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Applying Latina/o Critical Communication Theory to Anti-Blackness

The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement has helped to call attention to longstanding racist attitudes and policing practices, using the tools of digital communication. While we often focus on its impact in the U.S., this movement has extended across the Americas in its call to fight anti-Blackness. Within North American Latinx communities, it has specifically provided a rallying point for Afro-Latinx individuals and communities who have long faced discrimination and racism, particularly within media. For instance, the selection of Ilia Calderon in November 2017 to replace María Elena Salinas after 36 years of co-anchoring with Jorge Ramos the national news program, *Univision Noticias* on the fifth largest network in the U.S., marked a historic change in Latinx media (Univision Communications Inc. Press Release, 2017).

Univision’s hiring of Ilia Calderon by was very significant because she became the first Afro-Latina journalist to ever co-anchor a national evening news program on U.S. Spanish-language television, and the first person from Chocó, Colombia to achieve such prominence in North American Latinx media. Chocó is a coastal region in Colombia that is historically and dominantly Black, and an area that the rest of Colombia has generally treated with racist attitudes and stereotypes.

In my own travels throughout Colombia in 2015, many individuals I encountered made racialized and problematic comments about residents of Chocó although many people from Chocó were now residing in major metropolitan cities such as Medellín, Cali and Bogotá. From the perspective of residents from Chocó, the presence of Black citizens in major global cities meant that their issues could no longer be ignored and inclusion was necessary for addressing the systemic racism they had endured over the years not only in Colombia, but across the U.S. and beyond. The last decade had inspired various social movements rooted in the acknowledgement that the lived experiences and contributions of Black communities (Afro-descendientes) in Latin America and the Caribbean were valuable and important. Additionally, the emerging movements recognizing Afro-Latinidades were also reinforced by the emergence of Black Lives Matter in the U.S. and the need to call into question the racist attitudes and policing practices across the Americas in state politics and mass media. According to Yesenia Barragan, the growing political strikes by Afro-Colombians in recent years are also the result of communities fighting for more economic and social justice in the face of ongoing systemic exclusion. She quotes Saidiya Hartman who notes, “Black lives are still imperiled and devalued...this is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment (Barragan, 2016).

The fight to recognize the deep impact that Black exclusion has had on the Americas also extends beyond the social and political economy of everyday life. Movements oriented toward Afro-Latinidades have also included demands for mass media and digital communications to be more reflective of current demographics and racialized histories (see Román & Flores, 2010). Newscasts, telenovelas, and everything in between, are now being reexamined more closely for the ways in which problematic and questionable racialized narratives are perpetuated, and how

Afro-Latinx individuals in particular are not being granted opportunities to showcase their talents and skills as key members of society and prominent voices in the public sphere (Rivero, 2014; Torres-Saillant, 2008). The considerable growth of Afro-Latinos as sports figures and global entertainers also demonstrated that Blackness was becoming both mainstream on Latinx popular culture but continually marginalized in social-political contexts (Burgos, 2009).

Consequently, the selection of Ilia Calderon as the new co-anchor at Univision, and as a person who views her own racial identity as a strength and values the multiracial context of her family (her partner identifies as Korean-American and they have a daughter), demonstrates that perhaps (slowly) forthcoming changes to the racialized framework that have been historically promoted on Latinx media are underway in ways that deeply matter to the ethno-racial future of Latinx communities across the Americas. In this context, Latinx media are key in reimagining the racialization of Latino populations in the U.S. and possibly challenging the limited understanding of race with regards to Latinx communities. As Littlefield notes (2008), “the media serve as a tool that people use to define, measure, and understand American society. For that reason, the media serve as a system of racialization in that they have historically been used to perpetuate the dominant culture’s perspective and create a public forum that defines and shapes ideas concerning race and ethnicity.” Additionally, these ideas about racial categories are not static or frozen in time, but influenced by historical, economic and political contexts which in turn affect the processes of becoming racialized beings and transforming how racial identities are constructed and experienced through social relations. Understanding how this occurs is important because it can powerfully challenge our preconceived and problematic notions of race and racism.

This is an important shift since Spanish-language media have struggled with this issue and have emphasized Whiteness historically, politically, and culturally. Yet as more Latino communities across the U.S. as well as Latin America mobilize, organize and address the lived experiences and media representation of indigenous and Afro-Latinidades, it is interesting to witness how Latinx media are making limited spaces for these identities as well.

This chapter will discuss how Latinx media have historically participated in the racialization of U.S. Latinx and how contemporary social movements and the ongoing challenges to the historically racist treatment of Afro-descendent and indigenous communities, including the success of Black Lives Matter, have called into question the reproduction of White supremacy as well as activated action against racist tropes in Latinx media. In an effort to conduct this analysis, the chapter will discuss and apply the Latina/o Critical Communication Theory (LatCritComm) as a pathway for better understanding the current shifts occurring in Latinx media as well as assess what the future may hold.

Latina/o Critical Communication Theory

According to Anguiano and Castañeda (2014) there is much to gain by applying critical race theory and Latino critical theory to studies of communication, especially examinations of anti-Blackness as expressed through pervasive communicative forms. Most of the theoretical applications of critical race theory and Latino critical theory have occurred in studies of law and education, and have generated a rich body of scholarship that demonstrates the ways in which racism is institutionalized and racialization systematized. Although examinations of race and media representation have proliferated in the last three decades, there is still much to examine given the vast array of communication practices and the growing media landscape, particularly if

we utilize a critical race and Latino critical lens. In an effort to bring together Latinx communication studies with the aforementioned theoretical lenses, Anguiano and Castañeda (2014) developed the Latina/o Critical Communication Theory through a set of tenets that can be operationalized in order to critically examine communicative sites and practices in the context of Latinx lived experiences.

The five tenets are as following: 1) Centralize the Latinx experience; 2) Deploy decolonizing methodologies; 3) Acknowledge and address racism aimed at Latino communities; 4) Resist colorblind and postracial rhetoric; and 5) Promote a social justice dimension. These tenets are based on the major findings promoted by critical race and Latina/o Critical Studies theorists, and aim to provide a framework through which communicative investigations centered on a critique of racialization processes related to Latina/os can take place. This is not to say that other theoretical frameworks focusing on race, communications, and Latinos are insufficient. On the contrary, the LatCritComm Theory is an attempt to add another layer to the flourishing and ongoing scholarly conversations that are deepening our understanding of Latinx subjectivities, more specifically, and communication realities more broadly.

According to Anguiano and Castañeda (2014), LatCritComm Theory takes a holistic and social justice approach to analyses of communication and cultural experiences of Latinx communities by centering the long history of struggle and resistance by communities of color. For instance, the theory values methodologies that emphasize non-Western modes of knowledge production and recognizes that methods such as counternarratives and autoethnography tell a different (racialization) story that can potentially disrupt historical and contemporary mainstream narratives. Furthermore, LatCritComm Theory “as an analytical lens allows us to consider how White supremacy has shaped the contours of the audio-visual communications that Latina/o

communities engage with on a daily basis” (Anguiano and Castañeda, 2014, p. 115-116). This theoretical foundation thus creates a productive context in which investigate the history of racialization that has occurred in U.S. Spanish-language media and the productive changes that underway which are reimagining Latinx media as the voices and experiences of Afro-Latinx, for instance, become more visible and are given credence in the mainstream Latinx media landscape.

1) Centralize the Latinx experience

The theory begins by centralizing the Latinx experience as an effort to understand how members of this community of color also experience racialization in multiple way through their Spanish-language use, immigration status, and ethnic cultural practices, and how is this judged, often derisively, by largely White populations. It also aims to move away from race as a black-white binary and the need to recognize that Latinx lived experiences (and media representations) are also rooted in transnationalism, postcoloniality, colorism and xenophobia. For instance, as a child growing up in Los Angeles, I watched Spanish-language television and listened to Spanish-language radio, and was always struck with how Blackness and indigeneity were constantly dismissed and stereotyped. Even at a young age, this dismissiveness did not make any sense since I was growing up surrounded by a diverse community of people that included Black families, Mexicans, indigenous people, Asians, and Latinos from different parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico. Indeed, race and ethnicity were salient factors in our realities, but our largely positive interactions as kids seemed opposite from what was being promoted on mainstream and Latinx media. The near invisibility of Black, Asian and indigenous people on Latinx media, except as stereotypical caricatures, reinforced a broader

notion that these communities did not exist as part of Latinx diaspora when they fact they constitute millions of people.

I remember when I was in high school when a friend perceived as only Japanese shocked people when shared she was Peruvian of Japanese descent. Another friend mentioned she was actually Afro-Colombian although everyone assumed she was only African-American, and another acquaintance who spoke Spanish noted that her parents were predominantly Quechua speakers because they were from an indigenous community in Ecuador. These lived experiences demonstrate that U.S. Latinx subjectivities are not largely White or mestizo (i.e., mixed race with indigenous ancestry) but in fact embody a range of racialized positionalities that are often ignored and made invisible by media. Consequently, popular comprehension of what constitutes Latinx lived experiences remain largely limited.

The emergence of digital technologies has actually helped to chip away at the ignorance by providing a platform through which counter-narratives of Latinidades can be produced and distributed. One such blog space that has challenged the prevailing story of race in Latinx communities is “Ain’t I Latina?” (aintilatina.com). Janel Martinez has centered Blackness as another way to understand what it means to be Latina today. In her blog, she questions the centrality of “Eurocentric beauty standards” and discusses how the stories of Afro-Latinas are often erased and silenced in Spanish-language and Latinx media. Another Afro-Latino social media creator who has pointed to the absurdity of televisual invisibility when in reality Blackness is very prominent in Latino cultural contexts is LeJuan James. His YouTube videos aim to show how Latinos can be understood from a variety of intersectional positionalities (mother, student, Caribbean, professional) and in doing so complicates what is often perceived as normative Latinidad.

Scholars in Latina/o studies have also challenged normative ideas about race and identity in Latinx communities, media and academia itself. Tanya Katerí Hernández (2003) notes in her essay, “‘Too Black to be Latina/o:’ Blackness and Blacks as Foreigners in Latino Studies,” that although the privilege of Whiteness in Latinx media and popular culture is not surprising, the constant racialized treatment of Afro-Latino/a identities as foreigner and foreign in local and the national Latinx imaginary is distressing, disheartening and ultimately racist. She argues, “What is most disturbing about this multi-layered dynamic of Latino/as putting forth an image of enlightened racial thinking, by virtue of their racially mixed heritage...is the way in which the mindset obstructs any ability to effectively work through the complexity of the socioeconomic racial hierarchy.” Ultimately, the historical refusal to acknowledge the impact of White supremacy and undo racial prejudice in Latinx communities has perpetuated the treatment of Blackness and even Asianness as foreign and disconnected from Latindad and has also reinforced a Latina/o imaginary that is raceless. Consequently, by singling out Afro-Latinx communities as not belonging by characterizing them as foreign, alien, and suspicious for not matching what is considered the norm is a racialization process that needs centered in order to fully understand and center Latinx experiences.

Since the publication of Hernández’s essay, other Latina/o Studies scholars have also explicated the meaning of race in the context of Latinidad and the factors which have impacted the racialization process for Latinos. Ginetta Candelario (2008) notes that “identity formations are responsive to local conditions and institutions,” cultural and ideological contexts, and thus race for Latinx communities are conditioned by a multiplicity of meanings and social relations. The gendered ethno-racial identities of Latinx are in many cases slippery and/or ambiguous, so any understanding of Latinx media must take this into account. By centralizing the Latinx lived

experience, the LatCritComm theory aims to show the disjuncture of what is occurring in communities and what is being represented on Latinx media. The shift at Univision to include an Afro-Latina in the national newscast as a co-anchor and the immediate firing of a talk show entertainer who compared former first lady Michelle Obama to a primate animal as well as other efforts by Latinx media to reassess how race is embodied throughout its various content products are demonstrations that the unrelenting work by scholars, progressive media producers, and activists to protest against the negative racialization of Black, Asian and indigenous Latinx communities is paying off. The issue that remains is the following: as communication offerings expand and race becomes an issue that is dealt with in more complex ways, it is not clear if such engagement will translate into productive material realities and the equitable treatment of U.S. Latinx communities within the broader socio-political landscape.

2) Deploy decolonizing methodologies

The second tenet of the LatCritComm theoretical framework calls for use of decolonizing methodologies which challenge the notion that research can be produced from an entirely objective orientation and asks scholars to examine how their histories and social positions inform how they understand the multidimensional experience of Latinas/os. Applying feminist-inspired methods opens the possibility of creating collaborative knowledge production that is not researcher-centric but participant focused and cognizant of the lingering effects that colonization has had on Latinx communities. For example, the actual racialized experience of Latinx media workers is an area of research that is sorely lacking in the broader literature in digital media and communication. Castañeda (2014) notes that a Puerto Rican journalist residing in Massachusetts shared that in her past media work she was constantly made to feel like she was incapable of

producing real journalism or media content that would be read or engaged with by non-Latinx audiences. Although she identified as a light-skinned Boricua, she was often made to feel like her Latina positionality diminished her journalistic skills. However, this Latina journalist was recently granted the opportunity to host a regional morning radio show, and through her weekly program, she has made many efforts to deploy a decolonizing method to her work as radio talk show host. She has done this by fostering multiracial collaboration, embodying a feminist approach in her interviews, insisting that community voices and issues are centered in the discussion, and making every effort to point to the multidimensional contours of Latinx history, context, and agency.

Similarly, before Ilia Calderon was asked to co-anchor Univision Noticias, she conducted an interview with a KKK member in North Carolina that was televised as an evening program in August 2017. This interview was not only broadcast as a news special titled, “En la boca del lobo,” (In the mouth of the wolf), but it also became a viral video that demonstrated the degradation and potential danger Latin media workers like Calderon’s often face when they are not perceived to be the “right kinds” of people of color; meaning they are not deemed mestizo but only Black. Her steely performance in the face of a contemptuous interview with the KKK Grand Wizard Chris Barker, where he called her the n-word and a mongrel, ironically pushed further ongoing efforts to decolonize Latinx media spaces and dismantle the racist attitudes of Latinx viewers. It was unfortunate, though, that an such eye-opening interaction placed a heavy emotional burden on Calderon. LatCritComm theory’s emphasis on decolonizing methodologies not only turns research on its head but including the testimonios of Latinx lived experiences, but it also provides the context through which Latinx media can be reimagined as a decolonizing

force. It's important to note, however, that Calderon regarded the interview as a harrowing experience which points to the reality that decolonization is not without pain and suffering.

3) Acknowledge and address racism aimed at Latino communities

The third precept aims to elucidate the varied personal and systemic disparities and racism that Latinx communities face consistently and the ways in which such hurtful treatment is reinforced by persistent xenophobic oppressions that occur at individual and structural levels. Racist micro and macro aggressions targeted at Latina/o populations are often unrecognized because in mainstream discourse, inequities are perceived as being about citizenship status or language ability, for instance, but not race. By acknowledging and addressing the racism faced by Latina/o peoples, we can better investigate how race is experienced in conflicting, detrimental, and intersectional liberatory ways.

For example, Latinx media have traditionally operated as not only information and entertainment resources, but also as advocates for those who have been mistreated and misunderstood. The anti-immigrant legislation and policies that have proliferated after the initial pro-immigration movements in the mid-2000s have in many ways transformed Latinx media into spaces that acknowledge and address the racism aimed at Latino communities. Time and again they have covered stories that show the impact that anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiments have produced on the material realities of Latino, including their mental health. National news journalist Jorge Ramos of Univision has especially been vocal about the treatment of Latinos in the U.S. He has gone head-to-head with the 45th president, and in turn is viewed as someone on Latinx media who is fighting the racism directed at Latinx people at a national level. It is

important to note, however, that the commercial nature of most Latinx media have also created boundaries of the kinds of advocacy that can be produced through the airwaves.

In this sense, digital communication technologies have created a platform through which critical analyses and criticism can take place without necessarily fearing recourse especially from advertisers. For instance, the websites Latino Rebels (latinorebels.com) and Remezcla (remezcla.com) have become excellent examples where Latinx writers congregate on a digital media platform to expose and discuss racist policies and encounters that many Latina/o communities face on a daily basis. In multiple online articles and audiovisual postings, contributors from Latino Rebels and Remezcla have argued that although Latino-identified politicians, judges, celebrities, and artists may be recognized at a national level and in many ways accepted as legitimate voices in the public sphere, they themselves have also experienced racism such as Supreme Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor.

The documentary film *Latinos Beyond Reel* also makes this point especially with regards to Judge Sotomayor, who was characterized multiple times as a maid in news coverage during her congressional supreme court hearings. Given the hate-filled vitriol aimed at Latina/os, and most specifically at Mexican and Central American immigrants, acknowledging and addressing racism is increasingly a topic of concern for Latinx media. PBS Newshour senior correspondent Ray Suarez notes that “even as Latino trailblazers move into professions where they once were rare or that were even closed to them, they are still disproportionately represented in blue-collar work” and consistently racialized as unwelcomed “aliens” (2013, p. 225). Multiple scholars agree that fear is the factor that drives so much of the racism directed at Latinx communities; fear of their bicultural, bilingual, and multiracial positionalities and the impact these have on

what it means to be “American” (Johnson, 1996; Sanchez, 1997; Galindo and Vigil, 2006; Huber et al, 2008).

4) Resist colorblind and postracial rhetoric

The fourth point of LatCritComm Theory builds on the previous principles by asserting that much of the discussion about race in the U.S. tends to follow a Black-White binary that erases the complex racial experiences of Latinx, Native American, Middle Eastern, and Asian American communities. Media and political attempts to characterize U.S. Latino experiences as existing within colorblind and postracial frameworks fails to recognize the material and rhetorical forms of exclusion that Latinx populations face on a daily basis. The assumption that because Latinx/Spanish-language media have a presence in the cultural and media landscape of the U.S. this means that all Latinos are accepted as full members in civil society is untrue and damaging to achieving real educational, economic and political equity. For instance, multiple mainstream newspapers and online venues published and posted articles this past summer about the global success of the Daddy Yankee, Luis Fonsi and Justin Beiber musical collaboration on the song “Despacito” as a demonstration that Latino cultural production, and by association Latinos overall, have somehow “arrived.” Such media characterizations impart the notion that Latinos now embody a postracial status and any forms of racial discrimination they face is local and personal, rather than systemic and structural.

In many ways, these efforts to create colorblind narratives about Latinos are attempts to homogenize and mainstream their location within broader U.S. society. For Latinx celebrities and media outlets, colorblind and postracial discourses allow for non-Latina/o audiences consume media products that are ordinarily deemed Latinx-oriented. Yet such broadening and

whitewashing of Latinx communications diminishes the historical struggles that have shaped Latinx communities. It also diminishes the ongoing battles to equitably access education, jobs and political power. As the impact of Afro-descendent, indigenous, Black Lives Matter, and immigrant movements become more evident in Latinx programming and content production (especially online), the need to resist colorblind narratives about Latinos becomes more important than ever. As long as Latino immigrants and many Latinx communities are characterized in racist terms, then postracial characterizations of Latinos must be challenged for how they pit seemingly good “White” Latino people from the “bad hombres.” Latinx media’s efforts to highlight the Black, Asian and indigenous Latino experiences as it connects with anti-immigration policies and police practices is one of the ways in which colorblind and postracial narratives about Latinos are contested (although without a doubt, Whiteness still colors the audiovisual landscape). Speaking Spanish is in fact a primary way to push back against postracial and colorblind rhetoric because it signifies, front and center, how difference, cultural connections, and historical dynamics continue to exist for Latinos; and it is a difference that is appreciated and beloved and cannot be erased even with the passage of English-only policies and practices.

5) Promote a social justice dimension

The final tent asks: How does one foster a social justice orientation to the study and praxis of Latinx media and race? In many ways, the approach requires the acknowledgement that gaining media access is a political project that requires an intersectional framework that is anti-racist, anti-capitalist and always critically feminist. Promoting a social justice dimension means the need to examine how capitalism influences much of the media production in the U.S. and the

ways in which this confines the discussion of certain issues and lived realities. In addition to examining media with an anti-racist framework, the adoption of a critical feminist approach is also necessary for reimagining what Latinx media can be like if social justice was at the front of center of Latinx communications production. More commercial Spanish-language media is limited in its ability to publicly espouse a social justice dimension in their work although news reporters have argued that in the current context of the 45th president and his support of White supremacists, they are making a social justice intervention by simply existing (Navarette, 2017; Radtke, 2017). They are also promoting social justice by covering and discussing the topics that the mainstream English-language media will not address on their broadcast news programs and websites. Certainly, in some ways they are correct, but what they do is not enough. Therefore, the emergence of online platforms that have adopted a clearly articulated social justice dimension have been key in pushing the discussion of what needs to be done to change the representation and treatment of Latinx on and off the media landscape. Education also has a big role play in this regard, both in K-12 and in higher education. Latinx professors are working closely with students and community media organizations to produce media content that offers counter-narratives about what it means to be Latina/o in across multiple U.S. communities. Scores of these college graduates often become Latinx media workers that aim to create anti-racist, feminist stories about Latinx communities that acknowledge the challenges, beauty, and changes taking place on the ground locally. Thus, it is not enough to examine Latinx media and race, but political action that also embodies a social justice element is needed more than ever.

Moving Forward in Examining Latinx Media and Race

Given the historical and ongoing anti-Latino, anti-immigrant, and anti-Blackness offenses in the US, it is crucial to understand the role that U.S. Latinx media are playing to address as well as reinscribe the historical and contemporary problematics of race and racism that Latinx communities are facing. Although the online brand Remezcla has created viral stories that highlight and celebrate the “Ten Afro-Latinos who have Impacted the U.S.” (X), the reality is that a recognition of what blackness means within Latinx communities is still deeply contested within the community as well as Black communities. During February’s Black History, twitter postings have argued back and forth whether Latinx communities recognize their blackness and whether their blackness even counts since it is (wrongly) perceived to not have been affected by the racism African-American populations have endured in the U.S. The idea that Afro-Latinx experiences are not influenced by the racist attacks against blackness fails to understand that anti-black audiovisual and discursive narratives does not distinguish between ethnic, national or linguistic backgrounds. Afro-Latinos and Latinx individuals who are indigenous looking with dark brown skin are also subjected to discrimination, animosity and antipathy of their contributions to broader economic and social relations. Vilna Bashi (2004) notes that we must actually understand “anti-black racism as a *global* immigration phenomenon” (p. 600). Thus, to do so allows us to better compare, contrast and complicate the treatment and experiences of blackness, and race more broadly, within and across Latindades.

For instance, Latinx media has seen itself as Latino oriented but not necessarily as a racialized entity. Since the US presidential primaries, Latinx media has had to face racialization of its sector and the people who are both working in it and consuming it. They are no longer outside of discussion and constructions of race but very much operating as proxies for racialization and minoritization of Latinx and non-English speaking communities. They have

become a contradictory vehicle for both expressing and calling out xenophobia as demonstrated by U.S. politics and English-language mainstream media. In some ways, it is also causing the entertainment side of Latinx media to reflect on the ways in which it has also reproduced oppression in other areas such as gender, class and sexuality although there is still much work to do.

As noted earlier, the inclusion of an Afro-Latina news anchor from Colombia on Univision Noticiero is viewed as a progressive sign for Latinx media in terms of race. It is being heralded as turning point in Spanish-language media and wide range of programming streams including entertainment. Historically, the issue of race on Spanish-language media was only addressed in stereotypical ways so that Black folks were often represented as inferior. The Afro-descendiente/descendent movement has been ongoing for the past decade with intensity in an effort to address the ways in which colonialism has impacted the Americas and the Caribbean. The need to address race on Latin American media has made its way to U.S. Latinx media as well and on the flipside, the social movements rooted in heralding Black Lives Matter in the U.S. have also impacted Latin American social politics and discussions about racialization in media within a transnational context. However, the issue of White supremacy is still not entirely addressed and certain kinds of racialized exclusions still exist on Latinx media, such as the voices of indigenous populations.

One of the challenges of talking about racialization in Latinx media is the fact that in many ways, to be seen as Latinx is to be racialized in the U.S. given the historical relationship between White political economic power and Latinx populations. Therefore, if you're racialized by virtue of being Latinx, then Latinx media is already racialized by virtue of it being for, about, and by Latinx people. Indeed, it has always been a racialized space (Castañeda, 2016), and will

continue to be so as long as speaking Spanish in U.S. Latinx communities is viewed as foreign. This was evident during the presidential campaign when Jorge Ramos from Univision tried to be at the campaign stops and he was kicked out of the spaces, and the Republican presidential candidate made fun of him, and more importantly, delegitimized Univision and Spanish-language media more generally. Univision was seen as not legitimate news source because of the Spanish-language and the fact it was oriented towards Latinos. Yet Spanish-language and Latinx media do not always see themselves as being already racialized and as a result, it often reproduces the same kind of White supremacy narratives and images that are problematic and can reinforce systems of oppression. Radio, on the other hand, has been a broadcast space in which racism has been addressed and examined, and racialization contested (Casillas, 2014). The fact that discussions about ICE and immigration are taking place on broadcast and digital media is one way in which not only information about community issues are dispersed and discussed, but also a reminder of how Latinos are systematically, materially and symbolically othered in the U.S. every single day.

Conclusion

The tenets of the LatCritComm Theory were applied above with the intention to demonstrate how the framework can potentially help us reimagine how we analyze, understand, and perhaps improve Latinx media by more fully addressing anti-Blackness and the systemic exclusion of Afro-Latinidades. If we examine some of the literature about audience responses and reception, we see that issues regarding race and ethnicity, in addition to sexuality, gender and class, deeply impact how people see themselves and others. This then has real life consequences with regards to policies or the inclusion and acceptance of difference in everyday

life. It also impacts the ability to build connections and movements across difference that would allow for Latinx populations to see themselves are part of larger (racialized) community. Online Latinx media are some one of the spaces in which the boundaries and discussions surrounding race and racialization are being engaged with and challenged. Latinx media have historically regarded themselves as advocates for Latinx communities, but the importance of pointing out to the ways in which the communities are being targeted and racialized in negative ways is now at a crisis point given the Republican presidency and Trumpism. Race within Latinx media needs to be examined not only because of the amount of people it reaches but also for the ways in which it is viewed as a voice and communicative space for Latinx lived experiences.

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