Introduction

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If you have been reading the business news headlines, you would think that Latin@s are being showered with an unbounded selection of new media choices. Just ten years ago, talk of Latino media could be safely reduced to a handful of TV channels (dominated by Univision and Telemundo), a larger number of radio networks, a variety of more localized venues such as cable stations, and print news. Today, however, there’s a dizzying discussion of new TV channels, booming celebration of Latin@s as the “new” media market, and the entry of big media players anticipated to “transform” what we understand as “Latino media.” Yet neither communications nor media scholarship has kept up with these transformations, leaving us with few answers to overarching questions in the field of Latino media and communications. We know little about what really may be “new” about current media proposals, about whether Latin@s are being offered more varied representations and opportunities for jobs and access to media markets, and about the ways they are consuming and mobilizing new media for political aims. These are exactly some of the questions that this volume seeks to answer by calling attention to issues of production, circulation, distribution, and consumption. It does so by going beyond debates over images and
representation that, while important, have tended to dominate discussions of Latino media to explore a more uncharted terrain involving the larger political economic dynamics at play.

The volume focuses on Latino/Latin American media flows because what we regularly define as “Latino media” has historically been the product of transnational processes involving ownership and the importation and circulation of talent and content from Latin America. It has also been dominated by the importation and translation of programming ideas (from the United States to Latin America, particularly from the 1940s to the 1960s), the buying and selling of scripts across the region (beginning in the 1940s and continuing into the present), and, more recently, the selling of programming formats, all intended to sustain a larger and hence more profitable hemispheric market (Rivero 2009; Oren and Shahaf 2011). In other words, addressing “Latino media” means analyzing at least two industries: one with roots in Latin America and the other with roots in Hollywood, not to mention two industries that are also linked to at least three distinct language media worlds in Spanish, in English, and in Portuguese (translated into Spanish) (Rivero 2009).

Traditionally media scholars have tended to split Latin American and Latino media industries in their analyses, clearly separating the two regions and populations in their studies in ways that have tended to downplay the intricate connections between Latino and Latin America media at the level of production, circulation, and consumption. Instead, our analysis adopts a transnational focus to place these dynamics at the foreground of any contemporary analysis. The volume’s focus, however, is US Latin@s and how they are being inserted into these processes, and affected by the continued Latin Americanization of genres, products, and audiences, as well as by the whitewashing of “mainstream” Hollywood media, where Latin@s, like most racially diverse communities, have been consistently bypassed. Beyond this common emphasis, the volume is purposefully broad. It focuses primarily on Spanish-language television and radio, which are the two dominant nationwide marketing and media outlets for US Latin@s, but it also touches on the state of Latin@s in mainstream prime-time TV, and to a lesser extent on regional, digital, and alternative media that have been generally more accessible to locally based communities.
At the same time, we are very aware of the limitations of this project, and present it as a start of a larger and much-needed debate. In particular, the anthology reflects a continued dominance of Mexican and Mexican American media, a product of Latino demographics, but also of the continued dominance of Mexican exports in Latino media. We were surprised by the continued scarcity of analyses looking at Cubans in Miami, notwithstanding the key role that Cuban Americans have played in the development of transnational Spanish-language media and the rising role of Miami as a “Latin Hollywood.” The lack of research on the involvement of Dominicans and other Latin@ groups in the development of alternative media is also another important void in the current scholarship, which we hope our volume helps to fill by inspiring more work in the future. Then there is the fact that while Latin@s are close to 16 percent of the total US population and mass media imbricate every single aspect of Americans’ lives, it is impossible for this or any single volume to provide a fully comprehensive treatment of contemporary “Latino media” or Latin@s and the media. For this, we need to escape the very category of “Latino media” that has historically constrained analysis, limiting it to media that are supposedly marketed and packaged to Latin@s, in isolation from all the different media to which they are exposed and which they consume on a daily basis, from mainstream network TV, to video games, to outdoor media, to the Internet, and so on. In fact, some chapters provide glimpses of this larger media landscape that remains largely understudied, though as a general rule our focus remains on media marketed, packaged, and circulated as “Latino media.” We chose this focus because it assists our analysis of the Latino media landscape at a time when new investments and developments pose questions about what may be some of the social, cultural, and political implications of these supposedly “new” media investments. This emphasis also facilitates an exploration of the problems and limits of “Latino”-specific media and of most of the corporate-driven productions and representations of Latinidad at a moment when, despite their invisibility in most media venues, Latin@s and most racial “majorities” are no longer numerical “minorities.” In sum, our intention is to have more attention paid to the political economy and cultural politics of Latino media within media, communication, and cultural studies while encouraging more work to fill the enormous voids in these growing fields of study.
Likewise, we focus on the traditional rubrics of production, circulation, and cultural politics, well aware that politics embeds all stages of media production and circulation and that, as Stuart Hall’s famous encoding/decoding essay once noted, these “separate” dynamics are ultimately intertwined. Matters of circulation, distribution, and policies affect decisions about production, while production processes are decisive in what is ultimately consumed and circulated as “Latino media.” Our use of these rubrics is, then, strategic. Specifically, we seek to think through the transnational trends fueling the growth of “Latino” media initiatives in the United States; issues of policy and political economy that constrain the circulation of media products; and the everyday cultural politics related to all facets of media use and how they affect matters of representation, democracy, and the creation of new Latin@ publics and politics.

To this end, our contributors include a diverse group of stellar scholars working in the field of Latino media, cultural studies, and communications, who place different emphases on these issues in their analyses, but who nevertheless position matters of politics and the market at the heart of their discussion.

Indeed, the past decade has seen dramatic changes in the global political economy and the landscape of Latino media. There has been an unparalleled level of media consolidations and major new media ventures for Latin@s, as everyone seems to want a piece of the Latin@ media market. Not surprisingly, these developments have been accompanied by a rise in anti-immigration discourse and anti-Latino sentiment—a situation that reminds us of the limits of equating visibility with political empowerment. Some key initiatives include Murdoch’s MundoFox, a new Spanish channel that will draw supposedly more “sophisticated” programming from Colombia, and Univision/Disney’s twenty-four-hour cable news channel that will be directed at English-dominant Latin@s for the first time. Granted, there is a lot of boosterism, anticipation, and spin around these new developments, which, history warns us, merit more skepticism than optimism and praise. I recall the enormous fear and excitement provoked by Telemundo’s supposed “revamping” after its purchase by Sony Pictures Entertainment, with other major corporate investors in 1998. The entry of a major entertainment giant into the Latino market was interpreted as a sign of coming
of age, while the network’s announcement of new revamped programming that would rely less on imports and more on Latino-specific content led many observers and enthusiasts to speak liberally of a new “Latin Hollywood” on the make (Dávila 2001).

In hindsight, we know the buzz was highly overrated. Telemundo never developed any breakthrough bilingual programming. It did increase its US-based productions, but did so by lightly tweaking the dominant Spanish-language formula that remained largely unchanged. More recently, instead of solely importing Latin American soap operas, the network has focused on importing actors and writers from Latin America and producing in Miami. This “new” formula, however, has done little to increase access to the “Latin Hollywood” for US-based, English-language–dominant Latin@s, who continue to be bypassed in favor of Latin American actors and actresses with supposedly “generic” Spanish-language fluency and name recognition in the United States through their previous participation in their countries’ soap opera productions back home. Puerto Rican actors have had to migrate to Miami to find jobs in television upon Uninvision’s purchase of one of the island’s most important TV channels—another example of the types of labor inequities generated by the Spanish-only media world that increasingly have hemispheric ramifications (Rivero 2005). In turn, the growth of Miami’s production industry has not represented an improvement in working conditions for US Latin@ actors and writers. Importing performers and writers has shielded the major networks from the union contracts that would lead to improved and more secure working conditions for actors and media workers in the US Latino/a media landscape (Chozick 2012). The end result is that instead of hiring US Latin@ performers, Hollywood talent agencies are going to Miami in search of “Latino talent” who are mostly from Latin America and who are sought after for their overt signs of Latinness, consisting primarily of their accents. The rise of light-skinned Spanish-language soap opera stars like William Levy and Sofia Vergara is part and parcel of this penchant for “Latin” stars who “sound” Latino, and of the tendency for language to trump race and look as the primary defining element of “Latinidad” within mainstream media representations of US Latinos (Rosa 2010).

A continued problem is the essentialized ideas about language that continue to be promoted by most “Latino-oriented” media, a situation
that the rise of English-language and bilingual choices for Latin@s has not challenged. These media primarily consist of news or cheaply produced reality TV that have done little to expand opportunities for more diverse creative offerings. In fact, Christopher Joseph Westgate’s contribution in this volume argues that English-language media function the way Spanish-language media historically have: both contribute to essentialist associations between Latin@s and language that are more informed by economic considerations—specifically by the need to assure exportability of content, whether it be English-language news or Spanish-language novelas—than by the linguistic practices of contemporary Latin@s. I also worry about the ensuing typecasting of English as the language of news and information and Spanish as the language of entertainment that may follow from the ongoing split between English-language news channels and regular entertainment programming channels.

In this context, reality TV becomes one of the few spaces where diverse linguistic practices and sounds are heard. MTV’s show *Washington Heights*, featuring a multiracial Dominican cast, speaking Dominican-accented Spanish and English, was especially noteworthy. Unfortunately, reality TV remains an undependable genre and a contradictory space for anyone to attain representation and achieve access to media. These shows are cheap to produce, and while some characters may rocket into fame, most are exploited and discarded. Further, while most reality TV shows revolve around neoliberal citizenship formulations of transformation and uplift that erase everyday people’s complex realities, Latin@ and Black reality TV participants tend to be concentrated in urban/ghetto exposés that are embroiled in contradictory stereotypes. Other recent developments include the rise in transnational genres like narcocorridos, the pan-Latinamericanization of novelas with actors recruited from all over Latin America, and finally, the development of new media. As we will see, each of these developments represents particular openings for inclusion and representation alongside unique challenges.

In particular, transborder cultural networks that bypass national concerns and limitations in creating “Latino” products represent new types of challenges for theorizing inequalities in the flows of investment and production across the United States and Latin America. As Juan Piñón’s
Introduction

contribution to this volume notes, processes of deregulation, privatization, and liberalization have blurred the line between the “national” and the “foreign” in the US/Latin American television landscape, while national distinctions remain very much in place. Moreover, we are in the midst of more and new types of transnationalization within the dominant Spanish-language US Latino/Latin American media market. No wonder that the Ibero-American Fiction Television Observatory (OBITEL)—which publishes annual reviews on the industry through research teams in each of its eleven member countries in Latin America alongside the United States and Spain—made the transnationalization of television fiction the topic of 2012. Among other issues, OBITEL’s annual yearbook pointed to key internationalizing trends from

1) the adaptation of successful scripts from other countries, in particular the role played by Argentina and Colombia as producers of stories for the Spanish-speaking countries and increasingly so by Brazil and also as regards Portugal; 2) to the constitution of multinational casts as a commercial hook; 3) to the establishment of co-production models to produce or adapt fictional shows; and 4) to financing and creating production centers in countries other than their own. (Orozco and Vasallo 2012: 80)

Similarly, as Juan Piñón’s contribution attests, global media companies are increasingly bypassing traditional limits on foreign investment in Latin American media, fostering new types of US and global investments, whether it is through legal loopholes, the stock exchange market, or investments in production and content-providing companies.

These global investments are not often visible. The resulting programming products may appear “local,” while distinctions and hierarchies are reproduced in ways that favor global media industry over nationally based producers, who are often relegated to production processes rather than the most profitable aspects—creating and distributing media content. And here we must qualify the meaning of “local” content and “global investment” with an eye to the many ways transnational media are reconstituting what localized audiences are exposed to as “local” programming, or what they recognize as such, as well as the ways “global” investments take place. Because “local” programming has
long included transcultural products (such as a Brazilian soap opera dubbed by Mexican actors exported to Chile or to the US Hispanic market), Latin American and US Latin@ audiences may not recognize that behind the new imported soap opera from Mexico or Brazil lies a Disney, HBO, or Nickelodeon (OBITEL 2012). We see similar processes at play in Hollywood’s investments in India’s film industry, with Sony and Warner Brothers coproducing and codistributing with Indian filmmakers as a way of entering this growing market. Ironically, while Indian studios see these investments as their opportunity to become “global,” “global” partners are most interested in going “local” in India as a strategy to gain new markets (Ganti 2011: 361). In other words, it is Sony and Warner Brothers that benefit most from these investments (which allow them to tap into new markets and audiences in the developing world where they would otherwise be shunned), not Indian filmmakers or Mexican TV producers, of whom only a minority are afforded access to global audiences and recognition through these arrangements. The whitewashing of global cinema has led critics to point out that “Bollywood may make more films than Hollywood, but it shows no sign of gaining global traction. . . . Instead, both India and China are hiring more and more western actors” (Cox 2013).

Indeed, as attested to by Piñón, as well as by Rodrigo Gómez, Toby Miller, and André Dorcé in their coauthored chapter, the new transnational circuits of television production linking the US and Latin American markets are characterized by growing inequalities in the flows of television production. The United States still “reigns supreme” in production and circulation of content throughout the region; Mexico remains the primary content exporter for the entire Ibero-American market, including the US Latino market, while new investments in “Latino” programming have not produced greater or significant choices for Latin@ audiences. There are also winners and losers in the Spanish-dominant media market, countries that take the lead in production and exporting like Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil, and countries like Ecuador and Uruguay that are primarily recipients and importers, while the US Latin@ market is especially predetermined by the successful formula of importing content from Latin America. Moreover, “local” productions that are created in partnerships with global media corporations, whether produced in Latin America or in the United States for
the US Hispanic market, are increasingly mainstreamed and less tied to localities, or to political, social, or culturally specific issues, as they are increasingly produced with an eye to greater exportability and marketability across nations and regions.

In other words, what we are seeing is the casualty of the “local” in favor of neutral themes and formats that can have greater exportability at the cost of diversity at all levels, in terms of media content, but also in terms of what countries, regions, actors, writers, and workers get access to these transnationalized media markets and who are shut out. Media pundits may point to a new pan–Latin American telenovela with a multinational cast of actors or to the emergence of Latin global music idols like Shakira as evidence of the existence of a diverse transnational media space. Our contributors, however, challenge these types of naive assessments by exposing the erasures and inequalities that are consistently reproduced. In all, they remind us that behind every corporately packaged new media product, new types of exclusions and erasures can be found; that in fact, every new project that targets new types of Latin@s (the bilingual, the young, the immigrant, the upwardly mobile, the Afro-Latino, the regional music lover, the growing Dominican market, and so forth) demands attention to the many differences that are contained by and through these new Latino/a marketing niches.

One recurrent issue that concerns this volume is the unparalleled levels of media ownership and concentration that have accompanied these transnational developments. The National Hispanic Media Coalition notes that in 2011 “Latinos owned a mere 2.9 percent of all commercial TV stations and only 2.7 percent of FM radio outlets. Latin@s didn’t fare much better in AM radio, once thought to be a key entry point for people of color, owning only 172 AM radio stations out of 3,830, or 4.5 percent” (National Hispanic Media Coalition 2012a). Latin@s also hold less than 6.5 percent of all media jobs, both in front of and behind cameras as executives, writers, and producers, even though they now make up over 16 percent of the US population (see Frances Negrón-Muntaner’s essay in this volume). This underrepresentation is especially severe in mainstream journalism, and is especially worrisome given the news’ key role in shaping public opinion. Debates around immigration in the news have long been defined by stereotypes and racist tropes, in ways that dehumanize Latin@s and present them as inherently foreign
threats (Santa Ana 2002, 2012). Words and representations have political implications, and when Latin@s are nowhere to be found in the newsroom, the likelihood that diverse and politically sensitive perspectives are included is dramatically lessened, as attested by the difficulty of banning the use in major newsrooms of “illegal” to refer to undocumented immigrants. Drawing from key reports on this issue, Elizabeth Méndez Berry points out that in 2010 only 1.3 percent of total news stories focused in a substantial way on Latin@s; while Latinos made up about 4 percent of total newsroom employees in 2011, 0.5 percent of op-ed articles in major newspapers around the country are written by Latinos; and only 2.6 percent of radio news staffers and 7.3 percent of TV news staffers are Latinos (Méndez Berry 2012).³

This lack of representation has significant implications in the current context of increasing anti-immigrant sentiment and the rise of anti-immigrant legislations, because it feeds into the misperception that Latin@s are always “foreign” or a threat. This was the predictable conclusion of a major report issued by Latino Decisions with the National Hispanic Media Coalition that circulated widely during the 2012 elections, documenting how a majority of Americans buy into dominant stereotypes of Latin@s in the news and the media that represent them as immigrant, foreign, and criminal (National Hispanic Media Coalition 2012b). Sadly, the findings from this poll were not surprising. What is striking is the persistence of stereotypes and practices of othering despite the overwhelming growth and residential diversification of Latin@ populations. Liberal racial thinking would tell us that racially based stereotypes would lessen, as racial “minorities” are everywhere present. But the continued othering of Latin@s in the media suggests that their racialization continues apace. In fact, in the current so-called post-racial context, Latin@s’ racialization is accompanied by a general unwillingness to address issues of racial diversity, representation, and parity in the media and at all levels of society, especially within the Federal Communications Commission. At the height of the civil rights movement, the fight over media space was paramount; Chicano and Nuyoricans fought for equal time on the airwaves and for policies and funding to create TV and radio programs and films that would help counter their negative portrayal in mainstream media. The rise of Chicano cinema and of Latino-specific ethnic media and media activism
and advocacy in the 1970s is part and parcel of struggles for federal legislation and funding opportunities to increase Black people’s and Latin@’s access to media (Bodroghkozy 2012; Classen 2004; Noriega 2000). Unfortunately, since the passing of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which deregulated the telecommunications industry, racial minority populations have faced steeper challenges when media advocacy and activism are concerned. Not only do they face media monopolies and institutions that have exponentially grown in size and power, but also they do so with little to no resources and policies for addressing inequalities.

Overall, there is a scarcity of forums in which to analyze these transformations, given that, as a general rule, works on Latino media remain focused on textual and cultural studies analyses of representations, isolated from any examination of issues of global circulation and the structural transformations of global media or their effects on media employment and markets. One reason for this void is that communication scholars seldom produce book-length monographs, because their discipline encourages publication in peer-reviewed journals, while cultural studies scholars are not always concerned with or trained to look at matters of political economy. As a result, discussions surrounding Latino media still revolve around issues of representations and stereotypes, whose importance is evidenced by the above-mentioned study attesting to their prevalence in the American imaginary. Yet this approach does not provide us with the entire story of what’s happening with Latin@s and the media. For that we need to go behind the scenes, and look at issues of production, political economy, and politics. In doing so, we seek to fill a void in the field of Latino media, which has been historically devoid of analyses of political economy. We follow recent works on some of the global political economic trends behind the foundation of Hispanic marketing and important newer works on Latino media and the music industry, examining Latin@ music and performers in light of the growth of a generic “Latino” market (Cepeda 2010; Dávila 2012; Paredez 2009; Piñón 2011; Rivero 2005).

Works on the music industry have especially shown the exclusions and the violences experienced by performers as they pass through what Cepeda describes as the “Miami sound machine,” the corporate-fueled institutionalized music industry behind the “Latin” music boom of the
Latin@ performers have always been subject to corporate demands to make their music more palatable to wider audiences, but Cepeda shows how investments by major transnational corporations facilitated the development of truly global stars like Ricky Martin and Shakira, performers who despite (or perhaps because of) having only a “Latin tinge” in their music, became marketed as global icons of Latinidad. Cepeda bemoans this machine because it “perpetuates a belief in Latin America as the geographic and artistic center of Latin(o) musical ‘authenticity’” (Cepeda 2010: 48), not unlike what has happened with other sectors of the media industry, most notably television. But what’s clear is that once again, the concerning issue is not only one of representation, the very narrow type of Latin@ idol who becomes authenticated by the industry. The issue is also about the inequalities that are sustained and reproduced through these types of authentications that make it so difficult for Latin@ musicians to access both the mainstream and the “Latino” music industry.

Indeed, since their inception in 2000, the Latin Grammys have been criticized for highlighting corporate-favored styles and rhythms in Spanish over most regionally based performers, independent recording musicians, and Latin@s performing in English. Consequently, we remain surprised when tragedies like the early deaths of Selena and, more recently, Jenni Rivera bring attention to the existence of large numbers of Latin@s who remain “untapped,” such as those following regional music genres or bilingual performers and those who are not otherwise listening to the Colombian Juanes, the Mexican pop-rock duo Jesse and Joy, or other Latin American performers favored by the Latin Grammys. The sudden “discoveries” of artists like Jenni and Selena point to the existence of alternative communities and networks of distribution that bypass and challenge the limits imposed by the dominant “Latino” music establishment. A good example is provided by Hector Amaya’s discussion of narcocorridos, a genre that was popularized through online distribution across the US/Mexico border. As he notes, notions of authenticity harbored by the music industry don’t work for narcocorridos because this music is not nation-bound, while both the mainstream and the Latin@ music industries are regularly marketed in this manner. Similarly essentialist and nationalist precepts are behind Puerto Ricans’ erasure from the history of hip-hop because of its marketing as a solely “Black” cultural product. Puerto Rican performers were pressed to shed their “Latinness”
to fit into the dominant marketing model by an industry that could not understand the multiracial/multicultural milieu that was at the center of this new cultural expression (Rivera 2003).

This edited collection seeks to tackle wounding erasures like these that impact on Latin@s’ ability to participate as media creators and stakeholders. Foremost, our collection seeks to think through the new cultural politics involving Latin@s and media by going beyond the spin around Latinos as the “new hot market,” or the uncritical celebration unleashed by the announcement of one more “Latino” media station or channel in the works. These myopic, market-driven perspectives lose sight of the fact that Latin@s remain largely underserved by all media, whether or not meant specifically for “them,” and that they are still largely excluded or at the bottom of the media labor market. Recall here the omission of Lupe Ontiveros from the 2013 Oscars “In Memoriam” section, which led to the revelation that Latino membership in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is less than 2 percent. The Los Angeles Times reports that Ontiveros herself was denied membership when she applied. Foremost, these market perspectives ignore the fact that community voices and local and regional-based culture and products are consistently bypassed by most current corporate-driven Latino media proposals.

This is one of the reasons social media have become such key spaces for Latin@ activism, as described, for example, by Cristina Beltrán’s essay on Dreamers. These media are the one space that remains considerably more accessible to communities, even when their reach and impact remain quite limited, and they bring up additional issues around privacy and surveillance. Indeed, issues of reception and the politics of media use are especially important terrains for investigation when racially diverse communities are concerned as the last bastion through which to document alternative voices and rescue the type of differences that are consistently bypassed by mainstream representations. In particular, ethnographic analyses provide an especially useful tool to counter “overarching” narratives of Latinidad by providing fine-tuned observations of the limits of marketable formulas for reaching Latin@ constituencies and viewers. In all, many of our contributors turn to viewers, listeners, and audiences of all types to inquire about the multiple differences between popular media representations and the everyday uses of Latinidad.
Part 1 of this collection addresses issues of production, looking at matters of political economy and changes in production processes, the development of new hemispheric initiatives, and the reorganization of media work around old and new ethnic- and language-based hierarchies. This section includes essays that provide macro perspectives on some of the most significant new initiatives, such as Disney’s ABC News and NuvoTV, as well as the politics involved in their production. Juan Piñón provides an important look at current transnationalization strategies in Latino/Latin American television, exploring some of the factors, at the local and national levels, that have facilitated the ongoing corporate consolidation of the media and led to changing levels of foreign involvement and ownership. In their chapter, Rodrigo Gómez, Toby Miller, and André Dorcé point to some of the strategies that are helping to consolidate Mexico’s continued dominance in the US Latino market. Special attention is paid to the linguistic politics involved in creating media content for Latin@s, who have been historically defined as a linguistically homogeneous market to the detriment of US-born, English-dominant Latino producers and productions. These essays also examine the different types of “transnationalism” at play in Univision and Telemundo and more recent initiatives. Essays by Christopher Joseph Westgate and Henry Puente examine this key issue by looking at the linguistic politics involved in producing NuvoTV, a bilingual and English-language channel, and the new Latin@-specific English news sites developed by Fox, NBC, and Univision. Frances Negrón-Muntaner’s contribution then turns us to a discussion of the current state of Latin@s’ involvement in the contemporary media industries through an analysis of their participation both in front of and behind the camera. Her rich statistical data more than prove the exclusive world of mainstream media and the difficulties activists seeking to transform it must face. Vanessa Díaz’s chapter, in turn, touches on the politics of work and labor through a case study of paparazzi image sales that speaks to larger trends that position Latinos at the bottom of the ethnic/racial divisions and hierarchies of cultural work in the media industry. Díaz focuses on Latinos working in mainstream celebrity culture, but similar dynamics have been documented elsewhere, showing how Latinos’ incorporation
in the “Latino” media sector is consistently mediated by their race, language, ethnicity, and nationality in ways that exclude some Latinos (Afro-Latinos, English-dominant Latinos) from some of the most profitable sectors of the industry (Dávila 2001; Piñón and Rojas 2011).

Part 2, on circulation, distribution, and media policies, looks more closely at some of the major local and national communications policies that have affected Latino media, as well as new patterns for distribution and circulation of media products. The essays in part 2 examine how new players and initiatives are redefining the field of circulation and distribution of “Latino” media products. Omar Rincón and María Paula Martínez explore the rise of Colombia as a new venue for production and how new patterns of circulation may be redefining ethnic and national boundaries and creating new publics, as is the case with the new “pan-Latino novelas.” The cultural politics and debates around representation are a special concern of this section, debates that our contributors show are suggestive of the transnational dynamics involved. These issues are especially relevant in regard to the exportation of formats when the politics of race, ethnicity, and nationality in the United States and Latin America come to the forefront. This is evident in Yeidy M. Rivero’s discussion of the debates over the Colombian adaptation of the US series Grey’s Anatomy, coproduced by Disney Media Networks Latin America, Vista Productions, and RCN, when several Afro-Colombian organizations accused RCN of racism because the adaptation excluded the Black characters featured in the original series. Essays by Mari Castañeda and Dolores Inés Casillas examine how marketing measures such as those used for measuring audiences and ratings have historically helped shape dominant census and marketing categories that have both missed and misrecognized Latino/as. A key lesson is the overwhelming ignorance that prevents corporate America from understanding Latin@s and their needs, and the stereotypes that lead them to treat Latin@s as second-class audiences and citizens. Casillas, in particular, shows how supposedly “objective” audience evaluation companies such as Arbitron are riddled with linguistic and racial oversights that underrepresent Spanish-language radio audiences, who remain “lost in translation.” Altogether, these essays expose the wide-ranging types of cultural politics unleashed by the circulation and distribution of contemporary Latino/a media.
Lastly, part 3, on consumption, reception, and politics, examines how Latinos and Latinas are consuming, using, and reshaping the media that are being targeted to them, with an eye to the new public spheres and definitions of Latinidad that may be in the works. Essays address how DREAM activists are using social media (Cristina Beltrán), some of the different reading and consuming practices of Latino/a audiences (Jillian Báez), as well as some of the differences around region, race, ethnicity, language, and gender that are consistently elided by most “Latino” media content (María Elena Cepeda, Deborah R. Vargas). In particular, Báez shows how audiences are constantly gauging their and others’ identities through media, and how television viewing is a racially charged process for debating issues of citizenship, belonging, and race. Vargas, for her part, highlights the important role that Jenni Rivera played as an immigrant activist and the ways this regional music diva challenged the Miami music machine to embrace and reinstate a more working-class and queered position and identity. This section concludes with two pieces by long-standing media professionals, Juan González and Ed Morales. Morales shares his perspectives on the current state of alternative media, while González shares insights on some historical trends that have affected the current modern news media system, as well as some thoughts on media activism in the contemporary moment.

In all, we hope that even if we end up raising more questions than we can answer, we provide a necessary intervention in the field of Latino/Latin American media. Foremost, we hope these essays impel others to seek answers and to ask new and, hopefully, different questions.

NOTES
3. Elizabeth Méndez Berry’s unpublished report draws from studies by the Pew Research Center on Excellence in Journalism, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, and the Radio Television Digital News Association.
4. We point readers to some recent anthologies (Aldama, Sandoval, and García 2012; Valdivia and García 2012; Beltrán and Forjas 2008; Valdivia 2010) that, although focusing on popular culture more generally, include essays that touch on the political economy of media production. Similarly, a volume on Ugly Betty brings
attention to the globalization of this production across regional and national borders and the negotiations involved in remaking it as a national and global product (McCabe and Akass 2013). Our goal here, however, is to foreground and place issues of production-circulation-reception at the center of discussion.

REFERENCES


