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BEAUTY IN THE EYE OF THE PRODUCER:
THE ROLE OF APPEARANCE IN THE CAREERS OF HISPANIC FEMALE
BROADCASTERS

BY RACHEL E. ANDERSON

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the pressures of beauty and appearance on a selected group of female Hispanic broadcast journalists. Ten broadcasters who identify as female and Hispanic were interviewed about their experiences in the industry. A careful analysis indicated that there are pressures for adopting ultra-feminine looks for hair and makeup and sexy clothing for on-air appearances based on consumer feedback. News stations also manage employees' appearances to maximize favor with audiences and to increase ratings.

NOTE ON TRANSLATION

All translations in Spanish were conducted by the author unless otherwise noted.

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III. INTRODUCTION

When the nature of a profession is centered around live presentation to a mass audience, appearance can become a complicated factor. Emphasizing favorable appearances may generate popularity or consumer approval, but it might also compromise the main purpose of the presentation. Female broadcast journalists find themselves grappling with this conundrum in crafting their on-air persona. This issue has resulted in a variety of studies on the standards newswomen should follow.

Researchers have studied the general standards of appearance for female broadcasters, including common expectations for wardrobe, hair, makeup and age, among other factors. In addition, research has also been conducted on the additional standards and trends in place for Hispanic newswomen, including an emphasis on overt sexuality.

In this study, Hispanic identity is acknowledged as a multifaceted ethnonym, encompassing people of various cultures, nationalities and historical backgrounds. The term Hispanic is not used as a racial identification since those who identify as Hispanic can be of different races or consider themselves multiracial.

This study looks to add to the discussion on workplace appearance through finding if the pressures for beauty and sexuality are limiting factors for journalists and the possible sources of these pressures. To accomplish this objective, interviews with Hispanic newswomen were conducted. This study looks to understand the extent to which Hispanic newswomen agree or disagree with the following statements in order to achieve a greater overall understanding of the emphasis placed upon appearance for female Hispanic broadcasters:

RQ 1. Hispanic female broadcasters feel pressured to adopt a beautiful look when on the air.

RQ 2. Hispanic female broadcasters with Spanish-language networks feel more pressure to adopt a sexy look than those with English-language stations.

RQ 3. Political geography shapes the viewers' expectations for the appearance of Hispanic female broadcasters.

RQ 4. Hispanic female broadcasters receive more consumer feedback about their appearance rather than their skills.

RQ 5. News stations control the appearances of Hispanic female broadcasters in order to project a favorable image.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overemphasis on Physical Appearance for Female Broadcasters:

Television news separates itself from other forms of mass media through its means of visibly presenting reports to its audience. News anchors and reporters serve as liaisons between the actual events and the viewers, informing the public while also representing the industry of journalism.¹ Such visibility brings the unique pressures for news presenters to not only deliver relevant and engaging content, but also to meet the societal expectations of appearance for attracting viewers to their broadcasts. While the upkeep of personal hygiene and grooming are compulsory for both male and female broadcast journalists, women find that the professional standards for their success are set higher because of an overemphasis on physical appearance and beauty, leaving their journalistic talent and capabilities second to subjective, superficial values.² Two separate studies found that television newswomen perceived their top-rated career barrier and challenge to be an overemphasis on the perception others had of their physical appearances.³⁴

Many journalists have freely admitted to having lost out on job opportunities because they were not considered attractive enough; Liz Trotta, a journalist and conservative commentator, went so far to say a woman could not get hired today unless a

¹ Erika Engstrom and Anthony J. Ferri, "From Barriers to Challenges: Career Perceptions of Women TV News Anchors," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 789-802, doi:10.1177/107769909807500412 .

² Judith Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 31-33.

³ Erika Engstrom and Anthony J. Ferri, "Looking Through a Gendered Lens: Local U.S. Television News Anchors' Perceived Career Barriers," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 44, no. 4 (2000): 614-34. doi:10.1207/s15506878jobem4404_6.

⁴ Engstrom and Ferri, "From Barriers to Challenges: Career Perceptions of Women TV News Anchors," 789.

woman looked like a “Barbie doll.”⁵ Physical appearance has also been a factor in some women’s termination. After Lynn Sherr’s contract was not renewed by WCBS-TV in New York, an article surfaced claiming the broadcaster’s problem was that her shoulders were too broad for close-up shots.⁶

Female news anchors also reported that their male counterparts were permitted more leeway and less attention was given to looks.⁷ Marlene Sanders, the late broadcaster for ABC News and CBS News, claimed there was certainly more pressure on women than men on television regarding appearance, age and demeanor.⁸ A double standard for appearance among men and women in television news is attributed largely in part to the emphasis on beauty and youth in society, and the media’s reinforcement of this emphasis contributes to the objectification and secondary status of women.⁹

The scrutiny of physical appearance extends to almost every aspect of newswomen from controllable traits like fashion style to uncontrollable features like wrinkling. Among major national and local networks, women’s clothing choices, make-up, hairstyles, sensuality and age have become accepted topics for executives, co-workers and viewers to critique, overshadowing actual journalistic work and abilities.

Hair, Make-Up and Clothing. Presentation for female news anchors often focuses less on their vocal tone or inflection and more on their hairstyle, make-up and clothing choices. From giving anchors self-help books on professional style to sending

⁵ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 31.

⁶ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 34.

⁷ Engstrom and Ferri, "From Barriers to Challenges: Career Perceptions of Women TV News Anchors," 794.

⁸ Marlene Sanders and Marcia Rock, *Waiting for Prime Time: The Women of Television News* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 147.

⁹ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 30.

them to designer show-rooms to purchase clothing, female journalists can find their personal style and appearance dissected and controlled.¹⁰

Appearance plays such a large role in broadcasting that stations often hire personal shoppers and beauty consultants:

Consultants are routinely brought in to work with on-air correspondents about their image. Hair is the most frequently discussed and notoriously changed aspect of a woman's appearance. Any retrospective of a news woman's career bears testimony to the number of hairstyles that have been worn and shorn through the years. Viewers are more likely to comment on hairstyle than on story content, a sad but true reality about the television business and about American society. As a result, more time is spent worrying about physical appearance by women than ever before.¹¹

Furthermore, stations can vary on the desired look for its newswomen. Mary Anne Loughlin, a former CNN anchor, said that CNN's policy was "anti-star, and therefore, anti-style," foregoing the consultants and opting for broadcasters to look like themselves, everyday people.¹² Even with the freedom of more personal choice, the preoccupation with beauty does not disappear.

Complaints about appearances sometimes overshadow the news itself, detracting from the credibility of an anchor. Broadcasters have admitted that a "bad hair day" negates their reporting and that everyone from management to the public audience pays more attention to how a journalist appears on camera versus the actual news stories.¹³ Such a fixation on the outward appearance of female broadcasters in television news and

¹⁰ Penelope Green, "Beauty; Weighing Anchors," *The New York Times*, last modified April 28, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/28/magazine/beauty-weighing-anchors.html>.

¹¹ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 40.

¹² Green, "Beauty; Weighing Anchors."

¹³ Engstrom and Ferri, "From Barriers to Challenges: Career Perceptions of Women TV News Anchors," 795.

the integral role of whether a woman looks right for her position or not endangers pushing women back into an antiquated role of being objects for male admiration.¹⁴

Age. Perhaps the harshest treatment of women in television news and clearest example of the double standard in place with appearance centers around aging. Many, including NBC's Tom Brokaw, believe that there is an ageism bias towards women in the industry.¹⁵ Although men and women undergo the same effects of aging like greying or receding hair, wrinkling skin or gaining weight, women are viewed as losing appeal or attractiveness while men gain value in television news for their added years. The late Richard Threlkeld of CBS said, "If you're a man, you look distinguished as you get older, and if you're a woman, the perception is you just look older."¹⁶ The longevity of newswomen's careers may be limited more so than their male co-workers, especially when people like Betsy Aaron, former CNN correspondent, found that networks fired and discontinued hiring older people, seeking new, young reporters and viewers.¹⁷

Sensuality. Another critiqued factor in the professional lives of newswomen is sensuality. In a series of interviews conducted on the success of women pursuing a broadcasting career in Great Britain, potential "sexiness" was considered a crucial factor along with physical attractiveness.¹⁸ Andrea Mitchell, an anchor and reporter for NBC News, explained:

These are old boys networks in many ways. The people making the decisions are all male. The people executing the decisions are male. They

¹⁴ Karen Ross, "Selling Women (Down the River): Gendered Relations and the Political Economy of Broadcast News," *Sex & Money: Feminism and Political Economy in the Media*, ed. Eileen R. Meehan and Ellen Riordan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 112-29.

¹⁵ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 39.

¹⁶ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 35.

¹⁷ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century* 37.

¹⁸ Engstrom and Ferri, "Looking Through a Gendered Lens: Local U.S. Television News Anchors' Perceived Career Barriers," 616.

tend to drift toward people with whom they are comfortable and when they choose women, they often choose women who represent their own fantasy lives, not necessarily the best journalists. Or they choose women they think will be attractive to their audience rather than what many of us in the business feel, which is that viewers want to rely on broadcasters of both sexes who know what they are talking about whom, they can trust.¹⁹

This fantasy and choice based on attraction can be seen with the development of the “anchor doll” trend. At most local news stations, it is common to see an older male paired with a pretty, young female at the anchor desk.²⁰ The man almost always relays the seriousness of the news to audience, while the woman is left to present the light-hearted, infotainment stories at the end.²¹

However, sexual objectification of newswomen has materialized in more obvious manners. When women began regularly appearing as anchors on British news in the 1970s, they faced chauvinistic treatment, were targets of put-downs in the form of jokes, suggestive comments and their sexuality stressed.²² In 1985, Pam Golden, a 23-year-old weather forecaster for KDLH-TV in northern Minnesota, pressed charges against her employer after they fired her for refusing to exploit her sexuality for a broadcast. Golden claimed she had refused to stand and sit in suggestive positions, wear a microphone so it focused attention on her breasts, wear revealing clothing and entertain an important guest.²³

Valuing sensuality puts newswomen in a difficult position: they are regarded as sexual objects even while fulfilling their professional and serious duties of reporting, and

¹⁹ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 30-31.

²⁰ Marlane *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 44.

²¹ Ross, "Selling Women (Down the River): Gendered Relations and the Political Economy of Broadcast News," 122.

²² Ross, "Selling Women (Down the River): Gendered Relations and the Political Economy of Broadcast News," 118.

²³ Sanders and Rock, *Waiting for Prime Time: The Women of Television News*, 152-153.

meanwhile they “are criticized for trivializing the news because they are too decorative and can distract from the content of their words.”²⁴

Overemphasis on Physical Appearance for Latina Broadcasters:

In addition to the barriers in place from a gendered overemphasis on physical attractiveness for newswomen, Latina broadcasters face additional challenges stemming from their ethnicity. On top of all the aforementioned standards of female appearance for success in broadcast journalism, Hispanic women are expected to project more sexuality than their Caucasian counterparts.

Javier Solórzano, a journalist from TV Azteca in Mexico, indicated that social and cultural expectations, especially those of machismo culture, have imposed limiting conditions on the physical attributes needed to be on camera.²⁵ These presumed ideal images for a woman on television materializes to “perpetuate a specific conception of beauty” which consists of blonde hair, white skin and light colored eyes, which is a more European look than characteristics associated with the majority of Mexican women such as dark hair, tan skin and dark eyes.²⁶ Like other female broadcasters, the image for an on-air Latina woman also corresponds with someone young, attractive and thin.²⁷ More

²⁴ Ross, "Selling Women (Down the River): Gendered Relations and the Political Economy of Broadcast News," 117.

²⁵ Vanessa De M. Higgins, Teresa Correa, Maria Flores, and Sharon Meraz, "Women and the News: Latin America and the Caribbean," in *Women, Men and News*, ed. Paula Poindexter, Sharon Meraz, and Amy Schmitz Weiss (New York: Routledge, 2008), 239-66.

²⁶ Higgins, Correa, Flores and Meraz, "Women and the News: Latin America and the Caribbean," 250.

²⁷ Cristina Fraga, "Las Mujeres Y Los Medios De Comunicación," *Comunicación E Ciudadanía* 1 (2007): 45-52, accessed October 28, 2016, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/2542840.pdf>.

recently within United States' media, thickly accented English and "aggressive" sexuality also characterizes Hispanic women.²⁸

Latina television broadcasters and their presumed beauty has perpetuated stereotypes based upon appearances, further propelling the idea of physical attractiveness as a requirement to work in media. Among these stereotypes include the "mujer fatal" or femme fatal, a voluptuous, suggestive and mysterious woman, the "mujer niña" or woman girl, a nymph with young features that seems pure and innocent but also seductive, or a combination of the two.²⁹

Failure to meet or conform to these expectations for on-air images can lead to negative backlash and career blocks. Gloria Rojas, a former reporter for WNBC-TV in New York, received letters saying that she was not representing fellow Puerto Rican women well because she did not put much effort into her hair.³⁰ WNJU's Mari Santana claimed that her skin color was once considered too dark to be an anchor on Spanish networks, and although she has been accepted as a journalist in order to reach certain audiences, her skin color was still not considered "in" style.³¹

Valuing and identifying Latina broadcasters based on their body and beauty, favoring those possessing the desired qualities, undermines the intelligence, training and wit that many possess. However, for Latina newswomen, being physically beautiful is not

²⁸ Clara E. Rodriguez, *Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

²⁹ J. Carlos Suárez Villegas, "Estereotipos de la mujer en la comunicación," *Mujeres en Red. El Periódico Feminista*, last modified November 2011, <http://www.mujeresenred.net/IMG/pdf/estereotipos.pdf>.

³⁰ Marlane, *Women in Television News Revisited: Into the Twenty-first Century*, 40.

³¹ Monica Sanchez, "Hispanic Women in the Media: Adding a Different Side to the Story," *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* 3, no. 6 (Feb 28, 1993): 1, accessed November 2, 2016, <http://umiss.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.umiss.idm.oclc.org/docview/219268187?accountid=14588>.

enough for success as the additional element of sex appeal factor into the necessary attractiveness for a woman pursuing television news.

Sexuality and Machismo. Lilia Luciano, now an investigative reporter for ABC10 in Sacramento, began her career in broadcasting as a correspondent and co-anchor for Spanish-language news and entertainment shows. Although she has transitioned to reporting in English, changing languages was not the most noticeable difference between her jobs. As Luciano moved away from Spanish-language programming, she also distanced herself from a provocative look that many associate with Latina newscasters: plunging necklines, high heels, tight miniskirts and large jewelry. Instead, Luciano can be found in much more modest clothing without flashy accessories or heavy makeup.³² This sexy style of many Latina broadcasters separates them from their non-Hispanic, English-language counterparts and has been subject to intense criticism by viewers and other journalists. Some believe that their suggestive appearance derives from machismo or male-dominated sexism in Latin culture and that their image jeopardizes credibility.³³ In addition, the newswomen are presented as consumable subjects of hyperfemininity and exotic sexuality to non-Latin viewers.³⁴

For Televisa Monterrey in Mexico, their weather presenters, known to viewers as the “muñequitas de clima,” or the little dolls of the weather, have become the central example of the controversy over the display sexism:

The bodies of these female weather presenters are more important to viewers than the forecast itself. In fact, some people are even known to

³² Cristina Costantini, "Latina Journalists Navigate Sexuality And Professionalism," *Huffington Post*, last modified February 12, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/09/latina-journalists-sexuality_n_1264540.html.

³³ Costantini, "Latina Journalists Navigate Sexuality And Professionalism."

³⁴ Isabel Molina-Guzmán, *Dangerous Curves: Latina Bodies in the Media* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

lower the volume so they can concentrate better on the screen. They are Mexico's weather girls, the most profitable thing on the country's networks today.³⁵

In addition to provocative attire, the weather forecasters have been known to perform provocative movements like purposely turning their backside to the camera or bending down low to point to a graphic that have been practiced and rehearsed ahead of time.³⁶

There are even reports of viewers from the United States, who speak no Spanish, tuning into watch different Spanish-language programming just to see the sensual newswomen.³⁷

Suggestive attire and reporting extends across the different news departments, promoting broadcasters' sexuality throughout the various segments. For instance, the Mexican television station Azteca Trece featured its top sports reporter, Inés Sainz, in an article, not to highlight the many accomplishments in her career, but to promote her as "the sexiest woman of them all" with attached photographs of her posing suggestively in a bikini.³⁸

The largest critics of the sexy newswoman phenomenon comes from feminist activists, who see it as sexual objectification of women and an encouragement of sexism. Ana Francis, member of the feminist group "Las Reinas Chulas" says that sexy broadcasters like Yanet García, a weather presenter who has become a sensation in Mexico and United States for her body, creates a dangerous aspiration for young girls;

³⁵ Elena Reina Muñoz, "Why Mexico's Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm," *El País*, last modified January 21, 2016, http://elpais.com/elpais/2016/01/21/inenglish/1453372534_060926.html.

³⁶ Muñoz, "Why Mexico's Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm."

³⁷ Mariela Dabbah, "Too Sexy for the Super Bowl? Reporter's Attire Sparks Debate, Again," *Fox New*, last modified February 03, 2012, <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/lifestyle/2012/02/03/too-sexy-for-super-bowl-sportscasters-attire-sparks-debate-again/>.

³⁸ Azteca Internet, "Inés Sainz... La Mujer Más Sexy De Todas," *Azteca Trece*, October 28, 2011, <http://www.aztecatrece.com/vengalaalegria/enterate/notas//79301>.

she believes that aspiring to be like García only will reaffirm that women will only be evaluated on their beauty rather than their studies or training.³⁹ Mariela Dabbah worries that such an emphasis on sexiness inhibits viewers from taking the journalists and profession of journalism of seriously; she also believes that valuing sex appeal over actual journalistic substance as well as playing to the seductive Latina stereotype hinders the future opportunities of intelligent Latina professionals.⁴⁰

However, some, including broadcasters themselves, claim that overt female sexuality is a component of Latin culture that can be empowering.⁴¹ García ignores the criticism, believing all the female weather forecasters at her station, including herself, are beautiful and serve as aspirational figures for other Latina women.⁴² Maria Celeste, who anchors the news program “Al Rojo Vivo” on Telemundo, explained that Spanish-language television mixes news and entertainment, and this mix enables women to be more feminine, a femininity that others consider to be sexy. Celeste also added that the way newswomen dress on Spanish-language programming is “definitely a cultural thing” that is not positive or negative but just a factor of a different culture.⁴³

Capitalizing on Sex Appeal. In 2000, competition among Mexican television stations became incredibly intense after private networks were allowed to broadcast their own programming, and as a result, many weather departments began relying on beautiful

³⁹ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

⁴⁰ Costantini, “Latina Journalists Navigate Sexuality And Professionalism.”

⁴¹ Costantini, “Latina Journalists Navigate Sexuality And Professionalism.”

⁴² Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

⁴³ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

women in provocative clothing for better ratings.⁴⁴ Male forecasters only appear on air when severe weather conditions occur.⁴⁵

Stations have actively hired attractive women to garner ratings and attention. Matutino Express, a Spanish news program on FOROtv in Mexico and Galavisión in the United States recently hired Sugely Ábrego, an actress known for her voluptuous and curvy figure, to be their weather forecaster and direct competitor of the popular Yanet García.⁴⁶ Since the addition of Ábrego to the program, there has been a surge of comments on social media praising her body and low necklines.⁴⁷

Mauro Morales, head of the weather department for Televisa Monterrey, instructs his female employees how to act for broadcasts, calling for them to “be pleasant in front of cameras” and to maintain a healthy figure.⁴⁸ He claims that everything is related to a responsibility the commercial station has with its viewers and sponsors, saying “Obviously, if a sponsor has a beautiful woman, the product is going to have a great impact. And this is of great benefit for everyone.”⁴⁹ Gabriela Lozoya, a fellow broadcaster at Televisa Monterrey, values her attractive image because she imagines that is what viewers want to see and if they were to see someone ugly, they would change the channel.⁵⁰ Playing upon the attractiveness of female journalists has become a way for stations to capture attention, ratings and social media engagement.

⁴⁴ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

⁴⁵ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

⁴⁶ “'Nueva' Chica Del Clima Le Compite a Yanet García,” *El Siglo De Torreón*, last modified October 13, 2016, <https://www.elsiglodetorreon.com.mx/noticia/1272076.nueva-chica-del-clima-le-compite-a-yanet-garcia.html>.

⁴⁷ “'Nueva' Chica Del Clima Le Compite a Yanet García.”

⁴⁸ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

⁴⁹ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

⁵⁰ Reina Muñoz, “Why Mexico’s Weather Girls Have Taken the Country by Storm.”

V. METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the pressures of appearance that Hispanic female broadcasters face in the industry, the researcher conducted 10 interviews.

The interviews were conducted with Hispanic women who currently or formerly worked as a professional television broadcaster or plan to enter the industry upon college graduation. Suggested names were provided by: Dr. Félix Gutiérrez, Dr. Nancy Dupont, Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, Bill Rose, Madison Heil, and Savannah Coleman. Other interview subjects were found using snowball sampling as well as through contacting individual newscasters through social media. Snowball sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling, is the technique where existing subjects to be interviewed refer or recruit future subjects. The researcher reached out via email, phone calls and social media messaging to set up formal interviews with the newscasters.

Interviews were conducted with five research questions in mind. The responses corresponding to these questions were analyzed in order to connect the experiences of the women and see if there are any common trends or norms regarding appearance within the industry. Responses were calculated to see how many of the women agreed, disagreed or felt ambivalent toward the statement made in the research question. The research questions were:

RQ 1. Hispanic female broadcasters feel pressured to adopt a beautiful look when on the air.

RQ 2. Hispanic female broadcasters with Spanish-language networks feel more pressure to adopt a sexy look than those with English-language stations.

RQ 3. Political geography shapes the viewers' expectations for the appearance of Hispanic female broadcasters.

RQ 4. Hispanic female broadcasters receive more consumer feedback about their appearance rather than their skills.

RQ 5. News stations control the appearances of Hispanic female broadcasters in order to project a favorable image.

All interviews took place between December 19, 2016, and February 6, 2017. Nine interviews were conducted over the phone or email. One interview was administered in person at the University of Mississippi. Two interviews were conducted in Spanish to comply with the interview subjects' language preference. The researcher has translated the responses from these interviews into English.

For the interviews, a template of predetermined questions was utilized. The researcher also asked additional questions that arose naturally during the interviews. The following are the template questions.

1. What is your full name?
2. Where are you from?
3. In what capacity have you worked as a broadcaster? When? Where?
4. How would describe your appearance or wardrobe choices for broadcasts? What influences your style\look?
5. Do you ever feel pressured to appear a certain way on camera? If so, describe these pressures and where they may have come from.
6. Do you feel that there may be more pressures to appear a certain way like appearing sexy, feminine or beautiful on Spanish-language networks more so than other networks? If so, why do you think that is the case?
7. Do you feel that standards or expectations for male broadcasters are different than for women? How so?

8. Have you ever received comments from coworkers or bosses about your on-air appearance? What were the comments?
9. Have you ever received comments from viewers about your on-air appearance? What were the comments?
10. How do the comments make you feel?
11. Is there anything else that has not already been addressed that you would like to add?

VI. RESEARCH

Patricia Avila

For Patricia Avila, working as a broadcaster means reinventing herself each time she appears on the air.

Avila currently produces and hosts “A las 11 por el 11,” the first Spanish-language local news program for Hampton Roads, Virginia. She also has worked as an actress and model for the last 10 years throughout Virginia. She is originally from Uruguay.

Like many women who work in television, Avila attempts to look her best for work. She styles her hair, puts on makeup and wears flattering clothing. She selects outfits in colors that work well together and compliment her complexion, all with the intention of appearing presentable on camera. However, with her wardrobe choices, Avila hopes to make an even larger fashion statement.

“I just try to empower women that you can dress nice, be sexy, and be elegant at the same time without being trashy,” Avila said.

What sets Avila apart from other professional women is how often she wears her clothing. She tries to wear a completely new outfit each time she is on camera. One time a viewer wrote in to tell Avila that he had noticed that she had repeated a dress she had already worn once before on the program. He expressed that this bothered him. Even though she had tried to make the outfit seem different by wearing a sweater over top of it, the viewer had correctly identified that she was wearing the same dress. After being called out, she apologized for her appearance.

Avila believes never duplicating an outfit is simply part of the job, a responsibility for appearing on television. Furthermore, her viewers care about her clothing choices, taking time to notice and remember each piece.

“You can never [look the same] on camera,” Avila said. “At the same time, it’s hard to reinvent yourself every Saturday.”

However, for the most part, Avila receives positive and friendly comments from viewers. Her social media pages are filled with comments affirming that they like the way she looks, complimenting her beauty. In particular, Avila has found that viewers love her long, black hair. She did not note any comments addressing her broadcasting skills.

From never duplicating an outfit to consciously shopping for appropriate outfits, Avila always dresses with her audience in mind. According to her, favorable and appropriate style greatly depends on the market and the culture in that location.

“Virginia is very conservative. It’s not Florida,” Avila said. “You have to be careful with the way you dress.”

With this, broadcasters’ dress reflects their audience and can change with location. Avila finds that there is pressure to present an image that suits the tastes of the local public, which may not necessarily uphold or go along with a broadcaster’s personal style or personality.

“If you go to Florida, Los Angeles or Chicago, the population is different, the market is different and the media is different,” Avila said. “You have to, maybe you are forced, to ‘show off’ more [beauty].”

Fortunately for Avila, her market suits her personality. Her personal style and her market's values align, enabling Avila to be her genuine self while on-air and relieving her of any pressures to behave or dress differently in front of the camera. She considers herself lucky to work in this kind of environment and market.

Avila has a close friend who hosts a television program in Florida who is not as fortunate when it comes to dressing up to go to work.

“She has the pressure to dress in ways to show a bit [of skin,]” Avila said. “We always joke like, ‘Oh, I don’t have to do that here.’”

Markets like Florida, particularly Miami, where broadcasters are known for appearing more provocative, remind Avila of her home country of Uruguay. The television news industry is extremely competitive, especially between women. Beauty provides an advantage for a position in the limited field.

“It’s the beautiful one with the body that talks,” Avila said. “It’s essentially that.”

However, fierce competition is not limited to South America. Back in Miami, Avila has noticed a new beauty factor and trend with Univision: youth. She sees Univision removing its older broadcasters and replacing them with younger people. Avila believes networks are looking to move away from their old, traditional style with the welcoming of new, young talent. She sees networks hosting reality shows, contests and other competitions as a new recruiting tool for the industry, for the networks promise employment to the winners. Avila views this new way to discover young talent as the reason why networks are shifting their focus on to new and fresh faces.

Morgan Miller

From age 13, Morgan Miller dreamed of having a career on television, but when her dream became a reality, it turned out to be more like a nightmare.

Miller, a native of Atlantic City, New Jersey, moved to Jackson, Mississippi, to work at WJTV immediately after graduating from Cornell University in 2010. She spent the next three years working first as the weekend meteorologist and later as the weekday morning meteorologist. She has since left the industry, working in public affairs with the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

From the start of her professional career as a broadcaster, getting ready for work each day was not as simple as putting on a nice dress for Miller. She constantly faced criticism and pressure over how she dressed for her segments.

At first, she wore business casual wear out of naivety. However, she faced complaints from viewers about her wardrobe choices. For instance, Miller remembers wearing a turtleneck blouse that had a cut out on the back, and after her segment, people expressed that they were offended that she would show skin on-air. After this, Miller's supervisor told her to buy suits to wear. She was provided a \$1,000 clothing allowance each year to cover her wardrobe expenditures.

“Women in television are faced with the dichotomy of being sexy but being a virgin at the same time and never being able to find middle ground,” Miller said.

“There's absurd beauty standards to be considered that professional.”

Although Miller did not like wearing suits and thought the clothing did not suit her personality, she felt obligated to comply with her boss's instructions. When style in television began to feature more form-fitting dresses, Miller began introducing simple

dresses in solid colors. However, again her boss found fault with her appearance, telling her to mix jackets and suits into her wardrobe along with the dresses.

Moreover, Miller found that meteorologists such as herself faced more scrutiny over appearance than the anchors and reporters. While anchors only are seen from their chest up, viewers can see meteorologists' entire bodies.

“Some green screens go on to the floor, so you have to think about your shoes too,” Miller said. “They can't be too sexy, but they always have to be heels.”

In addition, microphones pose complications. Anchors have microphones at their desks, but since meteorologists stand their entire segment, they have to be creative about hiding their microphone packs. Miller said most female meteorologists attach them to their shapewear or bra, or if wearing pants, women would wear a leg band to attach the microphone pack.

“It's the crazy things you go through for a full body shot, so you wouldn't have any weird bulges on camera,” Miller said.

Miller felt pressure to always look her best from her supervisor, her viewers and herself. One of her biggest worries was looking slender enough or not having any visible bumps in order not to get questioned about being pregnant.

“The public has no shame in saying what they think,” Miller said. “I was left with a horrible perspective of humanity because all you get is negative and uncomfortable comments all the time.”

Miller would try to look her best to avoid receiving comments, so she would do things like wear two pairs of Spanx. She then would post a picture to social media, and people would comment about how attractive and sexy she was, so the next week, she

would completely change her wardrobe to baggy jackets. This change would only elicit insulting commentary. Miller would often switch back and forth between styles, trying to find a balance that pleased herself and viewers.

Although Miller's appearance did not always please the viewers, the programming that featured Miller had the highest ratings for the station. At WJTV, she was the only female weather presenter and the only Hispanic broadcaster. She received a lot of comments about her "exotic looks," explaining that she did not look similar to anyone else in the Jackson area.

"People watched me because I looked different and attractive," Miller said. "I hated this because I felt like my background in physics and science and my degree in meteorology meant nothing. People cared more about my looks."

Because of her popularity with viewers, the station used Miller in a lot of advertisements. She became so angry that they were capitalizing on her looks to make more money for the station that she cut her long hair to a bob in retaliation.

"A lot of Latina women have long beautiful, wavy hair, and chopping mine off didn't make me glamorous anymore," Miller said. "I wanted to change things up a little. I felt like 'I'm not your Latino bimbo anymore.'"

Miller felt like she was considered the "token Spanish lady," and that label came with additional pressure.

"I knew that the weather ladies in Spanish countries are so sexy and get a lot more attention," Miller said. "Because I was in the South, there was the constant reminder of being very conservative, and again I had to find that balance because I felt pressure to be

the token Latino and present the minority as I was the only Spanish woman on television in Jackson.”

However, Miller did not make it common knowledge that she was Puerto Rican. She felt that in Mississippi, people consider all Latin cultures to be the same and that being Hispanic equates to being a Mexican immigrant. Nevertheless, even if her ethnic background was ambiguous to the public, she filled the “exotic look void.”

Being in Mississippi affected almost all aspects of Miller’s professional career in the industry from her image to her engagement with the audience.

“Location affects style, personality and the image you have for viewers,” Miller said.

Miller actively used social media, which resulted in lots of feedback from her followers on the sites as well as through email. Almost all comments focused on an aspect of her appearance. If someone commented on her broadcasting skills, they would also mention something about her marital status or looks. In addition, many viewers would regularly leave her voicemails. One frequent caller would complement her beauty and talk about how he hoped there was a worthy man taking care of her.

For the most part Miller found the community’s commentary to be bothersome but inconsequential. However, she did encounter threatening situations from viewers forming attachments to her. She had to file five police reports after a man continually called from a payphone saying he was going to penetrate her. Miller also had to call the police after receiving mail from a man in prison who claimed that she was his woman, and he would have her killed if she was romantically involved with anyone else. These incidents made Miller feel very unsafe and vulnerable.

On top of it all, her news director would make jokes about her receiving death threats and being stalked. He also would make comments about her that were on verge of being considered sexual harassment. He was eventually fired, partially because of his treatment toward Miller.

The threats on her safety, the pressures for newswomen, and the culture of the industry began weighing heavily on her mental health. Compounded with stress and anxiety, Miller began to suffer from panic attacks on the job. Even though working in television had been her life-long dream, Miller left the industry to pursue a profession that would make her happier.

“With the crazy schedule, plus all the pressure on my looks, plus being a very progressive person, I felt that I couldn’t be myself,” Miller said. “I ultimately left because working in television because it did not follow my beliefs of feminism.”

Miller understands that most broadcasters do not experience the hardships she faced. She also recognizes that the field may be easier to work in, especially regarding the constant judgment and emphasis on beauty for women without a background in feminist theory.

“I think was dealt a bad hand,” Miller said. “My friends from college didn’t have the challenges I had. My very first experience was a very intense one.”

Ligia Granados

With over 25 years of experience in broadcasting, Ligia Granados understands the skills and expertise required to secure long-standing employment and viewership in North American television news.

Granados, a native of Mexico City, has worked as a broadcaster since 1990 for various Spanish-language programs with Televisa in Mexico and Univision in the United States. She currently works as a reporter and weather presenter for Univision Chicago.

According to Granados, maintaining one's appearance is an integral part of working in television. The moment someone chooses broadcasting as a profession, immediately there is the pressure to present a professional image as well as a look that is agreeable to the eyes of viewers. When it comes to pleasing the audience's gazes, Granados recognizes that there seems to be more pressure for newswomen with Spanish-language networks to appear feminine, sexy and beautiful. However, she does not let the additional pressure compromise her perception of professional dress.

“La ropa depende de muchos factores: lo que esté de moda en ese momento, las preferencias de los jefes y los gustos propios (My clothing depends on many factors: what is in style at the moment, the preferences of bosses, and my own tastes),” Granados said. “Todo lo anterior se debe balancear para no perder la esencia propia pero al mismo tiempo dar el mejor aspecto al aire (All the above should be in balance in order to not lose my own essence but at the same time give the best appearance on the air).”

Crafting the right image comes down to balancing the different pressures and interests at play. Granados finds that dressing in an up-to-date style helps connect with the viewers and puts her in the position of being a role model to many people. Ultimately,

when it comes to appearance and wardrobe choices, Granados lives by the phrase “*de la moda lo que te acomoda*” or “with fashion, choose what suits you best.” Even with the influences from outside sources, she feels that broadcasters should always adhere to their beliefs of what they think looks appropriate or favorable on their bodies.

Despite the emphasis placed on appearance in the field, Granados believes beauty is not a requirement for a prosperous career but rather more like a bonus factor that can be beneficial. To her, other elements like education hold more value.

“Parecer bella en mi caso no ha sido tan importante como la preparación académica pero siempre ayuda ser agraciada físicamente, o al menos sacarse el mayor provecho a través del maquillaje (To seem beautiful in my case has not been as important as my academic preparation, but it always helps to be attractive physically or to at least get the most benefit through makeup),” Granados said.

That being said, Granados believes that male broadcasters have an easier time in the industry. Men do not face as much pressure as their female counterparts when it comes to appearance, especially with regard to clothing, hair, makeup and being in style.

“Para ellos no es necesario un gran guardarropa, estar a dieta todo el tiempo, asistir a la peluquería constantemente (For them, it is not necessary to have a large wardrobe, to be on a diet all the time, or visit the hairdresser constantly),” Granados said. “La presión más grande es para las mujeres (The bigger pressure is on the women).”

Granados has occasionally heard feedback from bosses and co-workers about her appearance, but for the most part, feedback comes from viewers on social media. According to her, social media has grown so large that it has opened too wide of a door for people to express their opinions. She finds that viewers feel like they a right to have a

say over their newscasters' own bodies. With the job, broadcasters already have little privacy and are oftentimes trying to come across part of the family or relatable to viewers, so with this closeness, many viewers feel inclined to share their opinions over journalists' clothing, makeup and hairstyles.

“La mayoría de las veces los comentarios son agradables pero nunca faltan las personas sin educación ni cortesía haciendo comentarios ofensivos (The majority of the time, the comments are pleasant, but there never fails to be people without education or manners that make offensive comments),” Granados said.

However, for the most part, Granados enjoys the comments she receives as they show that she has secured a following of loyal viewers who love and accept her.

Stephanie Johnson Martinez

To Stephanie Johnson Martinez, industry standards for women in broadcasting have come a long way from their past.

Martinez, a native of Barranquilla, Colombia, started her journalism career as a freelancer for Univision in 2008. Since then, she has worked for Telemundo, Voice of America and Univision North Carolina. She also has directed a feature-length documentary film on Colombian journalists. She currently works as a freelance reporter for KMEX-Univision 34 in Los Angeles.

According to Martinez, maintaining a favorable appearance remains a responsibility for newswomen. However, instead of emphasizing beauty, Martinez perceives this responsibility as a way to express professionalism and personal style as well as connect with the market.

“For better or worse, I think wardrobe is extremely important for journalists,” Martinez said. “It is a crucial part of your presentation, and it could reinforce your strengths or take away from them.”

While working, Martinez tends to wear a variety of form-fitting clothing in bright colors. However, she takes care to never wear an outfit that could come across as looking provocative. She has felt an earlier expectation for Latina newswomen to look sexy and beautiful on-air, but slowly over time the focus has shifted from emphasizing physical appearance to valuing intelligence and skills.

Martinez also takes pride in being fashionable and looking up to date. Although she personally likes to keep up with current styles, she does not think this is necessary for

being a successful journalist. She sees fashion as a personal interest rather than a requirement or expectation for broadcasters.

“The only thing that should be required is to be presentable and wear clothes appropriate for your market because at the end of the day, you’re a representative of your station,” Martinez said.

Even if a broadcaster does dress in line with his or her market and especially if the broadcaster does not embody the community’s general style, broadcasters will receive critiques from their viewers.

Martinez claims that viewers comment on everyone, journalists of all ethnicities, races and genders. For Martinez, comments only come from her audience. A boss or coworker has never discussed her on-air appearance. However, the viewers’ harsh judgment alone can greatly impact a broadcaster’s self-esteem, but Martinez has realized that the critiques are a part of the job and something that only affects her life if she lets it.

“At first [comments from viewers] would bother me, but when you understand the context, industry, and that you can’t satisfy everyone, then you learn not to stress about it,” Martinez said.

Overall, Martinez believes industry culture for broadcast journalism has become less demanding for women. Although crafting the right image remains an important factor, newswomen do not face as much pressure over their appearance as their predecessors, according to Martinez. The differences in expectations for male and female broadcasters also have become less apparent, making way for more equal treatment and responsibilities. She believes women have come a long way to end disparity between the sexes and their treatment in the industry.

“Times are changing, and the planes are leveling for everyone in terms of competitiveness,” Martinez said.

Dinorah Flores

Although Dinorah Flores has worked throughout North America, she has found that the industry responsibilities do not change much over national borders.

Flores, a native of Mexico City, has worked in sports, entertainment and news broadcasting since 2004. She has worked throughout Mexico, the United States and Canada with networks including Fox Sports, Speed Channel, Telehit, Cadena 3, Univisión, Rogers TV and Univisión Canadá.

According to Flores, there are certain expectations for women working in her industry.

“La mujer que aparece en televisión está obligada a verse bien (Women who appear on television are obligated to look good),” Flores said. “La televisión sube de peso siete kilos así que siempre hay que perder peso para poder lucir mejor como en la vida real (Television adds seven kilograms, so you always have to lose weight to be able to look better [on air] like in real life).”

However, looking good on camera requires more than maintaining a slim figure. Fashion choices also factor into upholding this responsibility. For her wardrobe, Flores wears in-style, designer clothing. She describes her overall style as both sexy and classy. Flores also finds that as a Latina woman, there is the expectation for her image to have sex appeal.

“La mujer latina está catalogada como la mujer que tiene las curvas más sexys (Latina women are classified as the women who have the sexiest curves),” Flores said.

However, Flores values professional training and skills over physical attractiveness or beauty as the necessary factors for being a qualified broadcaster. She

feels so strongly about these beliefs that she moved from her native Mexico when industry culture began to compromise them. Flores explained that about 10 years ago in Mexico, a wave of people emigrated from countries like Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil. The women from South America found that their beauty was celebrated in Mexico and were offered starring roles in soap operas and other television programs. This pressured many Mexican women to change their image in order to keep their position on television. Flores said women would do things like lose a lot of weight or undergo plastic surgery procedures in order to face the new competition. To Flores, the addition of the new beautiful South American women to the talent pool made the competition for jobs in Mexican television even fiercer and much more superficial. She found this to be troublesome and began looking for broadcasting positions outside the country.

“Yo decidí mudarme del país a un lugar en donde me apreciaran no solo por mi físico si no por mi talento y conocimiento ya que en México no les importaba si las mujeres que llegaban de otros países tenían la preparación para estar frente a cámara (I decided to move to a country, to a place where they did not appreciate me only for my physical appearance but also for my talent and knowledge, knowing that back in Mexico, they did not care if the women that were arriving from other countries had the preparation to be in front of the camera),” Flores said. “Solo importaba su cuerpo y cara. Eso me desilusionó y decidí buscar otras opciones (They only cared about their body and their face. That disappointed me, so I decided to look for other options).”

Since then, Flores has developed a successful career as a multilingual broadcaster, working in Spanish, English and French. She also has gained a large following of viewers at each of her stations. Many of her viewers are quite outspoken about her on-air

appearance. Viewers and coworkers alike will tell her how incredible or beautiful she looks or whenever she wears a great outfit. According to Flores, viewers always are showing that they are attracted to her appearance from her head to her toes. Receiving a lot of positive and complimentary feedback has become the norm for Flores.

“Después de mucho tiempo uno se acostumbra pero el día que no recibo comentarios mi autoestima baja y me hace sentir que algo no está bien (After a long time, one gets used to it, but the days where I don’t receive comments, my self-esteem falls, and it makes me feel like something wasn’t right),” Flores said. “Puede ser mi maquillaje, ropa, peinado, etcétera (It could be my makeup, clothes, hairstyle, et cetera).”

Since she almost exclusively hears comments about her image, Flores immediately thinks to find fault with an aspect of her appearance on the days that seem off. Her viewers have recognized her beauty and expect the same level of glamor for each segment.

“El mundo de la televisión es muy ficticio (The television world is very fictitious),” Flores said. “La gente cree que todo es perfecto pero no es así. Hay muchos sacrificios que hay que hacer (People believe that everything is perfect, but it is not like this. There are many sacrifices that have to be made).”

Ginna Cardenas

To Ginna Cardenas, the strongest pressures within the television industry do not come from station managers or producers but from the cultural expectations of viewers.

Cardenas currently serves as a news anchor and reporter for Univision 40 North Carolina. Before moving to this station, she spent four years with Univision in Atlanta as a reporter and host of an economic segment. Before joining Univision, Cardenas worked as an entertainment reporter. She is originally from Bogotá, Colombia.

Her father is a Colombian journalist. By virtue of his profession, Cardenas frequently had opportunities to visit different stations, see how the industry ran, and observe working professionals. Some of these journalists became her role models, influencing how she would conduct herself in her future career. Overall, exposure to the field at such a young age helped Cardenas develop her personal professional image.

Now as a working newswoman, Cardenas tries to embody professionalism every day. She dresses in solid colors and follows simple and classic styles. Cardenas would not call herself fashionable.

“My wardrobe is very serious,” Cardenas said. “This is what I was taught for television.”

The main reason Cardenas has been advised to dress in this way is to make her appear older. She explained that people always have always perceived her to be much younger than her actual age. Cardenas deliberately dresses to appear older in hopes that viewers perceiving her age to be higher will then consider her to be more credible and experienced.

While working as a news reporter, Cardenas has not felt any overt pressures for how to appear from within the station. Her producers provide insight on what kind of patterns look distracting or clash on camera, but she says these are only suggestions. None of her coworkers or bosses has ever told her styles that she should or should not wear.

However, when Cardenas worked in a different sector of broadcasting, her position called for a much different appearance.

“As an entertainment reporter, I felt like I was part of the entertainment,” Cardenas said. “I had to look super good like a model and attract attention.”

Although entertainment and hard news programs have many differences, both share a similar experience for Cardenas regarding her audience. As a broadcaster, she has encountered persistent and brazen commentary on her image. She would receive feedback from men and women, young and old. Comments would be both positive and negative, ranging from compliments on her beauty to asking when was the last time she had gotten a manicure. Viewers will also take time to notice if Cardenas frequently repeated parts of outfits. Although her viewers have a lot to say about her appearance, Cardenas does not find their comments entirely troublesome.

“I look at it as a good thing because that means they are paying attention and watching every day,” Cardenas said. “If they can spot that you repeat a necklace three times in a week or are looking so closely at your nails, it means they are attentive and keeping up with you, and they always want you to look the best.”

Some viewers even consider Cardenas and the other anchors at her station as local celebrities. In a smaller Hispanic community like in North Carolina where her station

offers the only Spanish-language programming on television, viewers tend to see the reporters as more than just news presenters.

“We are TV personalities, but I don’t see myself as that,” Cardenas said. “I see myself as a professional, serious journalist, but the viewers aren’t thinking that.”

Cardenas feels that her viewers forget that she is a normal person just doing her job. She also wishes her audience would realize that journalism is not a highly paid profession and that she has to purchase all the expensive business professional clothes and accessories herself. While viewers may want to see Cardenas appear as the local celebrity they perceive her to be, she continues to follow the professional style she has already developed.

“When you start in the business, you lose your privacy,” Cardenas said. “At first, I was bothered by the comments, but now, I understand that people have so many different tastes.”

Cardenas attributes viewers’ inclination to express their opinions about her style and their high expectations for appearance to values rooted in Hispanic culture.

“I’d say the pressure comes from viewers in the Hispanic community,” Cardenas said. “Our culture is very obsessed with appearance.”

Because of this obsession, Cardenas feels that there are expectations for Latina women working in the public eye to appear beautiful, feminine and sexy.

“With the culture, there is this idea that being beautiful equals being successful,” Cardenas said. “Beauty and success are linked together.”

According to Cardenas, it is not uncommon for models and women who have competed in beauty pageants to be employed in Spanish-language communications

positions. Back in her home country of Colombia, she would say most of the women in the communications field have competed in the Miss Colombia beauty pageant system. Cardenas recognizes that the pressures for being beautiful are not bad in United States, but the pressure still exists.

Although she has never worked in English-language communications, Cardenas notices a huge difference between English and Spanish-language networks.

“Like with Univision Miami, you see a trend, a subliminal message to the people that are trying to get a position that you have to look a certain way,” Cardenas said. “It’s not the people hiring that only are looking for someone looking a certain way, but also the viewers. The viewers are very opinionative on looks, and they pick their favorites.”

To Cardenas, viewers hold power in the industry. By favoring one broadcaster or another, they can start trends and help propel a journalist’s career through establishing a supportive fan base. Because stations are driven by their ratings and viewership, audiences hold a great deal of power, influencing the industry with who they support or criticize.

As viewers are so influential, Cardenas wishes they would focus on the stories and the issues in their communities rather than fixate on broadcasters’ physical appearances. However, she recognizes that valuing beauty is ingrained in Hispanic culture as a factor for success and that this cultural aspect also forms many expectations held for people in the public eye.

“For me, it’s not a beauty contest,” Cardenas said. “[Beauty] should not be a priority... Because the culture is rooted in values of beauty and success, this is going to reflect in public jobs like television.”

Vanessa Vancour

Vanessa Vancour found her true passion for teaching journalism after experiencing many negative situations as a broadcaster in the field.

Right out of college, Vancour moved from Los Angeles to Reno, Nevada, to work as a video journalist at a bilingual start-up news station. After a year, she moved to the KRNV, the NBC affiliate in Reno, to work as a reporter and weather anchor. She currently works as an instructor for the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada-Reno.

To Vancour, one of the most difficult parts of pursuing a career in television news is maintaining a favorable image on camera.

“Broadcast is brutal,” said Vancour. “I think in that regard because it is so much about appearance.”

According to Vancour, the industry can be even harder for those working in smaller markets as they do not have the benefits like hair and makeup teams or clothing allowances that the larger stations can afford. Vancour’s stations never provided her with any funds for her appearance, but the NBC station did hire an image consultant from Texas to evaluate and provide critiques of each reporter. Vancour remembers her visit from the image consultant as “the most painful experience” during her time at the station. The consultant would sit with each broadcaster, watch their clips, and then tell them what colors to stop wearing, what hairstyles not to wear again, and other recommendations for improving appearances. Vancour was told to cut her hair to look more mature. The station thought that if viewers perceived her to be older, then they would also perceive her to be more credible.

“The moment I was told to cut my hair, I felt pressure,” said Vancour. “The haircut was the moment where I realized I had little control over myself and how important appearance is in this industry.”

Vancour remembers a line from her contract that stated that the station had control over employees’ appearances. Reporters and anchors were not allowed to get any piercings, dye their hair, or make any other significant changes to their appearance without first consulting the station. Vancour said one did not realize the impact of this until a broadcaster would want to do something like try a new hairstyle or color.

Even at other stations, Vancour noticed an emphasis on beauty and fashion. She remembers other two reporters in Reno who had worked in the market for many years and had established credibility for going after hard stories in the community. However, two women would often be criticized for not being as young or as attractive as others in the field.

“You can’t win either way,” Vancour said. “If you’re young, and God forbid you’re beautiful, that’s distracting, and you’re placing a burden on someone else because you’re too beautiful and taking attention away. If you’re overweight, not as attractive, or just don’t fit the standard norms of beauty, people are just as mean about that too.”

Vancour remembers her station hiring a young, beautiful woman, even though she was not a great journalist. Because she lacked the skills and talent of others hired, she required additional mentoring and rewriting of scripts, but the station accommodated her because she looked great on camera. Although the woman did not excel at her job, her physical beauty translated well on-air and therefore, she secured her position at the station.

“Especially in television, appearance can work for or against you,” Vancour said. “It all depends on the station, network and location.”

Vancour has also identified that certain perceptions regarding appearance can arise within the industry because of cultural differences. When she was still in college at the University of Southern California, she was considering all her options as a bilingual journalist when a guest speaker advised her to go by her mother’s maiden name of Jiménez in order to seem more Hispanic. The speaker told her that seeming more Hispanic with a commonly recognized Latino surname would help her get more jobs, for stations would perceive her to be more diverse. Vancour did not find this necessary, but she has noticed a difference between Spanish and English-language industry culture.

“Even in the United States on the Spanish-language stations, the way the women dress is more provocative,” Vancour said. “There’s more flexibility in that regard.”

While working at the bilingual start-up station in Reno, she remembers the lead Spanish-language news anchor dressing much more colorful than her English-language counterparts. Vancour always associated this difference with her Hispanic background and following Hispanic culture.

Working in Reno, the community’s culture also greatly influenced expectations for local broadcasters. Since the majority of Reno’s residents identified as conservative, Vancour always had to be conscious of her outfits, especially when she would appear on the green screen to present the weather. Viewers would express discontent when Vancour wore anything that did not reflect their values. They would message or write in to her about specific articles of clothing like lacy blouses that were inappropriate for her to wear on television. As a native of Southern California, Vancour understands that these

critiques were a part of working in Reno, for if she was still in Los Angeles, she would have had a completely different experience. Vancour finds that Los Angeles has completely different style that is much more provocative, so she would not expect viewers to find any of her outfits inappropriate there.

However, even if Vancour dressed conservatively, her inboxes would still be filled with feedback from viewers.

“People feel like they have a right to comment on your appearance,” Vancour said.

Social media began taking off toward the end of Vancour’s career in broadcasting, so she did not have the largest online presence. Instead, viewers would regularly email her with their comments, and she found that this was almost worse because with email, there was still a sense of anonymity about it since someone could send a message from an obscure address.

“A lot of the emails were mean with lots of name-calling,” Vancour said. “They were 100 percent focused on my appearance.”

When she became a weather anchor, Vancour worked hard to communicate her knowledge in the field, even though she was not a trained meteorologist. Nevertheless, she would only hear back from viewers about her appearance. They would comment if they liked or disliked her clothing or what lipstick colors looked the best.

“People do start to feel like they really know you,” Vancour said. “For people wanting to do the work to make an impact, you have to almost have a persona. Especially in local news, you’re like a local celebrity.”

Also during this time, Vancour became pregnant with her first child. Although she was a recognized local news presenter, she still considered herself a private person, so she was taken back when it was suggested she announce her pregnancy publicly. Vancour was uncomfortable sharing this personal information and decided to forego the announcement. Nonetheless, she received comments from viewers saying that they noticed her waist line growing and asking if she was expecting. After she released the information that she was pregnant, comments became even more personal and invasive. For instance, Vancour was sent an email saying one of her followers had noticed that she was not wearing a wedding ring and asked if she was having a child out of wedlock.

“People are really ruthless,” Vancour said. “That’s when I really started to realize as I had already been noticing that they weren’t always listening to what I was saying. They would only take the time to communicate if they didn’t like something that I wore.”

She never recalls anyone writing in to tell her about liking any of her stories. In the end, the constant critiques from her viewers played a large factor in why Vancour chose to leave the television industry.

“It’s hard to get people to care. It’s such a small sector of people that care about the information,” Vancour said. “A lot is so superficial, especially in television where you are obviously a physical part of the story.”

Now as an educator, Vancour believes the future of journalism lies in considering the community. To do this, she encourages her students to focus on community-driven journalism and how to diversify storytelling. Furthermore, Vancour has also helped start and supervise a student-run bilingual news program that serves Northern Nevada. Here, students are able to host events, publish content and gain an understanding of the

industry. Out of all the lessons Vancour teaches, one topic she never brings up is appearance.

“I want them to have the mindset to do things differently, so I say, ‘Come as you are, appropriately,’” Vancour said.

Jennifer Ortega

Working throughout the southern United States, Jennifer Ortega has had to adapt to each new environment, matching her style to suit community values.

Ortega, originally from Puerto Rico, has worked as a news reporter for stations in West Palm Beach, Florida, as well as in Columbus and Jackson, Mississippi. She now works at WKMG in Orlando, Florida.

For Ortega, going to work every day does not call for being as glamorous as other television personalities. She describes herself as low maintenance as she does not spend a lot of time primping and beautifying herself. Ortega rarely gets manicures and does not like putting on a lot of makeup. Most of the time she only applies makeup in the middle of the day after she knows that she will later be on television.

“Everyone is different,” Ortega said. “A lot of people work really hard on their appearance, but it’s all personal choice on how much emphasis you want to put on your look.”

At the same time, Ortega does put effort into her image in order to express that she takes her work seriously. She dresses in solid colors to achieve a polished, clean-cut look. Ortega also consults with her superiors and coworkers for feedback on which hairstyles, outfits and makeup colors look best. To her, looking well on camera is the “beast of the business.”

“You want to look professional,” Ortega said. “No one will take you seriously if you look like a slob on television.”

These pressures for appearance come mainly from herself. Ortega believes that everyone wants to look their best when they are presenting themselves to an audience. In

addition, she finds that newswomen, herself included, constantly are comparing themselves to one another to see how they style themselves, wear their hair, or apply their makeup.

Hair raises one of the most frequently discussed topics on a community Facebook page for female newscasters: whether women should leave their hair natural or present themselves differently on camera. Ortega has naturally curly hair, but she has straightened her hair for most of her career. She feels that the two hairstyles give off a different persona. She associates her natural curly hair as being fun and beachy while she sees straight hair as more serious, sharp, and in tune with how the famous national television anchors style their hair. Ortega has become so used to keeping her hair straight for the industry that when she does straighten her hair, she does not feel like she looks as professional. What makes hair a difficult factor for many broadcasters is that many stations require consultation before they to make any changes.

“A lot of people are coming out with their natural hair, but they have to ask for permission to even use it which is kind of silly,” Ortega said. “You should be able to change your hairstyle as you like.”

According to Ortega, there are also varying standards for wardrobe. She finds that dress codes differ based upon factors like the location of the station and the community’s culture. For example, broadcasters in northern states will wear darker colors during the winter while in Florida, news presenters will wear bright colors like yellow year round. The values of the audience in the area, specifically the degree of conservatism in the region, also heavily influences the news station. While working in Mississippi, Ortega one time wore a dress that viewers found too short, revealing and tight for television.

This confused her as the dress was completely appropriate according to the standards she grew up with in Florida. With this incident, Ortega realized her perception of conservative dress differed from that of many Mississippians.

Cultural differences like the language of the broadcast also contribute to the varying standards for style. Ortega notices that Spanish-language broadcasters wear more tight, form-fitting clothing that is far less conservative than what is generally seen on English-language programming.

However, the Spanish-language networks' style does feed into the English-language stations in many places in Florida.

“If you go into Miami and watch the news there, you’re looking at models on television with really tight dresses, and you’re like ‘Wow, they’re glamorous,’” Ortega said. “As you go up the state, it really changes.”

Ortega says trends from the Spanish-language networks influence style from Orlando down to South Florida. She regards the southern part of the state as very liberal and Orlando as the border of the political shift in the state, so she believes that broadcasters can get away with more in these areas. Above Orlando in the northern Florida, the conservative values reemerge, so broadcasters there are expected to dress much more modestly.

“An anchor here in Orlando would be wearing a nice conservative, tight dress in a solid color in comparison to an anchor in Mississippi who’s going to be wearing a suit jacket, which still looks great on television but is a completely different look,” Ortega said.

Failing to conform with the cultural norms for appropriate dress can lead to critiques from viewers as Ortega experienced in Mississippi. However, at her last station, comments from viewers were filtered, so she would not see all her messages. The assignment editor made it his responsibility to withhold mail to broadcasters because he found a lot of it to be questionable. Many letters would be from prisoners who were viewers. Because of the stations' actions, Ortega feels like she has been sheltered in the business. She did face creepy comments from men on social media, but for the most part, most online messages have not been about her appearance. Overall, Ortega feels quite lucky to have not received a lot of feedback from her viewers as she has heard of nasty remarks being made about other newscasters.

Nonetheless, Ortega recognizes that appearing presentable and engaging with viewers are responsibilities of the profession. Some people leave the industry when they cannot handle the pressures of their audience and the expectations for their image any more. Ortega says broadcasters have to ask themselves questions like how long are they going to keep wearing all the makeup, keep dressing in solid colors, and ultimately, keep appearing on television.

Although the industry can be very restrictive and critical over appearance, Ortega never lets anything bother her. She understands situations like being told to cut her hair or having to ask permission to cut it as known factors of the industry. She chose to pursue a career in this field and knew how the news world functioned, so nothing is surprising to her.

“When you are getting into this industry, you know what you’re doing.” Ortega said. “You’ve got to give up something to gain. It’s a sacrifice everyone that gets into the industry has to do.”

Daniella Oropeza

Daniella Oropeza hopes to pursue broadcast journalism not only to pursue her personal passion, but also to serve a larger purpose for her community.

Oropeza is a senior journalism student at the University of Mississippi from Clinton, Mississippi. She has interned with WATP in Jackson, Mississippi, and WTAE in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In addition, Oropeza also holds the distinction of having attended the first College Reporter Day at the White House in 2016, where she was able to question President Obama and speak with other members of the administration. Currently, Oropeza works at NewsWatch Ole Miss, a student-run broadcast, as a correspondent and sports producer. She plans to pursue a professional career in news broadcasting upon graduation.

Oropeza describes her appearance for broadcasts as professional, proper and clean. She dresses usually in straight fitted dresses with blazers. Her wardrobe consists of solid colors without patterns, stripes or designs. It also follows a color pallet of black, blue, red and white, which are colors she perceives as professional.

Oropeza claims the way she dresses and presents herself on camera is largely due to her mother who works as a paralegal. She remembers growing up and watching her mother go to work wearing a blazer and high heels every day. She now tries to emulate this look as her mother's style represented female professionalism to her. Oropeza also noted that her style derives from her mother's advice to follow classic fashion choices like black dresses and red lipstick rather than trendy looks.

Although Oropeza insists that she has never felt any negative pressures to appear a certain way on camera, she has observed a trend with Hispanic newswomen that could

influence other women in the industry. Oropeza has noticed that many Spanish-speaking broadcasters, particularly meteorologists, implicitly emphasized their sexuality and beauty on air. She has seen videos online of Latina meteorologists who would turn to the side during their segments to purposely show off their backsides to the camera and other broadcasters who would wear tops with plunging necklines.

Oropeza found that the trend was not limited to the Hispanic community as she came across other videos of Russian broadcasters informally competing with the Hispanic stations to have the sexiest female news presenters.

“As a woman, it’s annoying because it makes some girls look a certain way. Not that I’ve ever felt pressure to show off my body on camera,” Oropeza said. “I don’t like [the trend] because it’s drawing attention away from what’s important. It’s for fun and to get views and ratings.”

She sees the provocative appearances of the broadcasters as deeply troubling, feeling as though it was making a mockery of journalistic professionalism. She also believes this is adding to the negative reputation that the media currently holds amongst many Americans. She hopes that broadcasters will return to focusing on their stories rather than turning to seduction to capture viewers’ attention.

Although Oropeza mainly viewed Latina newswomen dressing or actively sensually in the online videos, she does not believe that the trend is because of Hispanic culture. Oropeza comes from a Mexican family that raised her to be modest and dress appropriately, disapproving of heavy makeup and revealing clothing. She did not find the behavior of the newswomen to be in line with what she perceives as traditional Mexican culture. Instead, she said current pop culture is to blame. According to Oropeza, icons

like the Kardashian family and other celebrities with plastic surgery, as well as the rise in popularity of makeup tutorial videos and beauty blogs, among other examples, have contributed to a pop culture obsessed with beauty. With such an emphasis on unnatural beauty, Oropeza said she would not be surprised if some of the broadcasters whose videos she watched had undergone cosmetic surgery to enhance their image.

Despite trends of some Latina newswomen and the interests of pop culture, Oropeza expressed a positive and excited outlook on the future of journalism.

“For me, [my plan] is just staying true to myself and staying true to how my parents have raised me,” Oropeza said. “When I enter the industry, I want to stay professional.”

She does not fear or anticipate any pressures for her career; instead, she hopes to fulfill a larger goal for her on-air image: representing a professional Hispanic woman.

After the 2016 election cycle, Oropeza decided she not only wanted to pursue broadcasting to follow her passion for the news, but she also hoped to serve as a role model and inspiration to others. Because of the negative rhetoric regarding Hispanics and immigration, especially statements made by Donald Trump, Oropeza determined that she intended to use her image to change people’s opinion of Hispanics.

“I hope to be a face that the Hispanic community are proud of and that changes the opinions of people who are influenced by what’s going on,” Oropeza said.

She hopes to challenge stereotypes by gaining respect as a professional newswoman. She intends to use her image, following her aforementioned professional style, to serve as a positive example of a successful, working Latina. In addition, her intentions included serving as a symbol of hope for young Hispanic girls to embrace their

heritage and to encourage them to never feel as though their ethnic background limits their dreams.

“My story would be my dad’s story of coming from Mexico and becoming a citizen,” Oropeza said. “I want to be a light for those who think they are stuck in their situation.”

Barbara Estrada

Barbara Estrada, an emerging Latina journalist from Miami, hopes she has gained the insight on the industry to propel her to future success.

Estrada is a current senior journalism student at the University of Southern California. She is an active broadcaster for Annenberg TV News, the university's student-run station. In addition, she has held internships with WPLG Local 10 in Miami and Variety Latino in Los Angeles. Estrada intends to become a professional news reporter upon graduation.

To prepare for her career, Estrada has taken time to study the craft through hands-on experience and studying industry professionals.

"I do know from both my internships that appearance is very, very important," Estrada said. "Obviously, [broadcasters] focus on their job as well, but it's a factor."

Knowing how critical image is to the industry, Estrada looks to professional broadcasters and reporters to model their approaches to crafting an appropriate on-air look. She has learned that it is common to wear a formal cocktail dress, but nothing that looks as if it could be worn for a night out or party. Estrada has also discovered that there is a large emphasis on hair, particularly the length it should be, as well as makeup techniques. For makeup, she has been advised to try to make it look natural and avoid dark, heavy application. Estrada also has learned that at some stations, broadcasters in the process of being hired can negotiate to have a wardrobe or makeup budget, which enables many to invest in their appearances.

Because of how important image can be in the industry, Estrada feels that this greatly increases the expectations of the job.

“There’s all these pressures and deadlines that you have to meet and on top of that, you have to look good, especially if you’re going to be on-camera talent,” Estrada said.

According to Estrada, a newscaster’s image also needs to be consistently well kept, or a broadcaster could face critical feedback. Although working in a school newsroom maintains a forgiving environment, she has had coworkers make comments about her appearance. Some days when Estrada puts extra effort into her makeup or outfit, her peers will shower her in compliments, which makes her feel inadequate on the days where she does not hear anything from them. On other ways, when she may not have the extra time to spend on primping herself, she will be asked if something is wrong or if she is tired. Estrada says that even though the comments may bother her at times, she does not take them to heart.

“Especially when you’re in a position where you’re in the public eye, you have to grow some thick skin,” Estrada said. “Just as much as every other person whether big or small in their career, they have to deal with these kind of comments and move on. It comes with the territory of the job.”

Estrada is not afraid of the critiques she may receive from viewers in the future; however, she does feel apprehensive about the treatment of Hispanic journalists in the United States.

“I don’t look like your stereotypical Latina women,” Estrada said. “Because of the fact that I don’t look a certain way, whenever I place myself in a position as a person of color, as someone who identifies as someone of a minority race, I don’t like how people of [the Hispanic] community are treated, especially in the journalism industry.”

She feels that many journalists who come from Univision, Telemundo and CNN Español are treated differently than their non-Hispanic American journalists. Although people are trained the same way and have the same skills, Hispanic journalists are thought to be inept or less capable of doing the same job, according to Estrada. If someone is applying to a job or internship and she discloses that she is Hispanic or is a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Estrada feels that one can be treated as the means to make a newsroom seem more diverse. She believes all journalists should be hired based upon their merit and skills rather than if their racial or ethnic background will help diversify the station or meet a diversity quota.

Already, Estrada has seen fellow Latino journalists try to distance themselves from their heritage. While working at the local station in Miami, Estrada observed that the broadcasters of Latino descent would try to portray an image that they were “as American as possible.” Some journalists went so far as to adopt a new American television name, dropping their traditional Hispanic surnames.

“I could easily pass as someone who is white, but I prefer not to because I’m just lying to myself,” Estrada said. “That would be the biggest disgrace to my family.”

When Estrada enters the industry professionally, she plans to use her Cuban heritage to her advantage. She believes that coming from a background of color can help her relate better to many communities, especially those made up of people from different cultures. She also can offer a different perspective that is not just “black or white.”

VII. RESULTS

After conducting interviews with 10 newscasters who identify as female and Hispanic, responses were analyzed using a series of research questions in order to understand the role beauty plays in the industry's culture. Interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, and through email between December 2016 through February 2017.

Some women also identified themselves by their nationality or family's country of origin. Other women used pan-ethnic terms like Latina or Hispanic. All women identified themselves as Hispanic.

A summary of the results can be found in the table below. The table is organized according to the research question, definitions for terms within each research question, and a numerical score of the women's responses from the interview.

The responses to each research questions help examine how Hispanic women in North America face pressures regarding personal appearance within the broadcast news industry.

Research Questions	Definitions	Scores (1-10)
RQ1: Hispanic female broadcasters feel pressured to adopt a beautiful look when on the air.	A "beautiful look" consists of an appearance that a broadcaster puts effort into preparing to come across as aesthetically pleasing on television.	9
RQ2: Hispanic female broadcasters with Spanish-language networks feel	A "sexy look" consists of an appearance or wardrobe that is sexually suggestive or	9

more pressure to adopt a sexy look than those with English-language stations.	pleasing in a sexual context.	
RQ3: Political geography shapes the viewers' expectations for the appearance of Hispanic female broadcasters.	Political geography refers to the shared political beliefs of people living in a certain area or region.	6
RQ4: Hispanic female broadcasters receive more consumer feedback about their appearance rather than their skills.	Consumer feedback refers to the comments newscasters receive from their viewers about their time on the air. This encompasses comments on social media accounts, emails, phone calls and mailed letters.	7
RQ5: News stations control the appearances of Hispanic female broadcasters in order to project a favorable image.	“Control the appearances” refers to instructions from a station’s leadership for newscasters to appear or dress in a certain way for their broadcasts. This refers to asking newscaster to change their wardrobe, hairstyle, makeup or other aspect of their appearance that is prompted by someone at the station rather than the broadcaster herself. This also would include any limitations found within contracts regarding appearance such as seeking approval before dying or cutting hair.	7

The first research question asked if Hispanic female broadcasters feel pressure to adopt a beautiful look for when they appear on the air. The content analysis indicated that nine out of the 10 women interviewed agreed with the statement.

The second research question asked if Hispanic female broadcasters working at Spanish-language networks feel more pressure to adopt a sexy look than those working for English-language stations. The content analysis indicated that nine out of the 10 women interviewed agreed with the statement. One woman provided a response that did not agree or disagree with the statement.

The third research question asked if political geography shapes viewers' expectations for the appearance of Hispanic female broadcasters. The content analysis indicated that six out of the 10 women interviewed agreed with the statement. Four women responded in a way that was not applicable to the question, providing no indication if they agreed or disagreed.

The fourth research question asked if Hispanic female broadcasters receive more feedback about their appearance rather than their skills. The content analysis indicated that seven out of the 10 women interviewed agreed with the statement. It should be noted that the other three women were not able to provide an answer to the question. Two women were students who had not experienced receiving feedback from viewers as they have not established a viewer base. The other woman was from a station that had a procedure in place where employees would not see commentary from the audience, so she was not able to provide a response to the research question.

The fifth research question asked if new stations control the appearances of Hispanic female broadcasters in order to project a favorable image. The content analysis

indicated that seven out of 10 women agreed with the statement. Three women disagreed.

It should be noted that one of the women that disagreed with the statement works as a producer of the program that she hosts.

VIII. DISCUSSION

After reviewing the results from the content analysis of the interviews, there are strong indications that beauty plays a large role in the careers of Hispanic female broadcasters in North America.

Although beauty is subjective and can be defined in many different ways, almost all of the women interviewed expressed that they felt pressure to look their best on camera. Whether “beautiful” was interpreted as glamorous and sexy, elegant and sophisticated, or a combination of all these descriptors, the sentiment was the same: each woman crafted an image to make themselves appear appealing to viewers’ eyes. The one woman who felt that there was not pressure to adopt a beautiful look for broadcasts believed that beauty was a matter of personal choice and interest. However, she did include the opinion that newswomen did need to appear “presentable” and “wear clothes appropriate to your market,” which hinted at some pressures of appearance that were not necessarily focused on beauty.

Both the Hispanic newswomen working at English-language stations and Spanish-language stations agreed that pressure to look sexy existed more so for the Spanish-language female broadcasters. All of the women interviewed agreed with this statement, except for one woman who did not provide a relevant response. Both newscasters working within the Spanish-language and outside recognized this pressure.

When asked why or how the pressure to look sexy started, many of the women attributed it to aspects of Hispanic cultures. The most discussed explanation was the value beauty held in many Hispanic cultures. One woman described how beauty is valued as a trait linked to one’s success, more specifically that being beautiful is equated to

being successful. Thus, if one was to follow this cultural standard, then women looking to be successful would also look to maximize their beauty. Furthermore, looking sexy can follow common Latin beauty standards or conform with the beauty expectations people have for Hispanic women. For example, wearing sexy clothing, such as garments that may be tight or revealing, would support the beauty standard that beautiful Hispanic women have curvaceous figures, a trait that one interviewee claimed as a defining factor of attractiveness. Another woman interviewed stated that even within the United States, beautiful Latina women are known for their sex appeal. The beautiful Latin look for women can often be associated with being hot and sensual, and so potentially Hispanic women seeking success, may feel pressure to appear sexy, the culturally-deemed beautiful style.

Some of the women also attributed the pressure to a trend within the Latin American communications industry of hiring former beauty pageant queens, models and actresses to be broadcasters in order to boost ratings with their physical attractiveness. Broadcasting in essence becomes a new modeling opportunity, where glamour rather than strong reporting skills become the mechanism for capturing audiences' attention.

Another explained that being a broadcaster for the only Spanish-language station in an area with a smaller Hispanic population has turned her into a local celebrity to viewers. Her viewers do not think of her as a typical newscaster or even as an average member of the community. Because of this, she feels that her viewers expect her to look like a celebrity with glamorous and flashy clothing.

While none of the women directly brought up machismo culture during their interviews, some of them did describe similar situations. For instance, one woman

brought up how in Hispanic cultures men can be more forward than in her local American community. She noted generalizations like how it is not uncommon for men to compliment or catcall women in public, and she related this to how outspoken many of her male viewers are with their feelings about her appearance.

One critique found with the preliminary research stated that the suggestive appearances that some Latina broadcasters had adopted was objectifying Hispanic women as consumable subjects of exotic sexuality and femininity to non-Hispanic audiences. One English-language newswoman who worked as the only Hispanic broadcaster in her market described how viewers would often compliment her for her exotic looks and would only tune into the program to watch her. Because of her popularity with the viewers, the station began using her in advertisements. She described the experience as being treated as though she was the station's "Latino bimbo."

On the other hand, one of the women interviewed said she dressed in a sexy manner to empower herself and others to show that her style did not make her unsophisticated.

Not all of the women addressed the relationship between the community's shared sociopolitical beliefs in a market and the effect it may have on the newscasters. However, the women who did touch upon the topic all shared similar experiences, explaining that appearances should match the values of the community in order to satisfy viewers. In politically conservative areas, audiences look for their newscasters to wear conservative clothing and make-up while in liberal areas, less traditional and even more revealing looks would suit the audience's preferences. Failure to conform with the viewers' expectations often results in harsh criticism from them on social media or other means of communication. Many of the women explained experiences where they or a coworker

had worn outfits that they considered appropriate work attire, but after the broadcasts, bosses and viewers critiqued their appearances, deeming certain wardrobe choices and styles inappropriate for television.

Another critique found in the preliminary research explained that white skin and light eye and hair color represented an ideal conception of beauty materialized on television. One interview subject stated that because of her fair complexion, she could begin identifying as white while pursuing broadcasting. She explained that although being perceived as white could potentially be advantageous for gaining more opportunities, giving up her Hispanic identity would dishonor her family.

The results from the content analysis also indicate that newscasters receive more feedback from viewers about their appearances rather than their broadcasting skills. According to the interviews, beauty or lack thereof overshadowed their reporting style, content and experience. While some of the women appreciated or enjoyed receiving frequent compliments from viewers, others were disheartened that viewers would more frequently discuss their hairstyles, clothing choices or physique than the actual news. Some women also touched upon how viewers feel as though they are entitled to a say over their broadcaster's image in which they can provide criticism, suggestions or affirmation that should be taken into consideration for continued viewership. With this, the women attributed the rise of social media platforms for strengthening this sense of power among viewers, for the sites have enabled them to have direct and easy access to communicating with the broadcasters.

When it came to discussing if news stations control the appearances of their Latina newscasters in order to project a favorable image, there were mixed responses. One

broadcaster who disagreed with this statement also serves as a producer of her program. Because she holds a leadership role, she is able to have direct control over herself, and this potentially may contribute to her negative response. Another woman believed that viewers hold more control, explaining that viewers can create trends by favoring one broadcaster over another because they prefer a certain look. The last woman who disagreed reaffirmed that she believed all pressures are self-driven and that appearance is left to personal choice.

Shortcomings:

While the 10 interviews fall short of encompassing a large, comprehensive sample size, the collection does provide insight into what a career in broadcast journalism is like for different Latina newswomen in North America. In addition, the collection succeeds in representing many different Hispanic cultures, including those from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba, Uruguay and Colombia. It also featured newswomen from many television markets in the United States with large Hispanic audiences such as Chicago, Los Angeles and Southern Florida as well as from states with growing Hispanic populations such as North Carolina and Virginia.⁵¹

The collection accomplishes its overall objective of identifying the pressures for appearance within the industry and how those pressures affect Hispanic female broadcasters' careers. Each woman provided first-hand examples of situations they faced related to their appearance. Many of these experiences overlapped, highlighting common trends, which help answer the main research questions for this study. All 10 women

⁵¹ Stepler, Renee, and Mark Hugo Lopez, "Ranking the Latino population in the states," *Pew Research Center*, last modified September 8, 2016, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/09/08/4-ranking-the-latino-population-in-the-states/>.

affirmed that appearance played an undeniable role in broadcast journalism, and each woman identified ways in which there were unique expectations or pressures in place for those identifying as female and Hispanic.

Because every news station operates in its own way, some women were not able to address certain issues within the interviews. One woman could not address consumer feedback because her station had a process in place that withheld all viewer commentary from the reporters. In addition, due to the small number of women interviewed, other situations or perspectives about the pressures of beauty in the industry may not have been covered.

The two students interviewed had limited experiences to share in comparison to women who had already established a professional career, so they were also not able to address or answer every question. However, they did provide a different perspective to the issues discussed, revealing any obstacles they anticipate to face in the industry and providing examples of how they hope to overcome them.

Overall, the collection of interviews provides a glimpse of the beauty standards and pressures found within North American broadcast journalism industry culture from the perspectives of current, former and future Hispanic female newscasters.

New Perspectives:

Much of the content from the interviews repeated similar issues discussed in the preliminary research. The women interviewed provided personal examples of situations where their hair, clothing, physical attractiveness or sensuality were the main focus. However, they also provided new information and issues surrounding the emphasis placed upon beauty.

Preliminary research found that some Mexican news stations had begun hiring actresses known for their beauty as on-air talent in order to boost ratings. In the interviews, women revealed another recruiting mechanism based on appearance that was quite common. Four women independently mentioned how beauty pageants and reality television shows function as way for Spanish-language news stations to discover attractive young talent. The women from South America explained how in their home countries the talent pool for female broadcasters consisted predominately of former beauty pageant contestants, and to a lesser extent, they had noticed this trend in North America with Spanish-language programming. For example, *Nuestra Belleza Latina* or “Our Beautiful Latina” is a season-long beauty pageant competition on Univision that offers the winner a variety of prizes, including a talent contract with the network.⁵² Many of the competition’s winners have gone on to work as on-air talent for different entertainment, variety and news programs with Univision, Galavision, Telefutera, Azteca America and Fox Deportes in the United States.

The women interviewed explained that the issue regarding this is not with the beauty pageants or reality shows themselves, but with how the women hired from these programs for broadcasting positions often do not have any formal journalism experience or training.

One woman also brought forward a new perspective that linked the pressures to appear sexy and beautiful on air to current trends within pop culture. She stated that the pressures arise from pop culture’s current obsession with appearing sexually attracted. Specifically, she mentioned and idolization of sex symbols such as the Kardashian sisters,

⁵² "Nuestra Belleza Latina," *Univision*, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.univision.com/shows/nuestra-belleza-latina>.

some of the most popular pop culture figures in today's society, as well as the popularity of tutorial videos on social media that instruct women how to achieve desirable hairstyles, makeup looks and outfits. This woman ultimately believed that when these trends began changing, then so would the pressures of appearance in broadcasting.

More new insight on the industry came from the interviews explaining how the degree of sexiness and beauty for broadcasting varies according to market's overall sociopolitical values. Conservative areas called for more conservative appearances while more liberal areas expected the opposite. Viewers and producers would scold newscasters for looking inappropriate or deviating from their standards.

Larger Context of Understanding:

Throughout this research, women used pan-ethnic terms or their family's country of origin to define their Hispanic identity. While race was not explicitly discussed in most of the interviews, many Hispanic adults attribute being Hispanic as a part of their racial background.⁵³ Although this research does not focus on racial identification, it does explore common experiences that women of different backgrounds and cultures undergo in the workplace because they have been grouped together for being identified as Hispanic. In the United States, there exists a misconception that Hispanic identity represents a homogenous group and culture.⁵⁴ In reality, Hispanic identity encompasses a plurality of cultures and nationalities, which the women interviewed in this research expressed through their various cultural backgrounds.

⁵³ "Chapter 7: The Many Dimensions of Hispanic Racial Identity," *Pew Research Center*, last modified June 11, 2015, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/06/11/chapter-7-the-many-dimensions-of-hispanic-racial-identity/>.

⁵⁴ Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David Wells Engstrom, *Hispanics in the United States: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), xvii.

As seen through the frequent demonstrations and campaigns for parity through events like the 2017 Women's Marches or International Women's Day, women are continuing an ongoing struggle to achieve ethical treatment in the workplace. This research explores a specific but widely visible sector of this inequality where Hispanic women feel that their professional value is tied to their beauty. Some women feel that there is still progress to be made because they feel that their gender and sexuality continue to overshadow their skills and capabilities as a broadcast journalist. Women interviewed also expressed that success in the industry can be heavily reliant upon appearance, especially for Hispanic female newswomen in that they face expectations of fulfilling a diverse or exotic look as well as providing an attractive appearance that suits the audience's preferences.

IX. CONCLUSION

This project researched the pressures and expectations of appearance for Hispanic female broadcasters in North America through interviews with 10 women who are current, former and future professionals of the industry.

An emphasis on beauty in the workplace affected every respondent in some way.

Even if they said it was not an obligation to be beautiful, they explained that there were still expectations for appearance. In addition to the pressures felt by Hispanic women in broadcast journalism, additional pressures to highlight female sexuality were observed as a more prevalent factor in Spanish-language programming than English-language broadcasts. Furthermore, the findings also indicated that the overall shared political beliefs of an area shape the viewers' expectations for the appearance that a Hispanic female broadcaster should present. The interview collection resulted in an indication that Hispanic newswomen receive more comments about their appearance than about their reporting skills from consumers. Finally, the interviews indicated that the stations control their newswomen's appearances in order to maintain a favorable image toward viewers.

These findings provide insight on the role that beauty plays in the broadcasting careers of Hispanic newswomen. The women expressed that there are pressures not only stemming from gender but also from ethnicity. Hispanic newswomen, especially those in Spanish-language programming, may face expectations for them to appear sexier and more exotic than a white broadcaster. Furthermore, the findings shed light on the discrepancies regarding appearance between Spanish-language and English-language broadcasting. Finally, this study expands the research on the overall expectations and responsibilities of women in broadcast journalism.

When it comes to pressures, women choose to ignore them, embrace them or leave the industry according to the interview collection. Some women accept and conform to expectations, believing that it is just a responsibility of the job. Others choose new career paths to regain more autonomy over their image.

The focus on appearance of female broadcasters in television news shifts attention

away from the substance of the actual news reports, the true value of journalism, and prioritizes materialistic and subjective qualities of beauty. In the case of Latina newswomen, an overemphasis on sensual appearances can result in continuing stereotypes that harm the reputation of the journalists and their craft.

With more time and resources, future researchers could expand upon this project in a number of ways. They could gather a larger collection of interviews, speaking to more women from different locations and networks. Researchers could also further explore any connections between beauty pageants and reality shows and Spanish-language broadcasting by compiling the number of broadcasters hired as compensation for success in a beauty-based competition. Data could be collected on the number of former beauty queens, models and actresses hired as broadcasters versus the number of traditionally trained journalists. Future researchers could also study the hiring practices and contracts of television stations to see if beauty and appearance are explicitly discussed.

APPENDIX – INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Patricia Avila, telephone interview by author, January 6, 2017.

Ginna Cardenas, telephone interview by author, January 15, 2017.

Barbara Estrada, telephone interview by author, December 19, 2016.

Dinorah Flores, e-mail interview by author, February 6, 2017.

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