile

**Daniel Fernando Lopéz Jiménez**, Universidad de los Hemisferios, Ecuador

**Felipe Korzenny**, Florida State University, USA

**Mercedes Medina**, Universidad de Navarra, Spain

**Juan Pablo Artero Muñoz**, Universidad de Navarra, Spain

**Mariela Nunez-Janes**, University of North Texas, USA

**Francisco J. Pérez-Latre**, Universidad de Navarra, Spain

**Rosa Zeta de Pozo**, Universidad de Piura-Perú, Peru

**Maria Elena Gutierrez Rentería**, Universidad Panamericana, Mexico

**Julian Rodriguez**, University of Texas at Arlington, USA

**Ryan Salzman**, University of North Texas, USA

**Gonzolo Soruco**, University of Miami, USA

**Federico Subvervi**, Texas State University, USA

**Aldo Van Weezel**, Universidad de Los Andes, Chile

**Kent Wilkinson**, Texas Tech University, USA



**CONTENT**

Click on the title to view page

## **ARTICLES**

The View from the Inside: How Those Who Produce Bilingual Newspapers Perceive Their Mission Kay O'Donnell .....	5
News Media Consumption in Latin America: Who Does It? Ryan Salzman .....	23
Young Audiovisual Audiences in Colombia: Under the Veneer of Fragmentation and Multiscreens Germán Arango Forero, Manuel González Bernal .....	40
Mexican Telecommunication Industry: Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age María Elena Gutiérrez Rentería .....	55
The Use of Case Studies to Understand Strategic Decisions within the Spanish Media Industry Juan P. Artero, Monica Herrero, Alfonso Sánchez-Taberner.....	68
Commercial Success Factors of Mexican Soap Operas Leticia Barron .....	80
The Juárez Femicides and Appadurai's Five Dimensions of Global Cultural Flow Valerie Bouché .....	93
Networks in the Digital Television Age: New Context, New Roles. The Case of the Spanish Industry Enrique Guerrero .....	102
Latin American Telenovelas on a Global Scale Mercedes Medina, Leticia Barron .....	125
Partidos Políticos en Guerra: The Impact of Partisanship in Political Advertising in the 2006 Mexican Presidential Election Sindy Chapa, Angela Hausman, Michael Minor .....	150

Case Study: Periódico Nostros, a Catalyst for empowering Latino immigrants in a South Jersey Town Edna I. Negrós .....	169
Intercultural Accommodation and the Negotiation of Hispanic Advertising: A Qualitative Perspective Christopher Chávez.....	184

## **The View from the Inside: How Those Who Produce Bilingual Newspapers Perceive Their Mission**

**Kay O'Donnell**

Our Lady of the Lake University, USA

[modonnell@lake.ollusa.edu](mailto:modonnell@lake.ollusa.edu)

---

### **Abstract**

In-depth interviews with the editors and journalists who are responsible for the content and direction of the two leading bilingual news publications in San Antonio, Texas, reveal how they have adapted the role of their publications to fit the evolving composition of the U.S. Hispanic population in San Antonio. This study was based on seven in-depth interviews with editors and journalists at *Conexion* and *La Prensa* with the results being examined within the frame of recent models of ethnic media functions and their use of assimilation and pluralism characteristics. The qualitative findings show that the two publications utilize a convergence of both assimilation and pluralism elements within the content of their pages. The importance of research that combines the above elements centers on the central fact that the expanding Hispanic populace in America is characterized by its steady stream of newcomers combined with an existing population which often has many familial layers. This has created a need for a type of “foreign-language” press unlike any that preceded it. This press must meet the needs of both unassimilated newcomers and highly assimilated residents alike. The resulting picture that emerges is of a press that combines both assimilation and pluralistic functions, looking ahead while not forgetting the past.

## **The View from the Inside: How Those Who Produce Bilingual Newspapers Perceive Their Mission**

Every journey has a starting point, and for the Spanish-language press of the United States, that journey began on Sept. 7, 1808, in New Orleans, Louisiana, with the publication of *El Mississippi* (Kent & Huntz, 1996). More than 200 years later, the Spanish-language and bilingual media in the U.S. have grown substantially, now including major television networks, radio stations and print publications.

The current state of mainstream English-language newspapers in the United States is marked by newspaper closures; record layoffs; and declining readership, advertising, profits and overall numbers (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009), a trend not fully present in Spanish-language and bilingual publications. To see just how different the picture is for Hispanic media, New America Media's 2009 report includes figures that show, "Today Hispanic newspapers serve all but four of the country's 50 states and almost 200 markets nationwide. This provides far better coverage than any other media serving the Hispanic community. On a weekly basis, at least 57 percent of Latino households are using one or more Latino publications" (Whisler, 2009). In the past few years, more and more English-language newspapers have either added pages, sections or supplements in Spanish. Some, such as the San Antonio Express-News, have created new publications targeting Spanish-language audiences. Others are recognizing the need to target their own community's growing Hispanic population. A case in point is The Press-Enterprise Company (publisher of *The Press-Enterprise*, the daily newspaper for Riverside, California, and the weekly Spanish-language newspaper *La Prensa*), which announced in October 2008 a new commitment to improving and increasing its Spanish-language products (PR Newswire, 2008). A third approach to reaching the Hispanic market involves new partnerships, such as the one between the third-largest U.S. newspaper publisher, McClatchy, and major Spanish-language publisher, ImpreMedia. The deal was announced in April 2008 and is designed to help McClatchy "offset its losses in the U.S. newspaper market (and) sharpen its focus on the rapidly growing Hispanic community by sharing articles and other content ..." (Associated Press, 2008, Para. 1)

While some well-established mainstream print publications have turned to Spanish-language or bilingual options as a way to survive during a dire period in U.S. journalism history, Hispanic publications have been enjoying record circulation numbers and ad revenue. In 2008, the latest year that figures were available from the Latino Print Network (2009), there were 834 Hispanic newspapers in the U.S., and although the number of Spanish-language dailies declined, weeklies have been seeing a steady increase. The decline of the dailies has been noted for the past few years, with the number of Spanish-language dailies reaching a high point in 2005, with 42, and falling every year since. But their remaining circulation, combined with that of the growing weeklies and less-than-weeklies, now stands at 17.8 million (LPN, 2009).

In 2006 it was estimated that minority markets accounted for approximately a third of America's buying power (Lieberman, 2006) with forecasts predicting the biggest increases in ad spending to occur with Spanish-language media. Though a lot of this revenue is expected to be generated within the arenas of television and radio, even

newspapers are getting a boost. According to Lieberman, within the past few years, ImpreMedia, “the largest Spanish-language newspaper publisher” (2006, p.1B), has bought several of the top Spanish-language newspapers in the U.S., including Chicago’s *La Raza*, Los Angeles’ *La Opinion* and New York’s *El Diario*.

Furthermore, Advertising Age (2008) has noted that spending on ads for Hispanic media outpaced the U.S. media spending for the years 2003-2007, with spending on ads in Hispanic media growing by 4.2 % in 2007 alone, compared with only 0.2% for spending on advertising with all U.S. media. Additionally, Advertising Age ranked San Antonio as the ninth-largest designated market area in the United States in 2007 as far as media spending for Spanish-language outlets, accounting for \$64 million in sales, \$4.6 million of that for print. Out of the top 10 DMAs, San Antonio posted the largest percentage increase over the previous year, up 3 percent, followed by San Francisco with 2.9 percent and Chicago with 2.8 percent.

Hispanic publishing in the United States recorded its highest combined ad revenues in 2006 at \$1.5 billion (LPN, 2007), and saw a slight decrease to \$1.4 billion in 2008 (LPN, 2009) – still a very strong number in a time of weak economic conditions and an overall unstable climate for print media as a whole. The bulk of ad dollars for Hispanic publications, more than 80 percent, came from local advertising, rather than national advertisers such as Target or Wal-Mart (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008). The State of Spanish Language Media (2008) offers a more detailed look at the breakdown between national and local advertising revenue at Hispanic newspapers in the United States, revealing that ad revenue at dailies totaled \$538 million in local advertising and \$112 million in national, for weeklies it was \$352 million for local, \$81 million for national, and for less-than-weeklies, \$31 million local, \$10 million national (p. 25). This heavy reliance on local advertising revenue indicates a pattern of success for the Hispanic press while also revealing one of the key functions it plays for its readers that may not be addressed by mainstream, English-language newspapers – that of connecting potential customers (readers) to products they want or need, many of which are connected to their Hispanic culture.

Research on the Hispanic media has centered primarily on the following areas: how Hispanics use the media (Shoemaker, Reese & Danielson, 1985b; Ghanem & Wanta, 2001), preferences for English-language vs. Spanish-language media (Shoemaker, Reese, & Danielson, 1985a;), and how Hispanics are represented by both the English-language and Spanish-language media in the U.S. (Tan, 1978; Greenberg, Burgoon, M., Burgoon, J., & Korzenny, 1983; Turk, Richard, Bryson & Johnson, 1989; Fox, 1996; National Council for La Raza, 1997; Santana & Smith, 2001; Weill & Castañeda, 2004). The studies that have focused on the assimilation function of the Spanish-language press shed some light on the motives of this press in regards to whom they are targeting with their content (Subervi-Velez, 1986; Viswanath & Arora, 2000). Johnson (2000) used a mixed-methods content analysis to examine the assimilative and pluralistic functions of ethnic media, particularly English-language and bilingual Latina magazines. She determined that this type of publication did not fit into the existing models that describe the functions of the ethnic media and proposed a revised model that included assimilation and pluralism working together, and the potential for a higher level of symbolism. Interestingly, in the same journal in which Johnson’s research appeared,

Viswanath and Arora (2000) published an article in the issue printed prior to hers which outlined five functions of the ethnic media and heavily discussed the roles of assimilation and integration as they are reflected by this media. In addition to this research, a more recent study by Branton and Dunaway (2008) compared how the topic of immigration was covered by English-language newspapers and Spanish-language newspapers, concluding, among other things, that Spanish-language newspapers cover the topic more extensively. In their defense of the importance of their topic as a viable area of research, the pair stated: “Given the dramatic growth of the Latino population in recent decades and the corresponding explosion of Spanish-language media organizations in the United States, it seems important to consider whether and how the news content produced by these organizations is distinct” (p. 1020).

Looking at what makes Hispanic newspapers “distinct” is not an area that has received intensive study. Considering the changing population numbers in the U.S., however, it is important to take a closer look at the Hispanic print media and how they see themselves in relation to their readers. To get a quick glimpse of how the increasing Hispanic population in the United States is making an impact, consider these newspaper headlines from May 14, 2009:

- “Hispanic Surge Is Reshaping Oregon” – The Oregonian (Portland, Ore.)
- “Number of Hispanics up 59% in Eight Years; in Chesterfield, it Rises 135%” – Richmond (Virginia) Times Dispatch
- “BR Hispanic Population Increasing Steadily – Growth Rate Faster Than Other Groups” – The (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) Advocate

This paper specifically looks at *La Prensa* and *Conexion*, the main bilingual print media in San Antonio, Texas, to determine how the leaders of these publications envision their role in regards to their community. The focus of this paper is to examine whether the people behind the Hispanic print media in San Antonio, Texas, are motivated to help new Spanish-speaking immigrants assimilate to the American way of life, or whether they are focused on preserving the cultural nuances and heritage of their readers’ homelands by way of educating, or simply reminding their readers of these traditions, or is it a mixture of both? If, in fact, portions of the Hispanic population in America are undergoing a form of reverse acculturation, does the growth and increasing strength of bilingual and Spanish-language media aid this effort and, hypothetically speaking, could it even go so far as to help establish Spanish as an accepted second national language?

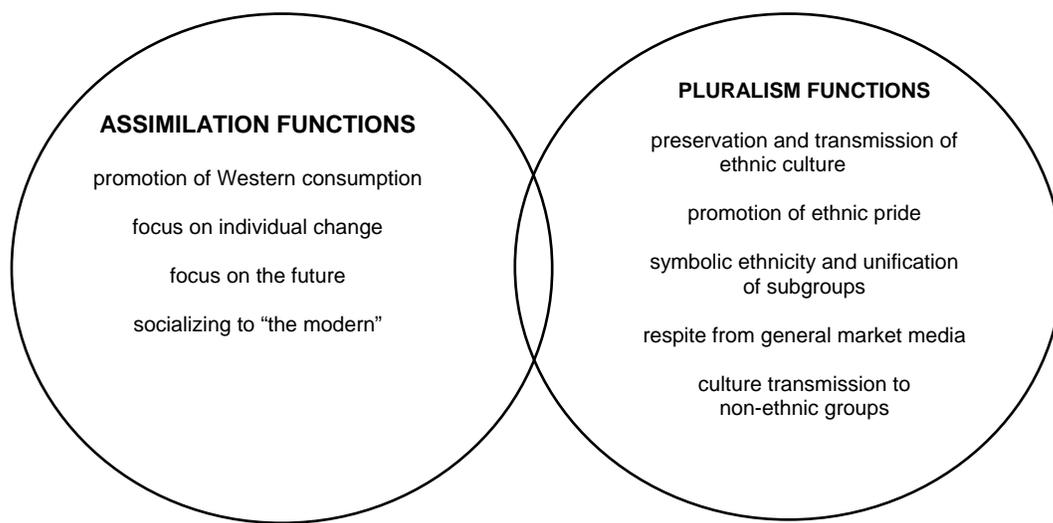
This research is important for two reasons: First, it is necessary to understand how the journalists at the Hispanic publications view their missions to readers. The real and potential advertising power of the Hispanic population, particularly in San Antonio which has a history of supporting Hispanic media, is a strong motivation for determining to what extent the Spanish-language press is helping its readers become “Americanized” compared to what extent this press is seeking to preserve the Hispanic culture. Second, ethnic media in the U.S. are a growing, vibrant resource; in fact, use of ethnic media by African, Asian and Hispanic Americans increased by 16 percent since 2005, reaching an audience of 57 million, according to a 2009 New America Media poll.

This research uses a qualitative method in the form of in-depth interviews with journalists at *La Prensa* and *Conexion*. The interviews with those who help set the

direction and tone of the publications shed insight and add context to the perceived mission of the publications in relation to their readership.

### Objectives of study

In analyzing the purpose of this press, this study adapts Johnson's (2000) model of ethnic media functions which contains four assimilation functions (promotion of Western consumption, focus on individual change, focus on the future, and socializing to "the modern") and five pluralism functions (preservation and transmission of ethnic culture, promotion of ethnic pride, symbolic ethnicity and unification of subgroups, respite from general market media, and culture transmission to non-ethnic groups).



**Figure 1 Johnson's (2000) functions of the ethnic media**

As she states, it is a model which reflects that media outlets "may not be pluralistic or assimilative, contrary to old models. One publication or broadcast station can present a range of content that contains both pluralistic and assimilative messages" (pp.245-246). Though Viswanath and Arora's five functions of the ethnic media also were considered as guidelines, Johnson's model is more appropriate for this study as she specifically applied it to research of Hispanic media and took into account this type of media's ability to serve both assimilatory and pluralistic functions.

### Transitioning role

The foreign-language press in America has an extensive history as serving as a conduit between cultures, easing the immigrant's transition to a new land while also instructing on the basics of everyday life. The press for various immigrant groups – such as Germans, Irish, Italians, Swedish, to name only a few – thrived during the time when print was the dominant mass medium. Specifically, Vecoli reasoned that "print culture increasingly gained importance among American immigrants at the turn of the century,

becoming a major resource and an instrument with which they fashioned ethnic identities and ethnic communities” (p. 17).

When analyzing the immigrant press, many have focused on its assimilation function, and, consequently, the tendency for this type of press to lose its value and disappear once the immigrant group had fully adapted to the language and ways of its new country. Bean and Stevens (2003) looked at an array of early work on assimilation theory, from that of Robert Park in the mid-1920s to the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century examinations by Andrew Greeley, Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, surmising that the theory has evolved from a “straight-line” perspective promoted by Park to one that centers on an “ethnic-disadvantage point of view” (p. 98). The evolving state of assimilation theory increasingly has been taking into account the characteristics of modern immigrants as well as discussing the role of succeeding generations of immigrant families. Specifically, assimilation theory has been applied to examinations of the ethnic press in America, with a few studies targeting the Spanish-language or bilingual press (Subervi-Velez, 2008; Johnson, 2000; Shoemaker, Reese & Danielson, 1985). Regarding the ethnic press in the United States in general, Viswanath and Arora (2000) stated that it has “a significant role in assimilation and integration” (p. 39). They outlined several functions of the role of the ethnic press, including that “in line with assimilatory function, the ethnic newspaper may provide more information on involvement of ethnic community members in American politics and more coverage of the relationship between ethnic groups’ native homelands and their adopted country” (p. 54). Federico A. Subervi-Velez (1986), a researcher with a long track record of studying the Hispanic media, urged specific research in this area, stating that “relationships among media and Hispanic assimilation and pluralism have rarely been stated explicitly” (78). Though Subervi-Velez issued his call for more research more than 20 years ago, few scholars have accepted the challenge. An exception is Johnson (2000, 2003), one researcher who has examined extensively the functions of ethnic media, particularly Hispanic, in regards to assimilation and pluralism. She refers to her ethnic media model as “a template” that is “aimed at improving our understanding of ethnic media content, and the interaction between audiences and content” (p. 285).

The fulfillment of a political need is a theme echoed in a study by Shoemaker, Reese and Danielson (1985). In their research, the trio surveyed Texans to generate a profile on media consumption and ancillary components such as acculturation, cultural identification and voting habits. Overall, they found that “English-language mass media appear to fulfill the political, social, and cultural needs of some Hispanics, while others rely on Spanish-language media or would rely on them if more and better Spanish-language or bilingual media were available” (p. 63). Furthermore, when it came to acculturation, the researchers suggested two possible developments. First, that as the older Hispanic population recedes and the younger one rises, the interest and use of Spanish-language print media could decline. However, the researchers also suggested a second alternative in which a form of reverse acculturation would occur, whereby the Hispanic culture would exert its own influence over the Anglo culture. “Thus there is some evidence to suggest that Hispanic culture – particularly as evidenced by the Spanish language – may not become fully lost in the Anglo mainstream” (p. 64).

This phenomenon has been noticed recently in the younger Hispanic populations. According to Levin (2006), second-generation Hispanics are increasing in number and

will outnumber their immigrant parents by 2020. This young population, Levin says, is influencing the United States, to the extent that “not only are they Latinizing the American mainstream, they are Americanizing what it means to be Hispanic in the United States” (Levin, 2006, para.4).

Additionally, 2006’s “The State of the News Media,” the annual report distributed by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, as far as ethnic media users go, suggests that “the ethnic media play a significant role in the American media landscape, influencing the views of a large number of citizens of various ethnic backgrounds” (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006, para. 19). The group’s 2008 report (based on 2007 figures) showed that the impact of ethnic media in the United States does not appear to be diminishing, but it is changing. The report cited the growing level of niches among this type of media and the increasing attention by the mainstream news outlets as several attempt to enter the ethnic media market, particularly Spanish-language.

This influence is even more pervasive in the Hispanic community as reflected in Suro’s research for the Pew Hispanic Center (2004). Suro states “that the news media powerfully influence the twin processes of cultural change at work in the Hispanic population: the assimilation of American attitudes and the formation of a distinct ethnic identity” (p. 1). In analyzing how U.S. Hispanics often switch between English and Spanish in getting their news, he surmises that “the language in which Latinos get their news significantly influences their opinions on issues ranging from immigration policy to the war in Iraq” (p. 1).

This study uses assimilation theory as a foundation for analyzing the role of the bilingual print media in San Antonio. The research also will utilize the ethnic media models (Johnson, 2000; Viswanath & Arora, 2000; Zhou & Cai, 2002) that have been developed from theories on assimilation and pluralism and that are directly connected to the questions raised in this study.

### **Why San Antonio?**

Newspapers that utilize both English and Spanish are nothing new in San Antonio, Texas. Kanellos and Martell (2000) noted that the city has a long history of offering Spanish and bilingual news options to its population, including *El Eco* which began publishing in 1838, *El Cronista Mexicano* in 1891, and *La Prensa* which was first published from 1913-1962, then reopened in 1989. Many of these early papers in San Antonio exhibited independence from American influences while promoting their own cultural identity. *El Bajaraño* appeared in San Antonio 10 years after Texas attained statehood, proudly proclaiming on its masthead that it was “dedicated to the interests of the Texas Mexican population” (p. 99). Other activist-minded newspapers followed in the city, such as *El Regidor* (1888-1916) and *El Imparcial de Texas* (1908-1924) which was started by Francisco A. Chapa who “had a political commitment to the Mexican-American population, and used his newspaper to promote electoral activism” (p. 102).

San Antonio has been the setting or partial setting for research on the Spanish-language and bilingual media in the past (Turk, Richard, Bryson, & Johnson, 1989; Mayer, 2001), and its strong connection to this type of media is often cited as a reason for selecting the city. Mayer noted that “If San Antonio has been a forerunner in trends for

Latino media, scholars should expect similar trends in other cities, if not now then in the future” (p. 300).

One researcher who included San Antonio in her study on the influence of Hispanic media, observed that despite the fact that the city can claim some of the oldest Spanish-language media in the country (KWEX TV and KCOR-AM radio, for example), overall, this media historically has lacked power. Veciana-Suarez (1990) noted three necessary factors that influenced the strength of Spanish-language media in any one particular location: “Hispanics’ economic power in that particular city, area, or region; their political power; and the retention of the language” (p.19). She further noted that reliance on just one of the factors is not enough to secure a powerful medium, citing San Antonio as an example of a region where political clout and economic strength are robust for Hispanics, yet retention of the Spanish language is not. The result, Veciana-Suarez determined, is a weak Spanish-language media. Her characterization of the potential audience pool for this media includes extremely acculturated Hispanics who may not write or read Spanish, but still speak it. Furthermore, these media consumers include “cross-overs” who use media presented in both English and Spanish. “When they are interested in a specific Hispanic issue or candidate, they tune in to both the English and Spanish media” (p.57).

Today, the newspaper landscape in San Antonio includes one English-language daily, one bilingual publication published twice a week, and two tabloids published once a week (one bilingual and one in English). *Rumbo*, which began as a daily Spanish-language newspaper, closed its print edition in San Antonio in October 2008 to focus its efforts on its Web site and to double its circulation in Houston. Similarly, *Cancha*, a 3-year-old, Spanish-only biweekly tabloid, ceased publication in early 2009, citing economic conditions for its closure. In addition to these publications, there are dozens of small, community-oriented news publications with limited distributions. Because Spanish-language and bilingual news publications have maintained a steady presence in San Antonio since at least the mid-1800s and continue to maintain a strong presence today, the city’s press offers an opportunity to study modern-day implications for these types of media.

### **Defining assimilation**

In his discussion on assimilation, Acuña (2003) says, “the question of assimilation and who should determine it is a debate that has been raging since the founding of the United States” (p. 45). The assimilation question has been inextricably tied to the issue of immigration and its historical periods of highs and lows. Though Acuña acknowledges the pattern of assimilation of other nationalities – such as Irish, German and Italian, with assimilation predominantly occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – he does note that the assimilation process has been much slower for Latinos, stating the culture’s dependence on identity as one factor. The result, he finds, is that “many U.S. Latinos remain un-assimilated to the fourth and fifth generation from their original immigrant ancestors” (p. 45).

The history of assimilation theory is long and complex, crossing over many disciplines, and assuming a variety of new aspects and even new definitions along the way. It has evolved from its early conception by Robert Park, devised from his writings

on the subject in the 1920s, to now include forms such as the segmented assimilation model proposed by Rumbaut and Portes (2001), which states that assimilation is dependent on a number of factors including family dynamics, the rate of acculturation, and economic barriers. Rumbaut and Portes go so far as to say that assimilation is not a definite outcome for all immigrants, but rather just a potential end result for some.

Alba and Nee (2005) traced modern interpretations of assimilation to include the well-founded concepts of segmented assimilation, also associated with the term “downward” assimilation, and pluralism. However, the pair sought an earlier conception of assimilation, one that was proposed by the Chicago School, and applied it to the current reality of U.S. immigration and demographics when creating their new definition. They defined assimilation as “the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences” (p.11). Furthermore, Alba and Nee pointed out that their definition includes the potential for the assimilating individual to affect change into the group or society it is entering.

Other scholars have studied how race and discrimination affect different immigrant groups’ assimilation process. In a broad view, Thompson (1989) discussed how the element of discrimination has negatively impacted the theory’s status, saying the theory has been unable “to explain the continued presence of severe racism and racial stratification” in the United States and, thus, has fallen into disfavor among some of its former advocates (p. 102).

Golash-Boza (2006) studied the effects of racism and discrimination on the prospect of assimilation by Hispanics in the United States and concluded that those who reported feeling discriminated against were more likely to reject the classification of “American.” She further states, “Some Latinos/as are holding onto their national origin identifiers and refusing to hyphenate themselves, even in the third generation. Others are taking on a hyphenated American identity, and still others are assuming the pan-ethnic label. Which path these individuals take depends on their experiences in the United States” (p. 51). In this study, the more current segmented assimilation model, with its inclusion of the possibilities of partial or full rejection of assimilation itself, will be used.

### **Defining cultural pluralism**

As a theory, cultural pluralism was developed and defined by Horace M. Kallen who wrote in 1915 that “all the immigrants and their offspring are in the way of becoming ‘Americanized,’ if they remain in one place in the country long enough – say six or seven years. The general notion, ‘Americanization,’ appears to denote the adoption of English speech, of American clothes and manners, of the American attitude in politics” (p. 72).

Kallen’s idea of an America comprised of diversity among various ethnicities, yet acting uniformly and for a united purpose, is an ideal that is still discussed today. The details for achieving such a cooperative co-existence, however, have proven elusive.

In his pro-assimilation-themed book, “The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society,” Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (1992) states that, “Cultural pluralism is a necessity in an ethnically diversified society” (p. 74). Schlesinger built upon Kallen’s original conception of cultural pluralism, particularly in his emphasis on a common language and culture among the diverse ethnicities of America. “The question America

confronts as a pluralistic society is how to vindicate cherished cultures and traditions without breaking the bonds of cohesion – common ideals, common political institutions, common language, common culture, common fate – that hold the republic together” (p. 138). Schlesinger also discusses his view on bilingualism in America, stating that “a common language is a necessary bond of national cohesion in so heterogeneous a nation as America. ... Like Afrocentricity and the ethnicity cult, bilingualism is an elitist, not a popular, movement,” he states (p. 110).

Alba and Nee (2005) discussed the credence of the pluralistic model, especially in a modern-world setting. They note that pluralism can allow second and possibly later generations of immigrants to the U.S. to maintain strong ties to their original land. “The pluralistic alternative envisions that, in the contemporary world, the choice to live in an ethnic social and cultural matrix need not be associated with the loss of the advantages once afforded almost exclusively by the mainstream” (p.6).

Johnson (2000) explored the shift away from assimilation and toward pluralism in her research on English-language and bilingual Latina magazines in the United States. She concluded that the publications used both approaches and called for a modification to the ethnic media model “that reflects dual functions of assimilative and pluralistic expression and takes into account the possibility of more symbolic ethnic media functions” (p.229). To this end she devised a nine-part model for the functions of ethnic media that include four assimilation functions and five pluralism functions.

### **Method for qualitative interviews**

The in-depth interviews were conducted with seven journalists and editors of *La Prensa* (three interviews) and *Conexion* (four interviews). These publications have been identified as the leading bilingual publications in San Antonio based on circulation sizes and overall presence in the city.

Here are short informational sketches of both publications:

***La Prensa***: 62,538 biweekly circulation (Echo Media); Tino and Amelia Duran, owners and publishers. This is the second time around for *La Prensa*, which was originally based in San Antonio from 1913 until 1963 and which was produced primarily for the Mexican-American elite. Tino Duran restarted production of *La Prensa* in 1989 with a new mindset and new audience. “Marketing materials for the paper aim for a linguistically diverse San Antonio readership, while niche marketing to middle-class Hispanic consumers” (Mayer, p. 299).

***Conexion***: 42,000 weekly circulation (Echo Media); Dino Chiecchi, head of Hispanic Publications; Hearst Corp., owner. The publication prints in both Spanish and English, however, the reported mix of languages is 85 percent English, 15 percent Spanish (Koidin Jaffee, 2005). The newspaper began publishing on May 5, 2004, (*Cinco de Mayo*) with a circulation goal of 50,000 a week. The target audience “are acculturated Latinos who may be predominantly English-speaking but that editors like to say still breathe in Spanish” (Ayala, 2005).

These in-depth interviews helped to personalize and put into proper context some of the information gathered in this research. The three editors from *La Prensa* and the four staff members from *Conexion* were interviewed at each publication's offices, in a private room, with just the author of this study and the interview subject present. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, with the results thematically organized.

### **Findings from in-depth interviews**

The first six questions asked of the interview subjects were designed to gather general biographical information such as the interviewee's name, position at the publication, length of time employed by the publication, years of journalism experience, place of birth, and first language. For years of experience in the journalism field, the range was from a low of two years to a high of 13 years. The average for both publications was nine years, with a median of 10 years. Regarding first language, three of the seven interviewees, or 43%, said that Spanish was their first language, and for the remaining four, English was their first language. All of the journalists who were interviewed were editorial employees and were directly involved in decision-making regarding content in the publications.

### **General themes**

Regarding the importance of their publication in relation to the development of San Antonio's Hispanic population, the responses from the *La Prensa* staff were extremely similar, with all three replying that the newspaper plays a vital role for the local Hispanic community. As one editor explained it, "We're a source of information for the community and we're special because we come at the coverage from a grassroots, event-oriented, community level." Another editor pointed out that *La Prensa* is used in several local schools as a tool to help teach Spanish to the students, stressing that "it's important to educate our culture and that they learn two languages." Another benefit to being bilingual, one editor said, is that it can be an advantage in today's job market. Ultimately, however, one of the leading roles of the bilingual print media is to "help keep alive the culture and customs," one respondent said.

The responses were more mixed from the *Conexion* staff regarding their perceptions of the importance of the publication in the development of the city's Hispanic populace. One staff member said that overall "I don't think it really matters," however, the respondent did extend the statement by saying that *Conexion* is able to report on areas, primarily in business or entertainment, that do not get as much exposure in the mainstream media. Using the example of the large-scale coverage the publication gave to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movie, "La Bamba," the respondent said that "we understood the significance of that movie" to many people in our city. A second staff member answered the question of importance by saying, "I would like to think so," adding that "people tell me how much they enjoy reading it and it's important that they see a Hispanic-g geared publication." Another staff member commented on how the publication is able to reach a wide variety of Spanish-speaking people in San Antonio, from those who have been in the city for generations to the upper middle-class Mexicans who recently have moved to the city for business or to escape their country's violence.

When asked about the quality of their publications, the general reaction from all of the journalists was that the product was good, but could be better. For example, the fact that *La Prensa* is “family-owned” and a small operation was mentioned several times. All three interviewees said that staff members of *La Prensa* take on a wide variety of roles, with one editor saying that “everyone has something to bring to the table.” *Conexion* staff members mentioned the recent down-sizing of their staff and resources, with one journalist connecting the loss of staff to diminished “community” coverage. Having to rely more on the staff of The (San Antonio) Express-News and from free-lancers has also impacted the focus of *Conexion*’s coverage, the respondent said. Another *Conexion* journalist said that the publication should do more to emphasize “issues as opposed to people,” stating that the concentration on entertainment may not be the right direction for the paper. Furthermore, the interviewee said, the scope of *Conexion* is “a narrow view of Hispanics as opposed to a larger view of what is important.”

When asked about the effectiveness of the bilingual print media in covering news that is relevant to Hispanics in San Antonio, those interviewed at *La Prensa* saw their effectiveness begin directly tied to two things: their heavy use of the Spanish language and their “local” focus. “Being local makes us relevant,” one editor said. Another pointed out that the printed newspaper does a good job of reaching the “older, Spanish-speaking population” and that their online site and entertainment guide are connecting with the younger demographic. For *Conexion*, the responses varied with one interviewee saying, “I don’t think bilingual content is important in this community, necessarily,” mainly due to the fact that “the majority of the people in San Antonio are second or third generations and they don’t read Spanish.” However, another *Conexion* staff member responded that the publication is “very effective ... and I think that’s one thing we try to focus on, news (that) is relevant to the population as diverse as it is. We try to pay attention to that diversity in our stories.”

Turning to the research questions, question 1 examines how the staff members of the two publications rank the functions of ethnic media regarding their own publication. Research question 2 looks at to what extent the people responsible for the content and direction of the two publications consider their goal to be assimilatory, pluralistic, or a mixture of both.

*RQ1: What functions of ethnic media do the journalists, editors and publishers perceive as predominant in La Prensa and Conexion?*

The interview subjects were asked to review a list of the nine functions of the ethnic media (as stated by Johnson, 2000) and state which function(s) they believed their publication stressed the most and the least. The subjects then were asked which functions they personally believed were the most important.

Starting with *La Prensa*’s staff, the editors all agreed that the publication stresses the function of “promotion of ethnic pride” the most. One editor explained it this way: “Unfortunately, sometimes being Hispanic, often the statistics you hear are about the negative, so for us we want to re-instill that pride that we have for our culture and our community.” Two of the three (67%) interview subjects saw “symbolic ethnicity and unification of subgroups” as the function stressed the least, with the third stating that “culture transmission to non-ethnic groups” was the ethnic media function which received the least amount of attention by the publication. Regarding how the individuals

personally ranked the importance of the ethnic media functions, the interviewees chose a mixture of both assimilation functions and pluralism functions. They all stated that along with “promotion of ethnic pride” and “preservation and transmission of ethnic culture,” two pluralism functions, that “promotion of U.S. consumption” and “focus on individual change,” two assimilation functions, were also important and were elements they personally stressed in one way or another in *La Prensa*. One editor stated that under the category of “focus on individual change,” *La Prensa* does “a lot of stories about Hispanics who have done great things and we hope that other people read it knowing that they, too, can do this.”

For *Conexion*, three out of four (75%) interview subjects rated “preservation and transmission of ethnic culture,” a pluralistic trait, as the ethnic media function they believed their publication stresses the most. The fourth respondent ranked “socializing to ‘the modern’,” a function of assimilation, as number 1. The pluralistic “promotion of ethnic pride” was the second most-stressed function according to three out of four (75%) interviewees. Regarding the functions that *Conexion* stresses the least, two named “culture transmission to non-ethnic groups,” one responded with “focus on the future” and another with “promotion of U.S. consumption.” Although the four respondents offered mixed opinions as to what functions they personally believed were important, all of the answers fell under the functions of pluralism.

Looking at the two publications together, “promotion of ethnic pride” was the one function that was strongly favored by all interview subjects. This function was ranked either as the most important function or the second-most important function by six out of seven (86%) respondents. Overall, pluralism functions were selected more often than assimilation functions as far as categories that were important to either the publication or to the individual.

*RQ2: What rationale did the journalists at La Prensa and Conexion give for their individual roles in assisting their publications in being assimilationist, pluralist or both?*

As this question is directed toward individual responses, the data are presented as a summary of the interview subject’s answer to research question 2. Each person’s interview was assigned a number and those are used to indicate the speaker. Interview subjects 1-3 were from *La Prensa*, and 4-7 from *Conexion*.

Interviewee #1 said that she finds herself being both an assimilationist and a pluralist as an employee of *La Prensa*, a publication she referred to as being dedicated to promoting Hispanic traditions, music and culture. She described her pluralist role as follows:

About 90 percent of the entertainment interviews I’ve done have been conducted in Spanish simply because many of my interviewees don’t speak English. I’ve also had some entertainers that speak perfect English, but prefer a Spanish interview because their fan base is Spanish speakers or bilingual. Although I could translate it to English, many times when writing an entertainment piece, if given the choice I prefer to write it in Spanish. Why? Because when I go to cover these concerts and events I hear Spanish spoken all around me by the attendees. I feel that these are the same people that are going to pick up *La Prensa* to find out more about the artist they went to go see.

In describing her assimilationist role, interviewee #1 said that the situation is more “tricky.” She stated that, “although I am one to always promote our heritage, I also understand that to succeed in the U.S. there has to be some assimilation.” Adopting the English language and knowing “social norms” and laws are part of this, she said. She said that when she writes informational or civic-minded articles she deems it “imperative to make it meaningful” to her Hispanic readers.

Interviewee #2 also said that she adopts both assimilation and pluralism tendencies at her position at *La Prensa*. She described her philosophy regarding the role of the newspaper and her influence on that role:

We still pride ourselves in thinking that we’re different and have something to offer, something that another culture doesn’t have to offer. We both do and don’t conform. ... The world is changing and the only way that our culture can keep up and survive is by also changing, by also adapting to the new ways.

A mixture of assimilation and pluralism was also the characterization of interviewee #3’s approach to her job. She described her overall method as “more pluralism” but said that, on certain issues, she encourages more of an assimilationist approach. She used the green movement as an example, stating that “we write stories on this in Spanish because we want to reach people who may not be aware of this movement and its implications.” Furthermore, she stated that *La Prensa*’s editors have found “that on some issues, our readers are more receptive to the message when it comes from a bilingual newspaper.”

Interview subject #4 was not able to specifically respond to the question as his role at *Conexion* involved the visual content of the publication and the majority of the editorial decisions were made by others. He did say, however, that “when I choose visuals, I have to pay very close attention to what the story is about and how do I best visualize that.”

Interviewee #5 said that he viewed *Conexion* as a publication motivated by a mixture of pluralistic and assimilationist tendencies. He can identify with the dual role because he is able to relate to being “Hispanic” on a variety of levels. With Spanish as his first language and being a native of Mexico, he stated that he still can feel “like an outsider” in America. If he was new to the area, he said: “I think that *Conexion* would be my preferred publication ... I think that gives me an edge that I am an outsider and I think I understand (the readers).” He added: “When there is a story in Spanish that I can read in *Conexion* in English, it interests me.”

Interviewee #6 connected her ability to choose editorial topics that appear in *Conexion* as a prime way that she helps the publication assert pluralistic and assimilationist characteristics. She said:

I try to stay on top of things that are going on, events coming up, etc., that relate to the Latino community here and are about Latinos elsewhere that would make interesting stories. So, I think my role in *Conexion* being both pluralist and assimilationist is that much of what is in *Conexion*, at least the locally written material, are stories that I decided to do.

The seventh interview subject stated a somewhat different perspective than the other respondents. Though she agreed that *Conexion*’s approach is a mixture of pluralism and assimilation, she said she believed it leaned more toward assimilation in the way that

nearly every item published has a “Hispanic” angle, particularly in celebrating the achievements or success of particular Hispanics and holding them up as models to emulate. “I think sometimes it’s almost pandering, like we’re trying too hard to find Hispanic in everything as opposed to just saying Hispanics could be interested in this and just writing about it.”

### **Summary of findings and conclusion**

RQ 1 was directed to the data derived from the in-depth interviews, and revealed that the pluralistic functions of “promotion of ethnic pride” and “preservation and transmission of ethnic culture” were most important to the majority of the combined editorial staffs of *La Prensa* and *Conexion*. In-depth interviews were used to respond to RQ2 which asked each editorial staff member to state his or her rationale for assisting *La Prensa* or *Conexion* in being assimilationist, pluralist or a combination of both. Thematically speaking, the majority of respondents saw their interaction as a mixture of both assimilation and pluralism in their editorial choices and judgments at their respective publications.

The expanding Hispanic populace is characterized by its steady stream of newcomers combined with an existing population which often has many familial layers. This has created a need for a type of “foreign-language” press unlike any that preceded it. This press must meet the needs of both unassimilated newcomers and highly assimilated residents alike. Add to this, that the population being served often maintains strong cultural connections or expresses interest in matters related to heritage. The resulting picture that emerges is of a press that combines both assimilation and pluralistic functions, looking ahead while not forgetting the past.

The strength of this study is that it shows how the bilingual print media in a major American city have adapted the role of their publications to fit the evolving composition of the U.S. Hispanic population, at least as it exists in San Antonio, Texas. Traditionally, Spanish-language or bilingual print media merely sought to assimilate its readers; now, assimilation functions work alongside pluralistic ones. So a publication can include an article on how to file taxes, an assimilation characteristic, next to a profile on a first-generation college graduate, a pluralistic function.

Finally, as the global media landscape continues to evolve, adapt and transform, there is much that can be learned by studying the functions of the foreign-language press. This press has a long history in the United States in particular, and its proven ability to maintain an important role for its readers is a valuable tool for mainstream newspapers whose leaders continue to seek out ways to preserve and strengthen their connection to readers, current and prospective.

## References

- Acuña, R.F. (2003). *U.S. Latino Issues*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Advertising Age, (2008). *Hispanic Fact Pack 2008 Edition: Annual Guide to Hispanic Marketing and Media*. New York, N.Y.
- Alba, R., & Nee, V. (2005). *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Associated Press (2008). McClatchy teams with ImpreMedia to share Spanish-language content in print, online. Retrieved February 10, 2009, from Lexis Nexis.
- Ayala, E. (2005, May 5). *Conexion* celebrates its first birthday. *Conexion* (San Antonio, Texas), 04A.
- Bean, F.D., & Stevens, G. (2003). *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Branton, R., & Dunaway, J. (2008). English- and Spanish-Language Media Coverage of Immigration: A Comparative Analysis. *Social Science Quarterly*, 89 (4), 1006-1022.
- Ghanem, S.I. & Wanta, W. (2001). Agenda-Setting and Spanish Cable News. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 45 (2), 277-289.
- Golash-Boza, T. (2006). Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation. *Social Forces*, 85 (1), 27-55.
- Greenberg, B., Burgoon, M., Burgoon, J., & Korzenny, F. (1983). *Mexican Americans & the Mass Media*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corp.
- Fox, G. (1996). *Hispanic Nation: Culture, Politics, and the Constructing of Identity*. Tucson, AZ.: University of Arizona Press.
- Johnson, M. (2000). How Ethnic are U.S. Ethnic Media: The Case of Latina Magazines. *Mass Communication & Society*, 3 (2&3), 229-248.
- Johnson, M. (2003). Constructing a New Model of Ethnic Media: Image-Saturated Latina Magazines as Touchstones. In A.N. Valdivia (Ed.), *Companions in Cultural Studies: A Companion to Media Studies* (pp. 272-292) Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Kallen, H.M. (1996). Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality. In Sollors, W. (Ed.), *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader* (pp. 67-92). New York, N.Y.: New York University Press.
- Kanellos, N., & Martell, H. (2000). *Hispanic Periodicals in the United States – Origins to 1960 – A Brief History and Comprehensive Bibliography*. Houston: TX.: Arte Público Press.
- Kent, R.B., & Huntz, M.E. (1996). Spanish-Language Newspapers in the United States. *Geographical Review*, 86 (3), 446-457.
- Koidin Jaffee, M. (2005, August 11). Hispanic Market Becomes the Next Frontier in Media, *San Antonio (Texas) Express-News*.
- Levin, J. (2006, September 3). A Nueva Generation is Poised to Shape Pop Culture. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved February 16, 2007, from Lexis-Nexis.
- Lieberman, D. (2006, April 7). Media Tune in to Ethnic Audiences. *USA Today*, 1B.
- Mayer, V. (2001). From Segmented to Fragmented: Latino Media in San Antonio, Texas. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78 (2), 291-306.

- National Council of La Raza (1997). Out of the Picture: Hispanics in the Media. In C.E. Rodriguez (Ed.), *Latin Looks: Images of Latinas & Latinos in the U.S. Media*. Fordham University: Westview Press.
- Project for Excellence in Journalism (2006). The State of the News Media – An Annual Report on American Journalism. Retrieved March 14, 2006, from [http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2006/narrative\\_ethnicalternative\\_audience.asp?cat=4&meda=10](http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2006/narrative_ethnicalternative_audience.asp?cat=4&meda=10)
- Project for Excellence in Journalism (2008). The State of the News Media – An Annual Report on American Journalism. Retrieved Feb. 3, 2009, from <http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2008/>
- Project for Excellence in Journalism (2009). The State of the News Media – An Annual Report on American Journalism. Retrieved May 4, 2009, from <http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2009/index.htm>
- PR Newswire (2008). The Press-Enterprise Appoints Two Executives to Expand its Focus Online and in the Hispanic Community. Retrieved Feb. 10, 2009, from Lexis Nexis.
- Rumbaut, R., & Portes A. (2001). *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. University of California Press.
- Santana, M.C., & Smith, R.F. (2001). News Coverage of Hispanics Surpasses Expectations. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 22 (2), 94-104.
- Schlesinger, A. (1992). *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Shoemaker, P.J., Reese, S.D., & Danielson, W.A. (1985a). *Media in Ethnic Context: Communication and Language in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas at Austin, College of Communication, Department of Journalism.
- Shoemaker, P.J., Reese, S.D., & Danielson, W.A. (1985b). Spanish-Language Print Media Use as an Indicator of Acculturation. *Journalism Quarterly*, 62 (4), 734-740, 762.
- Subervi-Vélez, F. (1986). The Mass Media and Ethnic Assimilation and Pluralism: A Review and Research Proposal with Special Focus on Hispanics. *Journal of Communication*, 13 (1), 71-96.
- Subervi-Vélez, F. (2008). *The Mass Media and Latino Politics – Studies of U.S. Media Content, Campaign Strategies and Survey Research: 1984-2004*. New York: Routledge.
- Suro, R. (2004). Changing Channels and Crisscrossing Cultures: A Survey of Latinos on the News Media. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Tan, A. (1978). Evaluation of Newspapers and Television by Blacks and Mexican Americans. *Journalism Quarterly*, 55 (4), 673-68.
- Thompson, R. (1989). *Theories of Ethnicity: A Critical Appraisal*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Turk, J.V., Richard, J., Bryson, R.L., & Johnson, S.M. (1989). Hispanic Americans in the News in Two Southwestern Cities. *Journalism Quarterly*, 66 (1), 107-113.
- Veciana-Suarez, A. (1990) *Hispanic Media: Impact and Influence*. Washington, D.C.: The Media Institute.

- Vecoli, R.J. (1998). *Print Culture in a Diverse America*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Viswanath, K., & Arora, P. (2000). Ethnic Media in the United States: An Essay on Their Role in Integration, Assimilation, and Social Control. *Mass Communication & Society*, 3 (1), 39-56.
- Weill, S. & Castañeda, L. (2004). "Empathetic Rejectionism" and Inter-ethnic Agenda Setting: Coverage of Latinos by the Black Press in the American South. *Journalism Studies*, 5 (4), 537-550.
- Whisler, K. (2006). Latino Print Network's annual report on Hispanic publishing 2006. Retrieved March 15, 2007, from <http://www.latinoprintnetwork.com/>
- Whisler, K. (2009). Print is Dead? Hispanic Publications Defy Trend, Tell a Different Story. Retrieved June 12, 2009, from [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=a61d85293886b3ff8cd812b79d1f8dab](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=a61d85293886b3ff8cd812b79d1f8dab)
- Zhou, M., & Cai, G. (2002). Chinese Language Media in the United States: Immigration and Assimilation in American Life. *Qualitative Sociology*, 25 (3), 419-440.

## News Media Consumption in Latin America: Who Does It?\*

**Ryan Salzman**

University of North Texas, USA

[ryansalzman@my.unt.edu](mailto:ryansalzman@my.unt.edu)

---

### Abstract

Before tackling in depth questions related to how news media consumption affects political attitudes and behaviors in Latin America, it is essential to explore what drives news media consumption for individuals in the first place. While similar research on the determinants of news media consumption is lacking in all contexts, it nonetheless remains an important question that requires addressing. This research looks to frame news media consumption as being dictated by three dimensions: ability, interest, and expectations. With each dimension being influenced by individual- and system-level determinants, I employ a traditional ordered logistic model to test the relative influence of each dimension on individual-level news media consumption behavior. The results indicate that each dimension can affect behavior, but that effect is contingent on the type of news media being consumed.

\*This project was funded by a Center for Spanish Language Media Research Grant. I would like to acknowledge the helpful comments of John A. Booth and Catherine C. Salzman. A previous version of this paper was presented at the Spanish Language Media 2010 conference held in Denton Texas, November 11-13, 2010.

## News Media Consumption in Latin America: Who Does It?\*

There have been many attempts to understand the role that media consumption plays in affecting individuals' attitudes and behavior. Most often, those efforts focus on experiments and survey data analysis where media consumption is the primary independent variable.<sup>1</sup> While that research seeking to understand the causal relationship of news media consumption and individuals is not misguided, there is a prior question that is often left unattended: *What determines an individual's relative level of news media consumption?* Therefore, before attempting to understand the effects of news media consumption on individuals in Latin America, it is important to understand what kind of individual consumes news media.

While efforts to comprehend determinants of news media consumption may appear trivial on the surface, there are a number of reasons that answering this question is important. First, since little is known about what influences news media consumption in Latin America, only a direct study of those determinants will clarify what kind of individual consumes each type of news medium. Second, studying the determinants of news media consumption in Latin America offers an opportunity to evaluate news media consumption in a new context. In all regions of the world, not the least of which is Latin America, changes in media technology have prompted a continued trend of deepening media penetration in each society (Rockwell & Janus, 2003). This condition makes evaluating contemporary usage trends in Latin America of increased importance as future studies of media use will be helped with a point of comparison. Third, identifying the determinants of news media consumption will aid in assessing the theoretical expectations in other research of this type. For example, Norris (2000) finds evidence of a "virtuous circle" in post-industrial societies where individual attributes (i.e. interest) variably dictate news media consumption which, in turn, directly affects similar attributes (i.e. interest). Thus, more clearly understanding determinants of media use can clarify such theories.

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

In addition to individual-level determinants, this project will also include contextual determinants of news media consumption. As with most cross-national studies, this analysis draws its sample from multiple countries. Research has shown that

---

<sup>1</sup> For examples of such research, see Iyengar and Kinder (1987), Cappella and Jamieson (1996), Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997), Salzman and Aloisi (2009).

variation in context can cause variation in individual political attitudes and behaviors (Almond & Verba, 1963; Muller & Seligson, 1987; Putnam 1993; Booth & Seligson, 2009). Therefore, contextual conditions related to news media consumption will also be included in this research along with the more obvious individual-level variables.

Tables 1 to 3 illustrate the potential presence of contextual differences. In each table, responses about the regularity of consumption of each type of news medium are divided per country. Significant variation across countries and consumption regularity is present. That variation makes obvious the need to include both individual- and contextual-level influences in seeking a clear picture of what motivates news media consumption.

**Table 1: Self-Reported Newspaper Consumption per Country**

Source: Latin American Public Opinion Project 2008

	Never	Rarely	Once or Twice per Week	Daily	Sample Size
<b>Argentina</b>	18.98	30.07	28.32	22.63	1,317
<b>Bolivia</b>	37.83	39.03	16.50	6.64	2,649
<b>Brazil</b>	35.89	30.39	14.81	18.91	1,290
<b>Chile</b>	26.04	29.69	27.18	17.10	1,398
<b>Colombia</b>	40.04	34.38	15.04	10.53	1,396
<b>Costa Rica</b>	21.54	24.55	16.87	37.05	1,328
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	39.83	31.90	13.15	15.12	1,323
<b>Ecuador</b>	18.44	36.39	27.72	17.45	2,836
<b>El Salvador</b>	31.08	31.49	17.57	19.86	1,480
<b>Guatemala</b>	17.27	29.88	23.94	28.92	1,245
<b>Honduras</b>	28.12	38.47	12.72	20.69	1,305
<b>Mexico</b>	37.91	29.53	18.38	14.19	1,480
<b>Nicaragua</b>	48.86	28.48	10.70	11.96	1,271
<b>Panama</b>	15.08	33.31	19.94	31.67	1,399
<b>Paraguay</b>	31.56	35.55	23.48	9.41	1,052
<b>Peru</b>	13.12	35.86	27.23	23.79	1,425
<b>Uruguay</b>	47.61	21.65	20.61	10.13	1,441
<b>Venezuela</b>	9.81	21.00	27.20	41.99	1,305
<b>All Latin America<sup>a</sup></b>	28.83	31.20	20.08	19.89	26,940

<sup>a</sup> Each category of news media consumption is averaged with each country being weighted equally to ensure that the averages are unbiased.

**Table 2: Self-Reported TV News Consumption per Country**

	Never	Rarely	Once or Twice per Week	Daily	Sample Size
<b>Argentina</b>	5.09	12.98	22.55	59.38	1,317
<b>Bolivia</b>	7.55	15.74	17.86	58.85	2,649
<b>Brazil</b>	2.48	7.13	12.48	77.91	1,290
<b>Chile</b>	1.79	7.08	16.24	74.89	1,398
<b>Colombia</b>	2.15	8.31	11.60	77.94	1,396
<b>Costa Rica</b>	2.64	5.57	7.83	83.96	1,328
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	6.50	13.08	15.65	64.78	1,323
<b>Ecuador</b>	2.01	8.32	21.02	68.65	2,836
<b>El Salvador</b>	6.08	12.03	16.08	65.81	1,480
<b>Guatemala</b>	11.73	16.39	21.45	50.44	1,245
<b>Honduras</b>	14.33	21.30	11.95	52.41	1,305
<b>Mexico</b>	3.99	10.20	22.91	62.91	1,480
<b>Nicaragua</b>	10.54	8.43	8.72	72.31	1,271
<b>Panama</b>	4.15	7.36	11.01	77.48	1,399
<b>Paraguay</b>	2.57	7.60	17.87	71.96	1,052
<b>Peru</b>	2.60	11.58	18.11	67.72	1,425
<b>Uruguay</b>	3.89	7.36	11.80	76.96	1,441
<b>Venezuela</b>	3.98	11.19	16.25	68.58	1,305
<b>All Latin America<sup>a</sup></b>	5.23	10.65	15.63	68.49	26,940

Source: Latin American Public Opinion Project 2008

<sup>a</sup> Each category of news media consumption is averaged with each country being weighted equally to ensure that the averages are unbiased.

### **What determines news media consumption in Latin America?**

To understand what determines individuals' news media consumption in Latin America requires a consideration of both individual- and system-level differences. Those differences can be grouped into three dimensions: ability, interest and expectations. The theoretical motivations for each dimension focus on media-specific as well as general behavior research across varying contexts.

#### *Ability*

Resources and access are the most basic determinants of individuals' consumption of news media in Latin America. Significant political behavior research has theorized and demonstrated that individuals with greater amounts of time and resources will be more able and presumably willing to participate in various activities, like civil society or voting, that may be avoided by those with little free time (Putnam 1995). This should be true for media consumption as well. That is to say, individuals with more available free time should look to fill that free time by participating in activities such as reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, or watching TV news. Other resources, besides time, include wealth and medium possession (i.e., a television or radio receiver). Therefore, individuals with greater resources are expected to consume more news media of all types.

**Table 3: Self-Reported Radio News Consumption per Country**

	Never	Rarely	Once or Twice per Week	Daily	Sample Size
<b>Argentina</b>	14.73	22.78	17.39	45.10	1,317
<b>Bolivia</b>	11.17	31.63	23.41	33.79	2,649
<b>Brazil</b>	15.43	29.22	13.95	41.40	1,290
<b>Chile</b>	19.53	30.40	15.95	34.12	1,398
<b>Colombia</b>	25.00	28.94	11.46	34.60	1,396
<b>Costa Rica</b>	35.99	21.39	8.66	33.96	1,328
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	16.78	28.95	15.27	39.00	1,323
<b>Ecuador</b>	15.59	30.57	22.71	31.14	2,836
<b>El Salvador</b>	20.81	31.01	12.77	35.41	1,480
<b>Guatemala</b>	12.69	30.76	21.69	34.86	1,245
<b>Honduras</b>	5.44	24.44	10.42	59.69	1,305
<b>Mexico</b>	20.88	26.82	22.03	30.27	1,480
<b>Nicaragua</b>	27.22	26.91	8.10	37.77	1,271
<b>Panama</b>	19.94	28.31	16.44	35.31	1,399
<b>Paraguay</b>	8.17	23.95	27.66	40.21	1,052
<b>Peru</b>	8.56	26.18	20.28	44.98	1,425
<b>Uruguay</b>	15.34	15.34	12.77	56.56	1,441
<b>Venezuela</b>	21.07	25.82	17.93	35.17	1,305
<b>All Latin America<sup>a</sup></b>	17.46	26.86	16.61	39.07	26,940

Source: Latin American Public Opinion Project 2008

<sup>a</sup> Each category of news media consumption is averaged with each country being weighted equally to ensure that the averages are unbiased.

Media dissemination, like many other societal conditions, can be affected by the size of the community and its relative location in a country (Rockwell & Janus, 2003). Very often, smaller communities are isolated geographically and technologically. A lack of proper roads can limit the availability of print media just as a lack of electricity and proximate radio broadcast towers can limit other news media reception. Smaller communities may lack newspapers or local broadcast media. When news media are less available, individuals are less able to consume it. Therefore, individuals living in larger communities should consume more news media of all kinds relative to individuals in small or rural communities.

Like individuals' resources, differences in the development of the media systems should also variably affect news media consumption. A country with a more technologically developed media system should have a greater amount of media that are being disseminated. With more news media access points comes less ability to avoid media consumption by individuals. That is to say, higher levels of media system development should induce higher rates of news media consumption of all types.

### *Interest*

Following Norris (2000), I presume that individuals with more knowledge are naturally interested in consuming news media to further their knowledge. For this to occur, I embrace the idea that news media are information-rich relative to other forms of media. Given this relative information richness, news media will be the preferred source

for individuals interested in seeking information. Additional research indicates that interest is a motivating factor for certain news consumption behavior and is highly correlated with political knowledge (Johnson & Arceneaux, 2010). Therefore, I expect individuals with higher levels of knowledge to consume more news media of all kinds than individuals with less knowledge.

Consuming news from one medium may also indicate a level of interest that could induce greater consumption of other news media. The substitutability<sup>2</sup> of news media is possible because consumption of each medium may be motivated by similar interests just as consuming various media may cause similar effects for individuals. Besides indicating existing interest, consuming one news medium may prompt greater interest which can subsequently lead to more information seeking behavior that is best satisfied with alternative news sources. Therefore, I expect individuals who consume greater amounts of one kind of news medium to consume each of the other news media in greater amounts.

At the systematic level, individuals who live in countries that are more developed economically and socially may be drawn to consuming more news media than individuals in less-developed countries. Continued economic and social development requires awareness of conditions (i.e. market changes) which are not available through outlets other than news media. As a country continues down the path of development, there will be an increased interest in information sought through news media. Therefore, individuals who live in more developed countries will consume more news media of all types.

### *Expectations*

Individuals vary in their regard of news media systems in Latin America. Relative expectations of the news media system may variably affect the amount of news media consumed by individuals. For many individuals, media are seen as serving a purpose that cannot be fulfilled through other means. That purpose can include providing information, setting up a “market place of ideas”, or serving as a societal “watchdog” (Votmer, 2006, 5). The perceived effectiveness of media for achieving those purposes may variably affect the amount of trust that individuals place in the media. If an individual has a high level of “trust” in media, then it is reasonable to assume that she will consume more of it. Likewise, an untrusting individual would regard consuming news media as a waste of time or source of dubious information. Therefore, individuals with higher levels of trust in news media should consume more news media of all types.

Individuals’ expectations of news media are also affected by the level of freedom experienced by the press in that individual’s country. Countries with a poor record of press freedom may find that reality reflected in the expectations of its citizens. The presence of a constrained press might induce lower levels of news media consumption as the press will be seen as unreliable. Higher levels of press freedom may increase the perceived reliability of the press and entice more consumers. Therefore, individuals in countries with greater press freedom should consume greater amounts of news media of all types.

---

<sup>2</sup> The idea of substitutability is most commonly addressed in international relations conflict studies (Palmer & Bhandari, 2000). In that research, the independent variables that are substitutable are more dissimilar than simply substituting one form of news media for another.

Another contextual condition that may affect expectations of news media is the duration of democracy within a country. Democracies require free expression and a free press (Dahl 1998). Individuals living in long-standing democracies should anticipate a stronger, freer press industry than those living in countries with a shorter experience with democracy. With a freer press comes more complete information. As individuals turn to news outlets for information, those living in longer standing democracies should use conventional news media with greater confidence and regularity. Their expectations should dictate greater news media consumption than individuals who live in countries where expectations of a free press are less well developed. Therefore, the democratic duration of a country should positively affect the expectations of individuals with residents of countries with longer democratic duration consuming more news media than individuals in countries with a shorter experience with democracy.

### Research Design

In order to test my hypotheses concerning what affects news media consumption, I utilize survey data taken from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) 2008 dataset. The survey data was administered in 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries.<sup>3</sup> This is a pooled, cross-sectional survey data set. The analysis is conducted at the individual level.

#### *Dependent Variable*

My research employs three dependent variables all intended to capture the extent to which individuals report consuming news media in Latin America. One, *TV news*, considers the reported regularity of television news media consumption. Another, *newspaper*, identifies how often the respondent reports reading the newspaper. Last, *radio news* measures the reported frequency of listening to the news on the radio. Each of these is scored 0 to 3 (never to daily) to correspond to the degree of regularity with which the respondent consumes that specific news medium.

#### *Method*

To conduct the analysis of my dependent variables, I utilize an ordered logistic model. The use of the ordered logistic model is justified by the count structure (0, 1, 2, 3) of the dependent variables (Long 1997). To more accurately incorporate the contextual variables included in the analysis, I cluster my standard errors per country. I also weight the sample of each country to equal 1,500 to ensure that no country is over/under-represented in the analysis.

#### *Independent Variables*

My research employs multiple primary independent variables all intended to capture the three dimensions that may influence individuals' news media consumption behavior. Each dimension is represented by individual-level (level-1) and system-level (level-2) variables. The description of the variables will be grouped by dimension.

To test the role of *respondent's ability* in influencing news media consumption, I

---

<sup>3</sup> The countries in the sample include Argentina, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic.

utilize three variables; *wealth*, *community size*, and *communication access*. The *wealth* variable is an additive measure of various items that the respondent may or may not own (scaled 0-13). These items include a television, refrigerator, land-line phone, cellular phone, vehicle (up to 3), clothes washing machine, microwave, motorcycle, potable water in the house, bathroom in the house, and computer and are scored on a scale of 0 to 13.<sup>4</sup> A respondent's score depends on the number of possessions that they claim. I expect the *wealth* variable to be positively signed.

The measures for community size are coded into five dichotomous variables, *rural*, *small city*, *medium city*, *big city*, and *capital*. These variables are derived from the values recorded by the survey administrator.<sup>5</sup> The administrator had five choices which were rural, small city, medium city, large city, and capital city.<sup>6</sup> The categorization of each community size variable was classified per country with relative population size and geographical distribution determining the exact defining parameters of the city size variables.<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of the statistical tests, I exclude the *rural* variable as my baseline case to which the other community variables should be compared. I expect the sign of each *community size* variable to be positive.

At the system-level, the development of the communications system is expected to influence in the ability of individuals to consume news media. The *communication access* variable is an index that measures the available access of information and communication technology (ICT) in a country. The ICT development index (IDI) is a composite of three sub-indexes identifying access, use, and skills. The *communication access* variable employs only the *access sub-index* which is a composite measure of fixed telephone lines, mobile telephone subscriptions, international internet bandwidth per internet user, proportion of households with a computer, and the proportion of households with internet access. The measure was normalized, re-scaled, and weighted.<sup>8</sup> Higher access sub-index scores denote greater ICT development as it relates to the ability of individuals to access information. I expect the *communication access* variable to be positively signed.

To test the role of *interest* in affecting the amount of news media consumed by individuals, I utilize three variables; *political knowledge*, *education*, and *development*. The individual-level relationship between the knowledge a person has and the amount of news media consumed is tested using two variables, *education* and *political knowledge*. *Education* measures the number of years of formal education that a person received and

<sup>4</sup> This measure is intended to replace the typical income question. This meliorates concerns of misreporting or refusal to report often associated with income questions. The use of household wealth also circumvents issues related to individuals such as family members who have no income of their own yet live a lifestyle reflective of various degrees of income because of their family situation. For an example of a study that uses a similar measure, see *The Legitimacy Puzzle in Latin America* (Booth & Seligson, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Since the survey administrator recorded the community size response this ensures that individual perception of community size is not being measured. Instead the environmental reality of the size in which an individual lives is what the score represents.

<sup>6</sup> The use of dummy variables, instead of a single ordered variable, is important to account for the potential of a non-linear relationship that would otherwise be assumed by using an ordered variable.

<sup>7</sup> One example, reported by a LAPOP representative as being a typical criterion, denoted a *Big City* as having a population in excess of 50,000, a *Medium City* ranged from 25,000 to 50,000, and a *Small City* was less than 25,000 (but not *Rural*).

<sup>8</sup> The IDI was compiled and produced by the International Telecommunication Union (2009). For more information visit [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/idi/2009/material/IDI2009\\_w5.pdf](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/idi/2009/material/IDI2009_w5.pdf).

indicates the capacity to obtain and process information. It is scaled 0 to 18. *Political knowledge* is an additive index of dichotomous responses to five general questions about politics. The questions ask about politics and institutions in the respondent's country, as well as politics in other countries. For each correct response, the respondent receives a score of 1. Incorrect responses receive a score of 0. The scores are then added together to create a *political knowledge* index that ranges from 0 to 5.<sup>9</sup> I expect both variables will be positively signed.

Also included as independent variables to test the interest dimension of news media consumption determinants are the dependent variables, *radio news*, *TV news*, and *newspapers*. For each model I include the unused news media consumption variables as independent variables. For example, when testing for the influences on newspaper news consumption as the dependent variable I will include TV and radio news consumption as predictors in the model. I expect the impact of each news media consumption variable on the others to be positively signed.

To test the system-level impact, I utilize a *development* variable to capture conditions that may increase the interest of individuals and thus lead to them pursuing greater amounts of news. The measurement of *development* is taken from the United Nations Human Development Index. This human development index "is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Health is measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge is measured by a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment rate; and standard of living by GDP per capita (PPP US\$)" (United Nations 2008). Scores range from 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating greater levels of development. I employ a single measure of development as aggregate development measures are often strongly correlated, often to the point of being collinear. Using multiple highly correlated development measures would cause problems for my statistical models. Therefore, I choose to use the Human Development Index because of its ability to capture multiple aspects of aggregate-level development. I expect the variable to be positively signed.

In order to test the effect of *expectations* on various levels of news media consumption, I include three variables; *trust in media*, *press freedom*, and *democratic duration*. *Trust in media* is a single item response that asks individuals to rate, from 1 to 7, the degree to which they trust media. A score of 1 denotes no trust with a score of 7 indicating "a lot" of trust. I expect this variable's contribution to be positive.

The system-level variable *press freedom* is taken from Freedom House's 2008 Press Freedom Index. *Democratic duration* is taken from Smith (2005) and extended through 2008. That variable is a count measure of the number of years of democracy per country. It has a range of 10 to 57 years. I expect both variables' influence will be positively signed.

### *Control Variables*

I employ some basic control variables that have been consistently linked to various political behaviors and are included to ensure the correct relationships are identified as well as to increase the robustness of our models. Although seeking news

---

<sup>9</sup> The five knowledge questions form an index with a scale reliability coefficient of 0.72 indicating that the questions form a coherent index.

media is not explicitly a political behavior, individual differences may still variably affect that behavior. The control variables that I include are *age* and *female* (Almond & Verba, 1965). *Age* is a count variable ranging from 16 to 101. *Female* denotes the individuals' gender and is given a value of 1 for women and 0 for men.

**Table 4: Summary Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Expected Direction</b>
TV News Consumption	2.471	0.878	0	3	n.a. <sup>a</sup>
Newspaper Consumption	1.298	1.080	0	3	n.a.
Radio News Consumption	1.767	1.135	0	3	n.a.
Wealth	5.998	2.723	0	13	+
Capital	0.222	0.416	0	1	+
Big City	0.197	0.397	0	1	+
Medium City	0.156	0.363	0	1	+
Small City	0.145	0.352	0	1	+
Rural	0.279	0.449	0	1	n.a. <sup>o</sup>
Communication Access	3.641	0.741	2.54	5.27	+
Political Knowledge	2.729	1.460	0	5	+
Education	9.274	4.502	0	18	+
Development	0.797	0.056	0.699	0.878	+
Media Trust	4.619	1.710	1	7	+
Press Freedom	44.359	11.672	19	74	+
Democratic Duration	26.129	13.911	8	57	+
Female	0.503	0.500	0	1	n.a.
Age	2.789	1.547	1	6	n.a.

n.a. denotes "not applicable"

n = 26,940

<sup>a</sup> In testing the substitutability hypothesis each news consumption variable is expected to be positively related to the news consumption dependent variable in the test.

<sup>o</sup> The expected direction of the community size variables assumes the exclusion of *Rural* for comparison.

## Results

Table 5 presents the results of the analyses that examine determinants of news media consumption in 18 Latin American countries. Each model performed well with a pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> of 0.037, 0.083, and 0.116 for the radio news, television news, and newspaper models respectively. Overall, each type of news media consumption is significantly affected by numerous variables, each representing various dynamics of the three theoretical dimensions; ability, interest and expectation. However, the results were dependent upon the type of news media. I discuss the findings for each variable in turn.

**Table 5: Ordered Logistic Models of News Media Consumption Determinants**

	Radio News	TV News	Newspaper
<b>Ability</b>			
Wealth	-0.057** (0.014)	0.130** (0.025)	0.096** (0.017)
Capital City <sup>‡</sup>	-0.354** (0.108)	0.292** (0.095)	0.546** (0.131)
Big City	-0.277** (0.090)	0.216* (0.121)	0.565** (0.094)
Medium City	-0.135 (0.107)	0.232** (0.097)	0.346** (0.131)
Small City	-0.249** (0.072)	0.430** (0.109)	-0.061 (0.169)
Communication Access	0.027 (0.119)	-0.283* (0.171)	0.346* (0.164)
<b>Interest</b>			
Political Knowledge	0.127** (0.032)	0.089** (0.025)	0.122** (0.029)
Education	-0.006 (0.010)	0.010 (0.008)	0.107** (0.011)
Newspaper	0.270** (0.029)	0.385** (0.059)	—
TV News	0.292** (0.034)	—	0.387** (0.055)
Radio News	—	0.286** (0.034)	0.232** (0.023)
Development	0.037 (1.560)	3.633** (1.469)	-7.252** (2.307)
<b>Expectation</b>			
Media Trust	0.011 (0.012)	0.091** (0.015)	-0.009 (0.015)
Press Freedom	-0.004 (0.006)	0.017* (0.009)	-0.021 (0.013)
Democratic Duration	-0.012** (0.005)	0.012* (0.007)	0.001 (0.010)
Female	-0.153** (0.031)	0.158** (0.035)	-0.340** (0.039)
Age	0.018** (0.002)	0.008** (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)
Constant			
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.037	0.083	0.116
N	28,561	28,561	28,561

<sup>o</sup> *Press Freedom, Development and Communication Access* are identified per country

\*p≤.05; \*\*p≤.01 (two-tailed)

<sup>‡</sup>The excluded category (for comparison) is *Rural*

Numbers in parenthesis indicate standard errors

An individual's ability to access news media was hypothesized to positively affect their consumption of those media. The most basic determinant of such behavior was an individual's level of *wealth*. The traditional ordered logistic model found statistically significant, positive parameter estimates associated with the dependent variables *TV news*

and *newspaper*. The model employing *radio news* as the dependent variable found *wealth* to have a negative parameter estimate indicating that greater *wealth* was correlated with less *radio news* consumption. This finding is not surprising because radios are cheaper than televisions and more consumable than newspapers due to cost and literacy requirements. Radio signals penetrate even remote areas of national territories much more effectively than do television signals. Residents of remote and rural areas of nations are often considerably poorer than urban residents.<sup>10</sup> It appears, then, that radio news may be the alternative that is sought when other news media are not accessible for reasons of personal endowment or location.

The role of the respondent's community size mirrors the results of the other individual-level ability determinant, *wealth*. For the TV News and Newspaper models each community size variable, *capital city*, *big city*, *medium city*, and *small city*, was positive and statistically significant relative to the excluded category, *rural*. The exception was that of *small city* that had no statistically significant parameter estimate in the *newspaper* model. That is to say that the larger the community in which an individual lives, the greater that individual's ability is to consume news media. The results of the *radio news* test found negative, statistically significant coefficients for the community size variables *capital city*, *big city* and *small city* meaning that relative to *rural* communities, individuals are less likely to consume *radio news* in those communities. *Medium city* failed to reach statistical significance. Like the *wealth* test, it appears that radio news is more available when other news mediums are less accessible.

The final test of the role of ability in shaping individual's news media consumption focuses on the system-level variable *communication access*. That test revealed no statistically significant results for *radio news*. The results for *newspaper* were in the expected positive direction and significant. The test of *TV news* unexpectedly revealed a statistically significant negative result. A closer examination of the data reveals that two countries, Guatemala and Honduras, had low television consumption scores given their level of *communication access*. After removing those data points and re-running the model, an insignificant result was found. I therefore conclude that there is no effect for television news consumption in Latin America. Variation in information and communication technology access appears to have no effect on TV and radio news consumption and a positive effect on newspaper consumption.

Considering the role of *interest* in shaping individuals' relative news media consumption, I utilize two individual-level dependent variables, *Political knowledge* and *education*. Both were hypothesized to positively affect consumption of all news media. For all news media, consumption was positively and significantly related to *political knowledge*. The theoretical presumption was that individuals who knew more would naturally seek out more information due to genuine interest. In contrast, *education* associated only with newspaper use, but not for radio or television. This result is reasonable as newspaper consumption is more active and thus requires skills provided via education. Radio and television news consumption is passive and requires no specialized skills such as literacy. In general, there appears firm support for the assertion that individuals who are better informed naturally seek more news due to increased interest.

---

<sup>10</sup> To verify this relationship I conducted a Pearson's R test. The results revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.43. The coefficient illustrates that as the size of the community that an individual lives increases, so too does their level of wealth.

To account for the substitutability of news media consumption I included the nondependent news media variables as independent variables in modeling each of the others. In each case, the consumption of the two alternative news media revealed positive and statistically significant parameter estimates. Therefore, an individual who consumes news from one medium with greater regularity can be expected to consume more of each of the others.

To test the role of the system in affecting interest which could subsequently affect news media consumption, I utilize a general *development* measure. The test revealed the most inconsistent findings in the study. I found no statistically significant parameter estimates for affecting *radio news* consumption. Consuming *TV news* was positively affected by relative levels of development per country. This is a reasonable finding as individuals living in countries with higher levels of development may find a greater availability of televisions, and thus television news. Finally, *development* was found to negatively affect *newspaper* consumption. The fact that this variable is statistically significant and negative may indicate that newspaper consumption declines as other forms of news consumption become more available. Greater availability of television not only encourages television news consumption but potentially discourages less technologically advanced news mediums such as newspapers.

Individuals' expectations related to news media were hypothesized to affect news media consumption and were tested using an individual-level variable, *media trust*. The results of that test revealed positive, significant parameter estimates for the consumption of *TV news*. The results of the *radio news* and *newspaper* consumption tests found no statistically significant result. Therefore, it is evident that *media trust* only affects the consumption of *TV news*.

I also found support for my expectation hypothesis only for *TV news* as it related to relative levels of *press freedom*. The relationship was expected to be positively and significantly correlated with news media consumption of all types. For the tests employing the dependent variables *radio news* and *newspaper*, there were no statistically significant parameter estimates. For *TV news*, the results were positive and significant. This means that individuals living in countries with greater *press freedom* had consistently higher rates of *TV news* consumption than individuals living in countries with less *press freedom*. This may indicate that individuals living in countries with greater press freedom may have expectations of more reliable information and that the press industry is free to report the news without interference. Those expectations of better information motivate increased TV news consumption.

Testing the effect of *democratic duration* on news media consumption revealed inconsistent results. There was no statistical effect on *newspaper* consumption. *Democratic duration* is positively related to *TV news* consumption. Interestingly, the results indicate that each expectation variable affects *TV news* consumption positively. The results for *radio news* contradict my hypothesis as the results were negative and significant. However, that result is consistent with the findings in the ability hypothesis tests where radio news appears to be an alternative source of news that responds to the determinants in a manner that is opposite that of the other news media.

The two control variables in the models, *gender* and *age*, performed as expected. The test of *female* on news media consumption revealed negative and statistically significant parameter estimates for *radio news* and *newspaper* consumption. Thus men

consumed more of those news media than women. There was no statistically discernable difference between men and women for the consumption of *TV news*. Employing the *age* variable found positive and significant coefficients for each news media consumption dependent variable. That finding demonstrates that individuals consume greater amounts of news media as they get older.

### **Discussion**

This project endeavored to understand what determines news media consumption in Latin America. Specifically, I sought to identify and test three separate theoretical motivations for news media consumption: ability, interest, and expectation. Each motivational dimension focused on individual-level news consumption but also incorporated contextual variables to capture country-level conditions that might influence individuals' behavior. The results of the empirical analyses reveal numerous findings that may prove useful in future research addressing the role of news media consumption in affecting individuals in Latin America. These include varying support for the theoretical dimensions, differences between news media, and the relevance of context.

The first theoretical dimension addressed was the *ability* (resources) of the respondent to consume news. Both an individual's relative level of wealth and the size of the community in which he lives significantly correlated with news media consumption. In comparing the statistically significant results across news media, the uniqueness of radio news consumers became quickly evident. Whereas newspaper consumption and TV news consumption were both positively related to wealth and community size, radio news consumption had the opposite relation. This finding reinforces the decision to consider consumption of different news media separately. Access proves of utmost importance for news media consumption. Individuals with more wealth living in larger communities have greater access to newspapers and televisions. Individuals who have less wealth rely on the radio for their news. Also, individuals living in smaller, presumably more remote areas also rely on radio news more as newspapers require distribution across space and televisions require electricity and proximate broadcasts. Radio stations are more dispersed across the country side and their signals penetrate rural and remote areas more effectively than television. Radio receivers can run on batteries when electricity is not available.

Relative levels of interest per individual have been shown to influence news media consumption in developed regions (Norris 2000). This study reveals similar findings. An individual's level of political knowledge is positively correlated with their news media consumption for each news medium. The test of education's effect revealed positive and significant parameter estimates only for newspaper consumption. This can be explained by the literacy requirement that comes with newspaper consumption that is not required for TV and radio news consumption. A further test of individual-level interest determinants focused on the propensity of interested individuals to consume multiple forms of news media. Consuming one news medium is highly correlated with consuming other news media. Therefore, individuals with greater political knowledge are more interested, with those consuming one news medium more likely to consume multiple media. It appears that individuals with higher levels of interest consume more of each news medium.

As for expectations, television news consumption is the most clearly affected. An individual's level of trust in media, the relative level of press freedom per country in which they reside, and the democratic duration of that country are each positively related to the amount of TV news consumed. TV news consumption appears uniquely affected by expectations of media.

The results of the contextual measures in the analyses were mixed. The clearest effect appears to be for TV news. Individuals living in countries with greater development, press freedoms, and democratic duration consumed more television news. Countries that are more developed may be expected to have more televisions. The findings related to press freedom and democratic duration lend support to the hypothesis that individuals who perceive news as providing more reliable information will be encouraged to consume more news. The fact that support for the hypothesis was only found for television news consumption could indicate that TV news is seen by Latin Americans as being the most influenced government induced limitations. This may also explain why individuals living in countries with less experience with democracy may seek news sources that are potentially less influenced by the government. "The capacity of community radio to foster democracy via access to broadcasting and its associated potential to 'extend the freedom of the individual, foster local interdependence and cultural enrichment' underpins the community media sector, the purpose of which is distinctly different from the media operating at national levels. (Jayaweera 2008)"

### **Conclusion**

Research endeavoring to understand the correlates of news media consumption in Latin America has been, until now, essentially an empty set. This research has sought to explore what determines news media consumption employing a three-dimensional test that focuses on individuals' relative abilities, interests and expectations. The tests of the dimensions that were carried out focused on both individual- and system-level variables as behavior can be shaped by what individuals know, have, and think, just as it can be shaped by the context in which individuals live. In general, there appears greater support for the propositions that respondents' ability and interests affect the ability to consume news. Less clear are the roles of individual-level expectations and contextual determinants in shaping all news media consumption. However, there is evidence that elements of both expectations and context having some influence on television news consumption.

## References

- Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Boston, MA: Princeton University Press.
- Booth, J. A., & Seligson, M. A. (2009). *The legitimacy puzzle in Latin America: Political support and democracy in eight nations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1996). News frames, political cynicism, and media cynicism. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546(July), 71-84.
- Dahl, R. A., (1998). *On democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- ICT Development Index. (2009). *Measuring the information society*. Retrieved February 24, 2009, from [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/idi/2009/material/IDI2009\\_w5.pdf](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/idi/2009/material/IDI2009_w5.pdf)
- Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jayaweera, W. (2008). What is community radio in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? In *Fighting poverty: Utilizing community media in a digital age*. Retrieved October 29, 2010, from AMARC: World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Web site: [http://www.amarc.org/wccd/?p=wccd\\_What\\_is\\_Community\\_Radio\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_Century?](http://www.amarc.org/wccd/?p=wccd_What_is_Community_Radio_in_the_21st_Century?)
- Johnson, M., & Arceneaux, K. (2010, March). *Who watches political talk? Revisiting political television reception with behavioral measures*. Paper presented at the 2010 annual meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association. Houston, TX.
- Long, S. J. (1997). *Regression models for categorical and limited dependent variables*. London: Sage Publications.
- Muller, E. N., & Seligson, M. A. (1987). Inequality and insurgency. *The American Political Science Review*, 81(2), 425-452.
- Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *American Political Science Review*, 91(3), 567-583.
- Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Palmer, G., & Bhandari, A. (2000). The investigation of substitutability in foreign policy. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44(1), 3-10.
- Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-78.
- Roberts, D. F., & Foehr, U. G. (2008). Trends in media use. *The Future of Children*, 18(1), 11-37.
- Rockwell, R., & Janus, N. (2003). *Media power in Central America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Salzman, R., & Aloisi, R. (2009). News media consumption and political participation in Central America: Causation and explanation. *Journal of Spanish Language Media*, 2, 46-75.

- Trevino, L. K., Webster, J., & Stein, E. W. (2000). Making connections: Complementary influences on communication media choices, attitudes, and use. *Organization Science*, 11(2), 163-182.
- Voltmer, K. (2006). The mass media and the dynamics of political communication in processes of democratization: An introduction. In K. Voltmer (Ed.), *Mass media and political communication in new democracies* (pp. 1-16). New York: Routledge.

## Young Audiovisual Audiences in Colombia: Under the Veneer of Fragmentation and Multiscreens

**Germán Arango Forero**

Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia

[german.arango@unisabana.edu.co](mailto:german.arango@unisabana.edu.co)

**Manuel González Bernal**

Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia

[manuel.gonzalez@unisabana.edu.co](mailto:manuel.gonzalez@unisabana.edu.co)

---

The first decade of the 21st century redefined the traditional ways for audiovisual communication distribution. The digital boom has brought a relevant multimedia transformation, characterized mainly by mergers between traditional and new media companies, new global media markets, new digital devices, new digital content and a new audiovisual culture that has combined traditional and new screens (Albarran, 2010). All this transformation occurred in only one decade has also provoked a new configuration in terms of audience responses.

Even traditional media such as radio and television have explored new windows for distribution thanks to the boom of digital and convergent communication. Nowadays, audiovisual content is not only on the Internet. Gradually, it has migrated to cell phones, video consoles and personal digital assistant devices (PDA's) among others, mainly in urban areas.

On the theoretical framework there is a transition from the mass audience concept to the interactive media user (Livingstone, 2003). From the traditional segmentation of audiences to fragmentation (Webster, 2005), even the erosion of audiences (Turow, 2010). As Denis McQuail remarks: "The media has increasing difficulty in identifying and retaining "their" particular audience... Patterns of media use will simply be a part of varied and changing lifestyles" (McQuail, 1997, p. 23).

This dynamic process has become pretty common in developed media markets like the United States, Western Europe, and Far East. But what has been happening in developing media economies?

This has been the theoretical framework that inspires the research about audiences behaviors and consumption habits at the Media Observer (*Observatorio de Medios*) of the Communication Faculty at La Sabana University in Colombia since 2007, mainly among children, adolescents and youths who represent more evidently the new configuration about the new habits for audiovisual consumption under the veneer of multi windows and multi channels (Arango Forero & González Bernal, 2009).

This article is aimed to answer one key research question: What are the characteristics of “the new audiences” regarding audiovisual consumption, mainly among young people between 17 and 24 years old who live in the ten most important urban areas in Colombia? This paper will be focused on answering that question based on three main topics:

- In terms of audiovisual consumption habits
- In terms of content preferences
- Considering traditional and new technological consumption

By the end of 2010 Colombia continued to be the third most populated country in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico, and the second largest in terms of Hispanic population worldwide after Mexico. According to the estimates of the Department of National Statistics (DANE), by the end of 2010 around 80% of Colombians were living in urban areas, and the population reached 45.5 million (DANE, 2007).

In terms of telecommunication services by 2010 there were 42 million active cell phone users in Colombia, representing over 93% of the entire population. Despite the large numbers, mobile telephony in Colombia remains a market largely limited to basic service provision, mainly voice and SMS (Arango Forero, Arango, Llaña, & Serrano, 2010).

In the case of television, by 2010 the average number of households –following the Latin American definition– with pay television model was estimated at 40%. However, Colombia had the second largest pay TV market in the region with a penetration of 77% of households (69.5% in the low-income bracket, 81.6% in the middle-income bracket and 89.2% in the high income-bracket). Argentina remained number one in the region with an average of 79% of households with pay TV (LAMAC, 2010).

In terms of Internet audience consumption, in 2009 Colombia experienced the best growth in Latin America with 36%, surpassing the average of the region which was 23%. In 2009 Latin America internet consumption represented 8% of the entire global consumption (Fosk, 2010).

Numbers confirm the penetration of new digital telecommunication services among Colombians. It has also a special meaning for audiovisual consumption, mainly among who can have access to the new digital platforms.

### **Research focus and methodology**

Based on DANE population estimates for the ten most important urban areas in Colombia, by 2010 there were 1'178.998 male and 1'154.414 females between 17 and 24 years old. We calculated a probability sample of 1.071 inquiries (share 0.5%) to get a reliability of 95% and an error of 3%. The sample also represents a balanced distribution among age groups as seen in table 1.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Share</b>
17	137	13%
18	135	13%
19	135	13%
20	134	12%
21	135	12%
22	131	12%
23	131	12%
24	133	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.071</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 shows the sample distribution according to population statistics by cities and their reciprocation with the segment selected.

<b>No</b>	<b>Ciudad</b>	<b>Inquiries</b>	<b>Share</b>
1	Bogotá	463	43%
2	Medellín	146	14%
3	Cali	144	13%
4	Barranquilla	80	7%
5	Cartagena	64	6%
6	Cúcuta	45	%
7	Bucaramanga	33	3%
8	Pereira	32	3%
9	Ibagué	32	3%
10	Santa Marta	32	3%
		<b>1.071</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the uses and gratifications theoretical framework, the main objective of the study is to analyze the audiovisual consumption on a segment of population in which can be demonstrated the consumption and the use of new digital audiovisual media. The aim is to probe the audiovisual fragmentation-consumption hypothesis among audiences who can respond to the new audiovisual environment.

On this paper we will reveal the general quantitative results and the statistical analysis that confirms the fragmentation consumption phenomenon.

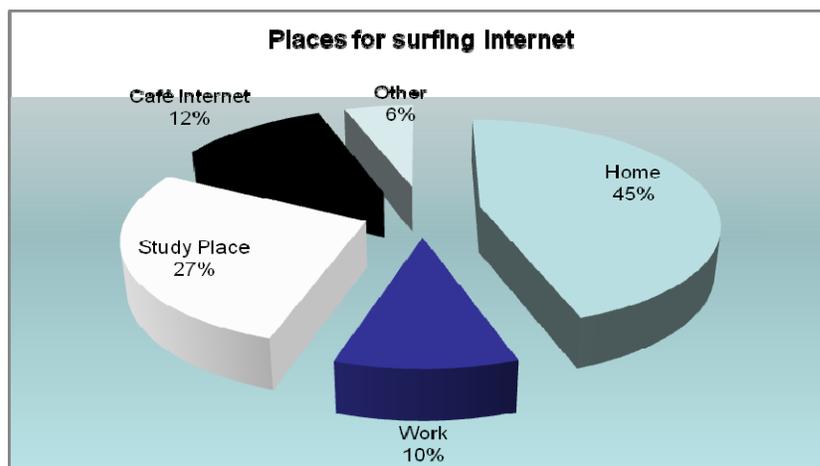
### Telecommunication services and television consumption habits

The study confirmed a high penetration of basic new telecommunication services among the sample. The study found 99% of young has either pay television, an Internet broadband connection, cell phone or portable Internet modem. Cell phone is the most common single service (76%), followed by triple play (fixed telephony, internet and paid television 62%) and cell phone data plan 21%.

Triple play plus cell phone is the most recurrent combined telecommunication services (28%), followed by triple play+cell phone+cell phone data plan (13%), and fixed telephony+internet+cell phone (5%).

Home remains the favorite single place for watching television (75%) and the number rises to 99% when is combined with other places. In contrast Internet consumption differs when home is the favorite single place for surfing the web with only 23%, followed by public areas (café Internet) 4,8%, study 1,9% and work place 1,1%. On the most recurrent combined places, home and study place are number one. Graphic 1 shows the most recurrent places for Internet consumption

**Figure 1**



N= 1.071

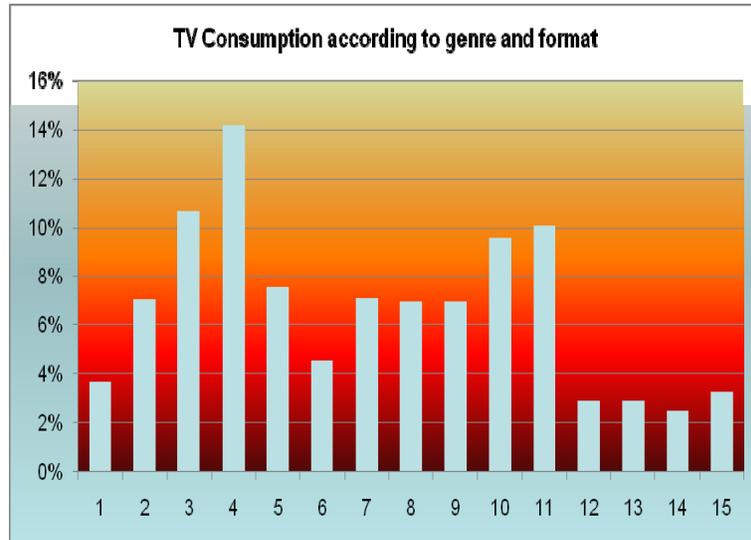
Source: authors

Four hours and 48 minutes is the average for watching television weekly while on weekends the average raises to six hours and one minute. Youth spend 2 hours and 19 minutes in average watching national television (through national private channels, national public, regional and/or local) and 2 hours and 29 minutes on international television (through paid television model, either cable or satellite).

On weekends, youths watch 2 hours and 29 minutes of national television in average, but three hours and 32 minutes of international television. There is correspondence between the kind of programming that they like the most and their favorite channels. Graphic 2 shows how movies, series and documentaries are the most

preferred formats. This kind of programming is very common among international channels, while newscasts and novellas (soap operas) are very strong on national channels.

**Figure 2**



(1. Contests; 2. Cartoons; 3. Series; 4. Movies; 5. Telenovelas; 6. Realities; 7. Humor; 8. Musical; 9. Sports; 10. Documentaries; 11. Newscasts; 12. Opinion; 13. Showbiz; 14. Current affairs; 15. Education)

N= 1.071

Source: authors

In terms of programming channels, 40% do not have a clear preference regarding the nature of the content, while 29% prefer mixed content channels and another 27% prefer to watch what are called thematic or specialized channels, which are pretty common on the closed/paid television system. That explains why 65% prefer international channels as their first option, followed by national, regional or local frequencies. Only 20% mentioned national frequencies for the first option, followed by international, regional and/or local options.

Looking for the veneer of fragmentation, we listed 125 channels included on basic and Premium television packages offered by Telmex (cable) and Direct TV (satellite) that include local, regional and national channels. We asked youths about their five favorite TV channels and there were 57 different mentions for the first channel; 64 different mentions for the second favorite channel; 70 different mentions for the third favorite; 76 different mentions in the case of the fourth favorite and 80 in the case of their fifth favorite TV channel. Table 3 shows the list of preferred channels, where international thematic frequencies are mixed with the two national private Caracol and RCN.

**Table 3. The five favorite channels**

First channel	RCN 18%	Fox 9%	Discovery 8%	Warner Bros. 8%	Caracol 7%
Second channel	RCN 12%	Caracol 11%	FOX 9%	Discovery 8%	TNT 6%
Third channel	TNT 8%	Discovery 7%	FOX 7%	RCN 7%	Caracol 6%
Fourth channel	RCN 8,4%	TNT 8,1%	Discovery 7,4%	Caracol 7%	FOX 6,9%
Fifth channel	RCN 11,4%	Caracol 10,7%	FOX 5,7%	MTV 5,7%	TNT 5,3%

N= 1.071 Source: authors

Despite the fragmentation expressed by the respondents and the slight difference between frequencies in terms of percentages, it is fair to recognize that the first five mentions account for up to 50% of the total preferences. For the second channel, the first five mentions account up to 46%; for the third channel, first five mentions account up to 51%; for the fourth channel, first five mentions account up to 37%; for the fifth channel, first five mentions account up to 33%. Although Colombian private frequencies RCN and Caracol remain among the preferences of youth, the penetration of international thematic frequencies contained on the paid television model is evident, led by Discovery, FOX, MTV, TNT and Warner.

Considering the big number of different options for television consumption, the recording habit is very low among Colombian youths. From 149 respondents that record television content, 51% use a digital video recorder (DVR), 19% use an external digital recorder (D.V.D.), 19% record straight through the computer and 11% still use the analogue device V.H.S. for taping programs. From those who record television content, 23% prefer series, 22% movies, 15% sports, 13% documentaries and 7% record novellas.

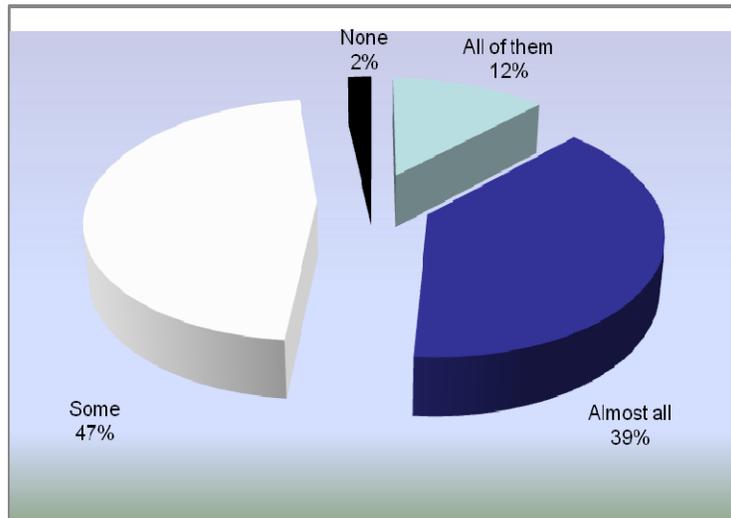
### **Audiovisual consumption on Internet**

Concerning multiscreens, the study also inquired about audiovisual consumption habits through new media such as Internet and PDA's. On average, young people spend the same amount of time (4 hours and 48 minutes) watching television and surfing the Internet weekly. On weekends, they spend 5 hours and 3 minutes on internet, while 6 hours and 1 minute watching television.

Approximately 90% of young people watch videos or television content through the Internet. Of these 80% look for entertainment formats as the first option, 13% prefer information and only 7% look for audiovisual educational content on Internet as the first option.

The study found that 71% of young people receive videos through Internet. Some 54% of the content is considered entertainment, 26% informative and 20% educative. Approximately 47% of youth watch only some content and only 2% do not watch any video content received through internet, as we can see on Figure 3.

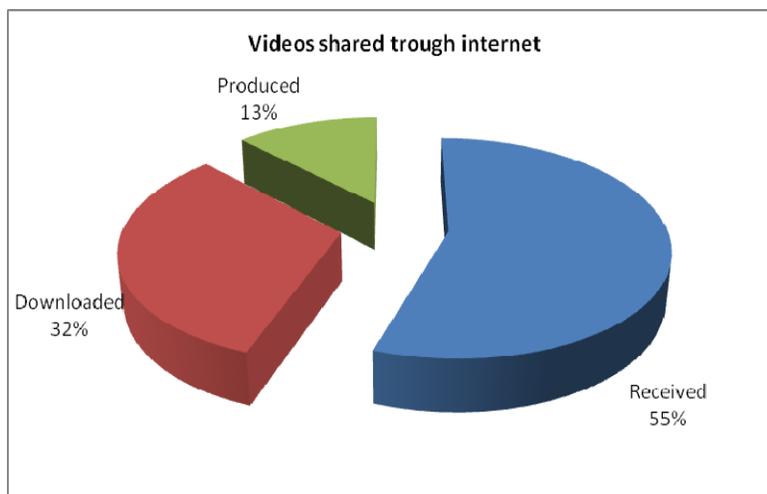
**Figure 3**



N=760 Source: authors

In regards to downloading 68% of young people download videos, movies or TV programs through the Internet. Of these 75% are considered entertainment, 14% information and only 11% is ranked as educational. Some 46% of youth send and share audiovisual content through internet. Figure 4 shows how 55% of videos shared through internet is about the content received and only 13% includes self production.

**Figure 4**



N= 492 Source: authors

Approximately 77% use [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) as the first option for watching and sharing videos through the Internet, followed by [www.megavideo.com](http://www.megavideo.com) (2%). Although YouTube is the undisputed preferred audiovisual site, there were 77 different mentions regarding the favorite web page for watching audiovisual content through the web, confirming the fragmentation hypothesis.

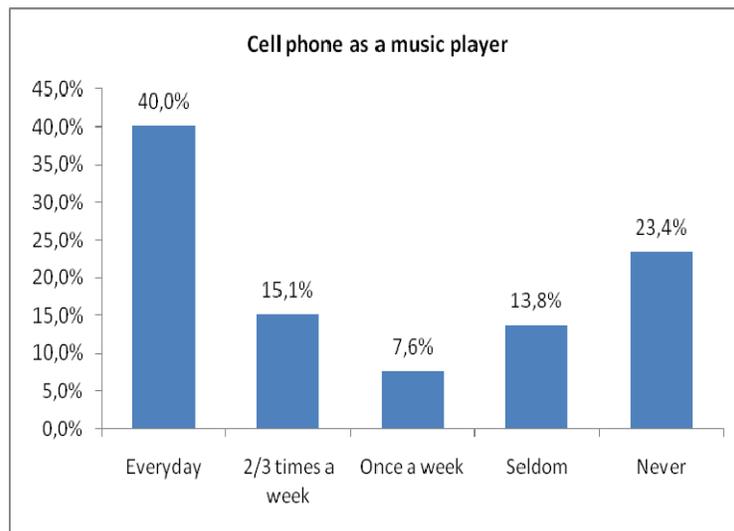
Almost 66% of youth do not visit web pages of traditional television channels. From the 34% that interact with traditional TV channels sites, voting is the first interactive action (33%), followed by e-mailing (21%), contest participation (18%), forums (17%), and chats (11%).

### Audiovisual consumption on cell phone

The penetration of cell phone services is up to 76% among the sample. Of these 63% has a pre-paid service, 33% post-paid and 4% both. Besides basic services such as voice and short text message service (SMS), 37% have a data plan, which means they can surf the Internet through their cell phone. About 61% of data plan users have consumption limited, 26% have unlimited consumption and 13% service on demand.

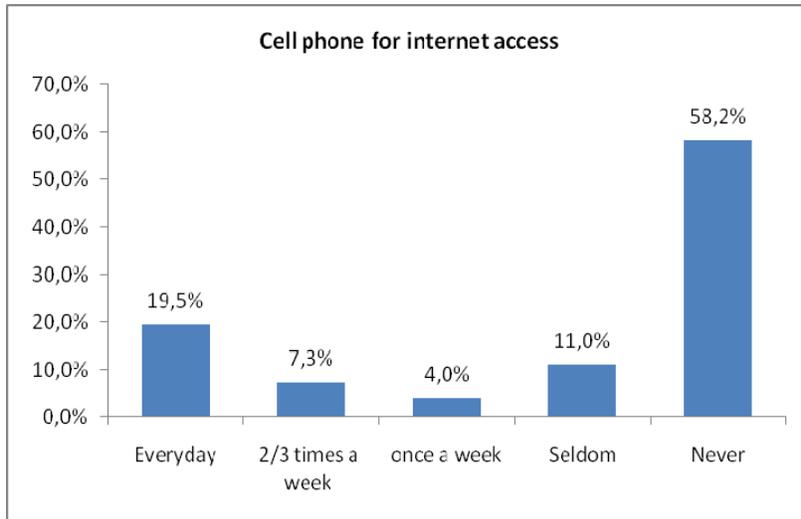
The study asked about audiovisual consumption habits among young people through the cell phone. Music player is the most recurrent audiovisual service, everyday, as can be seen between figures 5 and 8:

**Figure 5**



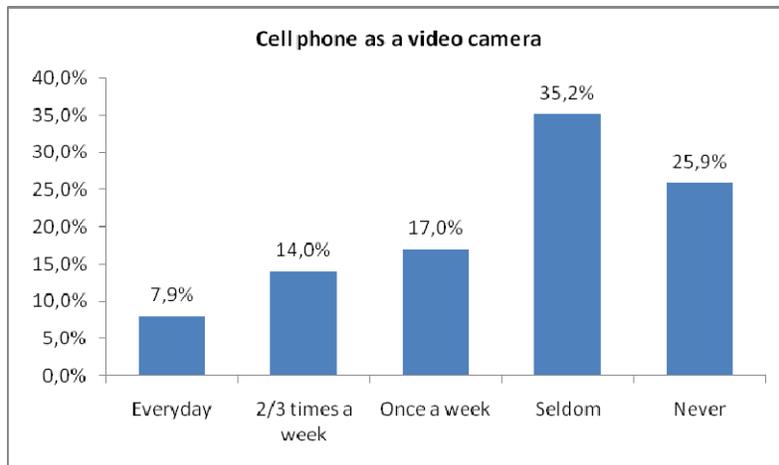
N= 814 Source: authors

**Figure 6**



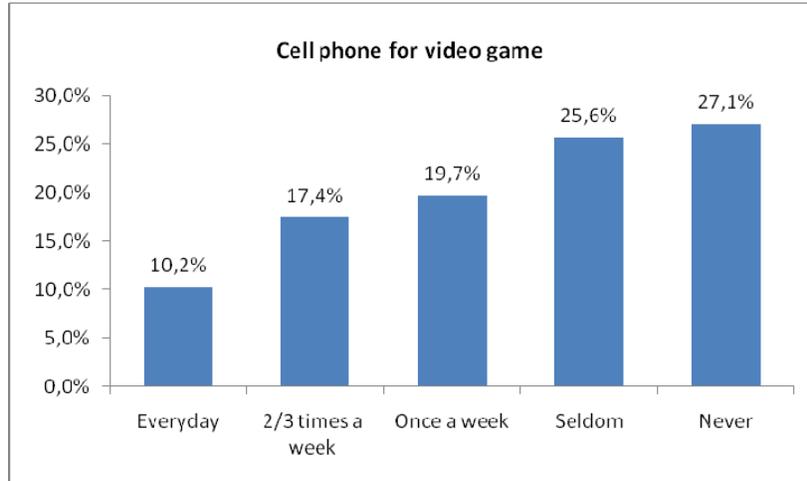
N= 814 Source: authors

**Figure 7**



N= 814 Source: authors

**Figure 8**

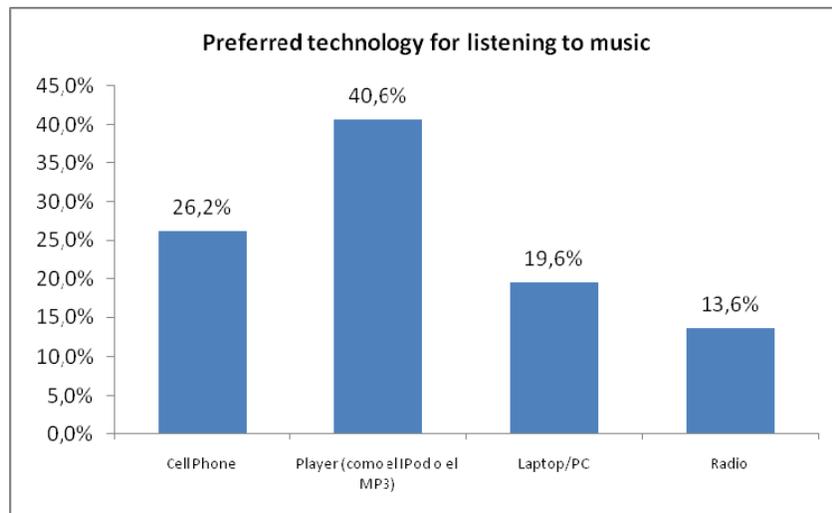


N= 814 Source: authors

It is important to point out that 40% of young share their pictures, music or video files using the cell phone. 6% share audiovisual content everyday, 27% 2/3 times a week, 29% once a week and 38% seldom.

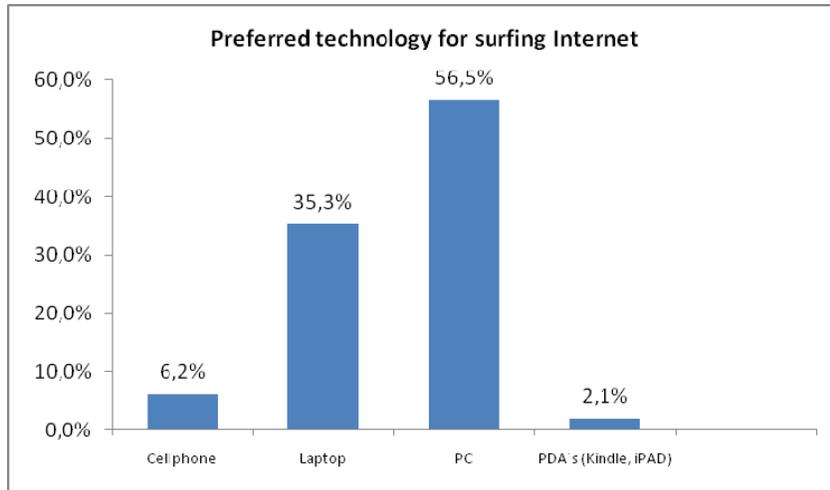
Regarding technological preferences for audiovisual consumption among youth, 40% prefer personal devices (iPod, MP3) or cell phone for listening music. About 20% prefer either personal computer or lap top and only 14% use a radio receiver. Graphics 9 to 13 show the preferred technology according to each type of content.

**Figure 9**



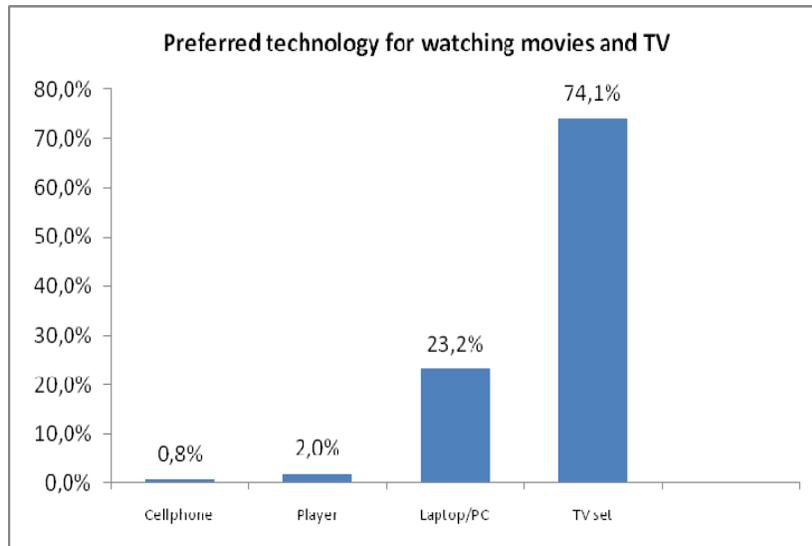
N= 1.071 Source: authors

**Figure 10**



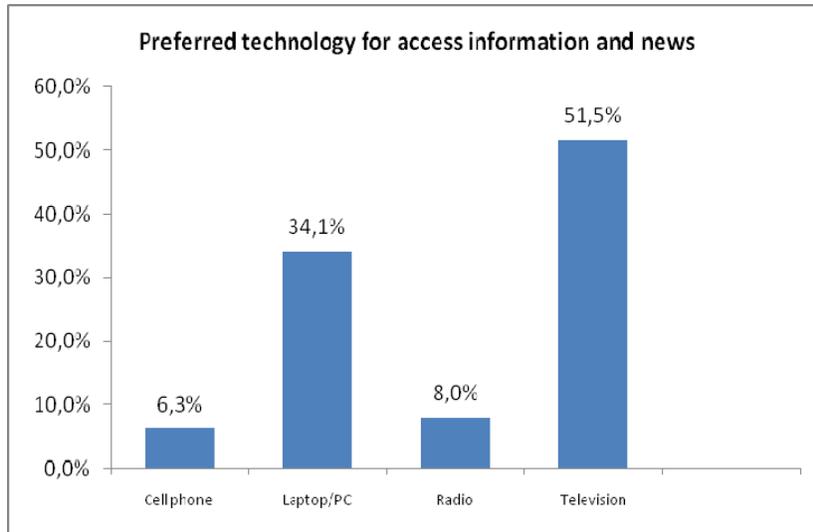
N= 1.071 Source: authors

**Figure 11**



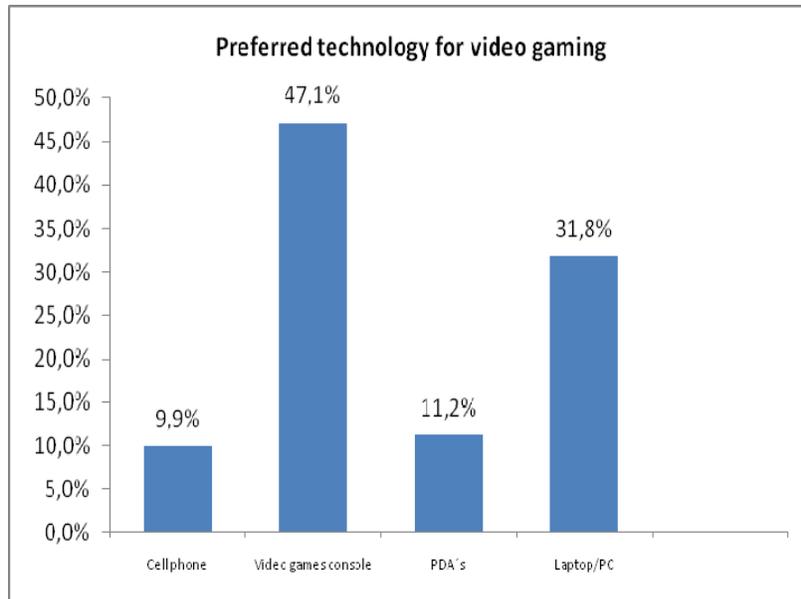
N= 1.071 Source: authors

**Figure 12**



N= 1.071 Source: authors

**Figure 13**



N= 1.071 Source: authors

Finally, the study looks at audiovisual multitasking by the young consumer. Approximately 83% of the youth consume two or more audiovisual media simultaneously, 75% combines Internet with another medium, 70% combines television with other media, 44% combines cell phone and 25% combines radio with other mediums.

Regarding television, 49% of the youth consider they watch less TV content compared to three years ago; 28% feel they watch more TV now and 23% consider their consumption stable. However, television and radio consumption tend to decrease, as seen on table 4.

<b>Table 4. A comparison between media for personal consumption</b>			
<b>Medium</b>	<b>More</b>	<b>Less</b>	<b>The same</b>
<b>Television</b>	28%	<b>49%</b>	23%
<b>Radio</b>	32%	<b>44%</b>	24%
<b>Film</b>	<b>37%</b>	30%	32%
<b>Internet</b>	<b>92%</b>	4%	4%
<b>PDA's</b>	<b>36%</b>	33%	31%

Last but not least, young people ranked traditional and new media according to the importance of their daily routine. Internet is the most important medium for 49%, whereas the cell phone is number one for 26%, television for 20%, radio is the most important medium only for 3% and film only for 2%.

### **Conclusions**

- Quantitative analysis shows a high penetration of telecommunication services among young people in the ten most important urban areas in Colombia.
- Statistical analysis also reveals that audiovisual media consumption tends to rise among the sample.
- Audiovisual media young users in Colombia are becoming multitasking.
- Even though Colombia is a country ranked as a developing media economy, there is a combination between traditional and new media in terms of consumption among the sample.
- Television keeps its importance among youth, but its consumption shows the veneer of fragmentation due to an oversupply and undeniable influence among young from the international offer. Although national private channels still remain

- on their preferences, International frequencies have become an important part of their daily audiovisual routine.
- Radio, as an industry, is losing attention among young audiences, who are slowly moving away from the traditional broadcasting system, and currently are paying more attention to digital media and personal digital assistant devices for entertainment and music listening, mainly among mid and high income levels in the most important urban areas.

## References

- Albarran, A. (2010). *The transformation of the media and communication industries*. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra.
- Arango Forero, G., Arango, M. F., Llaña, L., & Serrano, M. C. (2010). Colombian Media in the XXI Century: The re-conquest by foreign investment. *Palabra Clave*, 13(1), 59-76.
- Arango Forero, G., & González Bernal, M. (2009). Televidencias Juveniles en Colombia: fragmentación generada por un consumo multicanal. [Investigación]. *Palabra Clave*, 12(2), 215-234.
- DANE, D. A. N. d. E. (2007). *Proyecciones nacionales y departamentales de población 2006-2020*.
- Fosk, A. (2010). Situación de Internet en Latinoamérica. Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/francoalfero/estado-de-internet-en-latinoamrica-comscore-2010>
- LAMAC. (2010). Penetración de TV Paga-Latinoamérica. Retrieved Agosto, 2010, from <http://www.lamac.org/Espa%c3%b1ol/Investigaci%c3%b3n/Penetraci%c3%b3n/Penetraci%c3%b3n%20de%20TV%20de%20Paga/Latinoam%c3%a9rica/>
- Livingstone, S. (2003). The changing nature of audiences: From the mass audience to the interactive media user. In A. Valdivia (Ed.), *Companion to Media Studies* (pp. 337-359). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- McQuail, D. (1997). *Audience analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Turow, J. (2010). *Media today: An introduction to mass communication* (Vol. 3). New York: Routledge.
- Webster, J. (2005). Beneath the veneer of fragmentation: Television audience polarization in a multichannel world. *Journal of Communication*, 55(2), 366-382.

## Mexican Telecommunication Industry: Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age

**María Elena Gutiérrez Rentería**  
Universidad Panamericana, México  
[egutierr@up.edu.mx](mailto:egutierr@up.edu.mx)

---

### Introduction

The industries of Telecommunications telecommunications and communications media in Mexico have possibly been the economic sectors most benefited by digital convergence and new technologies, especially those companies that give access to Internet broadband (Figure 1). China, Mexico and Brazil are the countries with the most rapid growth of media/GDP as emerging economies. In the first few months of 2010, the Mexican telecommunications industry experienced an accumulated annual growth of 12.3% (Cofetel, 2010).

The potential for growth is possible, as well as the promotion of competitiveness among companies, allowing for better market prices. It is possible for one telecommunications network to handle information and entertainment services offered by multiple media companies quickly and easily. Diverse communication services can be offered on the same network (Ortega, 2002). The technological convergence affects media companies and their business models (Achtenhagen & Raviola, 2009). The distinction between telecommunication industry and media companies- offering information and entertainment- is becoming blurred.

According to Albarran (2010), on a global level, the majority of companies related to information and entertainment, and their diverse distribution channels, are affected by the following factors: the growth of “mobile media”, social networks, user-produced content, new and diverse applications for downloading content, advertisers looking for new formulas to attract and “hook” increasingly fragmented audiences, and finally, the transition from free content to paid, particularly on the Internet (Albarran, 2010). On one hand, the media that have had more impact on a global scale, or that are signaling a trend are the “video mobile phone” and digital television. On the other hand, Internet-based social networks have captured the attention not only of the consumers, but also of advertisers and business people.

This research intends to reflect the economic impact of digital convergence on the principal telecommunications companies in Mexico, which trade on the Mexican Stock Exchange (BMV). In this sense, it is also of interest to identify in broad strokes the principal strategies and challenges of companies that participate in this sector, especially in view of the facilities granted by the government to adapt to the new competitive

environment and digital convergence. This, in turn, fosters convergence between industries such as telecommunications and media companies devoted to audiovisual communications.

This paper is divided into four parts. The first deals with literacy and industry background; it presents some data on the growth of the telecommunications industry and consumer habits of Mexican audiences. The second part covers the methodology used for the economic analysis of the companies that participate in the media and telecommunications industry and are registered with the Mexican Stock Exchange (BMV). The third section will show the results, and finally, the conclusions to this research will be presented.

### **Literacy and Industry Background**

The structure of the media and telecommunications markets has been historically controlled by government parties and at the same time, companies are controlled by persons or by companies who make the business decisions (Gershon, 2009; Sánchez-Taberero & Carvajal, 2002).

According to Albarran (2010), the principal factors that currently affect communications companies around the world, making them more competitive and allowing them to participate successfully in the telecommunications sector are: technology, economy, regulation, globalization and social aspects (Albarran, 2010).

Actually some media companies offer content, production, packaging, transmission network, advertising sales and fixed and mobile phone services (Colapinto, 2010). These businesses rely on vertical and horizontal integration or have made alliances with other companies in order to attract the audiences or advertisers in the digital convergence age; facing the fragmentation of the market audience, the changing consumer behaviors and appealing to a growing younger audience (Pérez-Latre, 2006; Albarran, 2010; Sylvie, Leblanc, Hollifield, & Lacy, , 2008). However, these companies do not escape the uncertainty and emerging context, especially for them who participated in the publishing, broadcasting, advertising and newspaper markets.

In México, industry liberalization came about in 1990 with the privatization of Teléfonos de México (TELMEX), which had been the only provider of network services in the country, since 1947 (Serrano, 2000). The Federal Commission on Telecommunications (Cofetel, 2010) was created in 1995, charged with regulating, promoting, and supervising the efficient development of social coverage of telecommunications and radio broadcasting throughout the nation (Cofetel, 2010).

The audiovisual industry in Mexico also functioned as a practical monopoly. Grupo Televisa, a multimedia company completely integrated both vertically and horizontally, functioned as a private monopoly for twenty years (1973-1993). Competition for open commercial television arose in the same years that TELMEX was privatized. In 1993, during the presidential term of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, IMEVISIÓN, the country's public television offering, was also privatized. This became TV Azteca, which is the property of Grupo Salinas (Gutiérrez, 2009).

During this time, Mexico began to liberalize its borders and established close links with international enterprises (Gutiérrez, 2007). The internationalization of large Mexican companies was stimulated through the capital market.

In regards to the principal sources of information and entertainment for Mexico, commercial television still gets the larger slice of the advertising pie, followed by outdoor advertising, radio and the national press (Gutiérrez, 2009). On average, Mexicans are exposed to almost four hours of television daily (Jara & Garnica, 2009, p. 58).

According to COFETEL, the number of subscribers to satellite television has grown significantly, along with cable television and mobile phone subscribers (Cofetel, 2010). However, commercial television decreased 38.6% with respect to the previous year (Table 1). At present, close to 86.9 million cellular phone lines are registered. Cable television registers 5,223,000 subscribers, whereas satellite grew 97.4% in regards to the previous year; 3.3 million subscribers are reported. In regards to phone services, the trend is to offer service packages at increasingly lower special rates, mostly in response to competition in the sector (Cofetel, 2010).

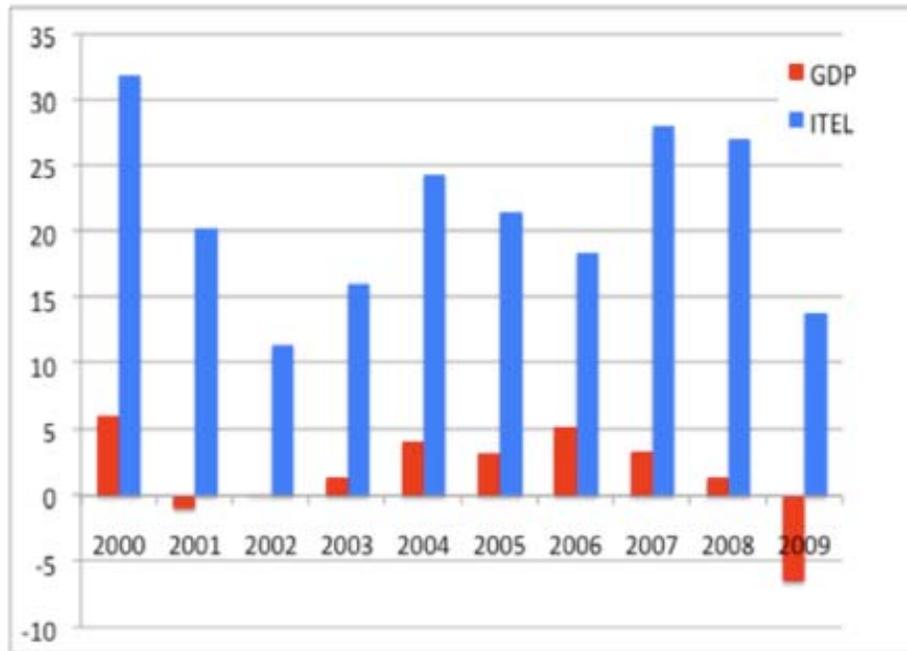
**Table 1. Highlights from the Mexican Telecommunications industry: 2009**

<b>Commercial Television:</b>	<b>Still gets the larger slice of the advertising pie</b>
Cellular phone lines:	86.9 million
Cable Television:	5,223,000 subscribers
Satellite Television:	5,514,200 subscribers
Television (commercial)	Has been decreasing: 38.6% (2009)
Internet users:	Almost 27 million. The majority of them are young (12-34 years old)
Principal uses given to Internet:	School work (52.6), entertainment (40.2%), communication (35.8%), work 29.9%

Source: Self produced with information from COFETEL, 2010; ENDUTIH, 2009; INEGI, 2009

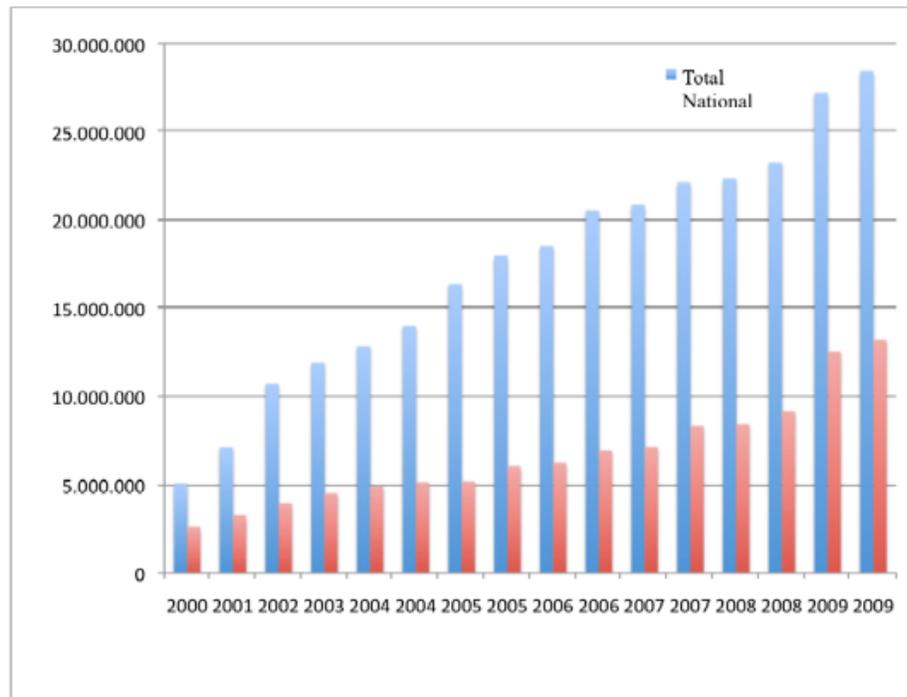
According to the National Survey on Availability and Use of Information Technologies in the Home, around 27% of Mexican homes have a computer; increasing a 4% in regards to the previous year and 18.4% of Mexican households have Internet connection (Figure 1). Of this total, 74.8% have broadband connection (Endutih & Inegi, 2009). According to the same institute, there are almost 27 million Internet users in the country; the majority of them are young, between 12 and 34 years old (Figure 2). The principal uses for Internet are: school work (52.6%), entertainment (40.2%), communication (35.8%), and work (29.9%). The majority of these users access Internet from outside their homes (Endutih & Inegi, 2009).

Figure 1. Mexican GDP vs. GTEL



SOURCE: Self produced with information from COFETEL, 2010

Figure 2. Number of Internet Mexican users: 2000-2009



SOURCE: Self-produced with information from COFETEL, 2010

As to the new generations, the study, *Social Media and Young Latinos: A Cross-Cultural Examination*, carried out by the Spanish Language Media Center of the University of North Texas in 2009, shows that for Mexican youths the computer is still the most widely used tool for Internet access (Albarran, 2009). The same study shows how social networks have affected youth consumption of traditional media, particularly television and the press. Their principal motives for being active in social network sites are sharing time with friends and providing entertainment for themselves. Thus, it can be said that these are interactive audiences that provide content and above all, they are looking to have “an experience with the medium” (Albarran, 2009).

Another investigation carried out by the same university and titled *Young Latinos Use of Mobile Phones for Video Content*, reflects that, in Mexico, the most recognized cell phone makers are Nokia, followed by Sony Ericsson and Motorola (Albarran, et. al. 2010). Around 74% of these users have a monthly contract and speak, on average, an hour a day on their mobiles. To communicate with family members, the preferred method is voice, whereas to communicate with friends, text messaging is preferred (Albarran, et. al. 2010).

Government institutions that in some way regulate the telecommunications industries are: the Secretariat of Economy “Secretaría de Economía”, the Federal Commission on Economic Competition “Comisión Federal de Competencia Económica”, the Inter-secretarial Commission on Digital Television “Comisión Intersecretarial de la Televisión Digital”, the Secretariat of Public Education “Secretaría de Educación Pública”, and the Federal Commission on Radio and Television “Comisión Federal de Radio y Televisión.” The law regulates principally in regards to content and oversees quality, as well as that companies guarantee diversity and pluralism (Ley Federal de Radio y Televisión, 2009).

## Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify the principal communications companies that participate in the telecommunications sector in Mexico and that trade on the Mexican Stock Exchange. It is of interest to know their main business lines in order to identify in what measure they try to take advantage of the dynamic market immersed in digital convergence. There will be a later analysis to show what places they occupy in terms of economic and financial leadership, according to behavior registered on the Mexican Stock Exchange during 2000-2009.

First, an informative table will be presented, showing the principal companies that participate actively in the capitals market related to these industries and their business lines (Table 2). Later, these companies will be assessed according to the principal parameters used in finance literacy: sales, revenue, net income, and assets (Table 3). This analysis will also identify rates of return for shareholders as a result of efficient management of the company. Finally, the percentage change in net income will be evaluated for the companies that stand out for their participation in the industry of communications and telecommunications during the period of study 2000-2009 (Figure 3).

The research analysis is based on information published by financial reports registered with the Mexican Stock Exchange, according to the database obtained by

*Economática*, which compiles information on Latin American companies trading on the capitals market, and from the annual reports from the companies.

Table 2. Mayor Mexican companies from the Telecommunications industry in Latin America (2009)

Creation	Company	Main Business
2000	America Movil	Wireless communication, internet, telecommunication services
2001	America Telecom	Administration of Telmex and Telmex International equities
1994	Axtel	Fixed telephone service, Paid Tv, WiMax
1996	Cablevision	Triple play
1996	Carso Global Telecom	Administration of Telmex and Telmex International (business strategies)
2003	Grupo Iusacell	Cellular telephones
2004	Megacable Holdings	Triple play
1971	Radio Centro	Radio services
1920	Telmex	Fixed telephone service, Internet (México)
1973	Grupo Televisa	Multimedia, Open television in México
2007	Telmex International	Diversified line of products in Latin America
1993	TV Azteca	Open television, Digital television, Internet

SOURCE: Self produced with information from TREJO-PECH, C. & GUTIERREZ-RENTERÍA, M. (2010)

## Results

At present, close to twelve companies of Mexican origin are trading on the BMV (Table 1). Most of these companies originated in the telecommunications industry after the liberalization of that sector. The rest of these companies are characterized by offering commercial television and radio in the country (Grupo Televisa, TV Azteca, and Grupo Radio Centro).

The majority of the strategies followed by entrepreneurs in the audiovisual industry are directed towards taking advantage of digital convergence and becoming involved in the quadruple play service for the domestic market. Some of these have

presence in Latin America. Following is a brief description of the lines of business of these companies.

America Móvil, America Telecom, Carso Global Telecom y Telmex Internacional are under the guardianship of the Slim family, whose investments also include real estate and other economic sectors (Grupo Carso, Cigatam, Anderson Clayton, Reynolds Alumnio, Sanborns, Sears, Denny's, Grupo financiero Inbursa, among others). The participation of Carlos Slim Helú in the Telecommunications industry in Latin America began in 1990, when he won the bid to acquire Telmex y Telcel (Radiomóvil Dipsa) in Mexico. These acquisitions were the base for Grupo Carso Telecom (Martínez, 2010).

Beginning in 2000, the Slim family devoted itself to re-structuring Grupo Carso Telecom and expanding its telecommunications business to Central and South America: América Móvil (cellular telephony) and Telmex Internacional (fixed telephony). Currently, the Slim Family holds investments in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay. The diverse holdings that make up Grupo Carso Telecom and America Móvil offer telecommunications services and, in some countries, participate in triple and quadruple play (American Movil, 2010; Telmex Internacional, 2010; Grupo Carso Telecom, 2010).

On the domestic market, it holds a leadership position in cable, fixed and cellular telephony, as well as the Internet. Stand out services are the cable system throughout the country, the "Prodigy" package for Internet, and DSL use. However, the group has not been allowed to participate directly in the audiovisual industry through open television, though it has formed alliances with a restricted television and radio company, e.g. Multivisión. This company, in alliance with Telmex offers the triple play package through Dish directed to the lower socio-economic sector (Notisistema, 2009).

Axtel formed in 1994, aiming to offer services in fixed telephony and private networks through wireless communication (WiMax). Its niche was the entrepreneurial market and the higher income residential market, principally in the states with greater political, economical and social influence: Distrito Federal, Nuevo León and Jalisco. This company has been characterized by rapid adoption of technology which allows the user faster Internet speed on broadband. At present, it offers the triple play and its main competitor in Mexico is Telmex (Axtel, 2009).

Since its origin, Grupo Televisa, whose current owner is Emilio Azcárraga Jean, developed as a completely integrated multimedia company (radio, cable, satellite, publishing, among others). The company's main line of business is the production of content for the Hispanic market; best known among the content are its soap operas or *telenovelas*. It holds two national television channels, which generate the greatest part of the company revenues. The company has a long history which began with the Azcárraga family, who consolidated the group during the twenty years in which they offered the only television services in the country. In the sixties, Grupo Televisa founded Cablevisión, directed to the higher income residential sector in Distrito Federal and offered restricted television. At present, the multimedia group offers the triple play through Cablevisión and Cablemás, and seeks to broaden its market through alliances with other cable companies such as Megacable (Grupo Televisa, 2008; Moctezuma, 2009).

At the beginning of 2010, Azcárraga-Jean decided to take advantage of the convergent services offered by a quadruple play and to compete with Telcel y Telefónica (of Spanish origin). The company acquired 30% of Nextel México (property of NII Holdings), devoted to mobile telephony. Televisa and Nextel recently won a bid for the use of bands 1.7 and 1.9 Ggz of the Radioelectric spectrum. However, during the second half of October, it was announced that Grupo Televisa and Nextel México had decided not to continue with this project (Grupo Televisa, 2010).

Currently, Grupo Televisa participates in the production and distribution of content, radio, mobile telephony, broadband Internet, fixed telephony, open and satellite television. This allows it to compete on the same national market as other Mexican companies such as Telmex, Telcel, y Axtel, as well as with Spanish Telefónica.

TV Azteca and Grupo Iusacell form part of Grupo Salinas, owned by entrepreneur Ricardo Salinas Pliego. Grupo Salinas holds a group of companies related to the finance sector (Banco Azteca, Seguros Azteca, Afore Azteca), appliance retailers, Internet, and the production and distribution of content for the Hispanic market in the United States (Azteca America). TV Azteca formed in 1993 when Salinas Pliego won the bid to buy Imevisión (public television) from the Government. At present, it has two national television channels: Azteca 13 and Azteca 7, directed to the middle and upper economic sectors; it competes directly with Grupo Televisa (Gutierrez, 2007)

Salinas Pliego was the first to offer cellular telephony in the country, beginning in 1989. The group intensified its participation in the telecommunications industry in 2007 with a merger between Unefon Holdings and Iusacell that gave rise to the creation of Grupo Iusacell. This wireless telephone company offers 3G services and is the principal competitor of Telcel and Grupo Televisa. (Grupo Salinas, 2010)

Megacable Holdings is a company owned by Enrique Yamuni; it began operations at the end of the nineteen seventies offering cable television in the northwestern part of the country. It has been trading on the Mexican Stock Exchange since 2007. The company now has national cable coverage, allowing it to offer triple play services. In 2009, Megacable signed a strategic alliance with Grupo Televisa to offer triple play to a market segment with middle or lower income. In the second half of 2010, it established another strategic alliance with Telefónica to offer quadruple play services to Mexican subscribers (Megacable, 2009; Notimex, 2010).

Grupo Radio Centro belongs mainly to the Aguirre family, who have been participating in the commercial radio broadcasting sector in Mexico for almost sixty years. The company produces and distributes content for the national market, and it is a market leader through its Organización Impulsora de Radio (OIR). The Aguirre family are some of the principal shareholders of Maxcom Telecomunicaciones, which offer triple and quadruple play, mainly in Distrito Federal, Puebla, Toluca and Querétaro (Grupo Radio Centro, 2009).

América Móvil, Grupo Carso Telecom, Telmex y Telmex Internacional account for over 85% of the total income, net profit, and assets of the telecommunications industry in México (Table 3). These companies occupy the first four places among the eleven companies evaluated in 2009, though, with the exception of Telmex, they have only been participating in the sector for one decade. Grupo Televisa, which had long

held the dominant position in the Mexican commercial audiovisual market, occupies fifth place, using the same parameters (Table 3).

Iusacell and Axtel, both devoted to fixed and wireless communication, occupy sixth and seventh place in terms of net income. Then come TV Azteca, Megacable and Cablevisión. Finally, Grupo Radio Centro is the company with the smallest revenue in the sector (Table 3).

Financial analysis shows that Telmex offers the greatest rate of return to its shareholders, followed by América Móvil. In third place is Grupo Carso Telecom. TV Azteca and Megacable Holdings offered greater rate of return for its shareholders in 2009, compared to Grupo Televisa, despite the fact that the latter occupies the fifth place in terms of revenue, net profit, and assets. By this same parameter, Axtel generated the least rate of return, in comparison to the other companies (Table 3.)

Table 3. Financial Statements: Mexican Telecommunications Industry (2009)

Company	Main Ownership	Revenues*	Rank	Net Income*	Rank	Assets*	Rank	ROE**
América Móvil	Carlos Slim and Family	30,209,249	1	5,893,039	1	34,671,011	1	49.1
Grupo Carso Telecom	Carlos Slim and Family	16,037,100	2	2,176,504	3	28,301,928	2	28.2
Telmex	Carlos Slim and Family	9,115,347	3	1,566,596	4	13,650,447	4	54.3
Telmex International	Carlos Slim and Family	7,082,565	4	731,897	5	13,340,125	5	10.8
Grupo Televisa	Emilio Azcárraga Jean	4,006,804	5	503,807	6	9,686,924	6	15.4
Iusacell	Ricardo Salinas Pliego	853,017	6	-49,133	12	1,201,640	10	-29.3
Axtel	Various	839,504	7	13,501	10	1,653,394	9	2.2
TV Azteca	Ricardo Salinas Pliego	762,893	8	107,303	8	1,743,117	8	25.8
Megacable Holdings	Enrique Yamuni Robles	527,685	9	155,305	7	1,089,025	11	23.8
Cablevisión	Emilio Azcárraga Jean	403,879	10	-72,643	13	902,901	12	-17.6
Grupo Radio Centro	Aguirre Family	60,147	11	340	11	147,480	14	4.3

\* Revenues, Net Income, Assets: US Dollars (in thousa

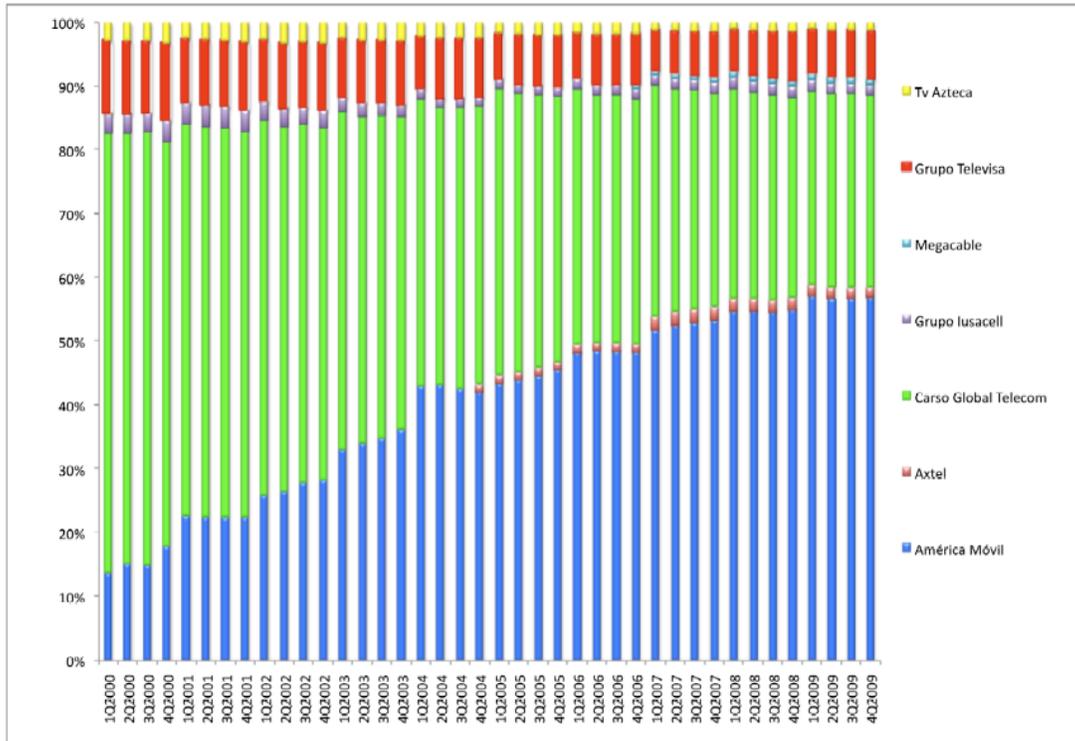
\*\* ROE: US Dollars

SOURCE: Self produced with estimations by Economatca as of August 2, 2010.

Analysis of the percentage change in net income of the companies that most contribute economically to the sector reflects a clear dominance and the growth of América Móvil in regards to the others: TV Azteca, Grupo Televisa, Megacable, Grupo Iusacell, Carso Global Telecom and Axtel. In the results presented, the decrease in

income of Carso Global Telecom can be seen for the period comprising 2000-2009 (Figure 3.)

Figure 3. Total revenues evolution from the main Mexican companies: 2000-2009



SOURCE: Self produced with estimations by Ecomatematica as of August 2, 2010.

### Conclusions

Communications companies, and those devoted since their origin to network telephony in Mexico, took advantage of the opportunities offered by digital convergence to broaden their service offerings in the country, beginning with the liberalization of the Telecommunications industry. The companies held by the Slim family have taken advantage of their position in the domestic market to successfully penetrate the Latin American market offering, in some countries, triple or quadruple play.

Most of the companies that participate in the sector have grown in terms of rate of return for their shareholders. At the same time, they have taken broadened their offerings of information and entertainment. This has also benefited users who pay for service, due to competitive prices. Additionally, society in general has benefited from digital technology and access to networks, as it allows people better options for communication. At present, the offerings of information and entertainment, as well as diverse means of communications, are greater compared to previous decades in Mexico (Gutierrez, 2009)

In the case of Mexico, it can be said that a dynamic industry with low risk for investors has been directly related to two sectors that are converging and providing better

quality services for the domestic market. This has allowed Telmex, Grupo Carso Telecom, América Móvil and Grupo Televisa to take advantage of both their privileged position in the market and of the new technologies that are fostering industry convergence. This small group of companies has been joined by others related to pay television and who offer their services through cable networks throughout the country. Some of the more representative companies offering the triple play are: Megacable, Cablevisión and Cablemás (owned by Grupo Televisa), as well as the Spanish company, Telefónica (Notimrex, 2010).

It can be observed through this analysis that, though it is true that digital convergence has fostered industry convergence, the rules of the game have not been totally defined in Mexico by government authorities, charged with looking out for these companies in a healthy competitive national market.

On the other hand, young audiences in Mexico have very different characteristics from adult audiences. Therefore, communications companies will have to direct their strategies towards capturing the attention of those markets, characterized by a high level of fragmentation and being producers of content. These generations “don’t like” advertisers invading their territory; industries will have to be more innovative and creative when presenting their products. It is worthwhile, as well, to consider that young people prefer foreign produce content in terms of television programs (series) or movies, over nationally produced content. Nowadays, the offering of content is unlimited for Mexican society and professional producers with intangible products must be at the level demanded today.

Finally, Mexico must not remain at the margins of the new reality in terms of telecommunications. Unlike previous decades, when the only existing media were the traditional radio and television, government authorities have now included the diverse institutions charged with regulating the pluralism and diversity that must exist in these industries. The Federal Commission on Economic Competition must carry out well its mission to do away with market abuse on the part of participating companies.

## References

- Achtenhagen, L. & Raviola, E. (2009). Balancing tensions during convergence: duality Management in a newspaper company. *International Journal on Media Management*, 2(1), 32-41.
- Albarran, A. (2009). El uso de los teléfonos móviles por jóvenes latinos: un estudio pluricultural, *Revista de Comunicación*, 8, 95-108.
- Albarran, A. et. al. (2010). Social media and young latinos: managerial and economic opportunities and challenges. Center for Spanish Language Media, University of North Texas.
- Albarran, A. (2010). *The media economy*. New York: Routledge.
- America Movil (2010). Subsidiaries and affiliates. Retrieved September 20, 2010, from: <http://www.americamovil.com/amx/about/footprint?p=>.
- Axtel (2009). Informe annual 2009. Retrieved September 20, 2010, from: [http://www.axtel.mx\(imagenesucm/groups/inversionistasgrupo/documents/adacct/001681.pdf](http://www.axtel.mx(imagenesucm/groups/inversionistasgrupo/documents/adacct/001681.pdf).
- Cofetel (2010). *Mision*. Retrieved December 9, 2010, from: [http://www.cofetel.gob.mx/es/Cofetel\\_2008/Cofe\\_mision](http://www.cofetel.gob.mx/es/Cofetel_2008/Cofe_mision)
- Cofetel (2010), *Índice de Producción del Sector Telecomunicaciones*. Retrieved October 2, 2010, from [http://www.cft.gob.mx/es/Cofetel\\_2008/Segundo\\_Trimestre\\_2010](http://www.cft.gob.mx/es/Cofetel_2008/Segundo_Trimestre_2010)
- Comisión Federal de Telecomunicaciones (2010), *Ingresos de la Industria de las Telecomunicaciones 1998-2009*. Retrieved October 2, 2010, from [http://www.cft.gob.mx/wb/Cofetel\\_2008/Cofe\\_indicadores\\_globales\\_del\\_sector](http://www.cft.gob.mx/wb/Cofetel_2008/Cofe_indicadores_globales_del_sector)
- Colapinto, C. (2010). Moving to a multichannel and multiplatform company in the emerging and digital media ecosystem: The case of Mediaset Group, *The International Journal on Media Management*, 12(2), 59-75.
- Endutih & Inegi (2009). Encuesta Nacional sobre disponibilidad y uso de las tecnologías de la información en los hogares. Retrieved Jun, 9, 2010, from <http://www.inegi.org.mx/inegi/contenidos/espanol/prensa/comunicados/endutih09.asp>
- Gershon, R. (2009). *Telecommunications and Business Strategy*. New York: Routledge.
- Grupo Carso, Telecom (2010). What is Carso Global Telecom?. Retrieved: August 20, 2010, from: <http://www.cgtelecom.com.mx/Ingles.html>
- Grupo Radio Centro (2009). Informe Annual. Retrieved: August 20, 2010, from: <http://radiocentro.com.mx/grc/grccorp.nsf/frListaAnualWeb?ReadForm>.
- Grupo Salinas (2010). Grupo Iusacell: nuestras empresas. Retrieved: August 20, 2010, from: <https://www.gruposalinas.com/companies/iusacell.aspx?lang=es>
- Grupo Televisa (2008). Informe Annual. Retrieved: August 20, 2010, from: <http://i2.esmas.com/documents/2010/05/07/600/descripcion-del-negocio.pdf>
- Grupo Televisa (2010). Televisa y NII Holdings convienen dar por terminado acuerdo de inversion, *Televisa Inversionistas*. Retrieved: September 19, 2010, from: <http://i2.esmas.com/documents/2010/10/25/1195/televisa-y-nii-holdings-convienen-dar-por-terminado-acuerdo-de-inversion.pdf>

- Gutiérrez-Rentería, M. (2007). Media concentration in the Hispanic market: A case study of TV Azteca vs. Televisa. *The International Journal on Media Management*, 9(2), 70-76.
- Gutiérrez-Rentería, M. (2009). The media industry in Mexico, *The Handbook of Spanish Language Media*. New York: Routledge, 34-46.
- Jara, R. & Garnica, A. (2009). Medición de audiencias de televisión en México. México: Patria.
- Ley Federal de Radio y Televisión (2009). *Nueva Ley publicada en el Diario Oficial de la Federación el 19 de enero de 1960*. Texto Vigente. Última reforma publicada DOF 19-06-2009. Retrieved July, 20, 2010, from: <http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/114.pdf>.
- Martínez, J. (2010). La nueva generación Slim, *Expansión*, 41(1050), 58-59.
- Megacable (2009). Rerporte anual 2009. Retrieved: September 20, 2010, from: <http://www.megacable.com.mx/reportes/>.
- Moctezuma, R. (2009). Televisa arma alianza y madruga a Telmex, CNN Expansion. Retrieved July 20, 2009, from: <http://www.cnnexpansion.com/expansion/2009/06/01/Unidos-frente-a-Telmex>
- Notimex (2010). Televisa, Telefónica y Megacable van por fibra óptica, *El Universal*. Retrieved: March 20, 2010, from: <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/667136.html>.
- Notisistema (2009). “Sky, en desacuerdo con relación Dish-Telmex”, *El Economista*, Retrieved: November 8, 2009, from: <http://eleconomista.com.mx/notas-online/negocios/2009/10/05/sky-desacuerdo-relacion-dish-telmex>.
- Ortega, V. (2002). Del correo a Internet: breve historia de las telecomunicaciones, *Una panorámica de las Telecomunicaciones*, FIGUEIRAS, Aníbal (coord.). Spain: Pearson, 30-72.
- Pérez-Latre, F. (2008). *Issues on media and entertainment*, Spain: Eunsa.
- Sanchez-Taberero, A. & Carvajal, M. (2002). *Media Concentration in the European Market: new trenes and challenges*. Spain: Universidad de Navarra.
- Serrano, A. (2000). *Las Telecomunicaciones en Latinoamérica: retos y perspectivas*. México: Prentice Hall.
- Sylvie, G., Lebank, J., Hollifield, A., Lacy, S., Broadrick, A. (2008). *Media Management: a casebook approach*. New York: Lawrence.
- Telemex Internacional (2010). Acerca de nosotros. Retrieved September 20, 2010, from: [http://www.telmexinternacional.com/assets/html/adn\\_index.html](http://www.telmexinternacional.com/assets/html/adn_index.html).

## The Use of Case Studies to Understand Strategic Decisions Within the Spanish Media Industry

**Juan P. Artero**

Universidad de Navarra, Spain

[jpartero@unav.es](mailto:jpartero@unav.es)

**Monica Herrero**

Universidad de Navarra, Spain

[moherrero@unav.es](mailto:moherrero@unav.es)

**Alfonso Sánchez-Taberero**

Universidad de Navarra, Spain

[astaberero@unav.es](mailto:astaberero@unav.es)

---

### Abstract

Academic interest on media industries has risen increasingly in the last decades. Lots of pieces of research from media economics, political economy of communication and media management perspectives have been published, especially in the United States and Europe. This process of increasing awareness on the field has been led in Spain by the University of Navarra, which launched a doctoral program and research project in 2000 trying to analyze in-depth the management and strategic implications of media companies by applying consistently the business case study methodology to several PhD dissertations. This article analyzes the results of this program as well as the strengths and weaknesses of case studies for media management doctoral dissertations.

## **The Use of Case Studies to Understand Strategic Decisions within the Spanish Media Industry**

### **Introduction**

Media industries have experienced huge transformations in the last few years. On the one hand, concentration lowers the number of competitors, large media and advertising conglomerates take the central stage, and the role of journalists, screenwriters and advertising creative people is easily overlooked. On the other hand, television supply is higher than ever, the publishing industry is producing more titles than ever, newspapers are often outstanding brands, and the number of films at box-office is high and diverse in quality. All of them shape popular culture, in many ways we live in media-driven societies.

Academic interest on media industries has also risen increasingly in the last decades. Lots of pieces of research from media economics, political economy of communication and media management perspectives have been published, especially in the United States and Europe. Most researchers have focused their interests in the fields of media economics and media market analysis. However, a comparatively low number of papers and monographs about media management have been published. This scarce amount of texts about media management is related to the difficulties to find the right method and sources.

Each firm competes in a different way. To understand its strategy, authors should know the internal and external context; that requirement means to have access to detailed information both about the market and about the analyzed companies. But quite frequently media managers do not like to provide such data because it may be used by competitors.

Researchers have to overcome the lack of transparency of most media organizations. To face that challenge, the School of Communication at the University of Navarra launched a project in 2000 to look into the management and strategic implications of media companies by applying consistently the business case method to several PhD dissertations.

### **Literature review**

Strategy has been shown as a key aspect in the management of media companies. Scholars began to study the media industries during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with most work emerging after 1950. Greater development of the field began during the 1970s, and continues today. Media industries became a logical area of study for economics as it contained supply, demand, market constraints and public interest. Relevant pieces of research from a managerial point of view have been made in the last few decades. Recent contributions in the field of strategic management of media companies includes seminal works published by Albarran (1997, 2002, 2010), Blumenthal and Goodenough (1991), Compaine and Gomery (2001), Doyle (2000), Gershon (2001), Hollifield (2001), Napoli (2003), Hoskins, McFadyen and Finn (1997), Lavine and Wackman (1988), McCavitt and Pringle (1997), Dimmick (2003), Owen and Wildman (1992), Picard (1989 and 2002) and Vogel (1998).

A company's performance is affected both by its own actions and by market factors. These various influences are not always easy to differentiate. The analysis of

those internal and external elements is the strategy's starting point. The strategic process follows with strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation systems.

Five main definitions of strategy have been recognized by Mintzberg. Strategy is a plan, "some sort of consciously intended course of action, a guideline (or set of guidelines) to deal with a situation". Strategy is a ploy, a specific way "intended to outwit an opponent or competitor". Strategy is a pattern, "consistency in behavior, whether or not intended". Strategy is a position, "locating an organization in what organization theorist like to call an environment". Finally, strategy is a perspective, "its content consisting not just a chosen position, but of an ingrained way of perceiving the world". Strategy is "in this respect to the organization what personality is to the individual" (Mintzberg, 1987, 11-16).

The industrial organization model, which states that market structure affects market conduct, which affects market performance. This model has been widely used in the analysis of media markets (Powers et al., 1994, 21-30). Porter (1979, 3-5), determines six major sources of barriers to entry into a market: economies of scale, product differentiation, capital requirements, cost disadvantages independent of size, access to distribution channels and government policy.

According to Porter's framework (1979, 6), the level of competition in an industry depends on five basic forces: customers, suppliers, potential entrants, substitute products and competitors. The collective strength of these forces determines the ultimate profit potential of an industry (Porter, 1979, 2). Even though, not all factors are equally important in all industries. The basic industry analysis throughout Porter's five forces can be combined with a more general environmental analysis on political, economic, social and technological conditions in a given market. This model is known as PEST.

For internal strategic analysis of the firm, the awareness of its available resources and capabilities has been shown as essential. The resource-based view of the company emphasizes such a conception, specifically those particular resources that are not easily imitable. As Barney indicates, "it is argued that firms, in general, cannot expect to obtain sustained competitive advantages when strategic resources are evenly distributed across all competing firms and are highly mobile. This conclusion suggests that the search for sources of sustained competitive advantage must focus on firm resource heterogeneity and immobility" (Barney, 1991, 103).

Similar basic foundations have been stated by Peteraf, who says that "four conditions must be met for a firm to enjoy sustained above-normal returns. Resource heterogeneity creates Ricardian or monopoly rents. Ex post limits to competition prevent the rents from being competed away. Imperfect factor mobility ensures that valuable factors remain with the firm and that the rents are shared. Ex ante limits to competition keep cost from offsetting the rents" (Peteraf, 1993, 185).

The analysis of what kind of resources can be critical for a given industry is not easily answerable. Main types of resources are financial, technical and human ones. But some other immaterial resources within the firm, such as brand or prestige in a market, can be essential as well, particularly in the media field.

Firms must choose what they want to be. Strategic positions emerge from three sources, that can be overlapped: variety-based positioning (producing a subset of an industry's products), needs-based positioning (targeting a particular segment of customers), and access-based positioning (segmenting customers who are accessible).

Specificity of media industries some times can cause that general knowledge and practice in business studies are not so applicable in these companies. Most media firms produce one product, but participate in two separated markets: advertisers and audience (Albarran, 2002, 74-75). Advertiser-supported media is a special industry: “consumers are given a free product (the program) in order to generate audiences that are then sold to advertisers” (Spence and Owen, 1977, 103).

The economic importance of communication companies is increasingly high, but their real power resides in their political and social influence. Moreover, media products are extremely flexible: within the same platform, content is adapted differently to each day edition of newspapers, radio stations or TV networks. In addition, regulation in media markets is usually an important constraint for free enterprise. Main broadcasting markets in developed countries have been configured as legal oligopolies. Even more, this structure “is further strengthened by vertical integration -the control of various aspects of production, distribution and exhibition” (Albarran, 2002, 78). So that, usually a few players in the industry concentrate most key decisions. The main reason for this market structure is barriers to entry created both by consumers’ habits and by public regulation.

The use of electromagnetic spectrum to transmit its signals crates a technological limitation that implies a reduced number of competitors in the market, even though digital transmission will permit more channels to be broadcasted. But other regulations on content and advertising are often established. That is why “management strategies in the audiovisual industries are often underpinned by government policy” (Block et al, 2001, 208).

The underlying economics of the industry have a clear influence in strategies adopted by media firms. Radio and audiovisual programs and online contents are public goods: they have high fixed costs and low marginal costs. That is why “to be profitable, business strategies for selling public goods must repeatedly exploit each product. Competitive advantage lies in reaching the largest audience for each product an in exposing the product in as many different markets as possible” (Owen and Wildman, 1992, 25).

The role of strategic planning in such an industry is a controversial issue. On the one hand, online sites as well as radio and television networks have 24 hours a day flow of contents to fill in. This requires a certain degree of purchasing planning. On the other hand, sometimes decisions are made in a very tactical focus, with audience results as key performance indicators.

Media companies’ owners and managers can not ask everyday what the public expect from their newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television channels or websites. Managers should discover and satisfy implicit demands; at the same time, they should protect the prestige of their brands and they should match demanding professional standards. Therefore, good management in the media industry requires balance, intuition and sensibility.

If a media organization participates “in two or more of the three markets - information, advertising, and intellectual- the strategic plan must address explicitly these markets and explain the relationships among them” (Sohn et al, 1999, 186). Effective management is understood as “the systematic movement toward a set of goals and those goals are established to fulfill a media company's mission. This is why the mission is at

the heart of effective management and why it must be put into writing and communicated to every person in the organization” (Willis and Willis, 1993, 239-240).

### **Methodology, process and sources**

There are not many empirical evidences about how the media industry’s specific traits influence the managers’ decision-making process. In other words, existing research does not clarify if media owners and managers lead their organizations following the basic principles of strategic thinking or, by the contrary, if the high number of particular factors cause that such organizations are led in a different way.

Keeping in mind such question, Bogart states that “the most productive research program would concentrate on individual case histories of specific media organizations, rather than on the search for generalizations through comprehensive surveys of all media. Yet it is impossible to think in terms of an over-all media system. The total effects of mass communication are impossible to dissect by source” (Bogart, 1974, 585-586).

Accordingly to that focus, during the last few years, six case study doctoral dissertations have been completed at the Department of Media Management in the School of Communication at University of Navarra. All six dissertations are coincident in some aspects: they are related to six successful media companies in the Spanish market; they have all sought a similar analysis methodology and they all used extremely valuable internal sources from the firms; they all obtained also the highest mark.

At the same time, differences among the studied cases permit some interesting comparisons: print and audiovisual media have been studied; big and small companies; some of them have been in their markets for almost a century and some others were almost brand new; some dissertations have focused on corporate strategy while others have been centered on product strategies. The doctoral theses completed have been the following ones:

i) Mónica Herrero, *Direct payment, programming and audiences. Canal Plus España (1990-2000)*, presented on November 15th 2002. *Canal Plus* is the leading premium pay-TV channel in Spain. It has more than 1.8 million subscribers.

ii) Javier Bardají, *The independent television production market in Spain. The case of Globo Media (1993-2000)*, defended on May 30th 2003. By that year, Globo Media was one of the two leading production companies in Spain. Three years later, it launched, jointly with other shareholders, a new television channel, *La Sexta*.

iii) Juan Manuel Roca, *Competitive advantage and brand value in sports press: Marca’s style (1984-2004)*, presented on February 18th 2005. *Marca* is the leading sports newspaper in Spain and its circulation is one of the largest in Europe, more than 400,000 copies per day. It is owned by Recoletos group, recently acquired by Italian group Rizzoli-Corriere della Sera.

iv) Juan Pablo Artero, *Competition in the Spanish television market: Telecinco’s strategic models (1990-2005)*, defended on February 13th 2006. *Telecinco* is the leading television channel in Spain in terms of audience share and profitability. It is, at the same time, one of the most profitable television businesses in Europe.

v) Miguel Carvajal, *Vocento’s growth strategies (1985-2004)*, presented on May 8th 2006. *Vocento* is the leading daily press group in Spain. It owns a national newspaper, *ABC*, and twelve local and regional papers. Almost all of them are leaders in their respective markets.

vi) José M. Irisarri, *Birth, Development and Turnaround of Antena 3 (1989-2005)*, presented on December 12th 2008. Antena 3 is the second biggest private television channel in terms of audience and revenues. It is owned by Planeta publishing group.

In all six cases, the companies were selected because they were achieving sustainable success in highly competitive markets. Furthermore, the top management of these firms accepted to collaborate with academic researchers, which permitted the availability of highly valuable internal sources. The possibility of studying failure cases was rejected, as far as it is much harder to obtain good information from the management.

The theses looked for reasons of such sustainable success. On top of that, they have a common aim, which was to identify if, given the specific traits of media companies, the strategy process was more democratic than in other industries; we wanted to analyze if employees – and more specifically those in charge of contents and marketing- had some influence in strategy formulation.

All six doctoral thesis sought the following route: firstly, researchers implemented a preliminary analysis of the situation of the chosen company in order to check that, in fact, it was a successful case: the threshold was five consecutive years with profit margins above 10 per cent; afterwards, the research project was presented to the firm's top management and an agreement about transparency requirements was reached; from that point, researchers were looking for the usual external sources –monographs, industry reports and journal articles- and the available internal sources; finally, scholars elaborated and defended their work.

Four types of internal sources were used in those dissertations: a) interviews to managers, former managers and employees; sometimes, even managers of competitor firms; b) company's official documents: minutes of the board of directors or general shareholders meetings; balance sheets and statements of profit and loss accounts; c) other internal documents: analysis of brand perception, market research reports, supplier, distributor or customer analysis; d) employee surveys, even though in some cases – related to internal causes of working environment- it was not possible to implement them.

Personal interviews were extremely interesting sources in order to show the manager's concerns and big strategic bids, the way they influence regulators and the type of relationship they maintain with competitors and customers. It is highly valuable context information. But frequently, while comparing statements from several managers, contradictions and disagreements were found, both in terms of opinions and facts. Consequently, interviews were used mainly as a source of context. Data revealed in them were not considered reliable if not checked with another sources of information. Direct quotations of the manager's declarations were used –if permitted- in order to show the most relevant opinions or explanations from them.

Written internal sources were particularly valuable so as to understand the decision making process of companies: how the mission statement influences their strategic bids; which internal and external analysis tools they use; who elaborates strategy; how responsibilities, budgets and deadlines are assigned; how frequent objectives and priorities are revised; which are personnel policies, selection, training, motivation and retribution of professional teams; how the marketing plan is decided; what procedures are used in order to know the level of consumer satisfaction.

At this aspect, it was critical that interviews were implemented after a deep study of each company's situation, its main decisions and performance. That way it was possible to avoid that managers were describing the most successful parts of corporate history or the most remembered ones, and not were talking about the aspects directly related to the research objective: analyzing the decision making process of the most relevant aspects of each studied company.

### **Structure and content**

All dissertations adopt an evident strategic focus, but two authors decide to include a theoretical framework in the first chapter (Herrero and Roca) while other two dedicate the first chapter to an environmental analysis (Bardají and Carvajal). Artero and Irisarri analyze the industrial forces of supply, demand and regulation at each of the periods in which the firm's behavior is studied. Afterwards, Herrero, Bardají and Carvajal conduct their research according to certain topics throughout all the studied period, while Roca, Irisarri and Artero choose a chronological criterion in order to organize the chapters. In fact, Roca combines both criteria (topic and period of time) by analyzing specific issues of *Marca* in each of the groups of years studied. All dissertations try to identify and analyze specific strategy issues that are revealed as critical in their respective case studies.

As we have said, they also try to discover if the strategic decisions in media companies are more democratic than in other industries. But, at the same time, they are obligated to make a choice between temporary development of firms and essential strategic issues so as to conduct their research.

The strategic areas in which each dissertation focuses more deeply are sometimes overlapped. Herrero studies the theoretical implications and relationships among direct payment, programming and audiences in the specific case of the leading pay-TV company. Bardají centers his analysis of *Globo Media* in creativity management, content quality and innovation, customer management, financial performance and corporate strategy. Roca is focused on identifying sources of competitive advantage and brand value for *Marca*'s case. Artero and Irisarri seek a classical structure of strategic analysis: first, environmental analysis; after that, the competitive strategies of Telecinco and Antena 3 according to their market contexts. Carvajal emphasizes the classical distinction between corporate and competitive strategy, but includes also a final chapter on financial performance.

The final aim of all these dissertations is to provide a scientific explanation of how different companies competing within several media industry segments in the same country and similar periods of time have achieved business success. The theoretical focus adopted is always grounded on the foundations of strategic management applied to the specific conditions of media industries. But their findings are closely and naturally linked to the strategic issues they have identified in advance, which are illustrated in the chosen analysis structures.

Herrero highlights the importance of content, form and logic as the main features in identifying different television business models. She states that the appearance of pay-TV products implies a new relationship between firms and audiences, a distinctive one from the traditional conception of free-to-air television. In a competitive context that in most cases tends to nearly monopolistic situations, the capacity to supply exclusive

content (mostly sport events and blockbuster movies), the development of specific marketing strategies (closer to consumer products markets than to traditional TV) and the creation of a singular relationship with subscribers (in which call centers management is shown as critical) are key success factors in any pay-TV industry.

Bardaji links closely the appearance of independent television production firms to the introduction of competition within audiovisual markets. Some internal factors identified by Bardaji that explain *Globo Media's* success are the experience, dedication and professionalism of the founding members of the firm; the way in which they manage their creative personnel; their ability to create high quality and innovative television products; the double focus not only on networks, but on audiences too as their primary customers; the intended corporate strategy based on vertical integration and internationalization; and the re-investment of profits.

According to Roca, *Marca's* success as the leading sports paper in Spain is closely related to the entrance of a new management crew that gave the company a new vision of the business and an inspirational leadership. These new managers were brave enough to break the traditional rules of the market concerning marketing, distribution and printing. After the turnaround of the firm, the management was focused on building a sustainable competitive advantage over competitors. The branding strategy is highlighted as a critical factor, as well as important innovations in the journalistic product and its content and design; the newsroom was able of building an emotional relationship with readers that favors strong loyalty patterns between the paper and its customers.

Artero implements an overview of the Spanish television industry from the beginnings of competition in 1990. In the first moment, Telecinco fails in achieving good financial outcome, but the firm increasingly understands the importance of costs management, of marketing research towards a commercial profile of viewers and advertisers and the critical role of adapting programming to local tastes and competing for each segment of both daytime and prime time. The firm generates an image of modern channel while in the past was more oriented towards older viewers. Telecinco's financial performance turn into one of the highest profitability levels in Europe, even though some of its shows are the most controversial and ethically discussed of European television.

Carvajal reinforces the importance of both corporate and business strategy for the generation of big and solid media corporations. *Vocento* is the story of a small local newspaper which becomes a big multimedia group with interests in several media industries. The role of protecting stability, the focus on core competences, the maintenance of a small group of family owners and the professionalization of management are shown as key success factors in this case. Its corporate strategy has rested in a clear horizontal integration of some local newspapers around Spain through mergers, acquisitions and launching of new titles that have not limited the role of the founding family in the firm's corporate governance.

Irisarri analyzes the turnaround of Antena 3 from 2004 to 2007. The author emphasizes some market conditions that drive competitive forces in a determinant manner: declining state-owned channels, the increasing advertising expenditure on television, the rise of new content suppliers and deregulation of the industry and the creation of an oligopoly market structure. Some internal key factors for the success of

Antena 3 have been a good programming strategy – based on news contents and Spanish soap operas -, advertising management and cost control.

The cases studied seem to provide enough examples in favor of our main hypotheses: the managers of the six firms believe that strategy is accepted in their companies only when employees perceive that they are listened when the most important decisions are taken. The strategy choice is a top management responsibility, but innovation and creativity require a culture of dialogue in which the best idea – and not necessarily the boss' idea- wins. Keeping that fact in mind, the six media firms studied have implemented different decision-making models to foster employees' participation.

### **Conclusions and discussion**

Analysis implemented on all six doctoral dissertations based on case studies, as well as other similar works that were developed in past years at the Department of Media Management at the School of Communication of University of Navarra, permits to detect some strengths and weaknesses of this research methodology.

Among the main strengths the following ones can be highlighted:

a) Case studies provide valuable information about management in the media, as far as they permit studying deeply and with primary sources relevant aspects related to the managers' work.

b) Though analyses are linked to particular and unique market situations, it is possible to confirm some hypothesis related to specific characteristics of communication industry. The case studies reinforce one of the most complex aspects in the management of media organizations: the concept of the public (Napoli, 2003). Those who determine media contents must have into account implicit or explicit demands of five types of public: i) readers, viewers or listeners; ii) advertisers and advertising agents; iii) employees, who claim for respect to professional codes and best practices in the industry; iv) political institutions –governments and political parties-, which try to obtain a positive journalistic coverage; v) owners and shareholders, who sometimes think that their organizations must behave as serving tools for other commercial interests.

c) Doctoral dissertations also confirm that employees of several departments usually participate in the first steps of the strategy process, like internal and external analysis, decisions about the way to compete and decisions' implementation. Such practice is related to the importance of tangible assets in media firms: management of brands and motivation of talented people are crucial for getting sustainable advantages in that industry (Picard, 2002).

d) Finally, case study dissertations favors the educational and training process of doctoral students: it implies a deep understanding of the research object, settles the limits of the piece of research, avoids a dispersion of attention from them and promotes that they are not focusing on already studied issues.

The main weaknesses of case studies can be summarized as follows:

a) At each piece of research some aspects are studied that will not be applied to other geographic markets, industry segments, temporary circumstances or different size companies. Case studies have a strong temporary characterization. That is why conclusions of each research project can only be applied plenty to each analyzed firm.

b) The interest of the study in each case is very dependent on quality of information provided by the analyzed company. In order to obtain valuable research, it is

needed that the managers adopt a transparent attitude and permit the researcher direct access to the most relevant internal sources.

Thereby, case studies must be implemented once it has been confirmed that the management is opened to collaboration with the researcher (Lavine and Wackman, 1988). In addition, it is necessary that the firm can supply relevant understanding about successes and failures in its strategic thought. Finally, the researcher must be able to distinguish which conclusions can be applied exclusively to the analyzed case and which findings can be extended in a more general manner to the strategic management of media organizations.

## References

- Albarran, Alan B. (1997), *Management of Electronic Media*, Wadsworth Publishing.
- Albarran, Alan B. (2002), *Media economics. Understanding markets, industries and concepts*, Iowa State Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Albarran, Alan B. (2010), *The Transformation of the Media and Communication Industries*, Media Markets Monographs. Eunsa.
- Artero, Juan P. (2007), *Modelos estratégicos de Telecinco (1990-2005)*, Fragua.
- Artero, Juan P. (2008), *El mercado de la televisión en España: oligopolio*, Deusto.
- Bardaji, Javier (2005), *La gestión de la creatividad en televisión: el caso de Globo Media*, Eunsa.
- Barney, Jay B. (2000), *Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage*, *Advances in Strategic Management, Volume 17*, 203-227.
- Block, Peter (ed.) et al. (2001), *Managing in the media*, Focal Press.
- Blumenthal, Howard J.; Goodenough, Oliver R. (1991), *This business of television*, Billboard Books.
- Bogart, Leo (1973), *The management of mass media: an agenda for research*, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 37, 580-589.
- Carvajal, Miguel (2007), *Líderes en prensa: la dirección estratégica de Vocento*, Diego Marín.
- Compaine, Benjamin M.; Gomery, Douglas (2000), *Who owns the media? Competition and concentration in the mass media industry*, Lawrence Erlbaum, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.
- Dimmick, John W. (2003), *Media Competition and Coexistence. The Theory of the Niche*, Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Doyle, Gillian (2002), *Understanding Media Economics*, Sage.
- Gershon, Richard A. (2001), *Telecommunications management: industry structures and planning strategies*, Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Herrero, Monica (2003), *Programming and direct viewer payment for television: the case of Canal Plus Spain*, Media Market Monographs, Eunsa.
- Hollifield, C. Ann (2001), *Transnational Media Management*, Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hoskins, Colin; McFadyen, Stuart; Finn, Adam (1997), *Global television and film: a introduction to the economics of the business*, Oxford University Press.
- Lavine, John; Wackman, Daniel B. (1988), *Managing media organizations: effective leadership of the media*, Longman.
- Meier, Hen Erik (2003), *Beyond convergence. Understanding programming strategies of public broadcasters in competitive environments*, *European Journal of Communication*, 337-365.
- Mintzberg, Henry (1987), *The Strategy Concept I: Five Ps for Strategy*, *California Management Review*, Fall 1987.
- Napoli, Philip M. (2003). *Audience Economics*, Columbia University Press.
- Owen, Bruce M. and Wildman, Steven S. (1992), *Video Economics*, Harvard University Press.
- Peteraf, Margaret A. (1993), *The Cornerstones of Competitive Advantage: a Resource-Based View*, *Strategic Management Journal*, vol. 14, 179-191.
- Picard, Robert G. (1989), *Media Economics: Concepts and Issues*, Sage.

- Picard, Robert G. (2002), *The Economics and Financing of Media Companies*, Fordham University Press.
- Porter, Michael E. (March-April 1979), *How Competitive Forces Shape Strategy*, Harvard Business Review, 102-116.
- Porter, Michael E. (1985), *Competitive Strategy. Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, The Free Press.
- Porter, Michael E. (November-December 1996), *What is Strategy?*, Harvard Business Review, 61-77.
- Powers, Angela (2001), *Toward Monopolistic Competition in U.S. Local Television News*, The Journal of Media Economics, 77-86.
- Powers, Angela, Kristjansdottir, Hildur and Sutton, Hal (1994), *Competition in Danish Television News*, The Journal of Media Economics, 21-30.
- Pringle, Peter K., Starr, Michael F. and McCavitt, William E. (1995), *Electronic Media Management*, Focal Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.
- Sohn, Ardyth B. et al. (1999), *Media Management. A Casebook Approach*, Lawrence Erlbaum, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Spence, Michael and Owen, Bruce (1977), *Television Programming, Monopolistic Competition, and Welfare*, Quarterly Journal of Economics. Vol. 91, No. 1, 103-126.
- Van der Wurff, Richard (2004), *Supplying and Viewing Diversity. The Role of Competition and Viewer Choice in Dutch Broadcasting*, European Journal of Communication, vol. 16, 215-237.
- Vogel, Harold L. (1998), *Entertainment Industry Economics: a Guide for Financial Analysis*, Cambridge University Press, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.
- Wheeler, Mark (2004), *Supranational Regulation. Television and the European Union*, European Journal of Communication, Sage Publications.
- Willis, Jim and Willis, Diane B. (1993), *New Directions in Media Management*, Allyn and Bacon.

## Commercial Success Factors of Mexican Soap Operas

**Leticia Barron Dominguez**

Universidad Panamericana, México

[letybardom@aol.com](mailto:letybardom@aol.com)

---

### Abstract

The commercial success of Mexican soap opera was investigated in this work under the hypothesis that this depends on three variables: script, production and artistic talent. In order to do this, frequency in which these variables appear in first place of audience soap opera in Mexico was compared (1997-2007) from the Televisa and TV Azteca producers point of view regarding the proportion of these variables. Results placed script and almost in the same place production; while artistic talent variable was less significant, therefore showing a weakness for both broadcasters whose last productions were remakes and formats adapted from foreign countries as well as a future threat faced by the foreign competition.

## Commercial Success Factors of Mexican Telenovela in Mexico

### Introduction

In Mexico, the telenovela is one of the entertainment audiovisual products which have generated the greatest income for the audiovisual industry in the country, both for its national sales as well as its export sales. There are two major producers and exporters of this TV genre: Televisa and TV Azteca both consider telenovelas the star genre of their productions, as can be seen in the Mexican Stockmarket yearly reports.

Nowadays Televisa is the largest producer for contents in Spanish in the world, it exports its productions to more than 100 countries (Televisa Yearly Report, Mexican Stockmarket, 2006). Of these exports, 90% are telenovelas; so much so that it was estimated that in the year 2001 telenovelas represented a business worth 130 million dollars a year, 55 to 60% of which went to Televisa's finance. (The father of telenovelas is in Mexico, 2001). By contrast, its competitor TV Azteca, currently exports 80% of the telenovelas of its whole production to almost 80 countries. During the 3rd World Congress of the Telenovela and Fiction Industry held in Madrid in 2005 it was stated:

"Mexico is the country that has produced and exported more telenovelas up to date. The Telenovela is the mark that Mexicans have spread for more than thirty years with great pride in all continents through their huge factory Televisa: an enterprise that has cuddled this genre with talent and skill, by exploring its multiple possibilities and recreating classical works, generating segmented products that today reach all kinds of audiences in multiple timings of World television. By contrast, TV Azteca, owned by Grupo Salinas, has had worldwide presence in this genre in spite of its short life."

It must be said that despite of being a genre with more than 50 years in Mexico and of great relevance in the audiovisual industry, few studies have been made from the perspective of the commercial aspect.

Hence, we can ask the following questions:

What has generated the commercial success<sup>1</sup> of Mexican telenovelas which has placed them in the first place of domestic audience when faced against other entertainment genres, when it has varied so little in fifty years from its original format?

### Object of the Research

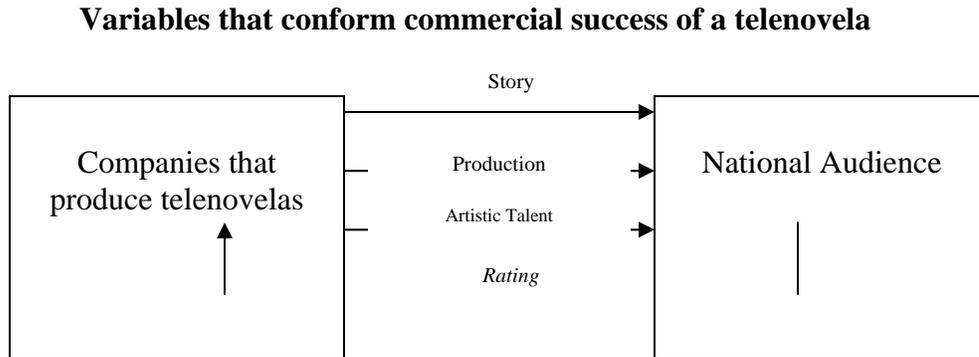
The object of this research under the hypothesis that the variables: story, production and artistic talent contribute to the commercial success, was to discover the proportion of such contribution, from the point of view of the makers of these productions (writers, producers, managers and entrepreneurs), by indirectly comparing it with audience results nationwide through rating<sup>2</sup> (these data were chosen for comparison since they are the only instrument that can provide quantitative and systematic information, on a day by day, week by week, and month by month basis about the audience behavior regarding exposition to telenovelas; moreover they provide a quantitative parameter of their commercial success, since the comparison values are

<sup>1</sup> It is important to differentiate commercial success from social impact, the first one makes reference to the audience reached by a program as well as the national or international sale it can reach and it can be measured quantitatively through audience index. The social impact refers to emotional bonds, accepted messages, tastes, uses and gratifications a given telenovela provides to a social group and qualitative techniques are used to measure it.

<sup>2</sup> Rating: Percentage of persons (tv homes or tv watchers) that set a channel at a specific time.

encrypted in the rating points and these are the ones used by companies to measure what they will pay for advertisement to a broadcaster company). Graphical description of this can be seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**



The proposed hypothesis and methodology used in this work is unseen, since many authors have studied telenovelas from the social impact point of view, but few have stopped to study this genre from the commercial point of view. Just to cite a few, we can say that Molina (1987) proposed years ago the study of the Mexican telenovela industry from an entrepreneurial perspective for research in the area of communication and even when Torres (1994), who carried out a historical description of telenovelas, he tried to discover the variables that provided high ratings, in contrast with the methodology we propose, he did not include the point of view of producer companies, nor direct interviews and he used yearly ratings instead of the maximum monthly rating (which we use in the present work). Furthermore, in his hypothesis he used broadcast time as a variable and concluded that it did not affect its high levels of audience.

### **Research methodology**

A period including 1996 through the first half of 2007<sup>3</sup> was chosen for the analysis. This allowed to prove the previously shown hypothesis and to consider the weight of each independent variable. This period was chosen since 1996 set a breakthrough in telenovelas in Mexico<sup>4</sup>.

In a universe of 28 telenovelas from Televisa and 18 from TV Azteca with a first place in rating, aired in channels two and thirteen respectively, from Monday to Friday<sup>5</sup>, variables were described and analyzed in the following manner:

<sup>3</sup> The analysis could not be concluded in December 2006 because some telenovelas ended in the following months and this would have deviated the results, therefore some were analyzed until they ended in June 2007. date they ended.

<sup>4</sup> TV Azteca, Televisa's new Competitor aired for the first time a telenovela produced on their own *Nada personal* (1996) and later *Mirada de mujer* (1997), this one surprised its competitors when it reached great success among the domestic audience.

<sup>5</sup> These two TV Broadcasters were chosen together with the airing times from Monday to Friday because besides having domestic audience these are the most common airing times for telenovelas in Mexico.

- a) Script: Represented by the original version writer's talent.
- b) Production: Represented by the quality and style used by each producer, since: "The director has had to take a supporting role in the consolidation of the producer as a principal figure in telenovela production, leaving as a factor of secondary relevance the movement of cameras". (Molina, 1987, pp. 367-375).
- c) Artistic Talent: Represented by the talent of the starring actors.

Also included for the analysis are the following data: date of broadcast, name of the telenovela, duration on air, (starting and finishing dates) and maximum monthly rating<sup>6</sup>.

Once the main data was described, producers and executive officers from Televisa and TV Azteca were interviewed regarding commercial success and the other variables such as, story, production artistic talent to later on perform the analysis by indirectly comparing results with the frequency in which these variables appeared (for writers, producers and leading stars) according to what was considered the most successful telenovelas by domestic audiences<sup>7</sup> and finally the weight of values was determined. (Tables 1 and 2 show what telenovelas were number one in national audience from 1996 to 2007).

Material for the study came mainly from these sources:

- a) Direct interviews with producers and officials from Televisa and TV Azteca.
- b) Information gathered directly from the video libraries from Televisa and TV Azteca.
- c) Rating information from IBOPE AGB México.

---

<sup>6</sup>A global average was estimated for telenovelas by company and by period, (only the results from Monday to Friday were considered since they are the most common and they are aired only through Channel 2 from Televisa and Channel 13 from TV Azteca). To make the study easier, time periods were divided as follows, from 1996 to 1997, from 1997 to 1998 and so on, because telenovelas can go on for more than a year.

<sup>7</sup> Telenovelas with the first places in National audience were considered as the most successful.

**Table 1 - Telenovelas in First place in National Audience  
Televisa Channel 2**

Telenovela	Broadcasting dates	Maximum Rating	Producer
El privilegio de amar	June 1998-February 1999	17.93	Carla Estrada
Abrázame muy fuerte	July 2000-February 2001	17.61	Salvador Mejía
La usurpadora	February 1998-July 1998	17.31	Salvador Mejía
Entre el amor y el odio	February 2002-August 2002	16.12	Salvador Mejía
Mujeres engañadas	October 1999-April 2000	15.31	Emilio Larrosa
Te sigo amando	June 1996-May 1997	14.92	Carla Estrada
El manantial	October 2001-February 2002	14.91	Carla Estrada
Amor real	June 2003-October 2003	14.49	Carla Estrada
Las vías del amor	June 2000-April 2003	14.36	Emilio Larrosa
La fea más bella	January 2006-February 2007	13.77	Rosy Ocampo
La madrastra	February 2005-August 2005	13.02	Salvador Mejía
María Isabel	June 1997-May 1998	12.59	Carla Estrada
Destilando amor	January 2007-September 2007	12.37	Nicandro Díaz
Laberintos de pasión	October 1999-January 2000	12.24	Claudia Reyes Rubio
Esmeralda	May 1997-October 1997	12.16	Salvador Mejía
Mujer de madera	May 2004-January 2005	12.11	Emilio Larrosa
Mi destino eres tú	July 2000-November 2000	12.09	Carla Estrada
Mariana de la noche	October 2003-April 2004	11.74	Salvador Mejía
Salomé	October 2001-May 2002	11.68	Juan Osorio
La otra	April 2002-August 200	11.60	Ernesto Alonso
Primer amor	October 2000-February 2001	11.43	Pedro Damián
Alborada	October 2005-February 2006	11.37	Carla Estrada
La esposa virgen	July 2005-October 2005	11.01	Salvador Mejía
Por un beso	November 2000-March 2001	10.74	Angelli Nesma
Rubí	May 2004-October 2004	10.72	José Alberto Castro
Contra viento y marea	April 2005-November 2005	10.57	Nicandro Díaz
Apuesta por un amor	October 2004-April 2005	10.31	Angelli Nesma
Tú y yo	September 1996-March 1997	9.43	Emilio Larrosa

\*Table made by the author with information from the rating data base from IBOPE AGB México and the data base from the video library of Televisa.

**Table 2 - Telenovelas in first place of audience  
TV Azteca Channel 13**

Telenovela	Broadcasting dates	Maximum Rating	Producer
Mirada de mujer	July 1997-April 1998	11.64	Epigmenio Ibarra
Amor en custodia	July 2005-August 2006	9.06	Claudio Meilán/Emilia Lamothe
Cuando seas mía	May 2001-April 2002	7.93	Rafael Gutiérrez
Mirada de mujer: el regreso	June 2003-May 2004	6.42	Elisa Salinas/Fides Velasco
La vida en el espejo	June 1999-January 2000	5.81	Epigmenio Ibarra/Marcela Mejía
Catalina y Sebastián	May 1999-October 1999	5.55	Antulio Jiménez
Enamórate	January 2003/July 2003	5.52	Elisa Salinas/Gerardo Zurita
Tres veces Sofía	October 1998-August 1999	5.25	Luis Vélez /Rossana Arau
Dos chicos de cuidado en la ciudad	July 2003-February 2004	5.15	Carlos Márquez
Los Sánchez	September 2004-January 2006	5.02	Martín Luna /Eva Hernández /Meiling Ley
Nada personal	May 1996-February 1997	4.99	Epigmenio Ibarra
Todo por amor	January 2000-January 2001	4.76	Epigmenio Ibarra /Mónica Skorlich
La Chacala	November 1997-July 1998	4.73	Christian Bach /Humberto Zurita
La hija del jardinero	August 2003-April 2004	4.52	Igor Manrique
Demasiado Corazón	October 1997-May 1998	4.55	Epigmenio Ibarra
Al norte del corazón	February 1997-September 1997	4.28	Santiago Galindo/Rubén Galindo
Se busca un hombre	February 2007-February 2008*	4.1	Genoveva Martínez /Meiling Ley
Montecristo	August 2006-April 2007	4.08	Rita Fusaro /Emilia Lamothe

\*Table made by the author with information from the rating data base from IBOPE AGB México and the data base from the video library of Televisa.

## Results

1) During the analyzed period these Telenovelas had first place 59% on Televisa Channel 2 and 54% in TV Azteca Channel 13.

2) Interviews were conducted with producers who in 2007 recorded telenovelas which were considered successful since they were first places registered in the audience lists. Moreover, we interviewed some officials like Marcel Vinay, responsible for TV Azteca international sales and people who represented this genre like Mrs. Fernanda Villeli, writer of the first telenovela.

Besides the previous data, we added a compilation of some interviews published in specialized magazines for the audiovisual field of persons that could not be interviewed personally.

Producers like: Juan Osorio, Emilio Larrosa, Salvador Mejía and writer Fernanda Villeli stated that the three variables have the same relevance to accomplish an excellent product. Below we have extracts from the most important comments in chronological order of the date of the interview or the enquiry of a mass media source

a) E. Larrosa, (personal communication, June 1, 2007), Televisa producer said: “Its a synergy of all variables, the script is the base, after choosing the artistic talent, even when I give an opportunity to new talents as I have done with this telenovela (talking about “Muchachitas como tú”) and to be very careful to get a great quality in the production”.

b) J. Osorio, Televisa producer declared on his part (personal communication, September 5, 2007), : “The fundamental success is the content we have in the script as can be the values and the respect for the public, although this does not mean giving less relevance to production quality and artistic talent, I believe they are equally important”.

c) F. Villeli, (personal communication, March 12, 2008), writer of the first telenovela in 1958 pointed out that: “For a production to be successful, you must have a supporting team: the writer, the producers and all the people that work with them as well as the talent of your actors”.

d) On his behalf, Televisa productions vice president said that: “The quality of our scripts and recordings, the promptness and the artistic talent we have in Televisa, competitiveness, quality and professionalism in the production of telenovelas are all the factors that have given us worldwide success”. (Mejía, 2007).

However, other producers and officials like Epigmenio Ibarra, Emilia Lamothe, Nicandro Díaz, Carla Estrada and Marcel Vinay considered the script to be one of the most important basis, followed by production and artistic talent, as follows:

a) M. Vinay (personal communication, March 17, 2007) international sales vice president for TV Azteca emphasizes in the following points: “The key is how we handle contents of universal interest such as love and those related to women as the main character, this is what gives success to telenovelas like “Mirada de mujer”, “Cuando seas mía” and “La hija del jardinero”.

b) N. Díaz (personal communication June 1, 2007), Televisa producer points out that: “I would privilege the script, since it always has to have the traditional element of love, but one should never forget to take care of the quality of production and to choose a good cast.”

c) C. Estrada (personal communication June 28, 2007), Televisa producer stated that: “It is the content managed in the script that is important and I believe that the

fact that we sell our telenovelas even in China is because we deal with stories with universal values like love and family integration, it is difficult to choose a good story and many times we guide ourselves by a “feeling”, we must acknowledge that the start (talking about preproduction), adaptation of the story to locations, looking for the cast, is the hardest, although during the production one must take care of how to deal with suspense, an accurate edition, and musicalization during postproduction”.

d) E. Lamothe (personal communication July 12, 2007), TV Azteca producer, mentioned the following: “The script is fundamental, I would assign it a 50%, the rest I would break it between production and artistic talent, we have seen artists who when well directed can launch a production and vice versa”.

e) E. Ibarra (personal communication September 3, 2007), producer for Argos and TV Azteca and of the “Mirada de mujer” telenovela, emphasized with the following comment: “If we are talking about priorities, my number one would be the script, since it is the most powerful one, second place would go to a well cared production and third place to artistic talent”.

f) M. Ley (personal communication June 14, 2007), producer for TV Azteca gave more relevance to the production factor: “The three are fundamental, but the quality of the production, the work of all in the team during recordings, what can lift up any script”.

g) Lee (2003), as general sales director for TV Azteca pointed out that: “A relevant aspect is to understand that in a Telenovela the star is not the artist, but the script, and this has to go along with a quality production that will allow you to easily sell the product”.

Once all the commentaries were gathered, a ponderation was given to the three variables in equal parts and later giving a greater value to the variable they considered the most important, as can be seen in Table 3.

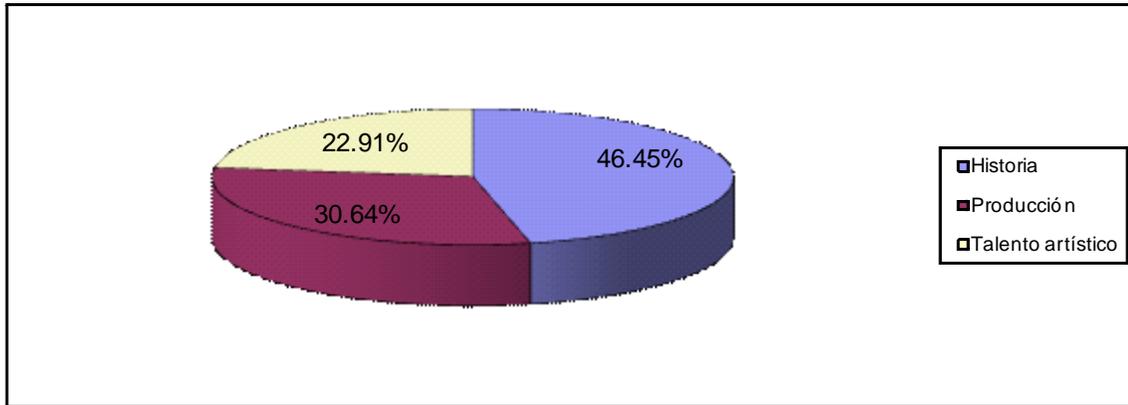
**Table 3 - Proportion of variables script, production and artistic talent from the point of view of telenovelas producers and officials**

Name	Position	Script	Production	Artistic Talent
Emilio Larrosa	Televisa producer	0.33	0.33	0.33
Juan Osorio	Televisa producer	0.33	0.33	0.33
Salvador Mejía	Televisa Producer and production vice-president	0.33	0.33	0.33
Fernanda Villeli	Writer	0.33	0.33	0.33
Marcel Vinay	TV Azteca International Sales vice-president	1	0	0
Nicandro Díaz	Televisa Producer	0.5	0.25	0.25
Carla Estrada	Televisa Producer	0.5	0.25	0.25
Emilia Lamothe	TV Azteca Producer	0.5	0.25	0.25
Epigmenio Ibarra	TV Azteca y Argos Producer	0.5	0.3	0.2
Meiling Ley	TV Azteca producer	0.25	0.5	0.25
René Lee	TV Azteca International sales Director	0.5	0.5	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>46.45</b>	<b>30.64</b>	<b>22.91</b>

Table made by the author based on information gathered during personal interviews and specialized magazine articles.

As can be seen, the script has the highest weight (46.45%), from the official's point of view, it is the highest, and it is followed by production (30.64%) and at last place we find artistic talent (22.92%).

**Graph 1 - Proportion of variables in commercial success from the point of view of producers and officials (in percentage)**



Graphic made by the author based on the information gathered in interviews and articles previously mentioned in the footnotes.

3) Finally, by comparing these statements, an element was added: audience measured with rating, and it was determined in most successful telenovelas with what frequency they were repeated: writers to ponder the story, producers to ponder the story and leading actors to ponder artistic talent.

Following were the results:

a) Script variable. In the case of Televisa. There are writers that still have a lot of presence and frequency like Caridad Bravo Adams, who started in the 50's, mostly because of the remakes of her original versions (43% of the telenovelas in Table 1 are a remake). Also very important are Delia Fiallo y Emilio Larrosa, who belong to a new generation of writers. One must say that the latter, besides being a producer also writes original works for Televisa.

We could also observe that of the successful productions, almost half are already proven stories. On the other hand, in a lesser proportion Televisa also tries with stories bought abroad that have been successful in the countries of origin (21% of telenovelas presented in Table 1)<sup>8</sup> which helps to minimize a lot to the weight of the story.

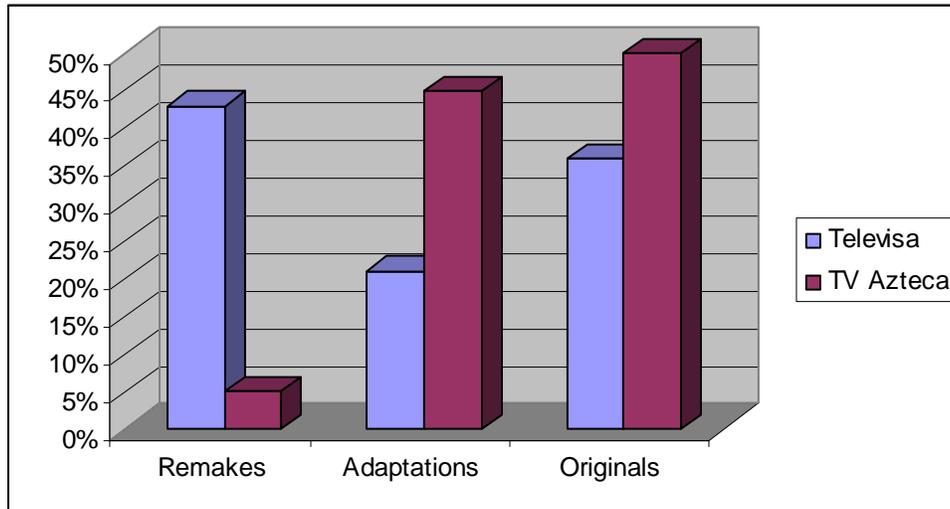
On its behalf, TV Azteca, as we have mentioned before, prefers to produce successes proven in other countries (45% of the productions presented in Table 2). From these foreign formats the writers in charge are Bernardo Romero, Alberto Barrera, Mónica Agudelo and Laura Lorenzón, who have written a good amount of the top stories in TV Azteca (50% of the total among the three of them). Although in all, they are always experimenting with versions from their own writers, like *La Chacala* (1997) from Eric Von or, *Catalina y Sebastián* (1999) from Ranferi Negrete.

It can be observed that this company concentrates writers in a lesser way, against what usually happens in Televisa. This is due to the fact that it is a younger company that hasn't consolidated its staff in this field for a number of years, which is one of the strengths of Televisa.

<sup>8</sup> As we have mentioned before these are considered Mexican productions because they were made in Mexico, only the script or the format are bought abroad.

It must also be said that, as an example of the weight of the story, both companies had success when producing a version of the Colombian telenovela “Café con aroma de mujer”: “Cuando seas mía” (TV Azteca, 2001) and “Destilando amor” (Televisa, 2007).

**Graph 2 - Most successful Telenovela Scripts**



b) Production variable. Producers were the most outstanding by their frequency of participation in successful programs, some with percentages up to 25% for Televisa and 28% for TV Azteca, where the most representative are Salvador Mejía and Carla Estrada from Televisa, who concentrated half of the successes (el 50% of the total of telenovelas) and Epigmenio Ibarra from TV Azteca, who occupied 28% of appearance frequency in telenovelas in first place in TV Azteca, mainly because of the success of “Mirada de mujer”.

The concentration for producers in these telenovelas gives a very high weight to the production variable for commercial success, since these are the ones in charge of directing staff, optimizing resources, supervising all processes to achieve quality in production.

c) Artistic Talent variable. Contrary to the previous variable, the amount of participations is diluted in both companies, since some of the actors participated only in one of these successful telenovelas, some participated in more than one but only achieved a 17% of appearance frequency, these are some examples: Adela Noriega, Fernando Colunga in Televisa; Silvia Navarro, Angélica Aragón and Sergio Basañez in TV Azteca. This is similar also with the weight that producers and officials assign to general component in this audiovisual genre. What can be inferred from all of the above?

### Conclusions.

When doing the comparative analysis previously described, we can infer that the script and the quality of production are an important component and are almost equal in relevance to get a commercial success from the point of view of those in charge of telenovelas and frequency of writers and producers regarding telenovelas in first place according to audience. In fact, when you have a good script and a high quality production

headed by an experienced producer, this contributes to commercial success when compared with other TV genres.

Because of the high relevance of scripts for commercial success and even though producing remakes and adaptations of foreign versions has worked for Televisa and TV Azteca a call for attention has risen, and this points out a weakness, the lack of original scripts or hiring new writers, or if you want to plan for the future, we have to consider competition from other foreign TV Broadcasters and producers, who do have original scripts and are the ones who sell formats for adaptations. Furthermore, there will be a need for original versions for adaptations in other technological platforms such as the webnovelas.

Artistic Talent, although it is an important factor as has been mentioned all the experts we interviewed, have lesser participation regarding the other two variables, since contrary to what happened during the first two decades of this genre, currently actors rotate more frequently in productions and we can observe that the majority only have participated in one successful telenovela.

## References

- El secreto del éxito (2006). Retrieved May 17, 2007 from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- En Madrid se celebró la tercera Cumbre Mundial de la Industria y la Ficción. (2005). Retrieved January 2008, from <http://www.fuerteventuradigital.com/noticiasdefuerteventura>.
- En México esta el pope de la telenovela (2001). Retrieved June 2, 2007, from <http://tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Gómez, R (2004). TV Azteca y la industria televisiva mexicana en tiempos de integración regional (TLCAN) y desregulación económica. *Revista de la Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara*, 77-82.
- Gutiérrez Espíndola, J. (1988). La industrialización del melodrama (historia y estructura de la televisión mexicana). *Revista Claves Latinoamericanas*, 2, 75-125.
- Jara, R. & Garnica, A. (2006). “¿Cómo la ves? La televisión mexicana y su público” (1ª. ed.). México: IBOPE AGB.
- Lavine, J. & Wackman, D. (1992). *Gestión de empresas informativas* (1ª. ed.). Madrid: Ediciones Rialp.
- Molina, G. (1987). Profesiones en trama: análisis de la producción de telenovela. *Estudios sobre culturas contemporáneas de la Universidad de Colima*. 367-375.
- Peredo, M. (2003, mayo). TV Azteca Expansión local e internacional. *Revista TVMAS Magazine*, 11, 43-45.
- Sánchez Ruíz, E. (2000). La televisión y el sector audiovisual mexicano. Breve examen de flujos asimétricos. *Dossier*, 131-142.
- Sánchez-Taberner, A.(2000). *Dirección estratégica de empresas de comunicación* (1ª. ed.). Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra.
- Televisa Annual Reports. Mexican Stock Exchange* (2006 ,2007). Retrieved April, 2008 from: <http://www.bmv.com.mx>
- TV Azteca Annual Reports. Mexican Stock Exchange* (2006 ,2007). Retrieved April, 2008 from: <http://www.bmv.com.mx>
- Torres, F. J. (1994). *Telenovelas, televisión y comunicación*. México: Ediciones Coyoacán.

## Source Databases:

- IBOPE AGB Mexico. Monthly rating of the most successful ten programs from January 1996 to June 2007.
- Televisa Video library from 1996 to 2007.
- TV Azteca Video library from 1996 to 2007.

## “The Juárez Femicides and Appadurai's Five Dimensions of Global Cultural Flow”

**Valeria Bouché**

University of Texas at El Paso, USA

[vibouche@miners.utep.edu](mailto:vibouche@miners.utep.edu)

---

### Abstract

Since 1993, hundreds of women and girls have been raped, mutilated, and then murdered in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, their bodies dumped in the desert. Others have disappeared, presumed to have fallen victim to the same fate. I contend that how this tragedy unfolded is a direct result of transnational flows: of people, capital, ideas, information, and technology. These transnational flows are a product of globalization. Arjun Appadurai suggests there are five dimensions of global cultural flow, and I argue that the Juárez femicides are largely the result of a particular configuration of Appadurai's five dimensions.

## **“The Juárez Femicides and Appadurai's Five Dimensions of Global Cultural Flow”**

### **Introduction**

Since 1993, hundreds of women and girls have been raped, mutilated, and then murdered in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, their bodies dumped in the desert. Others have disappeared, presumed to have fallen victim to the same fate. Despite numerous investigations, some arrests, and international attention, the mystery of who is killing the women of Juárez remains unsolved. The official Mexican police investigation into the murders was called off in 2006, though the killings continued and later merged with the larger epidemic of violence in the city, the result of a drug war in recent years. The story of the Juárez murders can be located at the nexus of several themes: international political economy, gender, the international human rights regime, transnational corporations and institutions, popular culture, national sovereignty, and global media. I contend that how the story unfolded is a direct result of transnational flows: of people, capital, ideas, information, and technology. These transnational flows are a product of globalization. Arjun Appadurai suggests there are five dimensions of global cultural flow, and I contend that the Juárez femicides are largely the result of a particular configuration of Appadurai's five dimensions.

### **The Five Dimensions**

*The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorize* (Appadurai, 2010, p. 384).

Appadurai proposed five dimensions through which to explore fundamental disjunctures: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, finanscaples, and ideoscaples. The murders of women in Juárez can be located within the fundamental disjunctures Appadurai identified; therefore his five dimensions are a useful framework with which to examine the phenomena. It seems as if the murders could form part of a dystopian nightmare of globalization, the beginnings of which Appadurai identified in his classic essay. Below I examine how each dimension is manifested in the femicides.

### **Finanscaples**

According to Rosalinda Fregoso, interpretive discourses regarding the murders fall into two main categories: Moralizing (where the victim is blamed for working, being outside the home, going to clubs, or for the way she dresses), and Globalizing (where all of the city's problems with security can be blamed on capitalist expansion). (Paraphrased by Miguel López-Lozano in Dominguez-Rubalcava, and Corona 2010) The moralizing discourse is prevalent in Mexican authorities' interpretations of the violence, while globalization is cited most often in scholarly literature (particularly literature written *outside* Mexico). Appadurai's five dimensions offer a lens through which to view the murders that goes beyond one-cause explanations like geographic exceptionalism or machismo, offering a tiered, macrosystemic structural examination of the murders. Still, global capitalism and neoliberal economics play an important role in the drama, so it is with them that I begin.

Juárez is a border city of nearly 1.5 million people across the Rio Grande River from El Paso, Texas. It is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Mexico, owing to its proximity to the United States, and the growth of international industry within the city. Beginning with the Border Industrialization Project of the late 1960s, foreign capital flowed rapidly into the city, attracted by tax incentives, low wages and union membership, and a plentiful source of labor. Foreign assembly factories called *maquiladoras* sought at first to hire majority female workforces (for a variety of reasons). Many of the women killed worked in these factories. Investment increased after restrictions were lifted and trade made easier by NAFTA.

There was also a simultaneous increase in drug and human trafficking. Businesspeople and criminals alike are able to bribe authorities to look the other way as they move their commodities: arms, drugs, people, industrial goods, etc. The authorities in turn responded to public pressure to solve the crimes by citing their lack of money and resources; common excuses for lack of action in Mexico. The vast majority of the girls and women that have been murdered were poor, their poverty contributing to an attitude that they are disposable, unimportant. This attitude is held by the perpetrators (drug traffickers, sons of rich families?) *and* the employers of those women and girls that worked in the *maquilas*. These factory owners are not held responsible for protecting their female workers and appear unconcerned by the killings; there are hundreds of thousands of poor girls and women who can replace any single murdered employee. It seems as if in Juárez not having money makes you a potential victim, and having money makes you immune to the force of law.

Several sources have cited rich and powerful men as those responsible. Refugio Ruvalcaba Plascencia, who served as Juárez chief of police for 45 days in 2003 until resigning citing death threats, among other reasons, declared<sup>1</sup>: “There is somebody in Juárez that does not want the murders of women clarified and the municipal police not continue to investigate. Something is going on. Here there is somebody with much hate towards Juárez, with a lot of economic power. It is a group that enjoys women’s pain, that enjoys watching the assassinations of little girls on video, and when somebody bothers, when somebody attacks that powerful group, this [threats and attacks] happens (Washington Valdez, 2005, p. 208).”<sup>i</sup> Theoretically, this could be sour grapes from an outgoing official, but the sentiment is echoed in other arenas. After Amnesty International issued a scathing report about the femicides, the FBI issued its own confidential evaluation. One confidential source stated: “Who are behind the murders? At least one or more serial killers, some narco-traffickers, two violent and sadistic gangs, and a group of very powerful men (ibid, p. 211)...”<sup>ii</sup> It is unclear here if “powerful men” means those with political or economic power, but in Mexico, as in much of the world, the two are intimately intertwined.

### **Ideoscapes**

*‘Ideoscapes’ are also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter-ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it (Appadurai, 2010, p. 386).*

---

<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own. See the end notes for the original text.

Several different ideas populate the ideoscape of the Juárez femicides, including those about the nature of the Border as an inherently violent place that occupy the imaginations of interior populations in both the U.S. and Mexico. However, if we are to follow Appadurai's explanation, I contend that the most prominent ideas in this issue space are the responsibility of the state to provide safety and security to its people, and the belief that the law enforcement institutions of Mexico are unable or unwilling to fulfill this responsibility to the population in even a most basic way. Cited as proof of this inability is rampant corruption among politicians and police at all levels. There is a suggestion that persons within the very organizations and institutions that are charged with protecting the people are complicit in the femicides. Those persons and entities that were not directly responsible for the murders still engaged in victimization, of families and the population at large. In the conclusion of her feminist sociological study of what she has described as "systemic sexual femicide," Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso states: "hegemonic groups and the state lacerated discursively what had already been physically hurt by the aggressors; in the same way the complicity between the organs of justice and those that were titulars of the different organisms whose objective is to guarantee integrity and the lives of women became one against victims and family members, and they safeguarded themselves in patriarchal hegemony and capitalist hegemony to allow a long and painful impunity in Ciudad Juárez (Monárrez Fragoso, 2009, p. 292)."<sup>iii</sup> The idea that the government is not responsible for the safety of its citizens is implied by the government itself, when authorities engage in victim blame or publish/broadcast often sexist public service announcements that tell men to protect their women, and tell women how to protect *themselves*. (Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, 2010)

### Technoscapes

*By 'technoscape,' I mean the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now move at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries (Appadurai, 2010, p. 384).*

In addition to the technology within *maquiladoras*, industrial assembly machines and the component parts they produce, the technoscape of the Juárez femicides is populated by (lack of) scientific technology, the internet, radio, television, and film. A number of victims were students at computer schools. The local medical examiner's office has suffered from a shocking lack of resources and knowledge for crime scene investigation and evidence preservation. Many groups have used websites and other internet technology to raise awareness and organize, the first of these being *Voces Sin Eco* (Voices without Echo), an organization founded by the sister of one of the victims. (Rodríguez, 2007) In the information age, countries have a harder time keeping a lid on their dirty laundry, so as news about the murders saturated the Mexican press, it was picked up by other sources, and international attention to the murders increased. Several television and film documentaries, as well as Hollywood movies, have been made about the femicides.<sup>2</sup> Radio stations have served as a sounding board for community outrage,

<sup>2</sup> *Señorita Extraviada (Missing Young Woman 2001)* is an excellent documentary on the murders, and 2009's *El Traspasado (Backyard)* was filmed in Juárez and based on recognizable people and events surrounding the murders. Hollywood movies include *The Virgin of Juárez* and *Bordertown*, both released in 2006.

have attempted to hold authorities accountable, and have even organized mass searches for the missing and murdered in the outskirts of the city, the latter because police often ignore leads or botch evidence gathering at newly discovered crime scenes. Because technoscapes overlap with mediascapes in the Juárez femicides, the role of communications technology and media organizations will be developed further in another section.

### **Ethnoscapes**

By '*ethnoscape*,' I mean the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree (Appadurai, 2010, p. 384).

People, of course, constitute the most important piece of the femicide puzzle. Extending Appadurai's definition, within ethnoscapes I include not only people, but their socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and the various hierarchies in which they are situated. Machismo and misogyny are often cited as the chief underlying causes of the femicides, but Mexico has suffered from both of these ills, to varying degrees, for hundreds of years. Yet serial femicide is dated to the early 90s. Either it has always existed and was underreported (a possibility), or something about the combination of people, place, profit, and time created a sort of perfect storm from which the murders exploded forth.

Many scholars explain the murders as a combination of social upheaval created by industrialization, and legacies of colonization and male domination of women. To begin with, the employment opportunities presented by international factories (100 of the *Forbes* top 500 multinationals are represented) attracted thousands of people to the border in a period of time so short that neither city infrastructure nor government could ever effectively cope. (Castañeda, 2004) Organization of work and the family was impacted by the rapid incorporation of women, mostly young, into the workforce. One group of Mexican authors contend that it was not ultra-rapid modernization that caused the upheaval, but *incomplete* modernization. In the foreword to a book about public security, sociologist Víctor Manuel Andrade Guevara explains: "This situation gave way to what the authors call 'pathologies of an incomplete modernization,' among which we can mention the destruction of the urban surroundings, the rupture of traditional work and family patterns and the fissure of an urban *machismo-villismo* that may have accentuated aggressive instincts regarding women, owing to partial economic displacement and the deterioration of their [men's] power (Betancourt, 2007, p. 21)"<sup>iv</sup>

The association of *maquila* work with women became so complete, that the work itself became gendered, with a variety of interesting consequences that emerged when factories started to hire more men and obtain a more equally distributed gender ratio, as Leslie Salzinger discusses.

It would be all too easy to see gender relations on the Anarchomex [a pseudonym for one of the *maquilas* in which she worked and researched undercover] shop floor as a simple reflection of those outside, for in many ways, Anarchomex's gendered practices feel like those of a Juárez street corner. The catcalls and

expectations of willing acceptance, the rule-bound, unequal, and mutual flirting, are relentlessly familiar—if somewhat more intense than the external norm. This “natural” appearance—the texture of an unreconstructed locale—is an illusion, however. Whatever the logic outside, the gender dynamics internally both implicitly and explicitly respond to internal conditions. There is nothing casual about male workers’ attitude toward their female counterparts in the plant. On the contrary, their determined sabotage of women workers in production and their intense insistence that women’s sexuality is a liability at work are both ultimately directed toward rectifying their embattled situation at work. Heterosexuality in Anarchomex is an arena where men can reclaim a piece of what they have lost elsewhere (Salzinger, 2003, p. 150).

### **Mediascapes**

*‘Mediascapes’ refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world; and to the images of the world created by these media (Appadurai 2010, p. 385).’*

The mediascapes found within the Juárez femicides are just as complex, if not more so, than the ethnoscapes. Here issues include who gets to speak for the city, and for victims, and what dominant narratives do they perpetuate? International press coverage is accused of being illegitimate by beleaguered authorities, who claim that it is a conspiracy of local and international NGO’s to exploit victims and raise money. Local radio stations have been involved in organizing searches for victims and questioning authorities on lack of progress. Some scholars ask if the quest for sales through graphic headlines re-victimizes and exploits the murdered women. They also contend that coverage reproduces violence by creating a constant state of fear and accompanying sense of helplessness. Alternative websites provide information that challenges the official story. When Hollywood gets involved, is it in a genuine effort to raise awareness, or is it just a part of publicity for their projects? The dimensions of this category are too numerous to explore here, but I would like to focus specifically on two issues: media representation and public reaction.

Alejandro Gutiérrez argues that the various points of view on the murders and the hypotheses that flow from them are based on the information, often false, disseminated through the media by government authorities. The media is a double-edged sword; he explains the consequences of this interaction thus:

It has given way to, through diverse media, the generation of myths and much disinformation about the homicides[sic]. For example, communication media have played an important role in the subject, since finally it was through this media that the phenomenon was publicly exposed in its origin; through publication of information many people have become aware of the gravity of it. Although some media have also been able to distance the subject from reality, substantially because they only reproduce or transcribe the versions of the diverse acts as, frequently, happens with government authorities- of the government of

Francisco Barrio (PAN) and Patricio Martínez (PRI)- that seek to play down reality with a political effort (Castañeda, 2004, p. 64).<sup>v</sup>

The media allows victims and their families to act as political actors, and witnesses to denounce crime that if denounced to the authorities, may never be investigated. However, several scholars argue that the way the issue has been portrayed in the media victimizes not only families of the murdered, but the entire population, by emphasizing the terror in which all seem to live. Domínguez- Ruvalcaba explains “the audiovisual media actually helps to solidify the idea of a general state of terror, which far from helping to reduce violence, instills fear in the population about their use of and interaction with public spaces. This in effect leads to surrendering the city, which is then perceived as a place of collective risk and danger (Domínguez-Ruvalcava & Corona, 2010, p. 60).”

### **Conclusion**

Violence against women is neither a new phenomenon, nor one exclusive to Juárez, yet by studying the femicides, particularly through the lens of Appadurai's five dimensions, we gain a sense of the myriad issues and processes that are part of globalization, and how these can combine in horrifying ways. The international attention garnered by the plight of victims and their families has strengthened focus on international legal frameworks and organizations' struggle to include women's protection from all forms of violence as a basic human right, free from excuses about cultural sovereignty. Whether the positive consequences of this particular moment on planet Earth can accomplish this essential goal remains to be seen, but as the case of the Juárez murders demonstrates, where there is horror, there is also hope and the passion to fight on.

This and all subsequent work is dedicated to all victims of violence, and the families and friends who survive to carry on their legacy and struggle.

## References

- Amnesty International. (2003, August 10). *Mexico: Intolerable Killings*. Retrieved April 26, 2010, from Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR41/026/2003/en/a62f0982-d6c3-11dd-ab95-a13b602c0642/amr410262003en.pdf>
- Appadurai, A. (2010). Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. In D. K. Thussu, *International communication* (pp. 383-392). New York: Routledge.
- Betancourt, J. A. (2007). *La seguridad pública local: inseguridad, delincuencia y participación ciudadana en Ciudad Juárez*. Juárez: Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez.
- Castañeda, G. G. (Ed.). (2004). *Violencia sexista*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Domínguez-Ruvalcava, H., & Corona, I. (Eds.). (2010). *Gender violence at the U.S.-Mexico border: media representation and public response*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Lugo, A. (2008). *Fragmented lives, assembled parts: culture, capitalism, and conquest at the U.S.-Mexico border*. Austin: The University of Texas Press.
- Monárrez Fragoso, J. E. (2009). *Trama de una injusticia*. Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Moreno, N. (2006). *Expedientes del feminicidio*. México D.F.: N. Moreno.
- Parrot, A., & Cummings, N. (2006). *Forsaken females: the global brutalization of women*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Rodriguez, T. (2007). *The daughters of Juárez*. New York: Atria Books.
- Salzinger, L. (2003). *Genders in production: making workers in Mexico's global factories*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Staudt, K., Payan, T., & Kruszewski, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Human rights along the U.S.-Mexico border: gendered violence and insecurity*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Washington Valdez, D. (2005). *Cosecha de mujeres*. Mexico D.F.: Editorial Oceano de Mexico.

## Endnotes:

---

<sup>i</sup> “Hay alguien en Juárez que no quiere que esclarezcan los asesinatos de mujeres y que los policías municipales no sigan investigando. Algo está pasando. Aquí hay alguien con mucho odio contra Juárez con mucho poder económico. Es un grupito que disfruta con el dolor de las mujeres, que disfruta viendo el asesinato de niñas en videos, y cuando uno estorba, cuando uno agrede a ese grupo poderoso, esto pasa.” (Washington Valdez, 2005, p. 208)

<sup>ii</sup> “¿Quiénes están detrás de los asesinatos? Por lo menos uno o más asesinos en serie, unos narcotraficantes, dos pandillas sádicas y violentas, y un grupo de hombres muy poderosos...” (ibid, p. 211)

iii “los grupos hegemónicos y el Estado laceraron discursivamente lo que ya había sido físicamente agraviado por los agresores; de igual manera, la complicidad entre los órganos de justicia y quienes fueron titulares de los diferentes organismos cuyo objetivo es el de garantizar la integridad y la vida de las mujeres se hicieron uno en contra de víctimas y familiares, y se ampararon en la hegemonía patriarcal y en la hegemonía capitalista para permitir toda una larga y dolorosa impunidad en Ciudad Juárez.” (Monárrez Fragoso, 2009, p. 292)

iv “Esta situación dio lugar a lo que los autores llaman ‘patologías de una modernización incompleta,’ entre las que podemos mencionar la desestructuración del entorno urbano, el quiebre de los patrones laborales y familiares tradicionales y la fisura de un machismo-villismo urbano que podría haber acentuado los instintos agresivos sobre las mujeres, debido al parcial desplazamiento económico y al deterioro de su poder.” (Betancourt, 2007, p. 21)

v “[H]a dado paso a que, a través de diversos medios, se generen mitos y mucha desinformación sobre los homicidios.[sic] Por ejemplo, los medios de comunicación han jugado un papel importante en el tema, pues finalmente fue a través de dichos medios que se ventiló públicamente el fenómeno en su origen; por medio de la publicación de informaciones mucha gente ha tomado conciencia de la gravedad del mismo. Aunque también algunos medios de comunicación han logrado distanciar el tema de la realidad, en buena medida porque sólo reproducen o transcriben las versiones de los diversos actos como, con frecuencia, sucede con las autoridades gubernamentales —del gobierno del panista Francisco Barrio y el priísta Patricio Martínez— que buscan minimizar la realidad con un afán político.” (Castañeda, 2004, p. 64)

## **Networks in the Digital Television Age: New Context, New Roles. The Case of the Spanish Industry**

**Enrique Guerrero**  
Universidad de Navarra, Spain  
[eguerrero@unav.es](mailto:eguerrero@unav.es)

---

### **Abstract**

After years of stable oligopoly, the main television broadcasters in Spain began to note changes in the market in the middle of the last decade. The emergence of new networks, the re-launch of digital terrestrial television (DTT), the boom in specialized channels and the proliferation of platforms such as online and mobile TV, which allow the broadcast of audiovisual contents, forced broadcast managers to change their strategy in relation to business models and production companies. The analysis in this article centres on two main points: on one hand, the transformation effected in the television industry by the advent of digitalization; and on the other hand, the role of networks in the new media environment. In April 2010, the Spanish broadcast system completed its transition from analogue to digital broadcasting and a new digital age dawned, marked by disruptive technologies and multimedia policies.

## **Networks in the Digital Television Age: New Context, New Roles. The Case of the Spanish Industry**

### **Introduction**

The relationships between networks and production companies (content suppliers) in Spain have developed over the course of the last fifty years in line with the demands and requirements of a television sector marked by a process of continuous transformation. Although they may at first have operated as rivals in the competition for business in content production, as their contexts and business profiles became more refined, each gradually adapted to its established role in the industry.

After a detailed historical approach, this article focuses on the field of television networks (broadcasters) – one of the main players in the audiovisual sector –, highlighting their distinctive features, the different modes of production on which their relationships are based, and the role they play in the multimedia environment. The purpose of this analysis is to explore the television business, which is undergoing a key moment due to several reasons such as the Internet-TV convergence and the digitization of the production and distribution processes. Although these phenomena were initially originated by technological factors, their consequences affect to the whole audiovisual industry and, more specifically, to the very core of the business – contents.

### **Historical Context**

When private networks began to broadcast in 1990, following thirty years of industry monopoly by public service broadcasters, they settled on a model that involved both the broadcasting of contents as well as content production. From the very beginning, such networks had full studio facilities and a wide range of staff, enabling them to offer a programme schedule based on internally produced contents – that is, programmes made using the network's own technical and human resources. The definition of the television network as both production company and broadcaster not only framed it as a potential client for independent production companies, but also as another competitor in the same field. Nevertheless, the implementation of this model, a carbon copy of the system prevalent in the public television sector, involved such high maintenance costs that it soon proved to be financially unsustainable. The new operators experienced financial difficulties for the first time shortly after their establishment, and sought to deal with such problems by restructuring the company's shares scheme and by modifying the network image (Guerrero, 2010: 161).

Despite the wide-ranging infrastructure at their disposal, the new television companies were unable, in practice, to provide twenty-four hour programming. The costs involved were so much higher than they could afford to take on that they were obliged to devote a significant proportion of their schedules to the broadcasting of externally produced contents. However, not only did the new model prove unsustainable for private networks, but also for Televisión Española (TVE), the national public service broadcaster in Spain, which continued to operate according to the old monopoly-era system in the new competitive environment, thus increasing its debt year on year (Tijeras, 2005: 112-113).

To a greater or lesser extent, all the networks in the television sector availed of the same solution: the externalization of production was seen as a way to cut costs while continuing to exercise control over contents. Independent production proved itself to be an efficient system that enabled the networks to acquire contents designed to meet their programming needs and corporate image without having to take on the resources directly, thus reducing the maintenance costs that might be involved.

This development in production strategy marked the beginning of a new stage in the relationships between television networks and production companies, which began to define and refine their activities during the 1990s. While the networks outsourced more and more content production to external production companies, and shaped their business around content broadcasting and the sale of advertising time, production companies became the main content suppliers. Nevertheless, despite dramatic growth in the field of independent production, the relationships between broadcasters and production companies failed to strike a mature balance. Although the fragmentation of the industrial fabric brought about by the proliferation of production companies may have been compensated for by the concentration of production activity in a limited number of companies, the television networks and production companies failed to establish stable, ongoing ties over the years. This failure was largely due to constant changes in programming strategies and in network management structures (Sánchez-Taberno, 1997: 69), as well as to inherent business limitations at most production companies.

However, this situation was to change dramatically halfway through the first decade of the twenty-first century. The emergence of new networks, the re-launch of digital terrestrial television (DTT), the boom in specialized channels and the proliferation of platforms such as online and mobile TV, which allow the broadcast of audiovisual contents, forced broadcast managers to change their strategy in relation to production companies as well as their own business models.

The increase in competition and the sense of uncertainty prompted by the emergence of a new network (La Sexta), whose main shareholder comprised a consortium of production companies, led the other networks to establish strategic alliances with particular production companies so as to ensure company loyalty, to take over existing production companies or to create their own production affiliates that would be managed by trusted personnel from the parent network. As a result, large audiovisual and multimedia groups were set up, with broadcast operators and production companies linked in a vertical structure.

Moreover, in light of the legislative change authorising mergers between operators introduced in 2009, such vertical integration was mirrored by horizontal development, prompting a series of mixed integration initiatives, which in turn further reinforced the prevailing oligopoly structure in the industry and the audiovisual market. Thus, the sector as such is fragmented, comprising hundreds of small companies, and at the same time, however, it is dominated by a small number of large, powerful multimedia groups. The new context shaped by the changes that have taken place in the industry requires a redefinition of the concept of independent production and, indeed, of the conventional classification of production modes.

### **The Development of the TV Programming Range**

The range of programming broadcast on television in Spain has been expanding steadily since regular broadcasts on public television began in 1956. The establishment of the first regional television channels in 1980 and, in particular, the introduction of the law regulating private television in 1988 mark the tipping point of this expansion. 1990 is also notable as the year in which private channels began to broadcast on a regular basis. Such expansion continued throughout the 1990s with the establishment of new regional operators and an increase in the number of channels available on other platforms such as cable and satellite. However, the next significant milestone in the history of communications in Spain took place in 2005 with the emergence of two new, national general-interest channels and the re-launch of DTT – DVB-T standard – (Fernández-Quijada, 2009).

Nevertheless, a comprehensive account of the complexity of the change prompted by the digitalization of terrestrial television and how it has altered the range of channels available to viewers depends on a return to the first, defining moment: 1998, the year in which the first National Technical Plan for Digital Terrestrial Television was approved. In practical terms, however, DTT did not go into operation until 1999, when the government awarded a broadcasting license to Quiero TV, a pay-per-view DTT platform. Finally, only one year later, in 2000, digital licenses were awarded to two national open-access networks: Veo TV and Net TV. Thus, along with the United Kingdom and Sweden, Spain was to play a pioneering role in the development of DTT in Europe (Caballero Trenado, 2007).

Despite such pioneering development however, it soon became clear that the model proposed for the implementation of the new system in Spain was not viable (Brown & Picard, 2005). Because of strong competition in the pay-per-view television sector, the platform that was to act as the basis for DTT – Quiero TV – failed to take off successfully. Its main competitors were two satellite platforms, Canal Satélite Digital and Vía Digital, a number of cable operators circumscribed by geographical area, and the encoded analogue channel Canal +. Definitive proof that so many pay-per-view operators could not survive in a market such as Spain came with the merger of the two satellite platforms, which began in 2002 and was completed in 2003 with the launch of Digital + (Artero Muñoz, 2008; Peñafiel, López & Fernández de Arroyabe, 2005; Herrero, 2003; Arrojo Baliña, 2008). Moreover, the pay-per-view DTT model that emerged in the late 1990s proved as unsustainable in other European countries as in Spain. For instance, the ITV Digital platform (previously known as ONdigital) in the United Kingdom collapsed and was re-launched as the open-access service Freeview in 2002 (Given & Norris, 2010).

Quiero TV began broadcasting in May 2000. Only two short years later, however, in June 2002, it ceased operations on the verge of bankruptcy, facing a debt of €400 million that it was unable to pay off. Thus, the process of digital transition stalled, and Spain went from being a front-runner in the field to a trailing position (Soto Sanfiel & Ribes i Guàrdia, 2003; Prado, 2005; Marzal Felici & Casero Ripollés, 2007; Urretavizcaya Hidalgo, 2008).

Digital broadcasting on Veo TV and Net TV began between April and June 2002, and on national general-interest networks, which had committed themselves to such

broadcasting when their licenses had been renewed two years previously. TVE, Tele 5, Antena 3 and Canal + began to broadcast in simulcast – that is, to broadcast the same contents through both systems, analogue and digital. However, given the lack of new contents and the insufficient availability of digital decoders in Spanish homes, this strategy failed to foster the further development of DTT. In 2004, one year before the re-launch of digital television, the TV range available in Spain was as follows:

**Table 1. The television range available in Spain in 2004**

<b>NATIONAL</b>		
<b>Free to air terrestrial broadcasting</b>		
<b>GROUP</b>	<b>CHANNEL</b>	<b>BROADCASTING</b>
<b>RTVE</b>	TVE 1	Simulcast
	La 2	Simulcast
<b>Antena 3 TV</b>	Antena 3	Simulcast
<b>Gestevisión Telecinco</b>	Tele 5	Simulcast
<b>Net TV</b>	Net TV	Digital
<b>Vevo TV</b>	Vevo TV	Digital
<b>Encoded terrestrial broadcasting</b>		
<b>GROUP</b>	<b>CHANNEL</b>	<b>BROADCASTING</b>
<b>Sogecable</b>	Canal +	Simulcast
<b>Pay-per-view satellite TV platform</b>		
Digital +	66 channels plus Video On Demand	
<b>IPTV operator</b>		
Imagenio (Telefónica)		
<b>Cable operators</b>		
Ono		
Auna		
<b>Satellite TV</b>		
Intelsat, Eutelsat, Hispasat, Astra, Arabsat, Sirius, etcetera.		
<b>REGIONAL</b>		
Analogue		12
Digital		1
Simulcast		1
Channels in development		6
Cable operators		3
<b>LOCAL</b>		
Affiliated with national networks		354
Affiliated with regional networks		195
Independent stations		665
DTT licenses to be awarded		1,064

Source: *Anuario SGAE 2005*.

A new legislative impetus for digital technology in Spain was introduced in 2005, when the National Technical Plan for Digital Terrestrial Television was approved by Royal Decree 944/2005 on 29 July, replacing the law that had been passed in 1998. This Plan set out the grounds for the implementation of DTT and described the conditions by which the channels that had been left dormant following the closure of Quiero TV were to be regulated. These conditions were agreed at the meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 25 November 2005, at which it was also decided that digital broadcasting would

begin on 30 November. Based on this new audiovisual model, the TV range available in Spain was as follows:

**Table 2. The television range available in Spain in 2005**

<b>NATIONAL</b>		
<b>Free to air terrestrial broadcasting</b>		
<b>GROUP</b>	<b>CHANNEL</b>	<b>BROADCASTING</b>
<b>RTVE</b>	TVE 1	Simulcast
	La 2	Simulcast
	Teledeporte	Digital
	24 Horas	Digital
	Clan/50 Años	Digital
<b>Antena 3 TV</b>	Antena 3	Simulcast
	Neox	Digital
	Nova	Digital
<b>Gestevisión Tele 5</b>	Tele 5	Simulcast
	Tele 5 Sport	Digital
	Tele 5 Estrellas	Digital
<b>Sogecable</b>	Cuatro	Simulcast
	CNN +	Digital
	40 Latino	Digital
<b>La Sexta</b>	In development	Simulcast
	In development	Digital
<b>Net TV</b>	Net TV	Digital
	Fly Music	Digital
<b>Vevo TV</b>	Vevo TV	Digital
	Vevo TV	Digital
<b>Pay-per-view satellite TV platform</b>		
Digital +	77 channels plus Video On Demand	
<b>IPTV operator</b>		
Imagenio (Telefónica)		
<b>Cable operator</b>		
Ono		
<b>Satellite TV</b>		
Intelsat, Eutelsat, Hispasat, Astra, Arabsat, Sirius, Vava, etcetera.		
<b>Mobile TV - DVB-H (trial broadcasting)</b>		
14 channels: TVE 1, La 2, Antena 3, Tele 5, Cuatro, Teledeporte, CNN +, 24 Horas de TVE, 40 TV, Factoría de Ficción, Intereconomía, Jetix and several regional channels		
<b>REGIONAL</b>		

Analogue	13
Digital	15
Simulcast	2
Channels in development	7
Cable operators	3
<b>LOCAL</b>	
Affiliated with national networks	426
Affiliated with regional networks	210
Independent stations	665
DTT licenses to be awarded	1,064

Source: *Anuario SGAE 2006*.

A comparative analysis of the channels available in 2004 (Table 1) and 2005 (Table 2) discloses market growth in numerical terms, as well as in the complexity of the sector. This trend was to intensify in succeeding years as more digital licenses were awarded. Given that the analogue option wasn't definitively terminated until April 2010, Table 2 provides information on a television range that is still in a state of transition.

Moreover, the awarding of licenses in 2005 prompted some networks to change their commercial name(s) and programming content strategies as a result. These innovations will persist in practice until the emerging market shaped by recent developments begins to coalesce and the process by which licenses and frequencies are granted comes to an end. Therefore, the range of channels available will continue to expand, including interactive options, according to the 2005 National Technical Plan for Digital Terrestrial Television (Table 3). In light of the foregoing, it may be concluded that the legislation adopted in Spain prioritizes the expansion of the TV range in numerical terms or multicasting (Hart, 2010: 11) over technical quality standards in broadcasting, although there are some HD channels (High Definition).

The new measures set out in Law 7/2009 (3 July 2009) should also be taken into account in this regard, a set of urgent measures adopted in relation to telecommunications which facilitates mergers between operators managing multiple licenses; as should the provisions detailed in Royal Decree-Law 11/2009 (13 August 2009), whereby the broadcast of pay-per-view contents on one of the assigned channels is authorized. However, the General Law for Audiovisual Communication passed in 2010 envisions the extension of pay-per-view broadcasting to up to 50% of such licensed broadcasters. Thus, the DTT range available in Spain would follow a mixed model, comprising a combination of open-access and pay-per-view channels. The first pay-per-view digital television network to begin broadcasting in Spain was Gol TV (football), followed by AXN and Canal + Dos. The development of national television channels during the period 2005-2010 is presented in the following table:

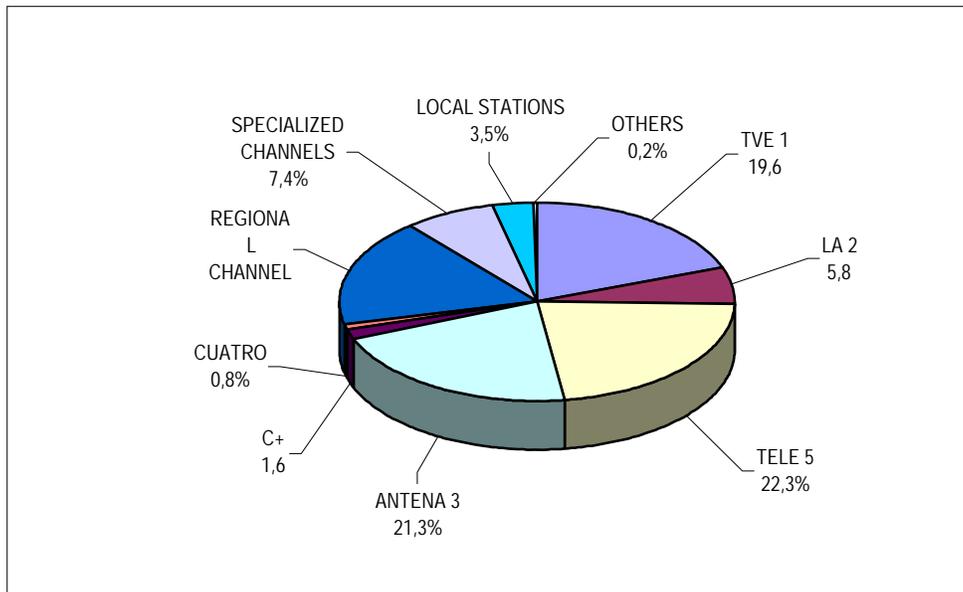
**Table 3. Development in the range of DTT national channels (2005-2010)**

GROUP	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>RTVE</b>	TVE 1	TVE 1	TVE 1	TVE 1	TVE 1
	TVE 2	TVE 2	TVE 2	TVE 2	TVE 2
	Teledeporte	Teledeporte	Teledeporte	Teledeporte	Teledeporte
	24 Horas	24 Horas	24 Horas	24 Horas	24 Horas
	Clan/50 Años	Clan/50 Años	Clan	Clan	Clan
<b>Antena 3</b>	Antena 3	Antena 3	Antena 3	Antena 3	Antena 3
	Antena Neox	Antena Neox	Antena Neox	Antena Neox	Neox 8
	Antena Nova	Antena Nova	Antena Nova	Antena Nova	Nova 9
<b>Tele 5</b>	Tele 5	Tele 5	Tele 5	Tele 5	Tele 5
	Tele 5 Sport	Tele 5 Sport	Tele 5 Sport	Tele 5 <sup>2</sup>	La 7
	Tele 5 Estrellas	Tele 5 Estrellas	Tele 5 Estrellas	FDF	FDF
	:	:	:	Cincoshop	Cincoshop
<b>Sogecable</b>	Cuatro	Cuatro	Cuatro	Cuatro	Cuatro
	CNN +	CNN +	CNN +	CNN +	CNN+
	40 Latino	40 Latino	40 Latino	40 Latino	40 Latino
	:	:	:	Promo	Canal Club
<b>La Sexta</b>	In development	La Sexta	La Sexta	La Sexta	La Sexta
	In development	Telehit	Hogar 10	Hogar 10	Gol TV
<b>Net TV</b>	Net TV	Net TV	Net TV	Intereconomía TV	Intereconomía TV
	Fly Music	Fly Music	Fly Music	Disney Channel	Disney Channel
<b>Vevo TV</b>	Vevo TV	Vevo TV	Vevo TV	Vevo TV	Vevo TV 7
	Intereconomía TV	Sony Entertainment TV	Sony Entertainment TV	Sony Entertainment TV	Sony Entertainment TV
	:	Tienda en Vevo	Tienda en Vevo	Tienda en Vevo	Tienda en Vevo

Source: Personal compilation.

Although general-interest networks continue to predominate in the national market, a further feature of the sector is shaped by audience fragmentation and the segmentation of the television range available. The ideal conditions required for the emergence of this twofold phenomenon are facilitated by the type of market above, in which the range on offer is so wide. This phenomenon involves the proliferation of “second generation” channels, whose programming targets specific niche audiences, and themed channels, which offer specialized contents for clearly defined audiences, as well as a wider distribution of the audience across available channels, thus leading to a decrease in screen-time assigned to the general-interest range. In 2005, the audience-share ratings were as follows:

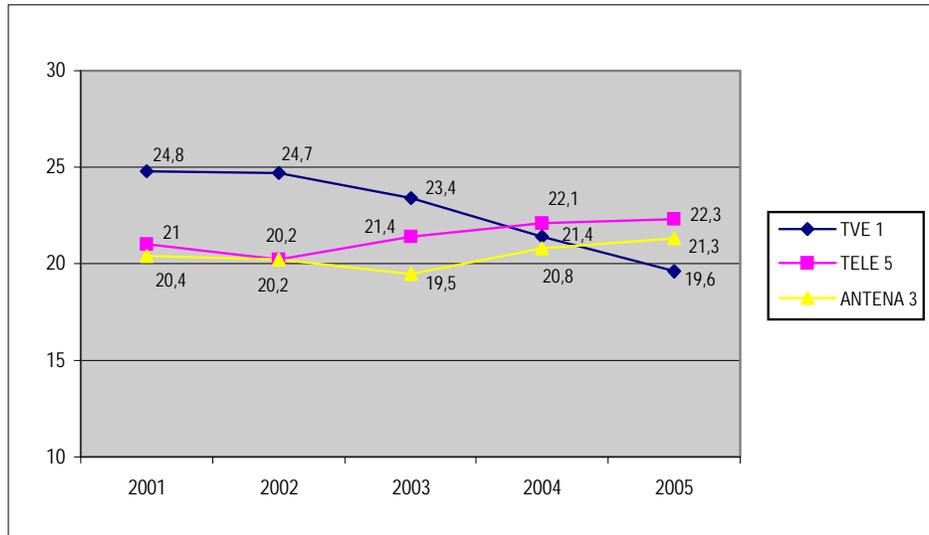
**Graph 1. Audience-share Ratings (2005)**



Source: *Anuario SGAE 2006*.

However, that year, the audience ratings for specialized channels had not yet begun to take off. Graphic 2 shows that until 2005 the trend was towards further growth in the main private networks, largely as a result of the decline in the public channel TVE 1.

**Graph 2. Changes in audience-share ratings for TVE 1, Tele 5 and Antena 3 (2001–2005)**

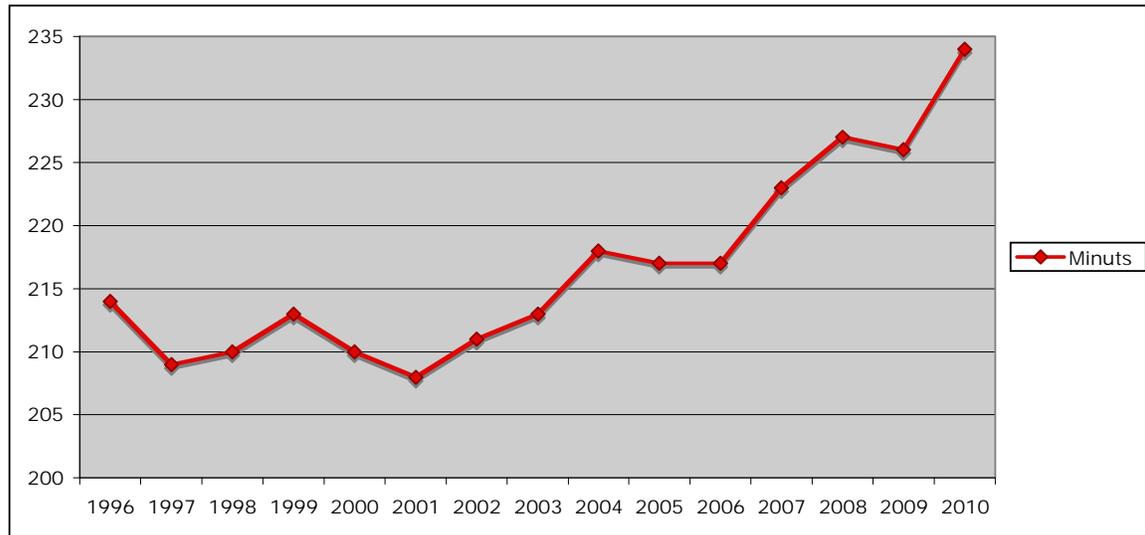


Source: SGAE.

Nevertheless, just five years later, in 2010, once the digital switchover was completed, the three largest national networks (La 1 – former TVE 1 –, Tele 5 and Antena 3) had a combined share of only 42.3%, wherein La 1 was the market leader with a relatively low figure of 16%. Furthermore, DTT theme-based channels as a set had an average annual share of 18.5% in 2010 (Barlovento Comunicación, 2011).

These shifts may be attributed to the fragmentation brought about by the expansion in the television range on offer, which was prompted in turn by the rapid development of DTT. As access to digital television increased, a greater proportion of the audience could avail of a higher number of channels, thus giving rise to the process of fragmentation outlined above.

During the same timeframe, moreover, record levels of television consumption were reached: the average Spanish television viewer watched television for 234 minutes per day in 2010, 17 minutes more than in 2005, a figure which broke the previous record of 227 minutes per day in 2008 (Graphic 3). Given that no direct relation between the increase in the range on audiovisual offer and television consumption had yet been established, this fact is of particular significance.

**Graph 3. Growth in television consumption in Spain (1996–2010)**

Source: TNS, SGAE & Barlovento Comunicación.

This is a broad brushstroke sketch of the context in which the large general-interest networks in Spain (TVE 1, Tele 5 and Antena 3) were operating until the legal reforms of the audiovisual model in 2005 disrupted the comfortable oligopoly that had held sway, which were followed in turn by the onset of the economic crisis. Despite the fact that private television companies in Spain broke all national records for income and profitability in 2005, both income and profits went into steep decline only one year later, although the overall results remained satisfactory. In fact, 2006 had seen the emergence of two new national channels, Cuatro and La Sexta, and the re-launch of DTT (*Noticias de la comunicación*, 2007). However, some years later, in 2010, due to financial difficulties, Cuatro was taken over by Tele 5, the leading audiovisual group in Spain (Vertele, 2010).

The situation for TVE, on the other hand, was entirely different. The management model followed at the national public broadcaster was altered by State Law 17/2006 on Radio and Television, which was designed to rein in further debt, to adapt staffing to real production requirements, and to ensure structured and viable economic management.

As a result of this thorough-going legal reform, RTVE (Radio Televisión Española) is to be managed as a public corporation. It means as a state company regulated by the legislation laid down for all limited companies, whose social capital pertains exclusively to the State. This law reasserted the public service remit of State television which, at the same time, continues to aim at attracting as high an audience as possible.

The mixed funding model was retained in the new law, comprising mainly revenue from advertising in addition to financing assigned in the General Budget of the State. Nevertheless, this point was re-visited in Law 8/2009 (28 August 2009) on Funding for the RTVE Corporation, which removed advertising from the public service

airwaves, a decision which came into effect in 2010 amid significant questions and criticism from the European Commission.

To compensate for this development, the new funding model states that the contribution made by the State is to be supplemented by a percentage of the incomes earned by private television operators and telecommunications companies. By law, commercial television operators are to transfer 3% of their income (reduced to 1.5% in the case of pay-per-view broadcasters), while telecommunications companies are to contribute 0.9% of their income. Moreover, other sources of funding are also encompassed by the law, including donations and subsidies, income generated by RTVE's activities, products and the profits on its assets, and a percentage of the broadcasting rate paid by licensees. Unlike TVE, Antena 3 and Tele 5 are in legal terms private limited companies, which have been floated on the stock exchange since 2003 and 2004, respectively.

As is clear from the detailed discussion above, given the state of ongoing change, the recent history of the range of television programming on offer in Spain is intense and complex. In the following section, the distinctive features that establish networks as the main players in the television industry are described.

### **The Distinctive Features of TV Networks**

Following the account above of the television programming range on offer, an analysis of the distinctive features of the networks as content producers, distributors and broadcasters is pertinent. One of the main features of television companies is the diversification of their business. Although the primary role of networks in the television industry has been to work as broadcast operators, their business cannot be reduced to this function alone. While their main role is to bridge the gap between content production and the products viewed by the audience, the operators in this sector are more than broadcasters. Their role encompasses other functions such as distribution and production (Barroso García, 2002: 32).

The increase in the number of channels on offer and the consequent fragmentation of the market have rendered the achievement of high audience ratings very difficult, a condition which may in turn compromise the ability to generate advertising revenue (Sánchez-Tabernero, 1997: 205). Thus, the networks have been forced to diversify their business and attribute greater importance to the distribution of their program back-catalogues so as to tap new income streams (Arnanz, 2002: 15).

Nevertheless, the vast majority of television programs tend to become soon outdated products whose commercial lifespan is limited to broadcast at a particular time in the programming schedule, along with repeat broadcasts during timeslots that are less valuable in revenue terms and/or on less popular channels. The re-launch of DTT in Spain has led to the emergence of a form of domestic syndication, whereby programs are re-broadcast on smaller channels which, in general, belong to the same audiovisual group on which the program(s) were first screened.

In addition to this extended range of opportunities for repeat broadcasts, the development of new platforms such as mobile phones and the Internet imply a need to re-think television entertainment itself. It implies to move from a model in which "disposable" and creatively limited products are commercialized on only one platform in

only one market, to one in which higher quality contents are created for distribution on a number of platforms in a number of international markets. “The most successful audiovisual products are conceived as wide-ranging projects with the potential to draw revenue throughout the value chain in many countries” (Sánchez-Taberner, 2008: 274). While the market in entertainment formats at the moment is robust, the same cannot be said for the situation in relation to programs produced in the past.

A change of the kind outlined above would establish a new and significant revenue stream for networks through the sale of back-catalogues. Indeed, in light of the limitations that impinge on network business in the international sale of formats, the concerted exploitation of archives of previously produced contents takes on even greater significance. In the standard division of rights between network and production company, the network is given the right to the “tape” and the production company retains the right to the format (where the format is original to the production company in question).

The Executive Director of Boomerang TV, Encarna Pardo, argues that production companies may only sell the format, “since the recording is always network property” (E. Pardo, personal communication, June, 2008). Daniel Acuña, the entertainment program manager at another Spanish production company, Videomedia, makes a similar observation: the division of rights “depends on the clauses in the contract signed by the network, but the normal situation is that the production company has no right to the recording” (D. Acuña, personal communication, June, 2008).

However, no clear consensus emerges from the consultations with executive producers carried out as part of this research project with regard to whether the rights to the produced content are exclusive to the network or if they may be shared with the production company. In fact, network executive producers tend to favour the former interpretation, while executive producers with production companies tend to assert the latter. In relation to the rights to the program format, the majority agree that they pertain to the production company (this information comes from questionnaires completed by executive producers at networks and production companies in Spain, 2008).

Nevertheless, in the case of larger production companies, which have correspondingly higher power at the negotiating table, the rights to the program produced are more likely to be shared. This view was articulated by a number of executive producers, including Ramón González, a veteran executive producer at Tele 5, who commented on the negotiation of such rights as follows: “Rights are shared in terms of percentages. It’s not an exact science. Negotiating with Gestmusic-Endemol is very different to negotiating with 3Koma. Gestmusic can negotiate with the network as an equal. But with small production companies like 3Koma, the network can dictate its own terms” (R. González, personal communication, June, 2008).

With regard to the network’s production activity, the most common mode of entertainment content production is through external, partnered production, which requires close collaboration between both parties. In general terms, in this mode of production, the network allies itself with a given production company or delegates to it the responsibility for content production, supplying resources to the level set out in the production agreement signed between them (Bustamante, 1999: 107-109; Sáinz Sánchez, 1999: 73; Fernández Díez & Martínez Abadía, 1994: 76-80).

A further defining feature of the network as a main player in the sector is that it retains control over content production, playing its part as the principal investor. Given its mediating role between creator and audience, the broadcasting operator has a certain status of power and privilege with respect to the production company. However, the competitive edge afforded by such status has diminished due to two factors:

- a) As a result of the success of their TV shows and the development of their own infrastructure, large production companies such as Gestmusic-Endemol and Globomedia, the principal providers of entertainment contents in Spain, have become major players in the industry, with significant negotiating power in dealing with the networks. Moreover, the privileged status of Globomedia is further enhanced by the fact that it is a shareholder in a broadcasting operator: La Sexta.
- b) To a certain extent, the emergence of new content distribution platforms spells the end of the monopoly once held by broadcasting operators and undermines their power as gatekeepers (Palmer, 2006: 80-81). While television remains the main means by which a large audience may be reached, the global and viral potential of the Internet reflects its capacity to reach audiences in the millions.

Whether professionally produced or user-generated, contents specifically designed for online distribution have become Internet sensations, whereas the distribution of television-based products is compromised by the need for local negotiation of copyright and commercialization. Techniques such as Digital Rights Management (DRM) and geo-blocking have been implemented in this regard (Palmer, 2006: 122-126).

Designed to protect authorial copyright, DRM is a digital restriction that prevents the transfer of contents to unauthorized appliances, compromises attempts to copy such contents, or applies a 'deadline' to the product in terms of time or number of viewings. Geo-blocking, on the other hand, is a technical constraint that enacts legal restrictions, preventing online viewing or downloading anywhere in the world. The user is localized and identified by the IP (Internet Protocol) used to access the Internet. Only those who live in geographical areas for which distribution agreements have been established may access the contents. Thus, geo-blocking sustains the complex system of negotiation and distribution of audiovisual contents currently in place throughout the world. This system is based on specific agreements for each geographical area and television model, whereby broadcasting operators retain exclusive control of such products. While this method does indeed protect contents and the respective copyrights, it fails to avail of the Internet's potential to facilitate access to a global audience and, at the same time, fosters illegal downloading in areas or markets that lack access to online sales and rental sites such as iTunes or streaming content aggregators similar to Hulu.

While the consensus among network executive producers and their counterparts working for production companies with regard to editorial control over the contents produced is that it is shaped by mutual agreement between both sides (questionnaires completed by executive producers at networks and production companies in Spain, 2008), as Manuel Aguilera, entertainment program production manager at Grundy, avers, "the network always has the last word" (M. Aguilera, personal communication, June,

2008). Not only does the network retain such control over the product because it is the broadcasting medium by which the audience may access the content, but also because it supplies the means of production in production partnership agreements and, furthermore, because it is the agent that funds product development (Barroso García, 2002: 33; Cantor & Cantor, 1992). This position explains why legal ownership and the rights to use of the TV program and its ancillary products pertain to the network, whereas the production company receives financial compensation referred to as an industrial profit (Medina Laverón, 2005: 235; Álvarez Monzoncillo & Iwens, 1992: 36).

Nevertheless, so as to adapt to the emerging audiovisual environment and any decline in editorial control, television networks have taken a series of measures to restructure their business model by forming strategic alliances with particular production companies and establishing large multimedia groups that comprise a wide range of content distribution platforms, in which the television company is the core division.

Although such vertical integration is not an especially innovative strategy in the audiovisual industry – in fact it has become more and more widespread in Europe since the deregulation of television markets in the 1990s –, the approach acquired particular significance since 2000. In light of market liberalization and the proliferation of new channels and networks on offer, the emergence of new production companies was foreseeable from the beginning of the 1990s onwards, likewise that such companies were likely to merge for reasons of productivity and profitability (Álvarez Monzoncillo & Iwens, 1992: 166). However, in 2010, in addition to purely financial concerns, the situation was marked by a further set of factors relating to strategic control of contents.

Since it is specific TV shows which generate viewer loyalty, rather than the channel or platform on which they are broadcast, audiovisual contents become even more valuable in a market experiencing dramatic growth (Medina Laverón, 2005: 180). The strategic potential of a given audiovisual content figures it as a product that may be commercialized over time and on a wide range of platforms:

In abstract terms, content becomes the most important benchmark of value in the television sector. And moreover, it is assigned new functions: to extend the product lifecycle, to encompass all distribution platforms, to integrate in a variety of ways with other products so as to form complete experience packages, and to identify social audience segments wherever they may be found. Any product capable of capturing the interest of a significant number of users is to be amplified by any means available until its potential has been exhausted. In contrast, the previous simpler model consisted of one-time broadcast with occasional repeats (Arnanz, 2002: 56).

Given this situation, programming contents with the potential to attract an audience that is both loyal and able to generate new users would appear to be the most effective way for a network to stand out from the crowd of its competitors. The application of the concept of “seriality” is especially important in this regard, not only because of the financial benefits such standardized production may generate, but also because of the viewer loyalty earned through the repetition involved in the programming strategy of these types of TV shows (Cortés Lahera, 1999: 157-161).

However, the loyalty potential of given contents should not be limited to the main broadcasting platform. Rather, its effect should be echoed through all possible integrated

platforms within the same audiovisual group – not merely as a marketing strategy, but as part of the normal commercial life of the product.

Consideration of media convergence and the need to create multimedia formats that can be exploited on different platforms in a coordinated way, from the drawing board onwards, is relevant in this regard (Guerrero, 2008: 307-308). However, television continues to be the core division in this multi-platform business. As the main broadcasting channel in audiovisual groups, it is both engine and launch-pad for the success of all the contents in all media (Arnanz, 2002: 36).

Not only do the business groups built around conventional networks include distribution channels. They also comprise content production companies, some of which were set up by the business itself and others that had previously operated in the market. The three most common forms of integration or association are as follows:

- a) The network acquires a significant, though not majority, shareholding in a production company.
- b) The network acquires 100% – or almost 100% – of the social capital, whereby the production company becomes an affiliate of the audiovisual group.
- c) Both parties sign a partnership agreement, for preferred or exclusive production.

Thus, as has been noted above, networks are no longer simple operators functioning through a single channel of terrestrial broadcasting. They have become media groups, with a greater need for new contents. This shift has prompted a change in the business model: more production at lower costs, and a re-evaluation of market niches.

The re-launch of DTT in Spain at the end of 2005 proved to be the tipping-point in this regard. Since then, along with all other licensed operators, TVE, Tele 5 and Antena 3 have made a package of channels available through digital broadcasting, wherein each channel has a particular profile and a complementary programming schedule. In practice, the digital range offered by each audiovisual group comprises its general-interest channel and a suite of other, more specialized channels. In general, each operator's groundbreaking content is first screened on the main channel, followed by repeats and/or ancillary contents on the minor ones. However, the success of a particular program may sometimes send this process into reverse: from minor channel to main.

This increase in the range of programming on offer gives rise, first of all, to a more complex competitive environment and, as a result, to further audience fragmentation. Thus, the shift from the management of a single channel to a suite of channels is the most significant change experienced by television companies, and this in turn involves modifications to production and programming policies.

In terms of production, the primary effect is a general decrease in budgets. Hence, more efficient work processes must be implemented so as to ensure, in so far as possible, that lower budget margins do not compromise the quality of the end-product. Given that capturing the interest of very large audiences has become even more challenging, audience fragmentation must be seen as a threat to the company's capacity to generate advertising revenue, a development that is reflected in a corresponding decrease in production budgets (Arnanz, 2002: 57). Since channels within the same audiovisual group begin to function as mutual competitors, the changes to programming are no less significant. Those responsible for programming must strike a fine balance between the different schedules the network markets as distinct brands, to strive to ensure that they

complement one another, and – at the same time – to outdo the range of programming offered by its competitors.

On the other hand, while such changes may leave the audiovisual business model facing a number of intractable difficulties, the new situation also affords a significant number of opportunities. The total number of viewers calculated from the figures for each channel may even reflect an increase in the network audience as a whole. Thus, micro-business approaches may comprise a significant new opportunity for television companies, and enable new commercial strategies including, for instance, the coordinated sale of advertising space across a number of different platforms. Given that it enables relatively low-cost broadcasting to smaller audiences, thus affording new opportunities in terms of profitability, the Internet may prove to be television's great ally.

The challenges implicit in the digitalization of television and the need to broadcast on other platforms have forced broadcasting operators to become transmedia groups, whose functions extend beyond television activity in itself. This development is reflected, for example, in the Antena 3 Group's description of itself on the corporate section of its website: Antena 3 "has a presence in all the main means of communication: television, radio, cinema, the Internet, and digital terrestrial television" (<http://www.grupoantena3.com>).

Such expansion of the television business is reflected as a matter of course in changes to the structure of management teams. Therefore, a number of operators have reformed their management structures. Tele 5, for example, has transitioned from a vertical structure designed to manage a single channel to a horizontal structure comprising a number of divisions, all of which answer to an overarching contents management team. According to Manuel Villanueva, the General Manager of Contents at Tele 5, these divisions "will address the needs of all the content distribution channels, from television networks– the established channels as well as the new DTT ones – to film production and new media, especially the Internet" (*Vertele*, 2008). The new management structure centers on a core production division, which nurtures all content production on all the platforms that comprise the multimedia group: television, the Internet, mobile devices and the cinema industry.

Given the new context described in some detail above, the Internet emerges as the audiovisual company's natural ally. The Web has become the logical field of expansion for television operators, whose initial, straightforward promotional web-pages have been transformed into interactive, multimedia platforms. With the passage of time, *rtve.es*, *telcinco.es* and *antena3.com* have begun to emerge as new means of communication in their own right. Although the close ties between channel and website are unbroken and both avail of content synergy, the latter has established a certain degree of autonomy with respect to the former.

In the beginning, because of concerns relating to author's rights and copyright, television networks were reluctant to facilitate content availability on the Internet. However, from 2007-2008 onwards, the Internet came to be seen as a new source of income and a new platform for promotion, as well as enriching viewer experience as a whole. Not only did the first tests in which contents were previewed on the Web show that there was no decrease in the audience for television broadcasts; rather, their success on the Internet was later confirmed by excellent television audience ratings. An example

in this regard is the fifth season of the *Los hombres de Paco*, which was released on Antena 3's website a few days before its screening on the network's main television channel: more than a million viewers accessed it online and the television broadcast had a primetime audience share of 24%. Moreover, the record for television consumption in Spain was broken in 2008 and, again, in 2010 (Barlovento Comunicación, 2008 & 2011), which illustrates the fact that a wider audiovisual range need not have a negative impact on conventional television viewing time, and indicates that the two platforms – television and the Internet – are complementary.

### **Conclusions**

The television industry in Spain has been in a constant state of development for more than fifty years. During this period, the two main players in the sector – networks and production companies – have defined their respective roles and shaped their intertwined production relations. At the same time, the range of television programming on offer has undergone continuous expansion, giving rise to an ever more complex market and industrial fabric. The twofold effect of this evolving situation comprises audience fragmentation and programming segmentation, although large, national general-interest networks continue to predominate in the sector.

These trends were reinforced in 2005 when new licenses were awarded with the further implementation of DTT. Many of these licenses were granted to theme-based channels. Although for many years the expansion of the programming range on offer did not give rise to a corresponding increase in television consumption, the proliferation of digital channels promoted an increase in the average amount of time spent on television viewing, which reached a new daily record of 234 minutes in 2010. Moreover, the number of channels on offer has not yet peaked or stabilized: the definitive transition to digital broadcasting was only completed in 2010, when the license award process was still ongoing. Thus, the following clear conclusion may be drawn: Spanish law has favored quantity in programming range (multicasting) over the technical quality of broadcasting, whereby high definition is relegated to just a few networks. In addition, that the list of channels available to viewers may still vary should also be taken into account. Such variation may arise from the window for mergers between operators opened in 2009, and as a result of the establishment of pay-per-view DTT channels which may be bundled and offered on a single platform.

Given these conditions, so as to achieve the same results in a climate of new risks, the leading networks (La 1, Tele 5 and Antena 3) have been forced to diversify their business. The primary function of such television companies is to broadcast contents. However, their business now also encompasses such functions as production and distribution. Irrespective of the production strategy and the agreement(s) reached between network and production company, as the main investor (source of funding) and the principal mediator between the producer of contents and the audience, the broadcaster retains control over content production.

While the wide variety of distribution platforms has weakened the influence of television operators as gatekeepers, television networks are still the main distribution means by which contents may be broadcast to large audiences. Hence, the television company is still the core division at the heart of the main multimedia groups. Nevertheless, changes to the business model were required to adapt to a more

competitive market, in response to the wider programming range on offer and a more demanding audience. Thus, due to the increase in the number of theme-based channels (defined target and theme-based programming range) and the emergence of second generation networks (defined target and a wide range of programming), lower cost production policies have been fostered and market niches have been re-evaluated.

Both now and in the near future, it is likely that the Internet will come to be seen as a natural ally to television companies, rather than as threat. The Internet is shaping up to be a mode of content distribution that enables the generation of higher income and as an effective marketing tool. Moreover, the Web facilitates user interactivity, thus enriching viewer experience. And, at the same time, it provides audiovisual companies with the opportunity to design business strategies that encompass both the global and the personal. However, this potential is mainly dependent on the industry's capacity to address the current challenges in creative and innovative way

## References

- Álvarez Monzoncillo, J. M. & Iwens, J. L. (1992). *El futuro del audiovisual en España. Las transformaciones ante el nuevo marco europeo*. Madrid: Fundesco.
- Anonymous (2003a). La publicidad castiga por segundo año consecutivo a las cadenas privadas de televisión. *Noticias de la comunicación*, 227 (July-August), p. 1.
- Anonymous (2003b). Trabajo reduce a 215 los despidos en Antena 3 TV. *Noticias de la comunicación*, 230 (November), pp. 11-12.
- Anonymous (2006). Las cadenas privadas de televisión repiten un nuevo récord de ingresos y rentabilidad. *Noticias de la comunicación*, 260 (July-August), pp. 40-80.
- Anonymous (2007). Las principales compañías privadas de televisión reducen ingresos y beneficios. *Noticias de la comunicación*, 271 (July-August), pp. 40-72.
- Anonymous (2008). Telecinco revoluciona su cúpula. *Vertele*, 23 September. Retrieved on March 9, 2010, from <http://www.vertele.com/noticias/detail.php?id=20318>.
- Anonymous (2010). Prisa cerró hoy la venta de D+ y Cuatro a Telecinco. *Vertele*, 28 December. Retrieved on January 20, 2011, from <http://www.vertele.com/noticias/prisa-cerro-hoy-la-venta-de-d-y-cuatro-a-telecinco/>.
- Arnanz, C. M. (2002). *Negocios de televisión. Transformaciones del valor en el modelo digital*. Barcelona: Gedisa Editorial.
- Arrojo Baliña, M. J. (2008). *La configuración de la televisión interactiva: de las plataformas digitales a la TDT*. La Coruña: Netbiblo.
- Artero Muñoz, J. P. (2008). *El mercado de la televisión en España: Oligopolio*. Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto.
- Barlovento Comunicación (2008). *Año 2007: Análisis cualitativo de audiencia del mercado televisivo*.
- Barlovento Comunicación (2008). *Un año de récord: la audiencia televisiva en 2008*.
- Barlovento Comunicación (2009). *Análisis televisivo 2009: transformación radical en el sector audiovisual*.
- Barlovento Comunicación (2011). *Análisis televisivo 2010: primer año de televisión digital*.
- Barroso García, J. (2002). *Realización de los géneros televisivos*. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis.
- Brown, A. & Picard, R. G. (eds) (2005). *Digital Terrestrial Television in Europe*. Mahwah (New Jersey): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Bustamante, E. (1999). *La televisión económica. Financiación, estrategias y mercados*. Barcelona: Gedisa Editorial.
- Caballero Trenado, L. (2007). *TDT*. Valencia: Tirant lo blanch.
- Cantor, M. G. & Cantor, J. M. (1992). *Prime-time television. Content and control*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Cortés Lahera, J. A. (1999). *La estrategia de la seducción. La programación en la neotelevisión*. Pamplona: Eunsa.
- Fernández Díez, F. & Martínez Abadía, J. (1994). *La dirección de producción para cine y televisión*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Fernández-Quijada, D. (2009). El mercado de la producción independiente en España ante la aparición de Cuatro y La Sexta. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 1 (junio), pp. 59-87.

- Given, J. & Norris, P. (2010). Would the Real Freeview Please Stand Up? *International Journal of Digital Television*, 1: 1, pp. 51-68.
- Guerrero, E. (2008). En busca del elixir de la alquimia televisiva: el contenido transversal y las alianzas estratégicas como claves del negocio. In UTECA (2008), *La televisión en España. Informe 2008*. Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto.
- Guerrero, E. (2010). *El entretenimiento en la televisión española. Historia, industria y mercado*. Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto.
- Hart, J. A. (2010). The Transition to Digital Television in the United States: The Endgame. *International Journal of Digital Television*, 1: 1, pp. 7-29.
- Herrero, M. (2003). *Programming and direct viewer payment for television. The case of Canal Plus Spain*. Pamplona: Eunsa.
- Marzal Felici, J. & Casero Ripollés, A. (2007). *El desarrollo de la televisión digital en España*. La Coruña: Netbiblo.
- Medina Laverón, M. (2005). *Estructura y gestión de empresas audiovisuales*. Pamplona: Eunsa.
- Palmer, S. (2006). *Television Disrupted: The Transition from Network to Networked TV*. Boston: Focal Press.
- Peñafiel, C., López, N. & Fernández de Arroyabe, A. (2005). *La transición digital de la televisión en España: tecnología, contenidos y estrategias*. Barcelona: Editorial Bosch.
- Prado, E. (2005). El futuro de la televisión: la TDT. In García Casanova, J. F. & Casado Salinas, J. M. (eds). *El servicio público de la televisión*. Granada: Universidad de Granada.
- Sáinz Sánchez, M. (1999). *El productor audiovisual*. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis.
- Sánchez-Tabernero, A. (2008). *Los contenidos de los medios de comunicación: calidad, rentabilidad y competencia*. Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto.
- Sánchez-Tabernero, A. et al. (1997). *Estrategias de marketing de las empresas de televisión en España*. Pamplona: Eunsa.
- SGAE (2005). *Anuario SGAE de las artes escénicas, musicales y audiovisuales 2005*. SGAE: Madrid.
- SGAE (2006). *Anuario SGAE de las artes escénicas, musicales y audiovisuales 2006*. SGAE: Madrid.
- Soto Sanfiel, M. & Ribes i Guàrdia, F. X. (2003). Del impulso a la inercia: evolución de la TDT en España. *Telos*, 57 (october-december), pp. 42-51.
- Tijeras, R. (2005). *Las guerras del pirulí: El negocio de la televisión pública en la España democrática*. Barcelona: Debate.
- Urretavizcaya Hidalgo, M. (2008). *La nueva televisión en el universo multimedia*. San Sebastián: Universidad de Deusto.

**Interviews**

Interview with Daniel Acuña, Entertainment Program Manager at Videomedia, 06/13/08, Madrid.

Interview with Encarna Pardo, Executive Director of Boomerang TV, 06/16/08, Madrid.

Interview with Manuel Aguilera, Entertainment Program Production Manager at Grundy, 06/17/08, Madrid.

Interview with Ramón González, veteran Executive Producer at Tele 5, 06/14/08, Madrid.

**Questionnaires**

Questionnaires completed by executive producers at networks in Spain in 2008: TVE 1, Tele 5 and Antena 3.

Questionnaires completed by executive producers at production companies in Spain in 2008: Gestmusic-Endemol, El Terrat, Globomedia, Cuarzo, Europroducciones, Videomedia, Martingala, Grundy and Notro TV.

## Latin American Telenovelas on a Global Scale

**Mercedes Medina**

Universidad de Navarra, Spain

[mmedina@unav.es](mailto:mmedina@unav.es)

**Leticia Barron**

Universidad Panamericana, México

[letybardom@aol.com](mailto:letybardom@aol.com)

---

### Abstract

This article examines the internationalization and globalization of the industry of Latin American telenovelas from an economic perspective. The study pays particular attention to the growth of the industry with production and distribution of the primary exporters of the genre, and the influence that the industry has had on the rise of new productions in other parts of the world, such as the United States, Europe, and Asia.

## **Latin American Telenovelas on a Global Scale**

### **Introduction**

Telenovelas are a response to a genre of fiction that originated in Latin America. Their characteristic feature is that each episode is a chapter, with the history continuing throughout several seasons. The personages of telenovelas are simple and address impassioned stereotypes, where feelings become the *leit motif* of their actions. The narratives are so universal that they do not relate only to local audiences, but can be exported to other countries, as well.

Starting in the 70's, the main exporters of telenovelas flooded the world's televisions with their products. However, in recent years, the phenomenon has accelerated for different reasons. First, the privatization of television in the 1990s brought additional channels, which needed content to fill hours of programming. Second, the economic stability and politics of the American countries contributed to the strengthening of the television industry, and to international distribution structures. Furthermore, globalization and the growing immigration, not only toward the United States, but also toward Europe, have favored the diffusion of the Latin American culture in many countries. Finally, the acceleration was caused because it unites Spanish speakers in different parts of the world. These causes have not only precipitated the international diffusion of telenovelas and its popularity with international audiences, but also in the national production of telenovelas in invested countries.

In order to define this new phenomenon, authors have spoken of "Latin American audiovisual space," along with that of "cultural proximity" to define the cultural and linguistic similarities that permit the exploitation of audiovisuals to a global level (Sinclair, 2005). In this article, we would like to study this phenomenon while responding to the following questions:

a) Why do people like telenovelas in countries with different cultures? The rise of telenovelas throughout the world makes it necessary to undertake this question. Therefore, we will investigate which countries have exported telenovelas and seek the data of audiences in those countries.

However, in many cases these companies do not only distribute their products, but they also export their know-how to other countries, such as their original ideas and means of production in countries like Spain, the United States, and Germany, where the local versions of indigenous actors of the telenovelas have been created. This phenomenon demonstrates that not only similar genres can be adapted into different cultures. Therefore, we also study the aforementioned strategies to this type of expansion.

b) Sinclair (2005) distinguishes the types of exporting countries and indicates that Brazil and Mexico can be considered "net exporters," while Colombia, Chile, and Peru are "new exporters," and the Caribbean and Central America, that are "net importers." Investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the exporting companies of the above and others will allow us to form a deeper understanding of the keys of this industry, and, above all, to find which strategies allow for the continuance of exporting the products. Also, the opportunities and potential threats of these companies will be analyzed.

c) Finally, in the year 2000, the context of the market changed. New technologies, internet, mobile phones and electronic devices have become popular ways to distribute content. The production companies and distributors have begun to diversify their

activities and to produce contents for the new devices. We would like to know how the media and devices have influenced the production and distribution of telenovelas.

This study is grounded by the work of many previous researchers. Barron (2009) carried out her doctoral thesis on “The industry of the Mexican telenovela: Processes of communication, documentation, and commercialization,” and Medina (2001; 2003; 2006; 2008) has studied the Latin American market and its world expansion for many years. Additionally, the studies of Gutierrez (2004; 2007), on television and the strategies of Aztec TV in Mexico, consulted current literature and publications on telenovelas, and sought over all to reference aspects of the economy and market. Furthermore, a review of electronic sources and corporate web pages has been conducted to find the current data of distribution. Therefore, we need a deductive method to analyze the data and answer the formulated questions.

This study seeks to improve the line of study that shows the importance of the audiovisual industry in the world, emphasizing the competitive advantage of the American industry and how it has influenced production in other countries. The fear and reluctance that “American imperialism” produces in many authors and European legislators may perhaps be smoothed into a more harmonious culture with universal values, where family may continue to be central in social development and where the ideas of good and evil are clear and absolute.

First, we will conduct a literature review on current studies that are related to the market of telenovelas and their international expansion. Next, we will describe the strategy of exportations and discuss the exporting and importing countries; then, the strategies of the different groups and distributors will be studied and carried out. Finally, we will examine the influence that the new technologies have had in the production and distribution of telenovelas. Next, we will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of exporting companies, and will present their proposed answers for the reasons of the international success of telenovelas, taking into account the current development and bias of new opportunities in a new market. Finally, we will reflect on the limits of the study and the need for future studies.

### **Literature Review**

To continue, this study will briefly discuss what has been written about telenovelas in the current years, emphasizing what has been studied and, above all, the focus of the investigations. Our objective is to add to the literature and to focus on the effect that telenovelas have had on countries that have begun to produce them.

In the existing literature, we have found many studies on the telenovela industry. These investigations describe the dimensions of the market, exporting and importing countries, and the keys of the success of these programs. Other studies focus on frequent themes in telenovelas. Thus, many authors combine both of these factors in their investigations, as it is difficult to separate them.

For Martin-Barbero (2005), telenovelas constitute an enclave for television production in Latin America, not only because of the impact it has on the audiovisual market, but also for the role that they play in the representation of cultural values of their local audiences.

D’Souza (1997) found that it is important for Latin America to take charge and establish “industries of content,” as indicated by Azpillaga, Miguel, y Zallo (1995).

According to another author, regional politics of the promotion of cultural and industrial parks believe that similar content can be distributed in different platforms with flexibility (Sanchez-Ruiz, 2000).

While Medina and Renteria (2007) study the characteristics of telenovelas and the origin and possibilities of the expansion of the Mexican telenovela, Sinclair (2003) studies the role of the city of Miami as a central point of production and distribution of Latin American products in the United States. Nevertheless, they indicate that most of the telenovelas produced in the country were not successful.

In turn, Straubhaar (2007) emphasizes the standards of quality of the telenovelas produced by the Brazilian Globe, and Martin-Barber and Munoz (1992) indicate differences among the telenovelas of the American countries. The Mexicans have a more manichaeian focus; the Brazilians are more luxurious, realistic, and the characters move in real historical contexts. The Colombians seem more like Brazilians, in the sense of historical reality and the reality with which the history is presented. Still, like Davila (2000) think that since the 1980s and 1990s, these differences have begun to disappear in order to obtain a universal similarity. Waisbord (2004) adds that the telenovelas that appeal more to local audiences, because they identify more with the characters and the stories, are more difficult to export. In the study conducted on telenovelas exported from Latin America, it concludes that the countries with important production, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, prefer local telenovelas to those of other countries. Meanwhile, countries with smaller local production have no choice but to accept regional telenovelas.

Orozco and Vassallo (2009) coordinated a report on television fiction in Latin America, in which the data production of various countries were collected. In Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, the telenovela is the most produced genre of fiction. The predominant themes in the most popular telenovelas were also collected in recent years. For example, in Mexico, the themes have to do with the classics of the telenovelas, such as love, hatred, revenge, envy, and greed; and in Argentina, they are centered around family conflicts, discrimination, and reconciliation between work and personal lives (Aprea and Kirchheimer, 2009); and in Brazil, the themes are as complex as ideological falsehood, social masks, ambiguity, ambition, environmental responsibility, corruption, religion and spirituality, and their regional identity (Vassal, 2009).

According to Casas (2005), the Mexican traditional culture, based on religion, language, national character, and history, is now mixed with new elements to reach a globalized audience. It conveys a greater American influence in the contents and focuses of the most recent telenovelas. In detail, the crisis of values, unstable families, and sex scenes are more present, as well as themes related to violence and control exercised by men.

According to Lopez (1995), along with the focus of anti-imperialism of the Marxist sociologists in the 1970s, academic studies in 1980 clamored for a different imperialism, based on the exportation of telenovelas of TV Globo (Brazil) and Televisa (Mexico). This is discussed by Martin Barbero (1987), who found that telenovelas adapt better to the cultural demands of the different peoples.

Marques de Melo (1998) analyzes the reasons for the popularity of Brazilian telenovelas and their exportation in other countries, and Torres (1994) contributes with data of popular Mexican telenovelas and questions the causes of their success. Vilches

(1997) provides answers to some of these questions and considers that some of their attraction has to do with their representation of real life, the power of emotions, and they produce an evasion of routine, which gives spectators the sense of involvement. In the words of the author: “The function of these series is to create the possibility that people can hear emotions.” (Vilches, 1997, p. 67). For Klagsbrunn (1997), the prescription of success for Brazilian telenovelas is that they represent an idealized reality.

Mato (2005) indicates that the processes of globalization are also “homogenizing” and “differentiating.” In the case of telenovelas, the cultural differences are taken out of production so that they may be better accepted in other countries; in other cases, characteristics of local cultures are conserved wherever they are produced. Still, the same author understands that it is difficult to know and explain the causes that allow telenovelas to be successful in different countries than where they were originally produced.

Pastina and McAnany (1994), after studying the social impact of twenty-six telenovelas, came to the conclusion that “the Latin American telenovelas reached a global success due to the utilization of a simple formula: stereotypes and melodrama. Their telenovelas have expanded their audiences and reproduced the same ideas: a couple that fights for their love may surpass obstacles, there is a constant rivalry between good and evil, and that people love to see the story of the poor that falls in love with the rich, or vice versa” (p. 837).

Gershon (2005) does not have trouble recognizing that the phenomenon of the “Latin American globalization” is also related to the export of telenovelas, and mentions the study of Anatola and Rogers (1984). These authors conducted a study of the importation of American telenovelas from Mexico City, Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela. They emphasize the importance of taking the genre to the Spanish-speaking market in the United States. At the same time, Bielby and Harrington (2005) analyze the influence that the Latin American genre has had on American television, and even so for an Anglo-Saxon audience.

Sinclair (2000) conveys that in 1999, “94% of television exports in Spanish were produced by five companies: Televisa, Globe, Envision, RCTV, and RTVE” (p. 14). The same author, in 2005, references the work of Roncagliolo (1995) and names Mexico and Brazil as net exporters and the oldest in the market, followed by new exporters like Venezuela and Argentina, and more recently, Colombia, Peru, and Chile.

The majority of these articles discuss the exportation of telenovelas to the United States, but not to Europe or other countries. Currently, however, we will focus on the countries least studied, and emphasize the influence of the exportation of telenovelas on the production of national versions of these countries, in order to understand the phenomenon as a step of globalization.

Mato (2005) distinguishes two ways of expansion in the telenovela world: a) the globalization of consumption of the telenovela, such as the distribution of these products elsewhere, in which dubbing is used to allow other audiences to understand; and b) the transnationalization of the telenovela industry, such as the development of production processes with production units located in other countries. Following the distinction made by Mato (2005), the article is divided into two parts: first, we will focus on the study of international consumption of telenovelas, and second, the local production of telenovelas

in other countries. Third, we will focus on genre development in the new electronic media.

### **International consumers of telenovelas**

This section is structured around the telenovela purchasing countries, and the countries selling them. Most of the data provided is from 2009.

#### *Countries that purchase telenovelas*

Martin-Barbero (2005) notes that, in 1975, there were exports of telenovelas in China; in 1980 telenovelas were exported to Europe and North Africa, and in 1992, the soap *The Rich Also Cry* was broadcast in Russia.

Many European and American countries have imported telenovelas over the years. However, their acceptance in other countries has been different. In Eastern European countries, telenovelas have been successful. In Slovenia, for example, telenovelas help viewers recognize the feelings of love, hope, and faith, and allow them to escape to an ideal world (Kogef, 2002). According to the RTL CEO, the Germans like to view feelings of passion and jealousy (Correa, 2003). The Mexican telenovela, *Salome*, was broadcast in Germany in 2003 and received a 20% rating. It is also important to note the success of *Ugly Betty* in Germany.

Lopez (2007) explains that, “the success we have in Israel is likely caused by a combination of fiction and sociology [in the telenovelas]. In this country, moreover, the telenovelas are used to [help others] learn Spanish” (p. 199-202).

In the article “Russia buys and produces telenovelas” (2008), there was an indication that the Baltic countries are maturing markets, and that most prefer classic stories like those of *Juana la virgen*. In this case, traditional telenovela formulas are combined with more modern themes. Eastern Europe has been one of the main markets of the Latin American telenovela, and in 1999 it accounted for 40% of total exports of the primary Latin American producers. It has exported more than 200 telenovelas in the past ten years, to countries such as Russia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, and Yugoslavia, which generated annual revenues close to \$200 million. The telenovelas were Mexican, Brazilian, Colombian, and Argentinean.

In the following table, we have examples of telenovelas exported to European countries in 2009. The table shows that the country that has purchased the most telenovelas is Bulgaria, followed by Romania, Spain, Greece and Italy. Moreover, countries that have exported more telenovelas are indicated, such as Mexico (11), Colombia (7), Venezuela (5), Argentina (3), Brazil (2), and the United States (1).

In Slovenia, the POP TV channel has transmitted more than 50 Latin American telenovelas since the 1990s. The highest rated were those of Televisa, with the first Mexican telenovela *Esmeralda* (1998). Branko Cakarmis, the Slovenian program director of the POP TV channel, said that, “before scheduling Latin American telenovelas, we broadcast American novels, but did not get the expected rating. Then came *Esmeralda*, we programmed it in a good way and it was a great success, reaching 51% of audiences” (Kogef, 2003).

Table 1. Telenovelas in Europe (2009)

Telenovela	Buyer	Broadcasting Channel	Producer Company	Country of Origin	
<i>Los exitosos PellS</i>			Telefe	Argentina	
<i>Camaleones</i>			Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Niños ricos, pobre padres</i>			Telemundo	United States	
<i>Ángel de la guarda, mi dulce compañía</i>		TV +	RTI Caracol	Colombia	
<i>La marca del deseo</i>		Diema familia	RCN	Colombia	
<i>Eternamente tuya</i>		BTV	TV Azteca	Mexico	
<i>Don Juan y su bella dama</i>		Diema familia	Telefe	Mexico	
<i>Se solicita príncipe azul</i>		Eurocom	Venevisión	Venezuela	
<i>Doña Bárbara</i>		TV2	RTI	Colombia	
<i>La trepadora</i>		Eurocom	RCTV	Venezuela	
<i>Alma indomable</i>			Venevisión	Venezuela	
<i>Voltea pa que te enamores</i>			Venevisión	Venezuela	
<i>Torrente un torbellino de pasiones</i>		<b>Bulgaria</b>		Venevisión	Venezuela
<i>Señora del destino</i>	<b>Spain</b>	Cosmopolitan TV	Red de Globo	Brazil	
<i>Mujeres apasionadas</i>		Cosmopolitan TV			
<i>Cuidado con el Ángel</i>			Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Sin tetas no hay paraíso</i>		Telecinco	Caracol	Colombia	
<i>La hija del jardinero</i>	<b>Greece</b>		TV Azteca	Mexico	
<i>Muchachias como tú</i>		Makedonia TV	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Bajo las riendas del amor</i>		Makedonia TV	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Il mondo di Patty</i>	<b>Italy</b>	Disney Ch. Italia	Telefe	Argentina	
<i>En nombre del amor</i>		Acasa	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Sin tetas no hay paraíso</i>		Acasa	Caracol	Colombia	
<i>Patito Feo</i>		Acasa	Telefe	Argentina	
<i>Destilando amor</i>		Acasa	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Tormenta en el paraíso</i>		Acasa	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Yo soy Betty la fea</i>		Acasa	RCN	Colombia	
<i>Fuego en la sangre</i>		Acasa	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Doña Bárbara</i>		Acasa	RTI	Colombia	
<i>El clon</i>		<b>Romania</b>	Acasa	TV Globo	Brasil

Sources: [http://www.comarex.tv/noticias\\_detalle.php?noticia=40&idioma=es](http://www.comarex.tv/noticias_detalle.php?noticia=40&idioma=es); <http://www.cosmopolitan.tv/>;  
<http://www.disney.it/DisneyChannel/supersites/ilmondodipatty/>; <http://www.maktv.gr/homeDetail/0,5135,4,00.html>;  
[http://www.repretel.com/canal\\_6\\_tv/19/3/8334](http://www.repretel.com/canal_6_tv/19/3/8334); <http://www.telecinco.es/sintetasnohayparaíso/>;  
<http://telenovelasfans1.hit.bg/NewSerials.htm>; <http://www.acasatv.ro/>;  
<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2009/03/21/comunicacion/1237653895.html>

Table 2 shows telenovelas broadcast in USA. In this case, more than half – twelve – were produced by Televisa, one by the other Mexican company, TV Azteca; six by Colombia and another three by Argentina; Brazil and Venezuela, respectively.

**Table 2. Telenovelas in the United States (2009)**

<b>Telenovela</b>	<b>Broadcaster Channel</b>	<b>Producer Company</b>	<b>Country of Origin</b>
<i>Niños ricos, pobres padres</i>	Telemundo	RTI	Colombia
<i>Nuevo rico, nuevo pobre</i>		Caracol	Colombia
<i>Por ti</i>	Azteca América	TV Azteca	México
<i>Alma Indomable</i>	Univisión	Caracol	Colombia
<i>Valeria</i>		Venevisión	Venezuela
<i>Cuidado con el ángel</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Fuego en la Sangre</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Lola...érase una vez</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Palabra de mujer</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Betty la fea</i>		RCN	Colombia
<i>Destilando amor</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>En nombre del amor</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>La viuda de la mafia</i>		RCN	Colombia
<i>Piel de Otoño</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Sortilegio</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Tormenta en el paraíso</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Verano de amor</i>		Televisa	Mexico
<i>Don Juan y su bella dama</i>		Telefe	Argentina
<i>Por amor</i>	RCN	Colombia	
<i>El derecho de nacer</i>	Televisa	Mexico	
<i>Terra nostra</i>	Pasión	Red de Globo	Brazil

Sources:<http://msnlatino.telemundo.com/novelas>;  
<http://www.univision.com/content/channel.jhtml?chid=6&schid=1787>;  
<http://www.aztecaamerica.com/#>;  
<http://www.tvpasion.com/usa/index.php>

In Table 3, there is a list of purchasers of Latin American telenovelas in Latin American countries. It appears that the countries who produce the most telenovelas are the least likely to buy them. The table also continues to depict that Mexico is the country with the largest production and export of telenovelas. Interestingly, it also illustrates that the United States is a producer of telenovelas and exporter to Latin countries.

**Table 3 - Countries Buyers and Sellers of Telenovelas in Latin America  
Number of Telenovelas Broadcast (2009)**

Buyer	Seller	nº	Buyer	Seller	nº
<b>Ecuador</b> 31	Mexico	12	<b>Argentina</b> 13	Mexico	5
	Colombia	9		United States	3
	Venezuela	6		Brazil	3
	Argentina	2		Colombia	2
	Brazil	1	<b>Mexico</b> 6	Colombia	3
	United States	1		United States	2
		Brazil		1	
<b>Chile</b> 17	Mexico	10	<b>Colombia</b> 6	Mexico	4
	EEUU	4		Venezuela	1
	Brazil	2		United States	1
	Argentina	1			
<b>Costa Rica</b> 15	Mexico	8	<b>El Salvador</b> 5	Mexico	3
	Colombia	4		Colombia	1
	EEUU	2		Venezuela	1
	Brazil	1	<b>Panamá</b> 2	United States	1
		Colombia		1	
<b>Bolivia</b> 14	Mexico	6	<b>Rep. Dominicana</b> United States	United States	1
	Brazil	1			
	Argentina	2			
	United States	2			
	Colombia	2			
	Venezuela	1			

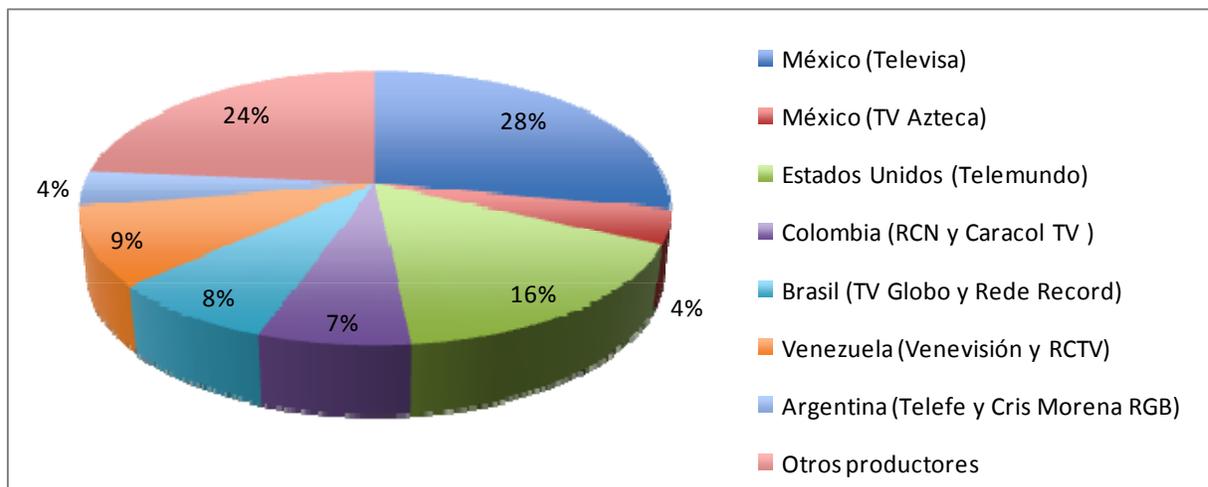
Sources: <http://www.network54.com>; <http://colombiatv.wordpress.com>  
<http://www2.esmas.com/entretenimiento/telenovelas>; <http://www.tctelevision.com>  
<http://www.canal12.com.sv>; <http://www.gamavision.com/programacion.php>  
<http://www.teleamazonas.com>; <http://www.tctelevision.com/webpages>  
<http://www.ecuavisa.com>; <http://www.teletica.com>  
<http://www.repretel.com/>; <http://www.caracol.com/telenovelasyseries>  
<http://www.reduno.com.bo>; <http://www.chilevision.cl>  
<http://www.telefe.com>; <http://www.canal9.com.ar/>

#### *Countries that sell telenovelas*

In these countries, large production companies that have an international distribution are in an order of importance: Televisa in Mexico, Globo TV in Brazil, Telefe in Argentina, RCN in Colombia, TV Azteca in Mexico, Telemundo in the United States, and Venevision in Venezuela.

The following graph illustrates the origin of telenovelas broadcast in Latin America, Spain, and the United States in July of 2009.

**Graph 1 - Origin of Broadcast Telenovelas in Latin America, United States and Spain (July 2009)**



Made by the author. Source: [www.produ.tv/Novelas al aire](http://www.produ.tv/Novelas%20al%20aire)

The following describes the main features of telenovela production styles, and the international expansion of these exporters.

Televisa telenovelas began production in 1958, and in the 1960s began to export to other Latin American countries. In the mid-1980s, the telenovela reached markets in Eastern Europe. Televisa currently exports to more than 100 countries. In some cases, adaptations of foreign formulas have had higher sales than their original productions. This was the case with *Yo amo a Juan Querendón* (2008), which sold to 32 countries, exceeding Colombia's original versión of *Pedro el escamoso* (available on the web page "webdelatele" in the telenovela of the same name). This implies the prestige of Televisa in the international market.

Televisa is the largest producer and exporter of the genre. It distributes its programs more effectively, due to their offices in Miami, Madrid, and Beijing, and has strategic alliances with other companies in many parts of the world. For example, since 2005, Televisa has been a shareholder in La Sexta, a new, open commercial channel in Spain.

TV Azteca was established in 1993, and in 1996 produced its first telenovela, *Nada personal*. The second, *Mirada de Mujer* (1997) had high ratings in Mexico and was the first to be exported. Along with *Amor en Custodia* (2006) and *La Hija del Jardinero* (2004), it has been the best-selling telenovela program abroad, in over 80 countries (according to the exporting company, Comarex), which places TV Azteca as competition to both Televisa and international companies.

Mexican telenovelas tend to be melodramatic and conservative. They follow the traditional formula of melodrama and, although they have undergone changes in production with technology and contemporary script adaptations, they continue to have the basic ingredients of love, family relationships, and complex characters, who aspire to overcome economic and personal problems.

Approximately 60% of Televisa productions are remakes of old telenovelas. Moreover, both companies have adapted foreign formats that were successful in their countries of origin.

Brazilian telenovelas are usually more sophisticated, with topics such as love between people of different religions, or controversial topics like the case of *El clon*, which addresses the issue of human cloning (Lizarzaburu, 2006<sup>a</sup>). The Brazilian Rede Globo, Televisa's main competitor, has also exported telenovelas to more than 100 countries since the 1980s. For example, the telenovela *La esclava Isaura* was watched by more than 450 million viewers in China. Rede Globo has an Alliance with SIC in Portugal, and their series and telenovelas are transmitted simultaneously in the two countries through their own channels.

The Colombian chain, RCN, has also had great success in the last decade. Among its most popular is *Café con aroma de mujer*, with revenues of \$8 million from its exportation to 77 countries, and even more successful, *Yo soy Betty, la fea* (2001), which was sold to 84 countries in both its finished and original formats. This company, although it has not been around long, already has a collection of 300 self-produced telenovelas (Lizarburu, 2006b).

According to the article, "Colombia, a decade moved," and "Welcome to Collywood," Colombian telenovelas tend to show characteristics of their country, with references to contemporary problems like corruption or discrimination, combined with touches of comedy. The telenovela industry is now a sector in Colombia, which helps its current development and allows it to remove barriers in the international market. Some people have begun to call it "Collywood." In Colombia, production focuses on creativity, which, according to Malcon Aponte, director of RC programming and production, has tried to emulate Mexican and Brazilian telenovelas.

The publication, "The forms of fiction. A great choice for the channels of the world," indicates that the main strength of Telefe, a production and distribution company in Argentina is the ability to sell formats. Telenovelas like *Montecristo*, *Rebelde Way* and *Vidas Robadas* have been exported to countries in Eastern Europe, the Philippines, and Israel. A few years ago, they even opened offices in Russia to promote sales in Eastern European formats.

Venevision of Venezuela has been a major exporter in this aspect. They export their programs to more than 100 countries. According to its president, Luis Villanueva, for years, their main competitor was Televisa. However, in early 2000, partly due to political and economic crisis, the country had to reduce local production and purchasing programs to Televisa for prime viewing times. In those years, the Venezuelan channel RCTV took over in the exportation of TV content. Yet, in 2007, the latter channel did not obtain the license renewal from the government, and therefore stopped production and exportation. Before this, their main distribution had been in South America, as mentioned in the article, "Venezuela, producing country to country buyer." Some countries are still broadcasting Venezuelan telenovelas, as some allowances have not been terminated.

Telemundo, a former purchaser of telenovelas from TV Azteca, is a new competitor, that entered the international market at the end of the 1990s, and used the structure of Televisa's telenovelas. Telemundo has produced telenovelas and drama series aimed at the United States' Hispanic audience. It also exports telenovelas to Latin America and, since 2008, to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Australia, and Asia,

with help from its offices in Portugal, the Philippines, Indonesia, Russia, China and Japan. Sales in Asia account for 10% of the total sales revenue of Telemundo Internacional (De La Fuente, 2009).

Telemundo follows the Mexican model, with the strategy to hire actors, writers, and producers in Latin America, mostly Mexican, who have broad experience and are recognized for their productions. This is the case of Mexican writers Eric Von Flores Bethel and actress Victoria Ruffo. Telemundo has also co-produced with Ibarra, owner of Argos, an independent Mexican producer. The locations of several telenovelas produced in Mexico, such as *Corazon partido* (2006), was recorded completely in Mexico City. In 2008, the production *Victoria* was based on the success of *Mirada de mujer* of TV Azteca.

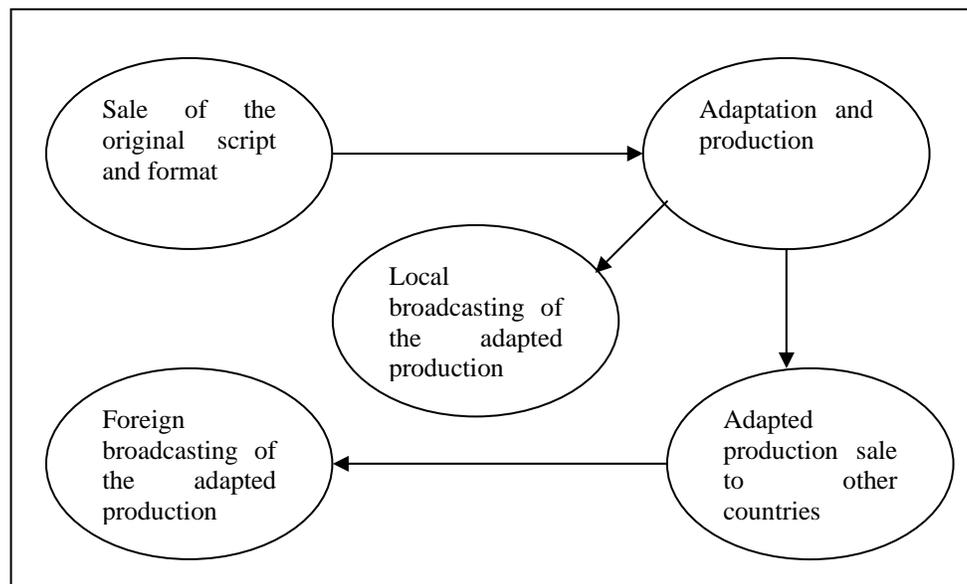
While it is true that the social impact telenovelas have in each country and region of the world is different according to the audience, the commercial success they have had in major Latin American productions is measurable by exports and the popularity that their audiovisual products have reached throughout the world.

### **New producers of telenovelas**

In addition to the traditional distribution of the “tin,” the exporters have begun to develop other export strategies that have more to do with know-how and different aspects of production (M. Vinay, personal communication, March 17, 2007). In the following text, these models will be reviewed.

Faced to the preference of local adaptation and the need to create wealth, even with the high costs of production, the marketing of telenovela formats is beginning to have more power for Latin American exporters, especially in Argentina and Colombia.

This changes the traditional sales model. Telenovelas’ formats are exported and adapted locally, and even create different concepts of their original versions. Therefore, both “canned” and local adaptations are created outside of Latin America. Furthermore, in cases such as those of Televisa and TV Azteca, adaptations are even purchased abroad. The graph in Figure 2 summarizes the sequence of decisions in this regard.

**Graph 2 - Sales model and Format adaptation**

Made by the author

In recent years, there are examples of countries that have issued original versions, adapted local productions, and imported adapted productions. For example, Antena 3 of Spain broadcast the Colombian versión of *Ugly Betty*, and a few years later, there was a local adaptation of *Ugly Betty* on Tele 5, and then the Mexican production of *Ugly Betty* by Antena 3.

Given the challenges and competition to move into markets in Europe, America and Asia, following the format, a wide range of development systems has been generated, from the presentation of the stories to the provision and creation of technical services. They do not only focus on how to sell a script, but how to produce, and even promote a product, as well as the process and criteria for casting, creating workshops for development of viable products, writing stories, developing scripts, and adapting and advising production.

The advantage of this method for the host country is that producers have temporarily contracted experts, which have no fixed costs and can adapt stories for the local markets. This has already come to fruition in countries like India, Russia, Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Croatia, Germany, Romania, and Portugal.

An example of this approach is Televisa's participation in the co-production of *La fea mas bella* with China's Hunan Satellite for their CBTB channel, with the name *Chou Un Wi Di* (*La fea sin rival*). Televisa also reached an agreement with Romanian producers to produce local versions of four telenovelas, or with the French group JLA to produce a local versión of *Codigo Postal*, to be called in the new country *Baie des Flamboyants*.

Not only do partnerships take place for co-production, but also for distribution and programming, and not only in America and the rest of the world, but also in the inverse sense. One example is the distribution agreements that South Korea's KBS made with Telemundo, so that Korean dramas may be broadcast in Latin America. Televisa and

Telemundo agreed in the summer of 2008 to embark upon a joint venture, in which Telemundo telenovelas are broadcast on Channel 9 in Televisa, as well as a cable channel in the United States (McClellan, 2009).

The adaptation of Latin American telenovelas to the culture and sensibility of local audiences creates business opportunities for many distributors. Currently, the traditional and the new way of distribution live together.

For example, Russia continues to buy telenovelas from Latin America, but in 2000 consolidated its own production of telenovelas, and prime time hours are now offered to Russian series and telenovelas. According to one senior executive of Russian TV, “every channel has at least two batches of Russian prime-time telenovelas, and telenovelas in the morning for children.” Slovenia, although it remains a major buyer of Latin American telenovelas, began to produce local adaptations in 2003, such as “*Pod eno streho*.”

Not only has Eastern Europe adapted Latin American telenovelas, but markets in Germany, France, and Italy are also producing their own telenovelas (Alvarado, 2006). The European company Endemol agreed to produce and distribute chain telenovelas with Telefe in Argentina in 2008. In Germany, new telenovelas are issued for the local markets, such as *Sturm der liebe* (2006). Although most of these local productions are not exported, Canale 5 in Italy purchased some formats from ZDF in Germany. Fremantle Media, a subsidiary of the European group RTL Group, has begun to co-produce and distribute novels in Eastern Europe, like *Bianca: Wege zum Gluck* (2005), and *Forbidden Love* (2007), which were broadcast in Australia, Germany, Sweden, and Greece.

Spain has also become a producer of telenovelas. RTVE always had such programs in their broadcasts. Subsequently, Antena 2 acquired *Betty la fea*, and its success led to the local version. Moreover, RTVE has decided to launch their own telenovela, this time with a Spanish theme and its own script. This is the case for *Amar en tiempos difíciles*, which takes place during the Spanish Civil War and was aired on Telemundo (USA) in 2009. This is an example of the attempted collaboration between Spain and the United States Hispanic population. Another is the establishment in 2001 of the Spain TV Expo, which aimed to sell Spanish films in the United States, Canada and Latin America, and was organized by the Spanish Institute of Foreign Trade (ICEX), the Economic and Trade Office, the Embassy of Spain in Miami, and the Federation of Audiovisual Producers Association of Spain (FAPAE). Also, the BBC has created its own Latin American telenovela format, such as in *The Guardian* (2006).

In addition to Telemundo, other companies have invested in the production and distribution of telenovelas. Walt Disney produced *Amor a mil y Siete veces amada* in 2003. Both are co-produced by Caracol TV and broadcast in Argentina and Peru. Fernando Barbosa, Director General of Latin America, has explained that the telenovela is attractive for advertising and merchandising. His goal is to produce six telenovelas annually. Fox began the production of *Desire and Secret Obsessions* in 2006, for the Anglo population. Similarly, NBC adapted *El cuerpo de deseo* in 2007. The pay channel Nickelodeon Latin America also launched its first telenovela in 2008– *Te quiero mucho* – aimed at children and adolescents.

The first telenovela entered Israel for the first time in the 1990s. The first, in 1990, was the Mexican telenovela *Los ricos también lloran*. The Viva and Viva Platina channels currently broadcast telenovelas in Israel, which people use to learn Spanish. In

Israel, foreign programs are not translated, but are transmitted in their original languages and subtitled in Hebrew. The telenovelas have been so successful that Dori Media Group, owners of the Viva and Viva Platina channels, produces two telenovelas per year (Allen, 2006).

In Saudi Arabia, Qatar TV produces and broadcasts its own telenovelas, in which the actors and studios focus are of domestic production. These telenovelas are not aired during prime-time, which is reserved for foreign series and telenovelas, but they are well accepted by the public for their social and historical themes. In addition to these telenovelas, a Mexican telenovela is also broadcast daily, subtitled in Arabic and addressed to young audiences. Syria and Egypt are other countries who Excel in the production of telenovelas, and Qatar TV seek co-production agreements with those countries to create telenovelas (Panjeta, 2003).

In Africa, Ghana's TV3 channel is successful, and submits Latin America telenovelas, among other series, and has developed some of their own productions in the genre<sup>1</sup>...

What are the advantages and disadvantages of these productions? One drawback would be the high production costs, and the lack of experience of some teams who produce telenovelas. As such, the local production level will always be small. As for the benefits, local elements such as casting, locations, and stories, better fit local audiences. Therefore, producing telenovelas with Latin American partners may continue, although they will continue to import "canned" products as they are cheaper and have proven success.

### **New forms of marketing and the production of telenovelas**

As noted by Barron (2009), the key to the success of telenovelas is mainly due to their stories. However, new technology provides elements of innovation that may lead to other avenues of income and relation to viewers.

In this section we describe other forms of telenovela commercialization which are different to the sales form in other countries and to the advertisement incomes; in particular, the use of new technological platforms for the production, broadcast and sale of telenovelas. Here we provide examples for the distribution and production of telenovelas for cellular phones and Internet and the commercialization of products derived from these.

#### *Telenovelas on the internet*

Many television networks post their telenovelas in chapters on production websites, and Access is free.

Table 4 lists the websites of major producers, where people may watch their telenovelas. On Televisa's website, "Tvolucion," audiences may access 56 past telenovelas, and more episodes on recent productions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Retrieved october, 2009 from [www.tv3.com.gh](http://www.tv3.com.gh).

**Table 4 - Main producers and web pages for telenovelas**

<b>Producer</b>	<b>Internet web site</b>
Televisa (Mexico)	<a href="http://www.tvolucion.com">http://www.tvolucion.com</a>
TV Globo (Brazil)	<a href="http://redeglobo.globo.com">http://redeglobo.globo.com</a>
Telefe (Argentina)	<a href="http://www.telefe.com">http://www.telefe.com</a>
RCN (Colombia)	<a href="http://www.canalrcn.com">http://www.canalrcn.com</a>
TV Azteca (Mexico)	<a href="http://www.tvazteca.com">http://www.tvazteca.com</a>
Telemundo (United States)	<a href="http://msnlatino.telemundo.com">http://msnlatino.telemundo.com</a>
Venevisión y Radio Caracas TV (Venezuela)	<a href="http://www.venevision.net">http://www.venevision.net</a>

In addition to viewing chapters and writing in forums online, viewers can also buy chapter scenes and photos of the actors. Viewers can also download episodes to their phones at a cost per minute, which is charged directly to users through an agreement with telephone companies. Even some pages, like Argentina's "mobile Telefe," have ads which allow users to rate, comment, and learn about their television programs.

#### *Telenovela produced for the web*

Not only are chapters of telenovelas put online, but some companies have started directing telenovelas directly for the web. These productions have been called "webnovelas." However, the production of telenovelas for internet is seen by some producers as something that contradicts the essence of the telenovelas themselves. Alejandro Aguilera (2009), director of programming of Televisa, has said that it "has shown that the telenovela is the television program which is currently the most seen by the whole family in front of a TV."

For example, the telenovela *Vidas cruzadas* (2009), produced by Televisa's Carlos Sotomayor, in collaboration with Endemol, was the first commercial telenovela to be viewed exclusively through the internet, and directed toward internet users and those in social networks. It consists of 15 chapters over 5 minutes – a variation of the traditional format of telenovelas on television – and access is free. This producer said that there is an economic difference in the production, especially in income, when compared to the traditional telenovela. However, it is a way to reach new viewers who are online and on their cell phones, at a cost per minute.

In 2007, Venevision attempted to execute two telenovelas exclusively for the internet and mobile internet, with 20 chapters at 25 seconds each, played by experienced actors of traditional telenovelas. However, there are no references in the development of this Project or its internationalization, as it was a Project for the local market.

In 2008, Brazil developed a downloaded series, *Desenrola*, on [www.portalconecta.com](http://www.portalconecta.com); *Control C*, *Control V* of MSN, based *O que e isso?* On their Messenger for the Locaweb, which was viewed by more than 300 thousand people on YouTube (Vasallo, 2009: 108-109). The difference in these telenovelas is that they are not produced by large companies, but by young and lesser-known companies, such as Oi Futuro, Raccord, and O2 Filmes.

One peculiarity that the *webnovelas* have, in the case that they extend their development and cannot work with traditional formats, is that their duration is shorter and

may provide alternative endings to the public, so the public may decide which end they like the best.

Upon developing these products in the future, one must consider that laws should be regulated, and create sales plans that go hand-in-hand with communication companies and establish ownership to broadcasting rights, in order to settle legal disputes. In June of 2009, Televisa and Univision came to the United States federal court to decide which company owned the rights to webcast a telenovela that could be viewed at Univision.com.

Thus, when these barriers are overcome, the development of mobile television and the internet will have a better momentum.

The *webnovela* appears to be a business for the future, but should be evaluated first on its current success and profitability, in addition to the legal issues and agreements with communications companies. Additionally, it should be seen as an opportunity for distribution and marketing, as opposed to a threat to the production of telenovelas.

#### *Merchandising: licensing, markets, and other products*

Beyond internet marketing for local advertisers or sales of content and images for mobile users, the internet has also marketed products for foreign telenovelas. Some telenovelas, derived success from the internet by reaching record sales in other countries, selling magazines, and holding concerts for the characters.

One example in this respect is of the records of the musical group RBD, which emerged from the adapted telenovela, *Rebelde* (2004), which was viewed in many places around the world. The group produced three albums in Spanish, one in Portuguese and two in English: *Best of RBD* and *We are RBD* sold millions of copies and went gold and platinum, and the group toured in Latin America, the United States, Spain, Romania, Russia, and Japan. The Univision website devoted an exclusive space for forums and news. Televisa, in partnership with Coca-Cola, Grupo Pepsi-Co, Kellogg, Editorial Televisa, Procter & Gamble, Calzado Andrea, Office Max, Jumex, Kraft, and ugos del Valle, took products related to “RBD” to national and international markets to food and beverages (juices, cookies, cereals, chocolates), publishing (books, comics and magazines), clothing accessories (bracelets and pendants), footwear, back to school themes (backpacks, lunchboxes), health and beauty products (shampoo, conditioner, gel), covers for mobile phones, toys (board games), and household items.

Carmen Rotter, the director of trademark and licensing for Televisa, said that the phenomenon was generated not only by thousands of fans glued to the telenovela chapters, or who attended the concerts, but also for the associated products. This meant substantial income for the company. *Rebelde* is a brand with all types of licenses, aimed at different market segments.

#### **Conclusions**

After studying the market situation, analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of key players will shed light on the future of the sector.

Of the seven groups studied, the greatest competitive advantage by far belongs to Televisa. It has greater capacity and experience of production and distribution, thanks in part to their horizontal and vertical integration. Among its weaknesses, however, one might note the absence of writers and scripts themselves, which lead to remakes or

adaptations of foreign formats. Also to be noted is the division of Univision and the consequent loss of presence in the United States' Hispanic market, and, finally, another opportunity is the alliances it has made and may continue to make, with international producers, sales of its products and its know-how in foreign markets.

The big competitor of Televisa in Mexico is TV Azteca, as the company has expertly prepared for international sales. However, their experience in telenovela production is less than its rival, and more than half of its productions are adaptations of foreign formats. Their constant threat on the domestic market is Televisa, and an opportunity may form with Rede Globo, as it may let the company open doors in the European market through Portugal.

Telemundo has solid talent and infrastructure for the production of telenovelas. Also, its physical headquarters in Miami is a focal point for distribution. However, its experience in producing telenovelas is still limited and they do not have a brand identity. Their opportunities include their presence in the Latin American and Eastern European markets, yet its main threat is represented by Televisa.

RCN in Colombia has creativity and original stories with international success. It also takes years to produce telenovelas. One weakness to be noted is their lack of distribution channels abroad, and competition from other Latin producers. The international market, however, opens up great opportunities for the distribution of telenovelas.

Rede Globo produced telenovelas with rich and original stories, which, combined with a high volume of production and experience, provides a unique competitive advantage in the market. However, from the viewpoint of infiltration into other markets, the language is presented as the greatest weakness. Portugal, in addition to Brazil, is a natural market for expansion.

Venevision has increased their imports and reduced the number of productions. The political and economic instability is a continuing threat. However, it has sold broadcast rights for its products in the international market.

Telefe in Argentina produces original scripts, which are exported to Latin America, the Philippines, and Europe. Its only weakness is the marked accent of its characters, but that barrier has been overcome, and they have managed to get into international markets and become warmly accepted by audiences. Eastern Europe also shows an increasing interest for their productions, and they have signed co-production agreements with other foreign companies.

The following table summarizes the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the exporters and leading producers of Latin American telenovelas.

**Table 5 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the main telenovela exporters**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
<b>Televisa (Mexico)</b>			
Integration, experience and production volume	Lack of creativity	Loss of presence in the hispanic audience in USA	New alliance with Univision and other foreign producers and broadcasters
<b>TV Azteca (Mexico)</b>			
International sales	Foreign production adaptations	Televisa	Alliance with Rede Globo and their own broadcaster in USA: TV Azteca.
<b>Telemundo (USA)</b>			
Talent and infrastructure	Poor production and lack of image	Televisa	Latin America and Eastern Europe
<b>RCN (Colombia)</b>			
Volume, experience and good stories International success of their productions	Lack of distribution channels abroad	Other producers	International distribution
<b>Rede Globo (Brazil)</b>			
Volume and experience. Original stories	Original language Portuguese	Language	Distribution in Portugal
<b>Venevision (Venezuela)</b>			
Good reception of national telenovelas	Increase of number of imports and reduction in the number of productions	Political and economical instability	Sale of rights in the International market
<b>Telefe (Argentina)</b>			
<i>Scripts</i>	Marked accent	Economical Instability in the country	International sales and agreements for co-productions. Growing interest in Eastern Europe

Aside from the threat of Televisa, all telenovela producers face the threat of other types of entertainment, such as the football World Cup, or reality shows, and new producers of telenovelas.

After tracking sales of telenovelas in countries such as Russia, China, Germany, Israel, Spain, Romania, and Bulgaria, it is worth noting the key points that explain how they came to attain such diverse audiences. First, in some places it is easier to acquire or cheaper to produce certain contents; second, the continuing stories allow emission over several seasons, and third, the stories told, based on universal feelings and passion, are

understood and shared by audiences of any country. Their plots can be adapted to any cultural context.

Therefore, aside from identifying a region without physical boundaries that is united by the same language, Spanish, the telenovela industry has not only contributed to the strengthening of some Latin American countries, but has also influenced television production in other countries.

New technologies have not caused significant changes in the production and distribution of telenovelas. The product is too traditional to be adapted by new devices, which, by their nature, are individual, personal, mobile and changing.

### **Limitations of the investigation and future studies**

This study may have been more complete if we could have found economic data on production costs, data acquisition, and audiences in the sending and receiving countries. Access to this data is complex because, in many countries, there is no audience measurement conducted by companies in order to provide data on rigorous daily television consumption. Moreover, the negotiations between producers, broadcasters, distributors and importers channels hinder the knowledge of the established prices. As the market becomes more transparent, the more data will be available to researchers.

Although the growing impulse of new technologies is still not very large, we shall have to follow closely the advances in Internet and mobile gadgets as audiovisual dispensers and the new commercial forms that will develop around them. The development of new technologies has as promoters the children and young population sector, which on another hand, devote little time to consume products from traditional media. Aware of this phenomenon, producers are starting to produce telenovelas aimed at children and teenagers. By studying their plots, main focus and the traits of characters can be a subject that may identify new publics and contents directed especially to them.

## References

- Aguilera, A. (2009, April 22). *New Technology and Mexican TV*. Paper presented at the 9th Communication Conference, Universidad Panamericana, Mexico City.
- Anatola, L.; Rogers, E., (1984). Television flows in Latinoamerica. *Communication Research*, 11 (2),183-202.
- Alvarado, M. T. (2006). Big Love, Big Business. Retrieved August, 2007, from <http://www.worldscreen.com>.
- Apra, G.; Kirchheimer, M. (2009). *Argentina: Crisis y renovación desde los márgenes*, in Orozco, G.; Vassallo, M.I., *La ficción televisiva en Iberoamérica. Narrativas, formatos y publicidad*, (pp.61-96). Barcelona. México: Observatorio Europeo de la Televisión Infantil. Observatorio Mexicano de la Ficción Televisiva.
- Azpillaga, P.; Miguel, J.C.; Zallo, R., (1995). Los parques culturales en Europa. *Telos*, 41,29-44.
- Barrón, L. (2009). *La industria de la telenovela mexicana. Procesos de comunicación, documentación y comercialización*. Doctoral dissertation. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. Retrieved December, 2009, from <http://eprints.ucm.es/9584/1/T30988.pdf>.
- BBC creará su propia telenovela al estilo latinoamericano. (2006, October). Retrieved January, 2008, from <http://www.cooperativa.cl>.
- Bielby, D.; Harrington, L. (2005). Opening America? The telenovela-ization of US telenovelas. *Television & New Media*, 383-399.
- Bienvenidos a Collywood, pero ¿qué factores han convertido a la TV colombiana en una industria tan pujante? (2008, March-April). Retrieved September, 2009 , from: <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Casas, M. L. (2005). Cultural Identity: Between Reality and Fiction. *Television & New Media*, 6 (4), 407-414.
- Cincuenta años del nacimiento de la telenovela en América Latina. Su expansión mundial. (2007, November-December). Retrieved April, 2008, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Colombia, una década movida. (2009, September). Retrieved September, 2009, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Correa, S. (2003, April 30). Alemania: Los ricos también lloran. Retrieved September, 2009, from <http://www.bbcmundo.com>.
- Davila, A. (2000). Language and Culture in the Spanish TV Battlefield. *Television & New Media*, 1 (1), 75-94.
- De la Fuente, A.M. (2008). Latinos romance Asian nets. *Variety*, 36.
- D'Souza, R. et al. (1997). *Content Industries in Canada. An Overview* (Tech Rep). Industry Canada, Information and Communication Technologies Branch.
- En Madrid se celebró la tercera Cumbre Mundial de la Industria y la Ficción. (2005). Retrieved January 2008, from <http://www.fuerteventuradigital.com/noticiasdefuerteventura>.
- En México esta el pope de la telenovela (2001). Retrieved June 2, 2007, from <http://tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Endemol moving into telenovelas. (2007, November). Retrieved May, 2008, from <http://www.tbivision.com>.

- Gershon, R. (2005). The Transnationals: Media Corporations, International TV Trade and Entertainment Flows. In Cooper-Chen, Anne (ed.), *Global Entertainment Media: content, audiences, issues*, (pp. 17-33). N.J.: Mahwah, L. Erlbaum.
- Gutierrez de Rentería, M. E. (2007). Media Concentration in the Hispanic Market: A case Study of TV Azteca vs. Televisa. *The International Journal on Media Management*, 9, (2), 70-76.
- Gutierrez de Rentería, M. E. (2004). *Las estrategias del Grupo Televisa: del monopolio audiovisual a la competencia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain.
- Klagsbrunn, M. (1997). La telenovela brasileña: un género en desarrollo. In Verón, E.; Escudero, L. (comps.), *Telenovela. Ficción popular y mutaciones culturales*, (pp. 153-168). Barcelona: Gedisa.
- Kogef, T. (2003, September). Eslovenia ama las telenovelas. Retrieved July, 2009, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Kogef, T. (2003, January). En Eslovenia POP TV compra y produce telenovelas. Retrieved August, 2003, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- La Pastina, A.; McAnany, E. (1994). Telenovela audiences. A review and methodological critique of latinoamerican research. *Communication Research*, 21, 828-849.
- La telenovela de TV Azteca, “La hija del jardinero”, alcanza excelentes resultados en Colombia y a nivel mundial. (2007, November). Retrieved August, 2008, from <http://www.comarex.tv>.
- La telenovela, la mejor clase de español en Israel. (2005, November). Retrieved November, 2009, from <http://www.telecinco.com>.
- La TV móvil crece en Latinoamérica. (2009, January-February). Retrieved November, 2009, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Lizarzaburu, J. (2006, April 1). How telenovelas conquered the World. Retrieved July, 2007, from <http://www.bbc.com>.
- López, A. (1995). Our welcomed guests. Telenovelas in Latin America. In Allen, R. (ed.), *To be continued: telenovela around the World*, (pp. 256-275). London: Routledge.
- López, T. (2007). Telenovelas and the Israeli Television Market. *Television & New Media*, 8, 197-212.
- Los formatos de ficción. Una gran opción para los canales del mundo. (2008, January-March). Retrieved May, 2008, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Los gigantes de la TV norteamericana tras la telenovela. (2003, January). Retrieved July, 2007, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Marques de Melo, J. (1988). *As telenovelas da Globo: produção e exportação*, Sao Paulo: Summus.
- Martín-Barbero, J. (2005). Memory and form in the Latin American Telenovela. In Allen, Robert (ed.), *To be continued: telenovela around the World*, (pp. 276-284). London: Routledge.
- Martín-Barbero, J. (1987). *De los medios a las mediaciones*. Barcelona: Gili.
- Mato, D. (2005). Markets and representations of transnational identities. The transnationalization of the Telenovela Industry, territorial references and the production of markets and representations of transnational identities. *Television & New Media*, (6), 423- 444.

- McClellan, S. (2009). Telemundo & Televisa team to launch cable net. *Hollywood reporter*, 409(43),3-31.
- Medina M.; Gutierrez, M. E. (2008). Globalization with Latin flavour. *Journal of Spanish Language Media*, (1), 79 – 93.
- Medina, M. (2006). The Hispanic Globalization. In Oliver Boyd-Barret, *Communications, Media, Globalization and Empire*, (pp. 164-181). Eastleigh, UK: John Libbey.
- Medina, M. (2003). New forms of Globalization: expansion of Spanish Communication Groups in Latin America. In Demers, D. (ed.) (2003), *Terrorism, Globalization and Mass Communication: Papers Presented at the 2002 Center for Global Media Studies Conference* (pp. 131-139). Spokane, WA: Marquette Books.
- Medina, M. (2001). Algunas claves de la expansión de los grupos de comunicación en América. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 14, (1), 71-99.
- Orozco, G.; Vassallo, M.I. (2009). La ficción televisiva en Iberoamérica. Narrativas, formatos y publicidad. Barcelona. México: Observatorio Europeo de la Televisión Infantil. Observatorio Mexicano de la Ficción Televisiva.
- Panjeta, L. (2003, August-September). Telenovelas en el mundo, Qatar TV Cooperación entre países logra aumento en la audiencia. Retrieved September, 2007 from <http://www.tvmagazine.com>.
- Rebelde resultó un fenómeno muy redituable. (2006, June). Retrieved November, 2009, from <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx>.
- Roncagliolo, R. (1995). Trade Integration and Communication Networks in Latin America. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 20 (3), 335-342.
- Rusia compra y produce telenovelas. (2008, March-April). Retrieved September, 2009 from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Sahab, Claudia, directora de Europa de Televisa Estudios. (2007, October). Retrieved April, 2008, from <http://www.produ.tv>
- Salgueiro, R. (2007). La Televisión de Europa del Este en romance con la telenovela latinoamericana. Retrieved July, 2009, from <http://chasqui.comunica.org>.
- Sánchez-Ruiz, E. (2000). Globalización y convergencia: retos para las industrias culturales latinoamericanas, Documentación en Ciencias de la Comunicación, Universidad de Guadalajara, México.
- Sinclair, J. (2005). International Television Channels in The Latin American Space. In Chalaby, Jean K., *Transnational television Worldwide: Towards a New Media Order*, (pp. 196-215). London; New York : I.B. Tauris.
- Sinclair, J. (2000). *Televisión: comunicación global y regionalización*, Barcelona: Gedisa.
- Sinclair, J. (2004). The globalization of Latinamerican media. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 37, (4), 15-19.
- Sitman, R.; Lerner, I. (1995). Queridas, Odiadas, pero nunca ignoradas... Las telenovelas en la clase de E/LE. Actas del VI Congreso Internacional de la Asociación para la Enseñanza del Español como Lengua Extranjera (ASELE), *Tendencias actuales en la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera II*,(245-247), León, Spain.
- Straubhaar, J. D. (2007). *World television: from global to local*, Los Angeles: Sage.
- Telemundo wants channel in 23 countries in year one. (2008, March). Retrieved May,2008 from <http://www.tbivision.com>.

- Telenovelas, un formato exitoso en todo el mundo. (2006, October). Retrieved April, 2008, from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Territory Focus: Central & Eastern Europe. (2008, August). Retrieved August, 2008 from <http://www.tbivision.com>.
- Torres, F. J. (1994). *Telenovelas, televisión y comunicación*. México: Ediciones Coyoacán.
- Univisión lanza telenovela para Internet. (2008, December, 5). Retrieved November, 2009, from <http://www.cnn.expansion.com>.
- Univisión y Televisa enfrentadas por emisión de telenovelas por Internet. (2009, June, 10). Retrieved November, 2009, from <http://www.informe21.com>.
- Vasallo, M.I. (2009). Brasil: en el umbral de nuevos rumbos. In Orozco, G.; Vassallo, M.I. (2009), *La ficción televisiva en Iberoamérica. Narrativas, formatos y publicidad*, (pp. 97-148). Barcelona. México: Observatorio Europeo de la Televisión Infantil. Observatorio Mexicano de la Ficción Televisiva.
- Venezuela. De país productor a país comprador. (2006, October). Retrieved November, 2007 from <http://www.tvmasmagazine.com>.
- Vilches, L. (1997). La fuerza de los sentimientos. In Verón, Eliseo y Escudero, Lucrecia (eds.), *Telenovela. Ficción popular y mutaciones culturales*, (pp. 51-52). Barcelona: Gedisa.
- Waisbord, S. (2000). Industria global, culturas y políticas locales: la internacionalización de la televisión latinoamericana. *América Latina Hoy*, (25), 77-85.
- Yo amo a Juan Querendón*. Retrieved November, 2007, from <http://www.webdelatele.com>

### Electronic sources:

#### Blogs:

<http://colombiatv.wordpress.com>  
<http://msnlatino.telemundo.com>  
<http://redeglobo.globo.com>  
<http://telenovelasfans1.hit.bg>  
<http://teleseries.tvn.cl/>

#### Websites: <http://>

[www.acasatv.ro](http://www.acasatv.ro)  
[www.atb.com.bo](http://www.atb.com.bo)  
[www.aztecaamerica.com](http://www.aztecaamerica.com)  
[www.canal12.com.sv](http://www.canal12.com.sv)  
[www.canal9.com.ar/](http://www.canal9.com.ar/)  
[www.canalrcn.com](http://www.canalrcn.com)  
[www.caracoltv.com](http://www.caracoltv.com)  
[www.chilevision.cl](http://www.chilevision.cl)  
[www.comarex.tv](http://www.comarex.tv)  
[www.comarex.tv](http://www.comarex.tv)  
[www.cosmopolitan.tv](http://www.cosmopolitan.tv)  
[www.disney.it](http://www.disney.it)

[www.ecuavisa.com](http://www.ecuavisa.com)  
[www.elmundo.es](http://www.elmundo.es)  
[www.esmas.com](http://www.esmas.com)  
[www.extremista.com.ar](http://www.extremista.com.ar)  
[www.fmbolivia.com.bo](http://www.fmbolivia.com.bo)  
[www.fremantlemedia.com](http://www.fremantlemedia.com)  
[www.gamavision.com](http://www.gamavision.com)  
[www.lared.com](http://www.lared.com)  
[www.tvmasmagazine.com](http://www.tvmasmagazine.com)  
[www.maktv.gr](http://www.maktv.gr)  
[www.mega.cl](http://www.mega.cl)  
[www.mvstelevision.com](http://www.mvstelevision.com)  
[www.network54.com](http://www.network54.com)  
[www.rbd.www.univision.com](http://www.rbd.www.univision.com)

## **Partidos Políticos en Guerra: The Impact of Partisanship in Political Advertising in the 2006 Mexican Presidential Election**

**Sindy Chapa**

Texas State University, USA  
[sc47@txstate.edu](mailto:sc47@txstate.edu)

**Angela Hausman**

Howard University, USA  
[hausman1229@gmail.com](mailto:hausman1229@gmail.com)

**Michael Minor**

University of Texas – Pan Americana, USA  
[minorms@hotmail.com](mailto:minorms@hotmail.com)

---

### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the role of message strategy and partisanship in evaluations of political candidates in Mexico in 2006. Using theories from political science, marketing, and advertising, the paper seeks to understand how these factors and interactions between them affect evaluations of the candidate sponsoring the ads and his/her political opponent. Mexico was chosen as the context due to the relative paucity of research outside of the developed nations and the rapidly increasing expenditures on political advertising across recent campaigns. Findings suggest that message strategy does impact candidate evaluations, but only across the extremes of competitive and attack ads. Partisanship and interactions between partisanship and message strategy also affect candidate evaluations.

## **Partidos Políticos en Guerra: The Impact of Partisanship in Political Advertising in the 2006 Mexican Presidential Election**

In Mexico, significant political changes have occurred during the last decade. As a result, there has been a notorious increase in political campaign expenditures, as well as an explosion of negative televised political advertisements. The total expenses for the 2000 presidential campaign exceeded the U.S. campaign expenditures by \$160 million (Nava, 2005). After the defeat of the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 2000, the political battles within and among parties became more intense. For example, in the 2006 presidential campaign two million hours were used in the media to broadcast a total of 757, 545 political ads (IFE: Instituto Federal Electoral, 2006; Saldaña, 2007). Clearly, this is indicative of the phenomenal increase in the utilization of televised advertising in Mexico (Nava, 2005).

In general, there is a paucity of research on televised political advertising, and what research exists is fragmented across several disciplines including political science, marketing, and advertising without much effort to integrate theories from these domains. Moreover, an understanding of political advertising beyond the developed nations of the world is even less developed. This study aims to investigate the impact of partisanship and televised political advertising messages in a recently democratized, transformed, and accelerated political system. Specifically, this research addresses the following research questions: To what extent does advertising message strategy affect a voter's evaluation of the candidate in Mexico? And, to what extent is this evaluation moderated by the individual's partisanship? To respond to these questions, we integrate theories from political science, marketing, and advertising to understand the role of advertising message strategies and partisanship in regards to political advertising in Mexico.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Mexico's Democratic Transformation**

During the last decade and a half, significant economic and political changes occurred in Mexico. The Mexican's debt crisis in the 1990s propelled Mexico to enter into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada starting officially on January 1, 1994. Mexico's market was opened to a broader competition with free access to one of the world's largest markets (Schettino, 1994; Rubio, 1992). Meanwhile, the inclusion of NAFTA side agreements on labor and the environment (Heredia, 1994) opened debates on issues of social justice (Heredia, 1994). The same day that NAFTA was inaugurated, Mexico suffered a Zapatista uprising, creating even more social pressure for further political transformation (Rich and De los Reyes, 1996). As a result, the "dedazo" (handpicking) system, of the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), came to an end in 2000. PRI partisan Labastida lost the election against the presidential candidate of the National Action Party (PAN) Vicente Fox (Dominguez and Lawson, 2003).

At the end of Fox's administration (2000-2006), however, the people remained dissatisfied not only with the political system, but also with Fox's administration (Flores-Macias and Lawson, 2006; Lawson, 2007, Dominguez et al., 2009). This, in turn, created a highly tense political climate for the 2006 presidential campaign (Paolino, 2009; Baker, 2006, Lawson 2006). With skeptical citizens (Flores-Macias and Lawson, 2006), and a

controversial and unwanted candidate Roberto Madrazo (Paolino, 2007a; Mendez, 2009), the PRI did not recover. Even worse, the PRI became the third popular party with no chance to win the 2006 presidential election (Langston, 2007b; Mendez 2009). On the other hand, liberal left-leaning Andrés Manuel López Obrador, candidate of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) became the most popular candidate contesting against conservative right-leaning Felipe Calderón candidate of the PAN (Paolino, 2009; Benton, 2006). López Obrador performed remarkably well in the presidential campaign, yet Calderón won by a difference of .58%, which is 35.9% of the votes against 35.3% (Benton, 2006). The 2006 presidential election was thus the most tightly contested and controversial election in Mexican history.

### **Message strategies in Political Advertising**

What types of communication qualify specifically as negative political advertising is still debated among researchers, some of whom suggest that contradictory findings may be the result of the general lack of agreement (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991). The definition has been evolving over almost two decades. For instance, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, “negative advertising” was just identified as any advertising form that presented a negative statement about the sponsors’ opponent (Garramone, 1982; Merrit, 1984; Roddy and Garramone, 1988; Hill, 1989; and Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton and Cole, 1990). More recently, several researchers have focused on studying the scope of negative political advertising to develop a more specific definition of the concept. This resulted in the identification and specification of several characteristics of negative political advertising. For instance Gronbeck (1985) identified three types of negative political advertising: the implicative, which involves an implication about the opponent but no direct attack; the comparative, which is an explicit comparison between the candidates; and the assaultive, which is a direct attack. Later, building on Gronbeck’s work, Johnson-Cartee and Copeland (1991) proposed a similar characterization encompassing three different types of negative political advertising: direct attack ads, direct comparison ads, and implied comparison ads; all of which include negative statements of one form or another.

In this study, we modified this more recent classification into four message categories: competitive ads (positive advertising), which include only statements about the candidate with no explicit mention of the candidate’s opponent; direct and indirect comparative ads (negative advertising), which contain both positive statements about the candidate and negative statements about the opponent; and attack ads (negative advertising), which contain only negative statements about the opponent and nothing positive about the candidate.

### **Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development**

The pervasive traditional and social media coverage allows voters to be more informed than ever before, yet the increased participation expected from a more informed citizenry has not occurred (IFE, 2010). Mexico’s Electoral Federal Institute (IFE, 2010) reported an increase in abstentions from 24.15 % in 1994 (the lowest in the history) to 50% in 1997. Research in developed countries indicates this apathy might be due to the growing cynicism resulting from increasing utilization of negative political advertising (Tedesco, 1999). In addition, empirical evidence supports the notion that negative

political advertising could backfire creating negative evaluations of the candidate sponsoring the advertisement and reducing stated intentions to vote for that candidate (Jamieson, 1984; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1995, 1997; Tedesco, 2002). Nevertheless, a lack of research in less developed countries limits the application of these propositions. If that were true, how can we explain the triumph of Fox who overused negative messages in his televised advertising campaign in 2000?

### **The Effect of the Message Strategy on Candidate's Evaluation**

Based on research from both experimental and survey settings the literature contends that televised political advertising can affect citizens' evaluations of a candidate's image (Atkin and Heald, 1976; Becker and Doolittle, 1975; Cundy, 1986, 1990; Hofstetter, Zukin and Buss, 1978; Kaid 1991, 1994, 1997, 1998; Kaid and Chanslor, 1995; Kaid, Leland and Whitney, 1992; Kaid and Johnston, 2002). Specifically, it has been found that the thematic issues, as well as the type of message strategy, are related to the effect on candidate evaluation (Kaid and Johnston, 2002). For example, several studies have focused on the effect that different message strategies have on a candidate's image evaluation, noting that the effect can be either positive or negative.

On one hand, it has been found that exposure to even just a single positive advertisement can raise support for its sponsor (Hill, 1989; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997; Pinkleton, 1997). Alternatively, negative effects on the sponsor's image have been detected as a result of exposure to attack advertising (Boydston and Kaid, 1983; Kaid and Boydston, 1987; Garramone, 1985; Merritt 1984; West, 1994). Some studies indicate that negative advertising can create negative opinions of the target candidate – the opposing candidate (Boydston and Kaid, 1983; Garramone, 1985; Merritt, 1984). However, other studies have found the backlash effects against the sponsoring candidate to be greater than the intended effect of creating negative opinions of the target (Hill, 1989; Faber, Tims and Schmitt, 1990; Japerson and Fan, 2002). Overall, research on the effect of negative political advertising indicates that attack ads can have double effects, harming the target of such attacks and/or harming the sponsor of attack ads.

Research concerning the negative effect of attack advertising reveals other variations in these effects. Garramone (1985) compared the effect of a negative ad that was sponsored by the opposing candidate versus one sponsored by a political action committee. Results indicated that subjects had a more negative image of the target candidate and were less likely to vote for this candidate if the ad was sponsored by an independent source than if the sponsor was the opposing candidate. Other studies have focused on other consequential effects of negative advertising such as “the sleeper effect,” a phenomenon that explains how the impact of negative political advertising persists and even increases over time. Weaver and Tinkham (1999), for instance, suggest that a defensive advertisement following the attack is initially effective; however, over the next few weeks, the impact of the attack ad increases substantially. Similarly, a recent study performed by Lau and Sigelman (2000) indicates that negative advertisements generate a backlash against the sponsor when the target of the attack responds quickly and forcefully, but were very successful when the target did not directly respond to the charges. Finally, the literature also suggests that attack ads are particularly effective

among voters who make political decisions based on who they do not want to see elected (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991).

Currently, political candidates employ a mix of strategies that includes the use of comparative advertising as a means of communicating negative information about an opponent to prospective voters, while avoiding the stigma attached to purely negative "attack" advertising. Some scholars argue that (direct) comparative advertising is rhetorically and ethically superior to negative advertising (Jamieson, Waldman, and Sherr, 1998) and provokes less of a backlash effect (Pinkleton, 1997). In an experiment conducted to determine the effects of comparative political advertising on candidates and advertising evaluations, the results showed that negative comparative advertising lowers targeted-candidate evaluations without lowering sponsoring-candidate evaluations, despite the low credibility ratings received by such advertising (Pinkleton, 1997; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991). In the case of indirect comparative advertising, the literature suggests that this type of negative ad has not been included in the research, but Johnson-Cartee and Copeland (1991) argue that it may be particularly effective because viewers generate arguments for themselves and it does not cause a backlash effect.

Overall, evidence suggests that positive advertising—in this study termed as competitive ads—are more effective than attack or comparative ads in affecting voter attitudes toward a candidate's image (Hill, 1989; Kahn and Geer, 1994; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997; Pinkleton 1997; Kaid and Johnston, 2002). In addition, comparative advertising is considered to be more effective than attack advertising (Pinkleton, 1997; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991). Based on the literature, we assume that indirect comparative ads might be more effective than direct comparative ads in terms of a viewer's attitude toward a candidate as well as a viewer's evaluation of a candidate. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

**H1:** Competitive ads are more likely to create positive candidate evaluations than indirect comparative, direct comparative and attack ads.

**H2:** Indirect comparative ads are more likely to create positive candidate evaluations than direct comparative and attack ads.

**H3:** Attack ads are less likely to create positive candidate evaluations than direct and indirect comparative ads.

### **Partisanship and Political Advertising Effectiveness**

The literature suggests that the effect of advertising on individuals depends, among other things, upon the partisanship displayed by the sponsor of the ad (O'Cass, 2002; Faber, Tims and Schmitt, 1993; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997). For example, Faber's et al. (2002) study suggests that when voting preference is the dependent variable, people who are more involved and interested in a particular party are more influenced by political ads (Faber, Tims and Schmitt, 1993).

Political advertising effectiveness can sometimes be accomplished by playing to the voter's partisan bias. The literature suggests that individuals exposed to campaign advertising, due to the emotions evoked by the ads are more likely to vote along party lines than those not exposed to political advertising (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997). Merrit (1984) argues that partisanship produces selective distortion and more favorable emotional responses to ads of their chosen party. Partisanship affects emotional responses because once the potential voter creates a candidate's image; this image is more resistant

to subsequent persuasive appeals to the contrary (Cundy, 1986, 1990; Mulder, 1979; Pfau and Parrott, 1989; Surlin et. al., 1986). In addition, the literature suggests that voters lacking a party affiliation are less likely to be persuaded by campaign advertising (Ansolabeh and Iyengar, 1997). Therefore, we expect that the effect of the message of the ad in terms of the candidate's evaluation will be weaker or stronger depending on the voter's partisanship.

**H4:** There is a significant difference among partisan groups in terms of candidate evaluations along the four message strategies (competitive, direct comparative, indirect comparative and attack).

### Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental survey procedure in a field setting to enhance external validity (Cook and Campbell, 1979). In addition, the quasi-experimental survey was conducted in an actual campaign and featured real candidates from the PAN (conservative) and PRD (liberal) parties. By conducting the survey experiment during an ongoing political campaign, the researchers enhanced not only realism and potential generalizability of the study, but it also assured the causality of partisanship. That is the causal impact of individuals' partisanship on candidates' evaluations, moderated by advertising, could be measured. Most voters hold a variety of beliefs and expectations about parties and candidates at different times (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997). Therefore, it is assumed that the effect related to "partisanship" will almost certainly change after the election. A one-ad experimental design was randomly assigned to participants to clarify the causal inference of the study and to increase the internal validity (Cook and Campbell, 1979). This design allowed us to evaluate the impact of a message on voters after exposure to a single advertisement and to provide a precise estimate of the effect of a particular stimulus from the advertisement.

### Treatment Stimulus Messages

The treatment stimulus selection was performed after a series of political TV ads were tested through a content analysis of the messages. Three Mexican evaluators were asked to view several political ads from the 2000 presidential campaign in Mexico and select the commercials that best represented each message strategy: (1) competitive, (2) indirect comparative, (3) direct comparative, and (4) attack. Once the messages were selected, inter-judge reliability was assessed using a different group of evaluators (see Luborsky and Crits-Christoph, 1990). The content of the messages is shown in Appendix 1.

After selecting TV ads most accurately representing those message strategies, simulated ads were produced at a professional-quality television production studio. These simulated ads were produced to control extraneous factors such as: background; voice-over; and music, which were not the foci of this project. To simulate the actual political campaign, we spliced together the actual candidates with footage from previous advertisements from Mexico, using studio-quality editing technology, in turn making it difficult to detect any difference between the segments.

The candidates selected to be in the experimental ads were: López Obrador from the PRD, – who is a liberal; and Felipe Calderón, from PAN – who is a conservative. The candidates' selection was based on their high level of popularity and equal

opportunity to win the election as reflected in media polls (example, Paolino, 2009; Benton, 2006). Based on a judgment selection procedure, López Obrador was selected to be the sponsored candidate due to the fact that he had not only used all four types of messages, but also used more negative messages (attack and direct comparatives) in his televised advertising campaign than any other candidate. Finally, to avoid any bias, a professional quality voice-over was added to all the videos, and the same video footage was used for each of the four political messages. In other words, we only manipulated the valence of the message, using the same images, voice, and candidates (Obrador/Sponsor-candidate and Calderón/Attacked-candidate).

### **Instrument Development**

This study used existing scales to assure construct validity. The candidate's evaluation was measured by adopting Funk's (1996, 1997) items on three dimensions: competence, trustworthiness, and warmth; and Kaid and Johnston's (2001) candidate's characteristics: honesty, integrity, warmth, compassion, competency, performance success, and activeness. The scale was a semantic-differential format using a 5-point scale. Partisanship was measured by identifying the partisanship of the respondent as either a partisan of the sponsor, partisan of the opponent, partisan of a third party (PRI), or non-partisan (without a political affiliation).

### **Data Collection**

Since the treatments examined in this quasi-experiment are related to political issues, only adults 18 and older were considered as potential candidates to participate in the study. Also, only Mexican citizens were eligible to participate in the experiment. The respondents were unpaid volunteers recruited through direct contact by interviewers. Fifteen adults, including professionals and undergraduate students, were recruited and trained to carry out the survey experiment and also serve as interviewers. The data was collected in Matamoros, Mexico during three consecutive days in June 2006, just before the Election Day I on July 6 that year. To assure a heterogeneous sample and to reduce bias, such as social desirability, the experiment was performed in a natural setting rather than a lab location. A quota sample, a non-probabilistic technique in which sampling units were selected based on geographic and demographic factors (Carl and Gates, 2005) was used to conduct the quasi-experiment. Interviewers were assigned a specific geographical region familiar to them in order to ease their ability in collecting data. Portable DVD players were utilized to show the selected political ad to the participants. Headphones were also used with the portable DVD player to avoid distraction among the participants and achieve a greater level of internal control in the study.

A total of 329 questionnaires were collected for a response rate of 99%. The final sample consisted of 322 cases after 7 questionnaires were deleted due to missing data. The number of treatment samples was almost equivalent across the categories: 82 (25.5%) competitive ads, 81 (25.2%) indirect comparative ads, 82 (25.5%) direct comparative ads, and 77 (23.9%) attack ads. The sample distribution by gender was 41% female participants, 59% male; social class was 34% lower class, 36% middle-lower class, 20% middle-upper class, 10% upper class; and by partisan groups 12% supporters of the sponsor, 16% partisans of the opponent (attacked) candidate, 18% partisans of another party and 54% non-partisans.

## Data Analysis

### The assessment of the measures

Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency among those items comprising the candidate's evaluation. The test showed an alpha of .94, which was greater than the suggested alpha of .70 (Nunally, 1967 and 1978). Further, in an attempt to assess the validity of the multi-item scale, a CFA was performed by using SEM. Overall, the 11-item construct produced a good fit of greater than .90 to accept the construct (GFI = .936, AGFI = .912, NFI = .979, TLI = .976, and CFI = .988). Along with the good fit measures, the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR = .072), and the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA = .064), showed levels of error below the recommended limit of .08 (Hair, 1998). In addition, the Chi-Squared ( $X^2$ ) divided by the degrees of freedom (df) was less than the recommended value of 3 ( $X^2/df = 2.32$ ), and the estimated regression weights were reported within a range of .62 to .90, all significant at .000. Finally, the percent of variance extracted, which reflects the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted by the latent construct, was .62, over the desirable level of .50 (Hair, 1998).

### Hypotheses Testing

One -Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the first set of hypotheses. Results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 1a. The overall results indicate that significant differences at .05 exist among the four types of messages ( $F = 3.22$ ). However, an examination of the post-hoc Bonfferoni and Scheffe comparison tests showed that only one significant difference existed among groups. That is, only the competitive and attack ads were found to be significantly different. The mean differences' direction of these variables indicated that evaluations of the sponsor candidate were significantly more favorable in competitive than in attack ads. Results of the multiple comparison tests are exhibited in Table 1b. Furthermore, the results showed no significant differences among competitive, indirect and direct comparative ads, and neither among indirect comparative, direct comparative and attack ads. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was only partially supported, whereas hypotheses 2 and 3 were rejected.

**Table 1a**

**ANOVA Results**  
**Analysis of Mean Differences on Evolutions of the Sponsor Candidate across**  
**Message Strategies**

Dependent Variable	Sum of Squared	DF	Mean Squared	F	P-value
Evaluation of the candidate	12.813	3	4.271	3.226	.023
Error	421.028	318	1.324		
Total	433.841	321			

Table 1b

---

*Scheffe and Bonfferoni tests*

---

(I) AD'S MESSAGE	(J) AD'S MESSAGE	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Competitive	Indirect	.231	.650
	Comparative		
	Direct Comparative	.315	.379
	Attack	*-.561	.025
Indirect Comparative	Competitive	-.231	.650
	Direct Comparative	.084	.974
	Attack	.330	.356
	Competitive	-.315	.379
Direct Comparative	Indirect Comparative	-.084	.974
	Attack	-.245	.614
	Competitive	*-.561	.025
	Indirect Comparative	-.330	.356
Attack	Direct Comparative	-.245	.614

---

In addition, multiple univariate tests were performed to test hypothesis 4. Overall, the results indicated that a significant difference at .000 existed among partisan groups. Post-hoc Bonfferoni and Scheffe multiple comparison tests revealed that partisans of the sponsor candidate were significantly more likely to produce higher-positive evaluations for the sponsor candidate than partisans of the opponent candidate, partisans of the third party (PRI), and non-partisans (without a political affiliation). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Four additional tests were run to observe the effects of partisanship on candidate evaluations on each message strategy. Overall, the results showed that differences among groups existed in three of the four message strategies. That is, significant differences were detected among partisan groups in the competitive, indirect comparative and attack strategies, while no significant variation was observed among partisan groups in the direct comparative strategy. Thus, when voters watched the direct comparative message, partisans of the sponsor candidate did not evaluate their candidate significantly better than other partisan groups. See Table 2.

Similar results were obtained with the multiple comparison tests (Bonfferoni and Scheffe) across competitive and indirect comparative strategies. Thus, partisans of the sponsor candidate produced significantly higher positive evaluations of the candidate than the other partisan groups. Surprisingly, results obtained with the attack strategy showed no significant difference between the partisans of the sponsor and the other partisanship groups. However, a significant difference was detected between non-partisans and partisans of a third party (PRI); that is, PRI partisans were significantly less

likely to have favorable evaluations of the sponsor candidate than non-partisans in attack advertisements.

**Table 2**  
**Comparative Univariate Analysis of Mean Differences among Partisan Groups**

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Sum of Squared</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Mean Squared</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P-value</b>
Competitive Ads	32.46	3	10.82	11.63	.000
Indirect Comparative Ads	19.23	3	6.41	6.40	.001
Direct Comparative Ads	3.20	3	1.06	.949	.421
Attack Ads	16.04	3	5.32	3.46	.020

In sum, evaluations of the sponsor candidate differed significantly across two message strategies: competitive and attack ads. Competitive ads created more favorable evaluations of the candidates, whereas attack ads produced less favorable evaluations. With respect to the role of partisanship, when either a competitive or an indirect comparative ad was shown, the results indicate that partisans of the sponsor candidate hold significantly more favorable evaluations of the candidate than do other partisan groups. At the same time, no significant better evaluation of a candidate was obtained by partisans of the sponsor when they were exposed to a direct comparative or an attack ad. Finally, when the voters viewed the attack ads, a significant difference was found between PRI partisans and the non-partisans, that is, PRI's followers were less likely to have a favorable evaluation of the sponsor candidate than voters without a party affiliation.

### **Contributions and Implications**

This study provides valuable contributions for theory, practice and research. Theoretically, the findings provide scientific evidence in the area of political advertising in Mexico. Practically, the findings will assist practitioners to understand the effectiveness of televised political advertising, and will provide them the tools to build a guide for the proper and efficient use of the message strategies mediated by the local levels of partisanship in political campaigns. Methodologically, this study innovatively applied a quasi-experimental survey to measure the effect of political advertising in a natural environment rather than in a laboratory.

Overall, the results of this study support previous research which contend that the type of message strategy has an effect on candidate evaluation (Kaid and Johnston, 2002), and provides more evidence to explain why negative advertising increases voter turnout (Boydston and Kaid, 1983; Kaid and Boydston, 1987; Garramone, 1985; Merritt 1984; West, 1994). Furthermore, the results indicated that the message of the ad is not always a direct predictor but a constant moderator of evaluations of the candidate. Partisanship, on the other hand, is a direct predictor of televised political advertising in Mexico.

### Implications for Practice

The most reliable message strategy is *competitive*; it produces the highest positive evaluations toward the candidates. The odds of producing NEGATIVE evaluations are negative. That in turn, explains why this strategy produces the highest intention to vote. Thus, the best strategy option would always be the competitive. However, in most of the cases, a campaign might also need to communicate negative messages. For instance, sometimes some level of negativism is expected in political advertising among voters who make political decisions based on who they do not want to be elected (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1997; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991). In this instance, an indirect comparative strategy should be considered. The positive scores of indirect comparative strategy are the second highest after the outcomes obtained in the competitive strategy, and not only that, the difference between these two strategies does not represent a risk for the campaign because statistically the study revealed that no significant differences occurred in any of the variables between these two message strategies. Therefore, a televised political campaign should, in that case, employ a mix of strategies (competitive and indirect comparative) as a means of communicating negative information about an opponent, by highlighting the superiority of the sponsored candidate over the opponent, but without explicitly attacking him/her. That is, the message should slightly disappoint the viewers about an issue, or action, which should represent an opponent's flaw, and subsequently underline the sponsor's attributes to place him, in the eye of the viewers, as the best option. Thus, the negative message should not be the focus of the message, but the positive messages, which must emphasize the attributes and superiority of the sponsor over the opponent.

### *Indirect Versus Indirect Comparative Message Strategies*

There are two forms of comparative advertising that can be used by practitioners to take advantage of a negative message but by avoiding, at the same time, the "stigma" of a negative campaign. As previously discussed, the indirect comparative is highly recommended, but in the case of a direct comparative, some deliberations should be taken before risking the campaign with this strategy. The results indicate that no significant difference existed between indirect comparative advertising and direct comparative strategies on evaluations, nevertheless, the literature in political advertising indicates that negative messages creates a backlash against the sponsor when it is used extensively over a considerable period of time (Lau and Sigelman, 2000), and also when the target of the attack responds quickly and forcefully (Sooner, 1998). That is, the negative effect of this strategy might increase over time as viewers accumulate their negative feelings toward the candidate and negative evaluations of cognition (see Campbell and Keller, 2003). This evidence, along with the premises about the backlash effect, is a strong argument not only to question the effectiveness of the direct comparative strategy, but also to claim that this strategy is not a beneficial alternative for a campaign.

### *Attacking Message Strategy*

Attacking advertising does not produce any good but hurts the political campaign. Although the name of the sponsor is never used, the appearance of the party's name, as sponsor of the ad, is more than enough to produce backlash against the sponsor and against his political party. This strategy produces mostly negative scores, that is, negative

viewer's evaluations of the candidate and negative intentions to vote for the "sponsor" candidate. Although research in advertising suggests that repetition, even in the case of negative advertising, increase attitudes toward the ad and attitudes toward the brand (Pashupati, 2003; Cox and Cox, 1988; Batra and Ray 1986), this assumption does not apply to political advertising. Literature in political advertising states that too much exposure to attacking advertising produces political cynicism (Chapa and Mendoza 2007; Pinklenton, Um, and Weintraub, 2002; Tedesco 2002), and repetition creates a backlash against the sponsor (Lau and Sigelman, 2000; Sooner, 1998). In this instance, repetition might only increase viewer's disgust for the candidate, and so decrease viewers' intention to vote. That is, an attacking message strategy will only contribute to citizens' disgust with the campaign.

### *The Effect of Partisanship*

Partisanship was found to be an important predictor at measuring the effectiveness of televised political advertising. The effectiveness of an ad will be initially generated by means of evaluations affected by a predisposition produced by partisanship. Therefore, if a campaign is about to occur in a place where the majority of the voters are non-partisan, the use of negative messages, particularly direct comparative and attacking, should not be encouraged but avoided. People with no political affiliation have a higher predisposition toward political messages than any individual with a party affiliation, and so they will respond more negatively to political ads. Nevertheless, the growth of such negativism can be controlled, decreased and perhaps avoided if practitioners stop using negative messages (direct comparative and attacking) and adopt more positive campaigns.

### **Limitations**

Despite the theoretical and practical strength of this investigation, two limitations are identified in this study: social desirability bias and sample characteristics. Some level of social desirability bias might have existed in this study since the quasi-experiment survey was conducted during an ongoing campaign, utilizing real candidates. In this study, the instrument did not correct for social desirability. Therefore, in future research, administering a social desirability measure may be beneficial. Also, as the data collection was limited to one city, any generalizations based on the results of this study should be done with caution because the sample does not represent the entire population of Mexico or the population of other Latin America countries.

## References

- Ansolabehere, S., & Iyengar S. (1997). *Going Negative*, York: The Free Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, & Iyengar, Shanto (1995). Winning through advertising: It's all in the context. In J. A. Thurber, & Nelson, C. J. (Eds.), *Campaigns and elections American style* (pp. 101-111), Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Atkin, C., & Heald, G. (1976). Effects of political advertising. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40, 216-228.
- Batra, R. and M. Ray (1986). Situational effects of advertising repetition: The moderating influence of motivation, ability and opportunity to respond. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (March), 432-445.
- Becker, L. B. & Doolittle, J. C. (1975). How repetition affects evaluations of and ad and information seeking about candidates. *Journalism Quarterly*, 52, 611-619.
- Baker, A. (2006). Why is Voting so Regionalized in Mexico? , Political Discussion and Electoral Choice in 2006. Presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the *American Political Science Association*, Philadelphia, PA.
- Benton, A. L. (2006). Quién está preocupado por López Obrador? : Las respuestas del mercado a las tendencias electorales durante la campaña presidencial mexicana del 2006. *Colombia Internacional*, 64, 68-95.
- Boydston, J., & Kaid, L. L. (1983). An experimental study of the effectiveness of NCPAC political advertisements. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Convention, Dallas, TX.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American Voter*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Campbell, M.C., and K. L. Keller (2003). Brand familiarity and advertising repetition effects. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (2), 292-304.
- Carl, M., & Gates R. (2005). *Marketing Research Essentials*, Wiley (5<sup>th</sup> ed).
- Chapa, S. and A. Mendoza (2007). Mexicans' responses toward televised political ads during the 2006 presidential election: Negative vs. positive ads. Special DVD Issue of *Consumption, Markets and Culture: Resonant Representations*, Vol. 10, Issue 2 (June), 141.
- Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*, Northwestern University Press: Evanston, IL.
- Cotton, C. (2010). Florida Redistricting: The complete analysis. At the Rose Institute of State and Local Government (02/22/2010). Retrieved January 30, 2010 at <http://rosereport.org/20100222/florida-redistricting-the-complete-analysis>
- Cox, D. S. and A. D. Cox (1988). What does familiarity breed? Complexity as a moderator of repetition effects in advertisement evaluation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (June), 111-116.
- Cundy, D. T. (1990), "Image formation, the low involvement viewer, and televised political advertising," *Political Communication and Persuasion*, 7, 41.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1986). Political commercials and candidate image. In L. L. Kaid, D. Nimmo, & K. R. Sanders (Eds.), *New perspectives on political advertising* (pp. 210-34). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Domínguez, J. I., & Lawson, C. (Eds.) (2003). *Mexico's pivotal democratic election: Candidates, voters and the presidential campaign of 2000*. Stanford and La Jolla,

- CA: Stanford University Press and the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California at San Diego.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Lawson, C., & Moreno, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Consolidating Mexico's Democracy: The 2006 Presidential Campaign in Comparative Perspective*. México DF: Miguel Ángel Porrúa.
- Faber, R., Tims, A., & Schmitt, K. (1990). Accentuate the negative? The impact of negative political appeals on voting intent. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Advertising*. Stout, Patricia (Ed.). Austin, TX: American Academy of Advertising, 10-16.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Tims, A., & Schmitt, K. (1993). Negative political advertising and voting intent: The role of involvement and alternative information sources. *Journal of Advertising*, 22 (4), 67-77.
- Fiorina, M. P. (1977). *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Flores-Macias, F., & Lawson, C. (2006). Mexican Democracy and Its Discontents. *Review of Policy Research*, 23 (2), 287-293.
- Franklin, C. H. (1984). Issue Preferences, Socialization, and the Evolution of Party Identification. *American Journal of Political Science*, 28, 459-478.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and John. E. Jackson, (1983). The Dynamics of Party Identification. *American Political Science Review*, 77, 957-73.
- Funk, C. L. (1999). Bringing the Candidate into Models of Candidate Evaluation. *The Journal of Politics*, 61, 700-720.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1996). The Impact of Scandal on Candidate Evaluations: An Experimental Test of the Role of Candidate Traits. *Political Behavior*, 18, 1-24.
- Garramone, G. M. (1984). Voter response to negative political ads. *Journalism Quarterly*, 61 (Summer), 250-259.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1985). Effects of negative political advertising: The role of sponsor and rebuttal. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 29 (2), 147-159.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Atkin, C. K., Pinkleton, B. E., & Cole, R. T. (1990). Effects of negative political advertising on the political process. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 34, 299-311.
- Gronbeck, B. E. (1985). The presidential campaign dramas of 1984. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 15, 386-393.
- Hair, J. E., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L, & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (5th Ed.). Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- Heredia, C. A. (1994). NAFTA and democratization in Mexico. *Journal of International Affairs*, 48 (1), 13- 39.
- Hill, R. P. (1989). An exploration of voter responses to political advertisements. *Journal of Advertising*, 18 (4), 14-22.
- Hoffstetter, C. R., Zukin, C., & Buss, T. F. (1978). Political imagery and information in an age of television. *Journalism Quarterly*, 55, 562-569.
- IFE – Instituto Federal Electoral (2010). Estudio sobre abstencionismo en México. Retrieved January 28, 2010 at [Http://www.ife.org.mx/documentos/DECEYEC/vgn\\_investigacion/estudio\\_sobre\\_abstencionismo.htm](http://www.ife.org.mx/documentos/DECEYEC/vgn_investigacion/estudio_sobre_abstencionismo.htm)

- Jamieson, K. H. (1984). *Packaging the presidency; a history and criticism of presidential campaign advertising*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, P. Waldman, and S. Sherr (1998). Eliminate the negative? Defining and refining categories of analysis for political advertisements. Paper presented at the Conference on Political Advertising in Election Campaigns (April), Washington, DC.
- Japerson, A. E., & Fan, D. P. (2002). An aggregate examination of the backlash effect in political advertising: The case of the 1996 U.S. senate race in Minnesota. *Journal of Advertising*, 31 (1), 1-12.
- Johnson-Cartee, K. S., & Copeland, G. A. (1991). *Negative political advertising, coming of age*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kahn, K. F., & Geer, J. G. (1994). Creating impressions: An experimental investigation of political advertising on television. *Political Behavior*, 16, 93-116.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1997). Effects of the television spots on image of Dole and Clinton. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40, 1085-1094.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1996). Technology and political advertising: The application of ethics standards to the 1992 spots. *Communication Research Reports*, 13, 129-137.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1995). Measuring candidate images with semantic differentials. In K. Hacker (Ed.) *Candidate image in presidential election campaigns* (pp. 131-134). New York: Praeger.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1994). Political advertising in the 1992 campaign. In R. E. Denton (Ed.), *The 1992 presidential campaign: A communication perspective* (pp. 111-127). Westport CT: Praeger.
- Kaid, L. L. (1991). Ethical dimensions of political advertising. In R. E. Denton (Ed.), *Ethical dimensions of political communication*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- \_\_\_\_\_, & Boydston, J. (1987). An experimental study of the effectiveness of negative political advertisements. *Communication Quarterly*, 35, 193-201.
- \_\_\_\_\_, & Johnston, A. (2001). *Video style in Presidential Campaigns*, Westport, CT: Praeger.
- \_\_\_\_\_, & Chanslor, M. (1995). Changing candidate image: The effects of television advertising. In K. Hacker (ed.), *Candidate Images in Presidential Election Campaigns*, New York: Praeger, 83-97.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Leland, C. M., & Whitney, S. (1992). The impact of televised political ads: Evoking viewer responses in the 1988 presidential campaign. *Southern Communication Journal*, 57 (4), 285-295.
- Langston, J. (2007b). The PRI's 2006 Electoral Debacle. *Political Science and Politics*, 40 (1), 21-25.
- Lau, R. R., & Sigelman, L. (2000). In Thurber, J. A., Nelson, C. J., & Dulio, D. A. (Ed.) *Effectiveness of negative political advertising in crowded airwaves: Campaign advertising in elections* (pp 10-43). Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press.
- Lawson, C. (2007a). Democracy and the Culture of Skepticism: Political Trust in Argentina and Mexico. *Political Science Quarterly*, 122 (3), 522-524.
- Luborsky, L., & Crits-Christoph, P. (1990). *Understanding transference: The core conflictual relationship theme method*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Méndez, G. P. (2009). El PRI: Relación interna de fuerzas y conflicto en la víspera del proceso electoral de 2006. *Política y Gobierno*, 16 (1), 157-190.
- Merrit, S. (1984). Negative political advertising: Some empirical findings. *Journal of Advertising*, 13, 27-38.
- Mulder, R. A. (1979). *The Insurgents: Progressives in the United States senate and the new deal, 1933-1939*. New York: Garland Publication.
- Nava, F. R. (2005, December 01). IFE aprueba 62mdd para cada candidato en México. *La Opinión*. Retrieved May 5, 2009 from <http://www.sre.gob.mx/umi/051201.htm>
- Niemi, R. G., & Jennings, M. K. (1991). Issues and Inheritance in the Formation of Party Identification. *American Journal of Political Science*, 35, 970-988.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory (2nd Ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (1967). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- O’Cass, A. (2005), “Political campaign advertising: Believe It or Not,” *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 14, 205-221.
- Paolino, P. (2009). La posición del PRI en la política mexicana. *Política y Gobierno*, 16 (2), 321-348.
- Pashupati, K. (2003). I know this brand, but did I like the ad? An investigation of the familiarity-based sleeper effect. *Psychology and Marketing*, 20 (11), 1017-1043.
- Pinkleton, B. E. (1997). The effects of negative comparative political advertising on candidate evaluations and advertising evaluations: An exploration. *Journal of Advertising*, 26 (1), 19-29.
- Pinkleton, B., N. Um, and E. Weintraub (2002). An exploration of the effect of negative political advertising on political decision making. *Journal of Advertising*, 31 (1), 13-25.
- Pfau, M., Parrott, R., & Lindquist, B. (1992). An expectancy theory explanation of the effectiveness of political attack television spots: A case study. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 20 (August), 235-253.
- Rich, P., & De Los Reyes, G. (1996). Mexican Caricature and the Politics of Popular Culture. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 30 (1), 133-145.
- Roddy, B. L., & Garramone, G. M. (1988). Appeals and strategies of negative political advertising. *Journal Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 32 (4), 415-427.
- Roxborough, I. (1992). Neo-liberalism in Latin America: Limits and alternatives. *Third World Quarterly*, 13 (3), 421-440.
- Rubio, L. (1992). *¿Cómo va a afectar a México el Tratado de Libre Comercio?* México DF: Editorial Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Saldaña, I. (2007, August 15). Rechaza Ugalde negociar spot con partidos. *Esmas, Noticieros Televisa*, (Agosto 15). Retrieved October 28, 2008, from <http://www.esmas.com/noticierostelevisa/mexico/620099.html>
- Schettino, M. (1994). *TLC Tratado de Libre Comercio ¿Qué es y cómo nos afecta?* México DF: Grupo Editorial Iberoamérica.
- Sooner, B. S. (1998). The effectiveness of negative political advertising: A case study. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 38 (6), 37-43.
- Surlin S. T., Stafford, M. R., Ganesh, G. K., & Garland, B. C. (1986). Marital influence in the decision making process for services. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 10 (1), 6-21.

- Tedesco, J. C. (2002). Televised political advertising affects: evaluating responses during the 2000 Robb-Allen senatorial election. *Journal of advertising*, 31 (1), 37-48.
- Weaver L., Ann, R., & Tinkham, S. (1999). The sleeper effect and negative political advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 28 (4), 13-18.
- West, D. M. (1994). Political advertising and news coverage in the 1992 California U. S. Senate campaigns. *Journal of Politics*, 56, 1053-1075.

**APPENDIX 1****Contents of the Treatments / Scripts (English)****Spot 1: Competitive** (Adapted from PRD 2000's Campaign)

The Mexicans shared with López Obrador his dreams, his illusions, and his constant battles for a better Mexico.

We trust him; he is a good father, and a good son; he is an honest man, and a good worker; his life, public and private, is transparent.

Think of your children. You know who has the capacity to govern.

Vote for López Obrador. Because to fulfill expectations is his strength!

**Spot 2: Indirect Comparative** (Adapted from PAN 2000's Campaign)

You know the conditions in Mexico, and this cannot continue.

No more violence, no more corruption; say no to the lies, say no to privatization.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador is the president that will make Mexico change.

He will generate employment for those who need it the most.

Only with him, will we win our country back.

Don't be deceived. Vote for PRD. President López Obrador.

**Spot 3: Direct Comparative** (Adapted from PAN 2000's Campaign)

You know the conditions in Mexico.

Now, you can choose.

Compare: Felipe Calderón has been linked to scandals and corruption; he is in favor of privatization; he does not care about poor people.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador is an honest man and a good worker.

He is our solution for unemployment.

Don't be deceived... Vote for PRD... President Obrador.

**Spot 4: Attack** (Adapted from PRI 2000's Campaign)

You know the conditions in Mexico, and this cannot continue...

Felipe Calderón supports only the powerful groups

He is in favor of privatization

His economic plan will generate more debt for our country.

The change Felipe Calderón offers us is a step backward.

No to Calderón.

[Escrito: Patrocinado por el PRD]

## APPENDIX 2

### Contents of the Treatments (SPANISH)

#### Spot 1: Competitivo

Los mexicanos compartimos con López Obrador sus sueños, sus ilusiones y su lucha de siempre por un México mejor.

Confiamos en el...

Es un buen padre y un buen hijo,

Es un hombre integro y trabajador.

Su vida pública y privada es una vida transparente.

Piensa en tus hijos, tú sabes quién tiene capacidad para gobernar.

Vota por López Obrador...porque cumplir es su fuerza.

#### Spot 2: Comparativo Indirecto

Tú sabes en qué condiciones esta México y esto no debe continuar

...no más violencia, no más corrupción.

... di no a las mentiras, di no a la privatización

López Obrador es el presidente que va a cambiar a México.

Generara empleos que ayudaran a los más necesitados

Solo con el ganaremos a nuestro país

Que no te engañen....Vota por el PRD...Presidente López Obrador

#### Spot 3: Comparativo Directo

Tú sabes en qué condiciones esta México

Ahora puedes escoger...Compara

Felipe Calderón está ligado a escándalos y corrupción

Apoya a la privatización...

Y los más necesitados no le importan

López Obrador es un hombre integro y trabajador

Es una solución para el desempleo

Que no te engañen....Vota por el PRD...Presidente Díaz

#### Spot 4: Ataque

Tú sabes en qué condiciones esta México y esto no debe continuar.

Felipe Calderón apoya solo a los grupos de poder.

Está a favor de la privatización

Su plan económico endeudara a un mas al país...

El cambio que ofrece Felipe Calderón es un cambio en reversa.

Calderón NO

## Case Study: *Periódico Nostros*, a Catalyst for Empowering Latino Immigrants in a South Jersey Town

**Edna I. Negrón**

Ramapo College of New Jersey, USA

[enegron@ramapo.edu](mailto:enegron@ramapo.edu)

---

### Abstract

The ethnic press is one sector of the media that is surviving the decline of newspapers. Weekly and monthly publications in 2009 grew at a faster pace than daily newspapers in the Spanish language market. Local news is resurging as a stronghold in the information landscape as consumers increasingly seek relevant news and information. This is particularly true of the Spanish language press, a sector that exploded onto the media landscape in 2003. Since 2002, *Periódico Nostros* in Freehold, N.J. has helped Mexican immigrants, many from Qaxaca and Puebla, to navigate their new life in this South Jersey borough. This case study of *Periódico Nostros* studies how this local newspaper has since served to expand and empower the immigrant community in Freehold and Asbury Park, N.J. reinforcing the traditional role of the ethnic press as a catalyst for change.

## **Case Study: *Periódico Nosotros*, a Catalyst for Empowering Latino Immigrants in a South Jersey Town**

### **Introduction**

While legacy mainstream newspapers continue to shrink their pages and staff, the Spanish language press in the U.S. – particularly weeklies and monthly publications – has been the only segment of the media to grow, according to recent industry reports. This is due in large measure to the demographic growth of Latinos in the United States (State of the Media 2009).

Hispanics are the largest and fastest-growing minority group, comprising 48.4 million in 2009 or 16 percent of the U.S. population. In 2008, nearly one in six residents was Hispanic, according to the U.S. Census. The number of Spanish language newspapers weeklies tracked by California-based Latino Print Network, a private research firm, rose to 417 in 2007 compared with 384 the year before (State of the Media 2009).

Small community papers like *Periódico Nosotros* fall into the “less-than-weekly” category. This category of newspapers experienced growth heading into 2008, according to Latino Print Network estimates. Less-than-weekly publications also increased from 346 to 377 (State of the Media 2009). The numbers suggest that the smaller publications play a critical role in helping newcomers to acclimate as the number of Latinos arriving in small town America grows.

The growth of small Spanish language publications reflects a larger trend in the rise of the ethnic media audience. “Nearly 60 million Americans now regularly get information from ethnically oriented TV, radio, newspapers, and Web sites, many of which are published or broadcast in languages other than English -- and that number is on the rise,” according a Sergio Bendixon poll reported in New America Media. This is true of many new Spanish language daily, weekly and less-than-weekly newspapers, which have surfaced on the American media landscape. In 2009, 46 of the 50 states had Spanish language newspapers (The State of Spanish Language Media 2009).

*Periódico Nosotros*, a monthly publication, ranks in the less-than-weekly category. In New Jersey, Latinos comprise 16 percent of the population in 2009. In Freehold, the town where *Periódico Nosotros* circulates in South Jersey, the overall population is 35,927 with a median household income of \$93,186, according to the 2008 U.S. Census. Latinos comprise 6.2 percent of the borough’s population, according to 2008 U.S. Census figures. However, this is a conservative estimate, say community leaders, who argue the percentage is higher as many undocumented do not participate in the census count.

Latinos have been coming to Freehold for decades to work mostly landscaping and construction jobs. Freehold was cast into the national spotlight when advocates won a federal class-action lawsuit on behalf of day laborers. The 2003 lawsuit challenged Freehold’s closing of the Throckmorton Street ‘muster zone,’ an open public space near the railroad where immigrants gathered to seek daily work from willing employers. The borough’s police had been authorized to ticket, fine and report day laborers to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for soliciting employment a move which lawyers for the day laborers argued was a violation of their free speech rights.

The lawsuit charged that the borough embarked on a "deliberate and coordinated campaign to harass Latino day workers," and denied them assembly for daily hire, according to the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, one of the advocacy groups representing the undocumented workers. The day laborers won and settled in 2004 with the town.

The borough rescinded the ordinance, which banned loitering on public property, to comply with a Federal District Court ruling. Freehold officials stopped police harassment of the day laborers and reopened the "muster zone," and day laborers agreed to abide by municipal laws. *Periódico Nosotros* played an important role in keeping the community informed of developments, according to Cecilia Reynolds, the newspaper's editor.

*Periódico Nosotros* launched in the office of the St. Rose of Lima Church, the primary place where immigrants had sought refuge and help since the 1990s. Weeklies and small publications like *Periódico Nosotros* are often the first type of publication to emerge in immigrant communities. The smaller newspapers typically serve as a vehicle to unite, inform, educate and advocate for the community. This study examines the role of a small ethnic newspaper and its impact empowering a community of newcomers.

R1: Does *Periódico Nosotros*' mission reflect the fundamental, historic role of a small newspaper, particularly an ethnic newspaper?

R2: Does *Periódico Nosotros* serve as a catalyst to mobilize and empower the immigrant community to action?

## Literature

The case study of *Periódico Nosotros* reveals how this monthly publication mirrors trends in existing literature which discuss the role of ethnic press. With the rise of Spanish language media since 2003, the literature provides some context for how such ethnic and smaller scale publications impact a community. Publications like *Periódico Nosotros* typically serve as a vehicle for helping new ethnic groups adjust to a new life in their adopted country, while preserving cultural identity, and in some instances, influencing a local immigrant agenda.

*El Misisipí* in New Orleans, the first Spanish language newspaper in the United States, celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008. Newspapers like *El Misisipí* played multiple roles, serving as a grassroots voice for the community, whether they were students, women, labor unions or community organizations.

Gutierrez (2003) in his research of *El Misisipí* observes that many of the early Spanish-language newspapers in California in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emerged as advocates for their communities by exposing institutional discrimination, defending workers' rights and promoting the spirit of Latino culture. At the same time, those newspapers played the role of reformers for the community. Those publications also encouraged the Latino community to better educate their generation so that they could take advantage of professional opportunities.

Azobar and Funabiki's (2008) research on the health of ethnic media notes that the most important goals of the ethnic media are to give voice to their communities, to strengthen cultural pride and provide cultural cohesion. This mission explains, to a large extent, why ethnic media are perceived as activist by outside observers.

Mass media generally plays an important role in preserving ethnic identification and creating a sense of community. Similar language, culture and geographic location connect new immigrants who often migrate to the same city or town in the new land. Latinos will respond to media that reflects their people, culture and reality.

Ethnic newspapers such as *Periódico Nosotros* are significant in what Subervi-Vélez (1986) observes as a dual role of encouraging the group to become active participants in the larger society, while helping its members maintain their cultural identity. As Latinos become more integrated and move around the country, they choose when to identify with being a Latino in what researchers Rios and Subervi-Vélez (2005) dubbed, 'situational latinidad.' Each Latino in the U.S. experiences the Latino identity in different ways, in different situations.

*Periódico Nosotros'* mission is to help its readers become more integrated into the Freehold community, while acknowledging and celebrating their Latino cultural ties to their native countries.

Rivas (2003) observes that the role of the ethnic press, in particular, plays "a significant role in helping their respective groups maintain cultural ties and resist pressure to assimilate." Typically, those involved in advocacy journalism for immigrant groups and other newcomers, are motivated by a social justice goal of helping a community advance. They work as volunteers who work for little or no pay.

This notion of disparity and relative disadvantage that keeps ethnic weekly papers struggling for visibility beyond its immediate readers reflects what Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970) identify as the knowledge gap. The knowledge gap can result in an increased gap between people of lower and higher socioeconomic status.

English mainstream media, serving as the dominant communication force, can have the effect of alienating new groups by virtually ignoring their issues or at least not cultivating new readers for lack of relevant content. When smaller ethnic publications like *Periódico Nosotros* appear in community newsstands, they can have a profound impact on immigrants, who seek information in a format that is relatable and which they can understand.

Despite the challenges associated with producing, distributing and maintaining such publications, small ethnic papers are the lifeblood for new immigrant readers, who depend on these publications to help them learn how to survive in their new country. Rivas (2003) observes that some scholars have noted that each ethnic group's press is a reflection of the extent to which that group has integrated into larger society.

In some instances, says Rivas (2003), "the ethnic press has counteracted the prejudices of the mainstream press; in other cases, an ethnic press used a language other than English to inform an ethnic community on how to navigate the American system; and on occasion, they have been the only means by which a disenfranchised community could voice opinions and concerns back to the country's leaders." This is the case for *Periódico Nosotros* which evolved, in part, from a need to keep day laborers informed of the disputed "muster zone" as a place to seek daily work.

As Hispanic communities grew in towns and cities across the nation, so did the newspapers, and their content and coverage matured to take on headier topics to give a voice to underserved immigrants.

Typically, small, family-owned newspapers addressed the need to provide basic information to burgeoning non-English speaking immigrant communities, and spurred the

community to action to protect their rights. The fundamental mission of the small ethnic newspaper actually espouses democratic participatory theory, a type of journalism that promotes active citizen political engagement. The theory emphasizes principles such as popular inclusion, empowerment and full expression through a range of communicative styles (McQuail 1983). Its theorists emphasize active citizen involvement. In participatory theory, small-scale, segmented media, commercial as well as non-profit, are best for promoting grassroots citizen involvement. Advocacy journalism is another important paradigm that applies to the ethnic press. Advocacy journalism is a form of political mobilization that seeks to increase the power of people and groups to make institutions more responsive to human need (Wahl-Jorgensen, Hanitzsch, 2009).

The need to keep such communities informed as they grow in the United States has led to an increase in the Spanish language press. In 2008, Spanish-language newspapers were found in nearly 200 markets across the United States (The State of Spanish Language Media, 2009). According to the Newspaper Association of America poll, respondents singled out newspapers by 56 percent as the medium most frequently used by Hispanics to check advertising information compared to 14 percent for direct mail, 11 percent for the Internet and 8 percent TV.

In 2008, there were 834 Hispanic newspapers, 556 Hispanic magazines and another 526 journals, annuals, yellow-page directories and newsletters keeping this nation's ever-growing Latino population, now approaching 50 million (Whisler, 2009). At least 57 percent of Latino households are using one or more Latino publications every week (The State of the Spanish Language Media 2009).

While larger daily Spanish-language newspapers have experienced drops in circulation, small Spanish language newspapers are thriving and are still coming onto the media landscape. For example, a new Spanish language daily called *N.Y. Al Dia* debuted in New York City in April 2009 with a reported circulation of 20,000, and in Boston, a group of Latino journalists last year also launched *El Tiempo* de Boston. The New Jersey-based Ibarra Media Group launched two more weeklies and now has a total of 12 free-distribution weeklies under the *El Especialito* banner — including an edition in Miami (The State of Spanish Language Media 2009).

In summary, the literature shows that small ethnic publication serve a vital role in keeping emerging mostly immigrant communities informed. While small newspapers inform the new immigrants about their adopted community, they also serve as change agents for disenfranchised groups. In doing so, these smaller publications also take on an advocacy role which helps to inform immigrants of their rights, how speak up when they have to, and learn to navigate the American system.

However, the extent to which these smaller publications can reach a mass audience is limited because they are usually home or small office operations with a handful of typically dedicated volunteers who believe in the service of the newspaper to the community.

This case study serves to describe and analyze *Periódico Nosotros'* role and whether it serves as a catalyst to mobilize and empower the immigrant community, reinforcing some of the theories noted in the literature.

## Methodology

This research adopts an intrinsic revelatory approach in a single-case study design to examine the advocacy role of *Periódico Nosotros* in Freehold and Asbury Park, N.J. Single-case studies are also ideal for revelatory cases where an observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible (Yin 1994). A revelatory case is one for which there is a belief or assumption that the problem discovered in a particular case is common to other cases as well. In the case of *Periódico Nosotros*, the role of the paper in this predominantly immigrant community reflects more of an advocacy role to empower the community, similar to *El Misisipi's* mission more than 200 years ago.

Stake (1994) describes intrinsic evaluation in which a researcher explores a particular case to gain a better understanding of it. The focus of this case study is *Periódico Nosotros'* mission to provide the new immigrant community the information they need to adapt to American society. The newspaper was born of a need to inform and organize the public, particularly after the controversy following the day laborers' lawsuit over the town's closing of the 'muster zone' where immigrants gathered to seek work. *Periódico Nosotros* was one of the primary vehicles that kept the community informed of the case and other developments, and grew to be influential in Latino issues.

Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) identified sources of evidence in case studies. These include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation. In this case, the researcher conducted interviews with the editor as well a community relations police officer and immigration lawyer who could speak to the impact *Periódico Nosotros* has had on building trust and improving relationships between Mexican immigrants and the local municipality. The researcher observed the editor's interaction with members of the community in distributing the newspaper, and also reviewed more than 20 *Periódico Nosotros* editions published over the last five years to study the content, particularly the letters from the editor, for the messages and themes she sought to convey to her readers.

This case study examines whether *Periódico Nosotros'* role doing advocacy journalism, garnered a level of empowerment and change in the immigrant community through knowledge and education.

## Case of Periodico Nosotros

### The catalyst

Cecilia Reynolds drove around Freehold, South Jersey one scorching August day in 2009 carrying bundles of her newspapers, placing them in the newspaper bin where day laborers wait for employers to hire them in front of a convenience store, place local workers called *las vias*. Plastic white chairs and a whiteboard, where students learn English as a Second language on the sidewalk, sat near the newspaper box. *Periódico Nosotros* motto says: "*Sirviendo a la comunidad (Serving the community)*." It's been the paper's trademark and the editor's motivation for publishing the paper for eight years.

Reynolds, a native of Mexico who married an American, has been publishing the paper since 2002. *Periódico Nosotros* has a circulation of about 20,000 and is distributed in Freehold, Lakewood, Long Branch, Red Bank, Neptune and Asbury Park via churches and local businesses frequented by Spanish-speaking clientele.

There are area competitors, but Reynolds is clear about the distinction she sees between the big daily and regional newspapers that publish Spanish editions and the mission of her monthly publication.

“The big newspapers focus on the general community, but smaller newspapers are closer to the communicating to readers who, for the most part do not know English, fear authority and who do not yet know local customs. They are learning how to use the media in the community and we are educating them in a level they can understand,” Reynolds said, speaking in Spanish.

Reynolds, who is not a trained journalist, first worked on the newspaper in the Human Relations office of St. Rose of Lima Church in the heart of Freehold. She learned about the many problems the new immigrants faced in town. Beyond the language barriers, they did not know how to become a legal resident, get a driver’s license or enroll their children in school. They had to learn how to follow town laws and how to avoid being victims of crime and discrimination. The majority of the Mexican immigrants in Freehold are from the Mexican towns of Qaxaca and Puebla, as well as Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Most of the immigrants came to the Freehold area as far back as 30 years to work in construction and landscaping. Many compatriots followed friends and family. Most are males as young as 15 who come to America to earn money they can send back. The day laborers began to congregate in open spaces by the railroad tracks. Their visibility in town fueled the ire of residents who didn’t want them soliciting work. The borough of Freehold is located in South Jersey, not far from Asbury Park.

This is the community where the legal case of day laborers’ right to assemble took the national spotlight in 2004. The municipality sought to close the open space near Throckmorton Street where the workers assembled for daily hire. The civil battle became a jumping off point for Reynolds and her newspaper to serve as a watchdog and advocate for the community.

“There was no information in Spanish. We started to help people get documents such as birth certificates they needed to enroll their children in school or get help at the local hospitals,” Reynolds recalled. “When the issue of the muster zone developed with the day laborers, we could not keep up with the requests for information sending the fliers from the church. We needed to integrate the information in the newspaper.”

### **How the newspaper started**

An immigrant herself, Reynolds came to the U.S. with two children. She arrived in Virginia later met an engineer whom she married, wound up going to cosmetology school. In 1998, the family moved to Freehold.

Reynolds connected with the local church, St. Rose of Lima, where she volunteered as a secretary. “When I came here and saw what was happening, I was in shock,” she said. Problems of abuse, discrimination, violence, arrests, robbing, muggings, crime, healthcare documentation, plagued the mostly Spanish-speaking immigrants.

They launched the newspaper in May 2002 driven by community demand for information. The needs of the mostly newer, immigrant community were great. So Reynolds and the then pastor of the church, Jose Berrios, a Venezuelan with a journalism background, started a newspaper as a way to educate and inform the community about how to integrate into American society and handle the daily search for work in town. After a much publicized battle, the town agreed to a designated spot they called the “muster zone.”

“Everything I saw is what moved me to do the paper,” Reynolds said. “They noticed the paper had local issues and local people.”

When the pastor was transferred, Reynolds decided to keep the paper going. With no management or editorial experience, she accumulated an estimated \$70,000 in debt, mortgaging her house to keep publishing the newspaper.

Reynolds initially produced the newspaper from home. She decided that she wanted the publication to serve the immigrants’ basic needs. Her vision was to educate the community using their stories to teach them how to participate in community life in Freehold. The paper’s content ranges from a brief history of the United States to civil rights and immigration law and new borough ordinances. She also covers law enforcement and what’s happening in the schools. *Periódico Nosotros* tells the individuals’ stories, cases they report as unjust deportations or treatment; the publication exposes scammers who want to take advantage of the disenfranchised.

“I wanted people to be educated and not to stress the negative. I have had to intervene in many cases. And yes, there is racism, but police know that we are watching in the community,” Reynolds said.

The 40-plus page newspaper launched in Spanish, and contains ads which she currently solicits herself. A volunteer page designer helps her layout the paper each month. It’s a free publication financed, in part, by advertisements.

She and a few volunteers distribute the papers. It’s common to see Reynolds with her SUV full of bundles of newspapers that she hand-delivers bundles to churches, restaurants, newspaper boxes and even hand delivers to readers after religious services.

She decided to make *Periódico Nosotros* the vehicle to give the community the information they need to become productive, socially conscious citizens of Freehold and not targets of discrimination and crime.

### **Content is key**

The paper’s sections are divided into news, legal news, health, culture, economy and finances, sports and entertainment. The content is not the standard hard-hitting news and investigation, but rather a series of articles which include more news features explaining rules, civic life, and school news posted by administrators. The newspaper tells stories of individuals’ triumph and despair in New Jersey and in Mexico. It also features volunteer columnists who write regularly about legal matters, health, law enforcement and entertainment.

It’s about 50 percent ads and content is written mostly Spanish, although as of Spring 2010, the newspaper translates some articles into English, Creole and Portuguese. In general, Reynolds said that she is aiming for content that will help readers understand how the political and legal systems operate here. Its news and information the community can use. The content is relevant, simple and accessible to readers, many of whom have low reading skills. She uses many photos and graphics.

“In reality, I want our community to form a habit of reading the paper to find out what’s happening. My principle objective is the community, to motivate them to read, to form a habit. Many come from towns with little or no forms of media,” Reynolds said. “They have to learn how to how integrate into this community.”

She said her initial challenge was to build trust among her readers. She doesn’t publish police blotter-type stories, but Reynolds will go after businesses that scam

immigrants, and will hold immigrant violators of the law up for scrutiny as an example for what is unacceptable behavior. For example, she writes about the perils of alcoholism and how it's illegal to drink with an open can of beer in the street. Her newspaper tackles social problems and how to lawfully live in Freehold – articles focused on what is expected of all citizens.

The way Reynolds sees it, the paper serves three generations or types of readers: progressive immigrants who come here with a plan to excel, most are already educated in their native country; people who come from tiny villages, many of whom wind up as day laborers, and children of these immigrants who are learning English and enrolled in American schools.

“They have to see themselves or someone they know in the pages so they can identify with the paper,” Reynolds said. “I see the community as people who open their arms and are unconditional. I want this to be their medium, to be a source of inspiration.”

Her paper also serves people who are documented, students and workers with H2 visas. She publicizes articles about how to keep a green card and become naturalized. She is currently partnering with the local college to educate young, second generation Latinos about the importance of higher education.

“Everything is local,” Reynolds said. “They have to know what to do.”

Recent newspaper features covered how to file a police report, illegal bicycle parking, the penalties for using false documents, and for parents, how to recognize the dangers of teenagers' sexting messages on the phone.

*Periódico Nosotros* helps to build bridges between the community and local agencies. Community interaction with law enforcement is a common theme. For example, the newspaper featured extensive articles about New Jersey's Section 287(g) which deputizes local law enforcement officers to work as federal immigration officers in carrying out investigations of unlawful immigrants. This law engendered fear in the community, and in some cases, allegations of abuse by some law enforcement who use domestic violence complaints as a basis to deport immigrants, Reynolds said.

“The government needs to know that we will be there when they transport someone who is not a target under 287(g),” Reynolds said. “Already we are seeing this. They are playing with the vulnerability of the people.”

### **The newspaper's impact**

Beyond her role as editor, many times Reynolds says she's had to go personally to identify undocumented workers in hospitals, schools and police stations. Many undocumented have no papers to identify who they are. The need for a comprehensive multi-service center to serve immigrants' social dilemmas was overwhelming. So when a Monmouth University Center for Entrepreneurship issued a call for proposals in 2009 for new projects, Reynolds pitched her idea for a service center for immigrants and support to translate articles in *Periódico Nosotros* to English. The new center in Asbury Park opened in April 2010. Services include medical, finance, translation and job training.

*Periódico Nosotros'* hosts registration session so that immigrants can meet American and Mexican consulate representatives to get assistance with filing for proper documents, such as passports and dual citizenship for their children. She received overwhelming endorsements from the police chief, local attorneys and accountants.

Under the agreement with the university, the paper's circulation is expected to double to 40,000. The university will help with distribution and labor to produce the extra volume of pages. Local journalism students would help write some English content. "To have the university working with us, we will have more credibility," Reynolds said.

She hopes the new Center would have a particular influence on second generation Latinos in town who see higher education as out of reach.

"I move as much as I can for this community. This is now a mission," Reynolds said.

### **The impact of the editor's letters to the readers**

A review of a sampling of more than 20 newspaper from 2005-2010 shows that her editor's message encourages immigrants to become self-sufficient, proactive and learn how to participate in American society. Some of her editor headlines translated into English read: "We need to be interested in what happens in this country" and "We need authentic communication between us in the community" and "In unity there is power."

Reynolds' messages were often tied to news events locally and nationally as a call to action. For example, in one edition, the translated headline read: "Our people should not die in vain." Here, she talked about the numerous crosses found in the town of Laredo, Texas, signifying the many border crossers who didn't make it.

She urged readers: "Let's be active members of the community and organize in our communities, churches so that we can contribute to society here."

In another letter, Reynolds discusses the bicultural lifestyle in Freehold in a letter headlined, "Dualidad Cultural" or "Dual Culture." Here she emphasizes the future rise of Latinos as a demographic force in the U.S. and how that translates to their community in Freehold. She tells the readers that to be productive citizens in the U.S. does not mean an abandonment of culture and customs.

She wrote this in Spanish: "This is not a matter of forgetting our roots, our language our customs, it's more a demonstration of respect toward this country and to take advantage of the many opportunities it offers."

In explaining "dual culture," Reynolds cited examples of such respect, including learning English, adopting appropriate public behavior, respecting neighbors, disposing of garbage in the appropriate receptacles, participating in school activities and encouraging children to study hard.

In her March 2007 letter entitled, "*La union hace la fuerza!*," she harkened to a February council meeting when 300 supporters demanded an apology from a councilmember who labeled Mexicans and Dominicans as "promiscuous."

"*Asi fue. La Comunidad Latina en pleno estaba presente para mostrar a las autoridades que no somos una sombra. Hemos marcado nuestra presencia en este pais, en esta ciudad.*" ("That's how it was when the Latino community was present to show authorities that we are not a shadow community. We have marked our presence in this city.")

The newspaper's community service has included events to make Latinos visible, such as Latino Festival in Freehold, an H1N1 vaccination program and a Mexican Consular on Wheels program to help local immigrants register for passports. More than 170,000 received Mexican passports.

Police credit the impact of the paper as Reynolds herself. “It’s her drive,” Sgt. Craig Dizpensa of Freehold Police Department said in a 2009 interview.

Reynolds works with Dizpensa to build trust between the immigrant community and local law enforcement. In a 2009 interview, he cited an example of his efforts to investigate an assault of immigrants, and how the paper helped him to reach immigrants who feared violence. Dizpensa wrote a column in the newspaper with his picture, at Reynolds’ suggestion, and it had an impact. “It has a strong influence, my picture was in the paper and now people recognize me,” Dizpensa said.

Reynolds worked with Dizpensa and the church to gain more trust within the community. She planned an event to have some face time with the community. In the past, many immigrants would be mugged, beaten because local thugs knew they carried their cash and didn’t use banks, but they never reported incidents.

“There was a lot of distrust. You’d get a call from a victim and then everyone would be ‘no problem,’ “Dizpensa explained. “Now there’s actually some trust and more reported crime. So much was going unreported. A big part of that event is that people are reporting crimes. Now they are reporting incidents.”

Politicians, community organizers, religious leaders have all come to know Reynolds and *Periódico Nosotros* and her influence. “This is an editor who is involved in the community and she understands the community and is taking a global approach,” said local immigration attorney Daniel Weiss. “She truly gets how different parts of government work together, the local implementation of state rules.”

Weiss also writes an immigration column in *Periódico Nosotros* explaining the law to newcomers. “People have to show how they have acculturated into the community and their contributions to society,” Weiss explained. “The newspaper imparts a lot of information and they really listen to her because it’s so practical and helpful.”

At the Caribe Restaurant that hot August day in 2009, Reynolds handed patrons newspapers, a Peruvian owner named Juana said that people scoop up the paper when it comes out. She remembered, for example, a story about false car registration and the case of domestic abuse in which the spouse called 911 only to be deported.

“I know that the paper is having an impact because of all the calls for help I get after an edition runs,” Reynolds said. “Readers say, ‘ I have that problem.’ I spend a lot of time trying to find help.”

### **Research Questions Answered:**

R1: Does *Periódico Nosotros*’ mission reflect the fundamental role of a small newspaper, particularly as an ethnic newspaper?

The democratic participatory theory best applies to the mission of *Periódico Nosotros*, whose motto is “*sirviendo a la comunidad*.” This participatory theory promotes political and active participation by its citizens, which best characterizes the fundamental mission of smaller newspapers (McQuail, 1983). The theory emphasizes principles such as popular inclusion and empowerment. *Periódico Nosotros*, following the 2004 ‘muster zone’ ruling on behalf of day laborers in Freehold, focused its mostly grassroots mission to provide useful, local information for its immigrants readers to help them acclimate in America while reaffirming their cultural ties.

And historically, *Periódico Nosotros*' mission is consistent with Azocar and Funabiki's research about the role of ethnic newspapers, and Gutierrez; work uncovering the history of the nation's first Spanish language newspaper established more than 200 years ago. These pioneer papers served as advocates of their communities by exposing institutional discriminations, defending workers' rights and promoting the spirit of Latino culture.

As a publication serving a mostly immigrant population, *Periódico Nosotros* filled a void as there were no known Spanish language publications in the community when it launched in 2002. It was thrust into the center of the knowledge gap, which Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970) describe as a gap between people of lower and higher socioeconomic status. *Periódico Nosotros*' mission targeting its information locally to immigrant readers, particularly after a high profile legal case involving day laborers, sought to bridge that knowledge gap.

Reynolds, as editor used the newspaper as a vehicle to attempt to move an entire community forward by publishing legal, civic, historic, health and financial information they needed to know to advance in this society and avoid becoming victims of discrimination and crime.

But it's been a struggle for the small newspaper, essentially run by one dynamic woman. The paper's new relationship with Monmouth University in 2010, establishing an immigrant center in Asbury Park and expanding the newspaper's content and reach, will add depth to the paper's mission and much needed help for Reynolds. The paper now publishes stories in Creole and Portuguese for Haitian and Brazilian immigrants, who are new to Asbury Park.

*Periódico Nosotros* plays a significant role in what Subervi-Velez and Rios observe as a dual role of assimilating the group in to the larger society, while helping the group maintain its culture. Subervi-Velez and Rios (2005) describe this approach as "situational Latinidad." Each Latino in the U.S. experiences the Latino identity in different ways, in different situations. In this case, Reynolds through *Periódico Nosotros*, calls for unity and action underscore Subervi-Velez's and Rios' observations. Reynolds doesn't ask her readers to give up one culture for the other, but rather encourages them to act and adopt the ways and opportunities of their new country to get ahead while preserving their own cultural pride and identity.

Editor Cecilia Reynolds uses the Spanish language and Latino values to reach the community about important local policies, law, customs that would help them better understand how to become active participants in town. Reynolds, in particular, uses her editor's column to appeal to the collective conscience of the Latino community, urging them to take the time to learn American ways without giving up the essence of who they are as Latinos. In one of her columns, she uses the phrase: "*dualidad cultural*" or dual culture to move readers to become active members of the community by learning English and becoming active contributors in the community. She stresses that becoming an active resident in American society does not necessarily mean giving up one's roots and native language.

R2: Does *Periódico Nosotros* serve as a catalyst to mobilize and empower the immigrant community to action?

Waisbord defines advocacy journalism as a form of "political mobilization that seeks to increase the power of people and groups to make institutions more responsive to

human need.” (Waisbord, Wahl-Jorgensen, Thomas Hanitzsch, 2009) For nearly a decade, Reynolds, through her newspaper, *Periódico Nostros*, demonstrated that its consistent record of fostering mutual respect between the residents in Freehold and neighboring towns in Monmouth County and new immigrants produced results for the community.

*Periódico Nostros*' mission and content support Rivas (2003) premise, the ethnic press have been the only means by which a disenfranchised community could voice opinions. Interviews with law enforcement and lawyers attest to the impact that Reynolds and her newspaper have had in building bridges between police, borough hall and other civil groups to open doors for a better relationship between Freehold and immigrants. In her own editor letters, Reynolds' – through her letters to her readers - insists they understand local and federal law, seek education while knowing their rights, particularly since the 2004 controversial “muster zone” ruling for day laborers.

When a borough councilman called Mexicans and Dominicans “promiscuous,” the newspaper galvanized more than 300 Latinos who filled borough hall to demand an apology and got one from the elected official. Through her paper, the community practiced informed activism. She is equally critical of Latinos who violate local laws, and calls them out in stories as an example of unacceptable behavior while providing the lesson for all.

The paper's work in community service has reach in the community, including a highly touted Mexican Consular on Wheels program to help local immigrants apply for documents, especially passports. More than 170,000 Mexicans received Mexican passports.

Reynolds has also involved the police department. The paper sponsored an outreach program to introduce local police and immigrants to each other at a special event in an attempt to build trust. Immigrants workers had been robbed and beaten in a series of attacks and police needed the community's help. *Periódico Nostros* served as the catalyst and now the community relations officer writes regular informational columns about public safety in the paper, and his column is recognized in the community.

The outcome of the newspaper's eight years of advocacy journalism work to date resulted in a new partnership with Monmouth University in 2010 to create a multi-service agency for immigrants as well as expand her newspaper to include bilingual information in Creole and Portuguese, and double the circulation. Students from the University intern in various editorial and advocacy roles at Nostros Center for Immigrant Services based in Asbury Park.

## **Discussion**

*Periódico Nostros* was born out of a dire need to inform the mostly Mexican immigrant community about how to survive in the mostly white, upscale town of Freehold. Many immigrants came to do landscape, domestic and construction work. They sought help from St. Rose of Lima Church where Cecilia Reynolds, herself a Mexican native, worked. She and the priest were inundated daily with requests for help. And so they decided to launch the newspaper as a way to respond to the demand for information. *Periódico Nostros*' role became more crucial during the controversial day laborers' ‘muster zone’ lawsuit challenging a town ordinance which sought to curtail their right to assemble and seek work. The day laborers won the case. And the paper played an

important role in keep the community informed of their rights and obligations moving forward.

*Periódico Nosotros* is an example of the growing number of Spanish-language weekly and less than weekly sized newspapers on the U.S. media landscape. Its role, as conceived by its editor, is to give the community the information it needs to become active participants in American society. This emphasis on integration into American society does not, however, negate the importance of the cultural roots of the community, the bond which ties Latinos in Freehold to Mexican towns of origin. *Periódico Nosotros* seeks to be the public face and mediator for Latinos in Freehold, a town where a dispute against day laborers spawned a legal challenge and solution. Now, many towns on Long Island and in Connecticut are facing the same challenges and look to the history of Freehold for examples.

*Periódico Nosotros*' role evolved as one of mediator of sorts; on the one hand, the editor publishes articles which educate and at times, chides the community for behavior that casts the entire community in a bad spotlight. But on the hand, the paper, with its social justice mission, exposes unscrupulous or unfair practices targeting a vulnerable community. Editor Reynolds, through her monthly column, seeks to remind the readers of their responsibilities to the town, but also warns town officials and businesses, who seek to harass and take advantage of the mostly undocumented population, that the paper will go after them.

*Periódico Nosotros*' serves as a catalyst for change, a vehicle where both community and town officials can give their perspective. Reynolds has grown a publication read by many in the community. Her drive and passion have kept the paper alive. Although it is not a traditional, hard-hitting newsy journalistic enterprise in the traditional sense, it does fill a tremendous void for a community in dire need of information, local observers say. Readers see themselves in the paper and read articles relevant to their daily lives. In that sense, *Periódico Nosotros* fulfills the mission of a small, grassroots publication, using advocacy journalism to empower the community to learn American ways, participate in a democratic society and defend its rights.

## Conclusion

The case of *Periódico Nosotros* reveals the important role a grassroots ethnic newspaper plays for a mostly disenfranchised community seeking information for basic survival. It is the first lifeline for many newcomers who do not know the language or laws in this country. The case study demonstrates the powerful role such small newspaper play in linking two segments of a municipality by engaging them in a dialogue via columnists and events to diffuse tension and improve communication. *Periódico Nosotros*' mission in essence, serves to increase understanding between two factions of society, while educating and informing a new group in town.

As the only segment of the media that is growing, according to the State of the Media 2009 report, smaller weekly and less-than-weekly newspapers play a crucial role in educating immigrants and serving as a watchdog against those who seek to take advantage of a vulnerable population. The case of *Periódico Nosotros* also serves to highlight the role of advocacy journalism as a viable newspaper mission and form of information delivery that can have a significant impact in improving the lives of its immigrant readers.

## References

- Azocar, Christina and Funabiki, Jonathan (2008). The Health of Ethnic Media. The McCormick Foundation, pp. 7-10.
- Allen, Jeffrey (June, 2009). Ethnic Media Reaching Record Numbers in U.S, New America Media.  
[http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=8bb0c256d866e8e99e74fc734d5cef67](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=8bb0c256d866e8e99e74fc734d5cef67) New America Media.
- Gutierrez, Felix & Chao, Lena, Wilson, Clint (2003). *Racism, Sexism and the Media, Third Edition*, Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage, pp. 269-272.
- McQuail, D. (1983, 2005). *Mass Communication Theory*, London: Sage.
- Mendoza, Lauren (2009). The Hidden History of the U.S. Latino Press. [pontealdia.com](http://www.pontealdia.com). <http://www.pontealdia.com/columnistas/the-hidden-history-of-the-u.s.-latino-press.html>Nagy
- Rivas-Rodriguez, Maggie (2003). *Brown Eyes on the web: Unique perspective of an alternative Latino online publication*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 15-18.
- Rosenstiel, Tom (2009). The State of the News Media 2009. Ethnic. The Project for Excellence in Journalism. New York. [http://www.stateofthemedias.org/2009/narrative\\_ethnic\\_intro.php?cat=0&media=11](http://www.stateofthemedias.org/2009/narrative_ethnic_intro.php?cat=0&media=11)
- Siebert, F. Peterson, T. & Schramm, (1956). *Four Theories of the Press*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- State of the Spanish Language Media Annual Report (2009). The Center for Spanish Language Media, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas.
- Subervi-Velez, Federico (2008). *The Mass Media and Latino Politics: Studies of U.S. Media Content, Campaign Strategies and Survey Research: 1984-2004*. New York: Routledge Communication Series, pp. 2-16.
- Subervi, F. & Rios, Diana I. (2005). Latino identity and situational Latinidad. In E. del Valle (Ed.), *Hispanic marketing and public relations: Understanding and targeting America's largest minority*, (pp. 29-46). Boca Raton, FL: Poyeen Publishing.
- Subervi-Vélez, F.A. (1986). The mass media and ethnic assimilation and pluralism: A review and research proposal with special focus on Hispanics. *Communication Research*, 13(1), 71-96.
- Tichenor, P.J., Donohue, G.A. and Olien, C.N. (1970). Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34: Columbia University Press.
- Waisbord ,Wahl-Jorgensen, Thomas Hanitzsch, (2009). *Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Whisler, Kirk (2009),Print dead? Hispanic publication defy trend, tell a different story. New America Media. [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=a61d85293886b3ff8cd812b79d1f8dab](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=a61d85293886b3ff8cd812b79d1f8dab)
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods, 2nd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## **Intercultural Accommodation and the Negotiation of Hispanic Advertising: A Qualitative Perspective**

**Christopher Chávez**  
Saint Louis University, USA  
[cchavez4@slu.edu](mailto:cchavez4@slu.edu)

---

### **Abstract**

As US Latinos have become a social, cultural and economic force, academics and marketing practitioners have taken a growing interest in Hispanic advertising. Existing research on the topic has focused primarily on marketers' efforts at intercultural accommodation and empirical investigation on the topic has generally taken an information processing approach in which ethnic cues contained within advertisements are treated as sensory inputs designed to elicit favorable consumer responses. Furthermore, because much of the research has been grounded in social psychology, there has been less concern for larger enabling structures. This study attempts to contribute to the discussion by providing a qualitative perspective on how US Latino consumers negotiate Hispanic advertising. While previous scholarship has provided insight into how consumers make meaning of advertising texts, this study accounts for social dynamics at play within the larger social space. Phenomenological interviews with Latino consumers provide a first-hand account of the meanings that Latinos ascribe to targeting efforts and how such efforts are linked to a broader network of cultural meaning.

## Intercultural Accommodation and the Negotiation of Hispanic Advertising: A Qualitative Perspective

### Introduction

In 2006, Volkswagen of America produced a Spanish language television spot intended to target U.S. Latino consumers. The spot, designed to showcase the performance qualities of the Volkswagen Golf G.T.I., blends footage from a vintage Speedy Gonzales cartoon with newly created animated footage featuring the Golf. The premise of the spot is as follows: Speedy Gonzales, “the fastest mouse in all of Mexico” is seen telling his friends in Spanish not to worry. He then disappears and quickly returns with a handful of cheese. The event happens so quickly that it is barely registered by the human eye. At this point, the viewer is meant to believe that it is Speedy’s own supernatural speed allows him to return with the cheese so quickly, however, the spot rewinds and is re-played at a slower pace. The slower viewing reveals that, in actuality, Speedy has jumped into the Volkswagen Golf, driven quickly to a food processing factory, taken the cheese and returned. The spot concludes with an end card that reads “Agarra Calle,” the Hispanic alternative to the general market tagline, “Drivers Wanted.”

According to the conventions of Hispanic advertising, the elements for a successful commercial are present. The spot is produced in Spanish, which minimizes barriers to comprehension and signifies to consumers that an attempt has been made by the marketer to accommodate the needs of Hispanic audiences. Furthermore, the ad includes a protagonist with whom Latinos are meant to identify, thereby triggering in-group mechanisms that may result in more favorable consumer responses. A more critical reading of the spot, however, reveals several fundamental issues that may prove to be problematic for Latino consumers. For example, why use the character of Speedy Gonzales, an icon that has had a contested history in the United States? While some see Speedy as the embodiment of resourcefulness, others have criticized the cartoon for its stereotypical depiction of Mexicans and Mexican life (Nericcio 2006). Furthermore, Speedy is distinctly Mexican and, while he is intended as a spokesperson for the Hispanic market, will Guatemalans, Chileans and other Latinos who are not Mexican feel equally attached to him? Finally, what do consumers make of the fact that the spot looks nothing at all like other Volkswagen ads running on English language television?

A review of the literature indicates that empirical research on Hispanic advertising has primarily been grounded in social psychology and has focused on marketers’ attempts to accommodate Hispanic consumers through the use of language (Dolinsky & Feinberg 1986; Foster, Sullivan & Perea 1989; Koslow, Shamdasani & Touchstone 1994, Luna & Perracchio 2001) or spokesperson identity (Deshpandé & Stayman 1994; Forehand & Deshpandé 2001; Reed 2004). While these studies have yielded important insights into how ethnic consumers process advertising stimuli they do not necessarily account for the multiple, sometimes contradictory, meanings that Latino consumers actually draw from targeted advertising.

The purpose of this article is to provide a descriptive account of how US Latino consumers interpret marketers’ efforts at intercultural accommodation and the meanings they ascribe to ethnic cues embedded within advertisements. In doing so, this article contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it adds to the growing discourse on

targeted advertising and its implications for Latino consumers. Second, there has been relatively little attention given to the interpretation of advertising meaning and the degree to which Latino consumers negotiate, accept and contest targeted messages. Here, I argue that persuasion is not a linear process but a discursive one and consumers often construct meaning beyond what the marketer intends. Furthermore, I argue that understanding of the topic has been limited to a substantial degree by methodological orientation and that alternative approaches to investigation must be employed. As scholars Lannon and Cooper suggest, rather than ask the question “what does advertising do to people?” turn the question on its head and ask “what do people do with advertising (Lannon & Cooper 1983: 195)?”

In an effort to understand how US Latinos respond to ethnically targeted advertising this project takes a meaning based approach where advertising is understood as a symbolic discourse between producers and consumers (Levy 1959; McCracken 1986; Scott 1994). Furthermore, the project is informed by Sherry’s (1987) notion that advertising is a cultural system in which consumers infer essential information about world and their place within it (Mick 1986). From this perspective, the meanings that US Latinos ascribe to targeting efforts are placed within the context of larger social dynamics.

### **Background**

In recent years, Latino consumers have received growing interest from both academics and marketers. Currently, Latinos account for 16 percent of the total U.S. population and this number is expected to increase exponentially in upcoming years (U.S. Census 2010). Furthermore, the sheer size of the Latino population ensures an estimated buying power of approximately \$951 billion (Selig Center for Economic Growth 2008). While commercial marketers have taken the lead in understanding Latino consumers, empirical investigation into the subject has generally taken an information processing approach where elements contained within advertisements are treated as sensory inputs designed to solicit particular consumer responses (Deshpandé & Stayman 1994; Dimofte, Forehand & Deshpandé 1994; Ueltschy & Krampf 1997; Luna & Peracchio 2001). Early work in this area focused on the role of language in message comprehension (Dolinsky & Feinberg 1986; Foster et al 1989) while later work has focused on the impact of identity cues on favorable consumer responses (Deshpandé & Stayman 1994; Forehand & Deshpandé 2001; Reed 2004; Ueltschy & Krampf 1997).

A presupposition of much of this research is that there exist substantial linguistic and cultural differences between marketers and the consumers they wish to target. Therefore, in an effort to minimize barriers to communication, marketers must necessarily enculturate themselves in Latino culture (Peñaloza & Gilly 1999) and communicate their desire to breakdown cultural barriers. Work in this area has drawn heavily from speech accommodation theory (Giles & Coupland 1991), which asserts that when people are motivated to minimize social differences through communication, their speech patterns tend to converge. Put differently, as person A attempts to become more like person B, then person B will look more favorably upon Person A and reciprocate.

Koslow, Shamdasani and Touchstone (1994) extended speech accommodation theory to advertising practice by examining the role of Spanish as a persuasive factor. Focusing specifically on language, they hypothesize that Latinos will look favorably upon marketers who advertise in Spanish because they see that an attempt has been made to

build connections with Latinos. This attempt is seen as a respect for Latino cultural identity and an acknowledgement of the inherent worth of the Hispanic market. This in turn results in positive feelings toward the advertiser and the message (Koslow, Shamdasani & Touchstone 1994). The findings of their research found that some use of Spanish in advertising increased consumers' perceptions of the advertiser's sensitivity to Latino culture and elicited favorable responses toward the advertising.

Holland and Gentry (1999) extended this body of research by accounting for other tools available to advertisers including as spokesperson identity, music, art direction and other audio-visual elements. The basis of their "theory of intercultural accommodation" was that mere inclusion of an ethnic cue does not guarantee a positive response. Rather the success of the persuasive attempt is impacted by a variety of moderating factors including consumers' strength of ethnic identity, message clarity and the perceived motivations of the marketer.

A review of the literature reveals that scholarship in this area has relied heavily on quantitative methodology, which begins with the assumption of order and uniformity. In quantitative research, investigators typically isolate and define categories as much as possible before the study is undertaken and then determine the precise relationship between those variables (McCracken 1988). Beholden to this logic, much of the research has been framed within a series of binaries: English/Spanish, Acculturated/Non-Acculturated, Hispanic/Non-Hispanic, etc. While these constructs do provide a systematic segmentation of the sample population, they also presuppose homogeneity within ethno linguistic communities that are, in actuality, quite diverse. Pan-ethnic terms such as "Latino" or "Hispanic" accommodate individuals from differing cultural traditions, socio-economic classes, linguistic backgrounds and racial groups.

Furthermore, because much of this research is grounded in social psychology, consumers' own cognitive responses are of primary interest with less concern for larger enabling structures. Consequently, investigation is focused on how consumers respond to a limited set of advertisements elements but does not necessarily account for how these elements are employed within the overall context of the commercial which is itself situated within a larger cultural landscape. This is problematic when examining advertising, which is intended to be highly relevant to its targeted consumer. In short, it is not simply enough to say that Mercedes Benz and Boost Mobile use Spanish in their advertisements or that both brands employ the use of Latino spokespeople. To truly understand the impact of each brand's effort, one must consider the relationship between the advertisement, its intended audience and its cultural environment.

### **A Meaning Based Approach to Ethnically Targeted Advertising**

As an alternative framework, scholars have called for a meaning based approach to the study of consumer experience (Mick & Buhl 1992; Scott 1994; Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1989). Grounding their work in a variety of academic traditions, scholarship in this area has presumed that rather than merely reacting to external stimuli, individuals engage the outside world by interpreting or defining it. Thus, human interaction is mediated symbolically. Furthermore, scholars believe the commercial universe to be rich in the symbolic resources that consumers use to construct notions of who they are and who they want to be (Fournier 1998; Mick 1986).

As a symbolic system, advertising is largely seen as a discursive process in which the consumer is actively constructing meaning around the persuasive message (Hirshman & Thompson 1997; Mick 1986; Williamson 1978). For example, Scott (1994) describes advertising as form of rhetoric that involves a symbolic exchange between marketers and consumers. In this process, advertisers craft their messages in anticipation of the audience's probable response using shared knowledge of various vocabularies and conventions as well as common experiences. Audiences use this same body of cultural knowledge to read the message, infer the sender's intention, evaluate the argument and formulate a response. Cultural knowledge thus provides the basis for persuasive interaction.

Previous scholarship has provided important insights into how consumers make meaning of advertising texts (Mick & Buhl 1992), but there are dynamics specific to Hispanic advertising that warrant academic consideration. First, we must account for the disparity that exists between producers and consumers of targeted messages. Unlike advertising in general, Hispanic advertising is fundamentally shaped by decision makers who are neither Latino nor Spanish speaking. Second, we must consider the status of Latinos as ethnic minorities within the social hierarchy. Latinos reside within a larger culture in which their ethnic identities are perceived as strange and unfamiliar and they are often considered to be intruders by residents of the host community (Omni & Winant 1994). Furthermore, scholars have argued that for most groups that migrate to the United States, the transition to ethnic minority is immediate. Consequently, ethnic experiences in the United States are fundamentally shaped by inter-group relations, in which each group (dominant and subordinate) places itself within a dichotomous relationship of "us" and "them" (Acosta-Belén 1992).

Thus, intercultural accommodation is not simply an exchange between two different cultures. Rather, this exchange is mediated by dynamics within the larger social space. This study is intended to address this deficit in the literature by providing a qualitative perspective on accommodation as it relates to Hispanic advertising. Specifically this study provides an account of how Latino consumers respond to the various strategies employed by marketers in their attempt to break down cultural barriers. Here, I am interested in the specific meanings that Latino consumers ascribe to ethnic cues embedded within targeted advertisements. Furthermore, because Hispanic advertising has been conflated with Spanish language advertising, I pay particular attention to consumers' responses to linguistic usage in targeting efforts.

## **Methods**

This project employs phenomenological interviewing, an empirical approach based on the premise that each person sees the world differently to a substantial degree and that human phenomena must be studied as they are lived and experienced. Phenomenology is an orientation that holds that individuals ascribe personal meanings and symbolic values to their lived experiences and that these meanings are limited to the individual's field of awareness (Heidegger 1927 [1960]). It is further assumed that these meanings also exist in particular historical and cultural conditions that shape not only the individual's life world but also their frame of reference (Merleau-Ponty 1962). In the context of this discussion, a phenomenological approach to advertising focuses on the particular meanings that advertising holds for individual consumers while understanding how

commercial meanings are related to other lived meanings that exist in the life world of the participant and as they are situated within broader cultural systems (Mick & Buhl 1992; Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1989).

Phenomenological inquiry emphasizes in-depth interaction with a limited number of participants. In keeping with this tradition, size restrictions were placed on the informant pool in an effort to ensure comprehensive discourse between the investigator and the participant (McCracken 1988). Six different participants were involved in the study. Each participant was involved in two separate interviews lasting a total of four hours.

Participants were recruited from the greater Los Angeles area. Los Angeles was chosen as the research setting because it continues to be the number one reception area for new immigrant Latinos and because Latinos currently account for 47 percent of the city's population (US Census 2000). Participants were purposely sampled in an effort to account for the linguistic and cultural complexity of the US Hispanic market. While all participants self identified as Latino, the study was designed to generate testimonies from Latinos that differ in level of education, socio-economic status, country of origin, media preferences and residential tenure in the United States. Participants in this study ranged in age from 23 to 54 and the informant pool included both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers. Half of the respondents were foreign born and half were born in the United States. Furthermore, while the Latina/o population in Los Angeles is largely of Mexican origin (US Census 2000), this study included two participants from Argentina. The following are the descriptive characteristics of each participant. For purposes of this study, participants' names have been changed:

**Table A.**

**David** is a 53 year old immigrant from Argentina. David arrived in the US at the age of 21 after attending college and military service. In the US, he has had several occupations including factory worker, computer programmer and his current job as wine importer. While he uses English at work, he admits that his command of the language is limited. He speaks exclusively Spanish at home and prefers Spanish language media.

**Eva** is a 26 year old college student who works at an administrative assistant at a local bank. She is the daughter of an Anglo mother and Mexican father but strongly self-identifies as Latina. Her media preferences are blended. She listens to hip hop and reggaeton, she watches the Los Angeles Lakers and the Mexican national soccer team. She enjoys the Discovery network, MTV and Univision and her favorite shows include a blend of the Dog Whisperer and Spanish language telenovelas.

**Fátima** is a 36 year old homemaker. She immigrated to the United State from Mendoza, Argentina at the age of 17. She speaks primarily Spanish at home but prefers both Spanish and English language media. She prefers house and home programming and she watches a blend of the Food Network, Oprah, local news and Spanish language telenovelas.

**Irma** is a 26 year old, college educated nurse. She is the daughter of Mexican immigrants. She speaks mostly English at work and with friends, but she speaks to her family exclusively in Spanish. While she prefers English language media, she also watches Spanish language telenovelas.

**José** is a 53 year old immigrant from Mexico. He is a union representative who lives in a working class, Latino neighborhood. He speaks primarily English at work, but prefers Spanish at home. Although he watches some English language programming, he prefers Spanish language media.

**Rachel** is a 39 year old home maker. She is the daughter of Mexican immigrants but considers herself highly assimilated. While she speaks mostly English at home and consumes primarily English language media, she also watches Spanish language telenovelas and listens to Spanish language music.

In an effort to ensure the holistic nature of the research approach, all interviews and analysis were conducted by the researcher. Here, it is necessary to disclose my own background as it relates to the study. I am an English dominant Latino who was born and raised in Southern California, the setting for this study. While I was conducting this research in a scholarly capacity, I was also drawing upon my previous experience as a former advertising executive. While such experience may pose some risk, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that professional experience gives the researcher theoretical and social sensitivity, the ability to maintain analytical distance while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen.

In general, my status as a Latino was enough to provide me with insider status which was beneficial in eliciting candid responses. That said I believe there were cases where my position as an academic created some distance with participants. Interviews were conducted primarily in English but the discussions also utilized linguistic mixing, or Spanglish, as directed by the participant. In phenomenological research, the participant largely leads the dialogue, which is generally organic rather than linear in nature. In turn, the investigator does not approach the topic with presuppositions nor assumes to have more information than the respondent.

Each participant was involved in two separate interview discussions, each held one week from the other. The first interview as designed to obtain the contextual details concerning the participant's life world. Following McCracken's (1988) interviewing protocol, the first interview involved obtaining a biographical history, a process that allows participants to express general life meanings and concerns, data that will inform the subsequent testimony. The biographical history is not intended to act as historical record. Rather, it is understood that the participant reconstructs memories through his or her present construct system (Tagg 1985) and is a reflection of general life meanings and concerns. During this time participants described their linguistic practices and were asked to how often, with whom and under what conditions they spoke English/Spanish. Finally, participants were asked to identify specific mediums, channels and programs that they engage most frequently.

In the interim between the first and second interviews, participants were asked to participate in two auto-driving exercises. Auto-driving involves the technique of asking the respondent to prepare stimulus material (i.e. picture, video, journal, etc.) based on the topic of conversation and then to provide an account of that material (McCracken 1988). Such exercises are intended to reveal aspects of the respondent's experience that are otherwise difficult to articulate. In this study, participants were given an empty journal and asked to record any advertisements that they liked or disliked which they encountered during the week. These advertisements could be from any medium and the language of the ad was not specified. Second, participants were asked collect 7-8 images that they believed communicated who they are. These images were intended to provide further contextual information about the participants' life-world.

The second interview focused specifically on participants' experiences with advertising. The discussion began with each participant providing an account of their journals and discussing the meanings that each advertisement held for the participant. These specific examples that were provided by the participants were followed by a more general discussion about Hispanic advertising.

An interpretive or holistic approach to the data was employed. Verbatim transcripts generated from audio taped interviews served as the primary data for the investigation. In an effort to keep observations timely and to avoid contamination associated with fading memory, detailed notes were taken immediately after each interview. Field notes and other materials obtained during the interviews were cross-referenced and used as part of the analysis. This project follows McCracken's (1988) analytical framework in which analysis is generally conducted in three phases. In early stages, analysis is ideographic where the investigator engages a literal reading of the interview text. Separate utterances are then placed into the context of the overall interview transcript. The second stage involves an across-person analysis in which

separate interviews are related to one another. During this phase, the researcher begins to observe fields of patterns and themes that emerge from the texts and these general themes are organized and scrutinized with a specific focus on the degree to which those themes are confirmed and opposed by the data. Finally, a holistic view is taken across all interviews and supplemental data and is placed within a larger context. Guiding the analysis are issues of frequency (how often an idea or concept was brought up), extensiveness (how many different participants raised that issue) and intensity (how strongly people felt about that a particular issue).

### **Findings**

Phenomenological inquiry presumes that consumers are not passive consumers of advertising messages but rather actively constructing advertising meaning (Mick & Buhl 1992). Indeed, the participants in this study actively drew upon various knowledge systems to deconstruct and make meaning of targeting efforts. When asked to elaborate on the ads they recorded in their journals, participants frequently invoked their knowledge of products, brands and culture to interpret the various ads. Furthermore, all participants had a functional knowledge of how advertising worked, which assisted them not only in understanding the intended message, but also to infer the marketer's intention. For example, participants were consciously aware that advertising is, first and foremost, a persuasive medium and recognized that the advertisements they saw in Spanish language media were designed specifically to target them, as Latinos, and existed as a subset to a larger campaign. Because the participants were not engaging advertising literally, but rhetorically, it was not strange for the same brand spokesperson to speak English in one commercial and Spanish in another. Therefore, when Rachel watches a Verizon commercial on English language television and hears the spokesperson utter the tagline "do you hear me now?" and then turns to a Spanish language station and hears the exact same spokesperson say "me oyes?" it does not register as illogical. She is merely applying the logic of advertising to her understanding of the message.

While participants drew on cultural information to make sense of individual advertising messages, they also were drawing upon their own life experiences. Thus, participants varied in their reactions to marketers' accommodation attempts. For example, Fátima takes a preferred reading (Hall 1973) of targeted advertising. For her, the mere presence of targeted advertising was indeed interpreted as marketers' appreciation of Latino culture and the inherent value of the Hispanic market. Consider the following statement in which Fátima describes what she perceives to be significant changes to Spanish language media during the seventeen years she has lived in the U.S. She attributes to evolution of Spanish language media to the growing Latino presence and the economic clout that goes with it:

A lot has changed, before we didn't have Telemundo. Univision was only on until midnight, same thing on radio. Now we have more. Like HBO, now we have HBO Latino. It's good. It means we are a good public, that we spend money.

Here, Fátima is making the connection between consumption and the integration of Latinos into U.S. culture. For Fátima, being a "good public" means contributing to the political economy and she believes that Latinos have been rewarded for their buying power with significantly more choices. According to Fátima's logic, the mere presence of Hispanic advertising becomes validation of the growing importance of Latinos within the

larger culture. Furthermore, this idea of inclusivity became manifest in the creative execution. For example, Irma expressed a preference for Spanish language advertisements that were essentially the same as their English language counterparts and the employment of identical creative executions serves as evidence that marketers hold Latinos in equal regard to their general market consumers. Here, she describes the appeal of such advertisements: “I feel that Latinos want to be part of the American society. So it’s a good technique to use the same ad in Spanish as you’re using in English language. It makes us feel included.”

For other participants, readings of targeted advertising were more negotiated. While they did recognize that marketers were attempting to reach out to Latino consumers, they assumed that such motives were profit driven, not simply good will on the part of the marketer. Furthermore, not all participants were as receptive as Irma to executions that essentially adapted English language ads for Spanish language media and they believed that such ads were produced for the expediency of the marketer. Furthermore, several participants expressed a desire for advertising that was designed specifically to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the Latino consumer. However, as described in later sections, participants were aware that separate does not necessarily mean equal.

### **(Pan) Ethnic Cues**

In her ethnographic study of the U.S. Hispanic ad industry, Dávila (2001) found that Hispanic advertisers have been complicit in actively constructing a pan-Latino consumer segment that is economically appealing to corporate clients. In an effort to accommodate consumers who are culturally, racially, linguistically and socio-economically diverse, advertisers have been inclined to employ pan-ethnic cues that are designed to have broad appeal. For example, Dávila found that marketers commonly employ a generic version of Spanish (what marketers refer to as Walter Cronkite Spanish) and cast primarily olive skinned, “Mediterranean looking” Latinos.

Participants recognized that the people presented in Hispanic advertising do not necessarily look or speak like the Latinos they encounter in their everyday lives. However, they believed advertisers’ preference for light skinned Latinos was not necessarily a strategic choice but rather the result of subjective bias. For example, they noted the conspicuous absence of indigenous or African features within advertising. Participants also reported that Hispanic spokespeople did not speak in regional accents which they believed to be a conscious decision on the part of marketers. During her interview, Fátima expresses her belief that a Latino spokesperson has been encouraged to subdue his regional accent saying, “I know he’s from Argentina but I don’t think they let him speak like an Argentino.

Several of the participants were able to identify music and actors that were from a particular country of origin, however, most recognized that advertising was designed to appeal to various groups across the U.S. For example, Rachel describes Hispanic advertising as such: “I feel like it’s blended. Everything is so blended and you really don’t know who (the ad is) being directed to...Mexicans or Cubans or Puerto Ricans or Dominicans? It’s just one big melting pot.”

When asked to discuss this phenomenon, participants expressed very few reservations about being absorbed into a large, pan-ethnic consumer segment. While I

found this surprising, it did appear to be consistent with how several of the participants invoked their own ethnic identities, which fluctuated between their country of origin and the use of more collective terms such as “Hispano” or “Latino.” Furthermore, most participants believed that pan-ethnicity bred solidarity and believed that advertisers generally positive in their characterization of Latino cultural values. For example, participants’ journals included a large number of advertisements in which family was a central creative theme. Rather than finding these advertisements clichéd or stereotypical, participants embraced family orientation as a value that they considered to be distinctly Latino.

While participants like Rachel believed that advertising depicts a “melting pot,” others believed that such ethnic cues are not entirely devoid of regional characteristics. David and Fátima, who are both Argentine immigrants, were particularly aware that to be Latino in the United States largely means to be Mexican and that most programming in Spanish language media was designed to accommodate a Mexican audience. Here, David describes the inclination of marketers to favor Mexican linguistic styles:

Ads are geared towards Mexicans. Even the way they talk in the commercials, they have more of like a Mexican Spanish. You don’t really hear them talking like Cuban people or someone where you can really distinguish the accent or use certain words that other countries would use. They don’t have them in the commercials. They have them more like Mexicans would say.

Similarly, Fátima believes that marketers favor Latinos of Mexican origin. Without irony, she calls the evening news on Spanish language television, “news from Mexico.” In the following testimony she makes the explicit connection between audience size and opportunity.

They (the advertisers) focus on Mexico more than anybody else. It’s because they need to get to their public. There are more Mexicans and they’re going to be drinking more beer and they want to make them happy.

When asked to reflect on this practice, David and Fátima demonstrated a sober awareness that advertising was designed to reach the largest public and, by extension, the greatest economic opportunity. They were pragmatic in their understanding that Mexicans account for the vast majority of U.S. Latinos and were a particularly strong presence in Los Angeles. For these two participants, it simply makes sense that marketers would skew their efforts toward Mexican consumer.

### **Language and Symbolic Value**

Discourses on targeted advertising have generally conflated Hispanic advertising with Spanish language advertising and scholarship in this area has focused on language as an ethnic cue. In an effort to fully account for the persuasiveness of Spanish, however, we must also account for the significance of Spanish to Latino cultural identity. Scholars of socio-linguistics have long held that the language we speak is a fundamental component of our cultural identity and, therefore, who we are (Duranti 1997). Because of its inextricable link to identity, studies have shown that rather than abandoning their native tongues, minority groups will go to great lengths to retain them (Gonzales-Velásquez 1995; Schector, Sharken-Taboada & Bayley 1996). This was consistent with how participants discussed the role of Spanish in their everyday lives. Consider the following testimony from José, who provides an interesting illustration:

There was a European scientist and he knew many languages...many. And one day they asked him "what's your favorite language?" And he said, well I don't have any favorite see? When I'm with my wife, we speak French because it's a Romantic language. When I reprimand my children, I do it in German because it's a harsh language. When I do business, I speak English. But when I pray to the lord, I speak Spanish because it's the most beautiful language in the world. And that's how I think of it too.

Such testimonies complicate current understandings of how advertising functions in Hispanic advertising. Furthermore, it contests previous claims that Spanish has a negative value in targeted efforts because of its subordinate position within the social hierarchy (Luna and Perachio 2001). Perhaps more problematic is that there is little account for how targeted ads are actually consumed in the context of everyday experience. A Spanish language ad is situated within Spanish language media where all content is in language. Thus, there is no competitive advantage to creating a message in Spanish. It is merely the cost of entry.

As it relates to this discussion, language is not simply an in or out proposition and several of the participants were critical of marketers' treatment of Spanish. A significant finding has been that participants had a strong negative reaction to linguistic errors. Every one of the participants reported seeing advertisements that included mistranslations, awkward phrasing or commercials that were haphazardly dubbed from English to Spanish. Here, David describes an environment in which linguistic errors are prevalent:

They make so many mistakes in talking Spanish. The level of the Spanish is low I think. I mean for Spanish speaking people, they should at least promote a good level of Spanish language. You cannot make a mistake on national television. I mean you need to keep a level so the people will pick up that level.

David is articulating a common belief amongst the participants that linguistic integrity is of particular importance to Latino consumers. Most participants shared David's belief that there is a strong pull toward English and very few formal mechanisms in which to formally teach Spanish. Several participants admitted to lapses in their own use of Spanish, but they believed that media producers, including advertisers, must play a role in maintaining the integrity of the language. To fail in this capacity, therefore, is to compromise an important cultural resource. Here, Eva describes her reaction to an ad for Shakey's, a local pizza chain:

There was one that I meant to write down. It was for Shakey's. And it looks like totally low budget. Like they just got a video camera and started recording at people. And they're all saying how it's tradition to go to Shakey's and whatever. And then there's the mom with her kids. And instead of saying, "los niños estan jugando," she says like "juegando" or something. And I'm like, why would you put that on the commercial? Like it's okay that the lady says it wrong? Why would you put that on the commercial? It's in Spanish, it's not like it's in English or like they wouldn't know. They know that she's saying it wrong. Like for me it just says that they're ghetto or they have all kinds of ghetto people who don't know how to speak English or Spanish or either one.

Here, Eva is responding to the lack of quality control in Spanish language advertising. Such gaffes are unacceptable in mass media and, for her, reflect negatively on the advertiser. Consequently, such accommodation efforts are clearly undermined by the lack of attention paid to the quality of Spanish.

## Discussion

The focus of this study has been to provide a qualitative perspective on accommodation attempts made in Hispanic marketing. By employing a phenomenological framework, this research provides a first-hand account of the meanings that Latino consumers ascribe to advertising and an understanding of how such meaning is inextricably linked to a broader network of cultural meaning (Hirshman & Thompson 1997; Mick & Buhl 1992).

The relationship between the participants and targeted advertising was discursive. Participants drew upon cultural meaning to make sense of advertising messages and to infer the marketers' intentions. Advertising, in turn, told them about the world in which they live. This is consistent with previous scholarship in which the advertising landscape is said to be rich in cultural information, providing consumers with the coordinates of meaning that make the physical world consistent and comprehensible (Mick 1986). Furthermore, advertising has been described as a "cultural system" (Sherry 1987), in which consumers infer essential information about who is important, which material objects are relevant, appropriate practices and behaviors and key social institutions.

Previous scholarship on intercultural accommodation has focused on marketers' efforts in the conventional sense, but the findings of this study suggest that Latino consumers are not simply responding to language and spokesperson identity but are interpreting an infinite number of elements including linguistic style, characters, performance, brands, product classes, ad situations and production quality. This finding complicates our understanding of how Latino consumers engage targeted advertising. Furthermore, because meaning is found at the nexus between cultural and personal experience, participants varied in the degree to which they believed that accommodation efforts indeed communicated marketers' respect for Latino culture. For example, the interviews reveal that Fátima has had an overall positive immigrant experience and, because she interacts almost exclusively with other Latinos, she has not encountered inter-ethnic conflict on a consistent basis. Consequently, Fátima's experience provides her with a more favorable view of targeted advertising.

Conversely, Eva's experience as a U.S. Latino has been quite different. Eva's interviews reveal that her understandings of group dynamics are profoundly shaped by her childhood experiences in which she recalls being designated as a minority. During her interview, she describes a critical moment in the formation of her ethnic identity:

When I was little it was kind of like I was "the Latina." And then when I went to high school there in Torrance, since it's a Catholic school, there's more Latinos there. And even though it's a private school, they have like scholarships and stuff like that so there was a lot of Latinos and a lot of black people there. Going in, my best friend from grammar school she went also to the same high school. So I would hang out with her and like white people and all that but, I don't know, it's like I didn't belong. So then probably in my sophomore year was when I started hanging out with people in my Spanish class. More Latinos and stuff like that. And from there I just...never looked back (laughs).

Despite her bicultural background (her mother is Anglo and her father is a Mexican national), Eva describes being designated a minority at an early age. While she later embraces her Latino heritage, these early experiences appear to have profoundly shape her understanding of what it means to be a U.S. Latino. While attending university,

Eva refines this perspective by taking Chicano Studies courses, which she describes as her favorite in college. Largely due to these experiences, Eva is more aware of and critical of differences between English and Spanish language advertising.

A second theme that emerged during this study was that there appears to be little resistance to the process in which consumers are absorbed into a pan-Latino identity. This finding was surprising as I had expected more resistance, particularly amongst the foreign born participants. While this finding appears to be counterintuitive, the literature provides some insight. Current research on ethnic identification has found that shared language, residential tenure, anti-immigrant discourses and racial lumping by U.S. organizations may all encourage an inclusive Latino identity over regional identity (Lien, Conway, & Wong 2003).

Bourdieu's research on cultural production (1993) may provide further insight. Bourdieu has argued that to be effective, producers necessarily think in clichés or in "received ideas," which are conventional, common ideas that are received generally. By the time they reach their intended audience, these ideas have already been received by everyone else so reception is never a problem (Bourdieu 1998). As a commercial effort, advertising must present conditions that are favorable to the commercial message. Thus, in an effort to create an environment conducive to persuasion, Hispanic advertising presents acceptable notions of Latino identity while avoiding themes that may be contested or rejected by its intended audience.

A final implication of this study is the overall context in which advertising is consumed. Discourses on targeted advertising have largely characterized Hispanic advertising as being consumed independently of English language advertising but has not accounted for the fact that Latino consumers are immersed in dual media systems. Thus, Latino consumers' access to multiple linguistic codes and exposure to both Spanish and English language media provides them with a comparative perspective. It is this comparative evaluation, and this is the essential point, that informs their understandings of larger group dynamics.

During the general discussions of Hispanic advertising, several participants identified a disparity in visual quality compared to English language advertising. Here, José describes what he perceives to be the relatively unrefined quality of Hispanic advertising: "Well, the Spanish language advertising, it seems like they don't work at it more. They don't refine it, see? Compared to English advertising, they are more raw." When asked to elaborate, it becomes clear that José is describing the post-production process. Other participants also noted differences in editing, film quality, audio design, color treatment and scoring. By contrast, English advertisements were seen as relatively more polished or refined.

The overall reaction to poor production quality in Hispanic advertising becomes exacerbated when participants use a comparative evaluation. Because of their media practices, Hispanic advertising is not consumed in isolation but rather collectively. Thus, consumers are in the position of making comparisons between English and Spanish language for the same exact brand. In the following testimony, Eva expresses a belief that the same corporation will produce a more visually appealing ad for their English speaking audience than for their Spanish speaking audience, a belief that was commonly shared by participants in the study:

They (Hispanic ads) just seem more like low budget. And I think it's even the same brands that they have in English. It's the same brand, but it just seems that the ones

in English, the picture they have, it's just more appealing. The ones in Spanish are more like they did it overnight or something. To me it says that they don't really care...that they care more about the people that watch TV in English.

To Eva, it becomes apparent that marketers are not consistent in how they allocate resources nor in the attention they pay to different consumer groups. From this orientation, linguistic errors and poor production quality may be attributed to more than mere negligence. For Eva, it becomes a clear indicator of the relative value that the marketer places on the Latino consumer compared to their Anglo counterparts. By extension, marketing to Latino consumers through inferior efforts becomes reflective of larger social values.

### **Implications/Future Research**

This research has provided a descriptive account of the meanings that Latino consumers ascribe to targeted efforts; however, there are several limitations which must be acknowledged and there are several opportunities for future research. For example, this study focused primarily on the use of Spanish in targeted advertising, but the topic of code-mixing also emerged during the interview discussions. Several participants were ambivalent toward the common practice of Spanglish and while they admitted to their frequent use of code-mixing in their everyday conversations, many of the participants were resistant to its use in mass media. In recent years, advertisers have produced campaigns designed to appeal to bicultural Latinos through copy written in mixed linguistic codes. As it becomes a more prevalent rhetorical tool, future research may wish to examine the impact of Spanglish on persuasive communications.

Furthermore, this study focused on individual level processes; however there is an opportunity to build on this research by examining the ideals and practices within the advertising profession that shape advertising messages. Critical scholars have argued that consumer markets are constructed not discovered, and assumptions about what products are considered to be relevant to the targeted consumer, who gets to be included in the target market, how they will be spoken to and how resources will be allocated all reflect pre-existing biases on the part of the advertiser (Sender 2005). These dynamics have important implications on the particular form that Hispanic advertising takes. Furthermore, Hispanic agencies do not work in isolation and their creative products are shaped largely through their collaboration with Anglo clients and general market agencies. Research on advertising production may shed light on how inter-group dynamics play in role in shaping the very nature of Hispanic advertising.

Finally, this study was centered in Los Angeles. While Los Angeles was chosen as a research setting because of its significant Hispanic presence, it is in many ways unlike other cities. Los Angeles enjoys a large, diverse Latino population as well as a robust Spanish language media system. However, the dynamics unique to Los Angeles may be quite different than those in a city where Latino's account for a relatively small percentage of the overall population and where there do not exist the same institutional resources. Similarly, in other states, Afro-Latinos have a more significant presence and these populations may not be as indifferent to a process of homogenization that excludes them. In an effort to more fully explore these dynamics, similar investigation should be conducted in other markets.

Despite these limitations, the first hand testimonies elicited from Latino consumers challenge many normative assumptions and provide important implications for marketing practice. The findings of this study suggest that the mere presence of ethnic cues is not a guarantee of persuasion. However, given the country's demographic changes, there is a fundamental need to communicate with Latino consumers in compelling, relevant and thoughtful ways. Because many U.S. Latinos are negotiating dual media systems, advertisers must pay more attention to the totality of their efforts. Therefore, we must rethink how we view advertising as a cultural system. Campaigns that are fragmented and unequally developed may be recognized as such by Latinos. Conversely, campaigns that are relevant, integrated and thoughtful may go a long way in building stronger consumer- brand connections. Finally, when brands use a consistent voice, allocate similar resources and ensure similar production quality, it can indeed communicate that Latino consumers are entitled to the same quality of commercial resources and thus are a part of the mainstream culture.

## References

- Acosta-Belén, E. (1992) Beyond Island Boundaries: Ethnicity, Gender, and Cultural Revitalization in Nuyorican Literature, *Callaloo* 15 (4): 979-998.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *On Television*. New York: The New York Press.
- Calderon, J. (1992) Hispanic and Latino: The Viability of Categories for Pan-ethnic Unity, *Latin American Perspectives* 75 (19): 37-44.
- Dávila, A. (2001) *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Deshpandé, R. and Stayman, D. M. (1994) A Tale of Two Cities: Distinctiveness Theory and Advertising Effectiveness, *Journal of Marketing Research* 31(1): 57-64.
- Dimofte, C. V., Forehand, M.R. and Deshpandé, R. (2003) Ad Schema Incongruity as Elicitor of Ethnic Self-Awareness and Differential Advertising Response, *Journal of Advertising* 32 (4): 7-17.
- Dolinski, C. and Feinberg, R.A. (1986) Linguistic Barriers to Consumer Information Processing: Information Overload in the Hispanic Population, *Psychology and Marketing* 3: 261-271.
- Duranti, A. (1997) *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press
- Forehand, M. and Deshpandé, R. (2001) What We See Makes Us Who We Are: Priming Ethnic Self-Awareness and Advertising Response, *Journal of Marketing Research* 30 (3): 336-348.
- Foster, R., Sullivan, G. and Perea, V. (1989) Comprehension of Spanish Language Ad Claims by Hispanic Consumers: A Comparison of Bilingual and Monolingual Performance, *Southwest Journal of Business and Economics* 6 (2):13-18.
- Fournier, S. (1998) Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research, *Journal of Consumer Research* 24: 343-73.
- García Canclini, N. (2001) *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts*. Madison: University of Minnesota Press.
- Giles, H. and Coupland, N. (1991) *Language: Contexts and Consequences*. Boston: Wadsworth Publishing
- Gimenez, M.E. (1989) Latino/Hispanic-Who Needs a Name? The Case Against Standardized Terminology, *International Journal of Health Services* 19: 557-571.
- Gonzales-Velásquez, M. (1995) Sometimes Spanish, Sometimes English: Language Use Among Rural New Mexican Chicanas, in K. Hall and M. Bucholtz (eds), *Gender articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*, pp. 421-446. New York: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1973). *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* Birmingham: CCS
- Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and Time*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Hirshman, E. and Thompson, C. (1997) Why Media Matter: Toward a Richer Understanding of Consumers' Relationships with Advertising and Mass Media, *Journal of Advertising*, 26 (1): 43-60.

- Holland, J. and Gentry, J.W. (1999) Ethnic Consumer Reaction to Targeted Marketing: A Theory of Intercultural Accommodation, *Journal of Advertising* 28(1): 65-77.
- Koslow, S., Shamdasani, P. and Touchstone, E. (1994) Exploring Language Effects in Ethnic Advertising: A Sociolinguistic Perspective, *The Journal of Consumer Research* 20(4): 575-85.
- Lannon, J. And Cooper, P. (1983) Humanistic Advertising: A Holistic Cultural Perspective, *International Journal of Advertising* 2(3): 195-213
- Lien, P., Conway, M. and Wong, J. (2003) The Contours and Sources of Ethnic Identity Choices Among Asian Americans, *Social Science Quarterly* 84 (2) 461-
- Luna, D. and Peracchio, L.A. (2001) Moderators of Language Effects in Advertising to Bilinguals: A Psycholinguist Approach, *Journal of Consumer Research*. 28 (2):284-295.
- McCracken, G. (1986) Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account for the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods, *Journal of Consumer Research* 13(1): 71-84
- McCracken, G. (1988) *The Long Interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Massey, D. and Denton, N. (1993) *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mendoza-Denton, N. (1999) Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology of U.S. Latinos, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28: 375-395.
- Merleau, P. (1962) *The Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.
- Mick, D. G. (1986) Consumer Research and Semiotics: Exploring Morphology of Signs, Symbols and Significance, *Journal of Consumer Research* 13: 196-213.
- Mick, D. G. and Buhl, C. (1992) A Meaning-Based Model of Advertising Experiences, *Journal of Consumer Research* 19(3): 317-338.
- Moore, J. and Pachon, H. (1985) *Hispanics in the United States*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall
- Nericcio, W.A. (2006) *Autopsy of a Rat: Sundry Parables of Warner Brothers Studios, Jewish American Animators, Speedy Gonzales, Freddy López, and Other Chicano/Latino Marionettes Prancing about Our First World Visual Emporium; Parable Cameos by Jacques Derrida; and, a Dirty Joke in Tex[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Omni, M. and Winant, H. (1994) *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge
- Peñaloza, L. and Gilly, M. C. (1999) Marketer Acculturation: The Changer and the Changed, *Journal of Marketing* 63:84-104
- Reed, A. (2004) Activating the Self-Importance of Consumer Selves: Exploring Identity Salience Effects on Judgments, *Journal of Consumer Research* 31 (2):286-295.
- Schechter, S.R., Sharken-Taboada, D. and Bayley, R. (1996) [Bilingual by Choice: Latino Parents' Rationales and Strategies for Raising Children with Two Languages](#), *The Bilingual Research Journal* 20(2):261-81
- Scott, L. (1994). Images in Advertising: The Need for a Theory of Visual Rhetoric, *Journal of Consumer Research* 21: 252-273.
- Selig Center for Economic Growth (2008) *The Multicultural Economy* [Online] Available at: [http://media.terry.uga.edu/documents/selig/buying\\_power\\_2008.pdf](http://media.terry.uga.edu/documents/selig/buying_power_2008.pdf) [Accessed 2 June 2009].

- Sender, K. (2005) *Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sherry, J.F. (1987). "Advertising as a Cultural System," in Umiker-Sibeok (ed) *Marketing and Semiotics*, pp. 441-461. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Tagg, S.K. (1985) "Life Story Interviews and Their Interpretation," in M. Brenner, J. Brown and D. Canter (eds) *The Research Interview: Uses and Approaches* pp. 163-199. London: Academic Press.
- Thompson, C.J. (1996) Caring Consumers: Gendered Consumption Meanings and the Juggling Lifestyle, *Journal of Consumer Research* 22: 338-407.
- Thompson, C.J., Locander, W. B. and Pollio, H. R. (1989) Putting Consumer Experience Back Into Consumer Research: The Philosophy and Method of Existential-Phenomenology, *Journal of Consumer Research* 16: 133-146.
- Ueltschy, L.C. and Krampf, R.F. (1997) The Influence of Acculturation on Advertising Effectiveness to the Hispanic Market, *Journal of Applied Business Research* 13(2): 87-101.
- United States Census (2010) *The 2011 Statistical Abstract* [Online] Available at: <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population.html> [Accessed 1 January 2011].
- Williamson, J. (1978) *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyers Publishing.

**Note**

The project follows in the tradition of other scholarship that utilizes dual terms: “Latino” and “Hispanic.” While both labels are pan-ethnic and have contested histories, scholars have been particularly critical of the term “Hispanic” for its privileging of Spanish over indigenous origins. However, “Hispanic” is the term of preference for U.S. advertisers. For purposes of this study, I limit the use of “Hispanic” to commercially specific terms.

# **Center for Spanish Language Media**



**Education  
Research  
Professional Development**

**[www.spanishmedia.unt.edu](http://www.spanishmedia.unt.edu)  
[spanishmedia@unt.edu](mailto:spanishmedia@unt.edu)  
(940)-565-2756**