

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PORTRAYAL AND STEREOTYPES OF LATINOS ON
TELEVISION: *THE GEORGE LOPEZ SHOW* AND *AMERICAN FAMILY*

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department
of the Jack J. Valenti School of Communication
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By

Al Montaña

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ABSTRACT

Grounded in Cultivation Theory and Critical Race Theory, this study investigates *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family* with specific focus on Latinos and their portrayal in American television. This study represents a new examination of modern television and explores why and how stereotypes are perpetuated and challenged on Latino-oriented shows. The paper also critiques, reviews and describes prominent Latino figures throughout the past century on American television and film and examines how they're represented. Comparable studies were analyzed to provide further insight in the coverage and portrayal of Latinos in American television. A qualitative content analysis study was completed through observing episodes of both *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family*. Results obtained by coding the gathered data and using pre-set established stereotypes, revealed that there are formulas that work with sitcoms and dramas through themes such as major vs. minor characters, flashbacks and sitcom tropes. The themes help illustrate how stereotypes are perpetuated and challenged on television by how they promote positive behaviors and dialogue through negative, damaging behaviors and discourse.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mom Maria de la luz, my dad Justiniano and my siblings Justin, Nacho, Pancho and Marisol.

EPIGRAPH

Success is going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.

Winston Churchill

1874-1965

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There have been several prominent Latino characters on television before, from leading roles to supporting roles. Nevertheless, despite being the largest ethnic minority group in the country, Latinos only encompass 1% to 3% of the prime time television population (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz, 2005). However, when looking at Latinos on television, it's important to not only recognize how often they are portrayed, but how they are portrayed too? Throughout the past century, Latino actors and actresses have been categorized to a recurring set of roles that include the "Latin lover," "Mexican spitfire," and "Mexican peon" (Berg, 2012). *The George Lopez Show* (2002-2007) and *American Family* (2002-2004) are two shows that attempt to capture the essence of what it means to be Latino on prime time television. These two shows are important to study because *The George Lopez Show*, a situation comedy, consisted of a largely Latino cast, whereas *American Family* introduced the first Latino television drama series. These two shows in particular were chosen because together they represent prime time shows created by Latinos and a wide sample (2002-2007) of Latino family representations on prime time television. It's essential to analyze the *George Lopez Show* and *American Family* in order to comprehend how Latino shows with protagonist families are being portrayed, more positively or negatively in regards to stereotypes, as well as study what types of stereotypes are being perpetuated and/or challenged in assessment to previous portrayals of Latinos on television.

A big challenge that comes with creating these types of television shows are the stereotypes and perceptions that come along with using minority characters. There have already been many attempts at creating a show in which Latino characters not only stand out but in which the Latino audience actually finds captivating. For example, the following Latino-centric television shows were canceled after only one season due to low ratings: *Rob* (2012), *Saint George* (2014), *Greetings From Tucson* (2002-2003), *Cane* (2007) and *Freddie* (2005-2006). These shows not only featured Latino characters, but also presented them using frequently used stereotypes.

There are many challenges present when featuring not only Latinos, but also Latino families as a main cast. Furthermore, this study is unique because when it comes to *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family*, both shows exhibited Latino families as the main protagonist. Similarly, both shows go as far as to exhibit family portraits in their print advertisements. *American Family* also demonstrates the Virgin Mary and a tree in the middle of the DVD print advertisement, which represents past, present and future family generations. It can be said from the description of the print advertisements that both television series value the presence of family.

According to Negron-Muntaner (2014), despite the fact that Latinos consist over 50 million of the total U.S. population, among the top 25 scripted television shows over the last decades, the number of Latino leads during the 1970-1990s were higher than today. During the 1970-1990s, among the top 25 shows that had a central Latino character comprised of 1970s: *Chico and the Man* (1974-1978), *Paul*

Sand in Friends and Lovers (1974-1975), Fantasy Island (1977-1984), 9 to 5 (1982-1988); 1980s: CHIPs (1977-1983), Fantasy Island, 9 to 5; 1990s: NYPD Blue (1993-2005), Union Square (1997-1998) and Malcolm in the Middle (2000-2006). However, during the decades of 2000s and 2010s, only *Desperate Housewives (2004-2012)* had a central Latino character. Furthermore, since the end of *Desperate Housewives* in 2012, only *Modern Family (2009-present)* has a central Latino character.

General Portrayal of the Latino Population

Inniss (2012) explains that “Hispanic” is not among the official racial categories (White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander). According to (Diffen, 2012) there is a difference between Hispanic and Latino. He states that Hispanic refers to language, is a term that originally denoted a relationship to ancient Hispania (Iberian Peninsula), indicates a person whose lineage comes from a country where they speak Spanish. Inniss (2012) also adds that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. The United States Census (Ennis, Merarys, Albert, 2011) uses Hispanic to refer to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South (except for Brazil) or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. Latino refers more wholly to persons or communities of Latin American origin; for example, Brazilians are Latinos who are not Hispanic (Diffen, 2012). Furthermore, race refers to a person's physical characteristics while ethnicity refers to cultural factors, including nationality, regional culture, ancestry, and language. Latinos are classified as an

ethnic group (Diffen, 2012). However, according to a survey (Jordan, 2012) released by the Pew Hispanic Center, only 24% of "Hispanic" adults said they most frequently identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. About half said they identified themselves most regularly by their family's national origin, Mexican, Cuban, Salvadoran, etc. (Jordan, 2012).

In 1970, 4.7% of Americans recognized themselves as being of Latino descent. Today, Latinos are present in every state and are the biggest minority group in just over half of them (Barreto & Segura, 2014). Also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Mexican Americans are the largest Latino group, accounting for about 66% of the American Latino population (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2000). In *The George Lopez Show*, the wife, Angie, is Cuban American, and Rodriguez (2004) states that Cubans are the third largest single national origin group and comprise 3.5% of the total Latino population. One of the most pervasive values in the Latino culture is the importance of the family, including the extended family (Skogrand, Hatch, & Singh, 2005). Additionally, values that have been considered distinctly Latino according to Skogrand, Hatch and Singh (2005) include *familismo*, *personalismo*, *marianismo*, and *machismo*. *Familismo* refers more particularly to the importance of family intimacy and getting along with and contributing to the well-being of the family, often regarded as an extended one.

Over the last several decades, television has brought a couple of prominent lead Latino prime time characters, such as Ricky Ricardo from *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) and Chico Rodriguez from *Chico and the Man* (1974-1978). Besides Ricardo and Rodriguez, George Lopez is the only other Latino to star as the lead in his own

show. However, the overall number of Latinos represented in television is far less representative than the overall population. From 2011-2013, despite being 17% of the television population, Latinos didn't comprise one lead actor among the top ten films or scripted network television shows (Negron-Muntaner, 2014). According to the findings of Negron-Muntaner (2014), Latino existence in mainstream media is decreasing and altering at a slow pace in relation to the swift demographic changes. They called this problem the Latino media gap: as Latino consumer power grows, relative Latino media presence shrinks.

According to the study, *The Latino Media Gap* by Negron-Muntaner (2014), between 2010 and 2013, Latinos compromised none of the top ten television show creators, 1.1% of producers, 2% of writers, and 4.1% of directors. Mastro and Behm-Morawitz (2005) also state that it's hard to ignore the growing population of Latinos in America; still at 12.5%, Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the country. Yet, they only encompass 1% to 3% of the prime time television population while Caucasians compromise 80.4% of the television landscape and just 69.1% of the population. In addition, African Americans comprise 13.8% of the television population and 12.3% of the population (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Furthermore, no matter how far Latinos advance in terms of the quality of their depictions, many of these images still remain linked to established media stereotypes (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz, 2005).

Stereotypes

According to Mastro and Behm-Morawitz (2005), race and ethnicity does influence the way in which characters are depicted on prime time television. Mackie

(1973) adds that the working definition of stereotype is a collection of labels upon which a large percentage of people agree as appropriate for describing some class of individuals. The reading also states (Mackie, 1973) that stereotyping has three characteristics: the categorization of persons, a consensus on attributed traits, and a discrepancy between attributed traits and actual traits. However, the examination of numerous stereotype definitions, according to Mackie, shows that in its repetition, a stereotype has the following meanings: traditional knowledge rather than scientific decree; these beliefs concern groups of people, any social category like age, sex and occupation is a fitting group referent; portrayals of groups of people take the form of an assortment of trait-characteristics; stereotypes are identical (there are no grounds for definitional specification); stereotypes are inaccurate, the initial definition embodied the falsehood assumption. Gorham (2004) adds that a stereotype is a schema for people we perceive as belonging to a social group. He also adds that using the information in our scheme for Latinos, one can quickly make judgments about a Latino and the potential interaction with that person without having to expend much mental energy to evaluate the person in great detail.

The stereotyping of U.S. Latinos is mainly a result of deep-rooted Hollywood storytelling conventions (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Results also indicate that while in some cases Latino stereotypes are fading, in other instances stereotypical portrayals persist and that Latino images on television remain scarce and well below real-world numbers. However, it's also suggested by Mastro and Behm-Morawitz that television programming is a site of cultural politics where reliance on stereotypes exists, reinforcing the dominant ideology about race rather

than challenging it. Furthermore, instead of welcoming viewers to question Latino stereotypes, television generally provides hegemonic messages about Latinos in the United States (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). According to a study by Michigan State University on “ Mexican Americans- The New Minority on Television” (1979), of the 53 Hispanic characterizations in their study, about one fourth were bandits, thieves and other criminal types, the largest of the group at the time (Trevino, 1985). Meanwhile, other large groups featured handymen, waiters, car washers and construction workers, while only three characters (restaurant owners) were considered in the category of professionals and managers.

Lopez-Calvo (2011) claims that among the numerous ways to approach the marginalization of Latino youth, one of the most dangerous, is the glamorization of gang life. This lifestyle has captured the imagination of writers of the film industry alike. The unexpected success of television shows (like *Gangland* on the History Channel) about street and prison gangs has added to the negative characterizations of Latinos in films (Lopez-Calvo, 2011). Previous research (Lopez-Calvo, 2011) suggests that Latinos are the youngest, most inappropriately dressed characters, with the heaviest accents on television and among men. Latinos were thinner and more attractive than their on-air counterparts, which are attributes distinctive to the “Latin lover,” “harlot” and “dark lady” stereotypes; Latinas were the idlest characters on television. However, Latina actresses have been relegated to similar roles throughout their careers. Latina actress Teresa Yenque has played a nanny, a cleaning woman, a grieving mother, a grieving grandmother and three different housekeepers in several crime drama television series like *Law & Order* and *Law &*

Order: SVU while actress Lupe Ontiveros has played a maid (housekeeper) more than 150 times (Steiner, 2012). Even actress Jennifer Lopez, who is recognized worldwide, played a housekeeper in 2002's *Maid in Manhattan*, a romantic comedy reminiscent of the Cinderella fairy tale; and even actors such as Antonio Banderas, Fernando Lamas and Ricardo Montalban all starred in a number of roles that spread the idea that Hispanic men are incredibly suave, sexy and skilled in the bedroom (Nittle, 2015).

Previous content analyses of television programming that featured Latinos suggest a pattern of tireless underrepresentation spanning more than 50 years. Furthermore, in the 1950s, Latinos comprised about 3% of the television population, however by the 1990s that number remained the same at 3% (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). In addition, when shown on television, Latinos are more likely to be cast in secondary and nonrecurring roles and have historically been confined to a narrow set of stereotypical, often negative, characterizations which include "the criminal," "the law enforcer," "the Latin lover," "the Harlot" and "the comic buffoon" (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005).

For instance, the Chicano gang life has been a part of representation of Los Angeles Latinos in Hollywood for decades (Lopez-Calvo, 1993). The release of *Colors* (1988) starring Sean Penn and Robert Duvall marked the start of a sequence of exaggerated versions of the Chicano gang life in such films like *American Me* (1992), *Blood In Blood Out* (1993) and *Mi Vida Loca* (1993) which all carry varying degrees of heavy criminal stereotypes (Lopez-Calvo, 2011). As Rodriguez (2004) states, 20th Century cinema was the era in which the seeds were planted for the violent, lower-

class, criminal images that would blossom more fully over the next several decades. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to these films when it comes to comedy. The comedic duo of Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong made six films together playing as two pot-smoking hippies. *Cheech and Chong's Up in Smoke* (1978) grossed over \$40 million and ranked No. 15 in the top grossing films of 1978. The result of seeds being planted for strong lawless, felonious images during the 20th century triggered a massive, more generous approach to how these images have been conveyed over the next several decades.

Positive and Negative Stereotypes

According to Czopp (2008), stereotypes are described “positive” because they are favorable and confer an advantage to members of these groups over non-members. Stereotypes such as the Asian being labeled a “model minority” because of their professed academic capability and projecting socioeconomic achievements or the African Americans considered to have “greater athletic ability” and “a natural sense of rhythmic and music talent” can be considered positive. Though, they are essentially limiting because they are based only on group association rather than any individuating information Czopp’s (2008). Czopp also suggests an inconsistency in how targets and perceivers comprehend and appreciate positive stereotypes. On one hand, Czopp deems that majority group perceivers may feel that such encouraging views are truly complimentary because they reproduce honest praise for another group’s strengths. However, on the other hand, Czopp reasons that targets may identify the inherent restrictiveness of such stereotypes and may feel they are being pigeonholed based only on their group affiliation.

A stereotype can be described “negative” because it makes people ignore differences between individuals; therefore making generalizations and overviews about people that might not be true (McLeod, 2008). McLeod adds that by stereotyping negatively, we suppose that a person has a full variety of characteristics and abilities that we assume all members of that group have. Most stereotypes incline to carry a negative impression; negative stereotypes are seemed far more common. Furthermore, according to literature from Gonzales et al. (2002), ethnically shared negative stereotypes about one’s group create risk of confirming, thus leading to performance pressure.

According to Berg (2002), the following stereotypes exist in present-day media and have appeared in 20th century Hollywood cinema. “The criminal” is a male recognized by his youthful appearance, aggressive nature, dishonesty and unkempt appearances. “The law enforcer” is articulate, well-groomed and respected. “The Latin lover” is professionally attired and defined by his heavy accent, hot-temper and sexual aggression. “The female harlot” is hot-tempered, sexually aggressive, provocatively and unprofessionally dressed. “The comic/buffoon” is described by a heavy accent, laziness and lack of intelligence. “El bandido” is dirty and messy, usually exhibiting an unshaven face, missing teeth, and scruffy, oily hair. Today the Latin American gangster helps capture the same violent and fierce “bandido.” “The female clown” is the counterpart of the Latino “buffoon” and is used for her charms, just like “the harlot.” Last, “the female Latin lover” is virginal, inscrutable, aristocratic and erotically appealing precisely because of these characteristics (Berg, 2002).

Portrayal of the Latino Population in Film

According to Treviño (1985), stereotypes that originated in films persist and negatively reinforce attitudes about what Latinos are and what they can do. Despite the low representation of Latinos with the same conventions on cinema and television throughout the decades, over the past 35 years there have been numerous films made by Latino filmmakers with star Latino actors that have received prominence. Stereotypes like the traditional “el bandido” have been around since the early 1900s and were featured in such early films like *Cisco Kid and the Lady* (1940), *Viva Cisco Kid* (1940), *King of the Bandits* (1947) and *Bandido* (1956) (Trevino, 1985). Another common stereotype in early cinema was the “Latin lover,” which was first commercialized by Italian actor Rudolph Valentino, as seen in such films like *The Kissing Bandit* (1948), *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (1951), and *Latin Lovers* (1953). Other stereotypes Treviño examined were the “Mexican peon,” which displayed a lot of Mexican men as weak, as well as the “Mexican spitfire,” which degraded the portrayals of Mexican women. While the “American cowboy” was received as a hero with courage, the “Mexican peon” is seen as a coward and a target for the hero cowboy. Also, the “Mexican spitfire,” which was featured in early films such as *Hot Pepper* (1933), *Mexican Spitfire* (1939) and *Mexican Spitfire at Sea* (1941), was viewed as exotic and mysterious with a fierce temper, only assuming that all Latin women embody these characteristics (Trevino, 1985).

Unlike previous films that include traditional stereotypes like the “el bandido,” “Latin lover” or “Mexican peon,” the following films inform, inspire and are significant to the Latino experience in the United States and include issues such

as cultural identity, family, community, immigration, education and assimilation. *El Norte* (1983), starring Lupe Ontiveros, Tony Plana and Zaide Silvia Gutierrez tells the story of Rosa and Enrique who are forced to leave their native Guatemala after the army demolishes their village and murders their parents. Subsequently, like others in wave of violence and massacres who escape, Rosa and Enrique are forced to flee and make a long dangerous journey to the United States, eventually landing in Los Angeles as they attempt to start over as undocumented immigrants. The film goes into the culture shock experienced by the Guatemalan immigrants as they live in fright of deportation and struggle to survive and make a decent life through hard work.

La Bamba (1987), starring Lou Diamond Phillips, is a true-life story of Mexican American teen Ritchie Valens, born Ricardo Valenzuela, of Mexican immigrants who pick up fruit in California as migrant workers. As he made his rise to stardom as a rock and roll singer, Valens crossed over by changing his name, signing in English and reached the American dream before his early death in a plane crash at the age of 17. Valens kept his cultural roots alive in his music, by recording in Spanish; including his greatest hit "La Bamba," a traditional Mexican song he insisted in recording in Spanish. The film also portrays the struggles of interracial dating in the 50s. For example, the conservative dad of Ritchie's girlfriend, Donna, is a racist who does not approve of the relationship.

Lou Diamond Phillips also stars in *Stand and Deliver* (1988) as high school student Angel Guzman. The film is based on the real life of East Los Angeles high school teacher, Jaime Escalante, played by Edward James Olmos, who is strong-

minded in changing his students' lives by increasing their self-esteem. He accomplishes that by making the students realize that education is the only way out of poverty and teaches them calculus in order to help them pass. The film explores the relationship between the teacher and the students as they are accused of cheating and are forced to retake an exam.

My Family (Mi Familia) (1995) follows three generations of a Mexican-American family living in East Los Angeles. The film starts in the 1930s with José Sanchez, recent immigrant, and Mexican-American María, played by Jennifer Lopez. After they meet, throughout their journey they achieve to marry, face exile and nurture a family; the emphasis then turns to the children and grandchildren. The film, directed by Gregory Nava, ended up casting many of these actors again in his television show, *American Family*. *Selena* (1997), also directed by Gregory Nava is based on the true story of Grammy-winning recording artist Selena, the connection with her family and rise to fame before being murdered at age 23. The film features the life of a Mexican-American who has a Mexican heritage but also speaks English as a primary language, and is trying to create her own musical identity.

Nonetheless, despite the success of these few Latino films over the past several decades, the rest of the films that have been made in the United States are likely written, produced and directed by non-Latinos, therefore stereotypes are used to determine their roles. According to Reyes (2014), a study by USC found that Latinas were the most likely of any group to appear on film partly or completely nude and males were the most likely to be shown in tight or revealing clothing.

However, few Latina actresses like Zoe Saldana and Michelle Rodriguez have proved that theory wrong and have added to the success of major blockbusters like *Avatar* (2009) and *Fast & The Furious 6* (2013), respectably. Reyes also adds that there is no excuse for studios not to pursue Latino projects, insisting that Latinos should not only get one chance to prove that the market exists. There is a lack of significant participation in Hollywood in front and behind the camera; they have to elevate their culture by creating more films that are reflective of Latinos and how they live (Reyes, 2014).

Portrayal of the Latino Population in Television

One of first successful Latinos on television was Cuban actor, Desi Arnaz, who played Ricky Ricardo in the popular show *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) on CBS. Arnaz not only played the stage husband of Lucy, but in real life as well. Arnaz was also the first Latino to co-host a national English-language television show on prime time. As Ricky Ricardo, he portrays the stereotype of the “male comic” and “Latin lover” by displaying the hot temper and passion of Latino men; he also finds it hard to keep calm and shouts at Lucy frequently because of his impatience. He also displays the “refuse to speak English” stereotype by speaking broken English that is exhibited when he gets mad and often cries out swear words in Spanish. Ricardo plays a Cuban nightclub owner that orchestrates the Ricky Ricardo Orchestra. Along with being a bandleader, he is also a singer and his profession was considered peculiar because Caucasians were not associated with those types of jobs at the time. Ricardo displayed many traits that were unusual for a husband on television at the time. The fact that Ricardo’s heritage was Latino made it acceptable for other characters of the

show to imitate his accent, using phrases that were used in numerous episodes, such as “wha happen?” or “tick it teasy.”

Another recognized Latino who played part in a popular television show featured Puerto Rican actor and comic Freddie Prince as Chico Rodriguez in *Chico and the Man* on NBC. Rodriguez played alongside Ed Brown who was played by Jack Albertson. Brown runs an old garage in East Los Angeles and Rodriguez convinces Brown to give him a job, despite the fact that Brown dislikes Mexicans. Various more Latinos have been cast in non-leading roles in popular television shows, like Colombian and Venezuelan actor Wilmer Valderrama who plays Fez, a foreign exchange student in *That '70s Show* (1998-2006). The show centers around a group of teenage friends set in a small town in 1970s Wisconsin; the group consisted of five Caucasian characters plus Fez. Valderrama's character is often portrayed as a “male buffoon” with his obvious thick accent.

In 21st century television, besides *The George Lopez Show*, which lasted six seasons, various Latino actors have attempted to create something as lasting and impactful. In *My Name is Earl* (2005-2009), Latino actor Greg Garcia started in one of network's most popular comedies when it aired, but was canceled four seasons later. *The Brothers Garcia* (2002-2004), considered by many a Latino remake of the American show *The Wonder Years* (1988-1993), was narrated by an older version of the main character in each episode, played by Colombian actor John Leguizamo. The main character recounts his character's life on the series, and the adversities that he, his two brothers and their twin sister tolerate while living in San Antonio, Texas. *Resurrection Blvd* (2000-2002) was set in East Los Angeles, stars Nicholas Gonzalez,

Tony Plana and Marisol Nichols. The drama centers on a family that has three generations of boxers and struggle to find some sort of balance between their acculturated American customs and the Latino values that are holy and sacred in Latino culture. Another short-lived situation sitcom is *Freddie*, which aired on ABC. The show was inspired by actor Freddie Prinze Jr.'s real life, growing up in a home full of ladies, features the half-Puerto Rican actor as Freddie Moreno, a well-off chef living in Chicago with his niece, sister-in-law and grandmother.

The CBS drama *Cane*, which includes Jimmy Smits, Rita Moreno, Nestor Carbonell, Michael Trevino and Hector Elizondo, shares the story of a wealthy Cuban-American family working together to manage a rum business in South Florida. The drama features one of the finest Latino ensembles in the history of television, but only aired for one season. *Greeting from Tucson* aired on the WB (now called The CW) television network for just one season, before it was canceled. The television drama, which featured an almost all-Latino cast that included Sara Paxton, Aimee Garcia and Lupe Ontiveros, was about an ethnically mixed-family Latino family based on the life of series creator, Peter Murrieta, a Chicano TV producer.

Unlike other television shows, *Greetings from Tucson* was told from the point of view of a 15 year-old Latino teen named David Tiant (Pablo Santos), the oldest son of the family. *Ugly Betty* (2006-2010) aired for four seasons on ABC, earning 11 Emmy nominations in its first season. The series starts Betty Suarez, played by Honduran actress America Ferrera. The series revolves around Ferrera's character as she tries to make it into the fashion business in New York but lacks a fashion sense. Other recent show includes *Cristela* (2014), created by standup comedian

Crisela Alonzo, which is about a law student on the edge of getting her first big internship at a law firm but also has to deal with her traditional Mexican-American family. Cristela was the first Latina to create, produce and star in her own prime time comedy. *Jane the Virgin (2014)* stars Gina Rodriguez as Jane Villanueva, a student trying to become a teacher who is engaged to an attractive detective who respects her decision to be a virgin until marriage. Jane then accidentally becomes impregnated when she is inseminated by a specimen meant for another patient and later finds out the sperm donor is her boss.

Despite various attempts of creating another lasting Latino show like *The George Lopez Show*, many Latino television stars have been featured and highlighted in other non-Latino television shows, many even participating in typecasting (categorizing). One of those roles features actress Sofia Vergara in *Modern Family*, who plays Gloria Delgado-Pritchett, a sexy Latina trophy wife who is characterized as a clueless Latina. Many prominent Latinas argue that characterizing actresses in that type of role, not only fuels the stereotype that Hispanic women are sexy, but also loud, crazy and spicy (Nittle, 2015).

Typecasting has also helped other actresses break into the business despite not being featured in Latino-based films. Latina actress Eva Longoria played a homemaker who uses her looks to advance her agenda in *Desperate Housewives*, which aired on ABC for eight seasons. The show revolves around the mysteries and secrets that unravel through the lives of female friends in one suburban neighborhood, after the mysterious suicide of a neighbor. In principle, this category

of thinking traps our culture within our bodies, ignoring the values, ethics, and traditions that contribute to our sense of culture and community (Nittle, 2015).

The George Lopez Show

In April 2002, Reyes Entertainment was kept by ABC as Hispanic Market Consultant for the midseason comedy *The George Lopez Show*, starring well-known Latino comedian, George Lopez. Lopez became one of the few Latinos to star in a television comedy series, following the path of Desi Arnaz and Freddie Prinze. The show was scheduled to only run four episodes and Reyes Entertainment concentrated on Latino media and community groups to establish a connection by working with advertising, on-air promotions, publicity, and on-line departments to accolade their efforts regarding Latino and Spanish-language media markets (Reyes, 2006). Reyes Entertainment sought to capture the Latino audience by implementing strategies that included: securing a presence at high-profile Latino media events, writing and producing greeting and promo reels for Latino events, and translating and spreading press to Spanish-language and bilingual editors, producers, columnists, publishers and media executives (Reyes, 2006).

The George Lopez Show appealed to more than 10 million viewers in its debut episode and won its period when it aired on March 27, 2002, recording the highest ratings among adults aged 18-49. It also retained 97% of its lead-in audience from *My Wife & Kids* during its run, according to Reyes (2006). Additionally, after the first four episodes, the show became ABC's number one mid-season comedy and the number one broadcast network television program in Hispanic homes throughout its run (Reyes, 2006). In May, the show returned for a full second season

in the 2002-2003 prime time line up. According to a study by Markert (2004), the show fosters a positive image of Latinos considerably more than a negative one. This show is entrenched to a more candid depiction of Latino lives, a hard-working blue-collar family that fights to deal with real-world problems. This encouraging depiction offers a sight of normal people with a sense of humor that happen to be Hispanic, struggling with day-to-day regular activities (Markert, 2004). He also adds that such a depiction is prone to promote self-importance among Latinos and at the same time challenge some of the stereotypes about poor, rural, illegal immigrant Hispanics that are prevalent within the wider society.

The George Lopez Show, a syndicated situation comedy created by Mexican American comedian George Lopez, ultimately aired on from 2002-2007 for a total of six seasons and 120 episodes and features a largely Latino cast. The show revolves around the life of George Lopez, who plays a fictional version of himself, juggles raising his family at home and his life at work. The rest of the family consists of Constance Marie, who plays the wife; Carmen, the daughter, who is played by Masiela Lusha (the only non-Latino family cast member); and Max, the son, who is played by Luis Armand Garcia. The rest of the cast features family members and friends who make appearances on a regular basis. George Lopez works as an airplane parts factory employer and is promoted to manager, which is where the series starts off. Angie originally works part-time as a cosmetics salesperson and then switches to a wedding planner who works from home. Max is dyslexic and attends a special education program, while Carmen attends a luxurious private school before being expelled and forced to enroll in Catholic school. George's

mother, Benny, lives with them and is cast as the sharp and indecent older woman, George's best friend, Ernie, lives at home with his mother and is cast as a "male buffoon" and George's father-in-law, Vic, plays a first-generation Cuban physician and is cast as a "Latin lover."

American Family

In 2001-02, throughout development of the series *American Family*, there was hopefulness that CBS would launch the first drama about a Latino family on a broadcast network, which was initially made as a pilot for CBS (Jicha, 2002). When CBS passed on the series, there was discontent in the Hispanic community. Then PBS got involved after it thought the series would be a good fit for the network by seeking an outlet in the United States for a Latino Series (Jicha, 2002). CBS surrendered its rights to *American Family* and donated the pilot, which cost more than \$1 million to produce. PBS ordered 12 additional episodes to fill out the standard first-season order (Jicha, 2002). Despite funding from PBS, the show operated on a smaller budget than NBC, CBS, ABC or Fox, cutting costs by shooting many scenes on Los Angeles streets and weekends when Esai Morales wasn't working on *NYPD Blue* (Kiesewetter, 2002).

Nevertheless, not being on one of the big four commercial broadcast networks gave *American Family* more creativity, control and freedom. However, there were high-stakes riding on the series and future Latino series if *American Family* failed, giving the networks a reason to believe that ethnic programming is not beneficial, since it disappoints to draw a wide audience (Calvo, 2000). In addition, Latino-themed projects need significant executives to steer them through

the pitch procedure and also ponder the risk in airing a program with so many faces and story lines that haven't been on television before (Calvo, 2000). Another way PBS tried to reduce that risk is by changing the show's look, by plotting storylines based on responses by focus groups. However, take away the Latino ethnic images and *American Family* is a regular family drama of no definite distinction.

American Family, the first drama series on broadcast television to feature a Latino cast, attempts to depict the everyday struggles and triumphs of daily domestic life through the eyes of the Gonzalez family, from East Los Angeles. Gregory Nava was the series creator and executive producer. Narrated by college student Cisco Gonzalez (Jay Hernandez), who wants to be a filmmaker, Cisco videotapes family gatherings to post on the Gonzalez web site that he's created. The show was the first Latino TV drama series but was canceled after only two seasons on PBS; season one aired during 2002 and season two during 2004. A total of 35 episodes aired between both seasons.

Season one had 22 episodes, while season two had 13 seasons but was never released on DVD, unlike season one. The Gonzalez family consists of Jess Gonzalez, played by Edward James Olmos, who is the father of five adult children. Sonia Braga plays the wife and mom as Berta Gonzalez. They both arrive to Los Angeles from Mexico. The five adult children are Nina, Esteban, Conrado, Vangie and Cisco Gonzalez played by Constance Marie, Esai Morales, Yancey Arias, Rachel Ticotin and Parker Torres, respectively. This completes the Gonzalez family. In an early episode, the wife dies. The drama then centers on many characters including the three sons, two daughters, the aunt and a grandson. One of the sons, Esteban, played by Esai

Morales, is an ex-convict, who just got out of prison and is trying to put his life back together by being a firefighter, and another episode features him teaching gang members how to be firefighters, through a program.

One of the daughters, Vangie, played by Rachel Tichon, is married to a Caucasian male, Larry. They have two children, while she juggles a career as a fashion designer. The other daughter, Nina, is a feminist attorney working for a non-profit group who does immigration law. Conrado, the other son, is a medical doctor who ends up enlisting in the Army like his dad, while the youngest, the narrator of the series, is a teenage boy and likes videotaping family events and uploading the video up on a family website. The grandson is in the care of Jess and is the son of Esteban, and her mom, Laura, is a junkie.

The head of the family, Jess, is a conservative local barber. One episode focuses on his experiences in the Korean War while a couple of episodes tell the story of how his wife came to the United States. The episodes in this series touch many diverse stories like the housekeeper who gets deported and can't get back to her son. Whether PBS picked up a second 13-episode season of the series depended not just on ratings but on community reaction as judged by PBS stations and traffic to the show's web site, as well as success in finding corporate underwriting or other financing (Jensen, 2001).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultivation Theory

The longer we live with television, the more invisible it becomes; television has become the common symbolic environment (Gerbner, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). First introduced in 1976 by Gerbner and Gross, Cultivation Theory was largely proposed for television and concentrated on its widespread and frequent patterns of representations, viewing and focus on the lasting and common values shared when growing up and living with television (Gerbner, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). It similarly involves the cultivation of established, unaffected and commonly shared assumptions, descriptions, and conceptions echoing the recognized characteristics and interests of the medium itself. However, it is also specified that cultivation is not a universal process, but that the viewpoint and course of the television patterns depends on the lifestyles of the viewers. Essentially, each group of viewers (Latinos, African Americans, and Caucasians) is going to gravitate in a different direction, but all are affected by the same images. We can therefore imply, through Cultivation Theory, that anything that challenges the assumptions of the television audience, when it comes to Latino-based shows, is going to fail because there's already a set of established stereotypes and notions that are associated with Latinos.

For instance, a study by Tan, Fujioka, and Tan (2000), which studied television use and stereotypes of African Americans, found that perceived negative television portrayals of African Americans led to negative stereotyping which in

turn predicted opposition to affirmative action. Additionally, they confirmed through their study that negative television content is better remembered than positive content, suggesting that the more arousing a message, the more it is remembered, hence, are influential in the developing of stereotypes.

Similarly, a study by Ramasubramanian (2011) exploring how television exposure affects Caucasian viewers' attitudes on Asian Americans, revealed that the prevailing image of Asians in modern television is the "model minority" stereotype, members that are most often perceived to achieve a higher degree of socioeconomic success than the population average, yet they only form 3% of all prime time characters and are rarely cast in central roles. Ramasubramanian (2011) also found that heavy viewers were more likely than light viewers to recollect model minority stereotypes of Asian-Americans and are more likely to have sturdier stereotypical perceptions of Asian-Americans as intelligent, polite model minorities. This study by Ramasubramanian thus supports Cultivation Theory in that television appears to act as a socio-cultural mediator that forms, preserves and fosters ideas about Asian Americans in real life, and that the "model minority" stereotype puts enormous weight on Asian Americans to excel. Another study by Martinez and Ramasubramanian (2014) explores the effects of stereotypical comedy on Latino audiences. The study shows that participants rated comedy more favorably when the comedian was Latino, compared to when the comedian was Caucasian. Findings also suggest that participants with high levels of racial/ethnic identification rated comedy as more stereotypical and the Caucasian target alleged offender as significantly more culpable than the Latino alleged offender.

A study conducted by Dixon and Linz (2000) revealed that African Americans and Latinos were more likely to be portrayed as criminals instead of police officers on television news. The findings from Dixon and Linz propose that African Americans are evidently overrepresented as lawbreakers on news programs. However, although prior research suggests that Latinos would be represented in the same manner, results showed that Latinos are actually underrepresented as both officers and perpetrators. The consequences of Latino portrayals on viewers are unmistakable. If African Americans and Latinos on television news are displayed as criminals, then Caucasian viewers' mental groupings concerning African Americans and Latinos might cultivate from these depictions (Dixon & Linz, 2000).

From a cultivation perspective, these television images of Latinos probably have insinuations for real world insights of Latinos. While research indicates that portrayals of Latinos on prime time television are rare and unfavorable, research also suggests that viewers with limited contact with Latinos would rely more heavily on televised portrayals of Latinos for information (Mastro, Behm-Morowitz, & Ortiz, 2007). Hence, television does not just create or reflect images, opinions, and beliefs but it is an important part of an active progression (Gerbner, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Established needs and ideas influence the creation and spreading of mass-produced messages which generate, manipulate, and sustain the needs, morals, and beliefs of the mass public. In turn, the mass public acquires different identities as it is exposed to the continuing stream of messages (Gerbner, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994).

In a study by Mastro and Greenberg (2000), a one-week sample of prime time television was created to represent broadcast entertainment programming for 1996. Attention was paid to the regularities and assets of ethnic minority and majority characters, as well as Latinos and their relations with other television characters. Based on their findings, they concluded that there might be few Latinos on prime time television because the demand is alleged to be low; therefore, exhibiting a standard repetition of cultivation. Since there are not a lot Latino-based shows out there, Latinos tend to watch shows that Caucasians watch; thus, there is no need for Latino-based shows.

A similar study by Lee et. al (2009) investigated television viewing patterns of college students and their successive perceptions of ethnic minority groups in the United States. The study shows disparities in stereotypes held and identified based on the amount of television viewing and amount of exposure to specific television genres. Results from the study suggest that many heavy television viewers hold ethnic stereotypes and also hold a need for bigger media critique and consumer education. Results also show that participants not only believed many stereotypes but also showed more negative stereotypes towards Asians and Native Americans and credited Caucasians with the most positive traits when compared to other groups. Results from Negron-Muntaner (2014) also add that media representations of Latinos in United States are exaggerated when looking at the US Census. For instance, Latinas were represented as “maids” by media 69% of the time; the actual percent of Latinos who are maids and house cleaners is just over 44%. Latinos were represented as “criminals” by media 24% compared to 19% (US Census), and

Latinos were represented by media as “law enforcement” twice as much (23%) as actual census (13%). Latinos were under represented by media as “creative types” 1% compared to 9% (US census).

The National Hispanic Media Coalition looked at perceptions of Latinos in the U.S., and the vast majority of respondents in the study agreed with a number of positive stereotypes of Latinos. They included the idea of a “hardworking,” “family-oriented,” “religious/churchgoing” and “honest.” When being asked how well each of the following terms described Latinos, at least 30% of Latinos agreed each term was described as negatively. They include: “Take jobs from Americans,” “Too many children,” “Refuse to learn English,” “Less educated,” “Welfare recipients.” However, when researching Latino stereotypes by television news, they found that Fox, Network News and MSNBC all displayed the following expressions: “on welfare,” “take jobs,” “refuse English” and “too many kids” at least 19%, with the highest shown being 56% (Sharp, 2012).

One show that *The George Lopez Show* draws comparisons to revolves a family from a different ethnicity. *The Cosby Show*, a show about an African American family, aired for eight seasons (1984-1992) on NBC and altered the perception of African Americans on television, opening the door for other black television shows (Crenshaw, 2015). *The Cosby Show* opened several door for shows that aired before the start of the 21st century like: *A Different World* (1987-1993), *In Living Color* (1990-1994), *Roc* (1991-1994), *Martin* (1992-1997), *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* (1990-1996) and *Living Single* (1993-1998). According to *TV Guide*, *The Cosby Show* was television’s largest success in the 1980s. The show centers on the Huxtable

family, an upper middle-class African-American family residing in New York. The head of the household is Heathcliff "Cliff" Huxtable, an obstetrician, and his wife, Clair Huxtable née Hanks, is an attorney. They have five children, four daughters and one son: Sondra, Denise, Theodore, Vanessa, and Rudy. Despite being a sitcom, the show involves serious issues and matters, such as dyslexia, education, sexuality and teenage pregnancy.

The success of *The Cosby Show* changed the way audiences perceived African Americans on television. The show displayed African Americans in various positive roles that include an obstetrician and an attorney. Similarly, *The George Lopez Show* attempted to change the perceptions of Latinos on television by displaying The Lopez family as an upper middle-class family and George as a first-time manager.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory begins with the notion that racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society and because it is so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture; normal society, the usual way society does business, the common, and everyday experience of most people of color in this country (Lanson-Billings, 1998; Delgado, 2012). Lawrence (1995) proclaims that there's a practice of storytelling in law and that litigation is highly formal storytelling, though the stories of normal people, in general, have not been told or logged in the literature of law or any other discipline.

Critical Race Theory sprang up in the 1970s, as numerous lawyers, activists, and legal scholars across the United States, such as Derrick Bell (known as the father of Critical Race Theory) recognized that the strong advances of the civil rights era of

the 1960s had hindered and were being rolled back (Delgado, 2012; Oremus, 2012). Bell and other rightful scholars began using the phrase “Critical Race Theory” in the 1970s as an impression on “Critical Legal Theory,” a division of approved study that challenges the strength of notions such as rationality, objective truth, and judicial neutrality. Critical legal theory was also an impression on “Critical Theory,” a philosophical framework with origins in Marxist beliefs (Oremus, 2012). Additionally, Bell innovated what he called, “interest convergence theory,” which states that Caucasians will support minority rights only when it’s in their interest as well.

Moreover, after scholars held their first workshop at a Wisconsin convent in 1989, further conferences and meetings took place with panels, plenary sessions, keynote speakers, and a broad representation of scholars, students, and activists from a wide variety of disciplines (Delgado, 2012). Furthermore, today many in the field of education consider themselves critical race theorists who use it to understand issues of school discipline, tracking, affirmative action, high stakes testing, controversies over curriculum and history, and alternative charter schools.

The new theory, established out of legal scholarship, provides a critical analysis of race and racism from a legal point of view. Since its inception within legal scholarship, the theory has spread to many disciplines and the movement is a collection of activists and scholars fascinated in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power (Delgado, 2012). According to Lanson-Billings (1998), Critical Race Theory departs from mainstream legal scholarship by sometimes employing storytelling to analyze the myths, presuppositions, and

received perceptions that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render African Americans and other minorities lesser. It also looks at how citizenship and race might interact, critiques liberalism and argues that Caucasians have been the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation.

Critical Race Theory also argues that racism requires sweeping changes, but liberalism has no mechanism for such change, rather liberal legal practices support the painstakingly slow process of arguing legal precedence to gain citizen rights for people of color (Lanson-Billings, 1998). Racism is difficult to address or cure because it is not acknowledged, therefore only aid the most obvious forms of discrimination, such as mortgage redlining, an immigration search in a food-processing plant that targets Latino workers, or the refusal to hire a black Ph.D. instead of a white college dropout (Delgado, 2012).

Critical Race Theorists often cite empirical evidence to support their contention that civil rights laws continue to serve the interests of Caucasians. These scholars are unified by two common interests: To understand how a regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of color have been created and maintained in America and to change the bond that exists between law and racial power (Lanson-Billings, 1998).

For instance, the familiarities of minorities in American society differ from Caucasian's experiences because prejudice and discrimination have deeply impacted nearly all people of color. It's practical to expect programs about minorities to reflect aspects of those exclusive experiences, including the desires, interests, concerns, or perspectives written about them (Dates & Stroman, 2001).

However, the conventional values and beliefs of minorities seen on prime time television networks have not exposed unique Latino, African, Native or Asian American experiences, but rather the stories and perceptions of White producers, sponsors, writers, and owners (Dates & Stroman, 2001).

The lack of representation of Latinos in the media has not only perpetuated negative perceptions but have caused many Latinos to question their identity and deal with difficulty when trying to define themselves (La Pierre, 1999).

Furthermore, La Pierre also states that once the news media began opening up to Latinos in the 1960s, their stories were frequently wrong and virtually exposed stereotypes rather than the characteristics of the individual. This type of slander reporting according to La Pierre only reinforced the prejudices of the audience as very few Latinos worked as reporters or editors and could not alter the bias reporting that featured “problem people” or “zoo appeal.” As a result, Latinos aren’t casted in positive roles and are portrayed negatively with stereotypical characterizations.

Research Questions

This study aims at obtaining insight into the portrayal of Latinos and Latino stereotypes that are perpetuated and/or challenged on American television shows. *The George Lopez Show* aired from 2002-2007 and only seasons 1, 2, and 3 are available on DVD. However, because the show reached 100 episodes before it was pulled in 2007, the show currently airs in national syndication on various networks. *American Family* aired season one in 2002 and season two in 2004. However, PBS

only released season one on DVD but not season two, and the show no longer airs on current television networks. Because of this, only season one will be analyzed.

The following research questions guided this research:

RQ1: What stereotypes does each show perpetuate?

RQ2: How are these stereotypes challenged?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study aims at obtaining insight into the portrayal of Latinos and Latino stereotypes that are perpetuated on American television shows. Due to the nature of the study and its intentions, a qualitative content analysis is the methodology that is best suited to obtain relevant data for consideration. The shows, *American Family* and *The George Lopez Show*, were observed using a pre-set and established list of Latino stereotypes in the United States. These two shows in particular were chosen because together they represent a wide sample (2002-2007) of Latino family representations on prime time television.

Data for this study was collected through observations and rigorous note taking. First, a coding scheme was developed using existing, established stereotypes by way of literature from Berg, Mastro and Behm-Morawitz, Lopez-Calvo, and Sharp [Refer to Appendix A for list of codes].

The list represents the best possible codes for this study because they include the most featured stereotypes according to studies from literature. One can notice that mostly all stereotypes acquired from Berg's (2012) study are predominantly negative and demeaning towards Latinos. In an effort to minimize derogatorily biased stereotype results, a set of "positively influenced" stereotypes was included, by adding the most frequent stereotypes, according to studies from literature review.

A total of 44 episodes of both television shows were analyzed. The complete first season of *American Family*, compiled of 22 episodes, was observed; along with

22 episodes of *The George Lopez Show*, spanning across six seasons, that were selected through a random generator provided by JavaScript's Math Function.

Every selected episode was observed over different time lapses to ensure consistent and more accurate note taking and coding. Data gathered was analyzed by looking at each character's individual dialogue and actions throughout the selected episodes, as per the Codebook [*Refer to Appendix A for list of codes*], in order to answer the proposed research questions. Main characters from each protagonist family were examined individually in order to determine how each character is depicted, portrayed and characterized on prime time television and where the character falls under, according to the Codebook.

Findings from this study were coded and analyzed by two independent coders: The author served as primary coder, and a secondary coder coded 10 percent of the sample. After individually coding the data, inter-coder reliability was accounted for by meeting to discuss and find major themes. Together, the few differences in interpretation were identified and evaluated by returning to the data for detailed supporting evidence until agreement was reached.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To identify both perpetuated and challenged stereotypes depicted on Latino-oriented television shows produced in the United States, 44 episodes were coded and were spilt into 22 episodes for each series. All 22 episodes of *American Family's* season one were coded for a total of 999 minutes, and 22 randomly selected episodes between seasons one and six of *The George Lopez Show* were coded for a total of 473 minutes. A total of 1472 minutes or 24.5 hours were coded between both shows. Each episode averaged about 1.5 pages of code taking for a total of 66 pages.

Each episode was coded by looking at each character's individual dialogue and actions, as per the Codebook [*Refer to Appendix A for list of codes*], in order to answer the proposed research questions. One episode sample of each series is provided [*Refer to Appendix B and Appendix C*]. The coding categories included the following stereotypes: Criminal, the law enforcer, the Latin lover and female Latin lover, the male comic/buffoon and the female clown, el bandido, the female harlot, domestic cheap labor (blue-collar workers), hardworking, family-oriented, religious/churchgoing, honest, take jobs from Americans, too many children, refuse to learn English, less educated, immigrant, welfare recipients, Mexican peon, Mexican spitfire. The list represents the best possible codes for this study because they include the most present Latino stereotypes, according to studies from literature.

Research question one was: What stereotypes does each show perpetuate? Findings of this content analysis indicate that established Latino stereotypes remain constant in 21st century television programming. Findings of this content analysis also reveal that Latinos are confined to a set of labels. The most prominent Latino stereotypes in *The George Lopez Show* sample include: Cheap labor, male and female comic, Mexican Peon, Mexican spitfire, female harlot and less educated. Prominent Latino stereotypes in *American Family* sample feature: The criminal, family-oriented, immigrant, male and female Latin lover and religious/churchgoing. The lists do not represent all of the stereotypes that were found through the content analysis; it lists only the most prevalent stereotypes for each series. Furthermore, almost every stereotype appeared once throughout both samples, while few stereotypes like “welfare recipients,” “the law enforcer,” “take jobs from Americans,” and “el bandido” had little or no impression throughout the sample.

Research question two was: How are these stereotypes challenged? Findings of this content analysis suggest that stereotypes have to perpetuate in order to work. Nevertheless, in order to challenge, they have to talk about it first. Stereotypes discovered in both shows found that there are formulas that work with sitcoms and dramas when it comes to perpetuating and challenging stereotypes. In other words, there can't be positive depictions without negative portrayals. The data gathered found in the coding samples uncovered three overlaying themes: Major vs. minor characters, flashbacks and sitcom tropes.

Major vs. Minor Characters

In *The George Lopez Show*, George's immediate family (Angie, Carmen and Max) is the essence of the show. In episode "No one gets out alive," when being afraid of losing his job at work because of an investigation, George's persona changes as a result of not having a job and not being able to provide for his family, "A man isn't a man unless he is a provider." George is even asked by his boss, because he is so loved as the manager of the plant, to convince the work staff not to leave the factory and get other jobs, "We'll pull through this. We're a family." George looks out for everyone around him, from his immediate family to friends and co-workers. George parades positive stereotypes while still keeping his everyday novel *Male Comic* role intact. George tends to make fun of his self on a regular basis, often portraying negative stereotypes in order to get an easy, cheap laugh. For example, in episode "Profiles of Courage," George while sitting in the kitchen table with Carmen and Max, George tells them about how he's made a habit of always being confused for an immigrant and makes no attempt to hide his background, "When I go shopping, security follows me...When I cut grass, people want to know how much I charge."

Even when George and his family are portrayed negatively, numerous instances also display laughable cultural Latino customs, like being cheap through "The male comic/buffoon and the female clown," "domestic cheap labor (blue-collar workers)" and "the female Harlot," such as asking the technician for free cable channels in order to avoid paying extra fees like in "George helps Angie's Wha- Positive Self Image By Saying, You 'Sta Loca Good!":

Angie (to Allen, the cable guy): I'm about to go for a run, you don't mind if I stretch here do you? I wonder if there's a yoga channel on the premium package. That'd be nice.... Sometimes people do favors for each other (stretches in front of the cable guy).

Cable guy (to Angie): There is, pay for it, and you'll get it.

Veronica (Allen): They said we're not getting any of the movie channels. I'm so bummed Allen. Oh 'E-N' instead of 'A-N,' someone likes to break the rules...But I'm just a college girl, I don't have any money. The only thing I do for fun is go to parties. Maybe you can go with me sometime, Allen with an 'E-N' (while touching his shoulder).

Allen (to Veronica): I guess I could give you all the channels free for a year.

Veronica (to George): I got the channels, mission accomplished.

In episode "Bringing Home the Bacon," Carmen is having her "quinceañera," the celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday in communities of people from Latino backgrounds. George is first hesitant to let the "quinceañera" take place because of his temporary layoff at work, "Your salary is barely covering the bills...We're not wasting our money on some stupid party," he tells Angie and even teases that he is willing to break her heart in the process, "I'll break her heart, I'll do it right now. I'm like that Angie, watch-cha, heartbreaker." However, after realizing that Carmen was going to miss out on one of the most important days in her life, if he had canceled the "quinceañera," he lets the celebration take place, despite obvious evidence that they were going through financial problems:

Angie (to George): It's a day I'll never forget...for one day I was the princess.

George (to Angie): Carmen can have her quinceanera. I don't want to deny my daughter.

Carmen (to George): I know money's tight right now but I just want to thank you for giving me what I know is going to be one of the greatest days of my life.

George's mom, Benny, is also not positively molded to fit the ideal "family-oriented" character and is also not a part of George's immediate family, even though she's his mother. Benny, who at one point is forced to serve mandatory community service after being arrested, is completely comfortable saying what she feels to anyone by portraying the "Mexican spitfire," including to an inspector in episode "No one gets out alive," who arrives at the factory plant to investigate a report and records a testimony of everyone who works there:

Benny (to inspector): ...And it looks like your mother did it with a frog...Send me a tape I think I did a good job.

Benny (to George): ...Just don't say his name during the cavity search, it only encourages him.

Benny and George also carry a tough love rapport that does not follow the ideal footprint of a positive relationship. For example, when Benny makes fun of George for being the provider of the house while he is unemployed during Carmen's "quinceanera" in "Bringing home the bacon:"

Benny (to George about Carmen's dress): I wouldn't spend too much on it, that dress is just going to end up in the back of that guy's car anyways.

George (to Benny): I'll put an apple in your mouth, put you in the over and I'll serve bat.

George (to Benny, after Benny mocks him imitating a whip): You would know that whip sound, that's how they get you in the barn at night.

Besides being tough on George, Angie also gets her share of insults from Benny. For example, in episode "George helps Angie's Wha-Positive Self Image By Saying, You 'Sta Loca Good," Benny gets under Angie's skin by telling her she's old:

Hey, old lady (while looking at Angie from the back), the bus is leaving...I mistook you for one of the senior citizens that I drive around (pretends not to know what's going on,) oh whoops, I am just stepping in it left and right...because she's young and fresh and you're old and nasty. There like a Band-Aid. Rip it off.

Nevertheless, Benny's character also portrays positive stereotypes, despite the majority of them being negative portrayals. For instance, Benny demonstrates the "honest" stereotype at the conclusion of "No one gets out alive," by revealing to George that her tendency of memory loss during her work shifts might have been what caused the factory plant to be shut down and investigated, but the incident was later ruled an accident.

Most times, when shown at his work, George is portrayed as a respectable, well-thought-of manager. For example, in episode "Profiles in Courage," George refutes the notion that he worries too much about his employees, despite the fact that it's true. George must demote an employee (Hosni) simply because he's Indian, and doesn't want to do it. George defends Hosni when the other employees are

picking at him because of his race, “It’s a great day in America when White people, Black people and Latinos can all come together and pick on another minority.

What’s wrong with you guys?” Angie tells George that he is too nice and generous and in the end, Hosni thanks George for being honest and telling him the truth:

George to (to Angie): I hate being manager. I hate having this type of responsibility. It’s killing me.

Angie (to George): That’s why you’re exactly the type of guy who should be manager. You suffer like this because you actually give a damn about people.

George (to Angie): No, I don’t.

One major character who was used negatively in episodes was Max, who was often associated with the “Less educated” stereotype. Even though Max is a member of the family, he is still utilized negatively when it comes to school because of his dyslexia. However, one way the show also uses negative depictions is by bringing out the positive. In episode “George Enrolls Like That,” George has a difficult time when he enrolls in college attempting to set a positive example for Max after he catches him skipping school. Max believes he is not worthy enough to go to college because of his learning disability, “I’m not going to college anyways...I’m not good enough to go to college.” George, also having dyslexia, goes out of his way to teach his son a lesson, promoting school values and the importance of education. In the same episode, George’s life is compared to Rick Martinez’s (consultant), because like George, they both grew up in Boyle Heights (East Los Angeles). George didn’t go to college but Rick did, and that proves to be the difference in how their lives ended up. George describes Rick as “...perfect, smart, confident and successful.”

When analyzing *American Family*, despite the fact that the Gonzalez family portrays stereotypes such as “refuse to learn English,” “cheap labor,” “the criminal,” “family-oriented,” “immigrant,” “male and female Latin lover” and “religious/churchgoing,” all family members challenge stereotypes as much as they perpetuate them. For example, all five adult children challenge the “refuse to learn English” stereotype by speaking only English, while all five routinely speak Spanish and avoid speaking it whenever possible. All five children also challenge the “cheap labor” stereotype by having decent, civilized jobs, which includes a doctor, lawyer, fashion designer, firefighter and filmmaker. Take Vangie, a successful fashion designer, who despite being part of the Gonzalez family is married to a Caucasian, and they have two kids who look like their dad. Apart from the fact that she’s related to the Gonzalez, Angie’s character, like the rest of the adult children, portray positive depictions that challenge stereotypes. In episode “The Glass Ceiling,” when a large sportswear retailer wants to carry Vangie’s new line of athletic wear, Vangie risks all her savings to meet the retailer’s demands. But her initial excitement is dampened when she learns that even successful Latinos are not waterproof to the well-known “glass ceiling.” In conclusion, Vangie turns around her business and makes a new line of sportswear by “Vangie Taylor and Alex Mendoza,” who is a fantasy professional baseball pitcher.

While Esteban is regarded as a criminal, throughout the series, Esteban also shows signs of development and maturity towards a new lifestyle. For example, in episode “La Casa (the House)” Esteban learns that he doesn’t have to deal with his probation officer anymore and doesn’t have to follow any rules about when he can

see his son, "I feel like I've had this ten-ton weight on my chest and now it's gone."

Another episode "Circle of Fire" features Esteban running an at-risk youth program, and has to mentor six rival gang members who must take the program in order not to land in jail. During the episode, Esteban, who is a former member of the program, has to teach them how to turn their lives around, just like he once did. Esteban challenges various connotations about Latino criminals by teaching the gang members how to be firefighters, changing their lifestyles. During the program training, the members of the group open up, discuss the negativity that comes along with being associated as a criminal. Showing the audience what reality is like for them:

First group member: You couldn't walk from your house to the corner store without getting hassled by "la chota."

Second group member: ...Dad promised things would get better. And all they did was laugh at you and call you a dirty Mexican. Judging you without even knowing you...You stand in the mirror, looking at your brown skin and wonder would it would be like if it was white.

Third group member: So you sit in that classroom, "ese," day after day feeling like an "estupido," holmes.

Fourth group member: You're not even 12, and they already treat you like you're going to kill somebody. I don't deserve to go to jail. I'm not a criminal. I'm not a cold-blooded killer. I've never even shot a gun or stabbed anybody in my life.

In the end, Esteban and his trainees must overcome their differences in order to save lives in a burning building. The group goes into the burning building, work as a team and save the lives of three people. The fire team successfully rescued a family of squatters from inside the building as one of the group members says, “Not bad for a couple of Chi-Chicanos from the barrio, no?” while another one speaks to a news reporter, “We had some differences in there, you know, getting along but somehow this –this helped us, you know, put the puzzle together.”

Minor characters in *American Family*, like Esteban’s mentoring group program, are used similarly like in *The George Lopez Show*. Although these characters are not part of the core cast, they help bring out many negative perceptions through the various minor characters that make guest appearances. In episode “The Fighting Fridas,” Nina coaches the first girl’s football team in East LA and challenges the local boys team to a football game. Nina wants to prove that girls can play and compete against boys. Jess thinks it’s a dumb idea and thinks they should go do their nails or cook instead. However, Nina convinces Jess to coach the girl’s football team and they come back from a 14-0 halftime deficit to beat the boys. By presenting a challenge, Nina uses the girls as underdogs (losers), thus promoting a positive example to girls and successfully challenging the perception that all girls are inferior to boys. During the end of the game, Nina puts Scrawne (weakest player on the team) in the last play because she hasn’t played all game and doesn’t want to haunt her for the rest of her life, and Scrawne ends up scoring the winning touchdown.

Aunt Dora, another minor character, is frequently displayed as the “female Latin lover,” like in episode “La Estrella” when Dora’s boyfriend from the past comes back, begging for another chance after he left her pregnant the first time (with Christy). Dora’s boyfriend plays the typical “Latin lover” who is described by Jess as “tall, dark and handsome. Debonair. Romantic. He’s inventive. He’s mysterious. He’s everything Joes like us are not.” The mysterious man even takes Dora outside and serenades her with a song that he writes for her. His band and the people from the neighborhood are enthralled and start dancing as he sings, “Para mi fuiste el sol, que ilumino mi camino,” then Dora and him start dancing. The character is portrayed negatively again when he lies to Dora about a recording contract and borrows \$50,000 from her. When Dora leaves him, she tells Jess, “I know I did something stupid. I couldn’t help myself. I don’t know why he gets to me, but he does. So shoot me.” In this example, Dora also displays the “female harlot” when Dora’s daughter, Christy, finds out that she sleeps with him on the first date.

In episode “Silence of God” Esteban and his girlfriend, Ofelia, reach a painful crossroads when she leaves for New York. Her departure causes Pablito to run away and sets Esteban on a desperate search that becomes a life-or-death race against the clock. Esteban is on probation and is again portrayed as a criminal. He can’t leave Pablito alone or leave the state. Pablito goes to see her mom Laura after he runs away, but he finds her overdosed on heroin and unconscious. After Esteban finds Pablito and Laura, Esteban takes her to the hospital, drives past the speed limit and a police tries to pull him over, but Esteban doesn’t stop until he gets to the hospital. The police finds out that he violated his parole and Child Services takes Pablito away

while the police officer gets aggregative and forces himself on Esteban in order to arrest him, “You’re out of control” he tells Esteban. Despite the negative behaviors expressed, Esteban’s character also challenges his portrayal of the criminal with positive actions, like deciding to break the law in order to save the life of Pablito’s mother.

In episode “La llorona part 1” Laura attempts to see his son Pablito after school and Jess sends her a message when he spots her trying to talk to Pablito as he leaves school:

Now, you listen lady. Now, you tell me what you’re doing around here? You know you’re not supposed to be able to see Pablito...you had him, but that’s all. You’re no mother to nothing! Do you know what would happen if anybody saw you around him? ...You ruined your life Laura. ...Everything you touch, you destroy. But I’m not going to let you destroy Pablito, understand? ...You don’t have a son! He’s not your son anymore. If you come around here one more time, I’m going to turn you over to the police...Get out of here. Get out of here. Go away.

Laura is an addict who wants to see her son Pablito again and even tells Esteban in “The Father” that she’s threatening to kill herself as a result of her actions:

Aren’t you supposed to keep him from seeing his horrible mother? I wanted to die. Why didn’t you just leave me there? It would’ve been better for you. It would’ve been better for Pablito and for me...For some of us it is too late...I can’t see Pablito until I get off the junk. Now I can’t get off the junk because I can’t see Pablito...The only thing left for me to do is just to get the courage

one day to just take that little bit more and just end it. And I hope you're not there to save me....We are who we are. We're never going to change.

These types of depictions paint Laura to be a "criminal" who has no way out. Laura's character is rarely portrayed in a positive way; her character is a representation of purely negative actions that have been recycled many times before on other television shows.

Minor characters, like Elena, who only makes one appearance, appears in "Llorona part 1" and "part 2" as an immigrant women. Elena is portrayed as "Llorona" (weeping women), a folktale about a woman who loses her children. Elena is from Guatemala and needs help getting papers for her and her husband now that their little baby is an American citizen. Her husband also plays a minor character that is displayed as an immigrant farm worker. In a scene, a random person in a truck comes to a local spot to recruit immigrants to help him and picks Elena's husband as one of them, "I need four of you to come work at a garden. I want you...you...you and you." The immigrants are shown arriving to work at a farm, are all shown picking up weeds. After the workers are down picking up weeds they hear sirens "Immigration! Over there, run! "La Migra." "Correle," "Correle." Elena's husband gets deported and unsuccessfully attempts to use a fake green card "I have a green card senior," he tells the officer, as the officer then tells his partner, "I can't believe the crap forgeries we're getting there days. We gotta start a new file on this. I haven't seen one like that." At the same time Elena gets help from Nina, who fights to reunite Elena with her American-born child. However, Elena goes to look for her husband in Long Beach after he gets deported and instead gets her baby taken away

by Child Services. Elena gets deported and is taken back to Mexico without her baby or husband. In the end, Elena is seen waiting for her husband to return from work, just like the “la llorona” (the weeping woman) does in the folktale.

Flashbacks

When looking at flashbacks, *American Family* exhibits memories and recurrences in various episodes. These flashbacks not only perpetuate stereotypes, but challenge them as well using stereotypes such as “honest,” “hardworking,” “criminal,” “the law enforcer,” and “female harlot.”

In episode “La Case (The House) the old house needs a new paint job. As the family begins to repaint the house, they reminisce about their years growing up together. Even the spirits of family members who have passed on pay the Gonzalezes a visit as they discover the importance of home. “The House” is about everything coming together, the house you grew up in, the house that you know. Many scenes throughout episodes even show members from the Gonzalez family fighting for space in the little house, crammed in the kitchen, having breakfast and getting ready for the day. In the episode, instead of going to Las Vegas with her friend Gordie after winning a settlement, Nina decides to repaint the house with her family. The whole family plans the re-painting of the house. Nina is the organizer. At one point during the episode every member of the family sees a version of himself from an earlier time that at one point shared an experience at the house. In the end, everyone gets together and greet each other after they paint the house back to the way it was. When Conrado visits from Georgia, where he serves in the Army, he can’t help but express what he feels about his home, “There’s no place that’s more special

to me than this house.” Other flashbacks include Jess seeing a vision of his wife, Jess dressing up as Santa and surprising the kids with presents and the kids worrying that they will lose the house and not be able to go to school.

Flashbacks are also used to show the difference and transformation of growth and development between members of the family. In episode “La llorona part 1” Jess has a memory, he and his late wife Berta go see Esteban in prison where they show him baby pictures of Pablito, who he has never seen before. In this scene, Esteban is depicted as a criminal waiting to get out of jail, in order to live a better life, “Look at him. He’s amazing. I hope Laura comes and brings him to see me soon...I can’t wait to see him and hold onto him. Someday...Thinking about Pablito I guess it’s the only thing that’s keeping me going,” Esteban tells his parents through a window. Pablito is later mentioned in another flashback that displays Laura negatively again when Berta tells Jess:

It’s Pablito. He was found in the car. And he’s in critical condition. He’s in the hospital...Laura left the baby inside of the car. She was in the motel. I don’t know what she was doing...She locked the baby in the car. It was hot, and they when they got to him, he was unconscious. Honey, he can die.

Jess has another memory in “La llorona part 1” when Laura comes visit Jess and Berta with the baby (Esteban is in prison) and she wants to borrow more money:

Laura (to Jess): Look, Mr. Gonzalez, I know what you’re thinking. But I haven’t been doing that stuff anymore. You gotta believe me.

Jess (to Laura): I’m here if you need clothing, groceries...all your bills...if you need medicine.

Laura (to Jess): I need money.

Jess (to Laura): I'm not going to give you money. You'll only use it to buy heroin...I hope she spends a little bit of that money on Pablito.

Other flashbacks are meant to display the history of Latinos. For example, in episode "Mexican Revolution," Jess tells the story of his grandmother, "La Adelita," a female soldier in the Mexican Revolution. It's the 88th anniversary of when Pancho Villa made her a colonel during the Mexican Revolution. Jess later tells the story of Pancho Villa and how he witnesses his sister get tortured and becomes defender of all women.

The George Lopez Show also displays hallucinations that serve a primary purpose of displaying positive and negative representations through stereotypes such as "honest," "the Latin lover," "family-oriented," and "domestic cheap labor." Although *The George Lopez Show* does not demonstrate as many recollections and memories as *American Family*, in episodes like "George discovers how mescal-ed up his life could have been without the Benny-fits," George's attempt to rig a productivity contest at a factory comes back to haunt him when he is unable to sleep because of a nightmare about his childhood. George is upset that her mom, Benny, wasn't nice to him while he was growing up. Throughout the episode, George jokes about his mom during the nightmare, bringing up Benny's conventional persona, "This is weird. Your hair smells like shampoo instead of cigarettes." In conclusion, a negative stereotype is once again challenged, flipped into a positive stereotype when Benny confesses to George about not taking him camping and not being a good mother, "I am so sorry that I didn't let you go camping. I'm sorry I wasn't the

perfect mom.” Throughout the nightmare, George goes through a series of cleansing and revisiting of his thoughts. He imagines his mom being good, proper and appropriate while living in a nice, pleasant house. George realizes there, that he’s thankful for the way his mom raised him. George realizes that he would have been a loser with his mom being nice while growing up, and he acknowledges his mistakes.

Similarly, in “Leave it to Lopez,” after a janitor at the Powers Brothers plant dies without health insurance, Angie discovers that George is also without insurance and grows furious at him. During the episode, George dreams about his family living in alternate worlds of some of his favorite childhood shows like *The Munsters*, *The Jetsons* and *Leave It To Beaver*. During the episode, George takes the time to open up, “When I was growing up, my Dad wasn’t around, my mom was always working, these shows were like my family. *The Munsters*, *The Jetsons*. I use to pretend they loved me.” In the dream, George is depicted in his usual comedic role that sometimes features stereotypes like “the male buffoon and “the Mexican peon” when George plays Frankenstein in his dream with dialogue such as, “Goodie. Goodie. Goodie. Goodie...” and when Frankenstein finds out he’s taking a real physical “No. No. No. No. No.”

During the episode Ernie is also displayed in his customary role, which features the “Mexican peon” stereotype when he is attempting to win over a girl:

Ernie (to Helen): I’m looking for a soul mate. My heart’s an open book and you can read it if you like.

Helen (to Ernie): Helen's going to love that once she gets out of the bathroom. Look there she is (Helen throws the rose and leaves once Ernie turns around).

Ernie: Oh God I don't believe this...What did I do wrong?

Ernie: Why can't I find a woman to love me...I'm going to die in my apartment alone.

When George is dreaming in his one of his other favorite shows, *The Jesters*, his character includes dialogue, which supports Latinos in the United States in the future, "Latinos are now 85% of the population. Huh we're down 5%." In conclusion, George realizes through the dream that he needs to get life insurance for his family. A third episode, "Sabes Gey, It's George's Fantasy Episode" features George trying to drown his sorrows at the bar, but when he takes a shot of Mezcal, a distilled alcoholic beverage, he has a vision in which he and Ernie are gay lovers and are set to wed. During the episode, George does not want to talk to Angie about his problems at work, even though Angie is trying to help him. In the dream George finds out that he's not gay and doesn't want to marry Ernie, and realizes that talking with your wife is not a waste of time.

Sitcom Tropes

The classification of a "trope" is a figure of speech, play on words or common conventional theme, and numerous examples already exist on television and films. These vary from several, according to Kurp (2011), and include: "the hot wife" where a woman is considerably better-looking than her significant other, the unwise blonde, "irresponsible person who has a point," "the sexual character," "the psycho

ex-girlfriend,” “the old grumpy person” and “the out-of-place character who never seems to fit in.” These tropes are purposely added to television casts in order to create more storylines, generate more excitement despite the fact that most of these are recurring, overly used themes. In *The George Lopez Show*, there are several minor characters like George’s best friend Ernie, George’s mom Benny and George’s stepdad Vic that are showed through sitcom tropes. Other fill-in characters, also casted as sitcom tropes but portray both negative and positive stereotypes.

In episode “Charity” Angie volunteers for job training in order to help rehabilitate former gang members. The group is trying to make a living grooming dogs. Two guest characters depict gang members: Giggles and Marisol. Throughout the episode, both Giggles and Marisol similarly display the criminal sitcom trope through their actions and dialogue:

Giggles (to George): I was banging since I was 10, but I got out cause I found something to believe in...Marisol? I don’t know, homey. I haven’t tapped that yet.

Marisol (to George): I didn’t spend four years getting my GED to shave dogs. That’s not exactly what I want to do in my life...The Power Brothers are Blowing are moving and blowing the Heating...I know, huh.

In addition to using typical sitcom tropes, these tropes, in this case Giggles and Marisol, are not only used for their negative criminal connotations associated with the sitcom trope, but also carry a positive message that George or Angie provide. Throughout the episode George and Angie once again portray the positive by providing Giggles and Marisol help, in guiding their lives back to the right direction.

For example, Marisol doesn't want to work in cheap labor and decides to work for George as an intern in his office, while Giggles receives help from Angie in getting a new career grooming dogs instead of living in the streets. These two examples, illustrated through Giggles and Marisol, challenges "the criminal" stereotype and promotes encouraging behaviors and manners to the audience.

Ernie is also a classic example of the typical sitcom trope. His character is regularly targeted with witty scripted dialogue. For instance, in "George discovers how mescal-ed up his life could have been without the Benny-fits," Ernie tries to ask a girl out but stumbles and makes a fool out of himself:

Ernie (to girl): Friday night around seven, what's your soup going to be...sorry for wasting your time.

Benny (to Ernie): You'll always be a cub by momma bear's side.

George (to Ernie): You're a momma's boy, you live at home and you don't even have the guts to ask a girl out.

Ernie (to George): I told you, I already have a date, I'm bringing my mom.

In other instances Ernie's character portrays the "Mexican peon" stereotype when it comes to his love life, another aspect of his life that gets used like a sitcom trope. In episode "Friends don't let friends Marry Drunk," Ernie dates a woman (Tammy) who's a mess. Tammy uses Ernie's credit card and charges him \$1,000. The challenge of the stereotype is demonstrated when Ernie decides he still wants to marry Tammy and be a good father to her three kids, even though they are not his kids, as he tells George, "I don't care if the baby's not mine...I can help her...I've got a chance to make a family here." In conclusion, George cares too much about Ernie

being used by Tamie, portrays the “honest” stereotype, and ends up telling him the truth, and puts their friendship in jeopardy. However, Ernie finds out the truth, admits to George that he was right. Tammy is too far into her pregnancy for Ernie to be the dad of her fourth child.

In episode, “The Art of Boxing,” in an attempt to relieve Max’s stress, George and Vic enroll him in boxing classes and attempt to hide the truth from the boy’s overprotective mother. During the episode, Angie’s dad, Vic, who is a wealthy Doctor and is typically dressed casual, portrays the “Latin lover” stereotype. Many of his scenes include obvious behaviors that illustrate the stereotype, such as trying to flirt with a female boxing coach, “Hi I’m Dr. Victor Palmero. Welterweight Champion of Señora de la Madrid School in 1956, 57 and 58. Cardiologist. Pugilist. Available.” He encourages Max, who is under stress about school, to take up boxing instead of art class, “How can he get hurt George? He’s half Mexican and half Cuban,” to which George replies with another negative connotation about his son, this time dealing with the “less educated” stereotype, “Orale he was born to fight. And live at home until he’s 40.” In conclusion, Max ends up getting knocked out in his next boxing fight, to which Angie and George decide to pull him from boxing because it’s too dangerous.

Sitcom tropes displayed on *American Family* also include roles that feature stereotypes such as “the criminal.” For instance, in episode “The Barbershop” someone has been robbing the local shops, Jesse suspects that young thugs “cholos” are guilty, “where there’s smoke there’s fire, where’s there’s graffiti, there’s “cholos,” and where there’s “cholos,” there’s gotta be grand theft.” Nina has a little sister from

the rec center-mentoring program, Jolie, who she's helping get a scholarship by watching a video about applying for college financially. Jolie is also displayed as a young "minichola," then Nina takes Jolie to Jesse's barbershop so he can help look after her while she deals with problems at work. Although Jolie is portrayed negatively at first, Jesse helps transform Jolie from a "minichola" into a pretty girl with the help of Aunt Dora, "You look beautiful, beautiful," she says.

Despite being displayed negatively with criminal characteristics and connotations, these depictions are also shown to help bring out encouraging and hopeful representations. The series does a regular job of promoting positive values through negative, damaging behaviors such as those associated with "the criminal." For instance, near the end of the episode, when a young Latino male comes into Jesse's barbershop, everyone assumes he's the theft, based only on his "cholo" appearance. However, Jesse ends up apologizing when he finds out the young male is innocent after incorrectly assuming that a Caucasian male who entered his shop was not the theft. The Caucasian male was charged for the crimes. In the end, the "criminal" stereotype is challenged again, when Jolie secretly tells Jesse that she's an honor roll student but doesn't want him to tell anyone. Similar minor characters like Rosa, who has a crush on Jess, is regularly seen attempting to win over Jess' heart.

For instance, in episode "La Estrella," Rosa comes into Jess' Barbershop asking for help "Oh Jess, help me, please. I got something in my eye. Ow. It hurts." However, it's just a trick. Rosa is actually trying to get a lock of Jess' hair in order to perform a charm spell on him. Her friend is seen from the back cutting a piece of his hair with one of his scissors. As Rosa and her friend go back to the store, Rosa pulls

out a picture of Jess, along with the lock of hair. Rosa says “!Que lindo!” as she pulls out the photo and blows it a kiss.

However, all of Rosa’s attempts to win over Jess never seem to work and simply serve as a plan to portray her as a “female Latin lover” and “female harlot” throughout the series. Another episode “The Barbershop” shows Rosa visiting Jess at his barbershop (Rosa owns a shop in the same block as Jess.) When all of a sudden, Rosa pretends to faint, only to kiss Jess. Jess attempts to use a lifesaving technique (CPR) on Rosa, when she suddenly awakens kisses Jess. The same episode displays Rosa shooting a commercial on how to get a man by learning how to cook with her “Charm Caster Book.”

Other minor characters make special appearances and are casted as sitcom tropes. For instance, comedian Paul Rodriguez and actor Erik Estrada both appeared in episode “The Barbershop” and were displayed a “male comics.” In the episode, Rodriguez’s (Flaco) character is seen getting a terrible haircut from Jess, while Erik’s (Roberto) character is seen trying to get away from Rosa, who is attracted to him.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, this study reveals that stereotypes in *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family* are present, perpetuated and challenged. This research coincides with some of the findings in research of Latino stereotypes (Berg, 2012, Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, 2005, Lopez-Calvo, 2011 and Sharp, 2012). Similarities present in the study include portraying Latinos using established stereotypes that are decades old. Many stereotypes are recurrently used while others are scarce, limited and irrelevant.

The first major theme, “major characters,” found that George’s immediate family is portrayed as assimilated and depicts them more positively other minor characters. According to Teske and Nelson (1974), assimilation refers to a process of interpenetration and synthesis in which persons and groups obtain the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups; and, by sharing their experience and history, are integrated with them in a common cultural life. Teske and Neslon (1974) also state that acculturation refers to a culture change that is originated by the combination of two or more independent cultural systems. Cultural changes brought by contacts between ethnic communities and their surrounding societies would be definable and acculturate, whereas those resulting from interaction of classes or factions within a single society would not be considered. Therefore, socialization, urbanization, industrialization, and secularization are not acculturation processes unless they are cross-culturally introduced rather than intraculturally established phenomena (Teske and Neslon

(1974). Matthews (2013) adds that first-generation Mexican immigrants are still behind on learning English, but second-generation Americans, including those who live with their first-generation parents, learn English just as fast as Asian or European immigrants. Furthermore, non-Latino second-generation immigrants acquire English even faster; Filipino immigrants beat everyone, perhaps owing to the Philippines' half-century under U.S. sovereignty. Both the Lopez Family and Gonzalez family have experienced assimilation. Results from this study agree with Matthews in that second-generation Americans like George, Angie and Jess learn English at a faster pace. In addition, third-generation Americans like Max, Carmen, Nina, Vangie, Conrado, Esteban and Cisco grow up adjusted and adapted to American culture.

When looking at major characters, the Lopez family depicts positive actions through stereotypes such as “hardworking,” “family-oriented,” and “religious/churchgoing.” On the other hand, minor characters like Benny, Ernie, and Vic portray numerous negative stereotypes such as the “Latin lover,” “Mexican spitfire,” and the “male comic.” The Lopez family is sanitized and around them is chaos. George and Angie often portray “honest,” “hardworking” people who go out of their way in order to help someone in need. A lot of times George and Angie both portray either a positive role or negative role and one usually helps the other, vice-versa.

Similarly, the Gonzalez family also portrays positive stereotypes. Minor characters around the Gonzales family include Rosa, Ofelia, Aunt Dora, Laura and Jolie. These characters, however, also portray positive behaviors in addition to

negative, despite only being minor characters. When looking at flashbacks, *American Family* demonstrates growth, depth and nuance through recollections, memories and recurrences in various episodes. These flashbacks not only perpetuate stereotypes, but also challenge them as well. Using stereotypes such as “honest,” “hardworking,” “criminal,” “the law enforcer,” and “female harlot”. *The George Lopez Show* also displays hallucinations that serve a primary purpose of displaying positive and negative representations through stereotypes such as “honest,” “the Latin lover,” “family-oriented,” and “domestic cheap labor.”

When looking at sitcom tropes, these roles, although traditionally looked at as an easy way, doing something that’s been seen millions of times before, serve a purpose and function because of the exaggerating roles the characters take part in. Because television shows regularly include typical sitcom trope characters, it’s easy to recognize them in both *American Family* and *The George Lopez Show*. Characters like Ernie, Benny and Vic play sitcom tropes, as do Jolie, Rosa and other minor characters in *American Family*.

Discussion

This study aims to contribute to Cultivation and Critical Race Theory through an analysis of the portrayal and stereotypes of Latinos on Latino-oriented television shows produced in the United States. Research and theory about representations of verbal and visual behaviors in Latino stereotypes is deficient, and this paper makes an extensive addition to our familiarity about this topic.

This research shows that repetitive interpretations of Latinos persist on prime time television. Findings from this study agree with findings suggested by

Mastro and Behm-Morawitz. For example, the notion that television programming is a site of cultural politics where dependence on stereotypes exists, supporting the dominant ideology about race rather than challenging it. Previous Latino television research has found that the most frequent used Latino stereotype in 20th century television and film were bandits, thieves and other criminal types, the largest of the group (Trevino, 1985). Similarly, Negron-Muntaner's study (2014) adds that roles in which Latino leads and supporting actors were used more in, compared to all actors in the 10 highest-grossing films in U.S. between 2010-2013 included all criminals and blue-collar criminals, law enforcement and blue-collar/service workers. Results of this research are similar to those regarding Latino leads and supporting actors. In this study, "the criminal" and "family-oriented" stereotype was illustrated in all three themes on *American Family*. Therefore, this study coincides with previous Latino television research that "the criminal" is largely dominant.

In this sample, hardly any events or discussions of "welfare recipients," "the law enforcer," "take jobs from Americans" or "el bandido" were found. This is different from what Sharp (2012) found in "The Impact of Media Stereotypes on Opinions and Attitudes towards Latinos," regarding the perceptions of Latinos in the United States. According to Sharp, at least 30% of Latinos agreed each term was described as negatively. Whereas, scenes incorporating "religious/churchgoing" were scarce even though findings suggest that the vast majority of respondents in the study agreed it was a positive stereotype of Latinos. Other terms described in the study "hardworking," "family-oriented" and "honest" were also suggested by the vast majority of respondents as challenge stereotypes and were found in more than

once instance. For example, in episode “Silence of God” Esteban and Pablito portray “religious/churchgoing” as they try to save Laura from dying from an overdose after finding her unconscious in her apartment. While on the way to the Hospital, Esteban asks his son to recite God’s Prayer. Esteban takes Pablito to the Hospital chapel and Pablito lights a candle, then Pablito starts crying. Pablito wants to pray with his dad.

According to Markert (2004), *The George Lopez Show* adopts a positive image of Latinos much more than a negative one. Markert adds that the show displays a hard-working blue-collar family that fights to deal with real-world problems, offers a view of normal people with a sense of humor that happen to be Hispanic, struggling with day-to-day regular activities. Nevertheless, findings from this study suggest that *The George Lopez Show* not only adopts positive images of Latinos, but that it adopts negative images just as much as positive. The images might start off as negative, but findings from this study also suggest that adopting negative images helps generate more narratives and stories, and that many of these stories with negative images can be used as teaching tools to encourage positive behaviors.

According to Mastro, Behm-Morowitz, Ortiz (2007), research indicates that portrayals of Latinos on prime time television are rare and unfavorable, and that viewers with limited contact with Latinos would rely more heavily on televised portrayals of Latinos for information. Gerbner, Morgan, and Signorielli (1994) state that Cultivation Theory involves the cultivation of established, unaffected and commonly shared assumptions, descriptions, and conceptions. Findings from Negron-Muntaner (2014) found that Latinas were represented as “maids” by media 69% of the time; the actual percent of Latinos who are maids is just over 44%.

Findings also suggest that Latinos were represented as “criminals” by media 24% compared to 19% (US Census). Findings from this study found that when it comes to Latino-based shows like *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family*, any content that challenges the assumptions of the television audience is going to have a chance to succeed because despite the set of established stereotypes and notions that are associated with Latinos, even negative depictions can be used to challenge, defend Latino portrayals on television. Stereotypes can be used two ways, negative or positive, each outcome offers distinctive results that can be used only once, or twice. Stereotypes that are used both ways, positive and negative, offer beneficial depictions that can be used accordingly.

Critical Race Theory begins with the notion that racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society and because is it so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture (Lanson-Billings, 1998; Delgado, 2012). The lack of representation of Latinos in the media has not only perpetuated negative perceptions but have caused many Latinos to question their identity and deal with difficulty when trying to define themselves (La Pierre, 1999). Furthermore, La Pierre also states that once the news media began opening up to Latinos in the 1960s, their stories were frequently wrong and virtually exposed stereotypes rather than the characteristics of the individual. The understandings of minorities in American society differ from Caucasian’s experiences because bias and discrimination have deeply impacted nearly all people of color. It’s realistic to expect programs about minorities to reflect aspects of those exclusive experiences, including the desires, interests, concerns, or perspectives

written about them (Dates, Stroman, 2001). However, the predictable values and beliefs of minorities seen on prime time television networks have not showed unique Latino, African, Native or Asian American experiences, but rather the stories and perceptions of White producers, sponsors, writers, and owners (Dates, Stroman, 2001). Furthermore, when it comes to *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family*, findings from this study suggest that by portraying exclusive Latino experiences like *American Family* does, one can only assume that the understandings of non-Latino viewers in American society differ from Latino's experiences. Both *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family* included exclusive Latino experiences in their episodes because Latinos created both shows.

Limitations/Suggestions for Future Research

One of the limitations of this study is the lack of previous research regarding Latino stereotypes on primetime television. Since there is no existing foundation from which this study could start, film research was used as a reference due to similarities between both kinds of series. Film research served as a beginning for this research and was used for comparative purposes.

Another limitation is that one of the samples of the study, *American Family*, aired on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). PBS is a non-commercial broadcast television distributor, independently operated non-profit organization with over 350 member stations. Commercial television stations are privately owned and make profit by selling advertising time. Even though public television stations are either owned by the government or by non-profit organizations like PBS, they still air commercials and acquire capital by collecting fees from viewers. Despite the upper

hand that commercial stations have over non-profit organizations with advertisers, according to a press release from PBS, recent Nielsen data (PBS, 2014) shows that PBS finished the 2013-2014 broadcast season with a surge in viewership, moving to the fifth major primetime household rating among all broadcast and cable networks, just behind CBS, NBC, ABC and FOX. While *The George Lopez Show* aired all of its seasons on ABC, it is possible that findings could have been different if CBS had decided to keep *American Family*, instead of giving it away to PBS. In future studies, analyzing televisions shows from commercial television stations that have produced Latino-oriented shows, instead of public television stations, could be analyzed in order to have a wider sample of the Latino stereotypes that audiences are being exposed to.

Another limitation this paper faces, are the genres associated with the samples of the study. Both series offer two completely different styles of television. While *The George Lopez Show* deems itself as a situational comedy, *American Family* takes a most series approach in being a drama series. Therefore, each series was limited in the types of categories it could use, based only on its genre. Sitcoms often feature characters sharing a uniform setting (may be recorded in front of a studio audience or can be imitated by the use of a laugh track), with regularly witty dialogue, are regarded as one of television's leading narrative form. Drama series include television programs with often fictional storytelling along the lines of a traditional drama.

Another limitation deals with the longevity of the samples in the study. When looking at the prominence of both series, despite the fact that both *The George Lopes*

Show and *American Family* both began airing in 2002, only one found long-term success. On one hand, *The George Lopez Show*, not only aired on ABC during prime time, but also began National syndication one month after the series finale in 2007. Since the finale, the series has been Nationally syndicated across multiple television networks. *American Family*, on the other hand, lasted only 35 episodes (85 less episodes than *The George Lopez Show*) during its run on PBS. In future studies, analyzing televisions shows from commercial television stations that produce long-term Latino-oriented shows that yield similar ratings could be analyzed in order to have a wider sample of the Latino stereotypes audiences are exposed to.

Another limitation is that this study fixated only on television content but did not determine how audiences react to that content. Future research focusing on Latino stereotypes on prime time television would help existing literature and give additional evidence on how portrayals of Latino stereotypes are observed and adopted by audiences.

Another limitation is that the study fixated heavily on textual analysis and less on visual analysis. Depictions of characters provided in results did not describe the mannerisms, how things looked or how characters dressed or appeared during actions and dialogue. For example, not all “Mexican peons” and/or “criminals” look the same; each offers a unique physical appearance aside from discourse. Future research focusing on Latino stereotypes on prime time television would help existing literature and give additional evidence on how portrayals of Latino stereotypes are observed and adopted by audiences.

Conclusion

This study analyzed 19 categories of Latino stereotypes, both positive and negative. Nonetheless, it's important to note that many other stereotypes may have occurred in other episodes that were not part of the sample. The purpose of this content analysis is to develop a general sense of Latino stereotypes on prime time Latino-oriented shows and how the content is perpetuated and/or challenged.

This study found that when it comes to Latino-oriented shows created by non-Latinos, the out of touch culture gives birth to doomed shows. For example, shows like *Rob* (2012), *Saint George* (2014), *Greetings From Tucson* (2002-2003), *Cane* (2007) and *Freddie* (2005-2006) were canceled after only one season. The reasons why each of these individual shows were canceled might differ from poor ratings to the network going in a different direction. However, according to findings from this study, shows created by Latinos, like *The George Lopez Show* and *American Family*, employ Latinos in various roles outside of the stereotypical "maid" or "criminal." *American Family* even displays all five third-generation adult children as successful with decent careers and are conformed to the daily routines of American culture. All five also scarcely exhibit the Spanish language and prefer speaking English whenever possible, even in Mexico like Nina experienced. Both Carmen and Max from the Lopez family are also third-generation children who both prefer speaking English and grow up in an upper-middle class environment.

In Hollywood, the Latino actors and actresses assimilate for survival. Hollywood is forcing the hand of Latino actors; Hollywood demands that the Latino fit the stereotypical trope. Latinos are limited in freedom, and their roles are limited.

This study matters because it provides an addition to the study of the portrayal and stereotypes of Latinos in television. This study concludes that Latinos determined to succeed in Hollywood have two routes to choose from. They can either give in to typical roles like the “maid” or “criminal” or they can typecast away from their Latino identity and depict roles that do not require them to display unique Latino characteristics. This study shows that few Latino actors and actresses continue to be presented in prime time television. The ratio of Latino actors and actresses displayed on television compared to the total number of Latinos in the United States is a problem. This study makes an attempt to show how Latinos can be successful on television without depicting typical stereotypes.

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APPENDIX A

LATINO STEREOTYPE CODEBOOK

Variable	Description
<i>Criminal</i>	Frequently affiliated with gang members, the lower-class and is recognized by his youthful appearance, aggressive nature, dishonesty, and unkempt appearances.
<i>The law enforcer</i>	Articulate, expressive, powerful, eloquent, well-groomed, and respected.
<i>The Latin lover and Female Latin lover</i>	Male: Professionally attired and defined by his heavy accent, dancing skills, hot-temper, and sexual aggression. Female: Virginal, unreadable, aristocratic, noble, sensual, stimulating, erotically appealing.
<i>The male comic/buffoon and The female clown</i>	Male: Described by a heavy accent, laziness and lack of intelligence. Female: Counterpart of the Latino <i>male comic</i> and is used for her charm, attraction, appeal, allure.
<i>El bandido</i>	Dirty and messy, usually exhibiting an unshaven face, missing teeth, and scruffy, oily hair.
<i>The female harlot</i>	Daring, defiant, lusty, robust and hot-tempered, slave to her passions; sexually aggressive, provocatively and unprofessionally dressed.
<i>Domestic cheap labor (blue-collar workers)</i>	Male: represented most often by handymen, gardener, waiters, car washers and construction workers. Female: represented most often by a maid, a domestic servant who does cleaning work in a house or hotel.
<i>Hardworking</i>	Tend to work with energy, dedication, devotion and commitment; diligent.
<i>Family-oriented</i>	Appreciating, welcoming, understanding your family, your relationship and the relationship that your partner shares with his or her family.
<i>Religious/churchgoing</i>	Devoted to religious beliefs or observances, like the Virgin Mary,

	having or showing belief in and reverence for God or a deity.
<i>Honest</i>	Free of dishonesty and untruthfulness; sincere.
<i>Take jobs from Americans</i>	Mostly affiliated with immigrants who take jobs away from lower-paid working-class natives.
<i>Too many children</i>	Represented by big families, usually three or more kids, often seen crowded in one place.
<i>Refuse to learn English</i>	Not able to learn a new language, speaks broken English and difficult to understand.
<i>Less educated</i>	No or very little emphasis on education. Refuses to learn from the school system. Often seek labor employment.
<i>Immigrant</i>	Movement of people into a country to which they are not native in order to settle there and make a living. Often described as a welfare recipient.
<i>Welfare recipients</i>	Persons who receive financial assistance from their government in order to ensure their welfare, displayed as poor, underprivileged, needy.
<i>Mexican peon</i>	Displays men as weak, puny, sad and is seen as a coward.
<i>Mexican spitfire</i>	Degrades and reduces the portrayals of women, viewed as exotic, striking and mysterious with a fierce, aggressive temper.

APPENDIX B

THE GEORGE LOPEX SHOW CODING SAMPLE

Season 2, Episode 7: The Show Dyslexic

Perpetuated Stereotypes

Mexican Peon

- Ernie
- Lives with mom; temporarily moves in with George
- Used by girlfriend (Linda) – 3 kids with 3 different dads, doesn't recognize his voice on the phone, takes money from him, has him babysit the kids
- "She's just using you go you can take care of her kids"
- George: "Hey, man, I know this thing with Linda didn't work out, but look on the bright side: You got used."
- Ernie: "Yeah." Grins. "I got used."

Male Comic

- Ernie

Cheap Labor

- Ernie and Benny wear blue uniform
- George worked "on the line for 15 years"
- George (to Linda's kids): "Thing 1, Thing 2, take it outside." Boy: "We can't go out. The yard lady [Angie] is working with the dumb kid [Max]."

Less Educated

- George wants Angie to read his proposal to him
- George confuses the name of the Museum that Max is going to.
- Benny (to George): "You finished school. So what if you weren't the best student? What were you going to be, the first Mexican astronaut?"
- Benny (to George): "You were on the line for 15 years. You didn't have to read."
- George (to Linda's kids): "Thing 1, Thing 2, take it outside." Boy: "We can't go out. The yard lady [Angie] is working with the dumb kid [Max]."
- Boss to George: Guy from the plant would have trouble with the paperwork

Mexican Spitfire

- George: "My mom never went to my school. She only went to my graduation to heckle me." [imitating Benny] "Oh, look at him, Mr. Oh, You Think You're All Bad. Mr. High School Diploma. Mr. I Know Where Africa Is."

Hardworking/Honest

- George studying the insurance plans at his dining table throughout the episode

- Admits to bosses that he hasn't finished and needs more time, rather than agreeing to plan that doesn't benefit employees (no provision for retirement homes)

Family-Oriented

- Good marriage
- Good parents (go to school and work to help Max)

Honest

- George admits he has dyslexia.

Challenged Stereotypes

- George now supervisor and dresses professionally for work
- Two kids
- Nice house (more middle class than lower; actually devoid, though, of any Latino artifacts/Latino identity)
- Dyslexia – valid reason for difficulties
- **Welfare Recipients** – George (to Max's teacher, who suggested special education): "We're Lopezes. We don't ask for help, and we don't get help. And even when we get help we don't take it because we don't deserve it."
- Theme song "Low Rider" vs. them flying high on a trampoline

APPENDIX C

AMERICAN FAMILY CODING SAMPLE

Season 1, Episode 13: Silence of God

Perpetuated Stereotypes

Criminal

- Esteban and his girlfriend, Ofelia, reach a painful crossroads when she leaves for New York. Her departure causes Pablito to run away and sets Esteban on a desperate search that becomes a life-or-death race against the clock.
- Esteban is on probation; he can't leave Pablito alone and can't leave the state.
- Pablito goes to see her mom Laura after he runs away, but he finds her overdosed on heroin and unconscious and Esteban has to take her to the hospital.
- After he finds Laura, Esteban takes her to the Hospital, driving fast and a police cop pulls him over but he doesn't stop until he gets to the Hospital.
- The police finds out that he violated his parole and the police take Pablito away and he gets arrested.
- The Doctor tells Esteban that Laura needs professional help.
- Child services arrive and take Pablito away.
- The police office gets aggregative and forces himself on Esteban and arrests him.
- Police (to Esteban): "You're out of control."
- Pablito attacks the police officer.

Religious/churchgoing

- The inside of a church is displayed at the beginning of the episode.
- Esteban prays to la Virgencita to help him find Pablito "I'll go to church every Sunday- every Sunday from now on."
- While on the way to the Hospital, Esteban asks his son to recite God's Prayer.
- Esteban takes Pablito to the Hospital chapel and Pablito lights a candle and Pablito starts crying.
- Pablito wants to pray with his dad.

Family oriented

- Esteban takes his son to the park.
- People in the background are shown being united with their families and enjoying the day, playing, eating.
- Esteban wants Ofelia to move in with him and marry him, doesn't want her to leave to New York.
- Esteban loses Pablito after he tells him to wait for him while he talks to Nina.

Mexican Peon

- Ofelia has to choose between the love of her life and she decides to leave him and go for the job. She does not want to let her dream job go.
- Esteban is upset because Ofelia broke up with him.
- Esteban (to Ofelia): "I'm losing my mind."
- "Why did I leave him alone?"
- Nina (to Esteban): "How long are you gonna keep paying for her mistakes? You should've left her there. She's gonna do it again, and next time, you're not gonna be there to save her."

Domestic Cheap labor

- A paletero (Ice cream vendor) is displayed in the background selling to the kids.
- Laura lives in a old beat up apartment. There are dirty dishes everywhere.
- Esteban takes Laura to Linda Vista Catholic Hospital.

Honest

- Esteban does the right thing, and violates his parole, and takes Laura to the Hospital, he jeopardies his parole.
- Esteban (to Nina): "But this time I was there. I had no choice. How could I face Pablito if I let his mother die? Just get my son back. "
- Nina tells Esteban that he will get his son back.

Challenged Stereotypes

- Ofelia, Esteban's girlfriend, gets hired as a new ballet member in New York, from thousands of people.
- Ofelia has to choose between the love of her life and she decides to leave him and go for the job. She does not want to let her dream job go.