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Changing Channels and Crisscrossing Cultures: A Survey of Latinos on the News Media

by

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Introduction

This report shows that the news media powerfully influence the twin processes of cultural change at work in the Hispanic population: the assimilation of American attitudes and the formation of a distinct ethnic identity. Even as the English-language media purveys values and cultural expressions drawn primarily from the experience of the native born, the Spanish-language media reflects the immigrant experience and reinforces ties to the home country. Nearly half of the adult Hispanic population crisscrosses between the two, getting some of its news in both languages. These choices have consequences. In fact, the language in which Latinos get their news significantly influences their opinions on issues ranging from immigration policy to the war in Iraq. Moreover, Latinos have strong views about the roles the news media play in society. The vast majority of Latinos, including those who only get news in English, view the Spanish-language media as an important institution for the economic and political development of the Hispanic population. Meanwhile, Latinos are broadly concerned that the English-language media contribute to a negative image of Latinos among English-speaking Americans. For Hispanics, choices in news media are more complex than for the general population because so many can access news in two languages. And, those choices are more consequential because so many Latinos are immigrants in the process of learning about a new land.♦

These findings are based on the results of a comprehensive telephone survey that was designed to explore Latinos' preferences for sources of news, their attitudes towards the news media and the extent to which choices of media affect opinions on key policy issues. Language usage was examined carefully in relation to each of those topics. The survey was conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, a non-partisan research organization which is a project of the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and is supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The survey was supported with a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Scanning the offerings at a newsstand or on television, it might seem that the Hispanic population is divided among those who get their news in English or in Spanish. Instead, choices of news media are much more fluid. Rather than two audiences sharply segmented by language, the survey shows that many more Latinos get at least some of their news in both English and Spanish than in just one language or the other. And, over time, immigrant Latinos steadily migrate from Spanish to English media. Depending on the subject—news from Latin America, sports, or the U.S. presidential race, for example—many Latinos pick and choose not only among different types of news media but also the language of the media. In their choices Latinos exercise a far greater level of bilingualism than they do in reading and writing. Getting the news could be the single most extensive cross-cultural experience for the Hispanic population. This language switching not only characterizes an important media market, it is also a critical factor in shaping Latino identities and the behavior of Latino voters.

Given that a majority of adult Latinos (61% in this survey sample) were born either outside the United States or in Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth where Spanish is the dominant language, the survey results show that the English-language news media have extraordinary reach. Altogether, three-quarters of the Hispanic population gets at least some

♦ The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably in this report. For the sake of brevity, Latinos born outside the United States or in Puerto Rico will be referred to as foreign born. Those born in the United States except for in Puerto Rico will be referred to as native born.

of its news in English—31% all in English and 44% in both languages. That exceeds the share of the population that reports using English extensively at work. Exposure to news in English is greatly increased because so many Hispanic households are now bilingual with U.S.-born, English-speaking children living with Spanish-speaking, immigrant parents. Fully a third of Latinos who get all their news in Spanish, said that someone else in their household gets some news in English.

Nearly two-thirds of Latinos who came to the United States as immigrants or from Puerto Rico get at least some news in English—11% all in English, 50% in both languages. And, the survey shows that getting news in English can change the thinking of Latinos who come from Spanish-speaking lands. Migrants who get news in English express opinions on several key issues that are more similar to those expressed by native-born Latinos than to the opinions voiced by fellow migrants who get all their news in Spanish. People who come to the United States from abroad are necessarily undergoing a process of transformation, and exposure to English-language news media is an important part of that process for millions of Latinos.

On the other hand, about two-thirds of the adult Hispanic population gets at least some news from Spanish-language media—24% all in Spanish and 44% in both languages. This audience is primarily driven by the growth of the population born in Spanish-speaking lands, but it is augmented by a sizeable share of the native-born Latino population (35%) that gets at least some news in both languages.

It is important to underscore that this survey provides a snapshot of news media usage at a time when media offerings and the audience are changing rapidly. The availability of Spanish-language media has been increasing exponentially in recent years, and if the number of new Spanish-language broadcast outlets and publications continues to grow, the audience is likely to grow as well. Demographic trends also affect the size of the audience for Spanish-language media. Among foreign-born Hispanics, the share that relies on Spanish media exclusively is highest among the most recently arrived and declines progressively among cohorts who have been here longer. Thus, the future size of this audience will be determined largely by the size of future migration flows. There is additional potential in the fast-growing second generation—those born in the United States of at least one foreign-born parent—which is still overwhelmingly in childhood. In this survey, which involved only adult respondents, 43% of second generation Latinos are language switchers getting some news in both Spanish and English.

Aside from a linguistic appeal to Latinos who are still learning English, the Spanish-language media exercises a powerful draw through its coverage of Latin America and of Latino communities in the United States. On these subjects Spanish media get very positive marks from their viewers and readers. In contrast, all Latinos, consumers in English and Spanish alike, give mediocre grades to this kind of coverage in the English media. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of all Latinos (78%) say that the Spanish-language media is very important to the economic and political development of the Hispanic population. This view of Spanish media as a valuable ethnic institution is shared by a majority (61%) of Latinos who get all their news in English. These responses suggest that the Spanish-language media play an esteemed role as spokesmen for the Latino population and that they have a significant influence in the formation of Hispanic identities. The significance of the Spanish-language media as a social and cultural institution is magnified by the widespread concern expressed by 44% of all Latinos that the English-language media contributes to a negative image of the Hispanic population in the United States.

In a key segment of Hispanic population—likely voters in U.S. elections—the English-language media is the dominant source of news. More than half of Latino likely voters (53%) get all news in English and 40% get news from media in both languages, while only 6% of likely voters get all news in Spanish. ♦

Television advertising in Spanish-language media has become the hallmark of political campaign strategies to win the Latino vote. Examining the Latino national network television news audience shows an even greater ascendancy for English, as 61% of those Latinos who are likely voters only view English programming and 28% watch news shows in both languages, while the Spanish-only share of the audience is 11%. At best, political advertising on a national television news show in Spanish will reach 39% of the likely Latino electorate.

Among newspaper readers, the role of English in the Hispanic electorate is more widespread still. Of Latino likely voters who regularly get news from newspapers, 81% only read publications in English and 13% read newspapers in both languages while 6% only read Spanish-language papers.

About the Survey

The findings reported here are based on a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,316 Latinos. A sample of 504 Latinos living in the Los Angeles Designated Market Area was also polled. The sampling methodology used in this survey was stratified sampling, involving the selection of separate simple random samples for strata of telephone exchanges characterized by different levels of concentration of Hispanic households. The survey findings have a sampling margin of error of +/- 3.42 percent nationwide, and +/- 4.73 percent for the Los Angeles sample.

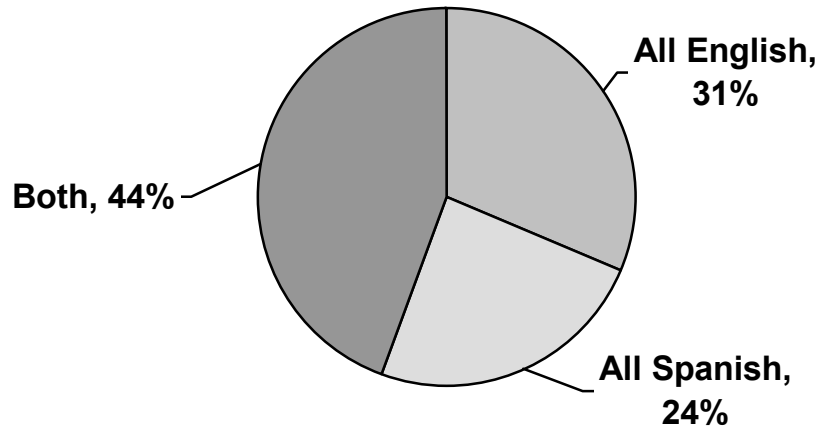
The telephone interviews were conducted from February 11 to March 11, 2004. Survey participants were offered the option of being interviewed in Spanish or English. Of all, 645 participants were interviewed in English, and 671 were interviewed in Spanish. All fieldwork was performed by International Communications Research (ICR) of Media, Pennsylvania.

Language Preferences

An essential first step in assessing how the Hispanic population gets news is to determine how that population divides up according to language preferences in news media. This survey first asked respondents whether they got any news on an average weekday from network television, local television, newspapers, radio or the Internet. Then, it asked about language preferences for each of these media. Any respondent who reported using more than one language in any media or who reported using different languages in different media was counted as someone who gets some of their news in both languages. Respondents who reported using only English or only Spanish for all their news media choices were put in the English and Spanish categories.

♦ Likely voters in this report are respondents who answered affirmatively when asked if they were U.S. citizens, registered voters and whether they had ever voted in a U.S. election.

All Latinos: Language Preferences in News Media

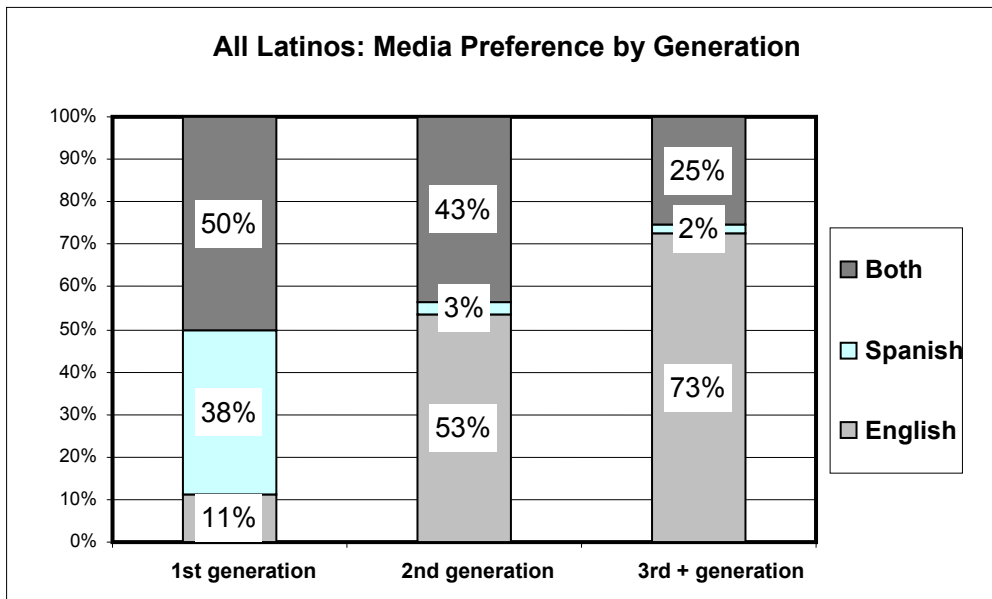


Key Characteristics of the language preference groups:

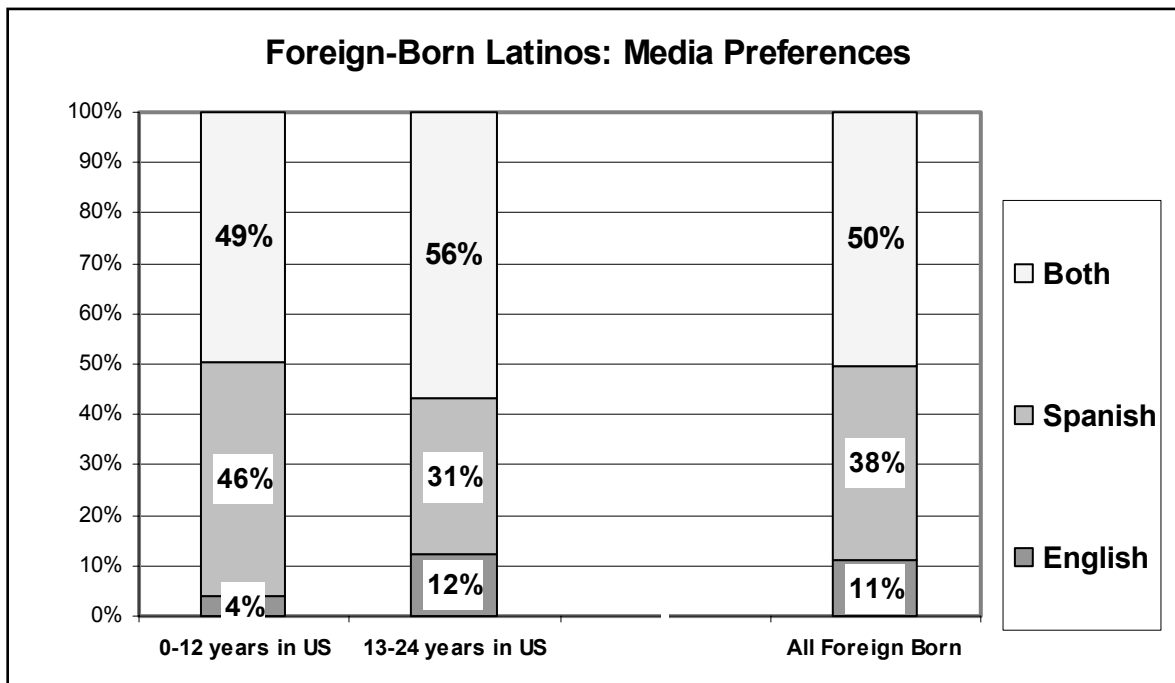
- All English: 31% of Latino adults
 - 78% native born, 22% foreign born
 - 31% high school graduates, 17% college graduates
 - 25% less than \$30,000 a year, 44% more than \$50,000 a year
- All Spanish: 24% of Latino adults
 - 4% native born, 96% foreign born
 - 21% high school graduates, 2% college graduates
 - 65% less than \$30,000 a year, 2% more than \$50,000 a year
- Both: 44% of Latino adults
 - 31% native born, 69% foreign born
 - 35% high school graduates, 9% college graduates
 - 46% less than \$30,000 a year, 17% more than \$50,000 a year

Almost two-thirds of native-born Latinos get all their news in English. Most of the language switchers are of the second generation, again the children of immigrants. Interestingly, consumption of Spanish-language media persists into the third-plus generation—the native born of native-born parents. A quarter of these Latinos get some news in both languages. A tiny fraction of the native born (3%) gets all news in Spanish.

Language preferences among the foreign born—the first generation—are more complex as this is a population that typically starts out in this country as Spanish speaking and then begins the process of acquiring English. The speed and completeness of that process varies considerably. Among the foreign born 38% get all their news in Spanish while 11% get all their news in English and a full 50% use both languages.



The distribution of language preferences among the foreign born varies considerably according to the length of time an individual has been in the United States. Those here for 12 years or less are almost equally divided between Spanish consumers (46%) and language switchers (49%) with only a small number (4%) getting all their news in English. Among those who have been here longer, the share that prefers English is larger and so is the group that gets news in both languages. Meanwhile, the proportion that gets news only in Spanish declines. The share of the foreign-born Latino population that gets all its news in Spanish drops by a third in the cohort that has been in the United States for 13 to 24 years, compared to those who have been here for 12 years or less (46% vs. 31%).



The Impact of Language Preferences

How you get your news shapes how you see the world. For foreign-born Latinos that simple verity has powerful and complex consequences. The very act of migration means not only that the news media available to them has changed but also that the world around them has changed. Moreover, they themselves are in a process of personal transformation as they get to know the English language and American ways. The acquisition of English is both a mechanism of change—learning English opens the greatest portal to American culture—and a marker of change—the extent of English acquisition is a measure of how far the transformation has advanced. The results of this survey strongly suggest that exposure to English-language news media influences the views of Latinos born abroad on a wide range of topics. Compared to immigrants who get their news in Spanish, they have less favorable views of undocumented immigrants, are more skeptical of Bush Administration policies in Iraq and are less trusting of news organizations.

To examine the influence of language preference in news media, the Pew Hispanic Center and its survey contractor for this study, International Communications Research (ICR), conducted an analysis of survey data that focused on Latinos born in other countries and that excluded those born in Puerto Rico whose views of U.S. politics and news media are presumably influenced by the island's unique relationship to the United States. In this foreign-born population 11% get all news in English. The views expressed by this English-only cohort of the foreign born were compared to those of the native born and to the opinions of the foreign born who get their news either entirely in Spanish or in both languages. A Chi Square statistical analysis was then conducted on responses to several questions to which the overall foreign-born and native-born populations expressed contrasting views. The results of this analysis repeatedly showed that foreign-born Latinos who get all their news in English express views more like those of the native born than of the foreign born who get their news in Spanish or both languages and that these differences are statistically significant. Some examples:

- Respondents were asked whether undocumented immigrants help the economy by providing low cost labor or hurt the economy by driving wages down. The native born split on this subject with 59% taking the positive view and 41% the negative view. The foreign born who get all their news in Spanish or in both languages were overwhelmingly favorable 89% vs. 11%. A large majority of the foreign born who get all their news in English were also favorable (79%), but the share that took a negative view (21%) was twice as large, showing a movement toward the views of the native born.

- Respondents were asked whether they thought the Bush Administration deliberately misled the American public about how big a threat Iraq was to the United States before the war began. The native born split 59% positive vs. 41% negative. Examining the foreign born who get all their news in English, 60% responded positively compared to 49% of those who get their news in Spanish or both languages, a swing of 11% towards the views of the native born

- Respondents were asked whether President Bush has a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion. Among the native born 37% responded positively and 63% responded negatively. Among the foreign born who get all their news in English, 60% responded negatively compared to 53% of the foreign born who get news in Spanish or both languages, again a significant shift towards the views of the native born.

- Respondents were asked whether they thought that the news media help society to solve its problems or gets in the way of society solving its problems. Among the native born 45% took the positive view and 55% took the negative view. An overwhelming majority of the foreign born who get their news in Spanish or both languages (80%) took the positive view of the news media’s role. The foreign born who get all their news in English split with 54% taking the positive view and 46% the negative view. That is a swing of 25% towards the more skeptical attitude of the native born.

Policy and Politics

In many cases Latinos express contrasting views on important issues according to language preference group. Often these differences clearly reflect differences in the views of the native born and foreign born. As the analysis above indicates, however, getting news in English is associated with a shift in views among the foreign born towards those of the native born. Choices in news media, therefore, may actually reinforce the basic differences in views between native-born and foreign-born Latinos. Some examples of policy issues or political choices on which these differences become apparent are:

- A considerably larger number of Latinos getting news in Spanish (70%) or in both languages (68%) said they were aware that President Bush had recently announced a proposal on immigration compared to those in the English category (53%). Of those who said they were aware of the proposal, the foreign born were more supportive (36%) than the native born (20%).

Do you support or oppose President Bush’s immigration proposal or do you not have enough information to have an opinion? (Asked of those who had heard of the proposal.)					
	Support	Oppose	Don’t have enough information	Don’t know	Refused
Total	31	17	50	2	*
English	17	28	55	1	--
Spanish	39	12	47	2	--
Both	35	15	49	2	*
Likely Voters	25	21	51	2	

- Foreign-born Latinos give President Bush higher approval ratings (59%) than the native born (42%). Views are less polarized within the Latino population when it comes to the upcoming election as all segments say they would favor Senator John Kerry over the incumbent. However, preferences on the race among likely Latino voters (Bush 39% vs. Kerry 52%) show that Kerry is running weaker than Democratic candidates in several recent presidential elections who have captured about two-thirds of the Latino vote.

How would you rate the job George W. Bush is doing as President of the United States—would you say he is doing an excellent, good, mediocre, or poor job?								
	EXCELLENT/GOOD			MEDIocre/POOR			Don’t know	Refused
	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Mediocre	Poor		
Total	52	14	38	45	25	21	2	*
English	42	15	28	58	28	30	--	*
Spanish	63	18	45	32	21	11	5	*
Both	54	12	43	43	24	19	2	1
Likely Voters	44	15	29	55	27	28	1	*

Looking ahead, would you like to see George W. Bush re-elected president in 2004 or would you prefer that Senator John Kerry or another Democratic candidate win the election?					
	George W. Bush	Senator John Kerry or another Democratic Candidate	Neither	Don't know	Refused
Total	38	48	3	10	1
English	38	52	4	5	1
Spanish	41	42	2	14	1
Both	37	48	3	11	1
Likely Voters	39	52	3	5	1

● As noted above, native-born Latinos are more skeptical of Bush Administration policies in Iraq than the foreign born. For example, 59% of the native born think the Administration deliberately misled the public about the threat in Iraq before the war began compared to 44% of the foreign born. Choices in news media accentuate this difference. Those who get their news only in Spanish are the least skeptical segment of the population.

Do you think the Bush Administration deliberately misled the American public about how big a threat Iraq was to the United States before the war began, or not?				
	Yes, misled the American Public	No, did not mislead the American Public	Don't know	Refused
Total	48	42	8	1
English	54	41	4	*
Spanish	39	47	12	2
Both	49	41	9	1
Likely Voters	54	38	7	*

Attitudes towards the News Media

Latinos have strongly favorable views about the role of the Spanish-language media in advancing Hispanic interests in the United States, and they also express considerable concern that the English-language media fosters a negative image of their communities among English-speaking Americans.

Regardless of nativity, education, income, or language preferences, an overwhelming majority of Latinos—78% of the population—believes that the Spanish-language news media are very important to the economic and political development of the Hispanic population. This is an exceptional endorsement of these news organizations as ethnic institutions.

In your opinion, how important is the Spanish-language media to the economic and political development of the (Hispanic/Latino) population in the United States?								
	IMPORTANT			NOT IMPORTANT			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all		
Total	94	78	15	5	3	3	1	*
English	87	61	26	10	5	5	2	*
Spanish	96	87	9	3	2	2	*	*
Both	96	86	11	3	2	1	*	*
Native Born	89	68	21	9	5	4	1	*
Foreign Born	96	85	11	3	2	1	1	*

Overall, Latinos are evenly split over whether the English-language media contribute to a negative image of their population among English-speaking Americans. The fact that 44% of Latinos believe that the English-language media are doing damage to their image is a significant complaint. This concern is highest among those Latinos who have the greatest exposures to these media, the segment that gets all its news in English. The negative view is stronger in the native-born population (46%) than the foreign born (43%). The findings very clearly demonstrate that exposure to the English-language media greatly heightens this concern as 51% of the English-only category takes the negative view. Only one socio-economic factor is associated with a higher level concern: among college graduates 59% say the English-language media harms the image of Latinos, and, as income mirrors education, 56% of Hispanics earning more than \$50,000 a year also express this concern.

Thinking about how English-speaking Americans view (Hispanics/Latinos), would you say that the English language media contributes to a favorable or a negative image of (Hispanics/Latinos) in the United States?				
	Favorable	Negative	Don't know	Refused
Total	46	44	9	1
English	39	51	10	1
Spanish	54	31	14	1
Both	47	46	5	1

The survey indicates that alarm about a negative impact on the image of the Latino population is driven partly by concerns over the accuracy of coverage and perhaps more so by concerns over story selection. A sizeable minority of Latinos (27%) believe that coverage of Latino life in the United States is more accurate in the Spanish-language media than in the English-language media. This explains some of the negative views on the question of impact. However, a near majority of Latinos (47%) say that coverage of Hispanic life in the United States is equally accurate in news media of the two languages. Latinos in the English-only category are less likely to hold this view (37%) but large numbers (21%) volunteered that they did not know enough to have an opinion, presumably reflecting their lack of exposure to Spanish-language media.

	Total	English	Spanish	Both
English language media contributes to a negative image	44	51	31	46
By too much emphasis on illegal or undocumented immigration	34	39	24	36
By too much emphasis on drug trafficking, gang violence, or other criminal activity	34	38	22	38
By not enough emphasis on economic accomplishments	28	40	14	28
By not enough recognition of (Hispanic/Latino) political community leaders	28	39	14	29
The English language media contributes to a favorable image	46	39	54	47
Don't know	9	10	14	5
Refused	1	1	1	1

Among those who said that the English-language media contributes to a negative image of Latinos, substantial majorities cited too much emphasis on undocumented immigration and criminal activity like drug trafficking. Native-born Latinos were especially concerned about a lack of coverage of Latino economic accomplishments and insufficient recognition of Latino political and community leaders.

In response to another question, about half (51%) of Latinos gave the English-language media poor grades on coverage of news specifically relevant to the Hispanic population with those in the English-only category expressing the most negative views (65%).

Overall, how would you rate the job the English-language news media have done in covering news that is specifically relevant to (Hispanics/Latinos) in the United States ?								
	EXCELLENT/GOOD			ONLY FAIR/POOR			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Only fair	Poor		
Total	45	14	31	51	35	16	4	*
English	31	6	25	65	42	23	4	*
Spanish	57	22	35	33	23	11	10	--
Both	47	15	32	51	37	14	2	--

In contrast the Spanish-language media gets much more positive ratings for its coverage of Latino news.

Overall, how would you rate the job the Spanish-language news media have done in covering news that is specifically relevant to (Hispanics/Latinos) in the United States?								
	EXCELLENT/GOOD			ONLY FAIR/POOR			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Only fair	Poor		
Total	69	27	42	23	19	4	8	*
English	50	17	33	27	21	6	23	1
Spanish	76	31	45	24	21	3	*	--
Both	79	33	46	20	16	4	1	--

Public opinion surveys consistently show that foreign-born Latinos tend to hold all kinds of public and private institutions in the United States in higher esteem than the native born. In many cases, immigrants are comparing governments, schools, and public services here to those in their home countries and drawing a favorable judgment. The same optimism carries over to native-born Latinos when their views are compared to those of the general public but to a lesser extent. This phenomenon is apparent in attitudes towards the news media.

When asked whether the news media help society to solve its problems or gets in the way, 72% of the foreign born took the positive view compared to 42% of the native born. When this question was asked in a survey of the general population in August 2002 by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 31% of respondents took the positive view. As noted above, an analysis of responses to this survey shows that exposure to English-language media pulls foreign-born Latinos towards the views of the native born. In addition, on this question, exposure to Spanish-language media is associated with an elevated sense that the news media play a positive role as Latinos who get all of their news

in Spanish are even more favorably disposed to the news media than the foreign-born population overall.

Which of the following two statements about the news media do you agree with more?				
	The news media help society to solve its problems	The news media get in the way of society solving its problems	Don't know	Refused
Total	61	33	6	1
English	41	53	6	*
Spanish	77	17	6	*
Both	66	27	6	1
Pew Research Center 8/02	31	58	11	

A similar pattern emerges from responses to a question on the overall accuracy of the news media. The foreign born are slightly more likely to say that news organizations generally get their facts straight (43%) than the native born (38%). But, Latinos in the Spanish-only category, who, again, are almost all foreign born, have even more positive feelings (49%). On this question, too, the views of the native born and of Latinos in the English-only category mirror those of the general population in surveys by the Pew Research Center.

In general, do you think news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?				
	Get the facts straight	Stories often inaccurate	Don't know	Refused
Total	41	53	6	1
English	38	59	2	*
Spanish	49	42	8	1
Both	38	55	6	1
Pew Research Center 7/03	36	56	8	

Keeping Up with News

Broadly speaking, Hispanics follow the news with about the same levels of interest found in surveys of the general population though with some important differences. When asked how much they keep up with the news overall, the native born are significantly more likely to say “a lot” (52%) than the foreign born (30%). As a result, the English audience for news shows a higher level of interest in the news (53%) compared to the Spanish audience (23%) or Latinos who get their news in both languages (37%).

Interest in major topics in the news varies considerably by language group substantially reflecting the mix of persons born in the United States and abroad in each group. For example, 77% of the English audience follows news of the U.S. presidential election closely compared to 51% of the Spanish audience. In contrast, 72% of Spanish consumers follow news from their countries of origin closely compared to only 31% of the English audience.

News Topics Followed Closely	
The U.S. military effort in Iraq	English: 90% Spanish: 72% Both: 81%
The presidential election campaign	English: 77% Spanish: 51% Both: 67%
News in your country of origin	English: 31% Spanish: 72% Both: 64%
The work of your local school board, mayor, local government	English: 59% Spanish: 43% Both: 56%

Choices of News Media

Asked which media they get any news from on an average weekday, 88% of Latinos cited network television, 82% local television, 52% newspapers, 58% radio and 29% the Internet. With the exception of radio, which shows a much higher audience share, these findings generally mirror results found in the general population. For example, a survey by the Pew Research Center in October 2003 found that 80% of the U.S. adult population overall gets most of its news on national and international topics from television while 50% relies on newspapers, 19% on radio and 20% on the Internet.

However, there is considerable variation among Latinos by their language preferences:

- National network television: The three language-preference groups split this audience, which includes broadcast and cable networks, evenly into thirds. More Latinos who get all their news in Spanish (92%) watch network television news than those who get all their news in English (78%). And, Latinos in the Spanish (49%) and both (48%) categories are far more likely to say that they consider network television the most informative source of news than those in the English category (29%). Similarly, network television is rated more highly in terms of the services it provides to Hispanics by those who get all their news in Spanish (47%) or both languages (39%) than Latinos who get their news in English (21%). Moreover, foreign-born Latinos are less likely to be language switchers when it comes to network television news than with other media. As a result, when it comes to national network television, the Spanish-only share of the audience is more competitive with the English-only share than in the market for any other news medium.

- Local television news: Almost equal shares of Latinos in the three language categories—English (81%), Spanish (77%) and both (86%)—get some of their news from local television broadcasts. But, among those who switch languages in their overall choice of news there is a small but notable preference for English local television broadcasts. Combined with somewhat lower viewership in the Spanish category, this produces a larger share of this audience that only watches English news programming (40%) compared to the Spanish-only audience (29%) and the language switchers (31%). The English-only audience

for local television news is stronger than the other language categories among young adults, ages 18 to 29, a key demographic segment for advertising.

- Newspapers: English enjoys a distinct advantage in the print news audience. The share of Latino newspaper readers that gets news only from publications in English is three times larger (62%) than the share reading Spanish-language papers (21%). Only 17% of Latino newspaper readers get news from publications in both languages. Among Latino newspaper readers who are foreign born, equal shares (39%) get all their news from publications in English and in Spanish. By a wide margin Latinos who get all their news in English give higher ratings to newspapers for being the most informative medium (16%) compared to Latinos who get all their news in Spanish (3%) and for giving greater service to Hispanics (15% vs. 1%).

- Radio: This medium is exceptionally popular among Latinos with 58% of adults saying they get some news on an average weekday from radio. This audience tilts to a preference for English (43%) compared to the share of radio listeners who get all their news in Spanish (34%) or from both languages (23%). Nonetheless, within the radio audience the share of the foreign born (56%) that gets all its news in Spanish is larger than for any other medium.

- The Internet: Only 29% of the adult Hispanic population gets news on the Web and three-quarters of them get all their news off the Web in English. Only 20% of foreign-born Latinos report getting news from the Internet compared to 44% of the native born.

When asked to name their first choice of news media for information on various topics, Latinos showed themselves to be highly selective consumers. Network television coverage of news from Latin America is the strongest draw for any Spanish-language media, and television, both network and local channels are by far the most preferred media on almost every topic for Latinos who get all their news in Spanish.

Hispanics who get some or all of their news in English have a much wider range of preferences. Newspapers, for example, do about as well as television as the preferred source of news on health care, events affecting the Hispanic population, business and the economy, and sports. Television wins out on politics and government, and international news. The print media's strongest showing with the English-only audience is providing information on movies, television or music.

The Internet is the medium of choice for English-only consumers seeking news about health care, and it beats newspapers as a source for news from Latin America with this audience. The Internet also rates strongly as a source of information on movies, television or music. Appendix A of this report shows preferences on a wide range of topics.

Los Angeles

As the national survey was conducted, 504 interviews were conducted in the geographic area that is generally considered the Los Angeles media market. Latinos who get all their news in English are a slightly smaller share of the Latino population in Los Angeles than nationally (28% vs. 31%) and the Spanish-only segment is slightly larger (28% vs. 24%) while the share of the population that gets its news in both languages is virtually the same (43% vs. 44%).

Two significant differences emerge in choices of news media:

- The share of the local television news audience in the English-only category is smaller in Los Angeles (31%) than nationally (40%) with the Spanish-only and both categories picking up the difference in equal measure.

- The Spanish-only share of the newspaper audience is larger in Los Angeles (31%) than nationally (21%) with most of the shift coming out of the English-only segment which is smaller in Los Angeles (62%) than nationally (53%).

Los Angeles is home to the largest U.S. newspaper in Spanish, *La Opinion*, as well as several other smaller papers in suburban areas. The survey period coincided with the much publicized launch of a new Spanish-language newspaper, *Hoy*. The survey findings suggest that the availability of newspapers in Spanish can increase the Spanish-only share of the Latino audience for newspapers.

The increased newspaper readership in Spanish, however, does not translate into better ratings among Los Angeles Latinos for newspapers. By several measures, such as the medium that is of greatest service to Hispanics or the medium that is the most informative overall, Latinos in Los Angeles who get all their news in Spanish have the same assessment of newspaper quality as the national population.

Two statistically significant differences emerge in the views of Latinos who get all their news in English. Newspapers are rated as a preferred source of news from Latin America by more English-only Latinos in Los Angeles than nationally (21% vs. 13%). And, the English-only segment in Los Angeles gives higher ratings to local television as a source of news on events affecting Hispanics than the national sample (40% vs. 22%).

No statistically significant differences emerged on responses to questions probing attitudes towards the news media, its trustworthiness, or on matters of policies and politics when comparing the Los Angeles and national samples.

Appendix A: First choices for various types of information

Events in country of origin

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	41	26	9	5	14	5	*
English	32	16	13	6	24	9	1
Spanish	51	34	6	6	2	1	*
Both	41	29	8	4	15	3	*

Health care

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	30	30	12	6	17	4	*
English	19	22	18	8	30	3	1
Spanish	40	40	7	7	2	4	*
Both	34	30	11	5	16	5	*

Events affecting Hispanics/Latinos

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	34	35	11	7	10	3	*
English	24	22	20	7	19	6	1
Spanish	44	43	4	6	2	1	--
Both	35	38	9	8	8	1	*

Sports

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	36	29	13	6	8	6	2
English	27	22	21	8	15	4	3
Spanish	43	36	4	4	2	9	2
Both	39	30	12	5	8	7	1

Politics and government

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	44	25	12	6	11	2	1
English	41	13	19	10	17	*	*
Spanish	47	36	6	5	2	3	2
Both	44	26	11	4	11	4	*

Movies, television, or music

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	30	27	15	9	16	3	1
English	15	19	26	9	29	1	1
Spanish	43	35	4	13	2	2	1
Both	33	27	13	8	14	4	1

The war in Iraq

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	52	23	8	5	10	1	*
English	48	12	13	8	18	*	--
Spanish	50	37	4	5	1	2	1
Both	57	22	7	3	9	2	1

Business and the economy

	Network television news	Local television news	Newspapers	Radio	The Internet	Don't know	Refused
Total	35	25	19	5	13	3	*
English	32	14	25	8	21	--	*
Spanish	40	39	9	4	2	4	1
Both	35	26	20	3	13	3	*

Methodology

The findings reported here are based on a telephone survey conducted from February 11 to March 11, 2004 among a statistically representative sample of 1,316 Latino adults, 18 years and older, in target regions of high Hispanic concentrations, so that the responses could be examined nationally. The sampling methodology used in this survey was stratified sampling, involving the selection of separate simple random samples for strata or subgroups of telephone exchanges characterized by different levels of concentration of Hispanic households. Overall, the survey used seven strata, four nationwide, and three for the Los Angeles area. Such sampling proved easy to implement, is known to provide relatively accurate information, and is more cost effective compared to simple random sampling.

A disproportionate stratified random digit dialing (RDD) sample of Latino households was employed. To define the strata, at the national level, a list of all telephone exchanges in descending order by concentration of Latino households was produced, excluding several counties in the Los Angeles area. These exchanges were grouped into four strata based on the incidence of Hispanic households, each one containing approximately the same number of Latino households. A similar procedure was followed for the several counties in the Los Angeles area, except using only three strata. The counties are: Inyo, Kern East, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties.

The survey results are reported based on weighted data adjusted in accordance to population characteristics using the March 2003 Current Population Survey (CPS), and controlling for age within gender and education attributes. The survey findings have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.42 percent nationwide, and +/- 4.73 percent for the Los Angeles area, at the 95 percent confidence level.

To capture the range of opinions among Latinos of various backgrounds living in the United States, survey participants were offered the option of being interviewed in Spanish or English language. Of all, 645 participants were interviewed in English, and 671 were interviewed in Spanish. All fieldwork was performed by International Communications Research (ICR) of Media, Pennsylvania.

Unweighted Number of Respondents and Margin of Sampling Error
for Latino Sub-Groups

	Unweighted Number of Respondents (N)	Margin of Sampling Error
Total Latinos	1,316	+/- 3.42
Los Angeles area***	504	+/- 4.72
Foreign/Native-Born		
Foreign-Born Latinos	767	+/- 3.53
Native-Born Latinos	549	+/- 4.18
Generation		
1 st Generation	767	+/- 3.53
2 nd Generation	296	+/- 5.70
3 rd Generation and Higher	247	+/- 6.24
Primary Language		
English-Dominant	344	+/- 5.28
Bilingual	397	+/- 5.91
Spanish-Dominant	575	+/- 4.08
Country or Place of Origin		
Mexico	898	+/- 3.26
Puerto Rico	78	+/- 11.16
Cuba	55	+/- 13.33
Central America (Total)	141	+/- 8.28
South America (Total)	69	+/- 11.88
Dominican Republic	27	+/- 19.22
El Salvador	48	+/- 14.29
All Other	69	+/- 11.88

*** Includes Inyo, Kern East, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties.



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The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pew Charitable Trusts or the University of Southern California.

