Clockwise from top left:
Lector at a cigar factory in Ybor City, c.1920s, Ybor City, Tampa, Florida [University of South Florida Tampa Library]; Nameplates on the front pages of historic US Spanish-language newspapers, c.1808-1956 [University of Houston]; Rita Moreno in the film version of West Side Story, 1961 [International Cinema Review]; Desilu Studios, co-owned by Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball, c.1950s (Sony Pictures Entertainment Museum); WKAQ-TV studio, 1967, San Juan, Puerto Rico [University of Puerto Rico]
More Than 200 Years of Latino Media in the United States
Félix F. Gutiérrez

In Spring of 2006, millions of people marched in more than 100 demonstrations for humane immigration reform in metropolitan centers such as Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and New York City, and in heartland cities such as Des Moines, Iowa; Garden City, Kansas; and Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to huge turnouts, a notable aspect of the non-violent protests was that no single leader or organization was identified as leading them. No César Chávez, Martin Luther King Jr., or Mahatma Gandhi exhorted people to action or led marches that seemed to spring up spontaneously from late March into May 2006.

Caught off-guard by the massive demonstrations, major news organizations scrambled to report who had awakened what the Washington Post called “A Sleeping Latino Giant.” They quickly credited Latino media for the huge turnouts. “Spanish-Language Media Organized Protests,” The Associated Press reported after the first demonstrations in March. Most stories focused on Spanish-language radio. A Los Angeles Times article was headlined “How DJs Put 500,000 Marchers in Motion.”1 While radio personalities such as Eduardo Sotelo (El Piolín), heard mornings on Univision stations nationwide, were active in spreading advance word of the marches, where they would happen, and who should participate, they were not the only Latino media voices ahead of the marches. Spanish-language television networks Univision and Telemundo provided advance coverage and advice, as did Latino newspapers. The morning of Southern California’s first march, Los Angeles’ La Opinión newspaper front-page headline read “A Las Calles! (To the Streets!). The next day a half-page picture of the 500,000-strong marchers in front of City Hall ran over the headline “Mega-marcha.”

Many English-language news reports treated activism as something new to Latinos and their media. They had not covered the long planning for the marches or the deep record of Latino media advocacy on behalf of their communities. One that dug deeper was The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. An interview with two Latinos involved in media began by asking whether the marches represented a “new role for Spanish-language media or something that has been with us for a long time?”2 A Southern California interviewee responded that activism was not new to that region’s Latino media. In 1855 the first Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles, El Clamor Público (The Public Clamor), was a strong voice for equal rights following the United States takeover of California in 1848. Other examples cited included Los Angeles radio personality Pedro J. González’s vocal opposition to forced repatriations of Mexicans and their families in the 1930s Great Depression and La Opinion’s critical coverage of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Operation Wetback in the 1950s.3 Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, some Latino newspapers proclaimed “Defense of the Community” as their mission. The turnout of between 3.5 to 5 million persons for the marches, the roles of Latino media covering them, and general audience media playing catch-up to understand and report the story to predominately-Anglo audiences once again revealed a tension between Anglo media and Latino media that has existed for centuries.

Anglo media are English-language print, broadcast, and digital media directed at the
general mass audience of the U.S. In this group would fall most television stations and networks, general circulation daily newspapers, many magazines, and movies. They seek to attract viewers, readers, and listeners by offering news, programs, or movies with a broad appeal to people from different races, ages, sexes, income, and other demographic categories.

Although they reach multicultural, multiracial audiences, Anglo media have tended to view people of diverse cultures through eyes that see Anglo Americans as the norm and others as apart from the norm. This “us and others” media view has offered less accurate images, reporting, and coverage of people of color and the communities in which they live. This is especially apparent in Anglo media’s portrayal and coverage of Latinos.

**Latino media** are produced by, for, or about Latinos and their communities. Their success in drawing audiences and ultimately advertisers is built on having a close connection with the wide range of activities and issues of interest to Latinos in the U.S. They are more closely linked to their audiences and play important roles in explaining the U.S. to their readers, listeners, and viewers, while also covering news in Latin America. “In the mainstream media, almost the only time you see a minority is a crime or welfare story, something negative,” observed UCLA Professor David Hayes-Bautista in a 1994 American Society of Newspaper Editors’ report. “In the Spanish-language media, you also get the human interest, the arts and sports stories….Latinos are reduced to only one slice in the Anglo media, while in the Spanish media, a whole community is presented.”

The different media roles described by Hayes-Bautista have long been evident in the often-contrasting images, portrayals, and coverage of Latinos and Latin America presented by Anglo and Latino media. English-language Anglo media have tended to offer a narrow view of Latinos as they appear and might appeal to a predominantly-Anglo audience. Latino media in Spanish, English, or both languages have covered and reported a broader range of activities, issues, and perspectives for Latino audiences. Historically, Anglo media have offered an outsider’s view of parts of Latinos and their lives in the U.S. Latino media have provided a more complete picture of Latino lives that otherwise would have been ignored or misrepresented. Ultimately, Latino media also provide an archival record of Latinos and their lives in the U.S. This essay will first explore Anglo media coverage and portrayal of Latinos, then Latino media’s multiple roles over the centuries.

**Coverage of Latinos in Anglo Media**

Historically, the role of Anglo media in relation to Latinos has been to cover or portray Latinos to a largely Anglo audience through mass entertainment and news media with images, issues, and stories that will appeal to and attract that audience. It is a role with deep historical roots in American literature and entertainment media.

Greasy bandidos, fat mamacitas, romantic Latin lovers, lazy peons sleeping under sombreros, short-tempered Mexican spitfires, violent revolutionaries, faithful servants, gang members, and sexy señoritas with low-cut blouses and loose morals have long been staples of Latin images in fiction, films, and television. When seen on the screen or page, the stereotyped characters quickly trigger a picture in the heads of the audience of what the character is like and what role she or he will play as the plot unfolds. This typecasting has deep roots in popular literature and entertainment. Many of these stereotypes were popularized during the Industrial Revolution, when popular literature such as dime novels was published widely. The first movies quickly picked them up and repeated them ad infinitum. During the 20th century, Hollywood was slow in allowing a broad-
fter range of roles for Latinos. After Puerto Rican-born actress Rita Moreno won an Oscar for her role in the 1962 film West Side Story, she was offered only typecast film roles and did not make another movie for seven years. Instead, she built a career that made her the only Latino performer to win all four top show business awards: an Oscar, Tony, Emmy, and Grammy.

In the late 20th century, the growing Latino audience and advocacy by groups such as Nosotros and Justicia opened more opportunities for producers, writers, directors, and performers. On screen, there is a wider variety of roles for Latinas and Latinos. Many of the old stereotypes persist, however, with typecast characters in contemporary settings. Nearly as old as these stereotypical images are efforts by Latino media to advocate more authentic participation in film and broadcasting. As early as 1911, the newspaper La Crónica of Laredo, Texas campaigned against the stereotyping of Latinos and Native Americans cast as “villains and cowards” in the newly popular cowboy movies, noting that Mexicans “and other Latin races...are generally the only and most defamed in these sensational American movies.” La Crónica urged other Latino newspapers to join protests of theaters and filmmakers, noting Latino families often left theaters when they saw such portrayals that “in reality don’t fit us.”

By the late 1960s, Anglo media had become a target of Latinos long dissatisfied with the images in entertainment media. Also targeted were stereotypical advertising images, such as the Frito Bandito. These concerns gave rise to protests from Latin American governments, legal challenges to broadcasters, and efforts for inclusion focused on Anglo media and their advertisers. In addition to the stereotyping in literature, movies, broadcasting, and advertising, Anglo news media long resisted everyday coverage of Latino communities and often slanted stories to portray Latinos as strangers threatening Anglo society. Unlike the fictional images, these news reports were presented as facts and carried the authority of the news media organizations presenting them. Their roots go back to the nation’s earliest years, when expansionists driven by what became known as Manifest Destiny cast eyes on lands held by Spain and Mexico.

These accounts reinforced the commonly accepted narrative of national development by portraying the U.S. as a benevolent liberator called by destiny to lead the lands and the people on them to a more civilized and enlightened advancement. The people living in the Caribbean islands and Southern hemisphere, along with those inhabiting lands taken by the U.S. in wars of conquest, were reported as obstacles needing Yankees to lead them to a better life. “What has miserable, inefficient Mexico, with her superstition, her burlesque upon freedom, her actual tyranny by the few over the many—what has she to do with the great mission of peopling the new world with a noble race? Be that ours, to achieve that mission!” wrote future literary giant Walt Whitman in the Brooklyn Eagle shortly after the U.S. declared war on Mexico in 1846. A few years earlier Richard Henry Dana reported in his epic book Two Years Before the Mast that Mexicans in California were too lazy to develop their own lands and observed, “nothing but the character of the people prevents Monterey from becoming a great town.”
The years before the Spanish-American War of 1898 continued the journalistic spirit of Manifest Destiny. Detailed drawings, banner headlines, and one-sided news reports of Spain's colonial rule of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines ran in newspapers owned by media giants Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, as well as others. The U.S. was portrayed as the liberator of people oppressed by Spain.\(^1\) Hearst fabricated stories of Spanish atrocities in the Caribbean and before war was declared in 1898 sent a reporter to rescue the "fairy-like little Cuban maiden" Evangelina Cisneros from "the infamies of Spanish prison life" in Cuba.\(^11\) In an 1898 book *The Spaniard in History*, James C. Fernald observed, "the Spaniard...is not one to be trusted with the control of a weak or subject race. The sword which has been drawn in behalf of the oppressed of Cuba must not be sheathed till Spanish power has ceased to touch with its blight the Western World."\(^12\)

News images of Latinos as a weaker or less engaged people needing the help of Anglos to make progress continued through the 20th century at times when Latino activities were felt to be newsworthy. Coverage was sparse and, when it occurred, often focused on natural disasters, social turmoil, or political upheavals in Latin America or when Latinos in the U.S. and elsewhere were seen by the Anglo media as posing a challenge to the Anglo status quo, such as the influx of Cubans to South Florida in the late 1950s and early 1960s.\(^13\)

A survey of magazine articles on Mexicans in the U.S., published in the *Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature* from 1890 to 1970, revealed few stories and "the articles that were written often had a crisis or negative overtone...when Mexican labor or immigration impacted national policy or when Latinos were involved with civil strife."\(^14\) When Latinos were covered in Anglo news media during much of the 20th century, the editors, news directors, and reporters often used shorthand word symbols to trigger stereotypes of the Latinos seen as posing a threat, such as "Zoot Suiters" in the 1940s, "Wetbacks" in the 1950s, "Chicano Militants" in the 1960s, and "Illegal Aliens" in the 1970s and 1980s.\(^15\) The underlying message was the people so labeled posed such a threat that extraordinary measures were needed to confront them.

A database search of *New York Times* stories linking "Puerto Ricans" and "nationalists" between 1940 and 1970 revealed more than 400 combined uses of the labels, with the heaviest coverage coming in the early 1950s when nationalists threatened the U.S. government and interests. Puerto Ricans were included as one of five New York City groups "Beyond the Melting Pot" in Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer’s 1963 book of the same title. The book’s section on Puerto Ricans included Spanish-language media, but no mention of the Anglo media or how their coverage kept the city’s estimated 720,000 Puerto Ricans beyond society’s proverbial melting pot.\(^16\)

The absence of daily Latino news coverage and focus on problems, when covered in Anglo media, provided little understanding of Latinos to the general public. A 1967 *Atlantic* magazine article on Mexican Americans was headlined "A Minority Nobody Knows."\(^17\) When the national
news media of the era reported on the “minority nobody knows,” their stories sometimes revealed more of their own lack of knowledge or their Anglo preconceptions than the realities of the people they tried to cover. A 1967 *Time* magazine East story, describing predominately Latino East Los Angeles, reported “tawdry taco joints and rollicking cantinas,” “the reek of cheap wine,” “the fumes of frying tortillas,” and “the machine gun patter of slang Spanish.” Such outsider views did little to promote cross-cultural understanding, but reinforced the prejudices of many in their audience. Two years later *Los Angeles Times* reporter Rubén Salazar told a San Antonio conference on “Mass Media and Mexican Americans” that for newsrooms “the Mexican-American beat in the past was nonexistent.”

“Mexican Americans were something that vaguely were there but nothing which warranted comprehensive coverage—unless it concerned such, in my opinion, badly reported stories as the Pachuco race riots in Los Angeles in the early 1940s, or more recently, the Bracero program’s effect on Mexican Americans,” he said. Salazar, who wrote a widely-recognized series on Los Angeles’ Spanish-speaking community in 1963, said Anglo news media trying to cover late 1960s activism should move beyond familiar stereotypes to understand and tell complex stories. “The media, having ignored the Mexican Americans for so long, but now willing to report them, seem impatient about the complexities of the story,” he continued. “It’s as if the media, having finally discovered the Mexican American, is not amused that under that serape and sombrero is a complex Chicano instead of a potential Gringo.” One of few Latino journalists working for metropolitan newspapers in the 1950s and 1960s, Salazar was well qualified to predict problems news media would encounter if they did not make efforts to employ Latinos in their newsrooms. A 1971 survey of Texas daily newspapers revealed that Latinos made up only 3.2 percent of editorial workers in the papers surveyed, many of them in towns along the Mexican border.20

From the 1970s to the present, newspapers, and broadcast stations have made concerted efforts to recruit, employ, and promote more Latinos in the newsroom as part of overall diversity efforts, though significant gaps between population and employment continue. In 2012, when Latinos made up 16.7 percent of the nation’s population, the American Society of New Editors reported they comprised 4.07 percent of journalists on daily newspapers and the Radio Television Digital News Association reported they made up 7.3 percent of local television and 2.6 percent of radio news employees. Those employed have worked to increase their numbers and to provide more accurate and complete coverage of Latinos. In 1983, a team of 18 *Los Angeles Times* reporters and photographers directed by editors Frank Sotomayor and George Ramos earned the paper the Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Public Service for a 21-part series “Southern California’s Latino Community.” Latinos hired in efforts to advance newsroom diversity have earned Pulitzer Prizes and other national honors for their photography, reporting, and columns, including two Pulitzer Prizes by Cuban-born journalist Liz Balmaseda at *The Miami Herald.*

Even with the advances in employment and coverage, there are significant gaps in Anglo news coverage of Latinos. Aside from the Latino athletes, politicians, and entertainers who are covered as celebrities, stories featuring everyday activities associated with Latinos often fall into two broad categories. One category portrays Latinos as *problem people* who either cause problems for the Anglo society as gang members, drug dealers, illegal residents, or as beset by problems associated to being Latino as they try to learn English, support a family by doing hard work for low pay, or try to build a better life in a new land. The other category is *zoo stories* of Latinos on display color-
fully celebrating their cultures in Puerto Rican Independence Day celebrations, Miami’s Calle Ocho festival, or Cinco de Mayo fiestas. These news stories feature Latinos in folkloric costumes singing and dancing to the music of their homeland, and enjoying traditional foods. Judging from Anglo media news coverage, one would hardly know that the problem people are the same people who are singing, dancing, and happily celebrating Latino cultures in the *zoo stories*. Both types of stories deserve some news coverage, but so do many other underreported things Latinos are doing in the U.S. and beyond.

Latinos undoubtedly have a greater visibility and range of images in Anglo media today than in the era before concerted efforts to improve portrayals, coverage, and employment were launched in the 1960s. Major movies and television programs now feature Latino characters among the cast and some are built around Latino themes or stars. Latinos have anchored national network newscasts and edited major daily newspapers. Yet, despite these gains, recent decades have seen a continuation of less accurate images and news coverage as debates over immigration, drug dealing, youth gangs, bilingual education, and other issues connected to Latinos have dominated Anglo media and the public mind.

**Latino Media**

Latino media are print, broadcast, film, and digital media produced by, for, or about people in the Latino communities they are covering or portraying. Anglo media look through an outsider’s (Anglo) eyes at Latinos and their lives. Latino media look through an insider’s (Latino) eyes at Latinos and their lives. Both use the same print, broadcast, film, and digital technologies and journalistic techniques in covering a news event, writing a story, or making a movie. Latino media’s audience, viewpoint, and insights, however, often result in different and deeper coverage than Anglo media. They have a different view of Latinos and a different role in Latino communities than Anglo media.

The most visible difference between Anglo and Latino media is language. Anglo media use one language: English. Latino media can come in more than one language: Spanish, English, or bilingual formats using both Spanish and English. The switch in languages is only the first step in understanding complex differences between Anglo and Latino media and their different ways of reporting what is news to their audiences. For instance, when President Barack Obama announced in 2012 that he was signing an Executive Order extending certain rights to young people who were brought to the U.S. as children without full documentation, it made news across the country. Anglo media covered the story as an outsider, focusing on possible political motivations and ramifications, quoting those who were for or against the order, and interviewing some who were affected. Latino media covered those angles and focused on the impact of the decision on their audience. Spanish-language Univision television network news co-anchors María Elena Salinas and Jorge Ramos hosted a special report covering the Anglo media angles, but also telling viewers how the action could affect them. The special closed with screen displays of places where people could get more information. Anglo media told their audience how the action was seen and how it might affect others. Latino media told their audience how it was seen, how it could affect them, and how to use it.

These different approaches have long characterized the distinct roles of Anglo and Latino

---

*The local Spanish-language newspaper assumed an importance parallel to that of the Church and the mutualist society.*

*Nicolás Kanellos, *A Brief History of Hispanic Periodicals in the United States*
media and are close to the historical roles of Latino news media in the U.S. since 1808 and the first Spanish-language newspaper, New Orleans’ *El Misisipi*. These roles have paralleled developments as Latino popular media moved from 19th-century print into film, broadcast, and digital media.

Latino news media have played a variety of roles. For the most part, they have been operated as businesses or in association with political parties, religious groups, cultural organizations, and as voices for organizations. In addition, the owners and producers of media have often been more elite members of Latino communities committed to leading their audiences. Beyond sharing news and information that is both local and international, offering entertainment, and providing avenues for advertisers to reach consumers, Latino newspapers have served broader functions not always provided by Anglo media. Some described by University of California Santa Barbara Professor Luis Leal include “political and social activism; promotion of civic duties; the defense of the population against the abuse of the authorities and other organized groups; the sponsoring of national and religious holidays; the provision of an outlet for the public to express their ideas in the form of letters or to express their activity in the form of poems, short stories, essays, and an occasional serialized novels...Not less important has been the publication of community social news.”

Equally important as understanding the broader roles played by Latino news media is recognizing that their development draws on Latin American press traditions with much deeper roots than do their Anglo counterparts. The first printing press in America was brought by Spain to Mexico City in 1535, more than a century before the first press in the English colonies. It came into a hemisphere whose indigenous people had well-developed systems of record keeping and communication. By 1600, at least 174 books had been published in New Spain and another 60 books have been identified without dates or verification, all nearly 40 years before the English colonies first printing press. The Spanish translated symbols used in the Mexica (Aztec) Codex into Spanish and published bilingual books using European and indigenous languages. A 1571 *Vocabulario* (Dictionary) translated words from the language of the Mexica into Spanish.

The Mexico City press issued the first print journalism in America, an eight-page news booklet reporting a devastating earthquake and storm that destroyed Guatemala City in 1541. Called *hojas volantes* (flying pages), these irregularly issued news reports were printed during the early colonial period to announce government proclamations, the death and coronation of royalty, European wars, and natural disasters.

From these deep roots grew U.S. Latino media, which developed their own uses of the literary, political, artistic, and activist traditions of the Latin American press while acquainting their audience with the ways of the U.S. in the 19th and 20th centuries. One example was the use of leading literary figures as critics, columnists, and reporters in Latino newspapers, which offered readers both news and literature. In addition to serialized novels, poetry, and political tracts, some Latino newspaper owners also published and marketed books. In some newspapers, *cronistas* wrote humorous weekly columns using jokes, folk tales, and everyday language to comment on current events, much like popular personalities on Spanish-language radio today. Latino media built on their own traditions and are much more than Spanish-language translations of Anglo media.

Like the *cronistas*’ ties to current radio personalities, some Latino media features, such as reporting on news from Latin America, and covering local community activities, can be
found in Latino media across all times and regions. Other features focus on the unique time, place, and nationality in which the media and their audiences found themselves, such as newsletters issued by Cubans and newspapers published by Central Americans as both groups came to the U.S. following violence and political upheaval in their homelands.

One common theme across all Latino media is coverage of an active, engaged, and ambitious people looking to make a better life for themselves and others in the U.S., first in print and later other media. Recognizing the fullness of Latino experiences in the U.S., these media show Latinos as participants, not bystanders, in events that shaped the nation and their communities. Such representation and documentation is important in countering prevailing images of Latinos as passive, unambitious, and uncultured additions to the nation. The remainder of this essay identifies themes and discusses how Latino media has reflected views of Latinos not often seen in Anglo media.

One way to understand Latino media history is by identifying key issues covered in Latino newspapers since 1808, some of which continued as Latino media developed in all forms. The two-page layout headlined “Mas de Cuatrocientos Periódicos en Español Se Han Editado en los Estados Unidos” (More than Four Hundred Newspapers in Spanish Have Been Edited in the United States) followed efforts that included asking readers “Que Periódico En Español en EE.UU. Ha Conocido Ud.?” (What Newspaper In Spanish in the U.S.A Have You Known?).

The Continuing Stories of Latino Media
Over the years, a number of scholars have used Latino print and broadcast media as sources. These include historians citing Spanish-language newspapers in books and articles on many topics, regional histories of the Latino press, and scholars who have examined the roles played by the Latino media at critical times in history. Other examinations of Latino media as social, economic, and political institutions have been in studies of Latino newspapers, radio and television, and digital media. Interestingly enough, the first history of Latino media in the U.S. came not from scholars or historical preservationists, but the Latino press itself. To commemorate its 25th birthday in 1938, San Antonio’s La Prensa printed a list describing 451 Spanish-language periodicals published in the U.S. The two-page layout headlined “Mas de Cuatrocientos Periódicos en Español Se Han Editado en los Estados Unidos” (More than Four Hundred Newspapers in Spanish Have Been Edited in the United States) followed efforts that included asking readers “Que Periódico En Español en EE.UU. Ha Conocido Ud.?” (What Newspaper In Spanish in the U.S.A Have You Known?).

Freedom: In the United States and Beyond
The U.S. has often portrayed itself as a bastion of freedom, both for those in the country and for others around the world. This attitude was reflected in news coverage promoting the nation’s Manifest Destiny to expand its borders, the Spanish-American War in the 19th century, and U.S. military involvement in Latin America. Many Latinos have also seen the U.S. as a bastion of freedom, but with a different twist. Latinos coming to the U.S. during trouble in their home countries have long used U.S. First Amendment press freedom to establish voices for freedom for their own lands. This journalistic tradition began with the first Latino newspaper and continues today. El Misisipí, the first Latino newspaper in the U.S., was a strident voice opposing Napoleon’s takeover of Spain and claim on Latin America and the Caribbean. Founded in New Orleans in 1808 and named for the river that runs by the city, the four-page newspaper was primarily in Spanish, with some editorial copy and all of the advertising translated to English. Using the U.S. freedom of the press, the paper reprinted anti-Napoleon news from other newspapers and circulated far beyond New Orleans. Newspapers as far away as New York and London, reprinted El Misisipí’s outspoken opposition ad-
vocacy for freedom from Napoleon’s rule. “We do not think it worth while to publish the New Constitution of Spain, because it appears too ridiculous to hear scoundrels talking about equity, usurpers about justice, tyrants about clemency and liars about truth,” declared El Misi­sipí in an article reprinted in New York’s American Citizen on February 11, 1809. “We shall publish in lieu of the constitution, an account of the glorious battles which the patriots of Spain have fought and won, and should they continue to be successful….this celebrated constitution may be returned to the ‘pigeon hole’ from which it was probably taken, whilst regenerated Spain, with the religion and laws of her ancestors will again take her high rank among the independent nations of the world covered with fame and glory.”

The use of U.S. press freedom to launch newspapers calling for liberation from European rule over parts of Latin America continued throughout much of the 19th century, but for most of these the enemy was the Spanish crown. The newspapers were published in the U.S., but focused on readership in the homeland. Texas’ first newspaper, La Gaceta de Texas, was written and typeset in Spanish-ruled Texas in 1813, then printed in Louisiana. It lasted one edition, as did its successor, El Mexicano. After México and South America won freedom from Spanish rule, exile editors focused on the Caribbean. Félix Varela’s El Habanero, founded in Philadelphia in 1824, and José Martí’s Patria, founded in New York City in 1892, were among the editors and newspapers that advocated freedom of Cuba from Spanish rule. More recently, Cubans have established what has been called an “exile press” in the wake of a mass exodus from Cuba to the U.S. following the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

Not all editors seeking press freedom in the U.S. found it when they advocated freedom for their homelands. After repeated arrests and suppression of his newspaper in México, Ricardo Flores Magón brought his revolutionary newspaper, Regeneración, to San Antonio in 1904 and continued its outspoken voice until 1918, when he was arrested by U.S. authorities on charges of violating restrictive World War I press laws that also targeted the publications Cultura Obrera and Voluntad. He was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison and died in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in 1922, not having found in the U.S. the freedom of the press in the Bill of Rights. Later in the 20th century Puerto Rican nationalist Juan Antonio Corretjer worked on newspapers in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and New York, where he edited Pueblos Hispanos: Semanario Progresista in 1943-1944, one of several newspapers that have advocated Puerto Rican independence from the U.S. Corretjer was jailed in the U.S. for his political beliefs and journalistic advocacy in 1937 and 1947.

Other newspapers advocated voices for women. In Laredo, Texas, La Cronica’s Jovita Idar used the newspaper to organize women in the U.S. and Mexico with a 1911 call “A La Mujer Mexicana de Ambos Lados” (To the Mexican Woman on both Sides.) Other newspapers included the Magonista newspaper La Voz de la Mujer (The Voice of the Woman) in the early 1900s and women’s newspapers published during the fights for voting rights.

Equality: Strangers in Their Own Land
Every news story has more than one side and nowhere is this true more than in covering wars. After the U.S. declared war on México in
1846, both countries reported it from their own perspectives. In the U.S., efforts to build support for the unpopular war included a booklet with a cover trumpeting “Mexican Treacheries and Cruelties.” In México, a child-
ren’s book featured a color cover of U.S. troops shooting down a soldier defending the Mexican flag with the headline “Los Horrores de la Guerra” (The Horrors of the War).

After the war, the U.S. took lands stretching from Arkansas to California and as far north as Wyoming, along with the people on them. Although promised equality by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, people on the conquered lands soon found themselves in a nation that did not respect them or their rights. Building on the journalistic traditions established in Texas and New México before the invasion of the Yanquis, Latinos operated newspapers to serve their needs, sometimes in partnership with Anglo newspapers or political parties. In an era of sudden change, Latino newspapers often played a dual role: on one hand, reporting and explaining the ways of the Anglo newcomers to readers and on the other hand exposing Yanqui injustices while advocating the equality for people now treated as strangers in their own land.

In Los Angeles in 1855, Francisco Ramírez’ El Clamor Público both urged its readers to learn the language and laws of the U.S. and exposed the many injustices to which his readers were being subjected by the newcomers. The 17-year-old editor contrasted the ideals of equality expressed by the founding fathers of the U.S. with the abuses to which he and his readers were subjected. “The North Americans pretend to give us lessons in humanity and to bring to our people the doctrine of salvation so we can govern ourselves, to respect the laws and con-
serve order. Are these the ones who treat us worse than slaves?” he asked in a September 1855 article condemning lynchings. The next May he wrote, “California has fallen into the hands of the ambitious sons of North America, who will not stop until they have satisfied their passions, by driving the first occupants of the land out of the country, vilifying their religion, and disfiguring their customs.”

Not limiting his attention to Latinos, Ramírez also advocated equal rights for Negroes and Chinese and promoted public education for all, including girls, at a time when such ideas were not widely accepted. Other newspapers played similar roles. In 1855, San Antonio’s El Bejará
neño called for bilingual public schools where Méjico-Tejano youths could learn the language of their new nation “sin perder el idioma de Cervantes” (without losing the language of Cervantes) and also learn their civic responsibilities in the U.S. In New México, the Santa Fe Republican founded Santa Fe’s El Republicano in 1847 as a political outreach voice of the polit-
ical party.

Americanos: Newcomers Building a New Life
The U.S. and its media have long projected the national story of a country built by immigrants who crossed continents and worked hard to earn better lives as adopted the Anglo ways of their new home. In addition to arriving from the same hemisphere, Latinos coming to the U.S. arrived under different circumstances. Starting in the early 20th century, new arrivals from Puerto Rico came not as immigrants, but as citizens from an island that is a part of the U.S. to a mainland that is also part of the U.S. Others came from México to cities and states with Spanish names that had once been in México. Still others came following U.S. involvement in their homeland and had already experienced daily contact with U.S. government or corporations. And some came hoping for a temporary stay until things settled down in their home country. Although in some ways similar to European arrivals who spoke German, Italian, Yiddish, and other languages before adopting English, Latino newcomers di
not fit the traditional immigrant model. Neither did their media, whose staying power has surprised some observers.48

In his 1954 book, Spanish-Speaking Groups in the United States, John Burma predicted the Spanish-language press “will virtually die out” in 15 years as Latino media in English grew.49 Although English-language Latino media did grow as predicted, the Spanish-language media did not “virtually die out.” In fact, 16 years after Burma’s prediction the newspaper trade journal Editor & Publisher reported “an expansion of publishing activity among Spanish-speaking Americans.”50 Two Spanish-language daily newspapers founded in the early 20th century, as Latinos were becoming Americanos, continued into the 21st century. One, New York City’s El Diario/La Prensa began publishing in 1913. The other, Los Angeles’ La Opinión, traces its roots to 1913 when a forerunner, San Antonio’s La Prensa, was founded by Ignacio Lozano. His granddaughter, Mónica Lozano, became La Opinión publisher and CEO, as well as CEO of impreMedia, a national chain of Latino newspapers.51 Both newspapers played the dual roles assumed by many newspapers and other media addressing immigrant populations. They delivered news of political, social, sports, and other events in the homeland and, at the same time, acquainted readers with the ways of their new homes through both their editorial and advertising content while maintaining strong ethnic and national loyalties. New York’s La Prensa, having first promoted itself as the “Champion of the Puerto Ricans,” now expanded to include all Latinos. Lozano and other Southwestern newspapers promoted maintaining a Mexican identity through the concept of México de afuera (Mexico outside of Mexico) by featuring Mexican writers, essayists, and popular culture coverage.52

One example of the impact and influence of Latino media on newcomers could be found in Tampa’s Ybor City, center of cigar making during the early 20th century. Coming to Ybor City from Puerto Rico and Cuba, workers brought with them the tradition of a lector, someone chosen by the workers to read to them in Spanish as they rolled handmade cigars. The lectores dramatically read, from elevated platforms, newspapers in the morning and literary or political works chosen by the workers in the afternoon. Each worker contributed a quarter weekly to pay the lector. As a result, the cigar makers were well-informed and politically active workers. They organized labor unions, which some cigar factory owners blamed on the influence of the lectores. Following a 1920 strike, lectores were not allowed to return by some members of the Cigar Manufacturers Association, and in 1931, the lectores were banned from all cigar factories.53 At least one unemployed Ybor City lector turned to newspaper publishing. La Gaceta, a trilingual newspaper launched in 1922 by former lector Victoriano Manteiga, continued reporting news in English, Spanish, and Italian into the 21st century under the leadership of his grandson, Patrick Manteiga.54

Though often misunderstood when seen through the lens of European immigrant newspapers that faded as their readers’ families became more assimilated, the roles of Latino media in reinforcing Latino culture has grown stronger over the years. They have connected with evolving audiences as back and forth mi-
igration has continued and Latinos have maintained an identity within the U.S. population. Latinos have not followed, nor always been allowed to follow, European melting pot assimilation into the U.S. Differences in race and language have been used to exclude them from full participation in American society. Perhaps recognizing the difficulties facing his readers in the U.S., San Antonio La Prensa founder Ignacio Lozano announced the newspaper’s mission in its first editorial in 1913, “Venimos a luchar” (We came to fight.)

New Leaders: Youth Voices of the 1930s and 1940s

The Great Depression was tough on all Americans, especially those on the margins of society. During those years government officials and public welfare agencies supported massive roundups of Mexicans and their families to forcibly “repatriate” them to México by train, regardless of their birthplace or citizenship status. Anglo media largely supported these efforts and portrayed them as a homecoming. “TRAINS TO TAKE MEXICANS HOME,” proclaimed a Los Angeles Times headline above a line predicting “Southern California Exodus Estimated at 75,000.” Latino media, including La Opinión and radio personality Pedro J. González, were much more critical and vocal in opposing the efforts targeting Mexicans.

Especially vulnerable were youths of Mexican descent born or raised in the U.S. Prohibited from using public swimming pools and parks on an equal basis with Anglos, segregated in schools, and not feeling completely at home in the U.S. or México, they formed clubs and began newspapers to organize and mobilize. The youths became involved in media to reinforce their Mexican roots in spite of Anglo media and society penalizing them for being seen as Mexicans. At the same time, they advocated being treated the same as Anglos in an era when some parents sometimes saw Anglo ways as ill mannered. In contrast to Anglo media, these “youth media” covered positive Mexican youth activities such as conferences and sporting events and also profiled paisanos who had succeeded in school, sports, community activities, and professionally. In contrast to Latino media of the era, almost all of the stories were in English. They expressed a pride in maintaining a Mexican identity while seeking ways to make progress in the U.S.

In 1939, youths involved in the División Juvenil Progresista (Progressive Juvenile Division) organized by Mesa, Arizona businessman Pedro W. Guerrero launched the newspaper Juventud (Youth). Using the slogan “Better Mexicans Make Better Americans,” Juventud urged readers to “Fight for Economic Security and Social Equity Through Cultural Eminence” and carried stories on Mexican youth accomplishments in education, the military, and club activities, while also reporting the discrimination its readers faced. A year earlier The Mexican Voice was founded in Monrovia, California as an “An Inspirational, Educational Youth Magazine” by Pasadena Junior College student Félix Gutiérrez. An outgrowth of the Mexican Youth Conference of the YMCA, the magazine circulated throughout the Southwestern U.S. to encourage a new generation of leaders.

The Mexican Voice regularly reported on Mexican youth conferences and club activities in California and beyond, chose “All Mexican” (in contrast to All American) teams recognizing Latino athletes, and published letters from readers across the Southwest. It also ran conversational columns by “Manuel de la Raza” (a pen name used by Gutiérrez) describing how Mexican youths were dealing with barriers they faced. Other stories provided forums for issues facing Mexican-origin youths and their communities, such as discrimination in employment and public facilities. After World War II broke out, the magazine reported new opportunities for Mexican youths in defense industries. It also noted a “high rate of volunteers...
of Americans of Mexican descent” at a local draft board and that they were classified as “white.” “What this means we cannot venture to guess. But...it is heartening because they, relatively, have less to fight for than the fellows ‘north of the tracks,’” wrote Gutiérrez under the pen name Manuel de la Raza.” In the schools by attending ‘their own’, they couldn’t feel American. In the municipal plunge, a day was reserved for ‘Mexicans’. In the theater the right side was reserved for ‘them.’ Certain restaurants would not cater to ‘Mexicans’. Yet....somehow, these fellows enlisted, joined the ranks and shouldered the responsibility as theirs.”

A year later The Mexican Voice called on service-men to fight against discrimination at home when they returned from the war. “Fighter for freedom, when you return, you will return another person and will return to a different world. You will say, ‘Ah, I am glad we got that job over there done.’ Yes, that job! But we have another job. One that will take a different sort of courage, not the courage of facing death, but the courage to face the future and to fight for your group, to fight for a better America at home.” Indeed, Latino veterans became leaders attacking the discrimination many faced at home after fighting for freedom for others abroad.59

**The Growth of Film and Broadcasting**

When radio developed in the first three decades of the 20th century, Anglo media made little room for Latinos on the public airwaves. In contrast, Latinos looked at new media technologies for ways to reach their community. They attempted to play out the same scenario when television grew in the 1950s and 1960s and, more recently, with new digital media.60 Latinos sought broadcast radio licenses from the Federal Government in the early 1920s, but were denied as early licenses were granted to Anglos. Instead, they launched Latino radio by purchasing brokered blocks of airtime from stations during unattractive time slots in the early morning or late evening or on stations specializing in foreign language programming. Radio broker, musician, and community advocate Pedro J. González and his singing group Los Madrugadores (The Early Risers) were heard on radio stations in Southern California by agricultural workers and were a force opposing U.S. efforts to deport Mexicans during the Great Depression. In 1946, the first U.S. radio station licensed to a Latino was granted to Spanish-language radio broker Raoul Cortez. Later a radio license was issued to Denver broadcaster Paco Sánchez, although Anglos owned most stations with programming for Latinos. Latinos also sought television licenses when that technology expanded in the early 1950s. In 1954, Puerto Rico’s El Mundo newspaper opened San Juan station WKAQ-TV, the first station in what is now the national Tele-mundo television network. The next year, San Antonio’s Cortez also was granted the first UHF television license in the country. In 1961, Cortez sold the television station to a group of investors that included his son-in-law, Emilio Nicolás, Mexican broadcast mogul Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurra, and others to become KWEX-TV, the first station in the Spanish International Network (SIN), now known as Univision.

From the early years to the present, Spanish-language broadcast entertainment programming largely has depended on music, programs, and sports from Latin America or featuring Latin American stars, although talent and programs produced in the U.S. has grown in recent decades as the number of television, cable, and radio outlets has expanded. Early radio news consisted largely of the brokers

**As Latino broadcasting has grown with the growth of the Latino population, Latino participation in films and network television has grown at a slower, but steady, pace.**
reading news from Latin American or local Latino newspapers, and later, "rip and read" newscasts from U.S. wire service Latin American news feeds in Spanish. In the 1960s and early 1970s, some radio and television stations developed local news staffs with their own crews. By the early 21st century, Spanish-language television news broadcasts had the highest viewership in many major cities, particularly among the 18-34 age group coveted by advertisers. According to the Nielsen Company’s television audience ratings Univision, the number one Spanish Language network in the U.S., had an audience size that was often as high as some of the major Anglo television networks. In order to capture a share of this television audience, Anglo broadcast media such as Fox, NBC, and ABC have begun to develop outlets targeting Latinos.

As Latino broadcasting has grown with the growth of the Latino population, Latino participation in films and network television has grown at a slower, but steady pace from the late 1960s to the present. Latino entertainers today no longer need to anglicize their names or appearance to gain popular acceptance. Advocacy groups such as the National Hispanic Media Coalition and The Imagen Foundation have pushed to broaden the range of roles open to performers as Latino producers, directors, and writers have gained a foothold in Hollywood. Some of these got their start by producing documentaries or other public affairs programs raising awareness of Latino issues through theater, film, or television during the activism of the 1960s and 1970s. Luis Valdez moved from leading El Teatro Campesino (The Farmworkers’ Theater) in the 1960s, to writing and producing the play Zoot Suit in the 1970s and the movie La Bamba in the 1980s. Others, like singer and actress Jennifer López, have become involved in productions both in front of and behind the camera.

Advocates: Voices for Justice in an Unjust Society

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the Anglo media were learning to cover the “Minority Nobody Knows,” new voices emerged in Latino media across the country. With offset printing, newspapers were easily produced that were different in appearance from traditional Latino media and that were able to express more authentic Latino voices than Anglo media.

Earlier Latino media portrayed Latinos as being able to adapt to fit into an Anglo-dominated society. The new alternative newspapers called on Anglo society to adapt to fit the needs of Latinos. Some were organizing tools for advocacy organizations sponsoring them, such as the United Farm Workers Union in Delano, California (El Malcriado), Young Lords Party in New York City (Palante), the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado (El Gallo), and advocates for restoration of land grants in New Mexico and equal rights for all (El Grito del Norte).

These newspapers did not emulate the appearance of Anglo newspapers or the Latino press, but offered full-page illustrations or photographs on front pages, some using color. In addition to their appearance, their content was also different. Staffed by non-professionals and volunteers, they were outspoken in attacking establishment institutions and agitated in both Spanish and English for radical changes in an unjust society.
In 1970, recent San Francisco State College graduate Juan Gonzales launched the *El Tecolote* newspaper as a non-commercial bilingual newspaper for San Francisco’s Mission District. In its first issue, *El Tecolote* described its mission “to inform and to create a community...to create a better understanding of one another and to bring us closer together.” Over the years, the newspaper has advocated bilingual telephone and health services, sponsored community cultural events, and covered issues on both sides of the border in both English and Spanish.

One early alternative newspaper was East Los Angeles’ *La Raza*, organized by Eliezer Risco in 1967, and transformed into a magazine by Raul Ruiz in the 1970s. In 1968 the newspaper described itself as “a community newspaper of a new kind...put together by people in the Mexican-American community, all volunteers...reflecting...a new determination and a new spirit in the Mexican American community...will say it like it is. With malice to none, but without compromise.”

*La Raza* attacked police brutality, exposed gerrymandering of political districts to deny Chicanos political representation, and advocated the massive 1968 student walkouts from East Los Angeles high schools on behalf of improved education. The same year, the Chicano Press Association began as news cooperative of 13 alternative newspapers from Los Angeles to Wautoma, Wisconsin. Member publications shared news stories, cartoons, and photos. “The Chicano Press Association is bound to service and dedication to the Mexican American people and needs the help of La Raza since we must go against the tide of political power, against discrimination and all such injustice,” wrote the editor of Houston’s *Compass* shortly after the group organized. As the social movements grew, so did the range of media voices, including feminist publications, campus newspapers, organization newsletters, and journals commenting on the status of Latinos in the U.S.

### La Fuerza: A Growing Force in American Society

Anglo media cite Latino population gains as translating to political impact. When Antonio Villaraigosa was elected Mayor of Los Angeles in 2005, he made the cover of *Newsweek* for a story on rising Latino political power. A 2012 *Time* cover featured a collage of Latino faces with the headline “Yo Decido” (I Decide) to promote a story on the potential influence of Latinos in the upcoming Presidential election. Today’s Latino population numbers are higher than ever before and media often portray those numbers as translating to political influence. That may happen, but the most immediate impact of the Latino population growth has been on media themselves. Latino print, broadcast, and digital media are a major part of the nation’s media offerings and are growing steadily. Fueled by Latino population growth, businesses seeking expanding consumer audiences, and expansion in media technologies, Latino media have greatly expanded their reach and influence over the past 40 years.

Much, but not all, of this growth has been fueled by fundamental changes in communication systems as media have moved from *mass communication*, where one media outlet attempts to attract a wide and varied audience, to *class communication*, where media divide messages into smaller outlets targeting key audience segments identified by demographic categories such as age, race, gender, language, etc.

An early indication of the changes came in 1976, when the *Miami Herald* began *El Miami*
Herald: Spanish-language translations of some of its stories printed in a special section inserted into the general audience newspaper for those who requested it.\(^{65}\) El Miami Herald was not a separate publication editorially and was available only upon purchase of the Miami Herald. Recognizing the interests of their Latino readers and the potential for advertising growth, the insert was relaunched as El Nuevo Herald in 1987 and became a stand-alone publication in 1998.

Today, other major newspaper chains have publications in Spanish or business arrangements with Spanish-language newspapers. Several English-language magazines, such as People, publish Spanish-language editions targeting Latinos in the U.S. and Latin America. Others, including Latina magazine, are focused on U.S. readers most comfortable in English. Broadcasting networks NBC, Fox, ESPN, and others also own Spanish-language networks. Many Latino print and broadcast operations also have digital sites available on the World Wide Web, mobile phones, and other new technologies. The interest in starting such ventures is often more economic than editorial in that advertisers increasingly seek to place messages in media reaching targeted audience segments.\(^{66}\) The increased advertising dollars have spurred growth of Latino media in all technologies and also has deeper editorial implications. As Latinos have more media choices, each media outlet must also fight for its audience share. Latino media are no longer media of chance, but media of choice.

In this market-driven environment, Latino media often describe audiences not as people who are a community, but as consumers who are a desirable market. They tailor content to attract segments of the Latino communities that are especially desired by advertisers, i.e. young Latinas, and provide content that cultivates interests consistent with the advertising messages paying for publications, broadcasts, or digital sites.\(^{67}\) All of this adds up to the continued growth of Latino media in the U.S. targeting increasingly diverse communities through an array of increasingly diverse media technologies. As the U.S. continues to develop as a multicultural-multimedia nation, so will media focused on the nation’s Latinos.
Endnotes


3 For information and analysis of Latino media coverage and opposition to government programs targeting Mexican and family members in the U.S. for deportation, see Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Ricardo Chavira, “A Case Study: Reporting of Mexican Emigration and Deportation,” Journalism History 4, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 59-61; and Paul Espinosa, Lorena Parlee, and Isaac Artenstein, Ballad of an Unsung Hero, Video Documentary, directed by Isaac Artenstein (Scottsdale, AZ: Espinosa Productions, 1984).


5 For a historical description and analysis of Mexicans in American literature, see Cecil Robinson, With the Ears of Strangers: The Mexican in American Literature (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1963). For the impact of these images on early films see Arthur Petit, Images of the Mexican American in Fiction and Film (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1980).


7 For description and analysis of the evolution of Latino stereotypes from past to present, see Juan J. Alonzo, *Badmen, Bandits and Folk Heroes: The Ambivalence of Mexican American Identity in Literature and Film* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2009); and Berg, 11-182


15 For further description and analysis of the news media’s use of symbols to trigger stereotypical images of Latinos and other people of color in different eras, see Wilson, Gutiérrez and Chao, 47-52. For a study of the use of symbols in covering Mexican American youths, see R. H. Turner and S. J. Surace, “Zoot Suiters and Mexicans: Symbols in Crowd Behavior,” *American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 1 (1956): 14-20.


Wilson, Gutiérrez and Chao, 266-269; and Carlos Alvear Acevedo, *Breve Historia del Periodismo* (Mexico City, DF: Editorial Jus, 1965), 77-84.


Nicolás Kanellos, “Cronistas and Satire in Early Twentieth Century Hispanic Newspapers,” *MELUS* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2008), 304-316.


33 For one example, see Chavira.


37 Description and quotes from *El Misisipí 1*, no. 10 (October 12, 1808) and *El Misisipí 1*, no. 27 (December 10, 1808); and Wilson, Gutiérrez, Chao, 269-272.

38 Kanellos with Martell, 10-11 for Varela, and 17-20 for Martí.

39 Chabrán and Chabrán, 374.


42 Kanellos with Martell, 106-114.

43 Chabrán and Chabrán, 368.

44 Kanellos with Martell, 78-106; Chabrán and Chabrán, 363-368; Meléndez, 11-62; and Doris Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves: Neomexicano Cultural Identity and the*


48 Kanellos with Martell, 28-73.


50 Spyridon Granitsas, “Ethnic Press Alive and Well, 440 Published in the U.S,” Editor & Publisher, November 28, 1970, 12.


52 For a more complete description of newspapers directed to specific groups, see Chabrán and Chabrán, 369-371; and Kanellos and Martell.


54 “Three Generations, 85 Years, One Great Newspaper,” La Gaceta (Tampa, Florida), June 29, 2007, Section B, 1-16.

55 Balderrama and Rodríguez.

56 Chavira; and Espinosa.

57 Smith.


60 For a history of Latinos and other people of color to gain early access to broadcast and digital media, see Juan González and Joseph Torres, “The Age Broadcasting,” Part IV, and “The Age of the Internet,” Part V in News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media (London and New York: Verso 2011), 185-376. For information on early development of
Latino radio, see Schement and Flores; Gutierrez and Schement, 1-17; América Rodriguez, 26-45, and Valenzuela, 103-192.


64 For more on Latino alternative publications, see Chabrán and Chabrán, 374-379.

65 For a description of the development of *El Miami Herald* to *El Nuevo Herald*, see América Rodríguez, 122-127.

66 For annual reports on corporate marketing and advertising expenditures directed toward reaching the Latino audience and their impact on Latino media, see December issues of *Hispanic Business* magazine, the annual *AdAge Hispanic Fact Pack*, and annual *State of the News Media* reports on Latino media from the Project for Excellence in Journalism at Harvard University.


The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.