

Understanding News Media Consumption Among Latinos in the United States

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Abstract

Research considering the effects of news media consumption on individuals has proliferated in recent decades. While a good deal is known about general indicators of news consumption, little is known about what dictates news consumption among Latinos. This paper endeavors to address that shortcoming by considering the determinants of news media consumption among Latinos in the United States. Employing a uses and gratifications theoretical rubric that focuses on individuals' relative abilities, interests, and expectations, the tests of the Latino National Survey dataset reveal some systematic news media consumption behavior for this subset of U.S. residents. In total, this project helps develop a clearer understanding of what determines news media consumption among Latinos in the United States.

Introduction

Research exploring the effect of news media consumption on individual-level attitudes and behaviors has proliferated in recent decades (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Iyengar, 1987; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Cappella & Jamieson, 1996; Norris, 2000; Prior, 2007; Salzman & Aloisi, 2009). Although understanding how news media consumption affects individuals is undoubtedly an important research focus, comprehending what determines news consumption is a necessary first step. Researchers have made significant progress toward establishing a general body of knowledge regarding what encourages individuals to consume news media. This article seeks to establish the extent to which that understanding applies to a specific group in the United States: Latinos.

Understanding what determines news media consumption among U.S. Latinos is important for a number of reasons.¹ First, isolating a single group type allows for a relatively parsimonious test of what shapes news media consumption. For instance, when testing what affects Latino news consumption, researchers can include potential influences such as English ability and how many generations removed an individual is from initial immigration. These important distinctions may be lost in a general study of all U.S. residents. Second, understanding the influences of news media consumption among Latinos may illuminate the general applicability of uses and gratifications theory for understanding the determinants of news media consumption for all individuals in the United States, and potentially elsewhere as well. Third, identifying the determinants of news media consumption for U.S. Latinos will aid in assessing theoretical expectations in future research that seeks to understand how news media consumption affects other attitudes and behaviors.

Research into why individuals consume media has focused on individual-level motivations and audience members' desire to satisfy those motivations. Put another way, individuals employ media for a specific use, and then seek gratification. This uses and gratifications approach serves to explain media consumption for all individuals despite the clear individual differences that influence such behavior. Like many theories, uses and gratifications requires that some assumptions about media consumption behavior (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). First, individuals initiate media selection. Second, audiences are active and their media behavior is goal-directed. Third, individual predispositions, social contact, and context produce expectations that guide media use. This article classifies the potential gratifications Latinos seek into three categories: ability, interest, and expectations.

Focusing on individual-level uses and gratifications helps provide insights regarding the choice and use of media. Although the uses and gratifications theory fell into academic disfavor several decades ago, it has experienced a renaissance with the increased pluralism of media options in the Internet age.² For example, one

recent analysis found that predictors of news media consumption among college students were dictated by habit, surveillance and escapism (Diddi & LaRose, 2006). Research like Diddi and La Rose's illustrates the need to differentiate among demographic groups (i.e. college students) within larger social contexts (i.e. the United States). Such differentiations are appropriate as groups like college students and Latinos vary markedly in many behavioral categories, including news media consumption.

Much academic attention has been dedicated to understanding the behaviors and attitudes of various cultural groups in the United States. This is particularly true for the subject at hand as "Latina/os studies span the major areas of the communication and media studies interdisciplines" (Valdivia, 2004, p. 110). There have been numerous studies that focus on media use effects among Latinos, including whether Latino media serve to sustain Latino ethnic identity as well as the roles of non-Latino media use in stimulating acculturation and assimilation (see Subervi-Velez, 2008). For instance, Rios (2003) found that telenovela viewers used those programs to both maintain their Latino identity and learn about their new culture. Similarly, Jeffres (2000) found that ethnic media use could help strengthen ethnic identity over time. Salzman (2014) found that the preferred language for news media consumption among Latinos is closely related to various measures of Latino identity. Although these studies have focused on the relationship between identity and media use, they have been restricted to Latino-specific media. Thus, a gap remains in the literature concerning what determines decisions to consume news media in general, whether Latino-oriented or not. To address the gap, this seeks to understand the central research question, what determines general news media consumption by Latinos?

The data employed herein focuses on individuals born in the United States as well as those born in Latin America who immigrated to the United States. The diversity of our sample allows us to identify influences deriving from differences in media context per country of origin. In general, research has shown that variation in context can cause variation in individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Almond & Verba, 1963). Adopting this assumption, that context can affect all types of behavior, our research design includes a test of a contextual measure that captures the relative press freedom levels of the country from which the individual originated.

Key Concepts: What determines news media consumption amongst Latinos in the United States?

To understand what determines Latinos' news media consumption in the United States requires that we consider some key individual-level differences that reflect audience members' desired use for news media.³ Those differences can be grouped into three dimensions: ability, interest and

expectations (Salzman, 2011; Salzman & Albarran, 2011).⁴

Ability

Resources and access are the most basic determinants of Latinos' news media consumption in the United States. For instance, studies have consistently found that individuals with greater income read the newspaper more frequently than individuals at lower income levels (e.g. Bogart, 1989). Political behavior research has theorized—and demonstrated—that individuals with greater amounts of time and resources are more able and willing to engage in various activities such as participate in civil society or vote; activities that may not be possible for those with little free time (Putnam, 1995). This should be true for media consumption as well. That is to say, individuals with more available free time may use it to participate in activities such as reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, or watching TV news. Other resources, besides time, include wealth and regular access to media (i.e. pay television, broadband internet and smartphone). Therefore, individuals with greater resources are expected to consume more news media of all types.

Another potential individual-level determinant of news media consumption for Latinos focuses on English speaking ability. The U.S. news media industry provides news in many different languages. Second in number to English news outlets are those in Spanish. However, the number of English-language news greatly exceeds that of Spanish-language outlets.⁵ Thus, individuals possessing better English skills should have more options to consume news, and will gratify their desire to consume news more easily than those with more limited or no English.

Interest

As Norris (2000) argues, individuals with more knowledge have greater interest in adding to their knowledge base. News media provide the best opportunity to satisfy that interest in knowledge accumulation. Additional research echoes Norris's findings, indicating that interest is a motivating factor for certain news consumption behavior that is highly correlated with political knowledge (Johnson & Arceneaux, 2010). Therefore, individuals with higher levels of knowledge are expected to consume more news media of all kinds than are individuals with less knowledge.

Also reflecting an individual's relative level of interest in seeking information via the news is political participation. People who participate in the political system are more highly educated than nonparticipants (Almond & Verba, 1963; Converse, 1972; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1996). Individuals who are more educated are expected to "research and evaluate the issues and candidates" (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993, p. 136). Reaching beyond the United States, similar research in Latin America demonstrates that political knowledge and education—representing interest in politics—are positively related to news

media consumption (Salzman, 2011). Thus, there is good reason to expect that Latinos who participate in U.S. politics will consume more news media than those who do not.

Consuming news of one type may reflect general news media consumption for other news media as well. That is, individuals who read newspapers are likely to watch television news, and vice versa. The substitutability of news media is expected because an individual's motivation to consume news may be consistently expressed regardless of the available medium. Besides indicating an existing interest, consuming one news medium may prompt greater interest, which can subsequently lead to more information seeking behavior that is best satisfied with alternative news sources. Therefore, individuals who consume greater amounts of news from one type of medium are expected to consume more news from other media types as well.

Expectations

Embracing the uses and gratifications theory and combining it with media effects research, Windahl (1981) argued that media perceptions and expectations shape individual behavior. So, we ask, what influences perceptions and expectations for Latinos? The level of press freedom in the individual's country of origin may affect Latinos' expectations of news media. Countries with poor records of press freedom may find that reality reflected in the expectations of their citizens, expatriates and other members of their diaspora. The presence of a constrained press in a Latino's country of origin might induce lower levels of news media consumption in the U.S. as the press will generally be unable to provide quality information without systematic bias. Conversely, higher levels of press freedom in the country of origin may increase the perceived reliability of the press and entice greater news consumption in the United States. Therefore, Latinos from countries with greater press freedom should see the news media as more useful and trustworthy, and, consequently, consume greater amounts of news media in the United States.

Another factor that may influence Latinos' expectations regarding news media is how many generations removed from immigration they are. Many new immigrants to any country have limited knowledge about the host society. Among other things, news media are used to inform new immigrants of the goings on in their new country. This expectation of information encourages news media consumption for many Latino immigrants to the United States. As each subsequent generation is born and matures in the United States, the relative level of lack of knowledge is ameliorated by participation in the American education system, and the expectation of novel information provided by news media decreases. Thus, subsequent generations should consume less news relative to the first generation of Latino immigrants. However it is worth noting that the decrease in news media consumption across generations may result from increased new media use (i.e Internet).

Method

In order to test the effects of individual-level characteristics on Latino news media consumption in the United States, this study utilizes survey data from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) (Fraga, et al, 2006). The LNS is a national telephone survey of 8,600 Latino residents of the United States that seeks a broad understanding of Latino political and social life by employing a semi-structured interview with a mix of open-ended and closed questions. Each survey was administered by phone and took approximately 40 minutes to complete, with the exact length and number of questions depending on the respondent's citizenship, parental status, and state of residence. Interviewing Services of America conducted the surveys in the preferred language of the respondent (English, Spanish, or both languages).⁶

The survey's universe was all adult U.S. Latinos (18 years or older); they did not have to be U.S. citizens or voters. The sample was designed and drawn by Geoscape International, a professional marketing research firm that specializes in targeting Hispanics.⁷ Geoscape's proprietary NameBase™ includes pertinent information for over 110 million households and over 215 million individuals.⁸ NameBase™ includes approximately 90% of all Hispanics in the United States. The sample design was stratified to create stand-alone samples in 15 states and the Washington DC Metro area, allowing for statistically sound analysis in each context. To allow national analyses such as those conducted in this study, the LNS weights state-level data using a national estimate or weight derived from state level population estimates according to census projections.⁹

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this project capture self-reported news media consumption measures for newspaper and television news. The TV news and newspaper consumption variables are single item measures consisting of four responses ordered by frequency of use. The response options are: almost never, once or twice a week, most days, and daily.

An ordered logistic model is employed to analyze the dependent variables. Use of the ordered logistic model is justified by the count structure (0, 1, 2, 3) of the dependent variables (Long, 1997). The results of the statistical models reveal the direction and statistical significance of the independent variables' effect on the dependent variables of interest.

Independent Variables

This research focuses on multiple primary independent variables, all intended to capture the three dimensions that may influence Latinos' news media consumption behavior. To test *ability*, the following variables are utilized: English quality, Spanish quality, economic situation better, economic situation worse, economic

situation the same, employed, own home, and income. English quality measures the level of English speaking ability, while Spanish quality measures the level of Spanish speaking ability. The self-ascribed measures are scored 0 (not at all), 1 (just a little), 2 (pretty well), and 3 (very well). All respondents who opted to take the survey in English were assigned a score of 3 for English quality, while respondents who opted for Spanish were assigned a 3 for the Spanish quality variable.

The economic situation variables were derived from a single question then divided into three dichotomous variables measuring whether the respondent considers their financial situation over the past year to have “gotten better”, “gotten worse”, or “stayed about the same.” To code each variable, the positive response, “gotten better,” was assigned a 1, while the other two responses were assigned a 0.

Own home is a dichotomous variable as well with a 0 assigned to those who do not own their home and a 1 to homeowners. Employed is scored 0 to 2 dividing employment into part-time, full-time, and not employed. Income is measured as the self-reported total household income divided into 7 income ranges from 1 equaling below \$15,000 to 7 indicating above \$65,000.

Interest employs eleven separate variables to test various levels of political interest and knowledge. Interest in politics tests whether the respondent is not interested (0), somewhat interested (1), or very interested (2) in politics and public affairs. Political knowledge is an additive index of various items intended to capture both formal and informal information. The questions asked respondents to identify which party controls Congress, who won their state’s electoral votes in 2004, and which party is more conservative. For each correct response, the respondent receives a score of 1. Incorrect responses receive a score of 0. The scores are then added together to create a political knowledge index that ranges from 0 to 3.

Education measures the degree of formal education that a respondent has received and is assigned scores between 0 (none) and 7 (graduate or professional degree). Civic engagement and contact government measure the frequency of actions taken to participate in civic group activities and contact a government official. Both variables are divided into three levels of frequency: no actions (0), one action (1), and two or more actions (2). Vote is a dichotomous variable measuring whether a respondent has voted in the last presidential election both within the United States and/or in their country of origin. Registered to vote is scored positively (1) only if the person is registered within the United States. If the respondent is not registered to vote in the U.S, they are assigned a coded value of 0. Democrat and Republican are variables used to identify whether a person considers himself or herself a Democrat or Republican. These variables are obtained from a single question within the LNS survey that asks a respondent to identify whether they consider

themselves a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or other. Those respondents who answered Democrat were assigned a value of 1; all other responses were assigned a 0 value for the Democrat variable. The same method was used for the Republican variable assigning those who answered Republican receiving a value of 1 and all other responses receiving 0. Independent serves as the excluded category in the model; thus, the results for Democrat and Republican should be interpreted relative to being Independent, the excluded category.¹⁰ Finally, citizenship evaluates whether a respondent is a citizen of the United States. This variable is coded dichotomously with 1 being yes and 0 being no.

Table 1: Press Freedom Scores for Latin America

Freedom House Freedom of the Press 2004		
Country	Score	Rating
High = less press freedom		
Argentina	35	Partly Free
Bolivia	37	Partly Free
Brazil	36	Partly Free
Chile	23	Free
Colombia	63	Not Free
Costa Rica	19	Free
Cuba	96	Not Free
Dominican Rep.	39	Partly Free
Ecuador	42	Partly Free
El Salvador	42	Partly Free
Guatemala	62	Not Free
Honduras	52	Partly Free
Mexico	36	Partly Free
Nicaragua	37	Partly Free
Panama	45	Partly Free
Paraguay	54	Partly Free
Peru	34	Partly Free
Puerto Rico ¹	-	-
United States	13	Free
Uruguay	26	Free
Venezuela	68	Not Free

Source: Freedom House, 2004

¹ Puerto Rico received no score as it is considered the same as the United States

Four variables are used to test expectation. These include generation of residency in the U.S. (second, third and fourth), and the level of press freedom. The generational variables are

Table 2: Ordered Logistic Models of News Media Consumption Determinants

	TV News		Newspaper	
	z-score	sig.	z-score	sig.
Ability				
English Quality	1.97	.048	7.11	.000
Economic Situation – Better	-0.89	.371	-1.11	.265
Economic Situation – Worse	-0.07	.941	-1.27	.205
Employed	-2.97	.003	0.75	.451
Own Home	-0.20	.843	-1.36	.172
Income	-1.29	.199	3.15	.002
Interest				
Interested in Politics	5.60	.000	10.23	.000
Political Knowledge	-0.04	.966	4.04	.000
Education	0.46	.646	7.06	.000
Civic Engagement	0.39	.694	3.65	.000
Contact Government	0.55	.580	2.50	.012
Vote	0.59	.558	0.77	.439
Registered to Vote	0.22	.826	-0.09	.927
Democrat	1.88	.060	1.65	.099
Republican	-0.31	.756	-0.56	.575
Citizen	-1.90	.057	0.67	.506
Newspaper	13.07	.000	-	-
TV News	-	-	12.66	.000
Expectation				
2 nd Generation	0.21	.831	2.70	.007
3 rd Generation	-1.37	.171	1.42	.155
4 th Generation	-2.11	.035	3.26	.001
Press Freedom (Birth Country)	-1.53	.127	2.13	.033
Control Variables				
Male	-3.92	.000	7.03	.000
Age	8.97	.000	6.97	.000
Married	1.16	.247	-0.61	.542
Kids?	0.93	.351	1.14	.256
Pseudo-R ²		0.047	0.113	
N		6,084	6,084	

Source: 2006 Latino National Survey

all single item dichotomous responses coded with 0 equaling no and 1 equaling yes. A second generation respondent is one who answered that neither parent was born in the United States.

A third generation respondent identified at least one grandparent being born outside of the U.S., and fourth generation respondents had all parents and grandparents born within the United States. The system-level variable press freedom is taken from Freedom House's 2004 press freedom index. Countries of origin were assigned a potential value ranging from 0 to 100. The actual values assigned were four through 87, with four representing the country of origin with the lowest level of press freedom and 87 being the county of origin with the 'most free' press. Table 1 presents the press freedom scores for Latin American countries and the United States.

Control Variables

Some basic control variables that have been consistently linked to various political behaviors (Almond and Verba 1963) are included to verify correct relationships and increase robustness of the models. Although seeking news content is not explicitly a political activity, individual differences may variably affect that behavior. These variables include sex, age, marital status, and parenthood. The respondent's sex is coded as either male yes (1) or male no (0). Age is assigned a continuous value in years. The age range obtained in this study is from 18 to 97 years. Married identifies a respondent's marital status where married is assigned a value of 1 and not married is assigned a value of 0. Kids measures the number of children within a household from 0 (none) to 4 (four or more).

Latino News Media Consumption Analysis Results

Table 2 presents results of the analyses examining the determinants of news media consumption for Latinos in the United States. Each model performed well with a pseudo-R² of 0.113 and 0.047 for the newspaper and television news consumption models respectively.¹¹ Overall, each type of news media consumption is significantly affected by numerous variables, each representing various uses and gratifications and grouped into three categories: ability, interest and expectation. Because the results were dependent upon the type of news media, we discuss the findings for each variable in turn.

Latino news consumption is expected to be positively affected by an individual's English speaking ability. The results of the standard ordered logistic model reveal that for both TV news and newspaper consumption, English speaking ability is positively and significantly related to Latinos' level of news consumption. While one could argue that the increased availability of Spanish-language news media in the

United States renders the ability to speak English well irrelevant to news consumption behavior; the results seem to suggest that English speaking ability is related to news consumption.

Considering the role of resources in shaping news media consumption behavior, we employed a series of variables. Economic situation better and economic situation worse are insignificant for affecting news media consumption relative to a stable (same) economic situation. Owning a home is also statistically insignificant. Being employed is not statistically related to newspaper consumption. For television news consumption, being employed is negatively related to that behavior. While this finding runs counter to expectations related to resources, it appears reasonable as unemployed individuals typically have more time to watch TV. However, those same individuals should have time to read the newspaper as well, despite the lack of statistical evidence elucidating a positive relationship. This result reflects the need to purchase a newspaper subscription separately from other entertainment whereas TVs provide both and are thus likely already purchased and eagerly maintained. Additionally, increases in the availability of newspaper reports via Internet sources may diminish the statistical relationship. Income has a positive relationship and is statistically significant in affecting newspaper consumption, but has no evident effect on TV news consumption. Therefore, the role of resources is more pronounced for newspaper consumption than for television news consumption. This could be due to the fact that many households may consider television to be a necessity and newspapers a luxury.

Interested individuals are expected to consume news media of various kinds. Interest appears to be a powerful motivator of newspaper consumption, but less so for television news consumption. The most direct measure of interest, political interest, follows the theoretical expectations. Political interest is positive and statistically significant for both newspaper and television news consumption. Individuals with greater political knowledge and education are anticipated to consume more news media. This only appears to hold for newspaper consumption, yet the result is reasonable as newspaper consumption is more active and requires skills provided via education. Television news consumption is a relatively passive activity and places less demand on literacy skills. In general, this study firmly supports the assertion that Latinos having political knowledge and formal education seek more news due to increased interest.¹²

Interest is also conceived via political participation. As with the other interest measures, television news consumption appears to be unaffected by political participation of any kind. Only being identified with the Democratic Party is correlated with greater television news consumption relative to being an independent. A similar result for being Democrat was found for newspaper consumption. While the finding is statistically significant, the reasons why are unclear. For newspaper consumption,

political participation has a stronger effect. Civic engagement and likelihood to contact the government have statistically significant, positive parameter estimates. Vote, and registered to vote, are found to be insignificant for newspaper consumption amongst Latinos. Citizenship was unexpectedly negative in affecting television news consumption. Thus it appears that more localized and individualized participation affects some news media consumption whereas engagement in national politics is not correlated with news media consumption.

The expectation that consumption of one news medium is correlated to other news media is strongly supported. To account for the substitutability of news media consumption, the nondependent news media variables (television news and newspapers) are included as independent variables in modeling the others. In each case, the consumption of the alternative news media revealed positive and statistically significant parameter estimates. This finding shows that Latinos who consume news from one medium with greater regularity can be expected to consume more news from other media as well.

Different generations of Latinos were anticipated to have various expectations of news media, thus consuming them dissimilar rates based on those expectations. It was assumed that Latinos who immigrated to the U.S. more recently will consume more news. For newspaper consumption, second or fourth generation status reveals positive and significant parameter estimates for newspaper consumption relative to the first generation. This is counter to what was hypothesized, implying that news consumption is a learned habit instead of one sought out of necessity to learn about the new country of residence. For TV news consumption, only fourth generation Latinos appear to be statistically discernable from their first generation counterparts. Latinos in the fourth generation consume less television news than their first generation counterparts. This is in line with the theorized expectations. However, the lack of statistical significance for second and third generation Latinos renders this finding questionable. Instead, this may actually be an effect of the shifting landscape of news gathering for younger generations where Internet becomes increasingly preferred to traditional news media like television.

The press freedom score of the respondent's home country is positively related to newspaper consumption.¹³ This means that Latinos born in a country with poor press freedom are less likely to read newspapers than individuals born in countries with better press freedom, which appears to support the contention that expectations of news media are shaped by prior experiences. The results for television news are statistically insignificant.

The control variables in the models performed well. Males are significantly more likely than females to consume newspapers, and less likely to consume television news. Age reveals a positive and significant parameter estimate for both newspapers and

TV. Being married and having children does not correlate with the consumption of either news medium for U.S. Latinos.

The analyses of news media consumption determinants among Latinos reveal, first and foremost, that media types must be considered separately. That is, factors that influence newspaper consumption appear to be unrelated to television news consumption and vice versa. In general, the model analyzing the determinants of newspaper news consumption paints a clearer picture than the model exploring the determinants of television news consumption. Besides the greater number of statistically significant coefficients in the newspaper consumption model, the explanatory value reported in the model (r-square) was twice that of the television news consumption model. In conclusion, newspaper consumption appears to fit well with the Ability-Interest-Expectation analysis of news consumption determinants while television news remains a puzzle.

Discussion

Our analyses clarify what is known about Latinos' decisions to consume news. A few conclusions stand out. First, news media types must be considered separately in any meaningful analysis. Newspaper readership is more clearly related to audiences' desired uses as discussed in the theory section. The relationship between individual characteristics and TV news is less clear, as prior research has found (Salzman, 2011). The conclusion reached in that research, and seemingly applicable here, is that TV news consumption is more passive than newspaper readership. That is, an individual may be watching a program that precedes the news broadcast and when the program ends, the viewer continues "watching" the news. Thus, more people claim to watch the news which muddies the statistical water. Reading a newspaper is usually a stand-alone behavior. As such, those who identify as newspaper consumers constitute a clearer "type" than TV viewers. This is not to say that TV news viewers are not of a specific type, but that they are diluted by individuals who watch TV news passively.

Second, interest is the most nuanced dimension of the three when it comes to variably motivating news media consumption. This lends support to Norris (2000) who found that interest positively affects news media consumption, which then further affects interest to create a circular causal relationship. The present research asserts that Latinos consume news because they are interested in politics and current events. Such desired-use motivation is most evident for newspaper readership. Again, this is likely due to the active nature of newspaper consumption relative to TV news consumption. However, the most explicit statement of interest in politics found very strong, positive results for both types of news media consumption, illustrating that Latinos indeed use news media to gather political and current event information.

Finally, Latinos' expectations about news media are correlated with newspaper consumption. This has never been tested before. Relative to first-generation immigrants, second and fourth generation Latinos read the newspaper more frequently. This finding is counter to the expectation that first generation Latinos will seek to learn more about their new country through news consumption. However, respondent language skills could be influencing our data and statistical analyses. That press freedom levels in the respondent's home country are related to newspaper readership meets the expectations laid out herein, indicating that Latinos may carry their attitudes about news media with them when they travel to a new country.

While there are significant differences among news media, it appears that Latinos variably consume news media based on their individual-level characteristics. There is also evidence that context matters as nation of origin press freedom scores are statistically related to newspaper readership. These findings are thus in line with the uses and gratifications literature, illustrating that Latinos seek news media similarly to the general population in the United States. By reaching those conclusions, a gap in the literature is closer to being filled. As communication research continues to differentiate among various sub-groups in societies, research like this will serve to strengthen our understanding and expectations of various groups.

Although strong on the whole, this study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. First among these are the usual shortcomings associated with survey data. All self-reported survey data is imperfect as it seeks to capture the feelings and behaviors of respondents. For this project, the nature of the data gathering methods, although presumed rigorous, is not completely known. As such, executing similar projects using other data sources would be fruitful. Also, the data set employed here lacked questions about radio news consumption. This is an important limitation for future research to consider as large percentages of the Latino population consume radio regularly. Internet and mobile device use should also be included in future studies. Another focus for upcoming research should be refining the variables for each category representing the various uses and gratifications presumed to exist among Latinos. Some variables may be unnecessary while others that should have been included were not. Thus, variable refinement is essential as this area of inquiry moves forward.

In closing, this project should serve to reinforce the generalizability of uses and gratifications theory. While it has not paved a new path to understanding news media consumption, it has certainly smoothed and widened the avenue. Thus, future research may find value in these findings for the applicability of theory, the fruitfulness of group-specific studies for clarifying relationships, identifying points of departure, and generally refining what is known about the effects of news media consumption.

Endnotes

¹ This project does not consider the language of news media. For a thorough exploration of that important topic, see Salzman (2014).

² For an excellent discussion of uses and gratifications theory and its evolution over time see Ruggiero (2000).

³ Studies of media consumption in other contexts demonstrate that (non-news) media use is clearly correlated with individual-level attributes (Salzman, 2011). For example, Roberts and Foehr (2008) examine trends in media use among children in the United States. They find clear differences in use that appear dependent on the presence of media (i.e. computer), the child's race and variation in intellect measures (i.e. grades) amongst other attributes that are individual-specific. Trevino, Webster, and Stein (2000) consider what affects communication medium choice in business settings. They find individual-level determinants, such as proximity to other individuals, variably influence media use choices by managers. Although these two examples appear unrelated to understanding news media use amongst Latinos in the United States, the sentiment remains the same. Differences among individuals variably affect decisions about media use.

⁴ Researchers who apply uses and gratifications often employ typologies to introduce parsimony to what might otherwise be an unmanageable venture (see Finn, 1997; Anderson & Reville, 1995; Eysenck, 1991; McGuire, 1974).

⁵ For a discussion of Spanish-language media expansion see Coffey (2009).

⁶ The collection of survey data faces many well-documented challenges (Tourangeau, Rips & Rasinski, 2000). A particularly thorny issue is the use of telephone surveys for data gathering. Although the trend was less pronounced in 2005-2006, the U.S. population has increasingly moved away from land line usage. However, telephones remain one of the most cost effective methods for collecting survey data. The survey administrator claimed to use mobile phones and other methods for collecting data when this article went to press, but little is known about its methods when the survey was administered in 2005-2006. Additionally problematic for a survey focused on Latinos/Hispanics in the United States is the propensity of some potential respondents to avoid participation for fear of revealing their undocumented status.

⁷ Although the LNS data was gathered by Geoscape International, the survey itself was designed by university-associated scholars to be used for academic purposes. The study was funded by the Ford Foundation, Russell Sage Foundation, National Science Foundation, Irvine Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Joyce Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Texas A&M University, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and University of

Notre Dame Inter-University Program for Latino Research.

⁸ Information about LNS data collection procedures is available at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/20862#method>. Simply employing last names to identify individual ethnicity is clearly problematic. The interview administrator, Geoscape, provides no specific information about how it identifies Latinos, but does tout its advanced stratification techniques, sample extraction using household databases, and cellphone accommodation "along with dozens of metrics to create strata and quotas based on key anchor points" (<http://www.geoscape.com/geoscaperesearch>). Although questions about identity (i.e. "Do you consider yourself Latino?") exist in the survey, they are not used as filter questions for identifying the goodness of survey participant fit.

⁹ "The original weights for 8,634 records were based on a comparative analysis of respondent demographics versus each geographical stratum's overall Hispanic demographics. Subsequently, in October 2007, the researchers requested that respondent weights reflect not only the overall demographic composition of respondents (versus state and national Hispanic demographics from Geoscape American MarketScope DataStream 2006), but also reflect the location where the respondents reside so regional differences in opinions and attitudes may be analyzed during state and national summary analytics (ICPSR, 2013, para.2)."

¹⁰ Identifying with a political party is presumed to represent greater political interest although that claim is sometimes contentious in the U.S. where registration, primary election voting, and partisan identification are closely but inconsistently related to one another.

¹¹ Pseudo R² scores demonstrate the explanatory value of the model and can be interpreted as a percentage. Thus, a score of 0.113 means that the 11.3% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. Although these numbers may seem low, they are average (and even above average) for explanatory values in similar models. The low explanatory values reflect the difficulty in measuring human behavior across thousands of individuals with any semblance of certainty.

¹² It should be noted that identifying causality is difficult. Some contemporary research indicates a circular relationship between political interest and news consumption where increases in one dictates increases in the other with heightened levels of political knowledge active in the circular relationship (Norris 2000).

¹³ Respondents who are second generation or later Latinos receive a score for country of origin press freedom that reflects the press freedom of the United States. For this reason the model was also run with the press freedom scores for their family's ancestral country of origin. The results remain the same.

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Appendix: Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Description
TV News Consumption	Single Item: How frequently a respondent watches television news. 0 = Almost never, 1 = Once or twice a week, 2 = Most days, 3 = Daily
Newspaper Consumption	Single Item: How frequently a respondent reads a daily newspaper. 0 = Almost never, 1 = Once or twice a week, 2 = Most days, 3 = Daily
Prefer English News	Single Item: Respondent relies more heavily on English news sources. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Prefer Spanish News	Single Item: Respondent relies more heavily on Spanish news sources. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Spanish and English News Equally	Single Item: Respondent relies on English and Spanish news sources equally. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
English Quality	Single Item: Quality of respondent's English speaking ability. 0 = Not at all, 1 = Just a little, 2 = Pretty well, 3 = Very well
Economic Situation – Better	Single Item: The respondent's financial situation has improved over the past year. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Economic Situation – Worse	Single Item: The respondent's financial situation has worsened over the past year. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Employed	Single Item: Respondent is employed. 0 = Not employed, 1 = Employed part-time, 2 = Employed full-time
Own Home	Single Item: Respondent owns home. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Income	Single Item: Respondent's total household income. 1 = Below \$15,000, 2 = \$15,001-24,999, 3 = \$25,000-34,999, 4 = \$35,000-44,999, 5 = \$45,000-54,999, 6 = \$55,000-64,999, 7 = Above \$65,000
Interested in Politics	Single item: Respondent's level of interest in politics. 0 = Not interested, 1 = Somewhat interested, 2 = Very interested
Political Knowledge	Additive index of summed dichotomous variables where 1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect answer: Asked which party controls the House of Representatives, who won the state's electoral votes in 2004, and which party is more conservative. Range 0-3.
Education	Single Item: Respondent's highest level of education completed. 0 = None, 1 = Eighth grade or below, 2 = Some high school, 3 = GED, 4 = High school graduate, 5 = Some college, 6 = 4 year college degree, 7 = Graduate or professional degree
Civic Engagement	Single Item: The respondent participates in civic group activities. 0 = None, 1 = Yes, one, 2 = Yes, more than one
Contact Government	Single Item: The respondent has contacted a government official. 0 = No, 1 = Once, 2 = More than once
Vote	Single Item: The respondent has voted. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Registered to Vote	Single Item: The respondent is currently registered to vote in the United States. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Democrat	Single Item: The respondent considers him or herself a Democrat. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Republican	Single Item: The respondent considers him or herself a Republican. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Citizen	Single Item: Respondent is a citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
2 nd Generation	Single Item: The respondent is a 2 nd generation citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
3 rd Generation	Single Item: The respondent is a 3 rd generation citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
4 th Generation	Single Item: The respondent is a 4 th generation citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Press Freedom (Birth Country)	Taken from Freedom House's 2008 Press Freedom Index. Inverted scale where 0 = no freedom and 100 = completely free (per country)
Male	Single Item: The respondent is male. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Age	Continuous value in years
Married	Single Item: Respondent is married. 0 = No, 1 = Yes
Kids	Single Item: Number of children in respondent's household. 0 = None, 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3, 4 = 4 or more.
Keep Spanish	Single Item: How important is it for the respondent and the respondent's family to maintain Spanish? 1 = Not at all important, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Somewhat important, 4 = Very important
Learn English to be American	Single Item: How important is it to learn English in the United States? 1 = Not at all important, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Somewhat important, 4 = Very important
Latino is Distinct	Single Item: Latinos should maintain a distinct culture. 0 = Not important, 1 = Important, 2 = Very important
Spanish Quality	Single Item: Quality of respondent's Spanish speaking ability. 0 = Not at all, 1 = Just a little, 2 = Pretty well, 3 = Very well