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It is a Sunday evening; I sit on the couch wanting to watch some TV and I turn to the channel playing *Family Guy*. Consuelo is a maid. I change it to *Modern Family*, Gloria Delgado is being feisty, strong-accented, and shows off her sexiness. Next show, *On My Block*, Caesar is a gangbanger, Jasmine is known as "ratchet" and loud, and all their friends are involved in money laundering. These characters represent a stereotypical Latino. Seeing my diverse culture being reduced to a handful of skits or laughter enjoyment is not appreciated. There are many American shows and movies that participate in making the Latino characters into what most people think Latinos are or should be. Sometimes, Latinos see somehow feel the need to fulfill the role they created of them because it shows that Latinos could not be anyone else. It gives Latino characters an image of being one dimensional. This creates one perspective of a specific kind of people which is not right. American film and television create limited characters for Latinos who are either criminals, laborers, or sex objects which only magnifies the single narrative. These stereotypes are an unfair representation of the American Latino community which: promotes discrimination, can modify how young viewers see themselves and their future, and less opportunities for Latino actors and actresses. The film and television should include more diverse representation to help benefit the Latino community.

The stereotypes in television and film come from the real-life stereotypes of a Latino person. For instance, the common image a person pictures Latinos are brown-skinned, Spanish-speaking immigrant, who came from Mexico to steal jobs from Americans. This the main stereotype of Latinos in America. This stereotype dates back to when Hispanics first started arriving in the United States. The highest peak of Mexican immigration was around the 1960s

during the Chicano movement. (Abramson M.D. et al., 2018, Chapter 27). Ever since then, Hispanics were labeled as mainly that. With their hard work of revolutions and protests, Hispanics and Latinos were able to become actors and actresses in the American film industry.

While, Latinos have progress into getting involved with shows and movies. About 9.8 percent of Latinos are involved in arts, design, entertainment, sports, or media profession. (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Even though it is a small percentage, it is a great accomplishment for the Latino and Hispanic community. One of the first representation of Latinos were called the "greaser," which were "white actors darkening their skin to play either thieves and rapists or doomed souls whose noble nature cannot be rewarded because they're … Mexicans…" (Los Angeles Times Staff, 2021, para. 2). So, some could say that this was the beginning of the evolution of the stereotypes against the Latino community. A poll was taken by Tyler Reny and Sylvia Manzona which showed how much of the Latino representation is seen. They indicated that the audience would see seventy-one percent of the criminal or gang member character, sixty-four percent of the gardener character, and sixty-one percent of the maid character (Reny and Mazona, 2016). These are the common Latino characters most audience see on the regular basis. The criminal stereotype still goes on today as well as laborers and an object for sexual feelings.

The criminal stereotype of Latinos in television and movies are still common today. Also known as, "'Thug Life' is a stereotype that is particularly dangerous because it depicts all Hispanics uniformly as rebels to the law" (Akines, 2015, pg. 23). This stereotype sees Latinos as only being "thugs" and anti-law followers. Examining the Netflix original series, *On My Block*, a group of friends of different ethnicities are involved in money laundering, murder, and gangs. In season two, the group of friends found a way to clean the dirty money they found or stole from a

gang leader (Lungerich et al., 2021). In season four, episode one, *Cuchillos* was a gang leader who was later killed by another gang member of *Los Santos*. (Lungerich et al., 2021). Caesar was a part of the gang, he used weapons, sold drugs, and was involved in gang rivalry. (Lungerich et al., 2021).

Another example is the movie *Colombiana*. The main character, Cataleya's, family was involved with a crime lord leader. Her parents were killed by the group. She trained to become an assassin to murder other leaders and to kill the one who killed her parents. (Megaton, 2011). There are many other examples that include the criminal character such as West Side Story, Money Heist, etc. These movies and shows entail the criminal perspective of Latinos and Hispanics. This stereotype comes from the main violent crime in Latin America today. Another common character that is shown are the physical laborers.

In many television shows and movies, a Latino worker can be seen. These workers can be maids, repair workers, or gardeners. This includes any time of cleaning or physical labor. Maids are usually Latina women. One common maid character is Consuela from the show *Family Guy*. Her whole purpose is to maintain a household. (MacFarlane, 1999). She also speaks broken English which goes with another stereotype that Latinos speak only Spanish. These types of maid usually work for a high-class wealthy, white family. Construction workers are mainly seen as male Latinos. An example of this is Manny Garcia from the Disney Junior show, *Handy Manny*. Manny is a repairman that works with his tools to fix problems. (Bollen et al., 2006-2013). The gardener stereotype can be applied to both male and female Latinos. In the movie, *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, Sam Cortez and his chihuahua, Papi, are landscapers for their boss Viv. (Gosnell, 2008). There are much more shows and films that also include this representation. They all consist of Latinos doing physical work mainly for white people. This stereotype comes

from the history of immigration, to come into a new country for job opportunities. Lastly, there is a stereotype where Latinas are presented as sexual beings.

Latinas are also commonly shown off as the "sex pots" or "Latin Lovers" (Pressler, 2019). This means that Latinas are sex objects to mostly the male gaze because of their body shape, attitude, and confidence. These types of women are feisty, loud, and sexy. A main character that represents this stereotype is Gloria Delgado from *Modern Family*. She is a curvy woman who has an exaggerated accent and uses her excuse of being a Latin woman to allow herself to be emotional. (Lloyd and Levitan, 2009-2020). In *Orange is the New Black*, there are multiple characters that keep up with their appearance and feisty attitudes. They include Gloria Mendoza, Dayanara Diaz, Marisol Gonzales, Blanca Flores, Maria Ruiz, Aleida Diaz, and Maritza Ramos. (Kohan, 2013-2019). They all represent the spirt of being a Latina, especially in prison. Most Latinas are commonly known as this stereotype because it comes from the culture. None of these stereotypes should be type-casted in movies or shows anymore. These types of characters further endorse discrimination against Latinos in society.

Latinos have always been discriminated against and the malpresentation in film helps to continue the discrimination in society. Television and film can impact the audience's views and judgments on people. It has the power to heavily influence audience members watching. So, what the audience sees on the screens give them the image of what a Latino person looks and acts like. People around the world watch television and movies all the time. There are many poor representations of Latino characters. It is important to include more diverse characters in new movies and shows.

There are some movies and shows that show good representations of Latinos as a community. For instance, *Encanto* is a movie that shows the Latino community as loving and

supporting to one another (Bush and Howard, 2021). Another example is the show, *Jane the Virgin*. Jane is the main character that goes through her life as an aspiring writer and has the support of her independent mother and grandmother. Her father is also a well-known actor, who supports Jane as well (Urman, 2019). *Stand and Deliver* shows a great education representation of Latinos. The teacher, Jamie, encouraged his students, who they themselves thought they could have no future, to study hard for their education to pass the Advanced Placement exam in calculus (Menendez, 1988). Even though these show approving representations, there still needs to be work done to include more. These cannot just be the only ones. It is not enough to forget about the other disappointing representations of Latinos. These films and shows could influence and encourage Latino audiences. The younger audience should be able to discover diverse representations of themselves.

Some of the audience that watch these types of shows and movies are of younger ages. These younger kids grow up watching these stereotypes being acted out. It gives them an image of what Latinos should act or be in life. The Hispanic kids watching would limit their dreams and think that they would have to fall into a category when they get older. It does not give them hope or encouragement to become somebody they want to be. Other kids of different ethnicities would compare these characters to real-life. They would only see brown-skinned kids as the people they see on the media. It affects them from seeing how the world should actually be. Another reason to stop these roles are for Latino actors and actress to have more acting opportunities.

There are actors and actresses that mostly play the role of a Latino. For example, Salma Hayek, Eugenio Derbez, Jennifer Lopez, Jamie Camil, etc. If there were less roles that involved being a stereotypical Latino those actors and actresses have an opportunity to explore different roles. It would also affect the way the audience sees them. They could inspire the younger

audience to become whatever they wished to be, no matter what ethnicity they are. This could expand their career path and lead them into different directions. Contributing to the problem helps "maintained, reinforced, and recirculated" the stereotypes. (Akines, 2015). Also, they would not be contributing to maintaining the stereotype in television and film.

Eliminating the stereotype from television and film can help change the stereotype in the real-world. Without writers writing in these roles and without actors or actresses acting these roles the common stereotypes could eventually disappear. The movies and shows that contain these stereotypes would still be around but if more diverse representation was shown it could become the new majority. Showing less and less of these stereotypes in media can decrease the unethical stereotypes in real-life. It could help solve a major social issue. The film industry in America presents Latino stereotypes in the forms of lawbreakers, workmen, and sexual attraction. Deleting these type-casted roles can help to not limit children's minds, have Latino actors and actresses have a chance to go against the stereotype, and aid the world-wide stereotyping problem. Stereotyping a group of people, negatively, is unethical and problematic. Stereotypes are created and planted almost permanently, which must need a lot of dedication to get rid of. They are created based of history and the culture of that minority. With action and movement there could be a time where the stereotypes are not describing a group of people in a negative way.

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