

THE LATINO MEDIA GAP

A REPORT ON THE STATE OF LATINOS IN U.S. MEDIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

Latinos are a powerful force in American society. Topping fifty-three million, Latinos constitute one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States, comprising 17% of the population and over 20% of the key 18–34 marketing demographic.¹ Relative to the general population, Latinos also attend more movies and listen to radio more frequently than do any other U.S. racial or ethnic group.² In addition, their purchasing power is steadily increasing. By 2015, Hispanic buying power is expected to reach \$1.6 trillion. To put this figure in perspective: if U.S. Latinos were to found a nation, that economy would be the 14th largest in the world.³

Latinos are not only avid media consumers; they have made important contributions to the film and television industries, and currently over-index as digital communicators and online content creators.⁴ Moreover, they are watchful of their image: when programs or films are perceived to have anti-Latino content, advocacy groups and consumers target studios and networks with increasingly effective campaigns. Simultaneously, programs and movies

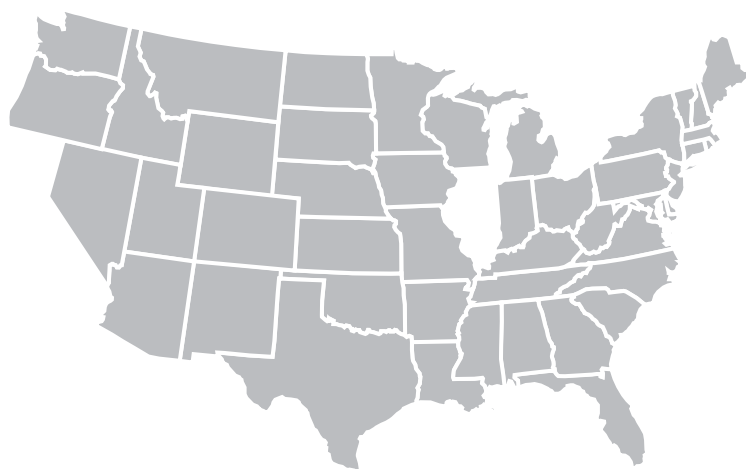
featuring compelling Latino talent and storylines are rewarded with high ratings and revenue.

Yet, with few exceptions, Latino participation in mainstream English-language media is stunningly low. A review of the top movies and television programs reveals that there is a narrower range of stories and roles, and fewer Latino lead actors in the entertainment industry today, than there were seventy years ago. Likewise, whereas the Latino population grew more than 43% from 2000 to 2010, the rate of media participation—behind and in front of the camera, and across all genres and formats—stayed stagnant or grew only slightly, at times proportionally declining.⁵ Even further, when Latinos are visible, they tend to be portrayed through decades-old stereotypes as criminals, law enforcers, cheap labor, and hypersexualized beings.

To visualize the magnitude of Latino media exclusion, we can imagine that references to the states of California (38 million people), Illinois (12.8 million) and Rhode Island (1 million); or New York (19.6 million), Florida (19.5 million), and Pennsylvania (12.7 million) are eliminated from American media culture.⁶ And in the rare case that audiences saw or heard anything about, say, California or Illinois, we would be shown bikini-clad women and gangsters.

In this report, we have named this conundrum the *Latino media gap*: as Latino consumer power grows, relative Latino media presence shrinks. Although the modest increase in numbers and the success of a handful of stars like Jennifer Lopez is noteworthy, the rate of incorporation is out of step with the massive demographic changes sweeping the country.

The consequences of this gap are far-reaching. The current data



LATINO MEDIA EXCLUSION



EXCLUSION OF MORE THAN THE ENTIRE STATES OF CALIFORNIA AND ILLINOIS
(38 MILLION) (12.8 MILLION)

suggests persistent and unchecked job discrimination in a major U.S. industry. The relegation of Latinos similarly deprives media consumers of innovative perspectives at a moment of rapid industry and demographic change. Equally important, as entertainment and news reports often carry more weight than do other forms of communication, the limited and stereotypical nature of existing stories about Latinos skews the public's perception of U.S. society. It also sanctions hostility toward the country's largest minority, which has already become the majority in many cities, including the media capitals of Miami and Los Angeles.

THE STUDY

The Latino Media Gap examines the state of Latino participation in mainstream media and the Internet with the goal of identifying challenges and opportunities to promote an inclusive media landscape.

One of the most comprehensive reports on Latinos and U.S. media, its seven sections provide an overview of critical issues, namely rates of media participation, stereotyping, ownership, leadership, diversity policies, economic impact of diversity, Latino advocacy, and Latino innovation. The first three sections focus on the stagnation and proportional decline of Latino participation in media since 1940 while noting new trends in the incorporation of women and Afro-Latinos. The last four sections emphasize approaches, initiatives, and individuals that are both expanding opportunity for Latinos in media and transforming the industries.

The study encompasses new research based on quantitative and qualitative methods. Our team analyzed Latino inclusion in network and studio leadership; top ten movies as measured by domestic gross revenue; top ten

highest-rated scripted television shows; public television programming focusing on history, music, and independent documentary; and select YouTube sites through March 31, 2014.

To determine short- and long-term trends, we consulted a range of available sources: the U.S. Census; past research and guild reports by the Writers Guild of America, Directors Guild of America, and Screen Actors Guild; PBS show archives; entertainment and advertising trade magazines; and studio and network websites; as well as the Nielsen Ratings, Box Office Mojo, and Internet Movie Database (IMDb). Furthermore, we conducted interviews with 27 media advocates, innovators, and executives over a period of five years (2009–2014).

In order to better understand the relationship between level of inclusion and cultural impact, we measured Latino media participation in two different ways. The first gauged the number of creative talent out of all individuals in that field. The second focused on how frequently creative talent appeared and/or was employed over a season or a year. We found both approaches useful, particularly to describe the inclusion of actors, since a single star like Cameron Diaz or Sofia Vergara may represent a small percentage of actors in a category but can be highly visible due to the repetition of a hit show or popular character over time.

Another important methodological consideration refers to the term “Latino.” As there are different definitions and these can affect statistical outcomes, the present study defines *Latinos* as persons born in the United States who are of Latin American descent and/or who have been born in Latin America and have immigrated to the United States. We identified Latino talent by surname, place of origin, self-identification, and other corroborating data. Being that

Spaniards are regularly confused with Latinos in media representations and tend to play Hispanic-coded roles, we refer to their influence and presence but do not count them as Latinos for statistical purposes. In addition, the report uses the terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* interchangeably.

FINDINGS

The Latino Media Gap report makes eight principal findings on the gap between Latino presence and media inclusion in the U.S. today:

1. Latino participation in programming and movies is extremely limited.

In general, Latino media participation has modestly increased since the 1940s. But, per capita, it is the same or lower than it was in prior decades in major categories. For example, in the 1950s, Latinos were on average 2.8% of the U.S. population. In the top ten scripted shows, however, Latinos were 3.9% of lead actor appearances and 1.5% of all lead roles; in the top ten movies, Latinos made up 1.3% of lead appearances and played 1.7% of lead roles. Yet, in 2013, despite being 17% of the population, Latinos comprised none of the lead actors among the top ten movies and scripted network TV shows.

2. Latino men have disappeared as leading actors; though the percentage of Latinas and Afro-Latino actors is rising.

Until the 1990s, there were considerably more Latino male leads than Latina leads in TV shows and films. This trend has significantly reversed. In the 2010–2013 period, Latino men did not perform any leading roles in the top ten films and TV shows, and constituted fewer than 3% of supporting television and film actor appearances. Latinas

also did not play any television leads. Still, they were 4.6% of all female film lead appearances and 9.5% of all TV supporting female appearances. On television, Latinas accounted for 67% of Latino supporting roles.

In addition, while there were few Afro-Latino stars in prior eras, the percentage of prominent Afro-Latino actors has significantly increased. From 2010 to 2013, Afro-Latino performers represented 18.2% of Latino film actors and 16.7% of Latino TV actors, although they were generally confined to supporting roles in both media.

3. Latinos are still missing behind the scenes.

The vast majority of industry executives support diversity policies. Yet, the main strategy employed by most media companies over the last decades—the creation of diversity executive positions and departments—has been relatively ineffective in increasing diversity in both creative and leadership pools.

In the 2010 to 2013 period, Latinos comprised none of the top ten television show creators, 1.1% of producers, 2% of writers, and 4.1% of directors. In top ten movies, Latinos accounted for 2.3% of directors, 2.2% of producers, and 6% of writers. Even more dramatic, no Latinos currently serve as studio heads, network presidents, CEOs, or owners. Among the top 53 television, radio, and studio executives (including chairpersons), only one is Latina.

4. Stereotypes restrict opportunities and perceptions.

On television and movies, Latinos continue to be represented primarily as criminals, law enforcers, and cheap labor. From 2012 to 2013, 17.7% of Latino film characters and 24.2% of TV characters were linked to crime, a considerable increase from 1994, when it was only 6% on television.⁷ The range of television roles played by Latinos

has also narrowed. Presently, 36.6% of Latino TV character appearances are in law enforcement and a whopping 44.7% of Latino-coded television characters are either uncredited or unnamed. Equally important, 69% of iconic media maids in film and television since 1996 are Latina.

5. News is worse than fiction.

Stories about Latinos constitute less than 1% of news media coverage, and the majority of these stories feature Latinos as lawbreakers. Moreover, Latino participation in front and behind the camera is extraordinarily low: As of 2013, there were no Latino anchors or executive producers in any of the nation's top news programs. According to available data, only 1.8% of news producers are Latinos.

6. Latino content and audiences expand viewership.

When possible, Latino media consumers reward shows and films that feature compelling Latino talent and storylines with high ratings and revenue. This is evident in the success of the Lifetime television show *Devious Maids*, the radio program Cohen and Martinez on NPR, and the Universal Studios' movie franchise *The Fast and the Furious*. Latinos also reject and organize against extreme stereotypical representations, as in the case of the campaigns against the canceled scripted shows *Rob* and *Work It*, and the news program *Lou Dobbs Tonight*.

7. Consumer pressure creates impact.

Latino consumer pressure is increasingly effective in bringing about change by using the Internet and social media. From 1968 to 1998, 63% of Latino media campaigns aimed at television shows, advertisements, or movies prevailed in all or part of their goals. After 1998, this figure jumped to 86%. Even further, the average length of time required to obtain a successful

campaign's goal has shrunk from an average of two years in the 1970s to three weeks today.

8. Latinos drive new media production and innovation.

As Latinos continue to be shut out of traditional media, their creativity is migrating to the Internet, blurring the distinction between producer and consumer. Latino participation online is significantly higher than in mainstream media or PBS. Of the top 50 single-focused YouTube channels with the most subscribers, 18% are produced by and/or feature U.S. Latino content creators. And even with little support, some of the most important new media innovators, such as transmedia pioneer Jeff Gomez, are Latinos.

EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLOSING THE GAP

Closing the Latino media gap will require the active participation of all media industry leaders. We offer eight recommendations for consideration to key stakeholders:

1. Major Networks, PBS, and Studio Leaders:

Hire diverse top leadership with effective decision-making power in all positions, including in the areas of business, policy, and content. Empower diversity executives to ensure that diversity policies are widely implemented, and support talent engaged in producing Latino and other diverse media.

2. Diversity Executives:

Develop innovative programs to employ the existing, deep and underutilized talent pool, as well as to scout, highlight, and recruit new talent in traditional grounds like universities and new media spaces such as YouTube. In addition, generate transparent annual reports regarding diversity efforts, hiring practices, and the results of diversity training programs.

3. Executive Producers in Entertainment:

Promote open casting and diverse hiring, form partnerships with diversity programs, and lead in the development of new talent and stories.

4. Advertisers:

Reward programming that attracts high ratings by featuring non-stereotypical Latino characters and storylines.

5. News Executives:

Advise editorial personnel to broaden Latino coverage and expand sourcing of experts, guests, and commentators to include more Latino talent.

6. Media Advocates:

Generate research on new trends and identify game-changing challenges. Similarly, increase the use of social media to engage a greater number of

consumers who can mobilize quickly across multiple media markets.

7. Latino Consumers:

Effectively communicate both critical and supportive perspectives on existing programs, movies, and companies. Provide alternative visions for Latino representation through content production and consumer campaigns.

8. New Media Companies:

Invest in young talent working in new media as early as possible; support the creation of widely accessible digital tools to facilitate communication between Latino media consumers, advocates, and producers.

BEHIND THE REPORT: PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

The Latino Media Gap: A Report on the State of Latinos in U.S. Media is a collaboration between the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race's Media and Idea Lab at Columbia University, the Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers. The report was funded in part by the generous support of the Social Science Research Council; The Coca-Cola Foundation; the National Latino Arts, Education, and Media Institute; and Marcos A. Rodriguez, founding managing partner of Palladium Equity Partners.

About the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race

The Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race (CSER) at Columbia University is the institution's main interdisciplinary hub for the most innovative research, public discussion, and teaching about race, ethnicity, and indigeneity in the United States and beyond. CSER is also the home of the Media and Idea Lab, a novel program that promotes media research and the use of media as modes of inquiry. The Lab's first project was *Small City, Big Change*, a policy brief and video, produced in association with Hispanics in Philanthropy. To learn more about CSER's programs and download the full report, visit <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cser/>

About the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts

The National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (NHFA) was co-founded in 1997 by actors Jimmy Smits, Sonia Braga, Esai Morales, Merel Julia and Washington, D.C. lawyer Felix Sanchez to advance the presence and image of Latinos in the media, telecommunications, and entertainment industries. NHFA has concentrated on increasing access and expanding

career opportunities for Latino artists and professionals while fostering the emergence of new Latino talent in all aspects of entertainment and telecommunications.

NHFA also provides scholarships and outreach programs to Latino graduate students at eight universities with a direct pipeline into the entertainment business: Columbia University, New York University, Harvard University, Yale University, Northwestern University, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California.

About the National Association of Latino Independent Producers

The National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) is a national membership organization that addresses the professional needs of Latino/Latina independent producers. Founded in 1999, NALIP's mission is to promote, advance, and advocate for Latino and Latina content creators in media. NALIP is the only national organization committed to supporting both grassroots and community-based producers/media makers along with publicly funded and industry-based producers.

Among NALIP's programs are its annual conference, plus six other initiatives: Latino Writer's Lab™, Latino Producers Academy™, Latino Media Resource Guide™, "Doing your Doc: Diverse Visions, Regional Voices" documentary development workshops, the Latino Media Market™, and the Latino Artist Mentoring Program.

Principal Investigator

Frances Negrón-Muntaner is a filmmaker, writer, and scholar. Among her books are *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture* (CHOICE Award, 2004) and *Schomburg* (forthcoming). Her films

include *Brincando el charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican* (Whitney Biennial, 1995), *Small City, Big Change* (2013), and *War in Guam* (2014). In 2005, she was named one of the most influential Latinos by *Hispanic Business Magazine*, and in 2008, the United Nations' Rapid Response Media Mechanism recognized her as a global expert in mass media and Latin/o American studies. She is a founding member and former board chair of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, and current director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race.

Research Assistants

Chelsea Abbas is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at Teachers College. She specializes in race, visual anthropology, and social movements in the Americas.

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Sam Robson is an oral historian based in New York City. Among his past projects is a series of interviews of Afro-Nicaraguan veterans of the 1980s Contra War.

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THE LATINO MEDIA GAP

By all measures, Latinos have made a significant impact on U.S. media. Even when Latinos constituted 3% or less of the U.S. population in the 1940s and 1950s, there was a range of films and TV shows featuring Latinos, including *Zorro*, *The Cisco Kid*, and *I Love Lucy*. While not all represented complex portrayals, these narratives showed a range of characters and situations that suggested a long history of Latino presence in the United States.

Starting in the late 1960s, there was a burst of Latino-made media that again transformed U.S. culture. Producers, writers, and directors who began their professional careers during this period went on to create contemporary classics that were also profitable and popular. This is evident in Luis Valdez's *La Bamba* (1987); producer Moctesuma Esparza's *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988) and *Selena*, directed by Gregory Nava (1997).

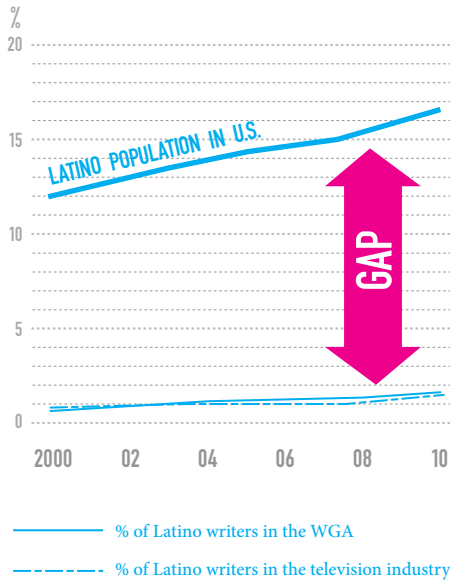
Yet, despite significant achievements and present expansion of the Latino consumer market, a review of contemporary television and film reveals that, relative to the fast-growing Latino population, there are fewer Latino types of roles and lead actors today than seventy years ago. The number of

writers, directors, and producers has also proportionally declined or not kept pace with population growth. This is the Latino media gap: as Latino consumer power grows, relative Latino media presence shrinks.

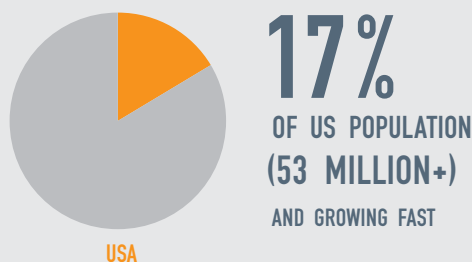
GROWING LATINO CONSUMER POWER

At present, Latinos comprise 17% of the United States' inhabitants. In densely populated cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Miami, Latinos are an even greater share: from 27% to 68% of residents.¹ The rate of Latino population growth is also dramatic. From 2000 to 2010, Latinos accounted for more than half of the growth in the U.S.² This trend is likely to continue: while the U.S. population is projected to expand by 42% from 2010 to 2050, the Latino component is expected to increase by 167% during the same period.³

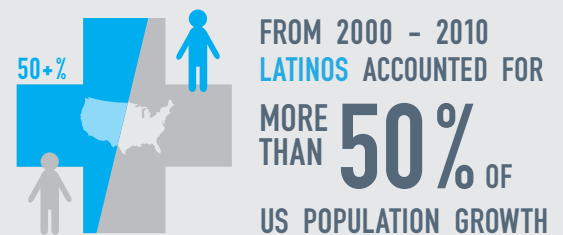
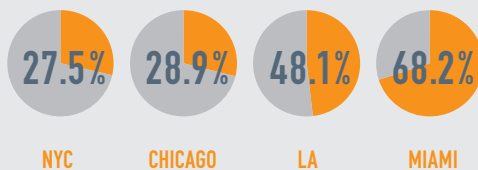
Moreover, of great value to advertisers and media companies, the coveted marketing demographic of Latinos ages 18 to 34 is growing five times faster than the rest of this population segment.⁴ Indeed, Latinos represent one of the youngest ethnic groups in the



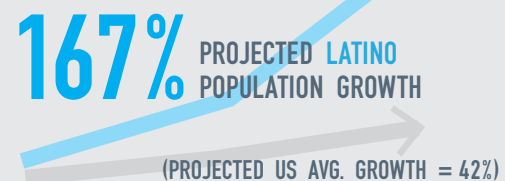
LATINOS BY THE NUMBERS



LARGE PRESENCE IN MAJOR US CITIES:



FASTEST PROJECTED GROWTH 2010-2050



United States: over 60% of Latinos are younger than 35. In addition, Latinos have a median age of 28, compared to the national median of 37.⁵

Latino consumer power is also increasing exponentially. In 2012 alone, at least 500 newspaper articles noted the surge of the Latino market to over 1 trillion dollars of spending power. That is more than any other minority group, including Asian Americans and African Americans—and close to 10% of the total purchasing power of the United States as a whole.⁶ According to the research company IBISWorld, by 2015, Hispanic buying power will hit \$1.6 trillion, “growing at a 48% clip, compared to about 27% for the entire nation.”⁷

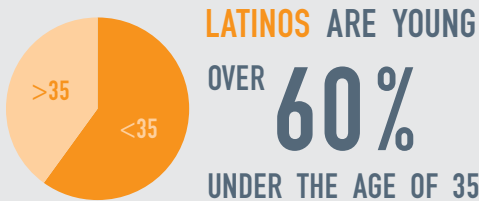
Equally relevant for the media industry, Latinos are among America’s most enthusiastic media consumers. They listen to radio more than any other ethnic group, with 94% of Latinos over 12 tuning in every week.⁸ According to the 2013 Motion Picture Association annual theatrical statistics report, Latinos are one of the most important demographics sustaining the film industry in the United States. While the average U.S. moviegoer attends theaters 4.1 times a year, Latinos have the

highest rate at 6.4. Similarly, Latinos buy 25% of all movie tickets.⁹

SHRINKING LATINO MEDIA PRESENCE

Despite these numbers, the level of Latino inclusion in mainstream English-language media remains low and is not significantly improving. To provide a picture of the current situation, we reviewed all talent listed for the top ten scripted television shows and films on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), consulted network and studio sites as well as diversity reports published in the last four decades. To establish long-term trends, we also referred to studies produced by professional organizations such as the Writers Guild of America, Directors Guild of America, and Screen Actors Guild.

Despite these numbers, the level of Latino inclusion in mainstream English-language media remains stunningly low and is not significantly improving.



IN THE AGE GROUP 18-34
(COVETED MARKETING DEMOGRAPHIC)


+++++ **LATINOS GROWING 5X FASTER**

LATINO MEDIAN AGE = 28
(US NATIONAL MEDIAN = 37)

LATINO BUYING POWER
CURRENTLY OVER **\$1 TRILLION**
AND BY 2015 **\$1.6 TRILLION**
(FASTEST GROWING IN THE NATION AT 48%)

IF US **LATINOS** CONSTITUTED A NATION
IT WOULD BE THE
14TH LARGEST ECONOMY
IN THE WORLD

94% **LATINOS**
LISTEN TO RADIO
 EVERY WEEK

LATINOS BUY
 **25%**
OF ALL
MOVIE TICKETS

1

LIMITED: LATINO INCLUSION IN FILM AND TELEVISION

If one considers standard reference measures such as the percentage of Latinos in the professional media guilds—Directors Guild of America (DGA), Writers Guild of America (WGA), or the Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA)—Latino membership ranges from 2% in DGA (2013) and 3% in WGA (2012) to 6.4% in SAG-AFTRA (2008).¹ Participation in front and behind the camera in movies and television at the most visible level is at times lower in some categories.

BETTER OFF BEFORE? NUMBERS IN PERSPECTIVE

Although counterintuitive, a comparison between Latino media employment today and in earlier periods reveals very modest gains alongside stagnation and decline. Even when there is an increase in participation, Latinos do not securely gain ground. Rather, the statistics fluctuate and upward trends do not necessarily relate to greater opportunity but to the rise of a small number of star actors and/or creative talent. In this regard, even minor advances cannot be taken for granted.

Latinos in Television

The most dramatic case study of Latino decline involves leading actors. In the 1950s—the first decade when Nielsen ratings were introduced—Latinos were, on average, 2.8% of the population and 3.9% of all top ten TV lead appearances. But in the 1980s, Latinos were close to 7.7% of the population and none of the leads. From 2010 to 2013, Latinos constituted an even greater share, 17% of the population, but no Latino actors played television leading roles. The result is a growing gap between population and representation.

Significantly, even if we shift our method and consider how many top 25 shows had Latino leads over the last decades, the general decreasing pattern still holds (see Figure 1). Among the top 25 scripted television shows, the 1970s through 1990s decades had a higher number of Latino leads than at present.² By this measure, on-camera representation in the 2000s was the same as in the 1950s, and significantly lower than in the 1970s, when four shows had Latino leads: *Chico and the Man* (1974–1978), *CHiPs* (1977–1983), *Paul Sand in Friends and Lovers* (1974–1975), and *Fantasy Island* (1978–1984). Moreover, this trend continued in the 1980s and 1990s, with each decade having three shows with a Latino lead, including *9 to 5* (1982–1988), *NYPD Blue* (1993–

OF TOP SHOWS WITH LATINO LEADS

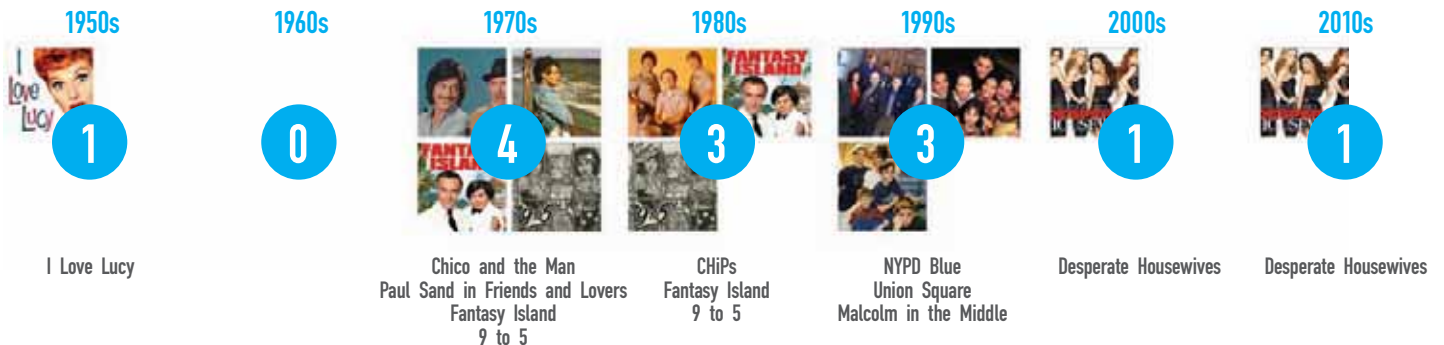


Figure 1: Top 25 TV Shows and Latino Leads
(Sources: IMDb and U.S. Census, 1950–2013)

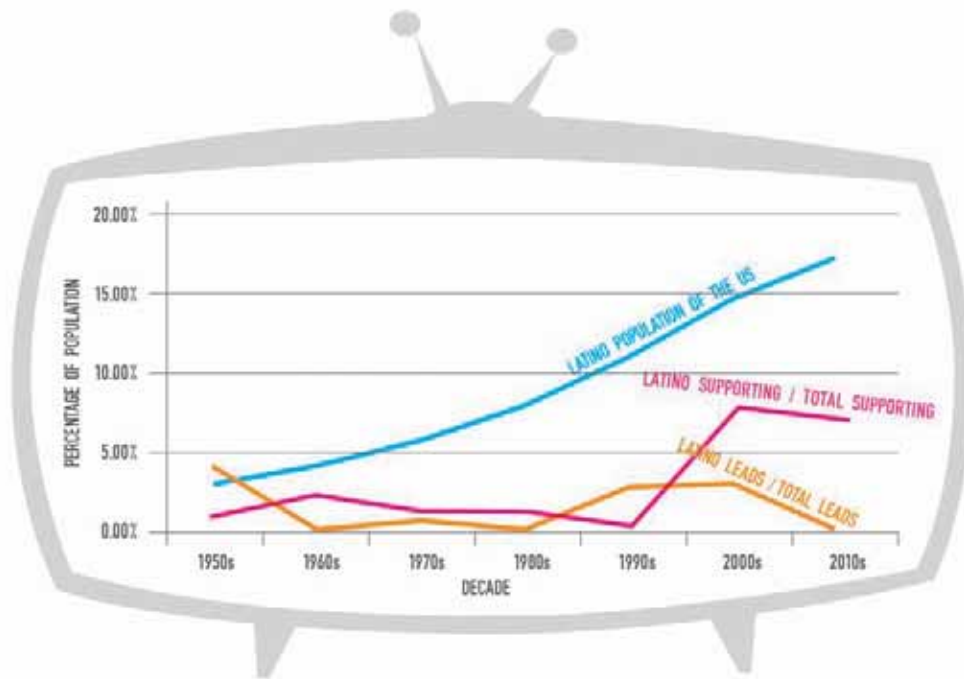


Figure 2: Percentage of Latino Actor Appearances in Top Ten Highest-Rated Scripted TV Shows (Sources: IMDb and U.S. Census, 1950–2013)

2005), *Union Square* (1997–1998), and *Malcolm in the Middle* (2000–2006). Since the end of *Desperate Housewives* (2012), only *Modern Family* (2009–present) has a central Latino character.³

Trends regarding supporting actors are complex. On the one hand, per capita, there were more Latino roles and supporting appearances in the 1960s than in the 2010s (see Figure 2). On the other hand, a relatively stable upward tendency has emerged in the number of Latino supporting actors. Given past patterns, it is unclear if this trend will hold and/or result in a greater number of Latino actors crossing over to lead roles or whether they will remain confined to playing secondary characters.

Behind the camera, Latino participation has been persistently low over the last six decades. With the exception of the Desilu era on television (1950–1962), in which the Cuban American Desi Arnaz was involved in producing top shows such as *I Love Lucy*, few Latinos have served as directors, writers and/or producers. Our survey of television

creative talent in recent years suggests continuity with that history.

From 2000 to 2009, Latinos comprised 1.2% of producers (including one show creator), 2.2% of directors, and 1.9% of writers.⁴ In the 2010–2013 period, the number of directors modestly rose to 4.1%. Likewise, in the critical position of writer, the number of Latinos slightly increased to 2%. Yet, there were no Latino show creators and producers decreased to 1.1%, declining in both absolute and proportional terms.

Latinos in Movies

Similar to TV, Latino participation as lead actors in movies was higher in prior eras, this time in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1940s, the Latino population was close to 2%. At this point, Latino actors made up 0.9% of lead appearances and 2% of all leads in the top ten movies. In the 1950s, Latinos were 2.8% of the population, 1.3% of lead appearances, and 1.7% of total leads.

From 2000 to 2013, among the ten films with the highest domestic gross

A comparison between Latino participation today and in earlier periods reveals that, over the last decades, one finds very modest gains alongside stagnation and decline.

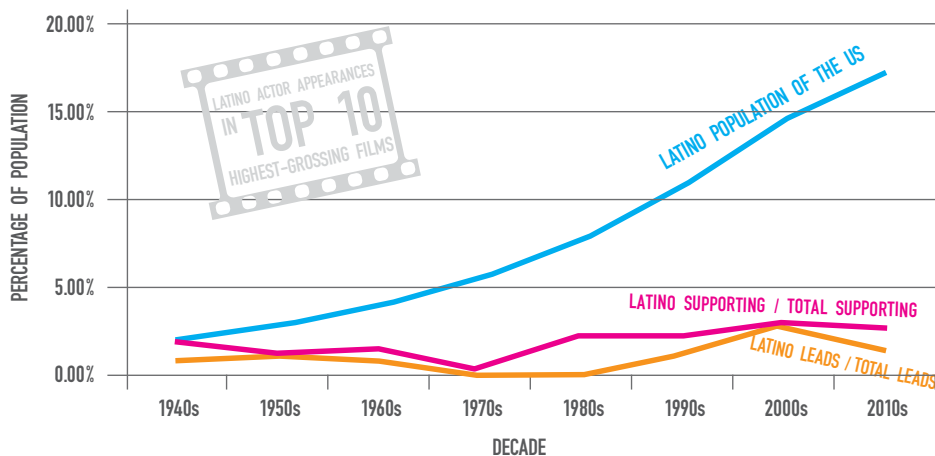


Figure 3: Percentage of Latino Actor Appearances in Highest-Grossing Films (Sources: IMDb and U.S. Census, 1950-2013)

per year, Latino lead role appearances decreased from 2.8% in the 2000s to 1.4% in the 2010s (see Figure 3). At the same time, the percentage of Latino actors playing leading roles fell under 2%. The number of Latino supporting actors has grown in absolute terms, but remains low and the gap has widened since the 1940s.

Not unlike television—but without the Desilu exception—Latinos have accounted for a small fraction of top ten movie producers, directors, and writers. The last decades suggest that growth for Latinos in film will continue to be slow.

From 2000 to 2009, Latinos accounted for 2.4% of directors, 0.8% of producers, and 0.6% of writers. In absolute terms, most of these numbers went up in the 2010-2013 period: Latinos were 2.3% of directors, 2.2% of producers and 6% of writers. The relative increase of writers in the top ten movies, however, should not be confused with a significant expansion of opportunity for U.S. Latinos in the film industry. It is instead indicative of very slow gains in U.S. Latino employment, combined with much faster rates of incorporation of star Latin American talent, a generally misunderstood trend that we will discuss further below.

The Role of Gender, Race, and National Origin in Media Employment Opportunities

As noted in the opening pages, this study uses the term “Latino” to encompass U.S. and Latin American-born talent of all races and both genders. Yet, the routine count of Latino talent without further qualification may mask more complex patterns of marginalization. These are important to note in order to better address specific barriers to participation that may relate to gender, race, and national origin, among other categories of social difference.

For example, while the overall inclusion of Latinos is limited, when we consider gender, we see a striking phenomenon: the near disappearance of the Latino lead actor concurrent with a relative increase in the number of lead Latina actresses (see Figure 4). This represents a significant change. Up until the 1990s, there were considerably more male than female leads in both film and television. The current trend reached its highest point in the 2010-2013 period, when Latino men did not play any leading roles in the top ten films but Latinas played 5.9% of female leads and 100% of Latino protagonists.

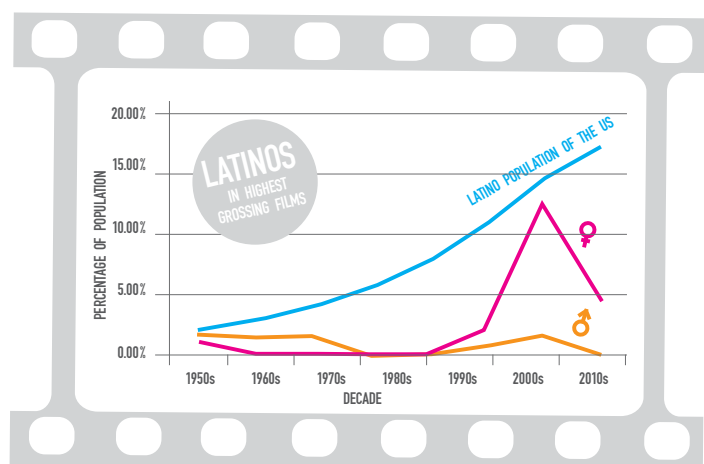


Figure 4: Percentage of Latino/a Lead Actor Appearances in Ten Highest-Grossing Films by Gender (Sources: IMDb and US Census 1950-2013)

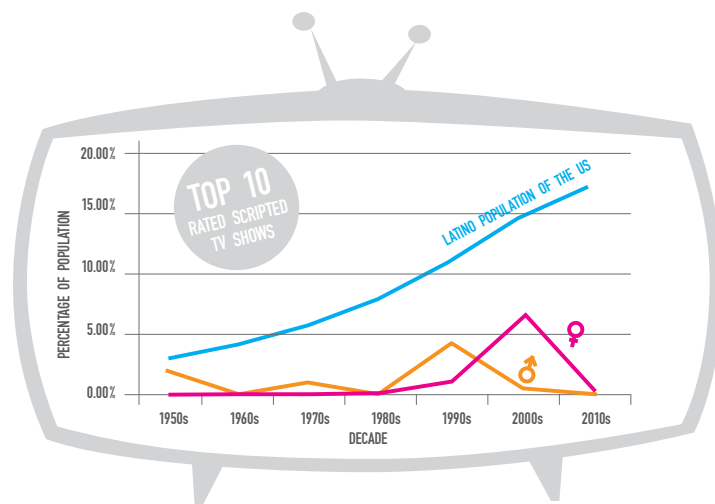


Figure 5: Percentage of Latino Actor Lead Appearances in Ten Highest-Rated Scripted TV Shows by Gender (Sources: IMDb and US Census, 1950-2013)

The greater presence of Latina actresses and characters is a welcome and significant change. At the same time, this increase has not completely translated into greater visibility for Latina actresses or storylines. On the one hand, most of the roles played by Latinas in the top ten movies were of animated or fantasy characters in films such as *Shrek Forever After* (Cameron Diaz), *How to Train Your Dragon* (America Ferrera) and *Avatar* (Zoe Saldña). On the other hand, Diaz and Ferrera voiced “white” characters, underscoring that the long-term success of stars like Diaz has been partly rooted in that she is rarely identified as Latina.

On television, we see a similar gender trend (see Figure 5). In the 2000–2009 period, men disappeared from leading roles while the number of women playing lead characters rose. Although currently there are no Latina leads in any of the top ten television shows, Sofia Vergara plays a main character in the ensemble comedy *Modern Family*.

Significantly, Vergara’s success is part of a larger drift. In the supporting actor category, women have likewise gained greater visibility than men. In the 2010–2013 seasons, Latinas constituted 11.8% of female supporting roles while Latino men were only 4.9% of supporting male roles. In general, Latinas played 67% of all supporting Latino characters. The current gender economy suggests that media decision-makers view Latinas as more culturally desirable than Latino men.

When factoring race we see another important change. Whereas the majority of Latino actors are considered “Hispanic white” and there are few Afro-Latino stars, from 2000 to 2013, Afro-Latino actors like Laz Alonso, Rosario Dawson, Jon Huertas, Zoe Saldña, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson became increasingly more prominent in both movies and/or on television (see Figure 6).⁵

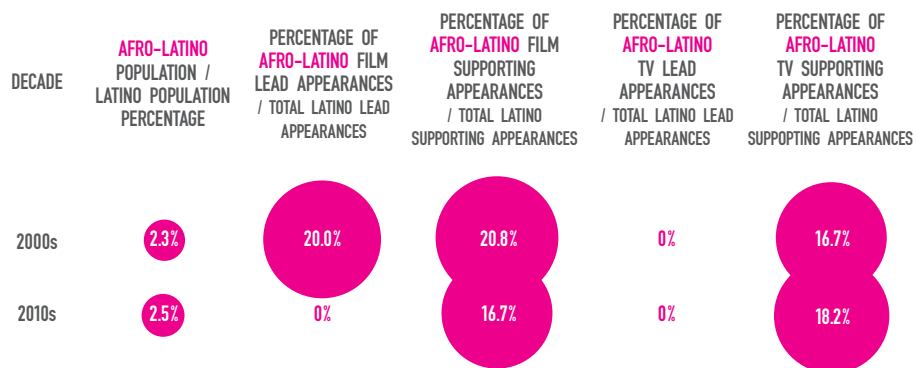


Figure 7: Afro-Latino Actor Appearances in Relation to All Latino Actors in TV and Film (Source: U.S. Census, 2000–2010, estimated 2000–2009 figure)

Measuring this increase with precision poses some challenges. To date, there is no definitive census data regarding the number of Afro-Latinos in 2000. Yet, even if we used the arguably higher 2010 census figures of 0.4% of total population and 2.5% of the Latino segment as reference points, Afro-Latino actors still over-indexed in all categories in both number of actors and frequency of appearances. In film, during the 2000–2009 period, they accounted for 0.6% of total lead roles and supporting actor appearances as well as 20% of Latino lead appearances and 20.8% of supporting actor appearances.

This trend appears to be weakening slightly in recent years. From 2010 to 2013, no Afro-Latino actor was cast in a leading role.⁶ The supporting actor category, however, continues to over-index. In the last three years, Afro-Latinos comprised 0.5% of supporting actor appearances and 16.7% of Latino supporting actor appearances (see Figure 7).

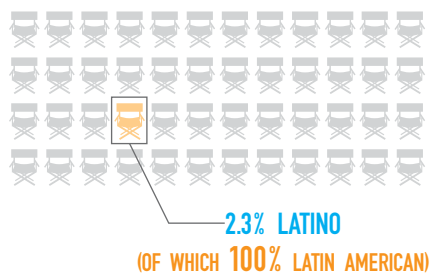
On television, Afro-Latino actors have yet to be cast in a leading role. But from 2000 to 2009, Afro-Latinos constituted 1.3% of all supporting actor appearances and 16.7% of Latino supporting actor appearances. In the 2010–2013 seasons, this trend marginally increased with Afro-Latinos continuing to represent 1.3% of supporting actors but 18.2% of Latino supporting actor appearances.



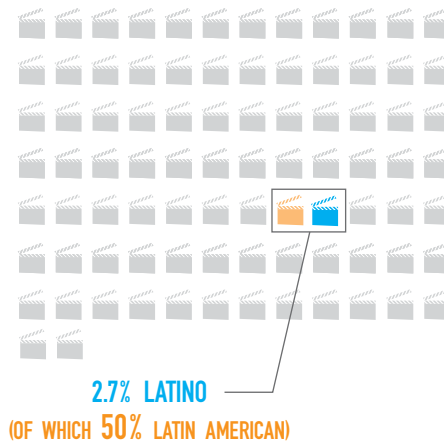
Figure 6: Zoe Saldña starring in *Star Trek* (Source: collider.com)

In the 2000–2009 period, Afro-Latinos accounted for 50% of Latino film leads.

DIRECTORS



PRODUCERS



WRITERS

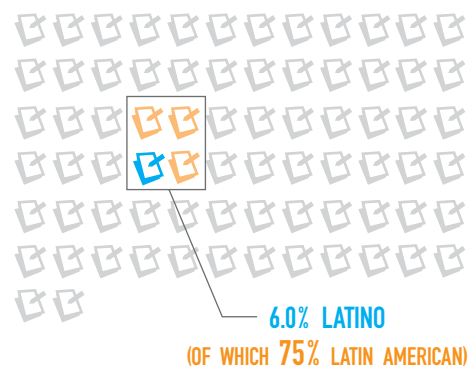


Figure 8: Latino and Latin American Directors, Producers, and Writers, 2010–2013
(Source: IMDb)

Latino indigenous actors are less salient. According to the 2010 census, indigenous Latinos constitute 0.2% of the U.S. population and 1.4% of all Latinos. Although not measured by the census, an even greater number of Latinos claim indigenous roots and/or are mestizos (of European and Native descent). Yet, there are currently no indigenous Latino stars.

Self-identified mestizo actors such as John Leguizamo and Benjamin Bratt, however, are more visible. On film, from 2000 to 2009, mestizos accounted for 0% of Latino leads, 0.2% of all supporting actors, and 8.3% of Latino supporting actor appearances. In the 2010–2013 period, mestizos held no lead roles but were 0.3% of all supporting actors, and 8.3% of Latino supporting appearances.

On television, from 2000 to 2009, mestizos did not play any lead or supporting roles. Still, in the 2010–2013 period, they constituted 1.3% of supporting roles and 16.7% of Latino supporting actor appearances. Arguably, the differences in incorporation of Afro-Latino and indigenous actors relate to how Afro-Latinos can signify both Latino and black identities to key demographics.

National origin also plays an important role in acting opportunity but considerably more in film than on television. This is evident in that some of the most popular “Latin” movie stars of the last decade are not U.S. Latinos but Latin American or Spanish-formed actors like Salma Hayek, Javier Bardem, Antonio Banderas, and Penélope Cruz.

The Spanish trend is particularly robust in the 2010–2013 period. Whereas Spaniards comprise less than 0.2% of the U.S. population (and if counted as Hispanic, 1.4% of Latinos), in the top ten movies, they played 50% of Latino-coded leads and 27% of Latino supporting roles. In television, however, the vast majority of TV stars portraying Latino roles are U.S.-raised Latinos. The most visible exception is Vergara.

Differences in race and gender are also significant behind the camera—in dissimilar ways. While Afro-Latinos over-index in some acting categories, from 2010 to 2013, no self-identified Afro-Latinos served as writers, directors, or producers. In the top ten TV shows, Latinas constituted 0% of producers and 33% of all Latino directors. At the same time, they over-indexed as writers, accounting for 75% of all Latino writers on television. In film, the situation is nearly the opposite: Latinas represented

33% of Latino producers but none of the Latino directors or writers.

Equally relevant, Latin American national origin correlates with behind-the-camera opportunity in the movie industry. If from 2010 to 2013 Latin Americans represented a small fraction of TV talent; in film, Latin American directors, writers, and producers such as Alfonso Cuarón (*Gravity*) and Guillermo del Toro (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*) constituted 66% of all top ten Latino movie talent. Broken down by creative position, Latin American-born and formed professionals, mostly from Mexico, made up 100% of directors, 75% of writers, and 50% of producers (see Figure 8).

NORTH OR SOUTH OF THE BORDER: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Latin American culture and artists have always been a rich part of U.S. media history. Likewise, the distinction between U.S. Latino and Latin American talent can be porous in the context of growing interconnectivity between the hemisphere’s media industries. It can also be relative, as many Latin American professionals

settle permanently in the U.S., “becoming” Latino over time. Yet it is an important analytical distinction. Not only does Latin American talent receive most of the top mainstream film opportunities accorded to Latinos in Hollywood today, the press often sees their achievements as emblematic of increased Latino media inclusion. This understanding, however, overlooks important differences in the incorporation of U.S. Latinos and Latin Americans to the movie industry.

A key difference is that Latin American film professionals tend to be white, male, and from privileged socio-economic backgrounds. These circumstances mean that they were less likely to encounter gender, racial, and/or class discrimination at the beginning of their careers, as is the case for most U.S. Latinos. Moreover, nearly all successful Latin American talent arrived in the U.S. with world recognition for prior work, which facilitated peer-to-peer interactions in Hollywood and access to effective talent representation.

In addition, the majority of top Latin American writers, producers, and directors are involved in mainstream big budget productions and do not focus their work on Latino stories nor cast U.S. Latino actors. This is not to say that media artists should tell certain stories or employ specific actors. But to underscore that the greater participation of Latin American over U.S. Latino talent in movies has been possible due to important differences in personal background, professional trajectories, and career objectives in the context of a globalized industry. It is not inherently representative of a major opening for U.S. Latino talent and stories.

THE NEWS IS WORSE THAN FICTION

If Latino participation seems limited in entertainment, it is nearly non-existent

in news. Our survey of 19 primetime shows revealed that of 22 anchors featured in top news shows, 20 or 90.9% were white and two (9%) were black—Van Jones of CNN’s *Crossfire* and Al Sharpton of MSNBC’s *Politics Nation*. No anchor was Latino. Among the 21 top news executive producers, all were white, including three women.

Of the eight shows that posted information on their websites regarding their producing staff, all of which were on CBS, NBC, and MSNBC, only two of 114 producers, or 1.8%, were Latino (see Figure 9). These were Andres Triay of *CBS News with Scott Pelley*, and Mario Garcia of *NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams*. Fox, CNN, and ABC did not provide information in their sites nor did they respond to our queries. Using alternative sources, we also identified that CNN’s *Anderson Cooper 360* has had at least one Latino producer on staff in the past, David Puente.

The lack of Latinos applies to news stories as well: A study by the National Association of Hispanic Journalists

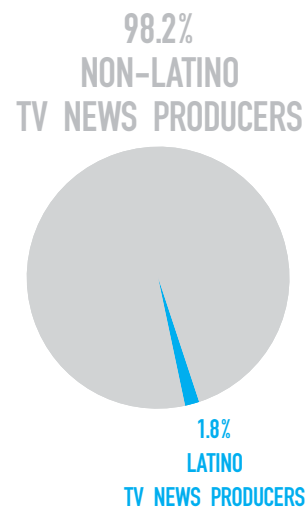


Figure 9: Latino TV News Producers (Sources: IMDb and network websites)

"NEWS WORSE THAN FICTION"

STORIES ON NEWS AND TALK SHOWS

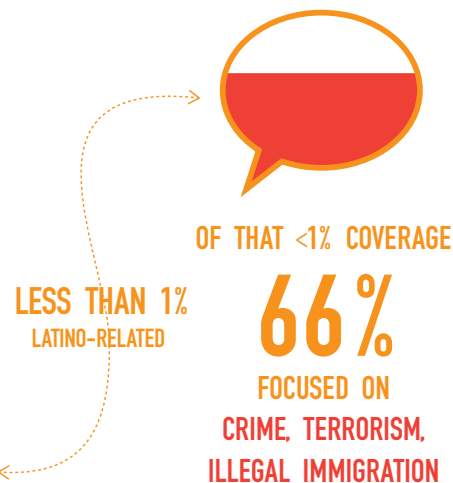
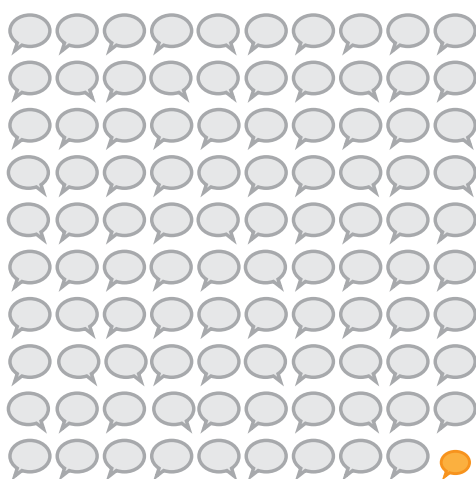


Figure 10: Themes of Latino News Stories (Source: National Association of Hispanic Journalists, 2005)

GUESTS ON NEWS / TALK SHOWS



2.7%
LATINO GUESTS

GUESTS
IN NEWS PROGRAMS
THAT ARE
WHITE MALE

- FOX NEWS - 88%
- CNN - 83%
- MSNBC - 83%
- PBS - 82%

focusing on the 1995–2004 period found that “in nine of 10 years, Latino stories made up less than 1 percent of all network news stories.”⁷ Of these, 66% focused on crime or illegal immigration (see Figure 10).

Since 2004, the first trend has actually worsened: a forthcoming study by scholar Federico Subervi on news story topics from 2008 to 2012 found that the percentage of general market TV network news stories highlighting Latinos declined from 1% in 2008 to 0.6% in 2012.⁸ Over this period, Latinos were central in only 491 out of approximately 80,000 stories.

Similarly, crime and related topics continue to dominate news coverage of Latinos. In both 2012 and 2013, the only top news story featuring a Latino was that of George Zimmerman, the neighborhood watch coordinator who fatally shot teenager Trayvon Martin. The death of teacher Vicki Soto at the Sandy Hook Elementary School

shooting also received attention in both years.

Lastly, Latino opinion on commercial television and PBS is shut out as well. Latinos are consistently excluded from talk shows, with Latino guests across multiple programs in all networks at under 3%.⁹ A May 2013 report by Media Matters for America further indicated that the situation is similar on cable. On Fox News, only 3% of evening guests are Latinos; at CNN and MSNBC, Latinos make up only 2%.¹⁰

WHERE IS THE (LATINO) PUBLIC IN PUBLIC TELEVISION?

In some ways, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is no different than commercial networks when it comes to including Latino talent and themes. Although PBS has yet to release detailed information regarding its diversity, our survey of posted data from their

	INCEPTION-2013		2010-2013			
	% OF LATINO OR LATIN AMERICAN-THEMED EPISODES / SEGMENTS		% OF LATINO OR LATIN AMERICAN-THEMED EPISODES / SEGMENTS	% OF LATINO OR LATIN AMERICAN DIRECTORS	% OF LATINO OR LATIN AMERICAN PRODUCERS	% OF LATINO OR LATIN AMERICAN EXEC. PRODUCERS
	2.7%		2.6%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%
	2.6%		3.7%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%
	5.5%		3.0%	0.0%	8.8%	0.0%
	6.8%		5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	3.2%		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	7.0% (SEGMENTS)		7.0% (SEGMENTS)	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
	11.2%		14.4%	7.8%	3.4%	2.4%
	14.9%		12.5%	9.8%	8.8%	6.0%
TOTAL	7.0%		9.7%	14.8%	4.8%	2.1%

Figure 11: PBS Latino and Latin American–Themed Programming (Regular and Series)
(Sources: PBS website and IMDb)

website and IMDb reveals that there are currently few regular Latino-focused programs on PBS.¹¹ The last major Latino-themed PBS series was *American Family*, which ran in 2002. Moreover, the late October 2013 departure of Ray Suarez from their flagship program *NewsHour* left PBS without any senior Latino journalists.¹²

Latino history is also both acknowledged and marginalized. In the fall of 2013, PBS released a noteworthy stand alone, three-part documentary series, *The Latino Americans*, co-produced by Latino Public Broadcasting. Yet, in signature history-related series like *American Experience* and *American Masters*, Latino content has been limited and still tends to largely focus on Latin American, rather than U.S. Latino, history and figures.

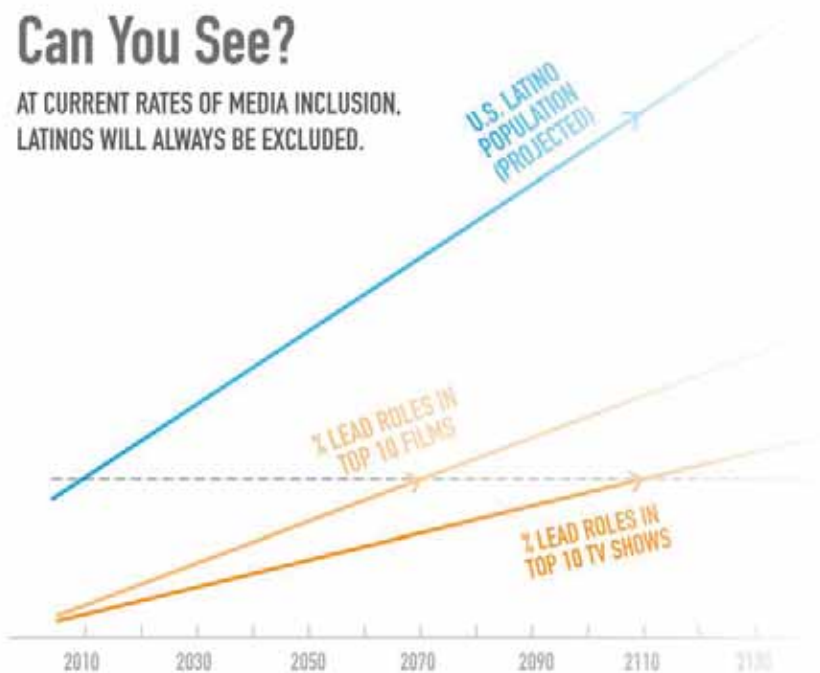
In our survey of eight series highlighting history, performance, and music since their inception to 2013, we similarly found a mixed picture: Latino-themed programming has ranged from less than 3% in *American Experience* and *American Masters* to 11.2% in *Independent Lens* and 14.9% in *POV*, both curated series.

During the 2010-2013 period, the two curated series continued to lead in Latino-themed programming: 14.4% of *Independent Lens* episodes and 12.5% of *POV* shows were Latino-themed (see Figure 11). Most series, however, experienced a modest decline while *American Masters* slightly increased its share of Latino programming to 3.7%. The recently created *Genealogy Roadshow* has a relatively high percentage of Latino stories. Since its first broadcast in 2013, 50% of shows have featured at least one Latino character, although only 7% of segments were Latino-themed.¹³

At another level, our review found that presence of Latino-themed programming did not necessarily

Can You See?

AT CURRENT RATES OF MEDIA INCLUSION, LATINOS WILL ALWAYS BE EXCLUDED.



correlate with inclusion of Latino directors or producers. Across all surveyed series from 2010 to 2013, Latinos made up 2.1% of executive producers, 4.8% of producers, and 14.8% of directors. All directors, however, were part of only two series: *Independent Lens* and *POV*.

In addition to the lack of directors, most series did not include any Latino executive producers, as was the case of *American Experience*, *American Masters*, *Austin City Limits*, *Soundstage*, and *History Detectives*. Overall, Latinos had the highest levels of participation in *POV* and *Independent Lens*, underscoring the importance of both series to diversity on television.¹⁴

Furthermore, it is significant to note that of the longest-running series, those beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, *POV* is the most inclusive and the only one that demonstrates a clear trend of increased incorporation of Latino-themed programming over time. Perhaps not surprisingly, *POV* is also the sole series to have had a Latina executive, Cynthia Lopez, who served

as executive vice president and co-executive producer from 2006 to 2014.

O, JOSÉ CAN YOU SEE?

In sum, U.S. viewers see an extremely low percentage of Latinos on television and movie screens in all genres and formats. Current rates of inclusion are also advancing at a very slow pace. One way of visualizing the situation is to consider that at the present rate of change, it will take 60 years for Latinos to fill 17% of lead roles in the top ten films. To reach 17% of lead roles in the top ten scripted TV shows will take over 100 years. By then, however, the Latino population is projected to double, making the goal of greater inclusion an elusive one for decades to come.

2

BANDIDOS FOREVER?: THE PERSISTENTLY NARROW RANGE OF LATINO CHARACTERS

If U.S. media suddenly increased the number of Latinos in front of the camera, the cultural landscape could, in some ways, grow worse. Not only does the media significantly underrepresent Latinos and other groups, but also, in the few instances when Latinos appear, they tend to embody many of the same stereotypes first visualized in cinema over a century ago: criminals, cheap labor, and sexual objects. Ironically, while there is a new Latina stereotype—the maid—the once familiar “Latin Lover” has nearly disappeared from television and movies, eliminating one of the few kinds of leading roles available to Latino men.

To determine the persistence of both new and old stereotypical portrayals, we reviewed Latino roles listed for the top ten scripted television programs and films on IMDb (Internet Movie Database). Additionally, we analyzed the number and percentage of times that stereotypical roles appeared in the 2012–2013 television season.

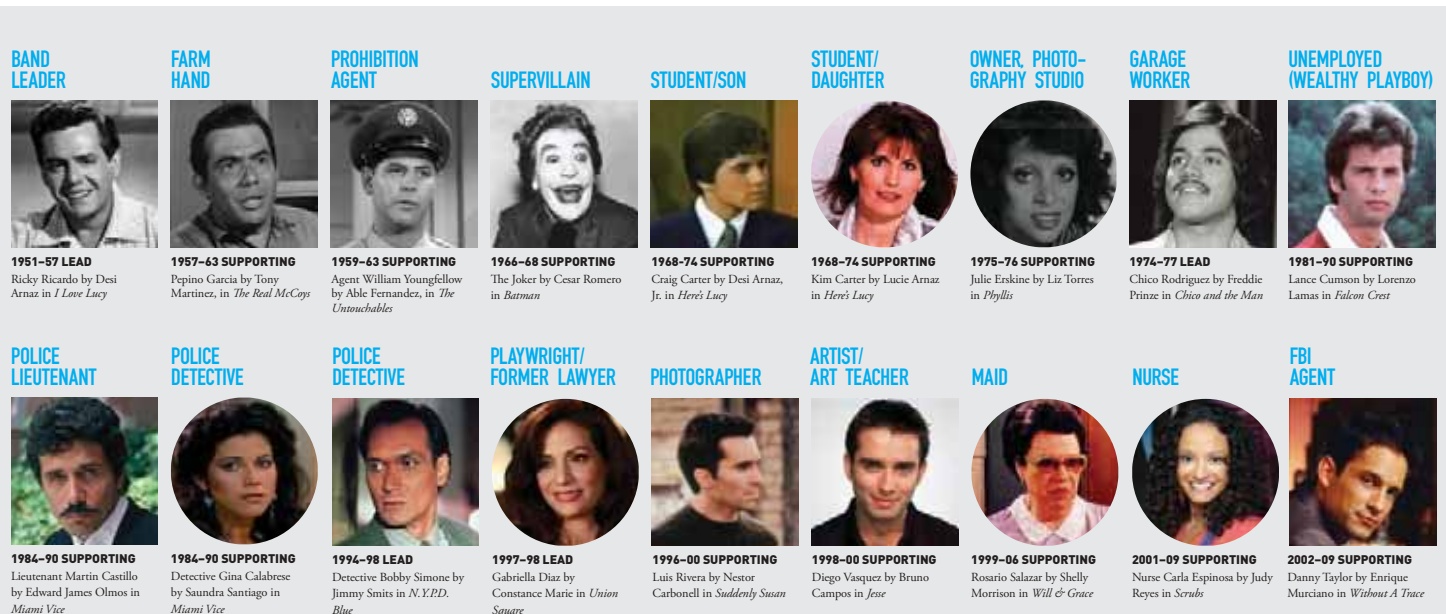
Overall, we found that stereotypical storylines and characters that were coded as criminals, law enforcers, and blue-collar workers continue to dominate television shows, movies, and news. Equally important, Latinos remain confined to very few genres,

mostly “law and order” dramas on television and action movies. In contrast to prior eras, they also play an increasingly narrower range of characters.

During the 1990s, Latinos still portrayed creative types, including a playwright, a photographer, and an artist in TV shows like *Union Square*, *Suddenly Susan*, and *Jesse*. Beginning in the prior decade, however, Latino characters and Latino actors were increasingly associated with only two types of roles: criminal or law enforcer. Since 1984, 51.9%, or 14 of the 27 Latino main cast roles in top ten scripted TV shows, have been related to criminal activities, law enforcement, or security (see Figure 12).

This trend continues through 2013, even when Latino actors do not play Latino-specific roles. In these shows, three out of five featured adult characters work in law enforcement or the military: an Israeli agent (Cote de Pablo, *NCIS*), a homicide detective (Jon Huertas, *Castle*) and an NYPD detective (Marisa Ramirez, *Blue Blood*). Across the top ten shows, there were a total of 2,596 roles, of which 161 or 6.2% were Latino-specific. Of these, 24.2% were criminal roles and 23% law enforcers.

Figure 12: Latino Actors and Characters in the Main Cast of Top Ten–Rated Scripted TV Shows, 1950–2013 (Source: IMDb)



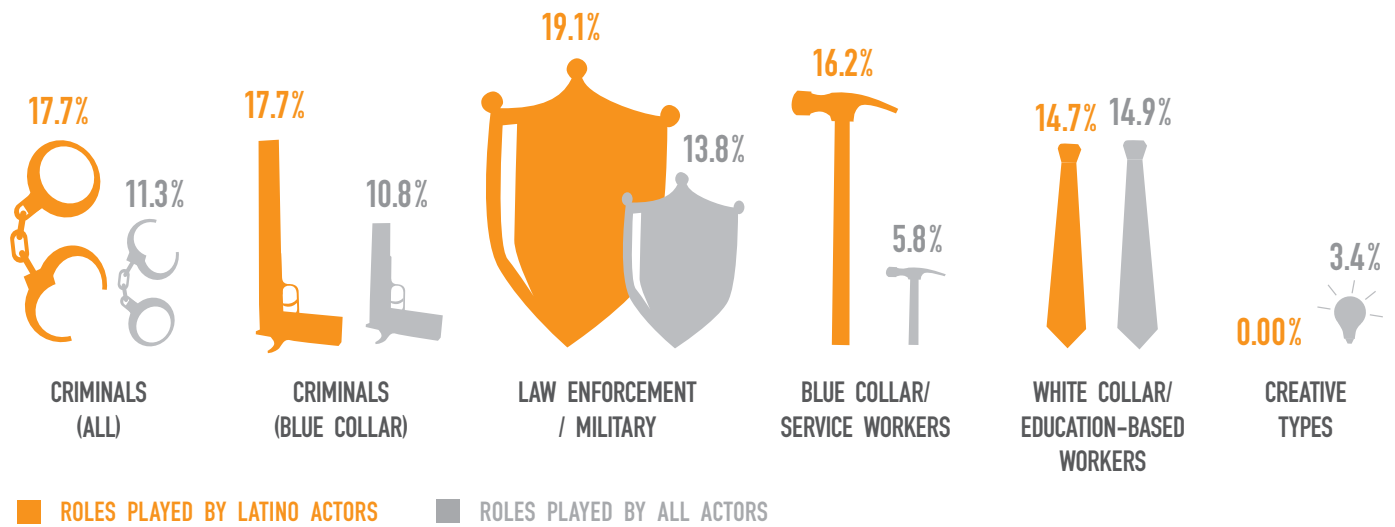


Figure 13: Roles Played by Latino Lead and Supporting Actors Compared to Roles Played by All Actors in Ten Highest-Grossing Films in the U.S., 2010-2013
(Source: IMDb)

As suggested above, only two major adult Latino/a characters were not members of law enforcement or military institutions. Of these, the most influential is Gloria Delgado-Pritchett, played by Sofia Vergara in *Modern Family*. Yet, whereas Vergara’s character is a continuation of the “sexy spitfire” stereotype whose accent is a constant source of humor, she is also portrayed as being skilled with guns. The show repeatedly implies that her Colombian heritage makes her comically accustomed to violence.

Significantly, the percentage of criminal roles today is higher than a decade ago. According to a 1995 National Council for La Raza commissioned study, in 1994, criminals made up only 6% of characters in primetime TV and 16% in reality shows.¹

While the idea that Latinos are actual or potential criminals endures, however, we found that the centrality of the criminal stereotype varied greatly from show to show, ranging from 0% in *Two and Half Men* and 5.1% in *Criminal Minds* to 32% in *NCIS LA* and 50%

in *The Big Bang Theory*. Notably, in law and order shows, Latino criminal characters tend to appear more often in stories involving gangs and/or drugs, rather than across all plotlines.

In addition to the uneven distribution of the criminal stereotype, there is a meaningful difference between the number of criminal roles and the number of times that a criminal character appears in relation to Latino law enforcers. Although criminal and law enforcement characters are almost equal when measured in number of

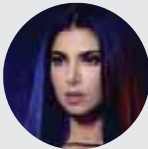

















<p>FBI AGENT</p>  <p>2005-09 SUPPORTING Elena Delgado by Roselyn Sanchez in <i>Without A Trace</i></p>	<p>POLICE DETECTIVE</p>  <p>2003-10 SUPPORTING Scotty Valens by Danny Pino in <i>Cold Case</i></p>	<p>PLANE CRASH SURVIVOR</p>  <p>2004-10 SUPPORTING Hurley Reyes by Jorge Garcia in <i>Lost</i></p>	<p>PLANE CRASH SURVIVOR/ SECURITY GUARD</p>  <p>2005-06 SUPPORTING Ana Lucia Cortez by Michelle Rodriguez in <i>Lost</i></p>	<p>POLICE CAPTAIN</p>  <p>2009-11 SUPPORTING Captain Roy Montgomery by Ruben Santiago-Hudson in <i>Castle</i></p>	<p>CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATOR</p>  <p>2002-12 SUPPORTING Eric Delko by Adam Rodriguez in <i>CSI: Miami</i></p>	<p>BUSINESSMAN/ INMATE</p>  <p>2004-12 SUPPORTING Carlos Solis by Ricardo Chavira in <i>Desperate Housewives</i></p>	<p>HOUSEWIFE</p>  <p>2004-12 LEAD Gabrielle Solis by Eva Longoria in <i>Desperate Housewives</i></p>	<p>FBI AGENT</p>  <p>2005-12 SUPPORTING Natalia Boa Vista by Eva LaRue in <i>CSI: Miami</i></p>
<p>STUDENT/ DAUGHTER</p>  <p>2008-12 SUPPORTING Juanita Solis by Madison de la Garza in <i>Desperate Housewives</i></p>	<p>STUDENT/ DAUGHTER</p>  <p>2008-12 SUPPORTING Celia Solis by Daniella Balandino in <i>Desperate Housewives</i></p>	<p>COVERT AGENT</p>  <p>2005-13 SUPPORTING Ziva David by Cote de Pablo in <i>NCIS</i></p>	<p>MEDICAL DOCTOR</p>  <p>2006-13 SUPPORTING Dr. Callie Torres by Sara Ramirez in <i>Grey's Anatomy</i></p>	<p>STUDENT</p>  <p>2009-13 SUPPORTING Grace Florrick by Makenzie Vega in <i>The Good Wife</i></p>	<p>UNEMPLOYED/ HOMEMAKER</p>  <p>2009-13 SUPPORTING Gloria Delgado-Pritchett by Sofia Vergara in <i>Modern Family</i></p>	<p>STUDENT</p>  <p>2009-13 SUPPORTING Manny Delgado by Rico Rodriguez in <i>Modern Family</i></p>	<p>HOMICIDE DETECTIVE</p>  <p>2009-13 SUPPORTING Javier Esposito by Jon Huertas in <i>Castle</i></p>	<p>DETECTIVE</p>  <p>2013 SUPPORTING Maria Baez by Marisa Ramirez in <i>Blue Bloods</i></p>



Figure 14: Race and Media Maids, 1930–2013
(Source: IMDb)

Once dominated by African American actresses playing “Mammy” stereotypes, the maid role has shifted decisively toward Latinas.

roles, law enforcers appear considerably more frequently: 36.6% vs. 13.7%. In other words, for every Latino criminal appearance, there are three appearances by Latino law enforcers. This gap can be explained in part by the fact that Latino criminal roles tend to be episodic, throwaway characters while Latino law enforcers are on the main cast.

Moreover, blue-collar and “sexy” female roles are still present but accounted for only 9.9% and 1.9% of the roles respectively. Like the criminal stereotype, however, blue-collar workers appear less than the number of roles suggests, only 5.7% of all Latino character appearances. Conversely, overly sensual Latinas are a very small number of roles. But given Vergara’s highly visible character, they account for 9.1% of appearances in the top ten shows.

Equally significant, traditionally stereotypical characters are often more common in comedy shows than in crime dramas. For instance, besides *Modern Family*’s Gloria Delgado-Pritchett, 50% of Latino characters

in *Two and a Half Men* are blue-collar workers or sexy Latinas, and 50% of Latino characters in *The Big Bang Theory* are blue-collar workers or criminals. Television then seems to view Latinos in a more favorable light when they are part of a multicultural anti-crime force than when they are inside the overwhelmingly white domestic realm.

Lastly, an important if previously unreported trend, is that over a third or 44.7% of the total number of Latino roles on television are unnamed or uncredited. While 72% of Latino characters are portrayed as law enforcers, criminals, blue-collar workers, sexy women, and other minor stereotypes such as “member of a big Latino family,” a considerable percentage of these characters have little airtime.

In the ten highest-grossing movies from 2010 to 2013, Latinos performed a greater variety of roles than on television, including princesses, Vikings and vampires. But similar patterns are present.

Of a total of 2,042 roles, Latinos played 68 or 3.3%, not counting uncredited or unnamed.² Over a third of these roles were related to law enforcement/military (19.1%) and crime (17.7%).

Furthermore, we measured two types of criminal roles: (1) blue-collar criminals, involved in the theft of goods and cash, kidnapping, the manufacture and sale of illegal drugs, and physical violence; and, (2) white collar or corporate criminals, implicated in embezzlement, bribery, cybercrime, and identity theft. While 4.3% of criminal roles in these films were white-collar, all of the criminals portrayed by Latinos were blue-collar. In addition, Latino actors were nearly twice as likely to portray blue-collar criminals than as were white actors. All of the Latino criminals were gang-affiliated.

Many Latinos also played law enforcement officials, who, although often central characters in the narrative, are still connected to crime. Taken together, criminal and law enforcement roles made up a quarter of roles performed by all actors, but comprised over a third of those played by Latinos. As in television, the confinement of Latinos to crime stories ultimately produces a limited lens through which to represent and understand them: “good Latino” or “bad Latino.”

Our survey similarly found that when one compares the types of characters played by Latinos to the actual frequency of these types of roles, it is evident that Latinos disproportionately perform stereotypical roles. Latinos were, for instance, more than three times as likely to play blue-collar labor, such as construction workers and waitresses, as were actors in general (see Figure 13). They were also slightly less likely to play white-collar workers. Moreover, while 3.4% of all actors played creative types, such as dancers, musicians, and writers, Latinos did not play any of these roles.

Finally, in the last two decades, a new stereotype was born, becoming visible in both television and film: the housemaid (see Figure 14). A role once associated with African American actresses playing “Mammy” style characters, the maid role has shifted decisively toward Latinas. Since 1996, Latina actresses have played 69%, or 11 out of 16, of the most iconic TV and movie maids. This trend was succinctly captured by the late Mexican American actress Lupe Ontiveros, who once famously declared that she had played at least 300 maid characters in her career.³

HOLLYWOOD VS. THE U.S. CENSUS

Another way to visualize the scope of stereotypical representation is to compare the mainstream media universes to another influential mapping of America: the U.S. census. While neither presents a complete picture, their contrast underscores the specifically limited ways that mainstream media portrays Latinos.

For example, mainstream television and film present worlds where Latinas make up 69% of maids and 24.2% of criminals, yet government statistics indicate that Latinos comprise 44.3% of maids or housecleaners and 19% of the non-federal prison population.⁴ Likewise, according to TV stories, 23% of Latinos are law enforcers, even if the census lists only 13% of Latinos working in those professions. Perhaps most surprising, although mainstream television represents Latinos as artists less than 1% of the time, Latinos constituted nearly 9% of the nation’s creative professionals (see Figure 15).

Equally important, whereas most news stories about Latinos correlated them with crime and undocumented entry, the majority of Latinos are native-born U.S. citizens. According to the 2012 census, of the 52.3 million people in 2012 who identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino ancestry, only 11.1 million or 21%, were undocumented.⁵

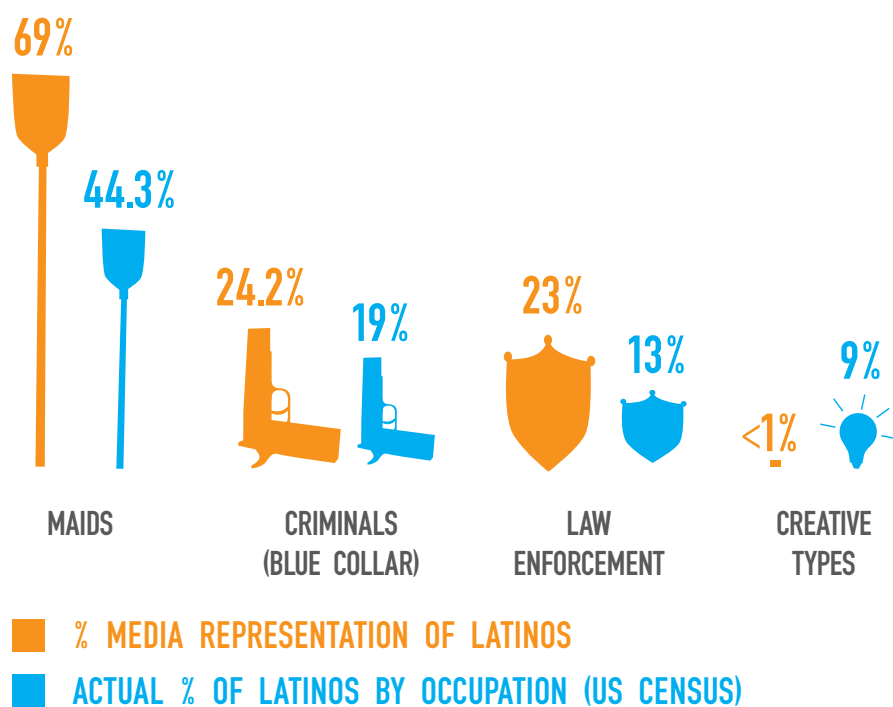


Figure 15: TV Latino Stereotypes and United Maids vs. the Census (Sources: U.S. Census, 2010 and IMDb)

3

THE DECIDERS: WHO RUNS THE SHOW?

The persistence of the Latino media gap raises the question of the role that Latinos and other groups play in decision-making. Here, the high frequency of stereotyping and low levels of Latino participation as writers, directors, and actors pales in comparison with the scant number of Latinos who serve as decision-makers, including company owners, CEOs, and television show creators. To the extent that corporations produce media through on a top-down model with tightly controlled decision-making structures, the absence of Latino industry leaders is a key factor in the current marginalization of Latino talent and stories.

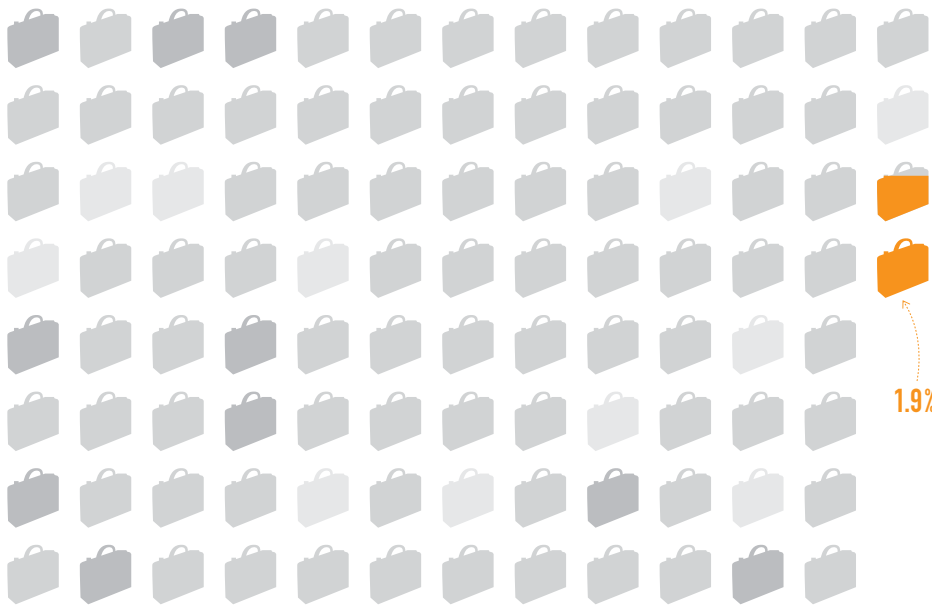
(NEARLY) NO ONE AT THE TOP: THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF CEOs, OWNERS, AND SHOW CREATORS

Since monitoring of top media management began in 1968 with the Kerner Commission, relatively little has changed in the leadership composition of the media industry. In 1989, minorities were less than 1.6% of all high-level producers.¹ Today, Latinos hold very few decision-making positions in studios and networks.

In order to determine the extent of Latino participation as decision-makers, we reviewed published lists of leading executives at the top 22 mainstream media outlets. We found that none of the 45 studio or network CEOs and presidents are Latino, and only two are not white men: Kevin Tsujihara, the Asian American CEO of Warner Brothers Entertainment, and Paula Kerger, CEO of PBS. If one adds the eight company chairpersons, all are white men except for Kazuo Hirai of the Japan-based Sony Corporation, and CBS's Nina Tassler, who is Latina. Overall, among the top 53 radio, studio, and TV executives, 1.9% were Latina or Latino (see Figure 16).

Latinos are better represented on the PBS Board of Directors, if still not proportionally. Three Latinos—Ernest Bromley, Helen Hernandez, and Ramon Rodriguez—currently serve on the 27-member body, accounting for 11.1% of all members. The level of inclusion in the senior administration is slightly higher. Of the 15 PBS corporate officers and senior executives, two, or 13.3%, are Latino: Mario Vecchi, Chief Technology Officer; and Juan Sepúlveda, Senior Vice President, Station Services.²

The show creator situation is one of the most challenging. From 2010 to 2013, there were no Latino show creators. This low level of participation correlates to the limited involvement of



NO SUITS % OF LATINO TV SHOW CREATORS, TV AND FILM EXECUTIVES WITH GREENLIGHT AUTHORITY

Figure 16: Percentage of Latinos in Top Media Leadership Positions
(Sources: Top media company websites)




	2010	2011	2012	2013
 PERCENTAGE OF WRITER POSITIONS FILLED BY LATINOS	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%
 PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCER POSITIONS FILLED BY LATINOS	1.9%	0.6%	0.9%	2.1%
 PERCENTAGE OF DIRECTOR POSITIONS FILLED BY LATINOS	1.5%	1.3%	3.7%	2.7%

Figure 17: Latinos Behind the Camera in Network TV Pilots, 2010–2013
(Source: *The Hollywood Reporter*)

Latinos in pilot production (see Figure 17). As Latino talent receives fewer opportunities to present ideas, they are also less likely to be part of final lineups.

Specifically, in the 2010 to 2013 period, Latinos accounted for 2.1% or less of pilot show producers. In 2011 and 2012, there were no Latinos writing for network TV pilots at all. Yet, in 2013, the number of writer and producer positions filled by Latinos increased. But the numbers are still quite small relative to the population: only 25 out of 901 posts in network TV pilots were filled by Latinos, representing 2.8% of the total.

It is unclear if the 2013 increase in writers and producers will become a trend or have an impact. Between 2010 and 2011, for example, the proportion of Latino writer, producer, and director positions fell. At the same time, given that 2013 was the only year in the sample in which Latino producers exceeded 2% and Latino writers surpassed 5% of the total, it is possible that viewers may see a modest increase in Latino participation on television over the next few years.

EQUALLY LACKING: POWER BEHIND THE POWER

Media company owners also drive key media decisions—and this is yet another

area where Latino participation is low. As reported by the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, in 2009, Latinos owned only 2.5% of television stations, 2.9% of radio stations, and no film studios. Three years later, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) found that between 2009 and 2011, Latino ownership of television stations slightly increased from 2.5% to 2.9%.³ Latinos, however, continued to hold majority-voting interests in just 2.7% of full power television stations, indicating stagnation in this sector.⁴

THE RACE OF RECOGNITION

The lack of Latino decision-makers is also dramatically evident in institutions that recognize the achievements of professionals working in the industry.

Of these, the most well-known to the public is the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which awards the “Oscars” every year. As of 2012, 94% of the Academy voters were white, and fewer than 2% were Latino.⁵ This composition correlates with the nominations and awarding of the Oscars.

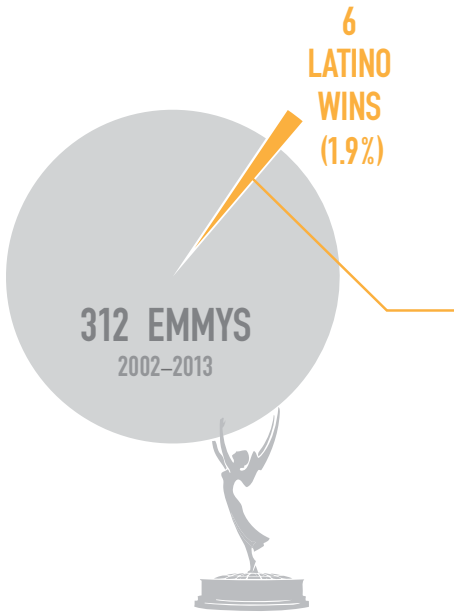
According to a UCLA report, from 2002 to 2012, only 4% of Oscar nominees in the major categories were Latino, and none of them earned an award.⁶ No Latino performer has

The absence of Latinos as executives and producers is a key factor in the current marginalization of Latino talent and stories.

LATINOS & THE EMMYS

2002–2013

OF 312 EMMYS AWARDED BETWEEN 2002–2013, LATINO ACTORS WON ONLY 6 (1.9%), WITH ANOTHER 11 NOMINATIONS.



NOMINATIONS

<p>2002 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A DRAMA</p>  <p>FREDDY RODRIGUEZ <i>Six Feet Under</i></p>	<p>2005 OUTSTANDING GUEST ACTRESS IN A COMEDY</p>  <p>LUPE ONTIVEROS <i>Desperate Housewives</i></p>	<p>2006 OUTSTANDING DIRECTOR IN DRAMA</p>  <p>RODRIGO GARCIA <i>Big Love</i></p>	<p>2008 OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTRESS IN COMEDY</p>  <p>AMERICA FERRARA <i>Ugly Betty</i></p>	<p>2010 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN COMEDY</p>  <p>SOFIA VERGARA <i>Modern Family</i></p>	
<p>2011 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN COMEDY</p>  <p>SOFIA VERGARA <i>Modern Family</i></p>	<p>2011 OUTSTANDING WRITING IN COMEDY</p>  <p>LOUIS CK <i>Louie</i></p>	<p>2012 OUTSTANDING GUEST ACTOR IN COMEDY</p>  <p>BOBBY CANNAVALE <i>Nurse Jackie</i></p>	<p>2012 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN COMEDY</p>  <p>SOFIA VERGARA <i>Modern Family</i></p>	<p>2013 OUTSTANDING GUEST ACTOR IN COMEDY</p>  <p>BOBBY CANNAVALE <i>Nurse Jackie</i></p>	<p>2013 OUTSTANDING GUEST ACTOR IN COMEDY</p>  <p>LOUIS CK <i>Saturday Night Live</i></p>
<p>2005 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A COMEDY</p>  <p>BOBBY CANNAVALE <i>Will and Grace</i></p>	<p>2006 OUTSTANDING WRITING IN COMEDY</p>  <p>GREG GARCIA <i>My Name is Earl</i></p>	<p>2007 OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTRESS IN COMEDY</p>  <p>AMERICA FERRARA <i>Ugly Betty</i></p>	<p>2012 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING WRITING IN COMEDY</p>  <p>LOUIS CK <i>Louie</i></p>	<p>2013 OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTOR IN DRAMA</p>  <p>BOBBY CANNAVALE <i>Boardwalk Empire</i></p>	<p>2013 OUTSTANDING DIRECTING IN COMEDY</p>  <p>LOUIS CK <i>Louie</i></p>

Figure 18: Latinos and the Emmys, 2002–2013 (Source: Emmys website)

received an Oscar for acting since Benicio del Toro won Best Supporting Actor for the film *Traffic* (2000). As with other industry institutions, gains are not sustained or sufficient: in both 2011 and 2013, no Latino was nominated in any of the major categories. The 2014 roster featured one main successful nomination to Alfonso Cuarón for directing *Gravity*, starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney. This win accounted for 2.9% of all top awards.⁷

The Emmys present a similar situation. They are presented by the Los Angeles–based Academy of Television Arts and Sciences; the organization’s objective is to honor the best in primetime programming. Although no complete

list of the Academy’s 15,000 members is available, in our survey of the Academy’s top leadership, we found that no Latinos are part of the organization’s 58 Board of Governors. Likewise, none of the Executive Committee’s 18 members are Latino.

Not surprisingly, this lack of diversity is also evident in the number of Latinos recognized by the Academy. From 2002 to 2013, there were 1,125 primetime Emmy nominations for drama and comedy series encompassing outstanding acting, writing, directing, and programming. Latinos received 18, or 1.6%, of the nominations. Of the 312 Emmys actually awarded in the top categories, Latinos won six, accounting for 1.9% of the total (see Figure 18).⁸

In sum, depending on the company, network or institution, the vast majority of all fundamental media decisions are made by affluent, middle-aged, white men. Yet, most industry leaders publicly support diversity as a corporate policy and recognize the importance of diverse storylines to the country’s youngest viewers. To better understand this disjuncture, the next section looks closer at why diversity departments have not been able to fully realize their mandates.

4

DIVERSITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Concern over Latino inclusion is not new in the media industry and it has arisen from different contexts. Arguably, the first “official” Latino diversity initiative took place during the 1940s.¹ At the time, the United States government instructed the movie industry to represent Latin Americans in a more “positive” light to secure the region’s markets and political support during WWII. Accordingly, the number of movies with Latin American themes exploded, nurturing the careers of both U.S. Latino and Latin American stars. After the end of the war, however, these directives were no longer considered important and were dropped. Latino inclusion plummeted on screens.

The next key moment took place two decades later. In the 1960s, the African American and Latino civil rights movements identified media representation as a civil right and gave rise to campaigns targeting discrimination in hiring and stereotypical representation. As social movements continued into the 1970s, new pressures were applied to the film and television industries.²

To address these, television outlets such as PBS made important modifications to their content, producing Latino-themed features, multicultural children’s programming, and bilingual sitcoms such as the now classic *Que Pasa, USA* (1977). But once the pressure declined, most media outlets opted to exclude Latinos rather than proportionally incorporate them in non-stereotypical roles and as behind-the-camera talent.

During the 1990s, advocacy groups again organized to demand better representation of minorities in television and film. This time, media companies responded by creating diversity departments and appointing people of color, mostly African Americans, as diversity executives. In this context, “diversity” emerged as a less confrontational term than did “affirmative action” to address the

persistent stereotyping and exclusion of women, Latinos, and other groups.

While it would be an exaggeration to conclude that diversity departments have been completely ineffective, it would not be unfair to say that they have failed to significantly change the face of the industry. In many, if not most instances, diversity executives can generate data and exert influence, but generally have little or no power to enforce compliance, particularly in the critical area of content creation. As a result, the fundamental job of diversity executives has been to monitor rather than actualize diversity within their networks and/or studios.

In order to better understand the possibilities and limits of the current model of diversity departments, we interviewed 27 diversity and other media executives, producers, and/or advocates to assess their views on the success of diversity efforts. Although all of the executives interviewed favored diversity as a policy, all but one agreed that the present model had largely not achieved its main objective. All advocates concurred that diversity departments had not brought about substantial change.

DIVERSE PROBLEMS

Respondents identified a broad range of reasons why diversity departments had not been highly effective. These reasons can be classified as interpersonal or focused on individual desires and fears; institutional, emphasizing company policies and rules; and societal, referring to broader social relations, laws, and discourses.

Interpersonal Factors

Most interviewees gave great weight to everyday life and professional behavior in accounting for the performance of present diversity initiatives. This suggests that while media professionals

“Writers tend to write what they know. And what they know is Beverly Hills to car to studio and back, always surrounded by people like themselves.”

recognize the importance of other factors, they also view individual actions as key to understanding the status quo.

The “Comfort Zone.”

There was a strong consensus that the “comfort zone” of decision-makers played a significant role regarding who is offered opportunities in the media industry. All interviewees agreed that producers and executives tend to hire people they know, who are recommended by acquaintances, and/or with whom they feel comfortable. In the words of one guild advocate: “The industry is hostile, dog-eat-dog, and very stressful. In that world, you want people who have your back.”³ Since the vast majority of top industry management is currently white and male, this results in hiring along the same racial and gender lines. The assumption is that people outside of the network will not be loyal or supportive to those already inside.

Unconscious Bias.

Several Latino producers stated that executives, showrunners, and casting directors view Latinos as better suited for low-wage, “unintellectual” jobs and roles. This perception is reinforced by the relationships that managers tend to have with Latinos, particularly in the industry’s capital, Los Angeles. As one Latino producer stressed, “The view of Latinos is as a servant class. All they know us as is their gardeners and maids. That’s what they see when they look at us and that’s how they cast us.”⁴

Resistance to Changing the Story.

A number of Latino media makers and diversity executives also identified the reluctance of individual writers to diversify the kinds of stories that they write as a key obstacle to change. For many of the study’s participants, this is linked to the homogeneity of writers and executive producers in the industry, who for decades have been

overwhelmingly white, middle-aged, and male. According to one diversity executive, “Writers tend to write what they know. And what they know is Beverly Hills to car to studio and back, always surrounded by people like themselves.”⁵

A second diversity executive provided the following example of how attempts to change the status quo fail: “A diversity executive will ask a writer to add diverse people to the script and the white writer will flip out and say ‘the character is everything, I can’t change him.’ When the writer says ‘I don’t feel it,’ the showrunner generally sides with him. At best, you will get a diverse sidekick character or ‘fruit salad’ background where the characters do not make significant contributions to the story. Showrunners themselves are almost always from the same background as the writer.”⁶

Fear of Displacement.

According to some respondents, the description of the media industry as a family business and/or one based on relationships may mask a greater anxiety for industry insiders: fear of change. “They say that the business is based on relationships,” a guild advocate noted. “But the fact is that people just don’t want to change. We do a lot of network mixers and it goes nowhere. The business is so competitive, no one wants to open it up to new people for fear of being displaced.”⁷ Or in more direct terms, “When someone is up, someone is down.”⁸

Importantly, the fear factor is not only a white/non-white issue. Some interviewees pointed out that African Americans were also hesitant to advocate on behalf of Latinos for fear of losing their hard-fought yet still limited access. “There is a fear of black displacement because blacks had been standing in for all diversity until now,” one producer observed.⁹ To the extent that inclusion is largely understood

in racial and gender terms, it tends to reinforce intra-group solidarity, and makes coalition-building difficult.

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Respondents also identified several key institutional reasons why diversity has not taken hold in studios, stations, and networks. These ranged from a weak commitment to ineffectual benchmarks to the ambiguity of the category “Latino.”

Diversity is a “Front.”

The vast majority of executives believe that diversity programs have not succeeded because diversity is not yet a true institutional value. In the words of one executive: “Diversity has never been an intrinsic part of the institutional fabric. Diversity is like a Christmas ornament that you bring out and, after it’s over, you put it away.”¹⁰ Or, as a diversity officer bluntly put it, “Diversity officers are managers of discontent and get paid well to do it.”¹¹

Others felt that diversity initiatives were in fact a conservative mechanism to maintain the status quo. “Diversity,” says one guild advocate, “is the product of white backlash. Taking some of our language and using it on us.”¹² The bottom line is that, as another guild advocate summarized: “Ultimately, the companies control everything. They choose the executives; the diversity departments serve at their pleasure, and cannot implement policies autonomously. They also choose the showrunners and producers. If the networks and studios really wanted more diversity, it would happen.”¹³

Diversity is Vague.

Likewise, the majority of executives say that accountability is difficult because measures of diversity are not well defined. A key example is that for major studios and networks, diversity is

understood globally. This means that employment and programs involving, say, Latin America and/or Latin Americans outside of the U.S., are counted as Latino diversity. One media advocate recounted: “The network was claiming that Paula Abdul, who has Syrian and Jewish roots and was partly raised in Brazil, was a Latina.”¹⁴

The majority of U.S.-born Latino respondents were particularly critical of this tendency: “Latin Americans are used as deflection. They come from elite backgrounds and their journey is very different than that of a U.S. Latino.”¹⁵ These assumptions were evident in the interview process: when pressed for evidence of Latino participation, most diversity and human resource officials cited their overseas divisions and named Latin American born-and-bred talent.

Benchmarks are Wrong, Tactics Ineffective.

A smaller number of executives expressed that diversity programs are intrinsically flawed and therefore unsuccessful: “Diversity recruitment events do not produce the best candidates. We hire through internal networking.”¹⁶ Some executives also rejected the idea that population should match employment, the usual benchmark of media advocates: “The talent–employment–population ratio is not a valid way to measure. One can’t say that because Latinos are 17% of the population, they should be 17% of the writers.”¹⁷ What is needed, added a second executive, “are different benchmarks for diversity.”¹⁸

Latinos Buy Us Anyway.

A minority of independent advocates pointed out that diversity programs fail because network and studio heads believe that there is no true need to diversify, as Latinos are already consuming media beyond their numbers. “This is slowly changing as executives now believe that Latinos are

an important part of the market. But it accounts for the haphazard ways that change happens. One year the numbers are up; the next they are down.”¹⁹

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLICY FACTORS

While most interviewees focused on institutional and individual factors, there was a convergence that the following three socio-political and economic aspects contributed to the lack of diversity in media.

“Diversity has never been an intrinsic part of the institutional fabric. Diversity is like a Christmas ornament that you bring out and, after it’s over, you put it away.”

Latinos are generally perceived as recent arrivals and foreigners, so inclusion of Latinos in media institutions is not perceived as a public good.

Latino Inclusion is Not a Public Good.

All Latino media advocates expressed that, in contrast to African Americans, Latinos are generally viewed as new arrivals and foreigners, so inclusion of Latinos in media institutions is not perceived as a public good. As one advocate noted, “They don’t understand our struggles. They don’t know that there were thousands of Mexican Americans murdered in Texas from 1900 to 1909.”²⁰ The advocates further observed that Latino claims are regarded as opportunistic or unwarranted: “Latinos are seen as recent immigrants trying to ride on the coattails of African Americans.”²¹ In the words of a guild advocate, “Whites do not feel responsible. Their sense is ‘I didn’t do it.’”²²

According to most respondents, this larger context partly explains why executives do not feel any urgency to increase opportunity. One human resources executive, for instance, summed up the situation in this way: “At our company, people tend not to leave. So we can’t keep up with outside demographics. We just don’t have many opportunities for promoting minorities.”²³

We Live in a “Post-Racial” Society.

Beginning in the 1990s and culminating in the immediate aftermath of President Barack Obama’s election in 2008, there is also a growing consensus, particularly among whites, that the U.S. is now a “post-racial” society. This is broadly echoed among the surveyed leadership. “There is no discrimination,” a guild advocate stated. “People just look for where the money is.”²⁴ Most diversity officers highlighted that Latinos were not considered to be as prepared or educated as Asian Americans or whites. In this sense, there is a general and growing rejection to the use of a collective rights argument over individual talent and preparation.

As one studio executive forcefully concluded, “The days of affirmative action are over.”²⁵

It’s the Economy.

In addition to racial fatigue, most respondents concurred that the recent recession and financial impact of changing media distribution platforms and income streams create a less hospitable atmosphere for proportionally increasing the participation of minorities. “The biggest threat right now is for someone to take your job,” one guild advocate, stated. “People don’t want to hear about minority exclusion, because everyone is suffering.”²⁶ Others concurred that today’s juncture was difficult to maneuver given the economic crisis: “People get defensive. If it’s difficult for everyone, it’s harder to talk about minorities. And the board doesn’t even want to hear it.”²⁷

5

DIVERSITY PAYS

From a business point of view, the reluctance to diversify is puzzling as there is strong evidence that increasing the presence of Latinos in media leads to more viewers, higher ratings, and greater profits for media companies. This is the case not only because a greater number of Latinos may watch shows or films but also because Latino talent often appeals to a significant cross section of the audience. In this regard, when it comes to Latino inclusion, studios and networks appear to act not out of economic self-interest, but only when they are pressured. As one advocate put it, “When change happens, it’s really about fear...fear of losing your job, embarrassment, and failure.”¹

For this section, we surveyed the impact of greater Latino diversity in film, television, and radio. To illustrate the premise that “diversity pays,” we identified four case studies in which executives have successfully developed business models based on diverse hiring.

ABC RISING: THE IMPACT OF DIVERSE PROGRAMMING ON RATINGS AND REVENUE

In 2004, ABC was at the bottom of the main network ratings pile.² In response, ABC executives Lloyd Braun, Susan Lyne, and incoming CEO Steve

McPherson implemented a strategy based on the idea that, given U.S. demographics and appeal of Latino stars, diverse shows could help revive network ratings and increase revenue.

To this end, ABC approved three shows from 2004 to 2005 with key Latino talent in quick succession: *Desperate Housewives* (2004), *Lost* (2004), and *Grey’s Anatomy* (2005). The results were remarkable: ABC’s ratings climbed from 3.2 in the 2003–04 season to 4 in the 2005–06 season (see Figure 19). In 2006, the show *Ugly Betty*, executive produced by Salma Hayek, also had an impressive premiere, becoming ABC’s highest-rated scripted show in its time slot since *Matlock* in 1995.³

Moreover, as a result of increased viewership, advertisers immediately started paying attention.⁴ The network’s advertising revenue reportedly climbed to an unprecedented \$50 million in the *Ugly Betty-Grey’s Anatomy* Thursday slot.⁵ Ten years later, diversity continues to be a key component of ABC’s business strategy.

DEVIIOUS MAIDS BRINGS (MORE) LIFE TO LIFETIME

Significantly, the ABC experience is not isolated; it also applies to cable shows. A case in point is *Devious Maids*, which

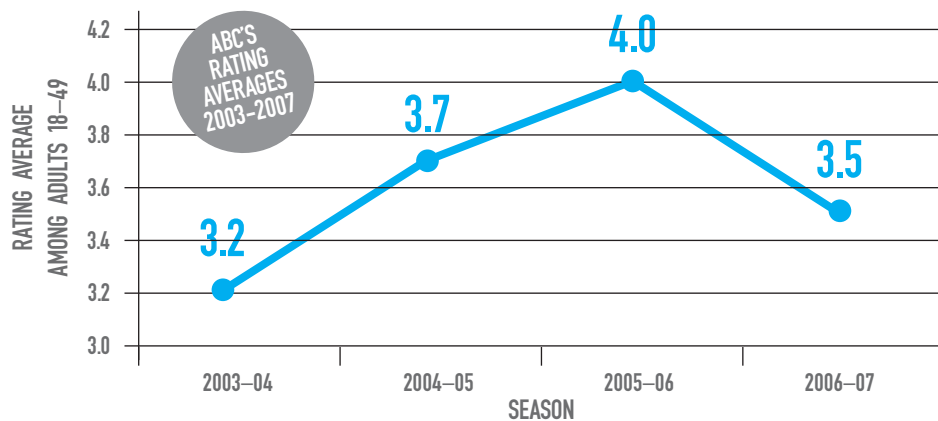


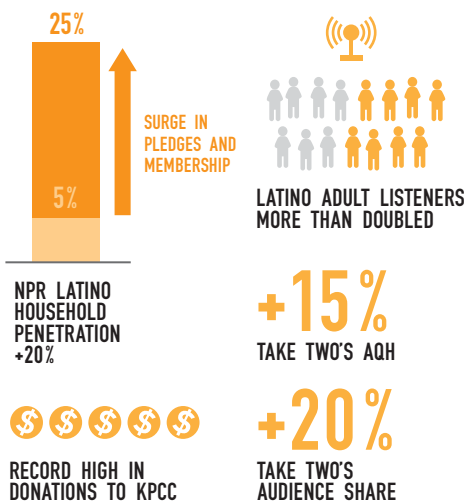
Figure 19: ABC Rating Averages, 2003–2007 (Source: SpottedRatings.com)

began to air on Lifetime in 2013 after being turned down by the networks. Based on a Latin American soap opera about the lives of five maids and their employers, *Devious Maids* featured an all-Latina lead cast, two Latina writers and *Desperate Housewives* star Eva Longoria as an executive producer.

This line up made *Devious Maids* the first major television show in history to include such a high number of Latina leads and behind-the-camera talent. The question was: is anyone going to watch? At the beginning, it was not clear. Even before anyone could tune in, Latino media advocates began to criticize the show as perpetuating the maid stereotype. Yet, while pundits debated in the blogosphere, *Devious Maids* became a big hit for the Lifetime network. Two million viewers watched the premiere in June 2013, and the audience grew to three million for the season finale in September.⁶ According to journalist Nellie Andreeva, the show “made Lifetime the No. 1 cable network in the Sunday 10 PM time slot among women.”⁷



GROWTH AFTER A. MARTINEZ JOINS 89.3 KPCC



As it was widely noted in the press, adults aged 18–49 accounted for 1.4 million viewers, 1.2 million of whom were women. Significantly, Latinos made up a large share of that audience: close to 19%, which is almost twice Lifetime’s primetime average.⁸ This response suggests that many Latinos, particularly women, did not object to maid characters as long as they were not stereotypically drawn. Although there are currently no public statistics concerning *Devious Maids’* impact on advertisement revenue, Lifetime picked up the show to air for a second season in 2014.⁹

LISTENING TO CALIFORNIA: THE KPCC BOOM

Another dramatic example involved 89.3 KPCC, one of the widest-reaching public radio stations in southern California, with approximately 600,000 listeners each week.¹⁰ Like most media entities, the station had a commitment to diversity and had actually designed a three-year, \$10 million project to address it.¹¹ Still, they had not made substantial changes to key programming in years.

In 2012, board member Ana Valdez, one of two Latinos on the board, sounded the alarm: if the station did not incorporate greater Latino diversity, it might not survive in the long term.¹² While 80% of NPR’s current audience is estimated to be white, over 45% of southern California’s population is Latino.¹³

The board chose to test the waters by hiring a Latino co-host, A. Martinez, for its morning news show, *The Madeleine Brand Show*. As this was a top-rated show, there was some apprehension, particularly as Martinez was perceived as a “sports radio guy from ESPN” with no experience in public radio.¹⁴ There was also fear that tinkering with a proven formula could drive away listeners. This fear increased

when after only four weeks, the star host, Madeleine Brand, quit, citing that she could no longer do the show.¹⁵

Despite missteps and a learning curve for the new host, the station experienced the unexpected. According to journalist Gabriel Kahn, a month after Brand and Martinez began working together, over 7,000 more listeners tuned in. And four months after Brand’s replacement, Alex Cohen, began to work with Martinez, NPR diffusion in Latino households shot up from 5% to 25%, ushering in a significant surge in pledges and membership.¹⁶ Equally important, the station’s morning audience share rose by 17% and donations to the station hit record highs.¹⁷

FAST AND THE FURIOUS MOVES THE MARKET

As noted in earlier sections, Latinos are the most avid movie ticket buyers in the U.S., a fact that is often leaned on to avoid rather than to promote diversity in hiring and storylines. There is, however, one movie franchise that has learned the huge risk that a studio may incur in when it fails to address a core audience: *The Fast and the Furious*.

The Fast and the Furious is the biggest box office franchise of all time for Universal Studios, grossing over \$2.3 billion as of 2013.¹⁹ The latest film, *The Fast and the Furious 6*, reached \$500 million in worldwide box office totals with greater speed than any other film in Universal’s history.²⁰ Given the series’ ample domestic and worldwide audience, Universal is already considering the production of sequels as far ahead as *The Fast and the Furious 9*.

Latinos have significantly contributed to Universal’s success. When analyzing domestic box office returns, there is a strong correlation between the presence of Latino talent and earnings. And this can be confirmed by examining the

box office of the second through fourth installments.

While each film in the franchise has earned more at the box office than the prior film, there are two exceptions: *2 Fast 2 Furious* and *The Fast and the Furious 3*. Domestically, *2 Fast 2 Furious* earned 13% less in revenue. Some critics attributed the drop to the departure of lead actor Vin Diesel.

Subtitled *Tokyo Drift*, the third installment experienced an even steeper drop—43%. This time, critics identified the absence of actor Paul Walker as a determining factor in the franchise’s decline. Yet, the fact that Vin Diesel again starred in the third film points to the possibility of another, less noted absence: Latinos.

Specifically, the drop in revenues between the first and second films was arguably not as dramatic as between the second and third in part because Latino talent and locations did not disappear altogether. Though Michelle Rodriguez did not star in *2 Fast 2 Furious*, Eva Mendes played a detective, and much of the action took place in Latino cities like Los Angeles and Miami. *Tokyo Drift*, however, did not include any Latino actors, themes, or locations.

The significant impact of Latinos to the franchise’s survival becomes even clearer in the fourth installment, with the return of Michelle Rodriguez in her signature role of Letty Ortiz and the film’s multiple Latin American settings. At that point, the franchise experienced a major jump in box office revenues. Whereas *Tokyo Drift* earned only \$62.5 million, *The Fast and the Furious 4*, made over \$155.1 million (see Figure 20). The franchise has since maintained top Latino talent, setting, and/or characters in all subsequent films.

The importance of Latino moviegoers to the franchise’s rise can be further verified by measuring audience share. In 2009, *The Los Angeles Times* reported

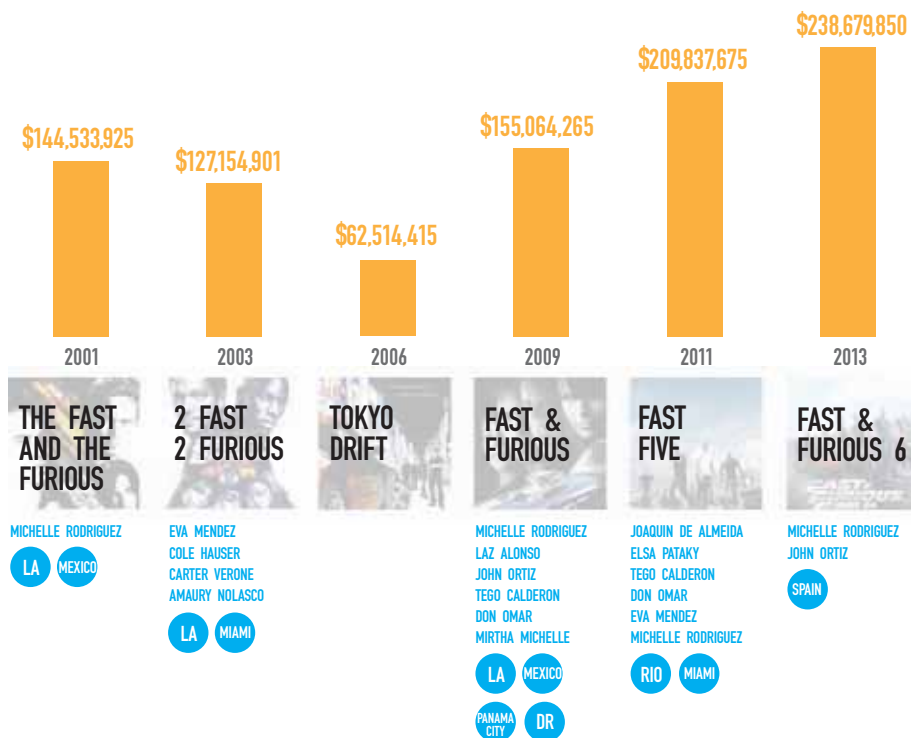


Figure 20: Latino Box Office Impact on *The Fast and The Furious* Franchise (Sources: *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Los Angeles Times* and IMDb)

that a limited sampling indicated that 46% of the audience for *The Fast and the Furious 4* was Latino.²¹ Such a number significantly exceeds the Latino population (17%), and the percentage of tickets that Latinos buy on average (25%).²² In 2013, the *Los Angeles Times* again reported that once Rodriguez was reintroduced to the series, Latino audiences helped to carry the film to the top of the box office: they accounted for nearly a third of the film’s spectators on opening weekend.²³

ADDING IT UP

These case studies reveal that the fear of diversity is unwarranted. When English-language networks, stations, and studios diversify talent, they are amply rewarded. It is also evident that although Latinos are passionate consumers of existing offerings, they also prefer media that includes Latino characters and storylines, and avoids blatant stereotypes. While *The Fast and the Furious* franchise can be seen as

perpetuating stereotypes of Latinos as cops and robbers, the series is unusual, as most characters are represented as neither entirely “good” nor “bad,” and the storyline creates a world where people of multiple racial backgrounds interact and work together toward common goals.

The importance of compelling Latino portrayals is additionally evident in the failure of two 2012 shows, ABC’s *Work It* and CBS’s *Rob*, which featured Latino actors and situations but relied on extreme stereotypical representations. The shows made it only to two and eight episodes respectively, demonstrating the pitfalls of such programming. *Work It* was also the target of a large boycott by Latino advocates and consumers, an effort that contributed to its cancellation and underscored the importance of Latino consumer power in the new media landscape.²⁴

6

ACTION!: LATINO CONSUMER POWER AND ADVOCACY

As previously noted, estimates indicate that Latino consumers hold over 1 trillion dollars in spending power, or close to 10% of the U.S total—and this consumer power is growing fast. By 2015, Latino buying power is expected to reach \$1.6 trillion.”¹

In the mainstream and trade press, allusions to Latino consumer power tend to be accompanied by the assumption of passivity. Even when studies show that Latinos actually change brands at higher rates than other groups, corporate reports and the press tend to portray Latino consumers as brand-loyal.² Furthermore, in our survey, some executives represented advocates as detrimental to achieving media change. In the words of one executive, “Protests are outdated. They ruffle feathers.”³

Yet, the mobilization of Latino media consumers and advocates has been key in the acceleration of change over the last five decades, and this pressure continues to be an essential force in diversifying media. Specifically, advocates and consumers have challenged stereotypes, helped to create pipelines of opportunity, and pressured networks and studios to tell new stories. To better understand their role today, this section investigates how Latino consumer and advocacy power have grown and changed since the 1960s.

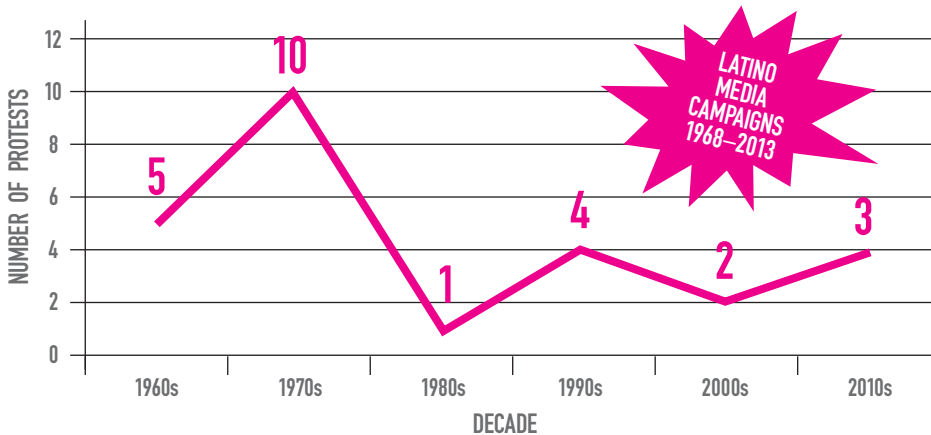


Figure 21: Number of National Latino Media Campaigns, 1968–2013 (Sources: *The New York Times* and scholarly publications)

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Since the introduction of cinema in the late nineteenth century, Latinos have responded to media misrepresentation and employment discrimination with organized campaigns, and these intensified after WWII.⁴ Our review of published accounts in the news and scholarly press revealed that there have been at least 25 national campaigns led by Latino media advocates since 1968. The rate of these protests also increased substantially in the 1970s, before declining in the subsequent decade. Media advocacy efforts picked up once more in the mid-1990s, and 2011 saw a flurry of activity reminiscent of the late 1970s (see Figure 21).

Along with the sheer volume of campaigns, it is significant that present Latino media advocacy efforts are increasingly effective. From 1968 to 1998, most successful media campaigns took an average of 23 months and as much as four years to accomplish their stated goals. In addition, just 63% of Latino campaigns prevailed in all or part of their goals. Since 1998, with the rise of the Internet and the Latino population, 86% of campaigns achieved all or part of their objectives in under a month, and none took more than nine months (see Figure 22).

Likewise, our survey found that the most effective Latino media advocacy campaigns have taken the form of boycotts targeting advertisers in relation to what consumers consider offensive programming or commercials. Since 1968, every mobilization by Latinos against products with stereotypical ads has achieved the campaigners’ goals. These include protests against Bell Telephone, Granny Goose, Liggett and Myers, Frito-Lay, Elgin National Watch Company, American Motors, and Coors Light (see Figure 23).

This tendency continues to the present. Campaigns aimed at advertisers have

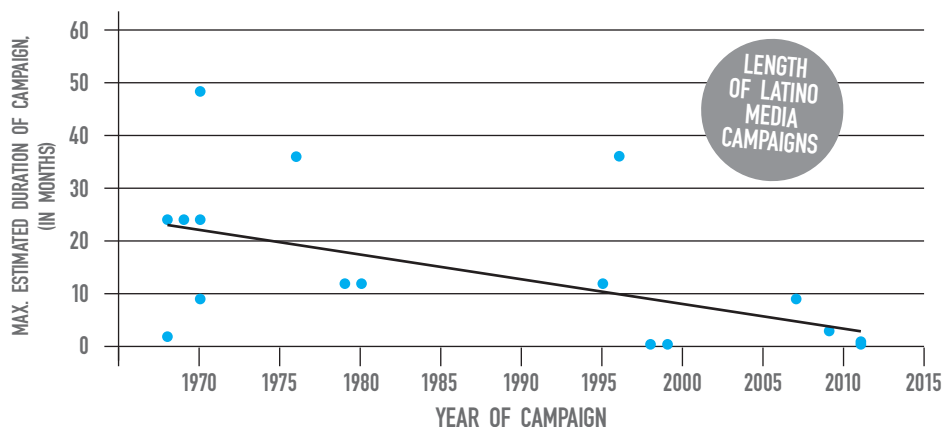


Figure 22: Length of Latino Media Campaigns, 1968-2013
 (Sources: *The New York Times* and scholarly publications)

Advocates and consumers have challenged stereotypes, created pipelines of opportunities, and encouraged networks and studios to tell new stories.

been responsible for the banning of a *Seinfeld* episode that featured the burning of a Puerto Rican flag in 1998, and accelerating the cancellation of television shows like the previously-mentioned *Work It* in 2012.⁵ To date, only the ongoing national campaign against the *John and Ken* radio show begun in 2011 by the National Hispanic Media Coalition has been unable to achieve its main goal of taking the program off the air, although it has triggered an exodus of advertisers.⁶

In general, the least successful campaigns have been against studios for specific films. This is partly the case because studio revenue has historically not been as dependent on advertisement dollars and national audiences, making the studios less vulnerable to domestic consumer pressure. Beginning in the late 1990s, however, some campaigns, such as “No nos quieren” (They Don’t Want Us), also launched by the National Hispanic Media Coalition against ABC and Disney, influenced the creation of writing programs that provide access for Latinos to entry-level creative opportunities.⁷ In the near future, the effectiveness of Latino advocacy campaigns will likely increase as studios require even greater budgets, and the promotion of a film becomes more reliant upon the sale of merchandise and the incorporation of corporate brands into the narrative.

Equally important, campaigns aimed at news programs have become gradually more fruitful. A case in point is the campaign demanding an end to the CNN news show, *Lou Dobbs Tonight*, which we explore in greater detail below. This effort was noteworthy not only because it focused on one of the media formats where Latinos are less visible and more stereotypically represented—television news—but also because of its innovative approach to advocacy and its potential to serve as a model for future campaigns.

THE FIGHT AGAINST LOU DOBBS TONIGHT

In 2008, anti-immigrant talk was heard everywhere, contributing to an all-time high of 735 hate crimes against Latinos in the U.S. (see Figure 24). At CNN, news personality Lou Dobbs was making a career out of American immigration anxiety. Since the show’s creation in 2003, *Lou Dobbs Tonight* had become a central source for anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric, often passing off exaggeration for fact.⁸

For example, in 2005, Dobbs made the inaccurate claim that “the invasion of illegal aliens is threatening the health of many Americans.” He cited that immigrants were importing leprosy over the Mexican border at a very high rate,

a total of 7,000 cases in three years. However, this was the total number of cases over the previous 30 years.⁹ Regardless of Dobbs' anti-immigrant bias, CNN did not act to hold the show accountable to journalistic standards. Instead, the company supported the show, which experienced a significant ratings bounce: between 2003 and 2007, its audience grew 72%.¹⁰

But not all were appreciative. In 2009, an online advocacy organization called Presente.org formed a campaign named "Basta Dobbs," calling on CNN to fire Lou Dobbs. Led by media strategist Roberto Lovato, the campaign came to include more than 40 grassroots organizations spanning 12 states and 25 major media markets. Overall, the "Basta Dobbs" campaign made two key arguments.¹¹ One, CNN could not retain Dobbs and hope to be considered a politically neutral news site. Two, CNN could also not expect to keep Dobbs as a host and still court Latino viewers with its upcoming *Latino in America* series, which included senior Latina journalists at the helm: correspondent Soledad O'Brien and senior producer Rose Arce.

Not long afterwards, several major organizations, including Media Matters

for America, the National Council of La Raza, the New Democrat Network, the National Hispanic Media Coalition, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, initiated a "Drop Dobbs" coalition. This campaign focused its attention on advertisers and demanded that the network stop supporting Dobbs' show.¹²

While both groups were important in ousting Dobbs, the "Basta Dobbs" campaign embodied a new approach to media advocacy in the digital age. On the one hand, the campaign effectively employed traditional means by recruiting writers to contribute op-eds in *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, New York's *El Diario-La Prensa* and Los Angeles' *La Opinión*, and gathering over 100,000 signatures. On the other hand, the campaign leveraged new media tools to amplify their message and exert pressure on CNN.¹³

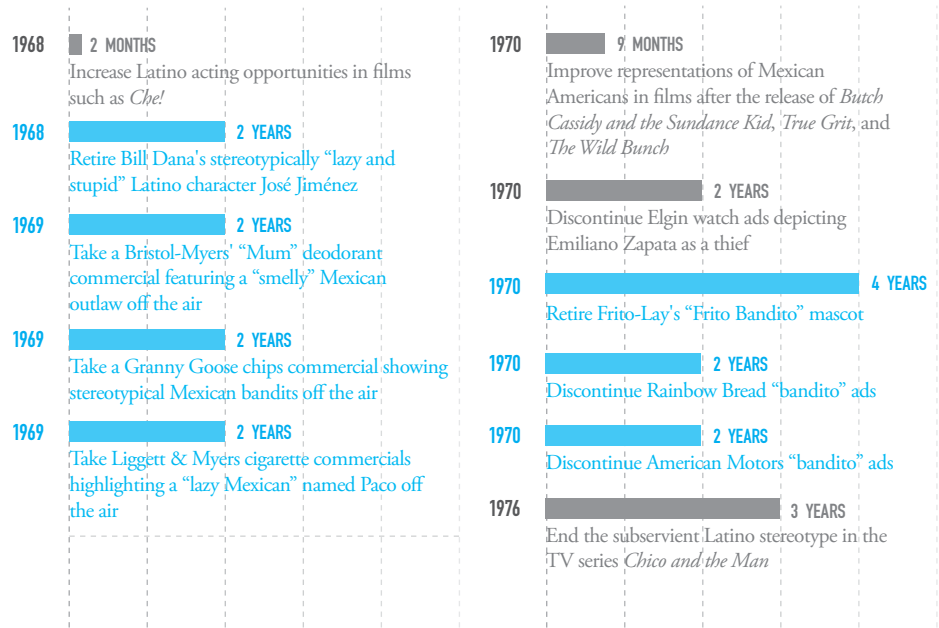
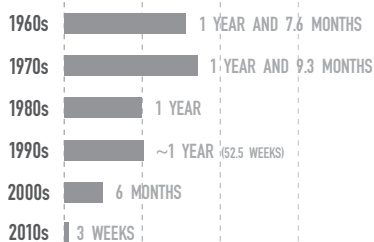
These tools included the production of an online video by award-winning documentary filmmaker Arturo Perez titled "CNN: Lou Dobbs or Latinos in America?" In addition, the group created a text-message "shortcode" call to action, publicized via radio and on-the-ground events in 18 of the largest Latino media markets. This enabled thousands of people to join the

Figure 23: Goals and Outcomes of Latino Media Campaigns 1968–2011
(Sources: *The New York Times* and scholarly publications)

LATINO MEDIA CAMPAIGNS 1968–2011

■ FAIL ■ PARTIAL SUCCESS ■ SUCCESS

AVERAGE CAMPAIGN DURATION BY DECADE



campaign through their cell phones by writing the word “ENOUGH” to number 30644. Moreover, “Basta Dobbs” organized a “digital sit-in” on CNN’s website, which allowed Presente.org members and supporters to deliver their comments and pictures directly to CNN.

The Basta Dobbs campaign also used the media to critique the media—it was launched at the same time that Dobbs chose to participate in an anti-immigrant conference organized by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) in September, and it was re-launched a month later when CNN’s *Latino in America* was to be broadcast. As Lovato describes, “On their big day in the limelight with *Latino in America*, all coverage was about how Latinos wanted CNN to cut its ties to Lou Dobbs.”¹⁴ The negative attention hurt the brand and jeopardized the resources invested in *Latino in America* to bring new audiences to the network (see Figure 25).

Significantly, the campaign focused not on Lou Dobbs, which had the potential to reach a dead end of “he said, they said,” but on Jonathan Klein, president of CNN. In this way, the advocates

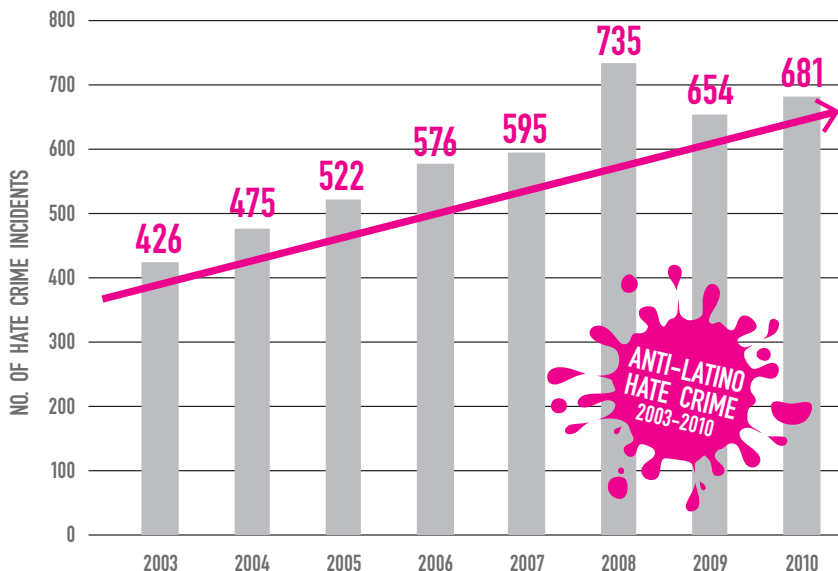
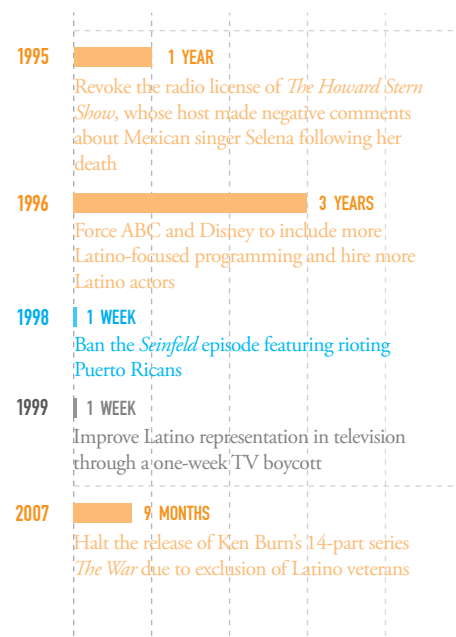


Figure 24: Rise in Anti-Latino Hate Crimes
(Source: FBI Hate Crimes Report, 2003–2010)

emphasized how Dobbs, not Latinos, were a threat to the CNN brand, bringing shame to an organization self-identified by the slogan “the most trusted name in news.”

After three months of campaigning, on November 11, 2009, Lou Dobbs announced he was retiring from the network.¹⁵ Klein stated that Dobbs was not asked to withdraw because of the protests, and activist pressure was likely not the only variable in terminating the show. By July, Dobbs’ strategy of

building an audience by mobilizing anti-immigrant feelings and fueling the President Obama “birther” controversy was failing—he had lost 15% of his overall viewership,¹⁶ and one month before his exit, the show was “dead last” in the critical 25–54 demographic.¹⁷ But the show’s decline and cancellation was greatly accelerated by consumer criticism and organizing. In the end, CNN paid Dobbs an \$8 million severance package to leave before his contract expired.¹⁸



CHANGING MEDIA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In contrast to the film and television eras, the success of all media today increasingly depends on a network of consumers who communicate quickly about content.

As the “Basta Dobbs” campaign underscores, an effective mobilization requires linking broad networks of people and leveraging their strength via online technology and on the ground contact. The power of such efforts will likely increase as both U.S. demographics and the media continue to change at a rapid pace. In contrast to the film and television eras, the success of all media today increasingly depends on an expanding network of consumers who communicate swiftly about content.

Moreover, the new environment affects how political action unfolds. In the words of Lovato, chief architect of the “Basta Dobbs” campaign, “The compression of time that is characteristic of digital reality and the acceleration of communication systems also accelerates political time.”¹⁹ The cost of a Latino consumer boycott of a studio or network is likewise on the rise.

Although street protest has been the main strategy of media activists

in the past, new media tools enable more people to express their views with greater speed. Additionally, even a consumer campaign engaging a relatively small percentage of the Latino online population, over a month or less, can cut into a media company’s profit margin and/or stain a brand’s prestige.

While advocacy and consumer power have not to date challenged media structures as a whole, they have played a major role in challenging stereotypes and expanding opportunity for Latinos. If this power is organized and mobilized at a higher rate than at present, it could become an even greater force in shaping the current media landscape. A population with \$1.2 trillion in buying power and significant content production potential is capable of that—and more.

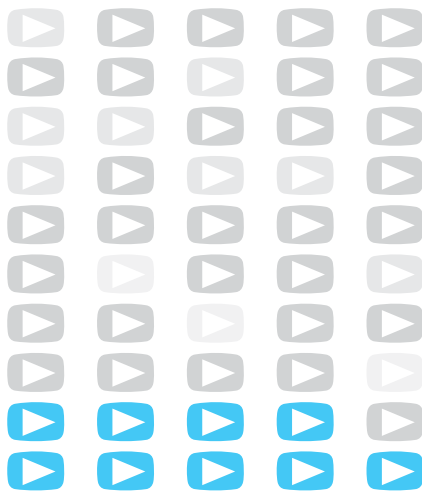


Figure 25: Roberto Lovato leading the Basta Dobbs Campaign
(Photo Credit: Yanira Arias)

7

UPLOADING STORIES: LATINO PRODUCERS ONLINE AND BEYOND

TOP 50 YOUTUBE CHANNELS (MOST SUBSCRIBERS)



9 OUT OF 50 (18%)

PRODUCED OR FEATURE
U.S. LATINO CONTENT CREATORS

Figure 26: Latino Creators on YouTube
(Source: VisStatsX)

In closing, we would like to focus on a generally ignored reason to open up paths of opportunity to Latino talent: media innovation. The vast majority of diversity, advocacy, and talent-development efforts are aimed at incorporating Latinos in traditional media, particularly broadcast and cable television, and studio filmmaking. This emphasis is warranted as the most high-paying and/or creative jobs have historically been in these sectors. Yet, our research indicates that this focus overlooks some important trends and opportunities for Latinos on the Internet and in multi-platform storytelling in three important ways.

The first is that the Internet and online companies may be the future of high-quality content production—or at least a growing part of it. A turning point was DreamWorks Animation’s decision to stream 300 hours of episodic television content via Netflix, bypassing the obvious choice of cable television.¹ Formerly a distributor of television and film products, Netflix is now creating original content as well. The entry of Netflix into production and distribution hints that the broadcast paradigm may collapse in less than a decade.²

The Netflix model has also already opened new opportunities for Latinos with the release of the Netflix original series, *Orange is the New Black* (2013) created by Jenji Kohan. The show features a white actress playing a self-identified “WASP” in a women’s prison, where the majority of inmates and staff are Latino and/or African American. While this setting may reinforce Latino stereotypes for some viewers, there is an attempt to develop each character with extensive backstories. Executive story editor Marco Ramirez oversees the crafting of plots that devote as much time to the stories and romantic interests of the characters of color as to those of the white protagonist.³

In addition, as Latinos continue to be shut out of positions in traditional



Figure 27: Vlogger and Fashion Commentator Bethany Mota’s Channel
(Source: YouTube)

media, Latino creativity is migrating online, blurring the distinction between producer and consumer. A recent study of college students found that Latinos were more likely to be online content creators than were white students.⁴ Furthermore, the Forrester Social Technographic Ladder noted that, “47% of online Latinos are ‘content creators.’” According to New Generation Latino, this represents an over-index of 263 when the activity of non-Hispanics is indexed at 100.⁵ To the extent that users of social media tend to be young people; the marked youth of the Latino population ensures that Latino presence online will continue to grow.

Our survey of the content on major video-sharing sites through March 7, 2014, similarly found that Latinos are far more active as talent and producers online than they are on network television and movies. Of the top 50 single-focused YouTube channels with the most subscribers, 18% are produced by and/or feature U.S. Latino content creators (Figure 26).

Among the top 200 channels, there are 25 Vevo channels dedicated to specific musical artists. Four or 16% of these artists are Latino—Pitbull, Selena Gomez, Demi Lovato, and Shakira. These trends are evident in other music-related videos as well: The

Latinos are not only highly visible online, they are also producing major creative and infrastructure innovations in media.

most-subscribed YouTube channel featuring a rock band is that of Boyce Avenue, made up of three Puerto Rican brothers.⁶ In the popular genre of young women's fashion advice, one of the top three independent YouTube creators is Latina, Bethany Mota (Figure 27). A second top vlogger, Yuya, is based in Mexico.

Lastly, Latinos are not only prolific online content creators; they are also storytelling innovators. This suggests that a greater investment in Latino talent may make a valuable contribution to the development of new narrative paradigms. This remains essential to change: as one advocate put it, "Without stories, nothing is going to happen."⁷

TRAILBLAZER: JEFF GOMEZ

One of the most far-reaching Latino media innovations has been in the field of transmedia, understood as interactive storytelling in which a narrative is extended across various media, including books, comic books, computer games, films, television, and smartphones; and audiences are invited to collectively add their creativity to these new worlds. Among the most

successful practitioners and theorists of transmedia is Jeff Gomez, who transformed personal challenges into a new way of telling stories.

Born on the Lower East Side in 1963 to a teenage Jewish American mother and a Puerto Rican father, Gomez spent his earliest years in foster care in upstate New York within a relatively privileged environment.⁸ This was to be important for his work, as Gomez realized that some people lived very differently than his biological family did, and that "inner city reality was not the only reality."⁹

Gomez reunited with his mother while still a child, moving with his family into a heavily Latino housing project on the Lower East Side. The contrast between his new and old environment was so jarring that he took refuge in popular culture and began drawing iconic monsters and dinosaurs. Later, Gomez's imagination was enriched by his summer trips to Puerto Rico. There, he was exposed to Roman Catholic doctrine, with its emphasis on good and evil, *espiritismo*, and stories of the supernatural. Equally significant, it was in Puerto Rico that a paternal aunt gave Gomez a copy of a crucial book for his media imagination: *The Hobbit*.¹⁰

Gomez's narrative repertoire grew further when his mother again moved the family, this time to Hawaii, in the 1970s. In Hawaii, he encountered Japanese popular culture, particularly a series called *Kikaider* (1972), which spanned several forms of media—television, comic book, and film. The *Kikaider* experience would be useful when Gomez returned to New York as a teenager. To cope with school bullies, Gomez began to draw detailed personalized worlds for both friends and foes, and to incorporate them in the leading role-playing game of the time: *Dungeons and Dragons*.

Inspired by his skill and popularity among his peers, Gomez went on to create and write original comic

Figure 28: Jeff Gomez speaking at TEDxTransmedia in Geneva, Switzerland
(Photo Source: Flickr)



book characters. This led to a job as a producer for Acclaim Entertainment's comic book division. There, he helped create the Acclaim Comics superhero universe, and also adapted Valiant Comics superheroes into videogames for Nintendo and PlayStation consoles. The characters, concepts, and games that Gomez conceived, wrote, and produced for Acclaim's *Turok*, *Dinosaur Hunter* and *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* helped that franchise to gross over \$420 million.

Gomez's success, however, was hard-earned, as he often faced outright discrimination: "When I signed my actual name to articles, they were rejected. But when I used a pseudonym, they were accepted. That rekindled my Latino roots, and late in college, I stopped using a pseudonym. My job for the next 20 years would be to understand how to hack infrastructure. I was never going to succeed conventionally like Steven Spielberg. I was going to be a ghost in the machine."¹¹

With this goal in mind, in 2000, Gomez founded Starlight Runner Entertainment with Chrysoula Artemis and Mark Pensavalle. Initially, the company was interested in developing software to tell stories on the web. But over time, it became a consulting firm on the creation of media worlds across various platforms. The company moved in this direction in part because Gomez wanted to focus on storytelling, not technology. His aim was "to introduce ideas in the greater ocean of connectivity."¹²

Since then, Starlight Runner has become one of the top transmedia companies in the country and Gomez has worked on such blockbuster universes as *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Men in Black III*, *Avatar*, and Microsoft's *Halo*. Moreover, in 2010, to a large extent due to Gomez's efforts, the Producers Guild of America ratified a new credit called "Transmedia Producer." The credit recognizes those professionals

who are responsible for the "planning, development, production, and/or maintenance of narrative continuity across multiple platforms, and creation of original storylines for new platforms"¹³ (see Figure 28).

To date, Gomez and his company have largely focused on corporate brands and mainstream intellectual properties. This has allowed him to work with some of the most talented people in entertainment, while introducing new worlds of possibility to large audiences. "For me, this is the power of transmedia: I worked on a Hot Wheels campaign that featured driver characters for the first time. I wrote two of the five leads as a Puerto Rican and a North African. I argued and won for their dialog to be reflective of their cultures, which was not happening in children's animation at that time. My real goal is to show people, particularly young people, that there are alternatives. If I didn't have reminders in popular culture of how it was possible to rise above my station in life, I would have fallen into an abyss. So, I don't care if it's a toy car, soda water or a fish cracker. The important thing is to create aspirational narratives, a tiny little story, capable of starting you down a different road."¹⁴

For Gomez, transmedia goes further than traditional media in that it can offer audiences a wider range of stories to imagine themselves beyond their current circumstances. This vision is leading Gomez to invest in education by introducing transmedia skills and literacy into schools in the U.S. Last March 2013, Gomez also undertook his first Latino-themed project, a partnership to bring Lucha Libre AAA to the United States, and "build an exciting multi-platform world...[that] will resonate with the aspirations of the powerful emerging Latino audience and the youth market."¹⁵

Ultimately, Gomez views transmedia as a strong indicator of a much larger social shift, in which consumer power

extends way beyond just purchasing commodities. In his own words: "Large media companies, consumer product corporations, and even entire governments are underestimating the extent to which the consumer now controls the dialogue, and this paradigm shift is among the most dramatic ever seen. We are witnessing the rise of communal narrative, and this is giving a voice and power to those who have thus far been invisible."¹⁶

CONCLUSION

In sum, for Latinos, the current landscape presents exciting new possibilities alongside old challenges.

After analyzing Latino talent diversity in network and studio leadership, and movie and television shows, the report's first general conclusion is that Latino presence in mainstream media remains extremely low and changing at a very slow pace in relation to the demographic changes sweeping the country. We have called this conundrum the Latino media gap: as Latino consumer power grows, relative Latino media presence shrinks.

At the same time, the report finds that Latinos demonstrate growing consumer power and advocacy effectiveness through expanded use of the Internet and digital tools. Equally important, Latinos are innovating in media content and storytelling forms such as transmedia. If this creativity is supported and consumer engagement expanded, the convergence may accelerate the current rate of change, at last closing the Latino media gap.

NOTES

THE LATINO MEDIA GAP

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1 LIMITED: LATINO INCLUSION IN FILM AND TELEVISION

1. The WGA also counts employed members. In 2012, the percentage of employed Latino writers was slightly higher, at 3.6%.
2. Multiple sources were consulted to obtain lists of the top-ranking films and television shows in this report. These include the websites Deadline, ABC Medianet, IMDb, and Box Office Mojo, as well as the book by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946–Present* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007). Television rankings were based on Nielsen prime time network ratings, and followed the fall-to-spring television schedule. Film rankings were based on domestic box-office totals through the date of this study, and were considered by the calendar year.
3. By consensus, the cast of *Modern Family* agreed to identify all characters as “supporting” given the ensemble nature of the show. In this report, we refer to Vergara’s character as central or featured rather than as lead.
4. Television creators and producers are often also writers. For statistical purposes, we are counting creative talent according to their official credit.
5. Given the differences in Latin American and American racial schemes, determining Afro-Latino and mestizo

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