

The Complexities of the New Latina Televisual Conservative Voice in the United States

Las Complejidades de la Nueva Voz Conservadora Televisiva Latina en Estados Unidos

As complexidades da nova voz conservadora da televisão latina nos Estados Unidos

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Abstract: The 2020 presidential election revealed a surprising shift among Hispanic voters, with many supporting President Trump despite his negative comments about Hispanic immigrants. This essay examines the roles of conservative Latina television hosts Ana Navarro on *The View* (ABC) and Myrka Dellanos on *La mesa caliente* (Telemundo). It explores how they construct their on-air personas, engage in political discourse, and connect with audiences in both English and Spanish-speaking media. The study aims to understand the evolving landscape of media representation, political discourse, and cultural identity within the diverse fabric of American society.

Keywords:

Conservative Latinas, Media representation, Political discourse, Cultural identity, Latino voters, Ana Navarro, Myrka Dellanos

Resumen: La elección presidencial de 2020 reveló un cambio sorprendente entre los votantes hispanos, con muchos apoyando al presidente Trump a pesar de sus comentarios negativos sobre los inmigrantes hispanos. Este ensayo examina los roles de las presentadoras de televisión conservadoras latinas Ana Navarro en *The View* (ABC) y Myrka Dellanos en *La mesa caliente* (Telemundo). Explora cómo construyen sus personalidades en el aire, participan en el discurso político y se conectan con audiencias en medios de habla inglesa y española. El estudio busca comprender el paisaje evolutivo de la representación mediática, el discurso político y la identidad cultural dentro del diverso tejido de la sociedad estadounidense.

Palabras-clave:

Latinas conservadoras, Representación mediática, Discurso político, Identidad cultural, Votantes latinos, Ana Navarro, Myrka Dellanos

Resumo: A eleição presidencial de 2020 revelou uma mudança surpreendente entre os eleitores hispânicos, com muitos apoiando o presidente Trump apesar de seus comentários negativos sobre os imigrantes hispânicos. Este ensaio examina os papéis das apresentadoras de televisão conservadoras latinas Ana Navarro no *The View* (ABC) e Myrka Dellanos no *La mesa caliente* (Telemundo). Explora como constroem suas personalidades no ar, participam do discurso político e se conectam com o público em mídias de língua inglesa e espanhola. O estudo visa entender o cenário evolutivo da representação midiática, do discurso político e da identidade cultural dentro do diverso tecido da sociedade americana.

Palavras-chaves:

Latinas conservadoras, Representação midiática, Discurso político, Identidade cultural, Eleitores latinos, Ana Navarro, Myrka Dellanos

“I have been a Republican since I came to this country fleeing communism when I was eight years old, and Ronald Reagan was president. John McCain, who has spoken strongly against the Arpaio pardon, is not the left... And let me say this to you. There's going to be a lot of Latinos watching you and listening to you today who are going to say you're a self-loathing Latino who doesn't look at himself in the mirror. I'm going to tell them to stop because the maturity of a community means that we can have diversity of opinion”.

-Ana Navarro in a CNN exchange with Steve Montenegro (Republican Arizona State Senator)

1. Introduction

During the presidential election of 2020, many observers expected that President Trump would do poorly among Hispanics due to his many disparaging comments about Hispanic immigrants. Surprisingly, Trump surpassed his 2016 total, winning the votes of a one in three Hispanic voters. What drives this swing to the right? This question partly motivates this essay, which analyzes the differing roles of conservative Latina television hosts Ana Navarro on *The View* (ABC) and Myrka Dellanos on *La mesa caliente* (Telemundo). As society becomes more politically polarized and culturally diverse, we need a better understanding of how influential

media figures manage their roles in various linguistic and cultural environments. This essay delves into the distinct dynamics put into motion when conservative Latina hosts engage with audiences in English- and Spanish-speaking media networks. A multidisciplinary approach drawing on media studies, communication theory, and cultural studies examines how Navarro and Dellanos construct their on-air personas, engage with political discourse, and connect with viewers across linguistic boundaries.

Given the broad cultural and political significance of Trump's presidency and movement, the problem of ethnicity and exclusion must be negotiated by these conservative hosts as they present a right-wing viewpoint to a largely Hispanic audience while at the same time maintaining cultural authenticity and linguistic accessibility. Ultimately, the study sheds light on the evolving landscape of media representation, political discourse, and cultural identity within the diverse tapestry of American society.

2. Constructing On-Air Personas and Engaging Political Discourse

In a heated exchange on CNN in 2017, Ana Navarro, a political commentator, confronted Steve Montenegro, a Republican Arizona State Senator. Montenegro had implied that Navarro's criticism of President Trump aligned her with the "liberal media." In response, Navarro offered a nuanced and multi-layered explanation of her political identity, drawing on her personal story as a Nicaraguan immigrant who escaped communism during the Sandinista Revolution. She strongly asserted her affiliation with the Republican party, challenging the prevailing belief that conservative media audiences are shielded from diverse perspectives by adverting to her life-story arc in the media environment. While the specific meaning of this challenge is not explicitly stated, it can be inferred that Navarro is pushing back against the stereotype that conservative media viewers are exclusively drawn from a traditional, predominantly white demographic. She appears to advocate for a more inclusive understanding of political diversity within the Republican party.

Navarro's presence in the media defies the tokenization of the "Latina voice." As a correspondent and co-host across major networks, her presence dismantles the stereotype of a monolithic Latina perspective. Her willingness to challenge misinformation, regardless of its source, further dismantles this stereotype. As a Nicaraguan immigrant, Navarro's voice inherently disrupts the stereotypes of lumpen illegal refugees exploited by Trump's campaign.

Her experiences offer a powerful counterpoint to the narratives that fueled his rise to power. Finally, Navarro navigates both English and Spanish-language media, often challenging the conventional wisdom of news programs like Univision and Telemundo by showing their unconscious bias. This ability to bridge linguistic and cultural divides further underscores her defiance of easy categorization: she is a Republican who critiques her party, a Latina who challenges stereotypes, and a bilingual communicator who refuses to fit herself into media norms. By examining her work and experiences, we gain deeper insight into the complexities of representation, political discourse, and personal identity in contemporary America.

Navarro is not the only conservative Hispanic pundit in the media. Myrka Dellanos has also risen to prominence, albeit in a demographic that watches Spanish-language news and entertainment. Being mainly confined to this environment, Dellanos wields less name recognition in the political media than Navarro. Navarro's background is in political science and law: she earned a B.A. from the University of Miami and a Juris Doctor from the St. Thomas Law School, also in Miami. Dellanos, by contrast, has a background as a trained journalist. She, too, went to the University of Miami, earning a B.A. in journalism in 1986, and broke into television news as the co-host of Univision's *Primer Impacto* from 1994 to 2004. While the show aimed to present important news and breaking developments, it primarily adopted a tabloid format filled with sensational crime and violence, with sprinkles of entertainment. Both figures advocate for and exemplify their conservative ideologies but take distinctly different approaches, perhaps reflecting their life stories as immigrants. Navarro's immigration story starts in Nicaragua in the eighties, where she fled when the Sandinistas took power, overthrowing Somoza. Dellanos came from Cuba, also fleeing a communist government, but she has no memory of the ante-Castro epoch. They interpret and express their Republican views in contrasting ways, partly influenced by their roles within the English and Spanish conservative media establishments. They use approaches that challenge or reinforce the media frames that sustain conservative opinion media. As Jamieson and Cappella (2008) observe, "By focusing on certain issues and disregarding others, the media establish the criteria by which we evaluate leaders and policies. The conservative opinion media highlight evaluative criteria that benefit their chosen conservative candidates while undermining those of their opponents" (p. 142). Navarro and Dellanos, to a lesser extent, have become central figures who have variously embraced and challenged the conservative media frames that act as a shield, filtering out

opposing viewpoints even as audiences engage with the broader media and candidates. As opinion leaders in their respective roles as political commentators and television co-hosts, Navarro and Dellanos are enhancing the multiple ways Latinx populations can embrace conservative ideologies.

It should be noted that Navarro and Dellanos, simply by being women, have had to jostle to assert themselves within the often hypermasculine world of right-wing media. Dellanos' meticulously styled blonde hair, green eyes, and polished persona embody the "attractive female commentator" trope. This aligns with traditional beauty standards and gender roles often associated with conservative ideology. As Lisa Downing (2018) notes in her essay "The Body Politic: Gender, the Right Wing and 'Identity Category Violations,'" such hyperfeminine presentation can serve as a branding tool, capitalizing on expectations of the "right-wing bombshell" while potentially limiting her to a one-dimensional persona. In contrast, Navarro subverts these expectations. Her short, dark hair, glasses, and focus on political commentary prioritize substance over style. This challenges the notion that female success in conservative media hinges solely on physical appearance. As Downing (2018) further suggests, Navarro's approach opens doors for intellectual engagement and disrupts the media's preference for hyperfemininity. This offers Latinx viewers, particularly Latinas, a different model of female empowerment within the conservative sphere. However, both women's experiences defy easy categorization. Dellanos, despite conforming to certain beauty standards, has advocated for women's rights. Similarly, Navarro still navigates a system that often marginalizes women, advocating a conservative platform that routinely dismisses feminism as a leftist ideology. By delving deeper into the variables not only of their ethnicity but also their gender, we can gain a richer understanding of how conservative discourse adapts itself – or fails to adapt itself - to the multiplicity of gender and ethnic identities in the evolving landscape of the 21st century United States.

Leslie Sanchez's (2007) insightful book, *Los Republicanos: Why Hispanics and Republicans Need Each Other*, provides a crucial pre-Trump perspective on the intricate relationship between Hispanics and the Republican party during the Bush era. Amidst Republican apprehensions regarding immigration and Hispanic influence, Sanchez (2007) advocates for a potential partnership, deliberately downplaying the impact of extremist voices within the party. Her stance aligns with President Bush's immigration policy, encapsulated in the

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, which, despite its alignment with Bush's vision, faced defeat due to opposition from within his party. The aftermath of Donald Trump's 2016 election marked a seismic shift, dismantling any attempt by the establishment wing of the Republican party to persist on the trajectory set by Bush. In 2007, Sanchez could reflect on President Bush's notable success with Hispanics in the 2004 presidential election, where he secured 40 to 44 percent of the Hispanic vote. Sanchez (2007) leveraged this achievement to argue that the Hispanic demographic was experiencing widespread disillusionment with traditional allies, particularly questioning the Democratic Party's limited successes in addressing the needs of this predominantly working-class group. Furthermore, the lingering post-9/11 patriotism that President Bush had skillfully harnessed remained a potent force.

Sanchez (2007) urged a Republican outreach to Hispanics based on shared values, emphasizing key pillars such as faith, family, and entrepreneurship. Her framing of the Democratic Party as fostering a "failed black America," captive to negative stereotypes, resonated with the subliminal racism that Republicans had strategically exploited since Nixon embraced the "Southern strategy" (Maxwell & Shields, 2019). Sanchez's (2007) insights underscore the complex interplay of race, politics, and identity in the shifting landscape of Hispanic-Republican relations. For the establishment media, which was blindsided by the rise of Trump, Sanchez (2007) had provided a map to the capture of the Hispanic voting block by the GOP. In hindsight, it is clear that the GOP discarded this map after Romney's failed election bid. Instead, Trump represented doubling down on an anti-immigrant base. One might think the anti-immigrant card would alienate the Hispanic community completely. But this line of thinking fails to understand the heterogeneity of that community, nor does it break out the generational and gender variables that invalidate too hasty generalizations about the Hispanic vote.

Sanchez, Navarro, and Dellanos all have different recipes for bridging the gap between Republicans and Hispanics. However, they must operate against the fact that most Hispanic voters still align with the Democrats. One reason for this, often touted on the right, is that Spanish-language media is structurally biased against Republicans, creating a major obstacle. Overcoming this barrier, Hispanic conservatives contend, demands mutual understanding and a willingness to move beyond stereotypes, recognizing the shared values and common goals that can create a more inclusive political landscape.

The notion of the "opinion leader," often incorrectly assumed to have originated in the television era, finds its roots as an explanation for the reception of communicative content and influence dynamics during the radio era. Coined by Paul Lazarsfeld et al. (1968) in their mid-1940s work *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* and further refined by Elihu Katz et al. (2017) in *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication*, this concept outlines a two-step process where information initially flows from elites to non-elites and subsequently from opinion leaders to opinion followers. It's worth noting that this line of political, sociological research was spurred by events in Germany and the Soviet Union, where the state's control of all means of communication and constant references to the Fuhrer or Leader challenged liberal democratic theories of social dominance.

Katz et al. (2017) theory proposes that content is first transmitted from certain media outlets, particularly those involved in news gathering, to opinion leaders. In "The Influence of 'Personal Influence' on the Study of Audiences," Sonia Livingstone (2006) summarizes this by stating that opinion leaders actively seek out relevant mass media messages within their expertise and disseminate them through vertical or horizontal flows in their local community. Livingstone (2006) emphasizes the community's active role as an interpretive partner in this process, resisting or facilitating social change. This complexity challenges a simplistic view of media as a unidirectional influence.

The two-step flow concept, irrespective of debates on the strength of Katz et al. (2017) evidence, underscores the limited impact of mass media. It underscores that people influence each other in ways beyond the media's reach. Opinion leaders, identified by Katz et al. (2017), are respected individuals or groups within the studied communities, distinguished by their consumption of media rather than celebrity status. Followers absorb messages from these leaders, especially in politics, accepting both the message and the leaders' perspectives. While the leader-follower dynamic is central, it's crucial to recognize the nuanced nature of followership—followers may accept or reject the influencer's message, aligning with the liberal democratic belief that followers aren't mere cultists. Face-to-face interaction emerges as the primary mode of influence in this intricate process (Katz et al., 2017).

3. Ana Navarro: A Republican Latina Voice on Immigration and Latinos

Ana Navarro does not only identify as a Republican Latina but her career as a political advisor was spent attempting to shape Republican responses to issues such as immigration and Latino rights. In a pivotal moment during the 2016 Republican primaries, when Jeb Bush was contending against Donald Trump – ultimately defeated by Trump – The New York Times featured Navarro as an unofficial advisor to Jeb Bush. Describing her as an "oft-quoted dial-a-zinger," the article, reflective of the pre-Trump era, indicated a recognition of her potential for a more significant role within the GOP:

At 43, Ms. Navarro is frequently labeled as a 'confidante' of Jeb Bush or a 'Republican strategist.' However, her primary qualification lies in her unique ability, unmatched in the 2016 presidential cycle, to hit the sweet spot of the Republican Party's desire for Hispanic female validators, the political media's quest for an aura of access, and the general scarcity of wit in the talking point echo chamber. (Stone and Hunt, 2016)

This characterization underscores Navarro's strategic importance within the political sphere. Serving as a Hispanic female validator, she navigated the delicate balance required by the Republican Party during that period. The media recognized her as a confidante and a figure embodying the intersection of diverse qualities sought after in the political landscape. As the New York Times noted, Navarro's role transcended the mere label of a Republican strategist; she became a crucial link between the party's aspirations, media dynamics, and the need for a distinctive voice in the political conversation. This recognition hinted at the evolving nature of her influence within the GOP, positioning her as a key player whose insights and perspectives were highly sought in a political flux.

In 2016, after eight years of Obama, political journalists were betting that the GOP would turn to diversity as a vote-getting strategy. Navarro was an obvious pick for a media figure under that framework. She had also established herself as a captivating television personality, offering sharp commentary on CNN, ABC, and Telemundo. When, however, Trump effectively captured the GOP, her wing of the party, the party of Bush, Romney, and McCain, faced a crisis. Navarro's role changed from a spokesperson for the Republican political elite to a fighter for her margin of the party – as she said in an interview on the *Tonight Show* with Stephen Colbert, "there is no way I am going to let that guy push me out of the party where I have been my entire life" (The Late Show, 2019). Today, she is a co-host on *The View*, where her fiery debating style and outspoken opinions captivate and provoke audiences.

Navarro's political views are not reducible to a simple formula. In the era of Trump and the party's turn to the extreme right, Navarro found herself in the unexpected role of chastening Republican leaders for bowing to Trump, who she describes as un-Republican. Her split with the GOP as it is now constituted is particularly evident in her views on immigration and Latinos; these views, passionately conveyed, have garnered millions of views on social media, where clips from her appearances on *The View* and other media networks are displayed.

Navarro's evolution to the role of GOP dissenter can be traced back to how Trump upended the Party and general conservatism. In 2016, the never-Trump conservatives still dreamed of having the upper hand. *National Review*, the oldest and most intellectually influential conservative magazine, hosted an edition devoted to conservative criticism of Trump. But conservative intellectuals soon found that they had no constituency; or at least the constituency had changed. His presidential campaign launch directly targeted former President Bush's immigration reform. Trump famously declared that Mexico was sending "rapists" and "criminals" across the U.S. border, thus creating a toxic atmosphere for any reasonable discussion of immigration. As a Latina and a Republican, Navarro was deeply offended by this rhetoric and became a vocal critic of Trump's inflammatory language and policies.

Navarro's voice became a powerful counterpoint to the anti-Latino sentiment that permeated the Trump campaign. She fearlessly challenged Trump's claims and policies, highlighting the harmful impact they had on the Latino community. She became a symbol of resistance for many Latinos who, though Republican, felt marginalized and threatened by Trump's presidency. Yet their major impact seemed to be on more sympathetic centrist Democrats than any subdivision of the Republican electorate.

Navarro's criticisms extended beyond mere words. She actively campaigned against Trump and his Republican allies, rallying Latinos to register and vote. On *The View*, she educated viewers about issues relevant to the Latino community and dispelled harmful stereotypes. Moreover, her presence as a co-host on a popular daily show, a commentator on CNN and Telemundo, and an active participant in political discussions on Instagram transcended the limits of network television. In these diverse forums, Navarro found herself in the unexpected role of challenging conservative media instead of her former target, the establishment of liberal media. She gamely took on debunking the stereotypes and misinformation emitted by such

venues as Fox News, trying to educate her audience, which presumably overlapped with the Fox News demographic.

Navarro's position made for an interesting highwire act, as she has not given up her right-wing views on the economy or foreign policy. On the other hand, she has also spoken out against the core anti-abortion Republican message. In a sense, Navarro's career is exemplary of the problems that confront bilingual Hispanic Republicans. Navarro has actively engaged on both English and Spanish-language platforms to strengthen a side that increasingly has no home in American politics. Notably, she criticized the Republican party's continued endorsement of anti-immigration policies and hate speech, rooted in their failure to challenge stereotypes that underpinned Trump's first presidential campaign.

Recently, a controversial interview with Donald Trump on Univision sparked outrage among many Latinos. His appearance there seemed to be a betrayal since Trump had famously dismissed Univision as an immigrant media outlet. Thus, on November 9th, 2023, he returned to Univision to interview Enrique Acevedo to discuss the border situation and the economy. The backlash was immediate, with viewers and journalists criticizing the interview's line of questioning, which heavily favored Trump and glossed over or ignored controversial topics. Keenly aware of the interview's significance on the largest Spanish-language media network, Navarro promptly took to social media to criticize Univision directly. In a November 23rd Instagram post, she wrote:

My thoughts on the very troubling situation with @Univision. Trump had not granted Univision an interview since 2015 when he kicked @jorgeramosnews out of a campaign event. The question I have is, why did that suddenly change? What did Univision offer or agree to? I strongly believe that we need both Parties and all candidates courting the Latino vote. That is a good thing. What we can't have though, is lack of accountability for those that have come for our community, belittling and insulting us. (Ana Navarro-Cárdenas, 2023)

Navarro reiterated these criticisms on *The View's* Hot Topics segment, emphasizing the need for Univision to be held accountable for its softball questioning of Trump (and notably, by another interviewer than Ramos), which never delved into his famously harmful rhetoric and actions towards the Latino communities. Navarro's vocal criticisms of Trump and the Republican party from a background that is anything but liberal have made her a powerful voice within the Latino community. Her work continues to challenge the narrative and advocate for accountability from those in power – and unlike most Republicans who once counted as political

allies, she has refused to bow to Trump's takeover of the party, making her a lonely voice in that party.

4. Shaping Public Opinion in Spanish-Speaking Communities:

Navarro's anti-Trump stance stands in interesting contrast to Myrka Dellanos's evolution. This is trickier to map for non-Hispanics since she has primarily navigated the Hispanic media landscape, notably with NBC Universal Telemundo. This focused approach directs Dellanos' influence, such as it is, more precisely toward dialogues within the Spanish-speaking community, a demographic often overlooked in both media and academic discussions on conservative ideologies. According to Singh (2022), Dellanos challenges preconceived notions within this community, fostering avenues for political dialogue that may have been less visible previously.

Dellanos, aligning more closely with the Christian Right, represents a political discourse with significant traction within a churchgoing demographic. In 2015, during Trump's primary candidacy marked by strong anti-immigrant sentiments, Dellanos questioned the disconnect, stating, "I don't understand who Donald Trump is seeing and these crazy people. Who are they talking about?" She expressed concern about Latinos in influential positions aligning with mainstream views without advocating for the oppressed (Boyd-Barrett, 2015).

This stance placed Dellanos in a challenging position when Trump secured victory, given her role as one of the GOP stalwarts in Hispanic media. Still, as with other anti-Trump Republicans, she was won over by Trump's success in achieving, as no other Republican had done, a lock on an anti-abortion Supreme Court. A recent controversy on her show, *La mesa caliente*, shed light on Dellanos' nuanced approach—subtly opposing Trump's more extreme positions while maintaining support for conservative perspectives. During a panel discussion on a tweet by Donald Trump Jr. featuring people in Easter Rabbit costumes armed with weapons, Dellanos gave the tweet a 1 for the inappropriateness of the Easter costume and a 5 for defending the Second Amendment. Her justification involved acknowledging the right to bear arms as part of the Second Amendment and her personal experiences with target shooting. However, when questioned about the timing on Easter day, tensions escalated. Veronica Bastos, one of the co-hosts of the program, interrupted, asking about the appropriateness of discussing the right to bear arms on Easter day. Dellanos, losing patience, emphasized her earlier point, asserting, "I'm

saying because what he's talking about is the right to bear arms that this government [Biden's] wants to delete." (La Mesa Caliente, 2022b, 1m10s) This incident showcases Dellanos's attempt to navigate the complexities of her political stance amid divisive issues, exemplifying the challenges of maintaining a balance in the ever-evolving political landscape.

While Navarro expressed dissent within a Republican Party in which she has become, increasingly, a solitary voice, Dellanos struggles to present conservative viewpoints to an audience that is well aware of Trump's attitude towards the Hispanic community. It is a dynamic that highlights the complexity of her role in shaping public perceptions within a specific cultural and linguistic context.

When Dellanos was a host on *Primer Impacto*, she did not have a distinct political identity. The show's format was not overtly ideological – rather, it kept its focus squarely on the salacious and the shocking. Dellanos Lloynaz's departure from *Primer Impacto* in 2004 marked a turning point in her public persona. She stepped back from the media spotlight, choosing to dedicate several years to activism and community work. This period of introspection likely solidified her political convictions, and her voice began to resonate in unexpected spaces. When President Bush appointed her to the Freedom Corps, a volunteer organization promoting charitable giving, her conservative leanings became more evident. This subtle shift in public persona signaled a willingness to engage with the political sphere, albeit not through the sensational lens of her former platform.

In 2022, Dellanos returned to television with a bang, joining Telemundo's *La mesa caliente* (The Hot Table). This show, reminiscent of ABC's *The View*, provided the perfect platform for her fully formed political voice. Unlike the limitations of *Primer Impacto*, *La mesa caliente* offered Dellanos the opportunity for open expression and debate. Here, she transcends mere co-hosting, acting as an outspoken conservative commentator, unafraid to spar with her diverse co-hosts on hot-button topics like immigration, abortion rights, and Donald Trump. It's important to note that Dellanos' conservative views are considered "outspoken" because, unlike *The View*, *La mesa caliente* strives for political neutrality, although leaning towards a center-consensus view. However, Dellanos often disrupts this neutrality when discussing former President Donald Trump and Republican policies.

During the August 30th, 2022, episode of *La mesa caliente*, a viewer confronted Myrka Dellanos in the "Las cartas sobre la mesa" [The cards on the table] segment, questioning her

consistent advocacy for Trump and suggesting her role seemed more activist than entertaining, contrary to the show's purpose. This inquiry echoed sentiments frequently expressed by viewers in *La mesa caliente's* YouTube comments but marked the first time it was addressed on-air. In her response, Dellanos aimed to emphasize the diversity of perspectives and the crucial role of debate in defining her position:

Muchísimas gracias en primer lugar por ver nuestro programa porque nos halaga muchísimo. En primer lugar, otra cosa que es muy importante es que este programa no es solamente de entretenimiento sino yo no estaría aquí...como periodista yo quiero dar ambos puntos de vista y aquí mis compañeras tienen algún punto de vista, cada persona dice lo que ellos opinan. Y para mí es sumamente importante que vean ambas partes. ¿Por qué? Porque ustedes en casa tienen hacer una decisión de qué es lo que opinan. Porque qué aburrido sería el programa si fuéramos 4 de la misma persona. (La Mesa Caliente, 2022a, 0m21s)

[Thank you very much, first, for watching our program because it flatters us very much. First of all, another thing that is very important is that this program is not just entertainment, otherwise I would not be here...as a journalist, I want to give both points of view, and here my colleagues have some point of view, each person says what they think. And for me, it is extremely important that you see both sides. Why? Because you at home have to make a decision about what you think. Because how boring the program would be if we were 4 of the same people. (La Mesa Caliente, 2022a, 0m21s)]

Dellanos appeals here not only to the importance of representing all sides on TV general affairs shows but also to an often-undervalued aspect of the news: keeping the viewer from getting bored. In this sense, Dellanos brings together her celebrity and her politics. In making this response, Dellanos leans heavily on a widespread conservative opinion that the media tilts left. Despite asserting her intention to present both sides against a presumed liberal hegemony adhered to by her co-hosts, she inadvertently affirms the viewer's sense that she fashions herself as an activist. The tension arises from Dellanos challenging assumptions made by the viewer, underscoring that politics is an integral part of a show dealing with news, and she represents a significant political viewpoint, pushing against the expectation of uniformity in perspectives.

Given Dellanos's way of thinking, much of her work on *La mesa caliente* falls into place. For instance, when, on June 9, 2023, the Justice Department unsealed a 37-count indictment against Trump, charging him with felonies concerning his handling of classified documents after leaving office, Dellanos did not openly support Trump's position. Instead, she surprised her co-

hosts by strongly disapproving of the incident. Speaking directly to the camera, she stated, “Esto nos hace sentir muy tristes. A mí por lo menos, como ciudadana americana, para mí es un día muy triste para el país...” (This makes us feel very sad. For me, at least as an American citizen, it is a very sad day for the country...) (La Mesa Caliente, 2023). There was a certain ambiguity in this statement. Is the sadness that Trump’s presidency ended on such a note of foul play, from the January 6 insurrection to the taking of the papers? Or is it a sadness that the Biden administration is hounding the former President? Notably, her live declaration of sadness was aired in its entirety. Still, the YouTube clip uploaded by Telemundo edited her words, cutting her off just as she began to veer into more controversial territory. Dellanos’s rhetoric here affords her a wide scope for deniability. She does not explicitly reproach the prosecution of Trump but reflects on the somber implications of a former president facing legal challenges, a sentiment that even anti-Trump partisans could agree with. This subtle nuance allows Dellanos to navigate the controversial subject cautiously while expressing her genuine feelings about the impact on the nation.

In a climate where opposing abortion in America often leads to attacks by the Left, even as the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Dellanos has taken up the pro-life argument on *La mesa caliente*. The show’s commentator typically aligns with the *Roe v. Wade* consensus, against which Dellanos uses the rhetorical strategy of using the word “baby” to mean the embryo in all its stages of development. In a segment from the April 2, 2022, episode of the show that focused on Oklahoma’s new abortion legislation, which illegalizes abortion completely, she emphasized that it was the lives of “babies” that were at stake. Alix Aspe, another of the co-hosts of the program, retorts after expressing that she is pro-choice: “Myrka, si lo que dices es que 1 de 3 mujeres tiene un aborto y son latinas, más importante aún que haya un lugar a salvo donde lo puedan hacer y que puedan tener un aborto seguro...” [Myrka, if what you are saying is that 1 in 3 women have an abortion and they are Latina, it is even more important that there is a safe place where they can do it and that they can have a safe abortion...] (La Mesa Caliente, 2022c, 3m3s). Dellanos repeatedly interrupts, saying that there are options: “La idea es que sepan que una opción es que no tienen que matar al bebé. Ese bebé fue creado desde el principio del universo y fue creado con un plan divino de Dios. ¿Quién está abogando por los derechos de los bebés” [The idea is that they know that one option is that they do not have to kill the baby? That baby was created from the beginning of the universe and was created with a divine plan from God.

Who is advocating for babies' rights?]' (La Mesa Caliente, 2022c, 3m25s). Despite Telemundo's ideological editorial line, Dellanos's pro-life stance is particularly noteworthy. The network, while focused on Hispanic viewers, often diverges from the community's pro-life inclinations. According to a 2019 Morning Consult poll, less than most Hispanics (45 percent) support abortion being legal in all or most cases.¹ Dellanos's pro-life argument represents a broader shift in Latino attitudes, with an increasing embrace of conservative values in politics. The 2020 presidential election saw a 10-point gain in Hispanic and Latino support for Donald Trump compared to 2016. This shift is not confined to specific regions or ethnicities, indicating a widespread attitude change. If the Trump gain – admittedly much less than Bush's totals – heralds the future, will Latinos become part of the faith and family values demographic that the Republicans have increasingly depended on? This shift challenges the assumption that Latinos are a guaranteed Democratic voting bloc and positions them as a potential swing electorate. Republicans, by staying true to their conservative values, might win over Latino voters. If so, this will not verify Sanchez's 2007 predictions but will happen precisely because the GOP has become more extreme on abortion, gun rights, and immigration. Dellanos's outspoken pro-life commentary voices the mood of the four in ten Hispanic citizens who reject abortion.

In conclusion, our examination of the contrasting roles of conservative Latina television hosts Ana Navarro on *The View* (ABC) and Myrka Dellanos Loynaz on *La mesa caliente* (Telemundo) reveals not only the intriguing career paths of Latina conservative media figures but casts a light into the complexities of conservatism in America itself, in the age of Trump. Navarro has succeeded in speaking out against Trump, but whether that success represents any larger part of the old GOP coalition is questionable. Dellanos's more Trumpian views may foretell, in part, a further development of the surprising shift toward conservatism among a notable proportion of Hispanic voters during the 2020 presidential election. Navarro and Dellanos are playing out, in real time, the questions now engaging both the Hispanic community and, on a larger scale, the American people.

¹ Recent data suggests ongoing shifts in Hispanic community views on abortion rights. Following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision, a September 2022 Pew Research Center survey found a clear majority (60%) of Hispanic adults supporting abortion rights access in most or all cases. This contrasts with earlier surveys and highlights the potential for evolving demographics and social issues to influence public opinion within diverse communities (Krogstad et al., 2022).

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