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FocusON La Política

Inside the Battle for Latino Voters

By Ben Ray, *American Bridge 21st Century*

Victory for both parties in 2016 could hinge on mobilizing Latino voters -- and the battle for their support is already fierce.

The epicenter is here in the American southwest, where the Libre Initiative, a conservative group, is spending millions on outreach to Latino voters, an effort that has sparked a backlash from Democrats worried about Libre's potential.

In anticipation of the upcoming election cycle, Libre is undertaking one of the most ambitious and expensive Latino outreach programs by any conservative organization yet. It will have a \$14 million operating budget in 2015, according to a source with knowledge of the group's finances who requested anonymity to speak freely. Libre now has field staff in ten states, with plans to expand further in 2016. Most of Libre's funding comes from a network of conservative donors organized by billionaire businessmen Charles and David Koch.

Since Libre's inception four years ago, the group has built a presence in states with high Latino populations by providing classes and free social services.

In Nevada, Libre sponsored a program to help people receive driver's licenses. In Florida, they partnered with H&R Block for tax preparation. Later this year, Libre plans to launch an education initiative that will pay for GED courses. The effort aims to build goodwill within the Latino community, while allowing Libre to collect data that will be instrumental in coordinating political ad campaigns and voter targeting efforts next year.

Libre also supports granting immigrants living in the country illegally a pathway to citizenship, a position that, while controversial on the right, allows them a gateway to increasing Latino support. The group does not, however, approve of President Barack Obama's use of executive orders to implement immigration policy--a tactic currently tied up in federal courts--which separates them from Latino outreach groups on the left.

"The Libre Initiative exists primarily to advance the principles of economic freedom to the Latino community," Libre Executive Director Daniel Garza, a former aide to George W. Bush and the son of migrant workers from Mexico, told CNN. "It is about driving a narrative, a conversation within the Latino community. If we're not helping to drive that agenda, somebody else is, and it's usually the left."

Last week, Libre's non-profit arm hosted a conference for about 100 Hispanic business leaders from seven states in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as part of the group's multi-million

dollar effort to promote conservative ideas within the Latino community and, they hope, convince them to vote for Republicans in 2016. Set inside the ballrooms of the Crowne Plaza hotel just off the intersection of one highway that stretches coast-to-coast across the United States and another that slopes southward to the Mexico border, business leaders sat through presentations and panels on energy, over-regulation and trade. Panels included titles such as "Regulations Stranglehold on Economic Prosperity" led by Libre operatives and talks about how to increase energy production in the state. Politics made a brief appearances when New Mexico Republican Lt. Gov. John Sanchez spoke on the power of the Latino vote.

"No president will be elected ever again unless they have the right message when it comes to how do they attract Hispanic voters," Sanchez said.

Indeed, in key battleground states, securing the Latino vote has been incredibly important in recent election cycles. In 2012, Obama received 71 percent of the vote. But in the 2014 mid-term elections, when the electorate is often more conservative than during presidential years, the GOP made gains within the community in states like Colorado, Texas and Florida.

Libre operated relatively quietly until last year's mid-term election, when the group's advocacy arm--called the Libre Initiative--

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'You cannot have a normal life; we expect extraordinary things from you.'

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ran paid political ads in English and Spanish in close races around the country. Libre's campaign helped remove Pete Gallego in Texas, Joe Garcia in Florida and Ron Barber in Arizona—all Democrats.

"It's been kind of a wake-up call," said Angie Kelly, an immigration reform advocate who works with liberal groups on Latino engagement. "Their message is intentionally fuzzy, but yet it's delivered with flawlessly competent clarity. That's a pretty brilliant combination. Those who disagree with Libre and the Koch brothers are really going to need to muscle up."

Now, a massive coalition of liberal groups is planning to strike back. Representatives from several organizations on the left met in the Washington office of the Latino Victory Project in early May to discuss a plan for how to counter Libre's efforts. Attendees included representatives from labor unions, American Bridge, Mi Familia Vota, Media Matters and People For The American Way, according to attendees.

Initial plans have been made to sound an alarm against Libre by highlighting their ties to the Koch donor network and relay a message that Libre supports policies liberals say are against Latino interests. They also plan to release a report about Koch industries that digs into the company's record on workplace safety and the environment, Latino Victory Project President Cristobal Alex told CNN.

"While I admire the rapid growth of this organization, I'm afraid it's for disingenuous purposes," Alex said. "It's important for us to begin having some very serious conversations with our allies to counter what Libre is doing. No one has really pushed back. So far they've had



free reign."

Earlier this month, BuzzFeed News revealed that the Democratic National Committee had put together an internal presentation warning about Libre's strength that called on Democrats to increase voter engagement with Latinos.

"It has changed our calculus," Alex told CNN. "Those on the left are starting to see, because Latinos can change their mind about who to vote for, they're going to start to pay attention to that and really investing in the Latino community."

Groups on the left also point to the fact that the same donors who support Libre—which is vocally supportive

of comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship—also help bankroll Republican congressional and presidential campaigns that oppose it.

"Libre's Achilles heel is exposure," said John Lored, the former Democratic Minority Leader in the Arizona state House. "They align themselves with people who are openly anti-Latino. Exposing them, however it may happen, that's a killer for Libre."

Efforts against Libre are already underway. Last week — on the same day of the business conference in Albuquerque — a liberal research organization called the Bridge Project released a 48-page research document that outlined Libre's priorities and some of their funding sources. The group released the paper online, along with a Spanish-language video attacking Libre.

Representatives from liberal groups The Latino Victory Project, Open Society Foundation and Mi Familia Vota plan to hold a roundtable discussion with reporters to outline their plans to counter Libre. Next Monday, People for the American Way will host its own press call to announce an offensive against the group.

"The irony here is that the Latino left had criticized the conservative movement for years that they were not doing outreach to the Latino community," Garza told CNN. "Now that the conservative movement is doing outreach and engaging in the Latino community on a national scale, they're criticizing us for that too. You can't have it both ways."

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FocusON Entrepreneurship

Understanding the Economic Power of US Hispanics



Carlos Garcia, Senior Vice President, Multicultural, GfK Media

The rapid growth in the US Hispanic population has made the demographic increasingly important to retailers. Carlos Garcia, senior vice president of multicultural at GfK Media, spoke with eMarketer's Lisa Barron about the importance of getting the message right and understanding the culture well enough to do so.

eMarketer: Are marketers adept at distinguishing between cultural relevance and stereotyping?

Carlos Garcia: Absolutely not. I generally think the Hispanic agencies know the difference, but they're not always given the chance to do that. Sometimes the general marketing agency is doing the work, and they feel even more compelled to stick in some ridiculous cultural icon like the Virgin of Guadalupe on a shelf behind somebody when some scene is going on. And Hispanics, especially millennial Hispanics, which are a big chunk of the total, see right through that. It just pisses them off, and it doesn't advance the client's cause.

eMarketer: How important are the marketer's choice of English vs. Spanish, and how does that compare to the cultural relevance of the message?

Garcia: About 85% of all Hispanics speak at least some Spanish in the home. Eighty percent speak at least some English in the home. Knowing how bilingual the space has become, it isn't so much about the language as it is the culture. You can't ignore Spanish; you can't pretend English isn't relevant. And you have to get the culture right.

eMarketer: Data suggests that Hispanics as a whole are more receptive to advertising than the population at large. Why do you think that is?

Garcia: It's particularly true of the less acculturated, and it's particularly true of people who have lived here less time. But in general Hispanics do look to advertising for information. They actually want to learn something about products, because they know what they know, and they know that they don't know a lot of things. They go to the store and tend to buy the same things.

A lot of Hispanics are brand loyal, and a lot of that is because they stick with what they know. If they don't know anything else, they're not going to try it. Do you really want to risk the money or waste the money on something that might be horrible? They'd rather spend their money on something that they know they like rather than something that might be horrible.

But they look to advertising for information. So imagistic ads don't necessarily work for Hispanics. Be specific. Why should I buy this product? It's just as good and cheaper, it's the same price but bigger, it's better taste, it has more natural ingredients, it has aloe in it, it has more protein,

it has something. They want a reason to buy something, and they want a reason to believe in the product. So they look to advertising for information and not images.

eMarketer: Data also shows that a disproportionate amount of Hispanics' digital activity takes place through mobile devices. What are the challenges for marketers given that many are still figuring out how to make mobile marketing work for them, and given that a smartphone is a more personal device and ads can seem intrusive?

Garcia: That is a really interesting issue, and I think it is a challenge. It's undeniable that Hispanics underindex on desktop and laptops, and they even underindex on [tablets]. But they overindex dramatically on smartphones because they are very social people and a very sharing culture. So smartphones are clearly going to be very important for marketing to Hispanics. Advertisers haven't necessarily figured this all out, but they will, and they are in the process of doing it. They're finding through trial and error what works and what doesn't work.

Marketers have to start using social media for the Hispanic space. I've been to some Hispanic media conferences and marketing conferences, and there are so many social media success stories. It's a brave new world out there. What makes it complicated of course is that every brand is different, and every situation is different. But mobile marketing is going to be very important; social media is going to be very important. It's a whole new opportunity. There are new ways to connect and new ways to engage.

One of the things that's driving this is the role of millennials. We're 18% of the total population, but as

you go younger into the population, the percentage of Hispanics goes up. So for millennials it's like 20%. When you go under 5 years old, it's like 24% or 25%. And I've seen a number that shows up to 50% of Hispanics are millennial.

eMarketer: The sheer size of the Hispanic population in the US makes it a market that retailers want to go after. But the average income and household wealth for Hispanics is below the average. Does that mean that the buzz about the market's potential going forward will lead marketers to overestimate how lucrative it might be?

Garcia: I don't think so. Hispanics might seem to not qualify for certain types of categories, like a \$5,000 television set. But guess what? They're buying them. It has a lot to do with their cultural priorities. Family togetherness is really important. Doing things as a family, being able to sit together and watch something and sharing an experience is really important to them.

So they will make the investment; they will put a larger percentage of their disposable income on things like that that an Anglo wouldn't do unless they had the cash sitting in their pocket. Latinos will pool their resources. They'll scrimp and save. They'll do it on layaway. They'll do whatever they have to do, because they see this as an investment in their future, an investment in their family.

They organize their lives differently. They have different priorities. They are buying high-quality, high-cost electronics. They are buying houses. They are buying appliances. They are doing all these things that the sheer income numbers would suggest are impossible. But they do it.

Study Shows Latinos, Immigrants Fuel Increase in Startup Creation

By *Nancy Dahlberg, The Miami Herald*

Latinos and immigrants fueled an uptick in new business creation nationally, reversing a four-year downward cycle, according to the 2015 Kauffman Index: Startup Activity released last week.

The entrepreneurial activity increase in the 2015 Index – which reversed the downward trend since 2010 – was the largest year-over-year increase in two decades, according to the research. Yet the rebound remains well below historical trends, Kauffman researchers said. In the 2015 Index, 310 out of 100,000 adults, or 0.31 percent, started new businesses each month, on average. In the 2014 Index, the average was 0.28 percent of the adult population.

"This rebound in entrepreneurial activity lines up with the strength we've seen in other economic indicators, and should generate hope for further economic expansion," said Dane Stangler, vice president of Research and Policy at the Kauffman Foundation, in a news release. "But it's important to view this short-term uptick in context of the bigger picture – we are still in a long-term decline of activity, which affects job creation, innovation and economic growth."

Some findings, according to the research:

- While all racial and ethnic groups experienced increases in the rate of new entrepreneurs

between the 2014 Index and the 2015 Index, the Latino share of all new entrepreneurs rose from 10.0 percent in 1996 to 20.4 percent in 2013 to 22.1 percent in 2014.

- Kauffman researchers said 28.5 percent of all new entrepreneurs are immigrants in the 2015 Index, compared to 13.3 percent in the 1997 Index and that immigrants are starting new businesses at nearly twice the rate of native-born Americans, creating an average of 520 businesses a month per 100,000 people last year.
- Most new entrepreneurs, or 63.2 percent, were men. The 36.8 percent of females who became entrepreneurs in the 2015 Index is close to the two-decade low of 36.3 percent in the 2008 Kauffman Index.
- Opportunity entrepreneurs, those who were not unemployed and not looking for a job before they started new ventures, was 79.6 percent of the total number of new entrepreneurs. This represented an uptick over the 2014 Index, and was substantially higher than in the 2010 Index, when the number of opportunity entrepreneurs was at the lowest rate since the Kauffman Foundation began collecting this data in 1996.
- Startup density (the number of new employer businesses by total population) increased from 128.8, or 128.8 for every 100,000 people, to 130.6 in the Startup Activity calculations from 2014 to 2015. Startup density is climbing, but it remains well below typical historical rates, the report said.

FOX DEPORTES DELIVERS A STELLAR MLS RETURN



SEASON OPENERS

TOTAL VIEWERS

+233%

VS 2011

P18-49

+291%

VS 2011



FOXHISPANICMEDIA.COM

Source: NTL Live+Same Day Program averages for 2015 (3/8/15); NHL Live+Same Day Program averages for 2011 (3/15/11-11/6/11). Subject to qualifications

Maria Contreras-Sweet: Agent of Change

By Adam Bryant, Blaine Novak and Jonathan Pulley, New York Times

It's not necessary to have all the answers, said Ms. Contreras-Sweet, head of the Small Business Administration. A leader's job is to create an empowering environment where the best ideas can surface.

Tell me about the early years of your life.

I was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. I always wanted to be a schoolteacher. I remember going on my grandmother's roof and I'd organize the plants and talk to them and nurture them. When they produced a berry or little piece of fruit, that felt like my reward.

And what about your parents?

My father was over 30 years older than my mother. They had six children, but they didn't have a cultural connection. My mother was from an immigrant family and my father was a business owner, and came from a more established family. That's why my mother left and she traveled here to the United States with her six children.

And how old were you when you came to the States?

I was 5 years old. I still remember my first class, in first grade. My teacher thought that I was some unruly kid because she didn't understand that I didn't understand what she was saying. She would say, "Line up," and I'd stay seated until I saw that everybody else was lining up

and then I'd follow.

It was a really awkward time because it made me feel dumb and that I didn't know anything. I was failing my tests. It was just a really difficult period. Because of that, I'm so much more sensitive now to people who come here to integrate and to learn about our society. You feel very different, particularly if you can't communicate. Somehow you feel inferior to everybody else.

But my first-grade teacher, Miss Tanaka, worked hard to help me learn English. She actually went to the principal to ask if she could teach second grade because she said that she saw promise in me and she wanted to be able to teach me into the next year. When I finally got to third grade, they said, "You know, she's actually pretty bright." And I was able to skip a grade. It just renewed my sense of confidence, my self-reliance. Once you learn any language — whether it's English, or the language of medicine or the language of business — you can get in the game and win.

It must have been hard for your mother to raise six children.

She made enormous sacrifices. Call it chutzpah, moxie, or ganas in Spanish, but can you imagine what it took for her to leave a little community, after being married to a very established businessman, and settle into Los Angeles without any economic advantage? She was educated up to the third grade and she provided for us by working at a little poultry processing plant. I saw her fingers stiffen and her legs thicken, and some of those lessons really do inform me today.

One of the things that I really appreciate about my mother and my grandmother is that they've always felt

a sense of exceptionalism. Even today, my mother, who is now in her mid-80s, still has this sense of confidence, that "I matter," when she enters a room. I think that's important to instill in our young girls — that we matter, we deserve to be heard and we deserve to be treated equally.

Are you the oldest of the six children?

I'm No. 5. Everybody was one year older than the next until it came to me and then there was a three-year gap before I was born, and then there was a three-year gap after me. That did give me a little more space between my siblings and me. I have no idea if that changed me or affected me, but I always felt a little special. And when you feel special, you feel empowered.

And when you went to college, did you have an idea of what you wanted to do for a career?

I had no sense of direction except that people always told me I was going to be a schoolteacher. I majored in public administration. Then I went to work for a local state assemblyman, who at the time was a key member of the State Assembly committee on education in California.

Different companies would come in to express their interest in having us vote a certain way or represent them in some way. Some executives from Westinghouse came in because they wanted us to help them change a bill. After they got to know me, they said, "How do we get you to leave to come to Westinghouse?"

They said that I could apply all the skills I had to the private sector. It was an important lesson because sometimes, as entrepreneurs or as women, we don't

understand the transferability of skills, that you can take the basic essence of management and apply it to a different set of industries. Once you have a basic set of skills that have applicability in different places, that gives you a sense of flexibility and a sense of freedom.

What are the key qualities you look for in people you hire?

When I'm building a team, I'm looking for people who are resourceful. That's a very important quality. I need people who are flexible, and I really need people who are discreet. Sometimes you are in situations where you don't know what the outcome might be, or maybe it's a privileged conversation.

I've learned that it's really important to surround myself with people who are discreet, resourceful and flexible. Discreetness speaks to integrity. I need them to be flexible, because you never know what time of day you're going to need them.

What are some key interview questions for you?

I really like to know what their relationship is with their family. I want to understand how well they work with other people. Because if they have strong relationships, it tells me that they already have the ability to go through highs and lows and work through problems. You really want to understand how that works.

Sometimes I'll ask, "If I could pick up the phone right now and call all of your peers at your office, what would they say to me about you?" And when they're presented with the possibility that you might actually make those calls, they're pretty candid and they share with you their challenges and their opportunities.

Hispanic Agency to Receive Top Honors



Daisy Expósito-Ulla, Chairman/CEO

d expósito & Partners will receive the Agency of the Year award from The Advertising Educational Foundation (AEF) at the 2015 AEF Honors Night, and it will be accepted by Daisy Expósito-Ulla, Chairman/CEO of the agency. The AEF Honors Night will take

place on Thursday, June 4, 2015, at The University Club, in New York City.

In awarding d expósito & Partners, the AEF is recognizing Daisy Expósito-Ulla's contributions to American advertising. "Through her leading role in the development and evolution of multicultural marketing, Daisy Expósito-Ulla has had a major impact in communications in the U.S.A," noted Paula Alex, President & CEO, Advertising Educational Foundation, in announcing the award. The AEF honor is especially significant this year, as 2015

marks the tenth anniversary of d expósito & Partners. For each of their award categories, the AEF recognizes outstanding representative companies and industry leaders from each of the foundation's constituencies --advertisers, agencies and media-- for their accomplishments in communications and for their support of the AEF. Previous recipients of the Agency of the Year award include: J. Walter Thompson (2014); Saatchi & Saatchi (2013); R/GA (2012); Deutsch (2011); Grey Group (2010); Interpublic (2009); Publicis (2008); Ogilvy and Mather Worldwide (2007); Omnicom (2006); McCann Worldgroup (2005); JWT (2004); Leo Burnett (2003); Young & Rubicam (2002); and True North Communications (2001).

Daisy Expósito-Ulla has long been a trusted resource and ardent supporter of AEF, from her early days at Y&R's Bravo, and now through d expósito & Partners' continued involvement in AEF programs and activities, and her participation as a member of the AEF Board of Directors. She is a recipient of various industry recognitions, such as Clio and Effie awards, and her trailblazing industry and community leadership has been acknowledged with the Matrix, Carvel's Immigrant, Carnegie Foundation and New York's International Center awards. She was a founding member and president of the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA) and was appointed by former Mayor Michael Bloomberg to serve as City Commissioner on New York's Arts and Entertainment Commission. Her agency is a recent twice recipient of the David Ogilvy Award from the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF).

FocusON Television

Nat Geo Mundo Revs Its Engines for Second Season of Original Series Limomasters

“El Jefe” Erick Quintana and his family convert everyday cars into luxury limos.

Do you believe in the American Dream? If you ask Erick Quintana, he'd say "yes!" because he is living the dream as the owner of successful vehicle customization business in Anaheim, California, Limos by Moonlight, where he and his team convert a variety of regular passenger vehicles into the most jaw-dropping limos. Comprised of four new hour-long episodes, the second season of LimoMasters premieres on Nat Geo Mundo each Saturday, at 9PM ET/PT.

During the fun and action-packed second season, Quintana and his team of seasoned builders work up not only a sweat, but a fair share of drama and heartbreak while converting everyday vehicles into tricked-out, larger-than-life limousines.

Erick counts on a crew that includes his father, Jaime; the general manager, Lemus; the designer, Paola; and the vivacious assistant, Vivian. The team combines unmatched technical knowledge with flawless design and expertise to build the most outrageous rides ever, catering to demanding clients from all over the

world with highly specific customization requests. This season, Quintana travels to meet clients in New York, Las Vegas, and even Japan where he has the opportunity to experience different flavors and cultures. In Quintana's absence, will the team be capable of maintaining a smooth business operation or will el jefe return to find his shop in chaos?

This Season also features celebrity appearances while the vehicle transformations are bigger and more detailed



than ever before. From a massive conversion that required a third axle and a decoration overhaul fit for a king in a Cadillac Escalade, to the creation of a party bus complete with LED lights, new curvy seats, flat screen TVs, dancing poles, lasers, bars and even a bathroom, the team works tirelessly to complete their jobs with perfection as the

ultimate goal. Witness the makeover of a Chrysler 300 to include all the latest technology whose final destination is New York City, and the construction of another Escalade headed to Houston, Texas which under-goes a major overhaul and is modeled to a fitting cowboy theme. Prepare to be amazed with the spectacular work of the Limos By Moonlight team.

In addition to turning standard cars into elaborate works of stretched metal art, the LimoMasters also have to

manage the office and a colourful family dynamic in the process. This Season, we learn more about every family member and their personal lives, and meet new cast members who play an important role in the business. And in an exciting new development for the family, the Quintana brood grows with the arrival of a small bundle, baby Emilio, who he hopes will one day join the family business.

LimoMasters is produced by Natural 9 Entertainment for National Geographic Channel. Executive producers are Carol Sherman, Jeff Androsky and Phil Viardo. co-executive producer is Patrick Taulere. For Fox International Channels, executive producer is Juana Maria Torres,

director of production and programming is Veronica Montali and senior vice president of programming and production is Carmen Larios. For National Geographic Channels standards and practices, senior director is Vilma Linares, senior researcher is Maria Rivas and senior production manager is Marjolaine Souquet.



Miami Station is Fastest Growing Spanish-Language Station

MundoFox8 Miami, continues its impressive growth momentum and delivers an outstanding performance during the May 2015 Sweeps period. WGEN-TV experienced triple-digit growth among Adults 18-34 (+400%) and 18-49 (+250%) when compared to the May'14 period. The station also achieved double-digit growth among Adults 25-54 (+80%), making it the #3 Spanish-language station in Primetime, outperforming Unimas (WAMI) and all independent Spanish-language stations in the market.

Propelling the station's success are popular game show 100 Latinos Dijeron,

the hit drama series Suleimán, El Gran Sultán and the 10pm local newscast of Noticias MundoFox8.

"May'15 Sweeps represented the strongest performance for MundoFox8 since the launch of MundoFox on WGEN-TV in December 2012," said Mauricio Cruz, General Manager, WGEN-TV. "The station continues to outperform most established con-tenders in the Miami Spanish-language broadcast market and our innovative, high-quality, original programing is generating a strong connection with the Latino community resulting in the delivery of an increased audience reach to our advertising partners."

MundoFox8 Miami May 2015 Sweeps Highlights

- MundoFox8 Miami ranked #3 in Primetime with a 0.5 for Adults 18-34, 0.7 for Adults 18-49 and a 0.9 for Adults 25-54 making it the fastest growing Spanish-language station in the market during May'15
- 100 Latinos Dijeron at 7P experienced triple-digit ratings growth among Adults 18-34 (+300%) and Adults 18-49(+100%)
- Suleiman, El Gran Sultan ranked #2 among all Spanish-language programs during the 8P time slot with a 1.1 among Adults 18-49 and a 1.5 among Adults 25-54 (tied with Univision among both of these demos)
- Noticias MundoFox8 at 10P experienced +100% growth May'15 vs. May'14 among Adults 18-34

FocusON Immigration

Jeb Bush Rips Republicans for 'Bending With the Wind' On Immigration

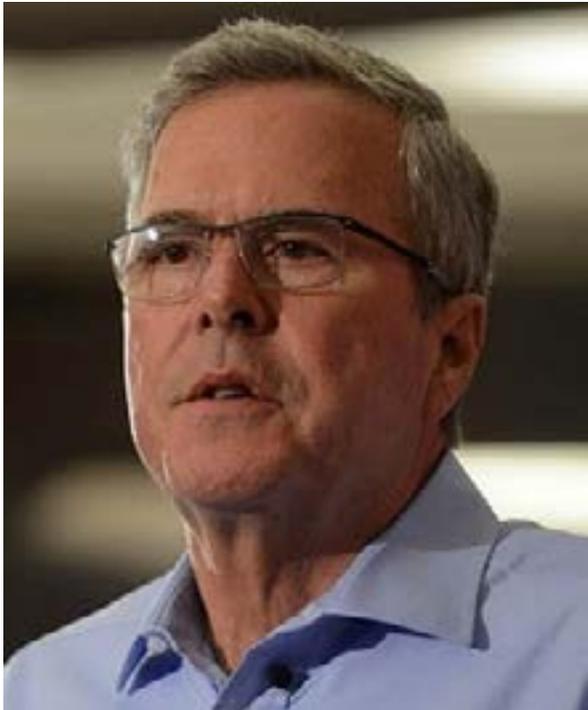
By Greg Sargent

Jeb Bush has promised us a presidential campaign premised on the idea that he can become the GOP nominee by speaking directly to the general election electorate — which is to say, by delivering a stiff dose of realism to GOP primary voters, rather than pandering to them. Exhibit A: Immigration, where Bush has argued, outrageously, that we aren't going to deport 11 million people, so it's time to embrace some form of legalization as the only answer.

Now Bush appears to be ratcheting up the attacks on fellow Republicans — presumably Marco Rubio and Scott Walker — over the issue. Post reporter Ed O'Keefe got access to a private conference call between Bush and Alabama Republicans, in which he seemed to accuse his rivals of "bending with the wind" on immigration:

He said that he believes President Obama's executive actions to change immigration laws will be eventually ruled unconstitutional by federal courts. He reiterated that he backs "a path to earned legal status, not citizenship, but earned legal status. Where people get a provisional work permit, where they pay taxes, they pay a fine, they learn English, they work, they don't receive federal government assistance and they — over extended period of time — they earn legal status."

Bush said he welcomed the opportunity to explain his



views on both subjects “because I find it interesting that people who share that view — rather than stick with the view and try to persuade people about it — in many cases have actually abandoned their views. I think the next president is going to have tougher times dealing with these issues than dealing with [Russian President Vladimir] Putin. If we’re going to bend with the wind, then it’ll be hard to imagine how we solve our problems.”

As O’Keefe notes, that appears to be a reference to Walker and Rubio, both of whom have moved right on immigration

after supporting a path to legalization as part of some form of comprehensive immigration reform. The suggestion that immigration may be a tougher thing to handle than Putin is also a nice touch.

It’s good that Bush is throwing down the gauntlet in claiming that GOP candidates should show courage in trying to persuade hostile GOP voters that legalization is the only solution. But it remains to be seen how far he’ll go publicly. What’s more, Bush does not deserve a pass here — he, too, has equivocated on legalization.

While it’s true that Bush has taken a grave political risk by suggesting undocumented immigrants might have something positive to contribute to American society, he has also retreated to a safer position, hinting he agrees we must secure the border before legalization. (Immigration advocates see this as tantamount to opposing legalization, since Republicans could easily continue to say in perpetuity that the border still isn’t quite secure enough.)

But this morning it was reported that the flow of illegal immigration is at its lowest point in a very long time. Of course, among many GOP primary voters, it is a given that President Obama has thrown open the border to the hordes. One way Bush could really deliver a dose of realism on this issue — or meaningfully show more courage than his rivals — is to acknowledge the real state of border security today. In light of his comments about Walker and Rubio, he should also be pressed to clarify whether he really thinks some elusive state of absolute border security must be achieved — and if so, how that might be defined — before any legalization scheme can be put in place. If not, he should forthrightly clarify that he agrees we need a comprehensive solution that strives for both.

FocusON Cuba

U.S. Officially Removes Cuba from State Sponsors of Terrorism List

By Andrea Mitchell and Katie Wall, NBC News

The announcement comes as American and Cuban officials, who met last week in Washington D.C. for a fourth round of talks, hit some speed bumps on an agreement on fully restoring diplomatic ties and opening embassies.

“The rescission of Cuba’s designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism reflects our assessment that Cuba meets the statutory criteria for rescission,” State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said in a statement. “While the United States has significant concerns and disagreements with a wide range of Cuba’s policies and actions, these fall outside the criteria relevant to the rescission of a State Sponsor of Terrorism designation.”

The Obama administration removed a major obstacle toward normalization of relations between the two countries last month when it recommended to Congress that Cuba be removed from the list of countries the U.S. considers sponsors of terrorism.

Last week, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson and Josefina Vidal, director of U.S. affairs at the Cuban foreign ministry met to discuss some of the finer details on fully restoring diplomatic ties between the two nations.

But there are still some sticking points before the two sides can agree to re-opening embassies.

Officials must hammer out an agreement on security requirements outside the proposed embassy in Havana. Both countries limit movement.

Cuban diplomats are restricted to a 25 mile radius as well and must ask permission to venture beyond that distance. This applies to both Cuban diplomats in Washington D.C. at the "Interests Section" as well as Cubans stationed at the embassy at the United Nations.

A particular sore point for Castro is an American program in Havana that offers computer courses to Cubans aimed at training them to be journalists. Castro has called the program, which is taught by American journalism professors, "illegal" in a nation where media is state controlled and Cuban officials have said there is no authority under the Vienna Conventions for diplomats to permit this kind of training.

The State Department said the program is fairly standard, but did not rule out possible changes.

Should the two nations strike an agreement, the State Department would give Congress 15 days' notice before re-opening the embassy. Congress cannot block this action since there is precedent for this being the prerogative of the president and no new appropriations are involved.

House Speaker John Boehner said the move "is just the latest example of this administration focusing more on befriending our enemies than helping our allies."

"The Obama administration has handed the Castro regime a significant political win in return for nothing," Boehner said in a statement.

Skateboarders in Cuba Find a Niche despite Outlaw

By Tim Johnson, McClatchy

Not a single skateboard shop exists in Cuba.

Yet visit these days, and you are likely to see skateboarders on the promenade that abuts Old Havana, and in some parks. Inline skating, once popular, has fallen off in favor of skateboards.

The skateboards have all come as donations from abroad. And obtaining one, even if it is dinged up, splintered or patched together, is a feat.

"If I tell you how I got this, you will laugh," said Andrea Hernández, a 27-year-old former tour guide carrying her colorfully painted skateboard along the Paseo del Prado promenade. "I built this. People gave me the parts."

Skateboarding is another example of how Cubans have learned to make do as they try to emulate trends elsewhere that have not received official sanction in the island nation.

Much as the lack of Internet connections has given rise to semi-clandestine services that download Western movies and television shows to portable hard drives that allow viewers to stay current on the latest entertainment on their home computers, skateboarders have found work-arounds to pursue a passion that is not yet officially recognized as a sport or recreational activity.

Only in the past month or two have authorities offered signs of acceptance. Skateboarding and its practitioners still walk a fine line, and in some neighborhoods skateboarders are harassed.

"Police don't like it. They kick us out. They take kids to the police station. ... They say, 'My boss doesn't let you skate here,'" Hernandez said.

But skateboarders have poked and probed and found a niche. Far from central Havana, in a park behind a hospital, they gather in the concrete basin of an abandoned and drained man-made pond. Ramps rise from the surface. Boarders do ollies, railsides and kickflips, riding up and down the ramps. In the late afternoon, the sounds are percussive: whap, thump, slap.

Overseeing the crew is Yojany Pérez Rivera, whose dreadlocks fly in the wind as he barrels up and down ramps, among the most veteran of Cuban skateboarders.

"We've been trying to teach people that it's not a kids' thing, that it's an art form, like photography. It's a way to express yourself," said Pérez, whose friends call him by his nickname, "Mamerto," the rough equivalent of "dummy." He doesn't seem insulted.

A daredevil by nature, Pérez makes his living as a window-washer of high-rise buildings, scaling the tallest hotels in Havana. He surfs and now skateboards. He is aware of what many older Cubans think.

"They think we are a bunch of bums with too much time on our hands," he said.

In Cuba, recreational options are limited. A handful of skateboards entered the country in the 1980s and 1990s. A short English-language documentary that came out in 2007, "Cuban Skateboard Crisis," raised awareness in the global skateboard community of the difficulties of obtaining boards in Cuba.

"I saw that and thought, 'That's pretty harsh,'" said Scott

McDonald, 41, a lifelong Canadian skateboarder from Hamilton, Ontario. A restaurant and nightclub owner, McDonald rallied friends to donate new and used boards to take to Cuba.

He said he's taken a total of around 400 skateboards to Cuba since then and comes under a group called Amigo Skate Cuba. Other nonprofit groups, notably cubaskate.com, say they are also taking skateboards. Each trip rejuvenates the activity in the streets.

"It's like rainfall in the desert. Everything pops back up again. It's an awesome feeling," McDonald said. "It's the only (skateboard) scene in the world that's 100 percent completely dependent on the generosity of others."

Skateboarding still retains an outcast image here, adding to its appeal.

"When I saw it, I was really attracted. I'd never heard of it. It was completely new," said Raciél Pereda Bernet, who has been skateboarding now for about a decade.

"We rely on donations. It's kind of sad because this is a healthy sport," said Pereda, who earns his living as a tattoo artist. In scripted letters across his chest reads an English-language tattoo: "We are the generation of different concepts."

Rene Lecour, the son of Cuban immigrants to South Florida, is a founder of Amigo Skate Cuba and a former skateboard shop owner. For years, he and his friends, too, have been taking skateboards to the island.



"We thought we were kind of under the radar. We were smuggling the stuff in," Lecour said in a telephone interview. But something odd happened. "It's grown to where the Cuban government contacted us to see if we would partner with them in a new skate park."

So Lecour, McDonald and a series of skateboard park designers from places like Denmark, Sweden, Puerto Rico, the United States and Canada are collaborating on site plans for the park.

"We're looking at building concrete bowls, banks and ledges," McDonald said.

Lecour said he could still hardly believe the turn of events.

"A couple of hooligans partnering with the Cuban government on a skate park? It sounds like a movie," he said.

The National Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation, Cuba's state sports branch, has taken an interest. Lecour said the institute would issue ID cards later this year to those skateboarders wanting to come under its purview. Not everyone will embrace the government's intervention.

"Some guys won't go to a skate park. They just want to skate on the streets," Lecour said.

Even if the skateboard park gets built, the Cuban government is still unlikely to permit a private skateboard shop. That means not all young Cubans who want a skateboard will get one. Nor do they normally wear kneepads, helmets or elbow protectors. Such padding is not readily available.

Swollen and twisted ankles are common, as are skinned knees.

"I've fallen a few times," said Jose Alejandro Hermida, pointing to a scab on his knee.

The rustic ramps at the drained pond are not always smooth, ripping up clothing.

"See how my shoes are worn out?" said Ezequiel Betanquourt, a 20-year-old skateboarder. He lifts a sole with a hole in it. Other boarders said they have to use silicone to repair shoes.

Even as they make do with poor equipment, camaraderie is tight. Arriving skateboarders greet everyone individually at the pond, a quick hand slap and a fist bump, a few words of salutation.

"It is so delicious, so cool. I like it, brother," Betanquourt said. "I have to be on the board every day."

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What We Know about Cuba's Economy

By Drew DeSilver, Pew Research Center

Two-thirds of Americans favor an end to the decades-long U.S. trade embargo on Cuba, a January Pew Research Center study found, and the two nations reportedly are making progress on re-establishing diplomatic relations. As the communist government continues to slowly reform Cuba's economy, American businesses – from airlines to law firms – are exploring commercial opportunities on the island nation. But even if the embargo were to be lifted, it's not clear just what sort of Cuban economy those businesses would find.

Getting a handle on even basic information about Cuba's economy is difficult, for a number of reasons. The government still dominates economic activity on the island, both directly and through heavily subsidized state-owned enterprises. National statistics are not always complete or reliable. And Cuba's system of two parallel currencies – one peso for everyday transactions among ordinary Cubans, and a "convertible peso" for the tourism industry, foreign trade and the private sector – combined with multiple exchange rates complicates any international comparisons or discussions about the relative size of different parts of the economy.

According to a survey conducted in March and published in *The Washington Post*, 79% of Cubans said they were dissatisfied with the country's economic system; 70% said they wanted to start their own business. Nearly two-thirds of Cubans (64%) said normalizing relations with

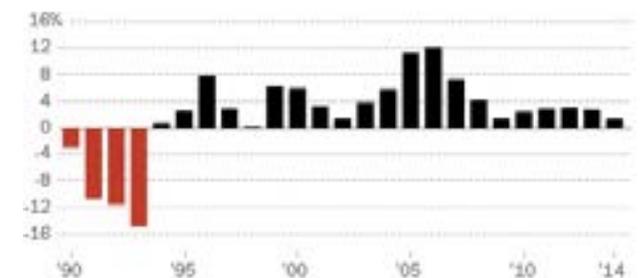
the U.S. would change the economic system, though only 37% thought the political system would change.

With so much change in the air, we decided to work our way as best we could through the data difficulties to put together a primer on what we know, and don't know, about the Cuban economy.

1. Despite the embargo, the U.S. does do business with Cuba. Last year, according to the Census Bureau, the U.S. exported nearly \$300 million worth of products to Cuba; nearly all (96.2%) of that was in the form of meat and poultry, soybeans, corn, animal feed and other foodstuffs. The exports are permitted under a 2000 law that modified, but did not repeal, the U.S. embargo; under it, Cuba can buy certain agricultural products, medicines and medical devices from the U.S., but must pay in cash.
2. Growth has slowed sharply in recent years. According to Cuba's national statistical agency, the country's gross domestic product in 2013 was 77.2 billion pesos – which, depending on which exchange rate one uses, could equate to anything from \$77.2 billion (at the official rate of 1 convertible peso to \$1) to \$3.2 billion (at the internal rate of 24 regular pesos to 1 convertible peso). But either way, growth has slowed dramatically from the mid-2000s: The CIA estimates that Cuba's GDP grew just 1.3% last year in real (inflation-adjusted) terms – 177th out of 222 countries ranked. One big reason: With global oil prices still well below their pre-recession highs, the heavily discounted oil that Venezuela sends Cuba – some of which Cuba re-exports – is less valuable.

Cuba's Economic Growth Slows

Real GDP growth, annual



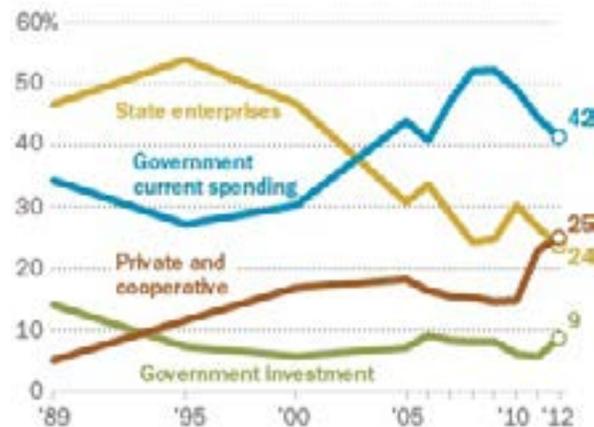
Source: CIA World Factbook (2014), Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información (2003-2013), World Bank (1990-2002)

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3. Despite economic reforms, the state still dominates. In a paper published last year by the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, former International Monetary Fund economist Ernesto Hernandez-Cata estimated that Cuba's private and cooperative sector generated 25.3% of GDP in 2012, compared with just 5% in 1989. But the government, both directly and through state-owned enterprises, was still the source of more than three-quarters of Cuba's economic activity. Government investment represented just 9.1% of GDP in 2012, versus 14.2% in 1989, which Hernandez-Cata said "reveals one of the most disturbing aspects of Cuba's recent economic history: the weakness of capital formation." (Official government figures put economy-wide fixed capital investment, from all sources, at 8.3% of GDP in 2013, considered low by international standards.)

Government Dominates Cuba's Economy

Estimated GDP composition of Cuba, by sector



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Source: "The Institutional Structure of Production in the Cuban Economy," Ernesto Hernandez-Cata, Papers and Proceedings of the 24th Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2014

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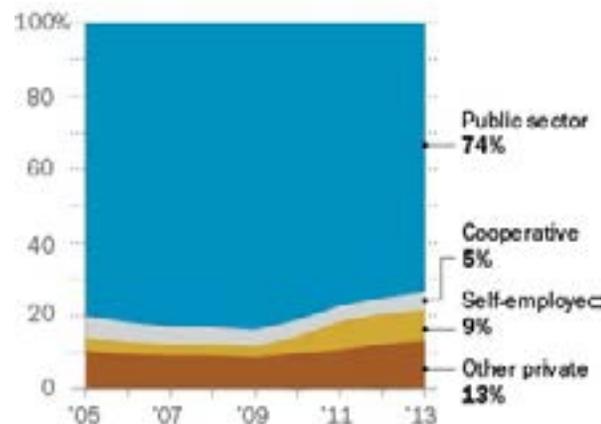
- More Cubans are working for themselves. In 2013, according to state figures, more than 424,000 Cubans (8.6% of all workers) were classified as self-employed; as recently as 2009, fewer than 144,000 Cubans (2.8%) were.

The "microenterprise" sector may be even bigger due to the hiring of unregistered full- and part-time workers. Ted Henken and Archibald Ritter,

researchers at Baruch College and Carleton University, respectively, estimate that as many as half of small enterprises employ at least one unregistered worker.

Despite Reforms, Most Cubans Still Work for the State

Share of employment in Cuba by sector



Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información

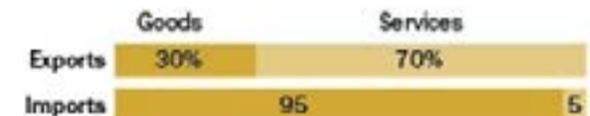
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- Cuba mostly imports goods and exports services. Getting a clear read on Cuban trade is especially tricky, not least because exports and imports are effectively valued using different exchange rates. As The Economist recently explained, state-owned firms and foreign joint ventures value each

ordinary peso at one convertible peso – that is, at \$1: "The massively overvalued rate ... creates huge distortions in the economy, allowing importers to buy a dollar's-worth of goods for one peso." While most of Cuba's exports are in the form of services (such as doctors and teacher working overseas), nearly all of its imports are goods (petroleum, foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, and chemicals).

Cuba's Foreign Trade, 2013

Share of Cuba's exports and imports



Cuba's major trading partners

Exports		Imports	
Canada	16%	Venezuela	37%
China	15	China	12
Venezuela	14	Spain	9
Spain	8	Brazil	5
Netherlands	6	Canada	4

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información (goods and services), CIA World Factbook (trading partners)

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FocusON Motivation

Sí Se Pudo: A Speech to Harvard Latino Students

Hola, soy el papá de Paola. I'm Paola's dad and I'm very proud to say that.

Many people think that the American dream is gone. I can't blame them. It's been very tough in this country for many people for a long time. But maybe they don't have a daughter, like me, who is graduating today from Harvard.

I'm an immigrant and, to me, my daughter Paola and each one of you are the best example that the American dream is alive and is strong.

As a journalist I've travelled all around the world and I've seen the worst of humankind. But regardless of where I go, I can always come home to the United States. This country gave me the opportunities, the freedom and the protection that my country of origin couldn't give me...and much more.

I can't think of anything more powerful, compassionate and beautiful than to choose a country where you want to spend the rest of your life, and for that country to turn around and accept you with open arms and allow you to become a citizen. That is exactly what this country has been doing for more than 200 years. I just hope that the immigrants who came after me are treated with the same generosity that I've received.

Right now, I am seeing the future because you are the future.

Let me tell you a story. More than 30 years ago, Cesar Chavez, the iconic leader of the Latino community, gave a speech in California. Back then, in 1984, he was very upset with the discrimination that farm workers and Hispanics, in general, were facing. And right there, in an incredibly difficult moment, he spoke with a lot of optimism. He said the following, quote:

"We are filled with hope and encouragement. We have looked into the future and the future is ours. History is on our side... The farm workers and their children, and the Hispanics and their children- are the future... These

'You cannot have a normal life; we expect extraordinary things from you'

trends are part of the forces of history that cannot be stopped."

Maybe you don't know it yet, but Cesar Chavez was talking about you. Yes, you. He was talking about the moment in which we were going to be leading this nation and you are the new leaders he was referring to.

Check the numbers. Right now there are about 55 million Latinos in this country and in 35 years we will be more than 100 million. One in three people in this country will be Hispanic. We are in the midst of a demographic revolution that is changing everything: the music that we listen to, the food that we eat and

politics.

No one can make it to the White House without the Latino vote. That's why every four years the candidates try to enamorarnos; they want us to fall in love and vote for them. And that is fine. But they are going to have to give us something in return for our vote. It's not enough to say a few words in Spanish, to put a hat on or to dance salsa.

For the first time in history we have two Latino candidates fighting for the White House in 2016. That's the new normal.

But this is what I want to tell you. I get the feeling that in this room, right now, we might find the first Hispanic president or the first presidenta Latina.

Do you want to know something? I wouldn't be surprised.

You are expected to do extraordinary things. Please, don't have a normal life. You have a lot going for you.

How many of you are the first in your family to graduate from college?

If you are a Latino you know that going to college is a family affair. Maybe your parents couldn't go to a university; maybe there was not enough money or a scholarship for your siblings to attend. But you made it. So, in a way, this graduation is a victory for the whole family. We can proudly say: Nos graduamos de Harvard. It's not I did it. It's we did it.

Now, I don't want to take anything away from you. Let's go back a few years.

+ Sign in to [Your Account](#)



I bet that you cried when you got your letter of acceptance from Harvard. I bet that you read it a hundred times to make sure that it was you who got accepted, that is was not a terrible and cruel mistake. I bet that you checked that the spelling of your last name was correct. The last names Rodríguez, Sánchez, López, Gutierrez, Ramos never sounded so good.

Well, it was a big deal and it still is. Harvard is, no question, one of the most important universities in the world. Your last name is now linked to one of the most recognized brand names in history. After your first name -María, Rosa, Paola, Juan, Jose, Arturo, Jorge- many people will immediately say: Harvard.

And that's where the challenge is. You cannot be a Latino, graduate from Harvard and have a normal life. No—I'm sorry to say—but you can't. There are so many problems in our community and so many things that have to be fixed in our country, that we need you for that.

We need you. We really do. And you know it.

As a matter of fact, I know that you know.

In the last few months I've talked to many of you—and to many Hispanic students graduating in all the country—and not a single one has told me: I want to be rich and make a lot of money. Not one.

I'm sure that all of you want a better economic life than your parents. That's understandable. But I'm "filled with hope and encouragement" – as Cesar

Chavez once said – to notice that most of you want to give something back to your community, to your family, to this nation.

This attitude – your attitude – is amazing and it will save this country.

I constantly say that the DREAMers, undocumented students, are my heroes. And they are. Facing incredible obstacles, and even deportation, they changed the immigration practices of this country. We have to follow their example.

Young Latinos are changing America for the best. You are the best insurance policy that we have. Thanks to you, we will be fine.

Now, I'm sure that you are worried and asking yourself: what am I going to do next? Don't worry. Just follow your passion and you'll be O.K. But, please, don't spend the rest of your life doing things that you hate. That's not the fastest way to happiness.

Yes, after these words, you might feel a lot of responsibility on your shoulders. That's fine too. But today and tomorrow let's celebrate. También somos buenos para las fiestas.

And I know what I want to celebrate. I want to celebrate that I still believe in this country and that I believe in you.

Now, go out there and change the world.

Guess what? *Sí se pudo.*

FocusON Journalism

News Startup El Español to Compete With Traditional Spanish Media

By *Tamar Wilner. Columbia Journalism Review*

A Spanish news startup led by ousted El Mundo founding editor Pedro J. Ramírez has raised €3.1 million (\$3.4 million) through crowd-funding in less than two months, likely the most ever generated by a journalism crowdfunding campaign. The well-heeled website, El Español, has €18.2 million in total capital and reserves, and is also taking the unusual step of giving all donors a financial stake in the business.

The outlet's early successes encapsulate many of the forces that have shaken up Spanish journalism and politics. Mass layoffs from traditional media enabled the launch of 400 news startups since 2010, and these have found audiences among an increasingly disaffected public. Whereas Occupy Wall Street withered away to nothing, Spain's populist movements have spawned new political parties and electoral wins—witness this weekend's municipal elections, in which an anti-poverty activist was elected mayor of Barcelona. In this environment, El Español hits the Goldilocks zone: small enough for anti-establishment credibility, but big enough to make a real impact.

More than 5,600 people made donations ranging from



€100 to €10,000 to the crowdfunding campaign for El Español, which plans to launch in September. In addition, Ramírez has put in nearly €5.6 million of his own—everything left over, after taxes, from his €11 million-plus El Mundo severance. Six main investors have together put in €5.5 million, and other benefactors, including several employees, have contributed tens or hundreds of thousands.

Supporters include Spainmedia—the publisher of Forbes and Esquire in Spain—as well as a private Madrid university and a small Spain-based hotel chain. Journalist David Jimenez told CJR he put in “a minor amount that represented about 0.2 percent of the money raised by the country” (by our calculations, about \$36,000), but decided to sell his shares when he was appointed editor in chief at El Mundo.

The crowdfunding figure alone is impressive when you consider that no single journalism campaign on Kickstarter has raised more than \$150,000, says Khari Johnson, editor of Through the Cracks, a website that reports on media crowdfunding. Johnson says he knows of only three journalism campaigns that have raised more than \$1 million: the Netherlands’ De Correspondent, Germany’s Krautreporter, and El Español.

The site’s fundraising muscle can be attributed in part to the clout of its high-profile editor. Ramírez, who founded El Mundo in 1989, is known not only for building the paper into Spain’s second-largest by circulation, but also for breaking important investigative stories, including revelations of death squads sanctioned by the Socialist government in the 1990s. Peter Preston, editor of The Guardian from 1975 to 1995, describes Ramírez as “probably the greatest Spanish (and European) journalist

of the past 25 years,” one who built up the paper “through years of blistering scoops and passionate invective—and prickly contempt for the gentilities of fairness and balance.”

Pedro J. (pronounced “Hota”), as he is known, has never shied from controversy. Critics charge that the paper’s editorial line on the 2004 Madrid bombings fueled conspiracy theories about involvement by Basque separatists ETA. (A Spanish judge concluded that a local Islamist terrorist cell was responsible, finding no link to tie the bombings to ETA.) In 2013, Spain’s Supreme Court convicted Ramírez of “violating the honor” of judge Baltasar Garzon, whom the paper labeled a “Nazi” for the way he pursued investigations of the bombings.

Ramírez’ opponents have played dirty as well. In 1997 he was the subject of a secretly filmed sex tape, and six people were convicted for invading his privacy. They included two executives from the newspaper Ya and the assistant of Spain’s former prime minister Felipe González.

Ramírez’ many years of muckraking came to a head in early 2014 when he was fired from El Mundo. He promptly blamed the ouster on government pressure, claiming the firing was retaliation for El Mundo’s stories on corruption in the ruling People’s Party—a charge which El Mundo’s parent company Unidad Editorial denies.

That firing, however, gave Ramírez a chance to act on his theories about opportunities in the Spanish media market. He has argued that the internet and smartphones are lowering the costs of distribution, which may soon allow the rise of a “new golden age for newspapers.”

“When I was fired as editor-in-chief of El Mundo at the beginning of last year—when I became victim of that epidemic that had killed off the editors at three

newspapers—then I decided it was time to demonstrate that my theories were right,” Ramírez says.

Ramírez says El Español will aim to compete with the main print newspapers in Spain and, later, in the wider Spanish-speaking world. Unlike most of the country’s previous digital launches, El Español seems to have the resources to reach its goals, and it plans to have between 50 and 60 journalists, as well as 15 developers, by September. Ramírez says he looks to Politico, Vox, and the French website Mediapart as inspiration.

At the same time, Ramírez says El Español will be less vulnerable to political pressure than will its mainstream competitors. For one thing, going digital-only cuts out major costs. And while advertising will start at about 80 percent of operating revenue, with subscriptions making up the rest, the business plan calls for dependence on ads to shrink year by year. Estimated revenue for the first year is €5.8 million, with about €9 million in operating costs, so the balance will come from El Español’s fundraising coffers. The company expects to start turning a profit in its third year.

The website will distinguish itself with investigative journalism, long-form stories, data visualization, and a cinematic take on video, says María Ramírez, the startup’s deputy editor, who is a Univision contributor and former New York correspondent for El Mundo, as well as Pedro J’s daughter. A beta version of the site is already active, and it provided coverage of Spain’s local and regional elections last weekend.

But El Español won’t limit itself to politics, and plans to cover all the usual newspaper departments, including business, sports, and the arts. In one project next month, the website will partner with production company 93 19

Metros to present a 360-degree view of an opera—including a virtual reality version for use with Google Cardboard.

The success of its crowdfunding campaign may make El Español an important first—as well as a last. While pending SEC rule changes are poised to open up equity crowdfunding in the US, Spain this year passed a law that prohibits crowdfunding campaigns from raising more than €2 million from members of the public. The law is intended to address problems with corruption and offshore assets, says Ramón Salaverría, a journalism professor at the University of Navarra.

“My impression is it is guided by financial reasons—and not by political or freedom of speech issues,” Salaverría says.

But El Español’s success speaks volumes about the changing media and political landscapes in Spain, and the intersection between the two.

The country was hit hard by a deep recession and the decline of traditional media, with 11,000 journalists and other media staffers losing their jobs since 2008, Salaverría says. Meanwhile banks’ increasing stake in the country’s media has raised questions about newspapers’ impartiality.

Spain has no formal, legal restrictions on freedom of the press, and claims of government and corporate pressure are often hard to substantiate. But such tales abound, María Ramírez says.

She recalls writing a story about the Spanish billionaire Villar

Mir, which included details about his court appearance related to investigations of corruption within the ruling People’s Party. Someone called the newsroom and persuaded the paper to remove the offending paragraphs, post-publication, without Pedro J’s knowledge, María Ramírez says. (Unidad Editorial told CJR, “The current management of El Mundo is not aware that any passage of the story you mentioned has ever been eliminated.”)

Sometimes, it’s hard to tell when conflict arises from undue influence, and when it comes from economic pressures. El Pais and La Vanguardia both fired their editors within three months of Pedro J’s departure from El Mundo—a situation Salaverría describes as symptomatic of the general decline in mainstream media. But María Ramírez doesn’t rule out government pressure in those cases: “It’s very easy to put pressure on you when you’re weak.”

Adds Pedro J: “The main powers, the political and economic powers, have profited off the crisis of the legacy business model ... to introduce censorship and especially self-censorship in the newsrooms in our country.”

Fueled by this atmosphere of distrust, and by the ready labor of thousands of pink-slipped journalists, Spain has become fertile ground for news startups. El Español seems perfectly poised to ride this wave, but with deeper pockets—and more shareholders—than its forebears. Now its challenge is to live up to that promise: of commercial viability, and editorial independence.

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