



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC JOURNALISTS

Network Brownout Report | 2006

THE PORTRAYAL OF LATINOS AND LATINO ISSUES ON NETWORK TELEVISION NEWS, 2005

QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COVERAGE | BY NAHJ STAFF | OCTOBER 2006 | WASHINGTON, DC

Table of Contents

About the Authors	2
Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Findings	
Part I. Quantitative Assessments	7
Overall Number of Stories	7
Topics Covered	8
Time Devoted to Latino Stories	9
Story Length	10
Latino Anchors and Reporters	10
Number of Sources and Viewpoint Balance	11
Latino Presence in Stories	12
Unidentifiable Latinos	13
Locations	13
Part II. Qualitative Analysis of Latino Stories	14
Part III. Other Representations of Latinos in the News	17
Part IV. Comparison with Two Sample Weeks of News Coverage	17
Conclusion	19
Methodology	20
Limitations	23
End Notes	23

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Acknowledgements

The authors and the NAHJ would like to extend a special note of gratitude to Diane Alverio, former NAHJ president, and Rod Carveth who established the report's baseline. This study builds on the work they conducted dating back to 1996. We extend our thanks to the Project for Excellence in Journalism for providing us with a copy of their code guide on the balance of views and sources variables adopted for this study.

We would also like to thank Dr. Federico Subervi, a professor at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University-San Marcos. Dr.

Subervi was the lead researcher and author of this report in 2003 and 2004, and he introduced much of the methodology that we continue to use in this year's report.

Finally, we would like to thank Bethsaida George and Lisa Goodnight who both assisted with the coding of data.

Funding for this report was made available by the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. For more information, please contact: NAHJ, 529 14th St., NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC, 20045-2001. (202) 662-7145, www.nahj.org.

Foreword

The National Association of Hispanic Journalists has been studying coverage of Latinos on the network evening news for the past 11 years in an effort to provide the public with a greater understanding of how Latinos are portrayed.

We also conduct this study because the network evening news continues to play a major role in setting the national news agenda. We hope each year that network coverage of issues affecting Latinos will improve; however, we remain baffled when the results are otherwise.

Despite the growing influence and presence of the nation's Latino community, stories about Latinos remain woefully absent on the network news. Occasionally, as was the case this year, we see some signs of improvement. Nonetheless, when a story about Latinos periodically makes it on the air, the coverage is often stereotypical.

Although the U.S. Latino community has grown significantly since the inception of this report, the amount of coverage devoted to Latinos does not reflect this reality. We believe the lack of Latino journalists and managers working at the networks is the primary reason for dismal coverage of the Latino community.

Poor coverage of communities of color has real consequences for our society. We call on the networks to cover our community fairly because it is a question of journalistic credibility. And we believe the credibility of the news media will remain in question as long as the issue of fair coverage of communities of color is not addressed.

Until then, NAHJ will continue to call on the networks and the U.S. news media to improve the representation of Latinos not only in their news coverage, but also in their newsrooms.

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Executive Summary

This year's report examines news stories about Latinos and Latino issues that aired in 2005 on *ABC World News Tonight*, *CBS Evening News*, and *NBC Nightly News*.

As in prior studies, Latino-related stories were identified by searching Vanderbilt University's Television News Archive. Other networks, such as Fox and MSNBC, are not fully archived by the university and thus are not included. Also, for 2005, CNN was not examined due to the cancellation of *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*.

The 2005 report contains quantitative and qualitative assessments of news stories about Latinos. NAHJ also performed a content analysis of news coverage that aired during the weeks of May 23-27, 2005 and December 5-9, 2005 to study the portrayal of Latinos during two typical weeks of news coverage.

The quantitative analysis of the 2005 network news showed:

- Out of an estimated 12,600 stories aired by ABC, CBS and NBC, only 105, or 0.83 percent, were found to be exclusively about Latinos or Latino-related issues. This represents a slight increase from 2004 when Latino stories comprised 0.72 percent of coverage.
- Of the estimated 329 hours the networks devoted to the evening news in 2005, 3 hours and 2 minutes were dedicated exclusively to Latino stories, making up 0.92 percent of the total time.
- In 2005, no single topic dominated more than 20 percent of coverage. The top five topics for Latino stories were domestic government (20 stories or 19 percent), crime (19 stories or 18.1 percent), human interest (18 stories or 17.1 percent), immigration (15 stories or 14.3 percent) and sports (12 stories or 11.4 percent).
- One positive trend: a notable drop in the networks' focus on immigration with 14.3 percent of stories this year devoted to the

topic compared with 34.7 percent of stories in 2004.

- One negative trend: a sharp increase in crime coverage with 18.1 percent of stories devoted to this topic in 2005 compared with 7.8 percent in 2004.
- A significant portion of Latino stories continued to lack a diversity of opinion. Of 105 stories, one third (33.3 percent) did not cite a single source. Of the stories using sources, one third (33.3 percent) presented mostly one perspective.
- Latinos continued to be nearly absent from non-Latino related stories. Out of an estimated 12,495 non-Latino stories aired by the networks in 2005, Latinos appeared as quoted sources in only 217 stories (1.7 percent), the same percentage as in 2004.
- The networks dedicated more time to Latino stories. Stories that lasted less than 30 seconds decreased to 24.8 percent of stories in 2005 from 33 percent in 2004. And, stories that lasted between two and three minutes comprised half of the stories (50.5 percent) in 2005 compared with 43 percent of stories in 2004.
- Only five Latino stories featured Latino reporters.

The qualitative analysis of Latino stories found:

- Latinos were featured in a variety of universal stories that did not focus on ethnicity.
- In contrast to 2004, Latinos were more often portrayed in crime stories in 2005. For most of these stories, Latinos were the perpetrators, not the victims.
- Immigration did not dominate the framing of Latino stories as it has in years past. Even so, immigration was still a popular topic for the networks to cover. One dominant theme in immigration coverage for 2005 was the notion that

immigrants, mostly undocumented, were changing communities across the United States. These stories were often told from the perspective of longtime community residents, and not from the perspective of immigrants.

- Once again, networks are missing Latino political news stories. This year, stories concerning Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales provided the networks an opportunity to explore the political climate of the Latino community. Not one network did a story that provided the Hispanic perspective on these issues.

Content analysis of two sample weeks of network news coverage found:

- Latinos continued to be nearly absent from general news coverage. Out of 115 stories NAHJ examined during the two sample weeks, only four were exclusively about Latinos and only two featured Latinos as news sources.

Conclusion

The booming growth of the Latino population (in numbers and in economic and political power) should serve as a wake-up call for the news networks. But each year very little changes and this report continues to yield the same dismal results. Latinos make up 14.5 percent of the U.S. population but less than one percent of stories on the network evening news.

One major problem shown by this report is that Latino voices are lacking in news coverage. Key political stories about Latinos lacked Hispanic perspectives. The vast majority of immigration stories were also not told from the Latino perspective.

NAHJ strongly believes that increasing the number of Latino journalists and managers will improve news coverage of the Latino community.

Introduction

The 2006 *Network Brownout Report* examines the ways in which Latinos and Latino-related issues are portrayed on the evening news programs of the nation's major English-language television networks — ABC, CBS and NBC. Now in its 11th year, this report remains the only study to annually examine how network news programs portray Latinos.

The goals of this report are to bring greater awareness to how Latinos are being portrayed on national news programs and to urge the networks to increase and improve their coverage of the Latino community.

The news media's poor media coverage of Latinos and people of color is historic. In 1947, the Commission on Freedom of the Press, also known as the Hutchins Commission, outlined the responsibilities of the news media in a democratic society. Among its five major recommendations, the commission stated that the press should project a "representative picture of the constituent groups in the society."

Twenty years later, President Lyndon Johnson appointed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission, to examine the causes of the riots that erupted across the country in the late 1960s. Among its major findings, the Kerner Commission concluded that the media's inaccurate portrayals and misrepresentations of the black community contributed to the racial division in our nation. Both the Hutchins and Kerner Commissions urged the nation's news media to improve their coverage of minority communities.¹

Since then, news coverage of people of color continues to fail to reflect the reality of these groups. Every year, this report finds that Latinos continue to be covered through a narrow prism even though they have experienced exponential growth in the last decades. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Latinos in the United States have grown in the past 16 years, from 22.3 million and 9 percent of the population in 1990 to 41.9 million and 14.5 percent of the population currently. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2050, Latinos will number 102.5 million and comprise 24.4 percent of the country's population.

The *Network Brownout Report* has historically found that Latinos are too often portrayed as criminals or undocumented immigrants. While it is important to cover crime and immigration stories, the focus on these issues becomes unfair when it comprises an overabundance of the network's coverage of the Latino community. Accurate news coverage of Latinos is a crucial issue since 27 million people watch the evening news each night and are influenced by these programs.

The 2006 report begins with the quantitative findings of Latino stories from 2005. Part Two represents the qualitative examination of Latino stories. Part Three provides an overview of Latinos as secondary or background subjects. Part Four presents an analysis of Latino-related stories compared to a content audit of two sample weeks of network news coverage. The report closes with a conclusion followed by the study's methodology and limitations.

Part I. The Quantitative Analysis

This section outlines the results of the quantitative analysis of stories that were determined to be exclusively about Latinos or Latino-related issues. The quantitative results provide information on:

- a) number of stories
- b) story topics
- c) story length
- d) use of Latino reporters and anchors
- e) number of sources used in each story
- f) balance of viewpoints expressed in each story
- g) overall statistics on the presence of Latinos in Latino stories

Overall Number of Stories

The 2006 *Network Brownout Report* continues the historical trend of finding a lack of Latino stories that air annually on the network evening news.

In 2005, stories exclusively about Latinos or Latino-related issues made up less than one percent of all network news coverage.

Out of an estimated 12,600 stories² aired by ABC, CBS and NBC, only 105, or 0.83 percent, were found to be exclusively about Latinos or Latino-related issues. This continues the pattern that we have seen in

virtually every *Brownout Report*. Latino coverage has comprised less than one percent of news stories.

Although stories about Latinos represent less than one percent of all news stories, NAHJ wants to recognize that each network increased the number of stories they aired about Latinos in 2005.

- ABC slightly increased its coverage of Latinos with 34 stories in 2005, compared with 30 in 2004.
- CBS had the most significant increase among the networks with 34 stories about Latinos in 2005 compared with 23 stories in 2004.
- NBC also slightly increased its coverage of Latinos with 37 stories in 2005, compared with 33 in 2004.

Even though networks aired more Latino stories in 2005, NAHJ remains frustrated by these negligible gains. CBS made the greatest stride of any network in 2005 by covering 11 more stories about Latinos than it did in the previous year. But the overall number of stories covered by each network remains woeful.

Latinos remain practically invisible on the evening news. NAHJ is concerned that the

Table 1.
Overall distribution of stories by number, time and length.

Network	ABC	CBS	NBC	Total
Number Stories	34	34	37	105
Total Time in Minutes	62:49	58:17	61:18	3:02:24
Average Minutes/Story	1:51	1:43	1:39	1:44
Distribution by seconds	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
< 30 seconds	6 (17.6)	11 (32.4)	9 (24.3)	26 (24.8)
30-59 seconds	2 (5.9)	2 (5.9)	5 (13.5)	9 (8.6)
60-119 seconds	5 (14.7)	3 (8.8)	3 (8.1)	11 (10.5)
120-179 seconds	21 (61.8)	13 (38.2)	19 (51.4)	53 (50.5)
180 + seconds	0	5 (14.7)	1 (2.7)	6 (5.7)

viewing audience continues to learn little about issues affecting the Latino community by watching the network evening news.

Topics Covered

One positive trend in this year's report was that no single topic dominated more than 20 percent of coverage of Latinos (see Table 2).

This was a welcome change from last year when immigration made up 34 percent of all stories aired about Latinos.

In 2005, the top five topics for Latino stories were domestic government (20 stories or 19 percent), crime (19 stories or 18.1 percent), human interest (18 stories or 17.1 percent), immigration (15 stories or 14.3 percent) and sports (12 stories or 11.4 percent)

We applaud the networks for diversifying their coverage of Latinos. In 2004, immigration was a central theme in a vast number of Latino stories, thus painting a one-dimensional view of Latinos as immigrants. In 2005, immigration continued to be an important topic on the evening news, but it did not dominate network coverage of Latinos.

Another trend, however, is the unfortunate rise of crime stories in 2005. We applauded the networks for decreasing their coverage of Latinos and crime to nine stories in 2004, but the networks reverted to their old pattern. In 2005, 19 stories, or 18.1 percent, dealt with crime and most of these stories focused on Latinos as perpetrators rather than victims.

In 2005, Latinos played a central role in sports stories. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these stories (10 out of 12) were about the allegations or acknowledgment of steroid use by Major League Baseball players that included Rafael Palmeiro, Jose Canseco and Sammy Sosa.

Domestic government was the number one topic for Latino stories in 2005. This was the result of two major stories. First was the nomination and confirmation of Alberto Gonzales as U.S. attorney general. Gonzales was also covered because of the speculation that he would succeed Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court. Out of 20 U.S. domestic government stories, 14 were about Alberto Gonzales. The second story that dominated this topic was the

Table 2.
Distribution of number and (%) of exclusively Latino stories by topic.

Topics	ABC	CBS	NBC	Total
Arts, Culture	1 (2.9)	0	0	1 (1.0)
Calamities (Disasters/Accidents)	1 (2.9)	1 (2.9)	0	2 (1.9)
Crime	5 (14.7)	7 (20.6)	7 (18.9)	19 (18.1)
Education	0	0	1 (2.7)	1 (1.0)
Election/Politics	2 (5.9)	1 (2.9)	2 (5.4)	5 (4.8)
Ethnic/Racial Relations	1 (2.9)	2 (5.9)	0	3 (2.9)
Government: Domestic	7 (20.6)	6 (17.6)	7 (18.9)	20 (19)
Health/Medical/Science	1 (2.9)	0	0	1 (1.0)
Homeland Security/Iraq War	4 (11.8)	1 (2.9)	2 (5.4)	7 (6.7)
Human Interest	4 (11.8)	8 (23.5)	6 (16.2)	18 (17.1)
Immigration	6 (17.6)	5 (14.7)	4 (10.8)	15 (14.3)
Sports	2 (5.9)	3 (8.8)	7 (18.9)	12 (11.4)
Religion	0	0	1 (2.7)	1 (1.0)
Total	34	34	37	105

Supreme Court ruling on a domestic violence case involving a Colorado woman named Jessica Gonzales and the death of her three children who were killed by their father, Simon Gonzales. This story accounted for four stories related to this topic. Thus, these two subjects accounted for 18 of 20 stories about domestic government.

Although the networks diversified their coverage of Latinos last year, we believe that these stories largely lacked an overall assessment of Latinos in the United States.

For example, this year's report showed a rise in domestic government stories. But this coverage focused on Gonzales' nomination to become the first Latino U.S. Attorney General or, possibly, the first Latino to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. These stories, however, did not include how members of the Latino community felt about his nomination or his prospects of being named to the Supreme Court. Domestic government stories also failed to communicate how government policies or legislation impacted Latino communities.

Although topics like immigration, crime and

government are important, when other stories important to Latinos are not covered, the networks fail in their duty to educate the public and provide their audiences with relevant information.

We also noted in 2005 that Latinos were included in more universal stories where ethnicity was not a focal point. We applaud the networks for including Latinos in these types of stories. However, we want to see more stories about issues affecting the Latino community. For instance, where are the stories about Latino small businesses or the positive impact Latinos are having on the U.S. economy? Where are the cultural stories about Latinos in their communities? Where are the stories about healthcare or educational issues important to Latinos?

Increasing coverage of issues affecting Latinos is the only way to provide more comprehensive coverage of the community.

Time Devoted to Latino Stories

A positive trend in this year's report was the increase in time the networks devoted to

Topics	ABC	CBS	NBC	Total
Arts, Culture	2:25 (2:25)			2:25 (2:25)
Calamities (Disasters/Accidents)	2:13 (2:13)	2:01(2:01)		4:14 (2:07)
Crime	11:25 (2:17)	12:55 (1:51)	13:45 (1:58)	38:05 (2:00)
Education			2:47 (2:47)	2:47 (2:47)
Election/Politics	2:25 (1:13)	:32 (:32)	2:39 (1:20)	5:36 (1:07)
Ethnic/Racial Relations	2:17 (2:17)	4:36 (2:18)		6:53 (2:18)
Government: Domestic	9:49 (1:24)	7:39 (1:17)	8:22 (1:12)	25:50 (1:18)
Health/Medical/Science	2:01 (2:01)			2:01 (2:01)
Homeland Security/Iraq War	5:36 (1:24)	2:36 (2:36)	5:19 (2:40)	13:31 (1:56)
Human Interest	8:55 (2:14)	9:43 (1:13)	8:06 (1:21)	26:44 (1:29)
Immigration	12:54 (2:09)	14:09 (2:50)	9:10 (2:18)	36:13 (2:25)
Sports	2:49 (1:25)	4:06 (1:22)	8:42 (1:15)	15:37 (1:18)
Religion			2:28 (2:28)	2:28 (2:28)
Totals	62:49 (1:51)	58:17 (1:43)	61:18 (1:39)	3:02:24 (1:44)

Latino stories. Of the estimated 329 hours³ of network news in 2005, 3 hours and 2 minutes were devoted exclusively to Latino stories. This represented just 0.92 percent of total network airtime dedicated to news about Latinos (see Table 3) and a small increase from 2004 when the time given to Latino stories comprised 0.62 percent of all stories.

Although we are encouraged by the slight increase, the time devoted to Latino stories was still less than one percent of the total time for news in 2005.

CBS experienced the most significant increase in time spent on Latino stories. The network aired 58 minutes of coverage of Latino stories last year, compared with 39 minutes in 2004. ABC increased its coverage from 51 minutes to almost 63 minutes. NBC decreased its coverage from 66 minutes in 2004 to 61 minutes in 2005.

Although domestic government was the leading topic in terms of the number of stories about Latinos, crime and immigration stories accounted for the greatest amount of *airtime* (40 percent).

Out of 3 hours and 2 minutes of coverage devoted to Latino stories, 38 minutes (20.9 percent) focused on crime. Immigration followed with 36 minutes (19.8 percent), and human interest and domestic government stories each took up about 26 minutes (approximately 14.3 percent).

In 2004, immigration stories made up more than one hour of news coverage. We welcome the decline in the amount of time dedicated to immigration stories in 2005, but we are disappointed with the rise in time given to crime stories.

We urge the networks to provide more in-depth coverage of issues affecting Latinos across a wider range of topics.

Story Length

The average length of Latino stories remained virtually unchanged from 2004. In 2005, it was 1 minute and 44 seconds, compared with 1 minute and 49 seconds in 2004.

Stories of 30 seconds or less made up 33 percent of Latino stories in 2004, but decreased to 24.8 percent of Latino stories in 2005 (see Table 1).

On ABC, stories about Latinos that were less than 30 seconds accounted for 17.6 percent (six stories) of its coverage in 2005. This was a drop from 2004 when these stories made up 33 percent of coverage.

CBS aired 11 stories that were less than 30 seconds in 2005, representing 32.4 percent of its stories.

NBC was the only network that increased the number of short stories it aired with nine stories (24.3 percent) in 2005, compared with six (18 percent) in 2004.

Stories lasting between 2 and 3 minutes (120-179 seconds) increased in 2005, making up half of all stories about Latinos that the networks aired (50.5 percent).

Even though overall stories tended to be longer in 2005, stories that were more than 3 minutes (180+ seconds) experienced a decline from 17 stories (15 percent) in 2004 to six stories (6 percent) in 2005.

The drop in stories longer than 3 minutes is disappointing since these stories tend to allow for more in-depth analysis with a wider range of viewpoints. Latino stories that are shorter in length have little time to delve deeply into issues.

Latino Anchors and Reporters

The most obvious and positive change in the use of Latino journalists by the networks was the increasing presence of Elizabeth Vargas as an anchor for ABC. Due to the deteriorating health of anchor Peter Jennings, Vargas was used more frequently by the network as his replacement. By the end of 2005, ABC made the official announcement that Vargas and journalist Bob Woodruff would become the new anchors for ABC's evening news.

Unfortunately, ABC did not keep Vargas as its anchor. But, it was a welcome change to see a Latina anchor on a network news program. Barring the presence of Vargas, the

participation of other Latino journalists reporting Latino stories in 2005 was very low. Out of 105 Latino stories, only five (4.8 percent) stories were reported by Latino journalists. Three of these stories appeared on CBS and two appeared on ABC.

One CBS story was reported by Vince Gonzalez about a priest abuse case involving a Latino priest and Latino victims. The other two CBS stories were reported by Jim Acosta — one about the arrest of Cuban exile Luis Posada, who was accused of terrorism, and the other about undocumented immigration. Barbara Pinto of ABC reported the remaining two stories — one about how Latinos were changing the demographic makeup of many communities across the country and the other about a Latina doll and her impact on a Chicago neighborhood.

NAHJ is disappointed by the dearth of Latino reporters covering Latino stories. We do not believe that only Latino reporters should cover Latino stories, but we do

believe that the lack of diverse Latino viewpoints at these networks contributes to the poor coverage of the Latino community.

Number of Sources and Viewpoint Balance

In 2005, the number of Latino stories that had no sources, meaning no one was interviewed or commented during the story except for the reporter or anchor, comprised one-third of the stories (35 stories or 33.3 percent). In 2004, these stories made up 36 percent of coverage.

In 2005, the number of stories that had one or more sources declined slightly from 74 stories to 70 stories (see Table 5).

Stories that provided a diversity of viewpoints increased from 18 percent (21 stories) in 2004 to 29.5 percent (31 stories) in 2005 (see Table 6). The increase in the number of viewpoints expressed in Latino stories is encouraging.

Table 5.
Number of stories (and percentages) for each network by number of sources used for news exclusively about Latinos.

No. of sources	ABC	CBS	NBC	Totals
none	8 (23.5)	13 (38.2)	14 (37.8)	35 (33.3)
1	1 (2.9)	2 (5.9)	0 (0)	3 (2.9)
2	6 (17.6)	5 (14.7)	4 (10.8)	15 (14.3)
3	4 (11.8)	5 (14.7)	8 (21.6)	17 (16.2)
4 or more	15 (44.1)	9 (26.5)	11 (29.7)	35 (33.3)
Total	34	34	37	105

Table 6.
Number of stories (and percentages) for each network according to the balance of viewpoints expressed by sources used for stories exclusively about Latinos.

Balance of Views	ABC	CBS	NBC	Totals
All one opinion	12 (35.3)	7 (20.6)	10 (27)	29 (27.6)
Mostly one opinion	2 (5.9)	1 (2.9)	3 (8.1)	6 (5.7)
Mix opinions	10 (29.4)	12 (35.3)	9 (24.3)	31 (29.5)
Not applicable	10 (29.4)	14 (41.2)	15 (40.5)	39 (37.1)
Total	34	34	37	105

Even so, the majority of Latino stories presented one viewpoint or no viewpoints (68 stories or 64.8 percent). This percentage becomes higher when stories expressing mostly one opinion are added — 74 stories or 70.5 percent. Although this percentage is down from 2004 (82 percent), it is still discouraging that the vast majority of Latino stories lack diversified viewpoints. A large majority of these stories are providing narrow, one-sided opinions, or are providing no opinions at all, which does not produce comprehensive coverage.

Latino Presence in Stories

NAHJ examined and counted the number of identifiable Latinos who appeared in Latino stories, the number of Latinos who actually spoke or commented in the stories and the number of stories that included unidentifiable Latinos, often portrayed in groups.

Identifiable Latinos are individuals who appear in a story whom we can deduce are Latino. They are either interviewed or are shown but do not necessarily have to be named or have to speak on camera.

The number of stories featuring no Latinos was down considerably, from 23 stories or 20 percent with no Latinos in 2004 to three stories or 2.9 percent in 2005 (see Table 7). This significant change signals a positive trend.

The number of stories showing two or more Latinos increased from 39 stories (34 percent) in 2004 to 47 stories (44.8 percent) in 2005. Stories featuring one Latino increased from 53 stories (46

percent) in 2004 to 55 (52.4 percent). Virtually all stories in 2005 included at least one identifiable Latino, a very positive change from past years.

Across all networks, the number of Latinos who appeared in Latino stories increased in 2005 (see Table 8). ABC increased from a total of 46 Latinos appearing in its Latino stories to 76 in 2005. CBS increased from 41 Latinos to 66 in 2005 and NBC increased from 56 Latinos to 66 in 2005.

Out of 105 total Latino stories, 65 or 61.9 percent had at least one Latino who not only appeared on camera, but also spoke in the story (many had more than one). Out of 34 Latinos stories on ABC, 25 included Latinos who spoke on camera. For CBS, the total was 20 out of 34 stories and for NBC 20 out of 37 stories.

ABC and CBS increased the number of Latinos who both appeared and spoke on camera in 2005 (from 32 Latinos to 44 and from 23 Latinos to 31, respectively). NBC dropped slightly from 41 Latinos who appeared and spoke on camera in 2004 to 37 Latinos in 2005.

Unidentifiable Latinos

This report also examined the use of unidentifiable Latinos in each story. Unidentifiable Latinos are shown in large groups, such as undocumented immigrants crossing the border or groups on a crowded city street. They do not speak on camera and are not individually named.

In 2005, there was a decrease in stories that portrayed unidentified groups of Latinos. Out

Table 7.
Number (and percentages) of stories with identifiable Latinos.

Number by news story	ABC	CBS	NBC	Totals
none	1 (2.9)	0 (0)	2 (5.4)	3 (2.9)
1	16 (47.1)	18 (52.9)	21 (56.8)	55 (52.4)
2	6 (17.6)	7 (20.6)	7 (18.9)	20 (19)
3 or more	11 (32.4)	9 (26.5)	7 (18.9)	27 (25.7)
Total	34	34	37	105

Table 8.
Number (and percentages) of individual Latinos on camera and their type of presence.

Number by type of presence in each news story	ABC	CBS	NBC	Totals
Image/Voice	44 (58.7)	31 (47)	37 (56.1)	112 (54.1)
Image/No Voice	26 (34.7)	32 (48.5)	28 (42.4)	86 (41.5)
Voice/No Image	1 (1.3)	0	0	1 (0.5)
No Voice/No Image(mentioned)	4 (5.3)	3 (4.5)	1 (1.5)	8 (3.9)
Total	75	66	66	207

of 105 Latino stories, 30.5 percent (32 stories) showed these groups as opposed to 41 percent in 2004.

Of these 32 stories, 18 stories (56.2 percent) portrayed these groups as immigrants. This is a decrease from 2004 when 66 percent of stories with unidentifiable groups portrayed these groups as immigrants. These results correlate with the overall decrease in immigration coverage for 2005.

Although these images, especially of immigrants, have decreased in 2005, their use is still problematic. Images of day laborers standing in a parking lot or immigrants crossing the border often provide viewers with a negative, menacing and stereotypical depiction of Latinos.

Locations

Of the 105 stories that were exclusively about Latinos in 2005, 15 stories originated in Washington D.C., 11 originated in California and seven originated in New York. These numbers are similar to 2004 when California, Washington D.C. and New York were among the locations that dominated coverage of Latinos.

It is to be expected that a large number of Latino stories originate in a state like California due to its large Latino population. For 2005, Washington D.C. is also to be expected as a central location since so many stories in 2005 dealt with the federal government and specifically, Alberto Gonzales.

Even though California, Washington D.C. and New York are “typical” locations for Latino stories to originate from, this year’s report shows that networks were covering stories in other locations with large or growing Latino populations such as New Jersey, Illinois, Virginia, Louisiana and Maryland.

The presence of Latinos is no longer restricted to southwestern states, Florida, New York and Washington D.C. Latinos have a significant presence in states such as North Carolina, Georgia and now, Louisiana — places not previously known for having large Latino communities.

We hope that this year’s report indicates that the networks are heading toward diversifying the locations of their coverage.

Part II. Qualitative Analysis of Latino Stories

In this section, we examine the network news stories exclusively about Latinos from a qualitative standpoint. Specifically, this section examines how these stories were framed in 2005, the nuances of how Latinos were portrayed and a general evaluation of stories from a more in-depth perspective.

Overall in 2005, the networks in some ways portrayed Latinos more positively and more completely than in years past. In other ways, coverage continued to be disappointing for its lack of a truly representative picture of Latinos in the United States.

Universal Stories

One positive trend that we noted among the networks in this year's coverage was the inclusion of Latinos in universal stories that did not focus on their ethnicity. When we conduct this study every year, we hope to see more coverage that focuses on the Latino community and informs viewing audiences about issues affecting U.S. Latinos. Another goal is for more coverage of Latinos in "everyday" stories that are not specifically about their ethnicity.

Latinos are woven throughout society in communities across the United States; therefore we would expect them to appear frequently in stories regardless of their ethnicity. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. But we applaud the networks for including Latinos in more universal stories in 2005.

Latinos appeared in a variety of stories in this year's report. Some examples include:

- The Supreme Court case of Jessica Gonzales who challenged her local police department for failing to enforce a restraining order which resulted in the death of her children. The case brought about a major domestic violence ruling by the Supreme Court.
- The story of Francisco Gutierrez, a pilot who followed the migration path of monarch butterflies in his own plane across the United States.
- The story of the sacrifice of the Ruiz

family in Texas and specifically of Rosemary Ruiz whose husband and son were both deployed to Iraq.

- The uproar in Rhode Island over the suspension of a student, Eliazar Velasquez, who took pictures of his principal smoking on school property.
- The story of Macario Guajardo, a fifth-grader who boycotted a standardized test in Texas.

These stories offer some examples in which Latinos were featured regardless of their ethnicity. Other stories included profiles of soldiers killed in Iraq and thus their deaths were profiled as human interest stories.

We appreciate the inclusion of Latinos in these types of stories. It is important that the networks showcase Latinos in stories that affect the average person without focusing on ethnicity. However, the networks still need to air more stories on Hispanic issues and Hispanic perspectives.

Crime

As noted in the quantitative analysis of Latino stories, crime made up a large portion of the time devoted to portraying Latinos. This is a change from 2004 when crime was not a dominant topic.

It is unfortunate that such a significant portion of stories portrayed Latinos as criminals. This coverage reinforces a negative stereotype and when stories about other topics involving Latinos are not covered, this type of coverage paints an unbalanced picture of the contributions Latinos make to our society.

One theme we saw in crime coverage was that of the "soldier gone bad." One story focused on Andres Raya, a soldier home from Iraq who went on a shooting spree in which he was eventually killed. Another story involved Alberto Martinez, a soldier who killed two of his superior officers in Iraq.

Crime coverage this year also focused on nonviolent crimes perpetrated by Latinos. For example, we saw several stories about Anna

Ayala who lied about finding a human finger in her bowl of Wendy's chili. We also saw a story about Candace Martinez, the "cell phone bandit" who robbed a string of banks in the Washington D.C. area while talking on her cell phone.

Although some crime coverage was non-violent, much of it portrayed violent Latinos. In two stories we saw Latino fathers who killed their children. Although the story about Simon Gonzalez, the father who murdered his three daughters after ignoring a restraining order, was coded as a domestic government story because it was told within the framework of a Supreme Court ruling, it still portrayed an image of a violent Latino. Several other stories were about Jose Peña, who used his infant daughter as a human shield during a standoff with police in which eventually both he and his daughter died.

The theme of gang violence was also present in these crime stories and these stories tied the rise in gangs to the growth of undocumented immigrants in the United States.

In 2005, crime coverage focused less on Latino victims. Latinos were mostly portrayed as perpetrators of crime. Occasionally, there was a crime story that focused on a Latino victim, such as the case of Latoya Figueroa who was murdered by her boyfriend. The story of Figueroa's murder was also noteworthy because it explored the role of race in media coverage in terms of who and what stories get covered.

Immigration

Immigration was still present as a topic in coverage of Latinos, which is to be expected considering the national importance of this issue both socially and politically.

In 2005, immigration coverage seemed more varied than in years past. One theme we saw throughout 2005 was immigrants, mostly undocumented, changing the communities where they live. This coverage focused mostly on the perspective of community residents who viewed these immigrants as a problem in their neighborhoods. One story took place in New Ipswich, N.H., a town where community leaders were arresting

undocumented immigrants under trespassing laws.

Another story focused on the "flood" of immigrants entering New Orleans searching for work in the rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Katrina. It is particularly troubling that this story, which aired on ABC, used the word "flooding" to refer to the migration of immigrants to the city — a comparison that juxtaposes new immigrants to the damaging floods of Hurricane Katrina.

Other stories about new immigrant populations originated in Herndon, Va., Atlanta, Ga., and Caldwell, Idaho. Most of these stories portrayed immigrants as a nuisance and drain on the community. Many stories showed groups of day laborers standing in parking lots and on street corners. Most of the stories interviewed established residents who complained about the presence of Latinos in their town or city.

Another trend in immigration coverage was the humanization of immigrants. News stories often cover immigrants as coming to the United States to take jobs or drain communities of their resources. These stories rarely examine the risks immigrants take to come to this country. Some of the stories this year examined the dangers involved in crossing the border, adding a layer of depth to immigration coverage. One story featured a nighttime surveillance tape of a group of immigrants swept away by the currents of the Rio Grande. Another story featured images of mass graves marked with plain white crosses where undocumented immigrants are buried. We applaud the networks for airing stories that allowed the viewing audience to learn more about the challenges, and often horrors, faced by immigrants coming to the United States.

Other stories focused on the benefit of the Latino workforce for farmers in the United States. In these stories, several farmers said they would have to shut down their farm if it were not for Latino farmworkers who harvested their crops.

Although immigration was still a major focus of Latino coverage in 2005, the topic was covered differently than in years past. The focus for many stories shifted from the Mexican border to cities in the United States.

Politics

Unfortunately, and surprisingly, the networks continue to fail to cover Latino political stories. The nomination and confirmation process of Alberto Gonzales as well as the election of Antonio Villaraigosa as the mayor of Los Angeles gave the networks two big opportunities to explore the impact of Latinos on politics.

Inexplicably, CBS did not cover Villaraigosa's election in Los Angeles at all. ABC and NBC did cover this story, but not once did either network interview an identifiable Latino to capture their viewpoint on the monumental election.

Stories about Gonzales fell into the same pattern. The appointment of the first Latino to the position of attorney general merited some commentary from Latinos, but this commentary was missing from every story about Gonzales. The networks never covered the Gonzales story or the Villaraigosa story from the Latino perspective.

This seems to be a very disturbing trend. Politics and news (and voting and news) are intrinsically tied, yet Latinos rarely see themselves on the news in relation to politics. We were aghast in 2004 when the stories about electoral politics actually declined even though it was a presidential election year. One goal of increased news coverage of Latinos is to inform and empower Latino citizens so they become actively engaged in their communities, politically and otherwise.

Political issues are desperately lacking in Latino coverage. This lack of coverage marginalizes the Latino community into a segment of the population that appears to not matter in regards to politics in this country — something far from the truth.

Other Stories

We found several stories about Latinos that aired in 2005 that provided viewing audiences with insights about issues affecting the Latino community.

One story by ABC was about an American Girl doll named Marisol and the controversy the doll stirred in the Chicago neighborhood she was fictionally from. All American Girl dolls have their own books that tell their biographical stories. In Marisol's book, her parents decide to move from her Chicago neighborhood because it is unsafe. Residents of the real-life Latino neighborhood in Chicago reacted to the story about the doll. The news story gave the audience an insight into how residents of this neighborhood viewed themselves and their opinions on how this doll portrayed their community.

NBC aired a story about White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen and the growth of Hispanic baseball fans in Chicago. Another story aired by NBC explored why Latinos in a California town were leaving the Catholic Church to join other faiths.

A series of stories that caught our attention were about three missing boys who were found dead in the trunk of a car in Camden, N.J. ABC aired one story about these boys and CBS aired two stories. Although the story was tragic, we appreciated that three missing Latino boys received media attention since missing person stories typically center on young, white victims.

More importantly, we applaud CBS for its follow-up story six weeks after the bodies of the boys were found. The death of the boys had been accidental. CBS reevaluated why police officers in Camden had not searched the trunk of the vehicle parked close to where the boys had last been seen. Network news is too rarely retrospective so it was a welcome change to see an in-depth follow-up story.

These are just some examples of the bright spots of coverage we saw of Latinos in 2005.

Part III. Other Representations of Latinos in the News in 2005

In researching Latino stories on the networks' nightly newscasts, we found that 400 stories, in some way, featured Latinos or Latino issues. Of these, 105 were centrally and exclusively about Latinos. We have already examined these stories in the previous sections.

Of the remaining 295 stories:

- 38 centrally involved Latinos, but were not exclusively about them.
- 24 involved issues important to the Latino community (such as immigration policy) but did not explicitly feature Latinos or a Latino perspective.
- 217 featured Latinos as news sources (interviewed) in stories not involving the Latino community or Latino issues and that were not personally about them.
- 16 mentioned Latinos in passing.

While stories about Latinos were scarce on the network news, the Latino presence in non-Latino related stories was only slightly better.

Out of an estimated 12,495 non-Latino stories⁴ aired by ABC, CBS and NBC during their evening news broadcasts in 2005, 217 stories, or 1.7 percent, featured Latinos as interviewed sources in reports not involving the Latino community or Latino issues. This figure stayed the same from last year when these types of stories also made up 1.7 percent of the total stories for 2004.

Of the 38 stories centrally but not exclusively about Latinos, 10 focused on domestic government with Gonzales being a central focus. In many of these stories about Gonzales, he is discussed as a potential candidate among several to ascend to a post on the Supreme Court, but the stories did not centrally focus on him.

Part IV. Comparisons with Two Sample Weeks of News Coverage

In this section, we examine the portrayal of Latinos during two typical composite news weeks. The composite weeks were derived from news broadcasts in 2005 that were not dominated by a particular topic, like the war in Iraq. We randomly selected two weeks out of the year to examine, and we randomly assigned each network to each night of those two weeks. The sample weeks we examined were May 23-27, 2005 and December 5-9, 2005.

We found Latinos were virtually non-existent during these two composite weeks of coverage.

Topics

Out of 115 stories that aired during these two weeks, homeland security/Iraq war stories and stories about domestic government received the most coverage with 28 stories (24.3 percent) and 21 stories (18.3 percent) respectively. The third most common topic was human interest with 19 stories or 16.5 percent and the fourth was the topic of medicine/science with 12 stories or 10.4 percent. Together, these four topics represent 69.5 percent of all news stories that aired during the composite weeks (see Table 9).

Table 9.
Number (percentage of network totals) and time in minutes of stories by topic during sample weeks.

Topics	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Business/Economy	2 (6.5)	4:43	5 (11.1)	4:49	4 (10.3)	5:02	11 (9.6)	14:34
Calamities (Disasters/Accidents)	3 (9.7)	:58	2 (4.4)	5:02	1 (2.6)	:27	6 (5.2)	6:27
Celebrity/Entertainment	1 (3.2)	2:20	1 (2.2)	3:01	1 (2.6)	1:31	3 (2.6)	6:52
Crime	2 (6.5)	:32	1 (2.2)	:20	1 (2.6)	:30	4 (3.5)	1:22
Education			1 (2.2)	3:21			1 (0.9)	3:21
Government: Domestic	6 (19.4)	12:47	6 (13.3)	6:24	9 (23.1)	11:57	21 (18.3)	31:08
Government: Foreign Policy	2 (6.5)	4:11	1 (2.2)	2:22	1 (2.6)	:20	4 (3.5)	6:53
Health/Medical/Science	1 (3.2)	:43	6 (13.3)	14:34	5 (12.8)	6:33	12 (10.4)	23:50
Homeland Security/Iraq War	10 (32.3)	17:27	11 (24.4)	19:55	7 (17.9)	11:51	28 (24.3)	49:13
Human Interest	2 (6.5)	3:50	10 (22.2)	11:55	7 (17.9)	13:01	19 (16.5)	28:46
Sports	1 (3.2)	2:32					1 (0.9)	2:32
International Story	1 (3.2)	:23	1 (2.2)	2:03	2 (5.1)	2:38	4 (3.5)	5:04
Religion					1 (2.6)	2:25	1 (0.9)	2:25
Total	31	52:26	45	73:46	39	56:15	115	3:02:27

The majority of stories that aired during the composite weeks and the majority of Latino stories that aired in 2005 both fell under a narrow range of topics. This year, more than in past years, we see some similar topics explored in both the composite coverage and Latino coverage (see Table 10).

Domestic government ranked high as a topic for both categories of coverage, but as we mentioned earlier in this report, the high number of domestic government Latino stories were the result of Alberto Gonzales' nomination process. The

coverage of domestic government was more varied for the two composite weeks.

Both the composite stories and the Latino stories had human interest as the third most popular topic. It is a positive step when topics of Latino coverage looks similar to topics being covered on a more general level.

Even so, there is a drastic difference in terms of crime coverage. Whereas crime comprised 18.1 percent of Latino coverage, and was the second most popular topic for this category, it was not a top topic for the

Table 10
Top Four Topics for Latino and Sample Weeks' Stories

Sample Weeks' Stories				Latino Stories			
Rank	Topic	N	(%)	Rank	Topic	N	(%)
1	Homeland Security/Iraq	28	(24.3)	1	Domestic Government	20	(19)
2	Domestic Government	21	(18.3)	2	Crime	19	(18.1)
3	Human Interest	19	(16.5)	3	Human Interest	18	(17.1)
4	Medicine/Science	12	(10.4)	4	Immigration	15	(14.3)

composite coverage. Crime stories only appeared four times during the composite two weeks of coverage and made up only 3.5 percent of stories.

Latino Faces and Voices

Latinos were nearly absent from coverage when we examined the two composite sample weeks. Out of these 115 stories, only four stories were exclusively about Latinos and only two stories featured Latinos as news sources.

Three of these four stories were aired by CBS. These three stories were about criminal charges being dropped against a Latino soldier, the shooting of a Latino man on an airplane by air marshals in Miami, and the profile of a fallen Latino soldier. The fourth story was an ABC story about Elizabeth Vargas and Bob Woodruff assuming news anchor duties for the network. NBC had no stories exclusively about Latinos during these two weeks.

Latino Anchors and Reporters

In these sample weeks of news coverage, Latino journalists had a significant presence due to the role of Elizabeth Vargas as anchor of ABC's evening news program. Vargas anchored two out of three broadcasts by ABC that we examined.

Even so, other instances of Latino journalists were nearly nonexistent in these two weeks of broadcasts. Out of 115 stories we examined, only three were reported by Latino journalists. One story that aired on ABC about Saddam Hussein's trial was reported by Miguel Marquez. The other two stories were reported on CBS by Vince Gonzalez — one story was about the Michael Jackson trial and the other profiled video postcards sent home by soldiers in Iraq. None of these stories reported by Latino journalists involved Latinos or Latino issues.

Conclusion

Latinos make up 14.5 percent of the U.S. population but less than one percent of stories on the network evening news. We think this is shameful.

The booming growth of the Latino population in numbers and in economic and political power should serve as a wake-up call for the news networks. But each year very little changes and this report continues to yield the same dismal results.

Nevertheless, every report has its bright spots of coverage. This year, Latinos were featured in more universal stories that did not focus on their ethnicity. Immigration did not dominate coverage as it has in years past and more stories included identifiable Latinos.

Even so, these positive trends are not enough. We have learned that these trends are often aberrations in coverage as opposed

to meaningful patterns. For example, in 2004 we praised the networks for focusing less on crime stories but in 2005, crime was once again a major focus for network coverage of Latinos.

The network news audience continues to learn little about the Latino community by watching the evening news. Latinos also rarely see themselves or their issues covered by these media outlets. We believe the credibility of the news networks is harmed by their failure to adequately cover issues affecting the Latino community.

The voices of Latinos are lacking in news coverage. Major political stories about Latinos such as the election of Antonio Villaraigosa in Los Angeles or the nomination process of Alberto Gonzales lacked Hispanic perspectives. The vast majority of immigration stories were also not told from the Latino perspective. In immigration

coverage, the voices of established residents were heard loud and clear while the voices of Latino immigrants were muted.

The news media are failing to fulfill their public interest obligations of projecting a “representative picture of the constituent groups in the society,” as put forth by the Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1947. Almost 60 years later, the media are still failing in this regard.

We believe the lack of newsroom diversity at these networks is the primary reason for their poor coverage of Latinos. Unfortunately, the nation’s news media have historically failed to ensure that their newsrooms, as well as their news coverage, reflect the communities they serve.

Methodology

The source for the data analyzed in this Brownout Report is the Vanderbilt University Television News Archives (TNA), which contains videotapes, indexes and summaries of all the evening news programs transmitted by the nation’s major television news networks — ABC, CBS, and NBC. In previous years, this report examined CNN, but for 2005 *NewsNight with Aaron Brown* was taken off the air, so we did not examine CNN for this year.

The summaries, accessible via the TNA Web site (www.tvnews.vanderbilt.edu), provide the following key descriptors for each story archived: 1) network and program on which the story aired; 2) date of the news program; 3) running title or topic of the story; 4) name of the anchor or studio correspondent who introduced the story; 5) the city where the story originated; 6) the field correspondent(s) who was/were part of the report; 7) an abstract of the story, including the names and title of any persons interviewed for the story; 8) beginning time, ending time, and duration of the story; and 9) last names of the reporters for the story.

Using the TNA’s powerful search capabilities available via the Internet, key words were

NAHJ strongly believes that increasing the number of Latino journalists and managers will improve news coverage of Latinos. We believe, however, that it is ultimately the responsibility of the networks to make the changes needed to improve news coverage of the Latino community.

Although this report yields results that NAHJ criticizes, as an association of Latino journalists, we are eager to help the networks improve their coverage and hire more Latinos for their newsrooms. We respect our colleagues and our NAHJ members working at the networks for their dedication to the profession, and we share their goal of improving the overall quality of news.

input to select stories related to Latinos transmitted via the three networks during the year 2005. All stories containing the key words showed up on the screen and were then reviewed for subsequent selection or exclusion for the report’s analysis.

In order to identify the stories related to Latinos and Latino issues, we used some of the same words and criteria used in previous studies. However, we also enhanced the process.

With respect to the key words⁵ for the search of the TNA, we proceeded as follows:

We searched for stories containing the general and most important Latino designations. These were “Latino,” “Latin-Americans,” “Hispanic,” and “Hispanic-Americans.” The vast majority of the stories selected for the first phase of the selection were obtained from this search. The searches using the next round of key words produced the remaining stories.

We prepared a broad list of specific Latino subgroups. Examples were “Cuban,” “Cuban American,” “Puerto Ricans,” “Colombian,” “Ecuadorians,” “Chileans,” etc.

We also searched the national countries of origin of the Latino groups. Examples were "Puerto Rico," "Mexico," "Cuba," etc.

We prepared a comprehensive list of keywords such as "bilingual education," "crime," "undocumented laborers," and "border." This list consisted of more than 30 descriptors associated with Latino society in the United States.

Finally, we searched the top 100 Hispanic last names from the U.S. Census Bureau. These last names were from a 1996 U.S. Census Bureau working paper called, *Building a Spanish Surname List for the 1990s: A New Approach to an Old Problem*.

Using these very broad and encompassing words and last names, the search yielded more than 1300 stories which included the following five descriptors: 1) network and program, 2) date, 3) running title or topic, which contained a live link to the abstract of the story, 4) beginning and end time and duration of the story. All 1300+ stories were downloaded from the TNA archives into an Excel file.

In the second round of selection, we assessed the TNA's abstracts of each story for two key variables: central involvement of Latinos (CIL) and exclusivity.

CIL establishes what, if any, specific role Latinos played in a news story. We assigned each of the 1,300+ stories one of the following:

- 1 Primary newsmaker role:** One or more Latinos clearly played a central role in the creation, development, or resolution of a news issue being aired. The topic of the story is also relevant or centered on the Latino individual or his/her community, business, or organization. If one of the newsmakers is Latino, but no visuals of this person are shown, it is still coded as centrally involving Latinos.
- 2 Secondary for relevant specific issues:** The topic of the story is pertinent to Latinos and/or a Latino community. However, it is not explicitly nor primarily about them. In this type of

story, mention is made of how a legal case, law, pending legislation, etc. may or will affect diverse communities, among them Latinos. The accompanying graphic may show a person, neighborhood or other image that could be *explicitly identified* as Latino. If the story is primarily focused on the impact or effects on Latinos, or that Latinos are key players in the process, the code would be 1.

- 3 Mainstreaming:** Regardless of the story topic, one or more Latinos (excluding the reporter of the story) appear in medium or close-up shots and speak on camera. The main difference between category 2 and 3 is that the topic here is not relevant or specific to a Latino or Latino community. Typically, this type of story involves a person on the street who offers comments on the non-Latino aspect of the story. It could also be a sports story in which a Latino player is mentioned, but not featured. The key is that a Latino is part of the story, but not necessarily for being Latino. If a Latino is featured because he or she is Latino, then it should be coded as 1 or 2 depending on the centrality of the involvement. At the same time, the image and/or sound of the Latino person(s) is not just in passing, a distant blurred background with no significance to the story (see next category).
- 4 Passing:** The stories under this category are those that show up in the index search, but in which Latinos or Latino communities have no bearing as described by either of the previous three categories. A story under this category would be one that states, for example, the accident/ceremony/event took place in the Mexican neighborhood of Chicago. But nothing else is mentioned about the community or the people there. Due to the word Mexican, the story was "tagged." But lacking any other context, it is thus only a "passing" mention.
- 5 None:** Story showed up because of key word search only, but not related to U.S. Latinos.

Exclusivity establishes if the story was exclusively about Latinos or Latino-related issues. If so, a code 1 was given for this variable. Stories coded CIL 1 could be coded 1 or 2 for exclusivity. However, by default definition, stories coded CIL 2, 3 or 4 could only be coded as 2 in terms of exclusivity. Stories coded 5 for CIL were not coded for exclusivity and were given no further consideration in the analysis.

The coding for CIL and exclusivity was done by two trained NAHJ staff members who agreed on more than 90 percent of the codes given to the stories. Discrepancies for these variables, and for the ones that followed, were discussed with each other and, when necessary, with the principal investigator of the report. Very high inter-coder reliability for all the variables was thus assured for the study.

Upon excluding all the news stories classified as CIL 5, e.g., those about Latin America, Spain and other matters for which the key words were within the abstract yet had no reference to Latinos in the United States, the sample was reduced to 400 stories, all of which were then coded for the topics indicated in Tables 1 and 2.⁶

Next, we selected the stories in which Latinos were centrally involved or which were exclusively about Latinos and Latino-related issues. A total of 105 stories fit these criteria. We purchased videotapes of those 105 stories from the Vanderbilt University TNA. We based the quantitative analysis on the viewing and coding of these 105 stories via video.

The TNAs abstracts were the unit of analysis for the first phase of selection of stories and for the coding of CIL, exclusivity and topics of the stories. An additional unit of analysis — as well as a source for enhancing the information that was often needed for coding those variables — was the transcript of each story. The transcripts were obtained from the Lexis-Nexis archives, which contain,

among other documents, the full text transcriptions for thousands of print and broadcast news programs from major media across the nation, including the news programs studied for this report. Thus, while the individual news story remained as the basic unit of analysis, the source for obtaining the information needed to shift from the running headlines and the abstracts scrutinized from the TNA to the Lexis-Nexis transcripts as needed.

For the qualitative phase of the study, the unit of analysis was the video segment of each story that was centrally and exclusively about Latinos (105 total stories). For this phase, two members of the NAHJ staff watched and then discussed each video segment to observe framing, images and the development of each story to examine trends and patterns in the coverage.

Another facet of this study involves examining two sample weeks of network news coverage to see how Latinos are portrayed during a “typical” week of news. First, we randomly chose two weeks (Monday-Friday) during 2005 to examine. We then checked these selected weeks against the Tyndall Report, a Web site that tracks the most popular topics on network news and the time devoted to these topics by the networks on a daily basis (and archives this information). Our reason for checking these weeks against the Tyndall Report was to make sure that neither week was dominated by one specific topic such as the war in Iraq or a major catastrophe such as Hurricane Katrina.

Once we knew these weeks were not dominated by any one story, we randomly drew the names of each network and assigned them to each night of news during both weeks. In this way, we were able to put together a sample that represented an average model of network nightly news that we were then able to compare with our exclusively Latino coverage.

Limitations

All efforts were made to find and include the universe of network news stories related to Latinos. That is why NAHJ conducted multiple category searches of the index of Vanderbilt University's Television News Archive. Even so, we acknowledge that we may have overlooked Latino stories that were not indexed by using our search criteria. For example, we looked for stories that included the top 100 Spanish surnames listed by the U.S. Census Bureau. There are thousands of other last names we did not search. Likewise, there are many Latinos who

do not have Spanish surnames. However, we attempted to capture any of those stories with other key words.

We also acknowledge the possibility of stories that were not indexed with key words related to Latinos, but were about Latinos nonetheless. The only way to capture the full universe of Latino-related stories is to observe each and every news story that aired in 2005, a task not possible given our time and human resources.

¹ See Commission on the Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines and Books* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago) and National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Bantam Books: New York).

² Estimate based on an average calculation of approximately 11.5 stories per each half-hour newscast. This calculation was taken from our two sample weeks of news coverage. The actual total number of stories for three networks airing 11.5 per newscast for 365 days of news coverage is 12,592 stories, which we rounded to 12,600.

³ Again, this estimate was taken from our two sample weeks of news coverage. We took an average of how many minutes each half-hour newscast devoted to news. The average total was 18 minutes. We then multiplied 18 minutes times 3 (for each network), then multiplied that total by 365 (nights a year). Our total was 19,710 minutes, which is 328.5 hours which we rounded up to 329.

⁴ The average number of stories aired by the three networks in 2005 was estimated to be 12,600. This figure (12,495) is this average less the 105 stories we determined to be about Latinos.

⁵ For a full list of the key words used in the TNA search, contact NAHJ.

⁶ The topics in tables 2 and 3 only represent those topics found in Latino stories. A total of 20 topics were used as categories for evaluating Latino stories (and the two composite weeks). For a full list of topics contact NAHJ.



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