

Making Latino News
Race, Language, Class

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INTRODUCTION

The production of Latino journalism--news that is purposefully and strategically created for U.S. residents of Latin American descent--symbolically denationalizes Latinos, as it re-nationalizes them as U.S. Hispanics. However, Latino oriented news does not melt or displace Latino cultures into the culture of the majority, dominant society. Rather, Latino news making creates a detailed symbol system, a daily capsule of reality in which Latinos are seemingly everywhere: among the victims and witnesses of the Oklahoma City bombing, in Congress and city halls, in the professions as well as in fields and factories. This is a world that prominently includes Latin America. The making of this social or public knowledge (Hall 1979, 340; Schudson 1995, 3), cultural and economic processes in which issues of power are central, is the topic of this paper.

This is a study of cultural production, of meaning making, by an elite--Latinolites. Latino journalism is produced by Latino journalists and Latino marketers, Latinos whose cultural and material capital set them apart from much of their intended audience, replicating the social distance that exists between most general market journalists and their audiences. What is (and what isn't) Latino news? In this essay, these questions are posed of journalism that self consciously targets the Latino audience: the national newscasts produced by the principal U.S. Spanish language television networks, *Univisión* and *Telemundo*. Latino oriented media--more than one thousand television affiliates, some 400 radio stations, hundreds of Spanish, English, and bilingual publications--are one facet of the increasing visibility of the ethnoracial group that will soon be the largest minority group in the United States.

By the year 2020, Latinos will make up about a quarter of all U.S. residents. Put another way, in less than a generation, it is predicted, one in four people in the U.S. will be Latino/a. This oft cited Census Bureau statistic has become a mantra, repeatedly intoned by Latino media producers, Latino marketers, Latino elected officials and Latino political activists (as well as those who study and teach about Latinos). The evocation of this statistic, and its variants, such as, by 2050, the majority of California, and more than a third of the Texas population, will be Latino, shouts to the larger, dominant society: "Look at us! You can't ignore us anymore!" The production of Latino news is one of the social terrains through which Latinos are creating a place for themselves in U.S. culture.

Despite the growth of the Latino population, various studies have documented the symbolic annihilation of Latinos by U.S. general market media.¹ These studies, of both entertainment and journalistic media production, conclude that in those few instances when Latinos are recreated as members of U.S. society in general market media, they are most often portrayed as criminal, or otherwise socially deviant. A pervasive example of the consequences of this representation (and lack of representation) is general market journalism's continuing focus on illegal Latin American immigration to the United States--to the virtual exclusion of other aspects of Latino life.

This preoccupation with immigration has contributed to the misperception that most--or at least many--Latinos are unauthorized immigrants. In fact, undocumented immigrants make up less than ten percent of the Latino population.² Today, about two thirds of Latinos are U.S. citizens, the balance are legal residents (Bureau of the Census, 1990). Given this context, Latino politics, in which I include much of Latino journalism, should properly be considered part of the ongoing U.S. civil rights movement.

A central theme of this essay is membership: cultural, social and political membership in U.S. society. As with other non-Anglo immigrants to the U.S., historically and today, there has been little room for Latinos in U.S. civil society. The bifurcation of U.S. race relations ("black and white"), as reproduced in general market journalism (and many other social institutions), has pushed Latinos to the margins of the U.S. nation. In response to this social landscape, Latino journalism has carved out an inclusionary role. The Latino journalistic perspectives examined in these pages turns on a vision of Latinos within the national culture, supportive of U.S. society's structures and norms, and yet also apart from it, preserving a distinct Latino identity.

Unless otherwise noted, the contemporary Latino journalists whose work is cited here are members of what sociologist Ruben Rumbaut (1991) has called the "1.5" or "one and one half generation," those who were born in Latin America, but were educated in the U.S., and came of age in the U.S. This "intercultural placement," positions Latino oriented journalists as translators and mediators between their audience and, the dominant,

majority society. For Latino journalists this 'in betweenness' is daily activated in tension between objectivity and ethnicity. Latino journalists are U.S. journalists, trained in traditional U.S. journalism schools, believers and practitioners of the journalistic ideology commonly called "objectivity." And, they are advocates for the inclusion of Latinos in all spheres of U.S. society.

The core issue here is the point of view, the vantage point of Latino journalism. This defining perspective is the product of Latino oriented journalistic firms and their constructions of the presumptive, or targeted audience. While this study does not consider audience response to Latino journalism, the journalists' and marketers' conceptualization of the Latino audience is key to the analysis. The creation of a commercially viable Hispanic audience is what makes Latino oriented journalism possible.

Theoretical Contexts

This project fuses cultural and economic analysis. Central to this is the construction of the Latino audience--from a journalistic perspective as well as a marketing or, put another way, a commercial culture viewpoint. In this context the Latino audience is not the men and women who consume news media, but rather the purposeful abstraction that constitutes the economic foundations of Latino journalism--the audience that is bought and sold in the marketplace (Ang 1991). This audience is a social and cultural and economic construction. The Latino audience is simultaneously the object, and the motivator of news production--it is both the purpose and the product of Latino news making. This analysis strives not to be media centric. Rather, this news is contextualized an element of the societies in which it is produced. Throughout the text, Latino journalism is framed in relation to the institutional and political contexts of its production, as well as the socioeconomic contexts of its intended audiences. In these ways, the production of Latino journalism provides a prism through which to analyze Latino political culture.

Latino oriented journalists are political actors and, they are actors in the Latino media economy, commonly called the Hispanic market. These two elements of news making are not presented separately, nor as a duality, but as inextricable strands of media production processes (Schudson 1978, Schiller 1981, MacManus 1994). Latino journalism is a constitutive element of the social process of community building and identity creation of Latino communities (Carey 1989, Anderson 1983, Hall 1992, 1993). This news making, the mapping and disseminating of a common social, political and cultural space and, an imagined community of shared interests, is an element of the social processes that make up Latino ethnic identity.

Ethnicity is a collective identity that arises from daily experience, in the instances examined here, out of the daily experiences of commercial cultural journalistic production (Sanchez 1993, Hall 1990). Similarly, race (and racial categorizing) is a social process. The racializing of U.S. communities of Latin American descent (by Latino oriented media as well as by general market media and, the larger society) is a recurring theme of this project (Blauner 1972, Winant 1994, C. Rodriguez 1989, 1991, C. Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992).

The analysis of language, the life of the Spanish language in the United States, is also key to the analysis. Spanish, in several intersecting dimensions of Latino societies, is the preeminent emblem of "Hispanic" in U.S. popular culture. From an nativist point of view, the Spanish language is a sign of "foreignness." From a marketing perspective, the Spanish language is what makes the Hispanic audience "efficient." For many Latino journalists, the Spanish language is the encompassing representation of their audience. The Spanish language as reproduced in Latino news making is, in short, both symbol and substance of Latino ethnic identity (Woolard 1985, Urciuoli 1966).

Class, in this analysis, is a hierarchical conflation of ethnicity, race, and language, as well as a marker of discrete socio-economic conditions and, most broadly, of social status, or relative social position (Williams 1983, pp. 60-69). Representations of class in Latino newsmaking are, as in most U.S. journalism, not explicit. Nonetheless, and again like the general media market, hierarchical class distinctions are central to Latino media "audience making."

The production of the Hispanic audience and Latino newsmaking have, from the nineteenth century to the present, been part of the globalization of communication, of the transnational production of culture. This project's focus is on how structural and cultural globalizing forces are manifest in U.S. Latino national and local commercial cultures, particularly as regards the "specialization" (Mosco 1996) of Latino journalism as a segment

of a Latin America centered "cultural-linguistic market" (Wilkinson 1995). This analysis is mindful that transnationalization of culture does not necessarily entail the homogenization or, the obliteration of national cultures (MartinBarbero 1987, 1988; Morley and Robbins 1995, Sinclair, 1996).

Contemporary Latino news making, and conceptualizations of Latino race, language, and class, are evolving social, political and cultural processes. One of the goals of this project has been to complicate Latino namings and categorizations, rejecting what Stuart Hall has called the "essentializing" of identities. The analysis that follows recognizes that Latino audiences, and the news media produced for them, have internal differences--of occupation and political ideologies, for example--that are not erased by unitary ethnic/racial labeling.

This paper draws on 42 open ended interviews and production ethnographies with Latino journalists, audience researchers and marketers in New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Antonio. Unless otherwise noted, these interviews were conducted in person and in English by the author. Also, content and textual analysis was done of select Latino news media texts and Hispanic market research reports.

COMMERCIAL ETHNICITY: THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF THE HISPANIC AUDIENCE

This section specifies the ways and forms in which the Hispanic audience is produced today, analyzing contemporary understandings of the Hispanic audience in Latino oriented media. The focus here is the Spanish language audience.⁴ The construction of the Hispanic audience shapes as it creates notions of Latino race and ethnicity, U.S. nationalism and cultural belonging. In our contemporary xenophobic culture (exemplified by Californians' passage of Propositions 187 and 209), the Latino representations which are at the core of the Hispanic audience are inescapably political, about cultural power. The analysis below examines key practices of some central communication industries, foregrounding issues of power and inequality, mindful that these popular cultural productions are simultaneously a site of contestation and, a cultural resource (Hall 1991; Gray 1996).

The Hispanic audience has been produced through a variety of cultural and commercial production processes. One of the discrete aspects of these processes is generally called "marketing," or, interchangeably in U.S. Latino culture industries, "audience research." The dominant construction of the Hispanic audience--the discursive concept that is sold in the marketplace and centrally structures Hispanic media--is racially non-White, linguistically Spanish speaking, and socio-economically poor. Despite, and because of, these defining cultural characteristics, Hispanic media have produced alternative (Williams 1980, 41) cultural forms within U.S. public culture.

A political analysis of the Hispanic audience is heightened when considering the identity of the discourses' authors: most contemporary Hispanic marketers and audience researchers are U.S. Latinos. Hispanic audience research is constructed by one class of Latinos, college educated and professionally salaried, symbolically reproducing a saleable product out of the "mass" of U.S. Latinos, more than half of whom have not completed high school, and whose median household income is roughly three quarters that of the general U.S. population.⁵ This is not to minimize the fact that the Hispanic audience is being fashioned primarily for Anglo advertisers and advertising agencies, but rather to point up the class character of Hispanic representation and the leading role elite Latinos play in its creation.

These are the voices of the men and women, employees of Latino oriented media firms, who construct and then sell the commercial and cultural commodity commonly called the "Hispanic audience."

We walk a fine line. We want to differentiate [from the general market] but ... We try to say these are people who want to be Hispanic Americans, but they don't want to lose their Hispanic identity. We have come to some retailers and pitched them and said, 'we'd like to drive the Hispanic consumer into your store and the way to do that is ...' And we've heard: 'the only Hispanics who come into our stores are the ones who come in here to shoplift ...'

The practice of audience research is constrained and organized by institutional industrial imperatives, but as the above voices show, marketing is immersed in the larger society, as it symbolically recreates it.

Marketing discourse mobilizes resources for the production of Hispanic ethnicity. Responding to a

commercial imperative, ethnic distinctiveness is reproduced in relation to an accepted standard. "The so called 'logic of capital' has operated ...*through* difference--preserving and transforming difference ... not by undermining it (Hall, 1993, 353, emphasis in original). This is the logic of 'narrowcasting,' the production of specialized media for specialized audiences, whether the audience be U.S. Latinos, vegetarians or sports fans. In the case of the Hispanic audience, a defining tension is produced between the construction of Hispanic as 'different,' and so efficiently 'targetable,' and the construction of Hispanic as just another 'American' consumer group.

While this study is limited to the construction of the Hispanic audience in the United States, it is important not to lose sight of the transnational Latin American audience, of which U.S. Hispanics comprise the northernmost component. This is most clearly seen in television: roughly half of U.S. Spanish language television programming is produced in Latin America; virtually all the Spanish language television programming produced in the United States is exported to Latin America. Further, Latin American media conglomerates have significant investments in U.S. Hispanic media (e.g. *Televisa*, the Mexican entertainment conglomerate, and *Venevisión*, a Venezuelan media firm, each own 25% of *Univisión*), and U.S. owned media corporations (Time Warner, CNN, CBS, NBC, MTV, for example) produce media that is consumed in Latin America. Considered in this economic and cultural context, the nexus of Hispanic audience construction is not solely difference, which some suggest is a primary characteristic of this historical period (Harvey 1993). It is also a profit maximizing abstraction of similarities, in this case, the common language of the audience.

The production and dissemination of the notion of Latinopanethnicity (the core of which is the elimination of national origin and racial differences) in Hispanic marketing and commercial representation since 1980 has erased the distinct immigration histories as well as the adaptation and settlement patterns of the three principal Latin American immigrant groups in the U.S. Underlying these are class differences: the 1960's wave of Cuban immigrants was largely middle class and educated, with many professionals in the group, while Puerto Ricans and Mexican immigrants tended to be working class, with many menial laborers among them.

The denationalization of Latin American immigrants to the United States facilitated their re-nationalization as members, albeit marginal members, of U.S. society, as a U.S. minority group. This created the cultural space to erase the multi-racial Latin American heritage of U.S. Latino communities. Consonant with the class differences mentioned above, first wave Cuban immigrants were largely of European or "white" ancestry, while Puerto Ricans and Mexicans are *mestizo* or of mixed African, Native and White racial heritages. Similarly, the submerging of intra-ethnic national, class and racial distinctiveness permitted the racialization of the social formation "Hispanic" (Omi and Winant 1986, 61; Winant, 1996). Latino oriented media did not act in isolation or in a pioneering fashion in the creation of this racial category. The Census Bureau at different times tried and then rejected: "Spanish speaking," "Spanish surnamed" and "not black, not white." In 1980, after rejecting "Latin" as too closely associated with an ancient language, the Census Bureau adopted "Hispanic" (Flores-Hughes 1996).

"Hispanic" is a cultural and racial formation that has a provisional, tenuous status in the established U.S. racial bifurcation of "black and white." U.S. born Hispanic marketers, who say they personally celebrate intra-ethnic diversity, professionally endorse denationalized, racialized U.S. Latinopanethnicity: "It's less complicated this way. We don't want to be *too* special ... That's how they think of us anyway. They think we are all the same." Implicitly in the first statement above, and directly in the second, these Hispanic audience marketers self-consciously and strategically embrace U.S. Latinopanethnicity as central to the inter-cultural nature of their work; the Hispanic audience is created and recreated relative to the dominant Anglo culture. Central to the Hispanic marketing project is the inclusion of Hispanics in the U.S. nation. In that context, language, the Spanish language, is positioned as the primary characteristic of the audience, what makes it commercially valuable. As will be further developed below, the Spanish language is also proxy for race and class, non-white race and lower class (Urciuli 1996).

U.S. Latino oriented media companies have found a place in the U.S. media marketplace that, encouraged by deregulation, the growth of cable television and the development of audience measurement technologies, facilitates niche marketing or media specialization. Smaller, more homogenous audiences, this now

institutionalized argument maintains, offer more value (the ratio of advertising expenditure to specific audience reached), to the advertiser than larger heterogeneous audiences (Streeter 1987, Barnes and Thomson 1995).

The dominant characteristic of Hispanic market discourse, like that of markets generally, is numbers, a communication system that privileges that which can be quantified (Porter 1995, ix). The Hispanic market is sold across racial, national, social and cultural barriers, making it apt terrain for the powerfully "neutral" language of statistics. The increased precision (and the perception of the precision) of audience research, including computer facilitated cross tabulations, has enabled market research firms to finely quantify Hispanics and so translate their market value into a language common to all concerned, that is, numbers. These symbolic quantifications are strategic and value laden: they reproduce U.S. Latino ethnicity and U.S. nationalism, as they create a commercially viable Hispanic audience product. Aggregate numbers, such as Hispanic population growth figures, interpreted by nativists as threatening ("the tidal wave of immigration ..."), have been reconfigured by market researchers into increases into Hispanic "buying power."

A primary (but not exclusive) goal of media marketers is to maximize the size of the audience, to create a critical mass of audience numbers. The "mass" audience for U.S. Hispanic media is made up of those people who are thought to reside in a monolingual Spanish speaking world--whether it be in the *barrios* of the United States, in Latin America, or in the fluid transnational world of recent Latin American immigrants to the United States. Sociologists and historians have long argued that language is the primary emblem of ethnicity (Fishman 1972, 1989; Edwards 1975). In the case of U.S. Hispanic ethnicity, the Spanish language reinforces Hispanic racial ideology and Hispanic media's "foreign" characteristics. In marketing terms, the Spanish language is the most definable, concrete characteristic of a broadly conceptualized Hispanic mass audience. This "mass" audience categorization signifies, as will be developed below, a quality of Hispanic, as well as quantity (Williams 1983, 192-197).

Nielsen Media Research is the most influential U.S. audience research firm. It produces audiences as it measures them. By measuring and so numerically defining an audience, the "ratings" create 'audience,' an entity which can be sold, one that guides content production. After Hallmark Cards bought the Spanish International Network (S.I.N.) and renamed it *Univisión* in 1986, recreating the Hispanic audience so as to increase its market value became the first order of business. In 1992 *Univisión* and *Telemundo* (the second largest U.S. Spanish language television network) paid twenty million dollars to the Nielsen company to develop new Hispanic audience measurement techniques. Standard Nielsen measurement procedures were altered in the Hispanic Nielsen Pilot Survey performed in Los Angeles (*Univisión's* largest market) in the spring of 1990: the Nielsen company did its own census of Hispanic residences; bilingual enumerators were sent to homes to explain the importance of the Nielsen ratings; and the number of buttons on the Hispanic peoplemeter was doubled. The new method of counting Hispanics produced a significantly larger Hispanic audience than the standard Nielsen methodology. Nationally, the new Nielsen methodology counted forty per cent more Hispanic television viewers than the previous methodology.

Hispanic television marketers were predictably exultant, celebrating the new Nielsen ratings as a populist affirmation that the Hispanic audience is an audience, like any other. The new Nielsen numbers have not however, translated directly to new advertising billing numbers for U.S. Spanish language television, or for that matter, the targeting of this audience segment by the English language networks. While billings have increased significantly in the last several years for Latino oriented media generally, and Spanish language television in particular, the Hispanic market remains on the margins of the U.S. media sphere. Spanish language television advertising rates are roughly half those of English language television. The new Nielsen ratings, *Univisión* and *Telemundo* executives hoped, would displace other defining numbers and, to a limited extent, they have. However, and perhaps decisively from a marketing perspective, Hispanics, according to the Census Bureau, the government's authoritative source of demographic statistics, are the poorest of the nation's poor.

The Hispanic Nielsen Television Index, or N.H.T.I (a supplement to the studies discussed above) reveals a linguistically complicated, and so potentially less marketable, portrait of U.S. Latinos. A major finding of the 1995-6 N.H.T.I. is, as the headline in *Univisión* promotional materials proclaimed: "87 Percent of

Hispanics Speak Spanish at Home." A careful consideration of the data reveal that a more than a third (36%) of this 87 percent is made up of Hispanics who "mostly" speak English, and who are self-designated "bilingual." For example, this author, who very occasionally speaks Spanish with students and colleagues from her home office (by telephone and electronic mail), and who speaks Spanish on the telephone monthly with her grandmother, would be counted as "English mostly" or "bilingual," and thus a Hispanic who speaks Spanish at home. Most sociolinguistic studies would label me "English dominant." These data show that 49 percent, less than half of U.S. Hispanics, speak Spanish "only," or "mostly" at home, and so would be most likely to watch Spanish language television. Other *Univisión* commissioned data reinforce the notion that the Hispanic market can no longer be defined as linguistically unitary, e.g. just 31 percent of Hispanic households watch Spanish language television. These data also show that 69 percent or, more than two thirds of Hispanic households, watch only English language television.

The flagship of the *Univisión* network, its Los Angeles station, KMEX-TV, Channel 23, illustrates the possibilities and the limitations of the new Nielsen method for counting Hispanics.⁸ Since the winter of 1995, KMEX-TV (one of the first two U.S. Spanish language television stations, founded in 1961), has won the Los Angeles Nielsen ratings race. According to Nielsen Media Research, more people in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (more 'total eyeballs,' as the marketers say) were watching *Cristina*, an *Univisión* talk show, and *Primer Impacto*, (First Impact) *Univisión*'s "tabloid" news program, than were watching Oprah" or "Hard Copy." Similarly, the Nielsen ratings show that *Noticias 34*" (Spanish language local news) and *Noticiero Univisión*" (*Univisión*'s national newscast) had larger audiences than KABC's "Eyewitness News" or ABC's "World News Tonight with Peter Jennings" or the news programs of the other networks *Univisión telenovelas* (soap operas) like *Dos Mujeres, Un Camino*, (Two Women, One Road) had a larger audience than *Seinfeld*." And, crucially, KMEX has won the ratings race in the 18-49 demographic group, the one most valued by advertisers.

Clearly, this is evidence of the high degree of audience fragmentation in the Los Angeles television market. It is also demonstrable proof of the significance of the new Hispanic Nielsen audience measurement techniques. However, KMEX's ratings supremacy is also evidence of the limited power of "ratings:" KMEX is number one in the ratings in Los Angeles, but sixth in billings, or advertising revenue.

Born Again Hispanic Programming

At the same time the Hispanic audience was being created and recreated as a commercially viable product by marketers, and audience researchers, Hispanic oriented media content producers were also transforming the Hispanic audience. The largest of these efforts--in terms of audience size, capitalization and revenue--are the two principal U.S. Spanish language television networks *Univisión* and *Telemundo*.⁹ While not completely rejecting the profile of the Hispanic viewer as a monolingual Spanish speaker and a relative newcomer to the United States, the television networks took the lead in the production of what *Univisión* (under Hallmark ownership) CEO Joaquin Blaya called "born again Hispanics."¹⁰ The principal tool in this effort is the production of Spanish language television in the United States. Before 1988 about 6 percent of *Univisión* programming was produced in the United States, mostly news and public affairs programming; the balance was produced by *Televisa* in Mexico. After the sale of S.I.N. to Hallmark, about half of *Univisión* and *Telemundo* programming is U.S.-produced, a programming ratio that has remained constant.

The production of the contemporary Hispanic audience, as discussed in the first part of this essay, is a multidimensional process involving many facets of contemporary culture industries: marketers, audience researchers, advertisers---and programmers. The reconfiguring of the Nielsen company audience measurement methodology, in and of itself, would not have resulted in increased ratings for U.S. Spanish language television.

The core, the "mass," audience of U.S. Spanish language television has been historically, and remains today, recent Latin American immigrants. Hispanics who have been in the United States longer, in contrast, tend to be bilingual, speak both English and Spanish (or only English), have higher incomes, more disposable income and, are consequently a more attractive audience to sell in the marketplace. *Univisión* president Joaquin Blaya called these viewers "born again Hispanics" (Mydans 1989). These are bilingual people who have been using more English language than Spanish language media but for a variety of reasons (affirmative action, racism,

family concerns) have recently renewed their feelings of ethnoracial solidarity and, in the process, discovered *Univisión*. Increased domestic programming (and consequently, less programming imported from Latin America) was the centerpiece of Blaya's strategy of increasing the number of "born again Hispanics" in the *Univisión* audience.

However, Blaya, a Chilean native, was not exclusively focused on the U.S. audience. He simultaneously wanted to produce a panhemispheric audience in Latin America for U.S. produced Spanish language television programming. Reproductions of proven U.S. television standards premiered in the 1990 television season. *Cita con el Amor* ("Date with Love") was modeled on the 1970's hit, "The Dating Game." *Desde Hollywood* ("From Hollywood") was formatted like the general market standard "Entertainment Tonight." *Fama y Fortuna* ("Fame and Fortune") recalled "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." The late-night *El Show de Paul Rodríguez* ("The Paul Rodriguez Show"), starring the Mexican American stand up comic, attempted to recreate the "Johnny Carson Show" and, *Cristina* featured a Cuban American in the role pioneered by Oprah Winfrey. Similarly, *Telemundo's Sevec* and *El y Ella* employ standard formats, yet are distinctly Latino talk shows. For instance, each of these has devoted programming to issues concerning contemporary Latino Catholicism. *Telemundo*, under Sony-Liberty ownership, is expected to produce Spanish language versions of "Jeopardy" and "Mad About You" and has pledged to increase its production of programming by and for U.S. Hispanics. Also in the late 1990's, *Univisión* is scheduled to introduce a Spanish language Home Shopping Network channel--all programs that will be shown in the U.S. and exported to Latin America.

The same market research that prompted *Univisión* and *Telemundo* executives to target "born again Hispanics," stressed that middle class U.S. Hispanics like to watch the news. In addition to national and local news programming at the network owned and major market stations, both *Telemundo* and *Univisión* produce daily "tabloid tv," programs that feature "human interest" and other dramatic stories. *Occurió Así* and *Primer Impacto* are widely distributed in Latin America and, the U.S. The news departments produce two 30 minute daily editions of their national news, one for late afternoon broadcast, one for the evening (10:30pm in the Eastern time zone), as well as weekly public affairs talk shows which air Sundays. Most U.S. Spanish language television stations carry 2-3 hours of U.S. produced news programming daily. This is a significant investment in news programming--5 times the amount *Televisa* allocated to U.S. news production, and an indication of these networks determination to recreate the Hispanic audience and, Latino oriented journalism.

NATIONHOOD, NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY IN THE MAKING OF U.S. LATINO NEWS

Consonant with the production of a panethnic, language centered Hispanic audience by marketers, Latino oriented journalists construct a unitary Hispanic audience in their journalistic productions. Latino oriented journalists--in English, Spanish and bilingually--displace the "melting pot" metaphor of U.S. nationhood, asserting instead that U.S. residents of Latin American descent have needs and interests that are distinct from that of the general market news audience--and that it is their professional responsibility as journalists to address those particular concerns.

Yet, Latino news is nationalist--U.S. nationalist. Latino news demands and celebrates inclusiveness, the inclusion of Latinos in U.S. society. This journalistic nationalism is centrally constrained, as it is enhanced, by Latino ethnicity. The reproduction of Latino national identity is challenged by symbolic and material ties to other nations, Latin American nations. While these ties sometimes divide Latinos amongst themselves, the evocation of a collective Latin American heritage also unifies Latinos and, provides a link to a founding myth of the U.S. as 'a nation of immigrants.'

The concept of nationalism implies commonality, shared values, loyalty to shared ideals or, as Benedict Anderson has framed it, as an "an imagined political community ... the nation is always conceived of as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1983, 15-16). U.S. journalistic nationalism, in the case of news produced for Latinos is, at its core, paradoxical. The lessening of ties to Latin American nations would seem a necessary first step in the creation or promotion of U.S. nationalism. However in this case, the maintenance of Latin American heritage is key to preserving Latinoethnoracial identity within U.S. culture.

Nationalism, the construction of a national collectivity, has boundaries, boundaries which include "us"

and exclude "them." "The exclusionary/inclusionary dialectic is necessary to all collective identities' cultural defence" (Schlesinger 1991, 301). This can be seen clearly in public opinion polls taken by Spanish language journalists. Typically listed are three mutually exclusive national/ethnic respondent categories: "*Afro Americanos*," "*Anglo Saxones*," and "*Hispanos*" (African Americans, Anglo-Saxons, Hispanics). The presumptive audience of Latino journalism does not want to be excluded from the national culture. It does however, want to maintain boundaries **within** U.S. national culture.

This section examines the interplay of U.S. nationalism and Latino ethnicity in the production of news by Latino oriented journalists. The principal focus is the two nationally distributed Latino television news programs, the *Noticiero Univisión* and the U.S. edition of CBS *Telenoticias*, which together nightly have an audience of about 2 million Hispanic households, by far the largest audience for Latino news.¹² The discussion below privileges the *Noticiero Univisión*, which commands about eighty five percent of the national Spanish language television audience (Nieken Hispanic Television Index (NHTI), February, 1998).

Latino Journalistic Panethnicity

U.S. Latino journalists are deeply embedded in the national journalistic culture and the broader national U.S. culture (Schudson 1995, 1-36; Carey 1986). However, in contrast to many national journalists who have only a "vague image" of their audience (Gans 1979, 230), U.S. Latino journalists have detailed conceptualizations of their audience. The journalists' presumptive audience is a culturally distinct, often oppressed and exploited people. Latino journalists have also experienced racism and injustice, both personally and professionally. The journalists' conceptualization of and identification with their audience is the central force shaping the production of U.S. Latino news.

The celebration of unity in diversity that is implicit in the commercial construction of Hispanic U.S.A. is relatively simple to reproduce in advertising. News, in contrast, is about politics, and politics is at the heart of intra-ethnic tensions. Consequently, Latino news emphasizes commonalities amongst Latinos, recreating the ethnic group as a community of shared interests. A key challenge for Latino journalists is how to address this notion of their audience as one community, while simultaneously respecting differences within the ethnic group. Latino panethnicity is implicit when *Univisión* and *Telemundo* journalists produce stories about the Puerto Rican community in the Bronx for national broadcast; the presumption is that Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles and Cuban-Americans in Miami will also be interested in a story about their fellow Hispanics.

The primary characteristic of "*Hispanos*" as an imagined audience is that they understand the Spanish language. Moreover, the journalists' presumption is that the audience's interests are **represented** by the Spanish language. This is an understanding of language that expands upon the fundamental social function of language as a communicative tool. It is a conceptualization of language as a symbol system that embodies essential characteristics of the ethnic group (Edwards 1975, 17; Fishman 1989, 32). From the journalists' point of view, the audience's demonstrated preference for the Spanish language defines them as a language community and therefore, a community of interest (Anderson 1986, 29). One of the constitutive beliefs of the journalists is that their imagined audience is more interested in news of Latin America than say of Europe, and of other Latino communities than of say, that of African-American or European-American communities.

The journalists are well aware that national origin and class differences, as well as differences in U.S. immigration histories, can override the unifying power of language in shaping Hispanic self-identification. They recognize that differing political ideologies are at the root of most Latino intra-ethnic tensions and are not easily disguised. Recurring controversies concerning intra-ethnic tensions playing themselves out on the Latino journalistic terrain have made the journalists exceedingly aware of the precariousness of their panethnic project. Many of these stem from the fact that while all national origin Latino groups are represented in the national newsrooms, and amongst U.S. based correspondents, Cuban Americans are over represented (relative to their proportion of the Latino population) in management positions in both networks and, in their respective national news departments.¹³ Simmering intra-ethnic tensions have periodically erupted in national Latino journalism, reminding all concerned of the fragility of the panethnic journalistic project.

These incidents have brought into relief decades old suspicions and resentments amongst Mexican-

Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cuban-Americans which turn on political differences of government ideology (e.g. Mexico has traditionally supported Fidel Castro, who most Cuban Americans vilify), as well as racial, class and U.S. immigration history differences. Considered more broadly in the context of Latino politics, these incidents illustrate that for Latino community leaders, media are a salient political issue.

The response of nationally distributed Latino oriented journalists to intra ethnic animosity has been to offer their work as a as a bridge that spans--but does not deny--the material and political differences that characterize the audience. Both *Univisión* and *Telemundo* journalists self-consciously try to be what they call national origin "balanced." The stories from the New York Bureaus tend to feature news of particular interest to that city's largely Puerto Rican and Dominican population, those from the southwest bureaus, news of Mexican Americans, etc. Care is taken not to overload the Miami based newscasts with Cuban-American news. A content analysis of the *Noticiero Univisión* shows that the national origin of Latino soundbites (or news actors) roughly approximates the national population distribution which, according to Nielsen audience research, roughly fits the networks' audience profile).¹⁴

In a more diffuse way, the journalists, whose offices are in the same building with the networks' sales and promotion staffs, are constantly reminded, by posters and videos in the lobbies, by marketing staffers dropping into the newsroom, and by promotional spots that they participate in, that the U.S. Spanish language television networks, their employers, are predicated on the notion of a national panethnic Hispanic market.

Latino Objectivity

The practice of objectivity is what makes the Latino oriented journalist U.S. journalists. Journalistic objectivity in the context of Latino news is an expression of professional nationalism. Objectivity is the dominant ideology and practice of U.S. journalism, what Hallin (1986) has called "conservative reformism." The production of the *Noticiero Univisión* and *CBS-Telenoticias* are highly routinized, professionally self-protective processes (Tuchman 1972); the result of mutually beneficial elite interactions (Sigal 1973) that create a nightly capsules of global reality. Objectivity is the nexus of the cultural and ideological commonality that Latino journalism shares with general market journalism. Journalistic objectivity confers credibility on these ethnic minority journalists; objectivity legitimizes journalists' "expert" positioning relative to the audience (Gans, 1979) and, their general market journalism peers. Closely related to this authoritative dimension of objectivity is its function as a marketing tool (Schiller, 1981). For Latino journalists, objectivity has special salience. Many national *Univisión* and *Telenoticias* journalists were once employees of *Televisa*, the monopolistic Mexican entertainment conglomerate that is commonly referred to as the Ministry of Culture of the Mexican ruling party, known by its Spanish language acronym, the P.R.I. For these journalists, as well as those who were are from other authoritarian Latin American regimes (e.g. Cuba, Argentina), U.S. journalistic objectivity is a professional and political declaration of freedom from government control.

According to many (both national and locally distributed) Latino journalists, objectivity, and its opposite, advocacy, are a topic of daily discussion in Latino newsrooms. The question is often framed as, "Do we give the audience what they want or what they need?" Gustavo Pompa Mayo, one the founders of *Telenoticias*, declared in an interview that all Latino oriented journalists, that is, those that make news specifically for Latinos, are "by definition" advocates for the Latino communities. Alina Falcón, executive producer of the *Noticiero Univisión*, addressed the question of Latino objectivity and advocacy this way:

This is going to sound corny: we almost have a special responsibility to our community. Perhaps more so than the English [language] stations. They [our audience] rely on us not only for information but for assistance in every day living ... We do focus more obviously on the viewpoint of the Spanish [language] community issues because that's who we are. I don't think individual journalists should be advocates ... Perhaps the news organization, or the newscast in general, because it is geared and focuses on the Hispanic audience, will focus more on Hispanic issues. And if that means we become advocates for the Hispanic community, then so be it ...

Falcón concluded this train of thought with these words,

If they [U.S. English language network news] choose only to cover the Hispanic community when negative issues come up, which is pretty much true, are they being objective?

This is not, however, a rejection of traditional journalistic objectivity. Rather, Latino journalism absorbs the objectivity ideal into a public service orientation, as will be further developed later in this essay.

Language

The Spanish language is the broadest symbol system employed by *Univisión* and *CBS-Telenoticias* in the production of their two newscasts. The *Noticiero Univisión* and the U.S. edition of *CBS-Telenoticias* legitimize the Spanish language as a language of U.S. political discourse and thus, Spanish speakers as legitimated U.S. political actors. At the same time, the Spanish language in these newscasts is a declaration of Latino ethnic identity. As *Noticiero* executive producer PatsyLorris Soto says, "We are committed not only to maintaining the Spanish language, but to improving it, and teaching it."⁶⁵ The journalists avoid "Spanglish," or the mixing of English and Spanish in a sentence. More frequent is the sequential use of English and Spanish in common phrases, i.e. "cash, *efectivo*," "Planned Parenthood *oplanificación familiar*." At large public events (e.g. political demonstrations), field producers carry placards that read *Habla Español?* ("Do you speak Spanish?") as a way of identifying Spanish speakers for "person in the street," interviews. When traveling abroad, producers carry similar signs, such as *Spanski?* in Russian, resulting in the surprising sight of Russian persons-on-the street speaking perfect Spanish on U.S. television news.

In the audiencemaking context of U.S. broadcast journalism, the Spanish language often has a counter-panethnic function; particular Spanish language accents and diction, while mutually intelligible, identify the speaker's particular national origin. The journalists are committed to using a Spanish language that will appeal to, and be understood by, all Hispanics. Panethnic Spanish is not only a question of vocabulary, but also of accent and intonation. *Telenoticias* and *Univisión* journalists speak "accentless" Spanish, a product of their interaction with Latinos of various national origin groups, and their professional training. For those who immigrated to the U.S. as adults, losing their national accents and replacing them with a nationality neutral accent was a conscious effort.

Formats

Luis Calle, former executive producer of the *Noticiero Univisión* and currently, executive producer of *CBS-Telenoticias*, stated very simply, in a matter-of-fact tone of voice that "American network" (ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN) news are the "best in the world." The presentation norms of the *Noticiero Univisión* and *CBS-Telenoticias* are emblematic of this fully acknowledged mimicry. Or, as Armando Guzmán, Washington, D.C. correspondent for the *Noticiero*, and one of the original correspondents of S.I.N.'s 1981 *Noticiero Nacional*, recalls, "In the beginning, when we chose the same [sound]bites as CBS, we knew we were on the right track."

These Spanish language journalists do not question the audiovisual presentation conventions of U.S. television news; they instead credit these production routines for bringing dramatic unity to the plot and narrative of news stories (Carey 1986, 148). Rapid, narrative pacing--both within stories, and within the nightly news program--are, in the journalists' eyes, what makes for compelling television. The *Noticiero Univisión* and *CBS-Telenoticias* are, without the soundtrack, indistinguishable from a general market news programming: from the traditional attractiveness of the anchors, to the shots of Washington correspondents signing off in front of iconic buildings, to the "quick cut" pace of the editing, and the framing of "head shots," the *Noticiero Univisión* and *CBS-Telenoticias* look like U.S. news programs which, after all, they are. A comparative content analysis of the *Noticiero Univisión* with ABC's *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings* (Rodriguez 1993, 1996) shows how the narrative structure of the reports on the two networks is identical.

There are equally significant content similarities between the two programs that illustrate the fundamental professional commonalities of the *Noticiero Univisión* and ABC's nightly national news program. For both newscasts the largest single U.S. subcategory is stories produced in the networks' Washington, D.C.

bureaus. For both networks, these are their largest bureaus, reflections of the nation's capital-centered political culture, headquarters of the legislative, judicial and executive branches of the federal government. The privileging of government officials as news actors within the *Noticiero Univisión* is one indication of the political orientation of the program; despite cultural differences *Univisión* is a participant in the "nationalization of newsroom culture," where national news organizations are in continual interaction (Schudson 1991, 271).

Story Selection

Despite the similarities outlined above--similarities in format, emphasis on government officials as newsmakers, and institutional news sources--there are significant, foundational differences between the Spanish language national news programs and their general market counterparts. Content analysis reveals the sharply contrasting contours of the story selection process of the *Noticiero Univisión* and ABC's *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*, showing with broad strokes their most obvious differences.¹⁶ The category "U.S." is the largest categorization of ABC stories. When this category is combined with "Washington, D.C.," the content analysis shows that despite its name, *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings* is nearly four fifths (79%) about the U.S. The same calculations for the *Noticiero Univisión* show that less than half (43%) of this U.S. national newscast is about the United States. The *Univisión* newscast contains slightly more news about Latin America than about the U.S. Turning to the "Latino" category, ABC devoted just over 1 percent of its airtime to coverage of Latino communities and issues (immigration affirmative action, etc.) while the *Noticiero* gave this category about 15 percent. (This understates the proportion of time the *Noticiero* devotes to Latino news, since Latinos are often featured in stories coded "U.S." in this content analysis.)

These story selection differences between *Univisión* and ABC turn on the differences between the social and economic status of the presumptive audiences of the Spanish language networks and the general market networks. Specific examples illustrate this difference. While both ABC and *Univisión* produced comparably framed (strategic, inside the Beltway stories) about Zoe Baird, President Clinton's failed nominee for Attorney General, *Univisión* produced extensive interviews with Baird's undocumented employees, and used the controversy as a "peg" for a series on Latino domestic labor. Similarly, when George Bush chose Jack Kemp to be his running mate in 1996, Latino journalists, like general market journalists, mentioned Kemp's relative youth, and his experience as a Cabinet Housing Secretary. Latino journalists however, also gave prominent play (in the first or second sentence) to the fact that Kemp had come out publicly against California's anti immigrant Proposition 187. In another example, the *Noticiero* and CBS-*Telenoticias* each night offer summaries of the day's Wall Street activity and, report on the day's dollar exchange rate for nine Latin American nations.

Univisión and CBS-*Telenoticias* coverage of Latin America and Latino communities discursively reproduces Latino ethnicity, highlighting the social ambivalence of this ethnic minority group who are marginalized participants in two worlds. Moreover, the construction of these stories--topics not generally included in general market national newscasts--illustrates how Latino national journalism is a special case of the dominant U.S. professional journalistic ideology. The unifying themes of these defining aspects of Latino journalism is their symbolic reproduction of the inclusion of Latino communities, and issues of presumed interest to them, in U.S. society.

Latino News

Unlike U.S. news, there is no professional journalistic consensus about what national Latino news is; there is no wire service "day book," listing the day's most important national news events. To the extent that this question has been addressed by general market national journalists, the consensus is, apparently, news about Latinos is not national news.¹⁷ Latino national journalists reject this exclusion and adapt--but do not fundamentally alter--general market routines and conventions for Latino oriented news. The journalists' recognition of the social marginalization of their audience informs the alternative vantage point from which Latino news is made.

These stories tend to be more nuanced and thoughtful, less cut and dry than other U.S. reporting.¹⁸ The social status of the Latinos who populate these stories is markedly different than that of the general U.S. news population; U.S. Latinos tend not to be "newsmakers." An analysis of the content of the *Noticiero*'s U.S. Latino

stories groups them into two broad categories. In the first, Latinos illustrate traditionally conceived U.S. news stories, such as those about the national economy, public school education, or new discoveries in the health sciences. The second group of stories, principally concerning Latin American immigration to the U.S. and Latino civil rights, are rarely included on the mainstream national news agenda.

The first, most frequently produced type of *Univisión* and *CBS/Telenoticias* Latino stories use Latinos and Latino communities to illustrate an otherwise traditionally conceived story. For example, instead of interviewing European-Americans in suburban Chicago about a federal study on the increasing incidence of measles, as ABC did, the *Noticiero Univisión* sent a correspondent to a Latino neighborhood in San Francisco. This inclusive gesture draws U.S. residents of Latin American descent into the public sphere of U.S. civil society, in this case as a group which will be affected by government policies that have been developed in response to a potential measles epidemic. This particularizing of the news for the Latino audience does not alter the mainstream conceptualizations of newsworthiness that shape these stories.

The *Noticiero's* coverage of Latinos in the electoral arena of U.S. politics, as voters, candidates and elected officials, is a special case of the inclusive mode of *Univisión* U.S. Latino news. *Univisión* journalists are supporters of U.S. electoral processes. In this they are no different than their general market colleagues. However, the *Noticiero's* unblushing advocacy of the inclusion of Latinos in U.S. electoral politics sets it apart from its mainstream counterparts. Some examples: coverage of Latino candidates is unabashedly favorable; a recurring theme of this political coverage bemoans traditionally low Latino voter registration rates; the *Noticiero* demonized California Governor Pete Wilson for his advocacy of Proposition 187, which would have denied many government services to undocumented immigrants, in much the same manner as the English language networks (as well as *Univisión*) demonized Saddam Hussein.

Univisión's U.S. Latino electoral political coverage somewhat submerges the panethnic ideal. It explicitly recognizes the divergent political orientations of the three major national origin groups; to do otherwise would bring into doubt the journalists' credibility. For instance, consistently throughout the 1992 and 1996 presidential election season, the *Univisión* polling results showed significant differences among the three groups, with Clinton leading by wide margins among Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans, while the Republican candidate was leading somewhat smaller percentages among Cuban-Americans.

Where *Univisión* "Hispanic vote" coverage highlights the desirability of Latino participation in U.S. political processes and institutions, *Univisión* coverage of immigration issues focuses on the exploitation of Latinos by those same institutions and practices. In these stories, the journalists position themselves, in the nineteenth century progressive tradition, as populist muckrakers. These stories, while often critical of aspects of U.S. society, are not oppositional. They do not seek to change the structures or ideals that govern U.S. society. Rather, *Univisión* journalists' conservatively reformist aim to expose rule-breaking for the benefit of their audience.

A defining presumption of the construction of the national Latino panethnic news audience is that a heritage of immigration--second only to the Spanish language--is the basis of a profound sense of commonality among U.S. Latinos. As with the election coverage, while its clear where the journalists sympathies lie, both sides are represented in each story. A series of "special reports" that aired in October, 1992 (during "sweeps week") was entitled: "Scapegoats," but INS and other government officials were featured throughout.

The defense of the imagined audience is often fused with the journalists' service orientation; they feel it is their professional responsibility to assist their imagined audience. This is clearly seen in the national Latino journalists reporting on the legislation approved in 1996, officially named "The Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act," and "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act." After detailed coverage of the bills' passages through Congress, Latino journalists gave extensive coverage (often daily) to the bills' consequences in Latino communities throughout the country.

A final note on the production of nationally distributed Latino oriented news about the U.S.: while *Univisión* journalists' personal and professional experience prevents them from wholly embracing the "contemporary ideology of American racial openness,"¹⁰ their ethnocentrism and professional ideology constrain their challenge of it. This soundbite analysis shows a larger proportion of people of color overall on *Univisión*

than on ABC--35% of *Univisión* soundbites were of Latinos, as compared with less than 1% of ABC soundbites.²⁰ Yet, news actors who were African or Asian American are fifty percent less represented on *Univisión* than they are on ABC.²¹ In other words, the *Noticiero Univisión*, while modifying the white ethnocentrism of general market newscasts, is primarily shaped by its own ethnocentrism, and does not fully confront the racial myopia of the dominant society.

Latin America News

Like Latino news, news of Latin America is not a regular feature of the U.S. national television news. As with their coverage of Latino communities, *Univisión* journalists embrace traditional U.S. journalistic ideology in their Latin American reporting--with modifications. Nearly half, 45 percent, of each *Noticiero Univisión* is about Latin America, while just under two percent of ABC's *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings* is taken up with news of Latin America. This enormous disparity in story selection is the clearest direct evidence of the distinct world views of these two U.S. television networks. Further, 48 percent of the *Noticiero Univisión* lead stories, the story journalists consider to be the most important story of the day, are Latin America stories. The significance of these reports is their inclusion and prominence in U.S. newscast; they declare simply and unambiguously that in our world Latin America matters. The Latino oriented journalistic construction of that world, as the analysis below shows, is one in which Latino life in the U.S. is intertwined--symbolically and materially--with Latin America.

One startling clear example of this Latino oriented world view happened when Pope John Paul II visited Cuba in early 1998. All the general market U.S. television networks sent correspondents and crews, as well as anchors, to Cuba to cover the story, (as did *Univisión* and *CBS-Telenoticias*), a sign of the visit's journalistic importance. However, the U.S. general market networks sent their anchors back to the states when the Monica Lewinsky story broke. The U.S. Spanish language network anchors and special technical crews stayed in Cuba to produce extensive coverage of the Pope's Cuba visit (including live broadcasts of the Havana papal Mass). *Univisión* and the U.S. edition of *C.B.S. Telenoticias* also produced extensive coverage of the Lewinsky story.

For the journalists' imagined mass audience, the Latin American reporting offers news of their "*patria grande*," of the panamerican hemisphere. *Univisión's* coverage of Latin America constructs the intended audience as residents of a hemisphere, what the journalists call "*el continente americano*," the American continent. The commercial imperative of Latinopanethnicity has been broadened in the construction of panamericanism, the notion that the U.S. Hispanic market is one segment--albeit the wealthiest segment--of a hemispheric market that embraces Spanish speakers in North, Central and South America. The journalists assume that U.S. Latinos are interested in Latin American politics as well as the Latin American Olympic medal count, and the deaths of Latin American actors and artists. This journalistic cartography prompts the *Noticiero Univisión* to have bureaus in Mexico City, Lima, Bogotá, and El Salvador.²² In Latin American cities where it does not have correspondents, *Univisión* relies on *CNN en Español*, *Venevisión* or *Televisa*, with which it has contracts for correspondent reports and video feeds. *Univisión* does not have correspondents in London, Paris, Tokyo, Beijing or Moscow.

By committing almost half its air time to Latin American news, the journalists of the *Noticiero* and the U.S. edition of *CBS-Telenoticias*, many of them immigrants themselves, are acknowledging the duality of immigrant life, especially recent immigrant life. Immigrants are between two countries, of two countries and not fully present in either. Often times, this national duality is evidenced in the selection of the lead story for a given day's program: a single lead story is not selected two are; one from Latin America, one from the U.S. These stories are not motivated by a desire to cover news from "home." Of the 25 or so stories on each newscast, perhaps one or two will be about Mexico. While Mexico is the most represented of Latin America countries on the *Noticiero* (22 percent of Latin America stories), the news is largely about the politics of the federal government in Mexico City, which may or may not have bearing on an immigrant's life, or that of her family in Mexico.

The two other Latin American countries with large U.S. immigrant populations, Cuba and Puerto Rico, are the topic of relatively little news. Cuba makes up 3 percent of the *Noticiero's* Latin America coverage;

Cubans are about 10 percent of *Univisión's* news audience. This is attributable to logistical difficulties and to the Cuban-born news managers' efforts to refute critics' "Cubanization" charge. Occasionally, stories from *CNN En Español's* Havana Bureau are carried on the *Noticiero*. Puerto Ricans constitute about ten percent of the nation's Latino population; news about Puerto Rico is rarely a feature of U.S. Spanish language television news. Cubans in the US and Puerto Ricans in the US are however regularly featured.

There is not a sizable Peruvian community in the U.S.; relative to other Latin American immigrant groups, the Colombian community is small. Yet the second largest group of Latin American stories (after Mexico) is news of those two countries.²³ Here again, commercial and professional imperatives are mutually reinforcing: guerrilla insurgencies, illicit drug trafficking, and ongoing efforts to "democratize" these countries make for a steady supply of breaking and dramatic (and therefore presumably audience maximizing) news stories.²⁴

Moreover, *Univisión's* emphasis on Latin American news is part of its large panethnic, de-nationalizing project. The journalists believe that it is "natural," incontrovertible, that Latinos would be interested in news of "el continente americano," the American continent--that a Mexican immigrant would be almost as interested in news of El Salvador, as she would Mexican news. *Univisión* journalists believe the unifying force of this hemispheric identity is a bridge that blurs differences amongst the *Univisión* audience, thereby constructing a unitary "imagined community."

However, daily news production is not generally organized around regional issues, but rather news of particular Latin American countries, most often "breaking" political and economic news regarding national governments. These stories are considered news by *Univisión* journalists because they relate events that happened yesterday, today or tomorrow and because they involve high ranking and/or powerful government officials. By incorporating mainstream forms such as the temporal frame and deference to government authorities, *Noticiero* journalists are able to preserve their objective narrative stance while presenting news of what--in the U.S. context--are unconventional topics. These daily news routines are largely unacknowledged by the journalists; they are habitual, workaday response to the pressures of producing a daily news program. However, another key *Noticiero* Latin American news routine is highly self-conscious.

Seventy four percent of the *Noticiero's* Latin American news is about politics.²⁵ These political stories often inspire strong emotion among the *Noticiero* journalists, many of whom consider themselves to be political refugees. Cuban-born former *Univisión* news director Guillermo Martínez makes no secret of his disdain for Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Mexican-born co-anchor Jorge Ramos left his native country because he was censored by the Mexican ruling party, the P.R.I. Melding U.S. Latin panethnic and U.S. journalistic objectivity considerations, political news about Mexico is routinely edited by Cuban-Americans and news about Cuba is edited by Mexican Americans. As Martínez explains, "I don't have an axe to grind in Mexico, and they [Mexican and Mexican American *Univisión* journalists] don't have an axe to grind in Cuba."

Unlike general market journalism's coverage of international news, events in Latin America do not need a U.S. "angle" to qualify as *Univisión* news. Both U.S. Spanish language television networks do regularly produce stories that highlight the interconnections of the U.S. and Latin American societies. Examples include a report on how young Salvadorans deported from Los Angeles, back to El Salvador for gang related crimes, reestablish gangs in San Salvador. A recurring theme is the dependence of Latin American countries on money sent from the U.S. by immigrants to their Latin American families, and the threat to this monetary flow caused by accelerated deportations of unauthorized Latin American immigrants to the U.S.

Latino oriented nationally distributed news' coverage of Mexico is the clearest example of this Latino charting of the globe. Mexico is not invariably considered to be "foreign" to the United States. The *Univisión* Mexico City Bureau is one of the largest bureaus, having the same number of correspondents (two) as the Washington, D.C. bureau. Mexican politics and economics are a continuing feature of these newscasts. The *Noticiero* gave extensive, live coverage to the 1994 assassination of the P.R.I. presidential candidate Luis Colosio, as well as to the devaluation of the peso. *Univisión* and the U.S. edition of *Telenoticias* have special election night coverage of elections in the U.S.--and in Mexico.

Although consciousness of political cartography is heightened in the reporting on unauthorized

Mexican immigration to the United States, the arbitrariness of the U.S.-Mexico border is also highlighted in this coverage. In many feature and arts stories issues of nationhood are masked, seemingly irrelevant. A transnational comradeship is symbolically created and recreated each year when, to cite two examples, the *Noticiero* broadcasts consecutive stories about celebrations of Mexican independence day, and commemorations of *la Virgen de Guadalupe*, Mexico's patron saint, on **both** sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In its reporting on Latin America, the *Noticiero Univisión* creates a history, a collective memory for its imagined audience. Daily, news stories offer U.S. Latino immigrants a sense of where they came from. In the case of *Univisión* news, the reporting on Latin America constructs a shared past for its audience of Latino immigrants--who are the core "mass" audience for the network. However, as has been argued throughout this essay, the role of Latino news in the U.S. public sphere is more complicated than its economic function of helping legitimate the media enterprises. It also seeks to educate its imagined community and in so doing, disseminate a panethnic, Latino identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The making of Latino news is an example of cultural productions of transnational economic structures, and one of their principal products, transnational audiences. Professional and cultural imperatives integrate the commercial profit motive in the complexity of the journalistic production process. The result of this melding of the cultural and the economic is audience-centered journalism; the symbolic embrace of Latinos, communities often marginalized by the larger society.

Latino journalism legitimizes use of the Spanish language as a language of U.S. political discourse. Latino oriented journalists reflect a panethnic vision of their audiences back to itself: the self-conscious inclusion of Hispanics in U.S. civil society, and the extended coverage of Latin America, affirm both the ethnoracial minority group and, U.S. political processes. Latino newsmaking reproduces a social world, that of Latino communities in the U.S. and, a global mapping that includes Latin America, that is rarely seen in general market news. However, Latino oriented news does not seek an alteration of the precepts and foundations of U.S. journalism. Rather, it claims a space within U.S. journalistic ideology--a commercially viable space--to project a particular perspective on the contemporary social landscape. The defining inclusion of the Latino ethnoracial group in this newsmaking activates Latino oriented journalism's professional, cultural and commercial imperatives. The commercially and culturally unifying force of Latino panethnicity and, the journalists' fealty to objectivity, constrain the journalists' reproduction of Latino diversity.

Within this ethnocentrism, Latino journalism's service ethic, that is, the notion that part of the goal of Latino newsmaking is to assist and educate the audience (as well as entertain it), is central. Alberta Castañer, news director of the Chicago *Univisión* affiliate stated,

We serve the needs nobody else will, because they don't have to. It's as simple as that. We give them [the audience] information they can't get anywhere else.

Whether Spanish or English language, or both, Latino journalism is likely to endure, as long as Latino communities have identifiable needs and interests not being served by other media. Like African American news media, which also has a centuries old tradition, Latino oriented journalism will likely continue as long as Latinos are marginalized within U.S. society. *La Opinión* marketing director Manny González put it this way, "As long as civil rights and politics take center stage in our community, there will be a need for Hispanic media."

The shape of Latino newsmaking and Hispanic media generally will be, as in the past, be determined by political cultural dynamics, primarily Latin American immigration to the United States, and Latino adaptation and settlement patterns. It is clear at this writing that despite stepped up efforts by the U.S. federal government to curb immigration from south of the border, that Latin American immigrant streams have been re-routed (i.e. entry points have shifted eastward, away from the militarized Tijuana-San Diego border, for instance), but have not been significantly decreased. Indeed, the "structural embeddedness," the dependence of the U.S. economy on illegal Mexican immigrant labor, has been strengthened in the 1990's (Cornelius 1998a, b). Thus, the recent

immigrant, monolingual Spanish speaking audience seems likely to be continually renewed.

Additionally, the post war trend for Latin American immigrants to put down roots and settle in the United States is also continuing apace. Studies show that the children of recent immigrants, U.S. citizens by birth, are integrating into U.S. communities. The overwhelming majority are learning English, but in what one scholar has called a "post proposition 187 backlash," these young Latinos have a heightened sense of their separate Latino ethnic identity (Rumbaut 1997).

These cultural and political trends are but the broad framing of the future of Latino journalism. The perceptions of the general market and of the audience making Hispanic cultural industries, are key. The entry (and expansion) of such major communication firms as Sony, CBS, Time Warner, KnightRidder, Times Mirror, as well as the continued presence of Latin American media companies in the Hispanic media market are a sign of confidence in its future. The Hispanic audience, the bedrock of Latino journalism, has a niche in the U.S. media market, as well as the pan hemispheric Latin American media market. Its central attribute, a conflation of Hispanic racialization and Spanish language use, have made this commercial and cultural construction distinct, and so efficiently targetable.

These same attributes, and the undesirable (from the marketing and advertising points of view) socioeconomic and political status they represent, promise that the Hispanic audience, and so U.S. Latino oriented media will remain marginal, relative to the general market. Put another way, in order for Latino newsmaking to survive, its audience profile needs to remain "different," apart from the general market. That, in turn, ensures that Latino media will not become "just another media," as many of its proponents would like. The central challenge of Latino media is likely to continue: to preserve a Latino ethnic identity and world view, while at the same time embracing the defining values of the majority society and, its media market.

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1. An excellent summary of is a report by the National Council of *La Raza*, a Washington, DC based Latino advocacy group, "Out of the Picture: Hispanics in the Media" (1994). See also: "Network Brownout," paper presented to the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (June 1998) Erickesen (1981); Kever, Martindale, and Weston (1997); Ramirez Berg (1990); Faber O'Guinn and Meyer (1987); Gerbner (1993), Greenberg and Brand (1994) Lichter and Lichter (1988); Lichter, Lichter and Rothman (1991); Morales (1996); Subervi-Velez (1994).
 2. For a summary of the demographic research on unauthorized Latin American immigration to the United States see Bean and Tienda (1987, 117-121).
 3. Portions of this section have been previously published as "Commercial Ethnicity: Language, Class and Race in the Marketing of the Hispanic Audience," *Communication Review*, Vol. 2(3), pp. 283-309, December, 1997.
 4. This chapter does not examine the production of the Hispanic audience in general market media, first because such representation are sparse, and second, because this is a topic deserving of its own research (see for example Turow 1997).
 5. Bureau of the Census, 1993, pg. 18.
 6. For discussion of the development of U.S. Latino panethnicity see de la Garza (1992), Hart-Gonzalez (1985), Lopez and Espiritu (1990), Melville (1988), Nelson and Tienda (1987), Padilla (1985), Portes and Truelove (1985), Sommers (1991). For a discussion of the role of panethnicity in the production of the *Noticiero Univisión* see Rodriguez (1996).
 7. "The Use of the Spanish Language in the United States, Executive Summary" DRI/McGraw-Hill, Lexington, MA, 1993.
 8. WLEW-TV, Channel 23, *Univisión's* Miami owned and operated station shares in many of *KMEX's* successes as well as its market constraints.
 9. Another U.S. Spanish language television network *Galavisión*, (owned by *Univisión*), is distributed exclusively on cable. It features entertainment, sports and *Televisa's* ECO news service. Regional U.S. Spanish language television cable networks include Prime Ticket *en Español*, HBO *en Español*, and MTV *Latino*.
 10. After stints as CEO of both *Univisión* and *Telemundo*, Joaquin Blaya left U.S. Spanish language television for U.S. Spanish language radio in 1997. He founded *Radio Unica*, a 24 hour network, which will try to recreate the Hispanic radio audience, traditionally segmented by national origin musical styles, into a panethnic, 'born again Hispanic' audience with sports, news and talk programming.
 11. Parts of this chapter have been published as "Ethnicity and Objectivity in the Production of the *Noticiero Univisión*," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 1, March 1996, pp. 59-82.
 12. According to the February, 1998, Hispanic Nielsen Television Index, the *Noticiero Univisión* is watched

by 1.4 million Hispanic households; the U.S. edition of CBS *Telenoticias*, distributed on the *Telemundo* network, was seen by about 150,000 Hispanic households. About 25 million U.S. households watch the three English language network newscasts (ABC, CBS, NBC), according to the Nielsen research.

13. For example, the news directors of both the *Noticiero Univisión* and CBS-*Telenoticias* are Cuban-American.

14. About two thirds of the soundbites were of Mexicans or Mexican Americans, about ten percent of Cubans or Cuban Americans, and an equal amount of Puerto Ricans, with the remainder of other Latin American nations. The author acknowledges that these numbers are subjective, based on her ability to identify various national origin accents (Rodriguez 1993).

15. Interview conducted in Spanish, author's translation.

16. While these figures are based on a 1993 content analysis, the findings were confirmed by a similar 1997 content analysis.

17. The content analysis shows that for instance, ABC spend just over one percent (1.3%) of its time on news about U.S. Latinos or U.S. Latino communities. See also 1996 National Council of *La Raza* 1994.

18. Latino stories are longer than other *Noticiero* stories, a mean of 143 seconds compared to 26 seconds for other *Univisión* stories; they use roughly three times as many soundbites as other *Noticiero* stories; these soundbites are three times the average length of *Univisión* soundbites generally.

19. ". . . [a]n open class structure, racial tolerance, economic mobility, the sanctity of individualism and the availability of the American dream." (Gray 1989, 376),

20. The racial categorization "Latino" is problematic. U.S. Latinos are multiracial; of African, Native, Caucasian or mixed race heritage. See C. Rodriguez, 1989.

21. Five percent of *Univisión* soundbites were of African-Americans, while ten percent of ABC's were. Similarly, one percent *Univisión*'s soundbites were of Asian-Americans, while ABC had two percent Asian-American soundbites.

22. In 1992, when *Univisión* ownership changed to a consortium led by Jerold Perenchino, *Televisa*, and *Venevisión*, *Noticiero* news bureaus in Brazil, Argentina and Chile were closed. At the same time, field producers in the network's domestic bureaus were laid off, and the network's weekly newsmagazine program *Portada* was canceled.

23. Peruvian and Colombian stories were both 12 percent of the total number.

24. 6 percent of the *Noticiero* is about Chile, 4 percent is about Argentina, 3 percent about Brazil. There are not sizeable immigrant communities from these countries in the U.S.. There were however *Univisión* news bureaus in these Latin American countries each providing twice weekly standard coverage of government and economic activities, as well as feature reports.

25. Specifically, 29 percent about economics, 23 percent about war (in which is included peace negotiations), 21 percent about government personnel reshuffles, 6 percent about human rights, 4 percent about elections and 2 percent about labor strikes.