



A Project of the USC Annenberg School and the University of Wisconsin

SPANISH-LANGUAGE TV COVERAGE OF THE 2004 CAMPAIGNS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings reported here are based on the most extensive study ever conducted of English and Spanish language network and local news coverage over the course of a campaign. Specifically, the national network findings are based on the nightly broadcasts aired on ABC, CBS, NBC, Telemundo and Univision during the 29-day period from October 4 to November 1, 2004. The local news findings are based on an analysis of all evening news broadcasts aired between 5:00 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. by the local affiliates of ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, Telemundo and Univision in three markets (Los Angeles, New York and Miami) during the same time period. The Spanish-language local stations were KMEX (Univision) and KVEA (Telemundo) in Los Angeles; WLTV (Univision) and WSCV (Telemundo) in Miami; and WXTV (Univision) and WNJU (Telemundo) in New York. The study examined a total of 424 network news election stories and 2,724 local news election stories.

NETWORK NEWS

How did the two Spanish-language networks compare? Univision, the primary Spanish-language network, is more like an English-language network in the quantity and quality of its election coverage; it provided more and better coverage than its competitor, Telemundo.

How much election coverage aired on English- and Spanish-language networks? English-language networks devoted somewhat more of their nightly news to campaigns and elections than Spanish-language networks. A typical half-hour of

network news on ABC, CBS and NBC averaged eight minutes of election coverage. A typical Univision broadcast contained six-and-one-half minutes of election coverage, while a typical Telemundo half-hour aired just four minutes. The amount provided by each English-language network was fairly similar: NBC ran 35 percent of all English-language network stories; ABC had 34 percent; CBS had 31 percent. But Univision provided over twice as much election coverage as Telemundo: sixty-eight percent of Spanish-language stories aired on Univision and 32 percent on Telemundo.

How much network election coverage focused on campaign issues or critiqued candidate advertising? Almost half of the election stories on NBC (48 percent) and CBS (47 percent) focused on issues. By contrast, only about 30 percent of the stories on ABC and Univision focused on issues, and 19 percent of the Telemundo stories focused on issues. Just one percent of the stories on English-language networks were adwatches; no adwatch stories were found on Spanish-language networks.

How much network election coverage mentioned Latino issues? Only five campaign stories (amounting to two percent of all English-language network stories) mentioned Latino issues, and four of them were on NBC (whose parent company, GE, also owns Telemundo). By contrast, 45 percent of the Univision network stories, and 27 percent of Telemundo stories, mentioned Latino issues.

How did English- and Spanish-language networks compare in coverage of the Iraq War and other world affairs news? A typical Univision broadcast contained about 45 seconds of Iraq coverage and slightly more than eight minutes of other world affairs news. On Telemundo, a viewer would have seen just under 45 seconds of Iraq

War coverage, and six-and-one-half minutes of other world affairs coverage. By contrast, a viewer of a typical English-language network broadcast would have seen three minutes of Iraq War coverage and slightly less than one-and-one-half minutes of other world affairs news.

LOCAL NEWS

Did the differences between Univision and Telemundo at the network level appear at the local level? No. In number of campaign stories, length of stories, discussion of Latino issues, and balance of strategy/horserace stories vs. issue stories, there were virtually no differences between affiliates of the two networks.

How much election coverage aired on English- and Spanish-language local news? English-language stations averaged more campaign stories and longer campaign stories with more candidate soundbites than Spanish-language stations.

How much local stations' campaign coverage was devoted to local races? The presidential race dominated coverage on both Spanish- and English-language networks. Roughly two-thirds of all election coverage – 64 percent of the English-language campaign stories and 67 percent of the Spanish-language campaign stories – focused on the presidential race. Only six percent of the English-language campaign stories, and just three percent of the campaign stories on the Spanish-language stations, focused on local races.

How much local election coverage focused on campaign issues or critiqued candidate advertising? Forty-five percent of the English-language campaign stories and

53 percent of the Spanish-language stories focused on strategy or the horserace. Local stations in both languages were diligent at providing viewers with information about where to vote and about potential problems with the voting process. Twenty-one percent of all stories focused on these types of voting issues.

How much local election coverage mentioned Latino issues? Just three percent of all English-language stories mentioned Latino issues, compared to 30 percent on Spanish-language affiliates.

How did English- and Spanish-language affiliates compare in coverage of world affairs and Iraq? Similar to the mix at the network level, local Spanish-language stations gave significantly more coverage to world affairs coverage than local English-language stations. A typical Spanish-language local broadcast devoted one minute 44 seconds to world affairs, while a typical English-language broadcast devoted just 17 seconds to world affairs. The Iraq War received surprisingly little coverage on local news in either language. A typical Spanish-language local broadcast devoted 10 seconds to the Iraq War, while a typical English-language local broadcast contained just 25 seconds of Iraq War coverage.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report is released by the Lear Center Local News Archive (localnewsarchive.org), a collaboration between the USC Annenberg School for Communication's Norman Lear Center and the NewsLab of the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The principal investigators are Martin

Kaplan, associate dean of the USC Annenberg School and director of The Norman Lear Center; Ken Goldstein, professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Matthew Hale, assistant professor in the Center for Public Service at Seton Hall University. The project is funded by a grant from The Pew Hispanic Center, which is directed by Roberto Suro.

In the four weeks preceding Election Day 2004 (October 4th to November 1st), project staff captured the evening network news broadcast on ABC, CBS, NBC, Telemundo and Univision. During the same time period, local news on the ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, Telemundo and Univision affiliates in three markets – New York, Los Angeles and Miami – was also captured. (In addition, English-language local news in eight more markets was captured for a parallel study funded by the Joyce Foundation, with additional support from the Carnegie Corporation; see localnewsarchive.org.)

The news programming was captured through a sophisticated market-based media server technology. Each day, digitally-recorded video was sent over the Internet to the NewsLab servers overnight. The NewsLab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (www.polisci.wisc.edu/newslab) is a unique state-of-the art facility that has the infrastructure, technical skill, and supervisory capability to capture, clip, code, analyze and archive any media in any market – domestic or international – in real time. Video can be gathered, digitized, sorted and archived automatically by the InfoSite system, a media analysis product of CommIT Technology Solutions of Madison, Wisconsin (www.commitonline.com). This system includes a variety of automatic validation checks to ensure superior coding reliability and logical consistency. With over a terabyte of storage, the NewsLab servers manage data, encode and archive video, and serve content

through one of many custom media analysis tools, both internally, and to the rest of the world via the Internet. The NewsLab director is Erika Franklin Fowler. The University of Wisconsin Advertising Project (www.polisci.wisc.edu/tvadvertising) is also housed in the NewsLab facility, where it tracks real time political advertising flows across the nation.

The NewsLab system captured 100 percent of all network broadcasts and 97 percent of all the targeted local broadcasts, a notably high rate. Of the 18 stations analyzed for this study, only one had a capture rate below 90 percent. This station was the Fox affiliate in Los Angeles, which had a capture rate of 77 percent. A full listing of each individual station capture rate can be found in Appendix A.

The majority of the report contains overall percentages and averages which, given the high capture rate, are unlikely to be significantly affected by small amounts of missing data. There is no reason to suspect that there are systematic differences between the data reported here and the small amount of missing data. Even so, the findings in this report are based only on the broadcasts and campaign news stories actually watched and analyzed by project staff. Television news broadcasts are often pre-empted or replaced by late running sporting events, particularly on weekends. As a result, the number of broadcasts for each station is based on broadcasts where the regular news programs actually aired, not the number of broadcasts a station would have aired without being pre-empted or replaced.

All Spanish-language coding was conducted by bi-lingual coders who underwent the same intensive training process as English-language coders.

NETWORK NEWS FINDINGS

How much campaign coverage aired on the network news?

All five networks devoted a significant amount of time to election coverage and gave significantly more air time to the campaign than local stations did. In terms of the quantity of election coverage, Univision rivals and in some cases exceeds the English-language networks. Univision has long been the dominant Spanish-language network, often enjoying ratings at least three times larger than Telemundo. Because the amount of Univision's political news was almost on a par with ABC, CBS and NBC, the vast majority of Spanish-language network news viewers got campaign coverage only slightly slimmer than consumers of English-language network news.

Total Election News Aired

NBC aired the most election coverage, just under four hours in total over the course of the study. Univision and ABC followed, each airing almost three-and-one-half hours of election news. Just under three hours of election news aired on CBS, and just under two hours aired on Telemundo.

Percentage of All News that Focused on Elections

An alternative way of looking at the amount of election coverage is as a percentage of the total amount of news each network aired. Using this measure, NBC again came out on top, with 31 percent of all of their evening news programming focused on elections. ABC and CBS were next, with election-focused coverage accounting for 26

and 25 percent of all news programming. Univision closely followed, with election-focused news accounting for 22 percent of their total news. Just 14 percent of the Telemundo news focused on elections.

Amount of Election News in a Typical Network Broadcast

Using these percentages it is possible to extrapolate how much of election coverage a viewer might have seen in a typical broadcast on each network. A viewer watching NBC network news could have seen just over nine minutes of election coverage. ABC and CBS viewers could have seen just over seven-and-a-half minutes of election focused news. Viewers of a typical Univision broadcast could have seen six-and-one-half minutes, while Telemundo viewers could have seen just over four minutes per broadcast.

Average Length of a Campaign Story

English-language stories were significantly longer than Spanish-language stories. An average story was just over three minutes long on NBC; two minutes 45 seconds on ABC; and about two-and-a-half minutes on CBS. By contrast, Univision stories averaged one minute 38 seconds, and Telemundo stories averaged one minute 26 seconds.

Total Number of Election Stories

While Spanish-language stories were generally shorter than English-language stories, there were more of them. Ninety-five percent of all Spanish-language network broadcasts contained at least one election story. Only 78 percent of the English-language

network broadcasts contained an election story. Univision aired a total of 127 election related stories, a record far outpacing all other networks. Telemundo aired a total of 78 election stories, and NBC aired a total of 77. ABC followed, with 74 stories, while CBS aired 68 stories.

What type of coverage aired on the network news?

Election Focus

Not surprisingly, the presidential race dominated network coverage, accounting for just over eight in ten of all stories in both languages. Voting issues, which at the national level centered primarily on the potential for voting irregularities, accounted for 11 percent of the coverage on Spanish-language networks and 12 percent on English-language networks. Spanish-language networks gave somewhat more coverage to ballot and bond initiatives (four percent of all stories) than the English-language networks (one percent of all stories). These numbers were fairly consistent across all networks.

Issues vs. Strategy Coverage

The balance between issue and strategy/horserace stories varied significantly by network. NBC aired more issue stories (48 percent) than stories focusing on strategy or the horserace (38 percent). The split on the CBS network was exactly even, with 47 percent of their stories focusing on each. The balance on ABC and Univision was quite similar, with about 30 percent of each network's campaign stories focused on issues, and about 45 percent on strategy or the horserace. Telemundo was the only network where strategy stories comprised more than 50 percent of their total; 19 percent of the

Telemundo stories focused on campaign issues, the lowest of all five networks. Just one percent of the English-language network stories critiqued candidates' advertising, and no stories on a Spanish-language network critiqued candidate ads.

Latino perspective¹

English-language networks virtually ignored Latino issues in their election coverage, as only five stories (two percent) mentioned or focused on them. Four of the five stories were primarily about Latino issues, and all four were aired on NBC, whose parent company, GE, also owns Telemundo. One ABC election story mentioned a Latino perspective before moving on to other topics.

By contrast, 45 percent of the Univision network stories, and 27 percent of Telemundo stories, mentioned or focused on Latino issues. Univision stories were somewhat more likely to discuss Latino issues than Telemundo stories. Seventeen percent of the Univision stories mentioned Latino issues, and 28 percent focused on Latino issues. Twelve percent of the Telemundo election stories mentioned Latino issues and 15 percent focused on them.

¹ The actual text of the question in the coding instrument reads: "Does the story discuss Latino/Hispanic interests?"

- 0. No
- 1. Yes, Latino/Hispanic interests are mentioned but are not a primary focus
- 2. Yes, Latino/Hispanic interests are a primary focus of the story"

No specific issues are labeled "Latino" or "Hispanic" in the coding instrument. The story itself must reference either Latino or Hispanic voters or issues in order to qualify as either mentioning them or focusing on them (i.e., "President Bush reached out to Latino voters today as part of his campaign stop...").

Non-election stories

Although the data are available for future research, non-election stories were not examined in detail. For this report, non-election stories were categorized by topic, and the amount of time given to each news topic was recorded. Analyzing time allotted to particular subjects allows for general comparisons of the news priorities of English- and Spanish-language networks.

The most significant difference in overall news content was that English-language networks gave substantially less time to world affairs, and somewhat more time to the Iraq War, than Spanish-language networks. World affairs covers news about these areas: American foreign policy, news of other countries (except Iraq); terrorism, foreign crises and news about immigration, trade and diplomacy. Four percent of English-language network news focused on world affairs, while 25 percent of Spanish-language network coverage focused on world affairs. Ten percent of the English-language coverage focused on the Iraq War, while just 2 percent of the Spanish-language coverage focused on the Iraq War. Converting these percentages into a typical half-hour of news means that a typical English-language network news program contained one minute 16 seconds of world affairs coverage and three minutes of Iraq War news. A typical Spanish-language broadcast contained almost seven-and-a-half minutes of world affairs and just 43 seconds of Iraq war coverage. Among English-language networks, CBS (which aired the least amount of election coverage) aired the most amount of world affairs and Iraq War coverage, with a typical CBS broadcast averaging just over one-and-a-half minutes of world affairs news and a little more than three minutes of Iraq war coverage. A typical

NBC broadcast devoted one minute 16 seconds to world affairs and three minutes to the Iraq War. A typical ABC broadcast aired about one minute of world affairs coverage and just under three minutes of Iraq war coverage. Univision devoted the most time to world affairs. Twenty-seven percent of all Univision network news – on average, slightly more than eight minutes of every Univision broadcast – was devoted to world affairs. A typical Univision broadcast contained 46 seconds devoted to the Iraq war. A typical Telemundo broadcast contained six-and-one-half minutes of world affairs coverage and just 40 seconds of Iraq war coverage.

Perhaps as interesting as this major difference is how similar the breakdown was of other news topics across languages and networks. When looking across languages, there was only a one or two percentage point difference in the amount of coverage provided to news about government (non-election), health, crime, unintentional injury and business/economy. Similarly, only minor differences appear between individual networks when looking at these other news topics.

LOCAL NEWS FINDINGS

At the local level, the significant differences found between Univision and Telemundo network news do not appear. As a result, the primary comparisons reported below are between Spanish- and English-language stations as groups. While comparisons are made between the three markets (New York, Los Angeles and Miami), comparisons between individual stations are not made. A larger and more detailed report with individual station comparisons about English-language coverage in 11 markets is available at www.localnewsarchive.org.

The primary finding at the local level is that on virtually every measure of quantity and quality of election coverage, English-language stations proved superior to Spanish-language stations. In many respects, however, these differences were in degree and not in direction. For example, local stations in both languages essentially abandoned local races in favor of the presidential contest and strategy stories were more prevalent than issues stories. As with the networks, local Spanish-language affiliates provided significantly more world affairs, and somewhat less Iraq news coverage, than the English-language affiliates. Also like the networks, the English-language affiliates ignored Latino issues in campaign stories.

A second notable finding is that at the local level, market appears to be as important or more important than language in the quantity and quality of election coverage. In many respects, the Spanish-language stations more closely resemble the English-language stations within their own market than they resemble Spanish-language stations in other markets. Clearly language accounts for some differences in election coverage, but overall these results suggest that where a station is located is as important as the language it broadcasts.

How much election coverage aired on local news?

A total of 2,724 stories were captured and analyzed in the three markets. Of these, 1,942 aired on the 12 English-language stations and 782 aired on the six Spanish-language stations. Of the three markets, Miami was the only one considered to be competitive in the presidential race. Florida also had a highly competitive race for the

US Senate. As a result, 49 percent of all English-language campaign stories, and 43 percent of all Spanish-language campaign stories, aired in Miami.

In New York, Los Angeles and Miami, English-language stations devoted more news time to elections than Spanish-language stations. Election-focused news comprised 11.2 percent of all English-language news and 9.5 percent of all Spanish language news aired by local affiliates.

The amount of election coverage, however, varied significantly by market. In New York and Miami, the percentage of all news devoted to elections was almost identical regardless of language. Nine percent of all news captured on both English and Spanish-language stations in New York was devoted to elections. This means that a New York viewer would have seen 2 minutes 36 seconds of election coverage in a typical half-hour news broadcast in either English or Spanish. In Miami, the English-language stations devoted slightly more of their news to elections (15 percent) than the Spanish-language stations (14 percent). This equals four minutes 37 seconds of election coverage in a typical English-language broadcast and four minutes five seconds in a typical Spanish-language broadcast. In Los Angeles, the English-language stations devoted nine percent of their news time to elections, compared to just six percent on the Spanish-language stations. English-language viewers in Los Angeles would therefore see an average of two minutes 43 seconds of coverage in a typical broadcast, compared to one minute 54 seconds on a typical Spanish-language broadcast.

What races got covered on local news?

The large majority of all local news coverage centered on the presidential race. Sixty-four percent of the English-language stories and 67 percent of the Spanish-language stories focused on the presidential race. Just six percent of the English-language stories and three percent of the Spanish-language stories focused on local races, such as those for the U.S. House, State Senate, State Assembly, mayor, courts, law enforcement, education-related offices and other regional offices.

Despite the fact that the Miami market was significantly more competitive at the top of the ticket than New York or Los Angeles, most of the local race coverage in both languages came from Miami. Out of a total of 107 English-language stories about local races, 70 percent aired in Miami. Similarly, out of the 26 Spanish-language stories about local races, 73 percent aired in Miami. Much of this was driven by coverage of the Miami mayoral race, which accounted for about 20 percent of all English-language stories about local races, but 65 percent of all Spanish-language stories about local races.

The English-language stations devoted four percent of their election coverage to ballot and bond initiatives. The Spanish-language stations were virtually identical, devoting five percent of their coverage to ballot or bond initiatives. As with local race coverage, most of this coverage aired in a single market--in this case, Los Angeles, which aired 71 percent of ballot or bond initiative stories in both languages. Virtually all of this coverage centered on statewide propositions such as those concerning stem-cell research and amendments to the three-strikes law.

While local stations in both languages largely failed to cover local races, in general they did provide a fair amount of coverage about voting issues, such as polling

locations, registration procedures and the potential for voting irregularities. Nineteen percent of all English-language stories and 21 percent of all Spanish-language stories focused on voting issues. Once again there were differences by market, although in a slightly different pattern. In Los Angeles and New York, the Spanish-language stations aired more stories about voting issues than the English-language stations. Just ten percent of the English-language stories in Los Angeles focused on voting issues. By contrast, 33 percent of the Spanish-language stories in Los Angeles focused on voting issues. In New York, 11 percent of the English-language and 19 percent of the Spanish-language stories focused on voting issues. The breakdown in Miami was reversed, as 27 percent of the English-language stories focused on voting issues compared to 17 percent of the Spanish-language stories.

How did local stations frame election coverage?

Across markets and languages, stories focusing on strategy or the horserace outnumbered stories focusing on issues. Overall, forty-five percent of the English-language stories, and 53 percent of the Spanish-language stories, focused on strategy or the horserace. Thirty percent of the English-language stories, and 21 percent of the Spanish-language stories, focused on issues.

The 15 percentage point gap in favor of strategy/horserace stories was remarkably consistent across all markets on English-language stations. In New York the gap was exactly 15 percentage points, in Miami it was 16 percentage points and in Los Angeles it was 14 percentage points. This consistency did not appear on Spanish-language stations. In Los Angeles, strategy/horserace stories on Spanish-language stations outnumbered

issues stories by 17 percentage points, or just slightly more than the English-language stations.² In New York, the gap was 31 percentage points, and in Miami it was 42 percentage points.

How long were election stories on local news?

The average length of an English-language story was one minute 43 seconds. The average length of a Spanish-language story was one minute 18 seconds. Los Angeles had the lowest average story length in both Spanish and English. An average English-language story in Los Angeles was one minute 38 seconds, while an average Spanish-language story in Los Angeles was just one minute seven seconds. New York ranked second in average story length in both languages, with an English-language average of one minute 44 seconds, and a Spanish-language average of one minute 21 seconds. Miami had the longest average story length in both languages, although Miami stories were only slightly longer than those in New York. An average English-language story in Miami was one minute 45 seconds, compared to one minute 23 seconds on Miami's Spanish-language stations.

How long were candidate soundbites on local news?

The average length of a candidate soundbite on the English-language stations was 12 seconds, compared to 10 seconds for an average Spanish-language soundbite. Overall the difference between markets was quite small; no more than five seconds separated the

² As noted earlier, 33 percent of the stories captured on Los Angeles Spanish-language stations focused on voting issues. This was significantly higher than other markets. In general, voting issue stories did not focus on either strategy or issues and were coded as "other." As a result, the high number of voting issue stories aired on the Los Angeles Spanish-language stations may help explain why Los Angeles differs from other markets.

highest market from the lowest in either language. Even so, the same type of market consistency appears. In both languages, Miami had the highest average soundbite, followed by Los Angeles and then New York.

A different pattern appears when we compare the percentage of election stories that contained at least one soundbite. Around 40 percent of stories on English-language stations in New York and Los Angeles contained at least one candidate soundbite. In both markets this was significantly higher than the Spanish-language stations. Just six percent of the Spanish-language stations in Los Angeles, and 12 percent of the Spanish-language stories in New York, contained a candidate soundbite. In Miami, the differences were less dramatic. Twenty-five percent of the English-language stories contained a soundbite, compared to 19 percent of the Spanish-language stories.

What other differences were there between English- and Spanish-language local news?

As at the network level, local English-language news broadcasts ignored Latino issues in their election stories. Only around two-and-a-half percent of all English-language stories mentioned Latino issues. By contrast, 31 percent of the Spanish-language stories mentioned Latino issues. These percentages were fairly consistent across markets.

Just as Spanish-language networks aired significantly more world affairs than English-language networks, the same difference held true at the local level. Similarly, local English-language stations aired somewhat more coverage of the Iraq War, although

Iraq was generally ignored by local stations in both languages. Less than one percent of the English-language local news focused on world affairs. By contrast, seven percent of Spanish-language local news focused on world affairs. Less than one-and-one-half percent of the English-language local news focused on the Iraq War, and just one-half of one percent of Spanish-language local news focused on the Iraq war. There were only slight variations in these percentages across market. This means that a typical English-language local news broadcast contained just 17 seconds of world affairs coverage, while a typical Spanish-language local broadcast devoted one minute 44 seconds to world affairs. A typical English-language local broadcast contained 25 seconds of Iraq war coverage, compared to just ten seconds in a typical Spanish-language local broadcast.

APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL STATIONS AND CAPTURE RATES

Market (DMA)	Station call Letters	Network Affiliation	Video Capture Rate
Los Angeles (2)	KABC	ABC	99.7%
Los Angeles (2)	KCBS	CBS	100.0%
Los Angeles (2)	KTTV	FOX	76.7%
Los Angeles (2)	KNBC	NBC	100.0%
Los Angeles (2)	KVEA	TELEMUNDO	92.3%
Los Angeles (2)	KMEX	UNIVISION	92.3%
Miami (15)	WPLG	ABC	98.9%
Miami (15)	WFOR	CBS	98.9%
Miami (15)	WSVN	FOX	98.9%
Miami (15)	WTVJ	NBC	92.0%
Miami (15)	WSCV	TELEMUNDO	97.1%
Miami (15)	WLTV	UNIVISION	98.9%
New York (1)	WABC	ABC	99.7%
New York (1)	WCBS	CBS	99.5%
New York (1)	WNYW	FOX	99.7%
New York (1)	WNBC	NBC	99.5%
New York (1)	WNJU	TELEMUNDO	99.7%
New York (1)	WXTV	UNIVISION	97.4%