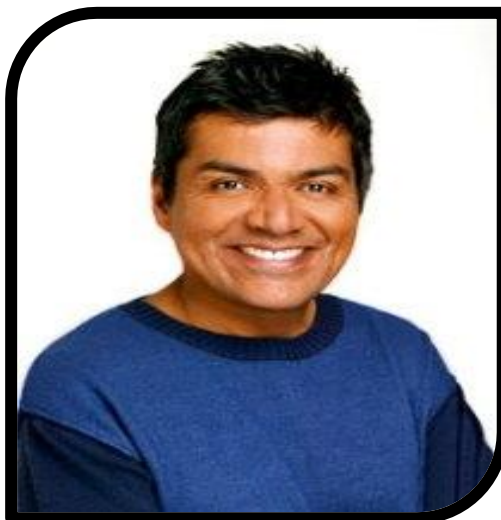


Latino Portrayals on Primetime Television in the United States



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Dansk resumé

Fremstilling af Latinos på primetime TV i USA

Formålet med dette speciale er at undersøge hvordan Latinos er fremstillet og repræsenteret på primetime TV i USA, og hvilke konsekvenser dette kan medføre. Dette speciale formoder at Latinos bliver underrepræsenteret på primetime TV i forhold til hvor stor en procentdel Latinos udgør af den samlede befolkning i USA, og at Latinos ofte bliver fremstillet negativt, enten i form af stereotyper eller som underlegne i forhold til den hvide majoritet i USA i form af Othering, separation af majoritetsgruppen og minoritetsgruppen. Derudover formoder dette speciale at TV som et magtfuldt medie, er med til at skabe seernes holdning til den latinamerikanske befolkning i USA.

Befolkningen i USA der har rødder i Latin Amerikanske lande er steget dramatisk gennem de seneste årtier, og Latinos er nu blevet den største minoritetsgruppe i USA. Dette afspejles dog ikke når man ser primetime TV, hvor Latinos er underrepræsenterede i mængde, og ofte fremstillet i stereotypiske roller. Eftersom at TV er et magtfuldt medie der viderebringer information og nyheder til seerne og er med til at skabe seernes holdninger, er det vigtigt at se på hvordan en minoritetsgruppe som Latinos bliver fremstillet når de er til stede på primetime TV i forhold til hvordan Latinos bliver opfattet af seerne. Latinobefolkningen i USA har i mange år været koncentreret i nogle få stater, og mange amerikanere har ikke haft direkte kontakt eller kendskab til Latinos, og hvis det eneste kendskab disse mennesker har til Latinos stammer fra oplysninger de har fået fra TV, vil disse oplysninger være det, der skaber seernes billede og opfattelse af Latinos. Derfor er det vigtigt hvordan Latinos bliver fremstillet på primetime TV, da der på dette tidspunkt er flest seere, og hvis disse seere kun bliver eksponeret for negative billeder af Latinos, vil dette kunne influere deres holdning til Latinos i en negativ retning.

Latinos har gennem tiden været underrepræsenteret på primetime TV i forhold til hvor stor en gruppe Latinos udgør i den samlede befolkning i USA. En række undersøgelser fra 2000 til 2010, har sat tal på hvordan Latinos er repræsenteret og fremstillet på primetime

TV i USA, i form af antal og karaktertræk, hvilket er blevet sammenlignet med andre etniske grupper, så som den hvide og den sorte del af befolkningen i USA, for at bestemme om der er nogle karaktertræk der i højere grad bliver repræsenteret af bestemte grupper mere end andre. Gennem de år der er blevet undersøgt, fremstår Latinos både positivt og negativt i resultaterne, hvor det mest gennemgående træk hvor Latinos skiller sig ud, er ved at de er den eneste gruppe er repræsenteret i roller der i ofte taler med accent, og de i øvrigt fremstår som den eneste gruppe med lavere kendskab til engelsk. Sammen med gruppen af sorte amerikanere, bliver Latinos i øvrigt fremstillet som værende de mindst intelligente, samt andre negative karaktertræk der sjældent bliver set blandt hvide roller på primetime TV. Ved at blive fremstillet på denne måde gentagende gange, kan det billede fremstillet på TV være med til at danne et billede af Latinos hos seerne baseret på TV-versionen frem for et mere overordnet realistisk billede af Latinos i virkelighedens USA. Derudover skaber de negative fremstillinger en distance mellem Latinos og de andre etniske grupper, og Latinos bliver fremmedgjort og "Othered", ved at de bliver fremstillet som om, de ikke taler det officielle sprog i USA flydende.

Komedieserier, sitcoms, er en genre der oftest er repræsenteret på primetime TV, men denne genre er også en af de genrer med mest homogene sammensætninger af roller, og oftest er sitcom-genren den mindst mangfoldige når man ser på etnicitet. Undersøgelser viser at Latinos gennem tiden har været meget underrepræsenteret i denne genre i forhold til andre genrer, hvilket gør det interessant at undersøge hvordan Latinos er fremstillet i sitcoms, eftersom de forekommer mere sjældent, og derfor har færre chancer for at skabe et positivt billede af Latinos hos seerne. Der er fire succesfulde sitcoms gennem tiden der har haft bærende roller der har været besat af Latinos, og i disse findes der gennemgående temaer og eksempler på stereotyper og Othering af Latinos, men også mange positive træk der i bred grad er med til at Latino-rollerne i serierne fremstår sympatiske om end de også stadig i mere eller mindre grad bliver fremstillet som underlegne i forhold til USA's hvide majoritet.

Konsekvensen af at Latinos bliver fremstillet stereotypisk/ensformigt og er underrepræsenterede på primetime TV i USA, er at eftersom seere vil danne sig et billede ud fra det de ser på TV, så vil deres opfattelse af Latinos primært være negativt baseret på de få og negative fremstillinger de ser på TV, især hvis de ikke har kontakt med Latinos i den virkelige verden. For at seere får et bredere forhold til Latinos på TV er det derfor vigtigt at Latinos repræsenteres i større mængder og at de bliver portrætteret i roller der giver et

nuanceret og realistisk billede af Latinos i samfundet i USA. De eksisterende stereotyper er ikke nødvendigvis forkerte, men ingen stereotyper kan repræsentere en hel gruppe. Så selvom Latinos for eksempel udgør en stor del af de ansatte inden for ufaglært arbejde og i servicejob, så er de også repræsenteret blandt uddannede i højere sociale lag. Derudover er mange Latinos ikke immigranter, men børn af immigranter, og de er dermed født og opvokset i USA. Hvis Latinos til stadighed bliver fremstillet i portrætter der ikke stemmer overens med virkeligheden, skaber det et forkert billede af Latinobefolkningen som helhed, hvilket seernes holdning til Latinobefolkningen i USA er baseret på, og dermed vil Latinos som gruppe fortsat blive "Othered" og set som fremmede i USA af den hvide befolkning.

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Introduction

During the last decades, the number of Latinos in the United States has changed the American demographics dramatically. This has resulted in Latinos being the biggest ethnic minority group in the United States today, and the number is still on the rise (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 102). Initially, the Latino population increased through immigration, but during the last decade, the primary demographic development has been growth of the Latino population already living in the United States (Motel, 2012). While the Latino population for many years was mainly concentrated in a few states, especially around the south western border and in Florida, within the last ten years, the expansion of the Latino population has extended in greater numbers to all states. And as the Latino population has increased, so has the influence of Latinos, both culturally and politically. This has been evident on many levels; Spanish has become a dominant language and in elections, the Hispanic vote is catered to by politicians and furthermore, Latino culture and music is no longer exotic and strange, but has been incorporated into general American culture. But despite the visibility of Latinos, in terms of population numbers and influence on American culture, Latinos are still lagging behind, when it comes to representation in the most powerful media – television.

While the number of Latinos in the movie industry has increased, and a rising number of Hispanic actors and actresses have found fame in Hollywood, the number of Latinos on primetime television, is still low compared to their population numbers, as well as compared to the representation on television of Anglo Americans and African Americans, the other major ethnic groups in the United States. This is relevant because, television is the most powerful media due to the fact that most Americans have a television, and they watch television several hours every day (Kentner, 2012). Therefore, television is for many people the main source of information.

The portrayal of Latinos on primetime television in the United States is interesting due to the power television has, when it comes to mediating images to the viewers. This means that the images of Latinos portrayed by television, can shape viewers' attitude towards Latinos in real life, and if the Latino images exposed to the viewers are both rare as well as negative, the perception of Latinos may not be as nuanced, as if the images on

television occur more often, including realistic portrayals of various Latino characteristics, both positive and negative.

Portraying ethnic minorities in negative stereotypic images has been prevalent throughout the history of film and television, although stereotyping of both positive and negative character is used on all groups, minority as well as majority. Most people asked to describe a Mexican bandit will instantly recall a mental image of an unkempt, sombrero-wearing villain from old Western themed movies, which has been a stereotype that has prevailed over time (Berg 2002: 1). This often happens to stereotypes used repetitively, and this thesis will examine a number commonly used Latino stereotypes, and determine if these are still present on television today. A theoretic aspect of stereotyping will be used in order to define a stereotype and how stereotypes are used, as well as how stereotyping is used on television. Additionally this thesis will examine theories interlinked with stereotyping, such as Othering, Social Identity theory and Cultivation theory.

Stereotyping is often used to reinforce the position of an out-group as an Other, thereby distancing the members of the in-group from the out-group members through Othering. This occurs on television, when members of a minority group repeatedly are portrayed as an opposition to majority group values and ideology, which goes hand in hand with the theory of social identity, where the main purpose is to enhance and promote the positive characteristics of one's own group to differentiate the group from the out-group (Jenkins 2003: 116), and both will be examined in the thesis in order to determine how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television in the United States. The Cultivation theory, the theory of long term effects of images repeated on television, is interesting to examine in order to analyse how repetitive images may impact viewers' attitudes, which is likely if stereotypes are being repeated on television, and the theory is therefore relevant in this case where Latino stereotypes are being examined.

There has been a tendency throughout the history of television that Latinos have been underrepresented, both compared to their numbers in the U.S. population, as well as compared to other ethnicity groups. Research on the matter shows, that while the numbers of the Latino population during the years from 1955 to 1985 increased in great numbers, the representation of the Latin American population on primetime television decreased from three per cent to one per cent (Rodriguez 1997: 14; Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 111). During the same time period, the representation of the African American population increased

from six per cent to 16 per cent (Rodriguez 1997: 14), and has been stable ever since. Furthermore, the percentage of representation on television for African Americans has been more or less equivalent to the percentage of the American population. The Latino representation on U.S. television has increased since the 1980s, and during the 1990s it had reached three per cent (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 111), and by 2007, the Latino representation on U.S. television, after further increase, reached five per cent (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 105). Despite the development in the representation of the Latinos on U.S. television, Latinos as an ethnic minority group are still grossly underrepresented compared to the percentage of representation in the U.S. population, which by 2010 had reached 16 per cent (Motel, 2012). This thesis will use the research that has been done on the topic of Latino representation on primetime television in the United States, in order to analyse how Latino representation has developed over time and if the portrayal of Latinos on primetime television has changed, and examine what impact this has on viewers' attitudes towards the Latino population.

Although Latinos appear in all genres of television this thesis will mainly focus on how Latinos are portrayed on situation comedies, sitcoms, because this genre is very popular, and it is the genre represented with most shows on primetime television (Hoffman and Noriega, 2004). At the same time the genre is also one of the least ethnic diverse genres and has been a genre in which Latinos are less visible, often appearing in secondary and non-recurring roles (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 698). Within television history, only four successful sitcoms have had Latinos appearing in recurring lead roles, and have had storylines that from time to time revolved around Latino themes and issues. These four shows are *I Love Lucy*, *Chico and the Man*, *The George Lopez Show* and *Modern Family*, which will be examined and analysed in order to conclude on how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television in the United States as well as the consequences thereof. The analysis of the sitcoms is based on empirical data I have collected by watching selected episodes of the four shows.

This thesis will examine these issues from the following research question:

Research question:

How are Latinos portrayed on primetime television in the United States and which consequences does it have on viewers' attitudes towards the Latino population?

Hypothesis:

1. The way Latinos are portrayed on television can reproduce stereotypes, negative as well as positive.
2. Latinos on primetime television are underrepresented as an ethnic group and when appearing, Latinos are often portrayed as stereotypic characters.
3. The way Latinos are portrayed on primetime television influences viewers' attitudes towards the Latino population.

Methodology

This thesis uses primary and secondary sources to explore the representation and stereotyping of Latinos on primetime television in the United States.

My primary sources are articles including various background information on the Latino actors and actresses starring in the sitcoms of my analysis, as well as information on population numbers from the website of www.pewhispanic.org as well as the sitcoms I use for part of my analysis on stereotypes on primetime television.

My secondary sources consist of academic articles, books and content analysis. A number of my secondary sources are used in order to explore the theory behind stereotyping and the use thereof and also how television is able to use stereotypes in order to maintain prejudice and attitudes towards minority groups in the minds of its viewers. Others are looking into Latino stereotypes in particular, which helps me to define the images that have been recurring, in order for me to identify when analysing sitcoms starring Latinos.

The theory used in the thesis to examine how Latinos are represented on primetime television in the United States is theory examining the concepts of stereotyping, othering, social identity and cultivation theory.

To examine the concept of stereotyping, I have primarily used the work of Berg (2002), Stangor (2009) and Merskin (2011) who all examine how stereotyping emerges and how it is used to distance in-groups from out-groups as well how stereotyping becomes negative, and which factors emerge in this process. The theory of stereotyping will be combined with the theory of Othering, using material from Berg (2002), Pickering (2007) and Merskin (2011), which is an extension of stereotyping, examining the in-group and out-group relations and how these emerge. The theory of social identity will also be examined due to its connection between in-group and out-group interaction and also due to the relation to stereotyping and Othering, which are concepts closely intertwined with social identity. I have used the work of Turner (1982) and Jenkins (2006) who have thoroughly examined the theory of social identity, explaining the concept and which factors that are present in interaction between different groups that are resulting in negative stereotyping and Othering as well as maintaining intergroup power relations. Cultivation theory is used in order to examine the media effect and influence on the viewers and the long-term consequences thereof through the work of Laughey (2007). Laughey (2007) has defined which factors that cause opinion-

forming effect on television viewers, and how a cultivated image on television tend to become the image viewers believe in, as a factual image due to being repetitively exposed to the image.

In order to analyse the development of Latino representation on primetime television I use content analysis in the shape of research papers specifically analysing various factors of representation such as racial and gender representation, occupational and behavioural patterns, physical attributes etc. I have found such research spanning over a decade. The sources provide a thorough overview of Latino representation on primetime television for the years researched. The research includes content analysis by Mastro and Greenberg (2000), Children Now (2000-2001, 2003-2004), National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (2000, 2001), Mastro and Behm-Morawitz (2005) and Monk-Turner et.al (2010). These reports cover all relevant factors of Latino representation and portrayals, having analysed all shows on primetime television during the time period of analysis, counting the number of Latino characters, defining the percentage of all characters, as well as examining the characteristics of the Latino characters comparing them to the same findings for Blacks and Whites, deciding whether there are common features of generalising, stereotyping or differences there seem to be ethnicity-based or stand out amongst the results. The reason why it is important to look at representation in connection with stereotyping is that the shaping of viewers attitude towards ethnic minority groups is both about the quality: portrayals and the quantity: representation of the images being exposed on television. Representation on television corresponding to the representation in the population does not secure that the viewers' attitude towards ethnic minority groups will be all positive, due to the effect of the images exposed on television, but increased representation may boost awareness of specific groups, and if combined with more positive or counter-stereotypical images, it is possible that it will create an overall more positive attitude towards these groups.

The reason for choosing sitcoms as the case in this thesis is based on the fact that despite sitcoms making up nearly half of the shows on primetime television, sitcoms are one of the least diverse genres to be found on primetime. Sitcoms have tended to be made up of a cast of one single ethnicity, and most often it has been an all white or all black cast (Children Now 2001: 12). In the beginning of this millennium only a few of the sitcoms on television showed a mixed cast of ethnicities and Latinos were barely represented in the sitcom genre on primetime television. I found that it was important to look into the development of Latino

characters within the genre, and look back to see what the history of Latinos in sitcoms reveals in order to decide whether there has been a pattern of negative stereotyping of Latinos on sitcoms, and how it has developed over time.

In order to collect my own empirical data to analyse Latinos on primetime television sitcoms, I have chosen four different TV shows since the 1950s. The four shows have been chosen based on different criteria. First and foremost the shows have Latinos starring in one or more leading roles, and second of all, the shows have been successful in the way the shows have been able to run for several seasons on primetime television. The four shows I have chosen have been the only four sitcoms over time to fulfil those criteria, and therefore I believe that these four shows are very important looking at Latinos on television in the United States and they are all relevant shows to analyse in order to decide whether there has been any development in the portrayals of Latinos over the years.

All of the shows have reached great success in the United States. With so many sitcoms to take over the time slot for shows being cancelled due to low audience ratings, shows running for several seasons indicate some level of success.

I have watched a number of episodes to become familiar with the characters and the shows. For at least one of the shows, *Chico and the Man* it has not been possible to find more than six episodes, but since the six are spread out over the three relevant seasons of the show, I think they are representative, and show the development of the character of Chico Rodriguez.

The episodes of the other shows have been chosen due to the topic of the episodes, they are episodes focusing on certain themes and stereotypes or generalisations that recur to some extent in the four shows. The stereotypes might have changed shape, or has been less obvious, which I find interesting to examine in order to determine the development over the last 60 years.

Delimitations

Despite the fact that other minority groups are faring just as negatively as, or even worse than, Latinos on primetime television in the United States, I have chosen to focus on Latinos due to the visibility of Latinos in U.S. society, being the largest minority group in the United States.

In my analysis on Latinos in primetime television sitcoms I have chosen not to include “That 70s Show” in my case is due to the fact that it is never really revealed where the supposedly Latino character “Fez”, played by Colombian/Venezuelan American actor Wilmer Valderrama, comes from, or that/if he is really Latino. His country of origin is several times explicitly referred to as unknown, and the only indication that he should be Latino besides his physical appearance, are stereotypes like his heavy accent and lack of English proficiencies. Yet he is of course played by a Latino actor in a successful sitcom, which is a positive factor, but on the negative side he is never really presented as a representative of Latino culture as such, and definitely not in a positive way. Furthermore, despite the show being built on an entourage of characters, the character of “Fez” is not the most central character who influences the storyline, and he is mainly a humorous element on the sitcom and therefore he falls out of category for the thesis.

The Spanish speaking networks in the United States will not be taken into consideration in this thesis. The focus is on the national networks accessible to everyone, and not cable networks, in order to determine how Latinos are portrayed.

Definitions

Anglo Americans will be referenced to as either Anglos, Anglo American or Whites interchangeably, even though most Latinos will also define themselves as being white when defining their race, but in this context the use of the term is not racial, but rather a measure of distinguishing between the groups.

When talking about the African American population, the term African American or simply Blacks will be used interchangeably.

In this thesis, the terms of in-group and majority group are used interchangeably, and in this case, the term in-group is used to refer to the Anglo majority of the population.

The terms of out-group and minority group are used interchangeably and will in this thesis be used to refer to all ethnic minorities in the United States, although most often Latinos, since this group is the main focus of the thesis.

“El Barrio” is the Spanish word for neighbourhood, which is also broadly used as slang for the Latino ghettos in the United States.

Chicano is another name for Mexican Americans.

George Lopez is both the name of the actor and the television show, so in order to avoid creating confusion I will call the show “The George Lopez Show” throughout the thesis.

Theory

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television in the United States and to what extent these images are of stereotypical character as well as the consequences of repetitive images and portrayals of Latinos on primetime television. The thesis will also examine if the representation of Latinos on primetime television makes a difference in how Latinos are perceived or how it will affect the perception of Latinos. In order to examine this, I will use a variety of relevant theories. First of all I will use the theory of stereotyping and Othering, including theory on Social Identity in order to understand how stereotypes emerge and how they are used. Furthermore I will use Cultivation theory to examine the power of the media and to what extent cultivated images of Latinos are influencing the viewers' attitudes towards the Latino population.

Stereotyping

The term "stereotyping" was introduced by Walter Lipmann in 1922 (Berg 2002: 14; Pickering 2001: x) and there are many different definitions of the concept of stereotyping (Stangor, 2009:2). One way to define stereotypes is that "*stereotypes represent the traits that we view as characteristic of social groups from each other. In short, they are the traits that come to mind quickly when we think about the groups.*" (Stangor 2009: 2)

Another definition is that a stereotype is that a stereotype is "*a negative generalization used by an in-group (Us) about an out-group (Them)*" (Berg 2002: 15).

Over all there is an agreement that stereotypes can be both positive and negative, but most often stereotypes are of negative character (Berg 2002: 14; Stangor 2009: 2). Categorising people into groups can be a measure of distinguishing, in order to know the difference between them, and this is done by everyone, to create an "overview" of the inhabitants of our world in our minds, and this is a neutral way of categorising without negative generalisations. It is not until the categorising become negative or prejudicial that stereotyping turns into a negative concept (Berg 2002: 14).

Berg claims that two important factors are present when a neutral categorisation of a group is turned into a negative generalisation and thereby stereotyping, which are “*ethnocentrism*” and “*prejudice*” (Berg 2002: 14).

Ethnocentrism is described as “*the view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled or rated with reference to it*” (Berg 2002: 14) which is a very clear dividing of “us” and “them”, in-group and out-group, where the in-group set the standard of what is ideal and desirable (within the definitions of physical appearance, culture and behaviour) and the out-group will never be able to measure up to the standards of the in-group and will therefore, in comparison to the in-group, always be “incomplete and imperfect” (Berg 2002: 14). Prejudice is by Berg (2002) described as a general judgement of an out-group as being “inherently inferior” to the in-group in all aspects, and that this attitude is unchangeable (Berg 2002: 15). Furthermore prejudice can also be viewed as a “thought pattern” that pave the way for discrimination (Merskin 2011: 66), which is also interlinked with negative stereotyping, and when forming an opinion based on generalisation and a hostile attitude towards a group, or members on the background of belonging to a specific group without having real facts to base the opinion on, it is prejudice (Merskin 2011: 65). Stereotyping and prejudice are two factors interlinked in many ways. According to Stangor (2009), both “*stereotypes and prejudice are social norms*” (2009: 4), and both are used in correlation to what is perceived as the social norm. If the concepts of stereotyping or prejudice are the prevalent methods of expressions in a group, it becomes normalised and socially accepted within a group (Stangor 2009: 4). Stereotyping is also more broadly accepted when used under the pretext of being familiar with characteristics of a group (Stangor 2009: 10). An example could be of a member of a majority group believing that he or she has thorough knowledge on a certain form of out-group behaviour, and therefore feels he or she is permitted to generalise and stereotype on that basis.

There are many different aspects of a stereotype, since a stereotype consists of various factors, such as the angles of the camera, settings, background music, the atmosphere, but most recognisable and most used is the stereotype presented in human shape and physical appearance (Berg 2002: 42). It is an easy measure to use stereotypes in order to tell the intended story, since most stereotypes are well known images, and the minds of the viewers do not have to form its own idea about what is going on, because the viewers are already familiar with the stereotypic characters (Berg 2002: 42). This means than when

watching a movie and a specific stereotype appears, the viewer's mind is already prepared for what kind of storyline will play out throughout the movie, and the atmosphere in the shape of expectations has been set up.

There are different levels of stereotyping. An evaluation of an out-group may not be as negative as it has been previously, but it is still more negative than the evaluation of the in-group (Stangor 2009: 3). This way the in-group remains superior to the out-group in the shape of in-group favouritism, thereby the in-group is always boosting the self esteem of the group by enhancing its own characteristics as the favourable ones compared to the characteristics of the out-group (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 112). It is important to compare the evaluations in order to detect in-group favouritism, which is enhancing the positive characteristics of one's own group, and thereby the level of positive evaluations of the out-group (Stangor 2009: 3). If the attitude is less positive towards the out-group, despite not being entirely negative, there is a case of in-group favouritism.

The basis for certain stereotypes may have occurred based on real facts or incidents from reality, but although things change over time, stereotypes have a tendency to persist even though the generalisation is no longer correct about the specific group it has been applied to, as well as the generalisation applied to a whole group would rarely have been relevant for more than a small segment of the group (Berg 2002: 16). This is the case for all stereotypes. The stereotypes fit some members of all groups, but it will never include the entire group, since stereotypes are not "culture specific" (Berg 202: 16), even though after recurring repeatedly it may seem that way. Repetition of negative images and stereotypes may even become a familiarity in the media or specific genres thereof, that the audience will question when it does *not* occur and be surprised about the specific character being portrayed differently than what they are used to encounter (Berg 2002: 19).

Stereotypes may also be used for finding a scapegoat and placing blame or responsibility, and often stereotypes are used this way to justify action towards a certain group (Merskin 2011: 78). It can be seen e.g. in the way that after a lot of the hard industry moved from the Midwestern states of the United States to the states in the Southwest of the United States bordering Mexico, leaving the Midwest with high numbers of unemployment, there was an increasing anger towards the Mexican workers who took over the employment, as cheap labour. Stereotypes are furthermore used in order to differentiate one group from another, e.g. when the in-group or majority group want to separate themselves from an out-

group or a minority group, by creating stereotypes that exaggerate the differences, or at least the perceived differences, between the groups (Merskin 2011: 78).

Stereotypes are often built up around certain patterns, where out-group characters are portrayed as less powerful than the in-group characters. The out-group characters tend to be portrayed either as harmless or as a threat to the in-group lead character (Berg 2002: 27). This results in the out-group characters often being portrayed as a distinguished Other who is inferior to the in-group character. When the out-group members are being portrayed as a harmless character, they are often portraying characters who are “childlike, irrational and emotional” (Berg 2002: 27), which makes them objects of humorous elements, which are not to be taken seriously and they are no threat of any kind to the in-group characters. When the out-group members on the other hand are portrayed as a threatening and dangerous Other, the characters played by out-group members are portrayed as “treacherous, deceitful and cunning” (Berg 2002: 27) being the subject of the film or television show that the in-group hero is battling against. One way it is possible to distinguish the hero from the “dangerous Other” is that the behaviour of the out-group member is much more “aggressive, brutal and corrupt” (Berg 2002: 27), and therefore not a character the audience is most likely to sympathise with or identify with.

There are different levels of a stereotype due to the various meanings and consequences that arise when the audience is exposed to a stereotypic character. When it comes to familiar stereotypes, how the character is perceived happens on more than one level. First of all the physical appearance and characteristics spark recognition in the mind of the viewer, but a well-known stereotype has an already created image of the person as an entity, among the viewers who have a conceived idea of where this character comes from, how he/she behaves in given situations, what kind of values the character contains which determines what kind of storyline is going to be built around this character (Berg 2002: 39). Subsequently a stereotype is not just a preconceived image of what a member of a specific group looks like, but also an image of what kind of personality and behavioural pattern the character is based upon.

Although stereotypes are most often used as a discriminative image of members of the out-group, stereotyping may also be used as a tool of empowerment by the out-group, when the out-group take the stereotype and use it for humorous purposes about themselves,

which is seen as a measure of “easing social tensions” (Avila-Saavedra 2011: 288). This is often seen on stand-up comedy routines or on sitcoms.

It is important to be aware of the fact that stereotyping goes both ways. Stereotyping is not just an action from the in-group members towards the out-group members, but often when an out-group stereotypes towards the in-group it is a “reaction” more than an independent action that occurs due to the prejudice and discrimination the group has been experiencing (Avila-Saavedra 2011: 285).

Furthermore, the stereotyping of the mass media is mainly directed towards members of out-groups, due the media mainly representing the views and the attitude of the dominant group, and since the media in its many forms reaches out to a great number of viewers, the dominant attitude in the shape of stereotypic images is exposed to people of all groups (Berg 2002: 21).

Othering

According to Pickering (2001), Othering is an updated version of stereotyping, which shares many of the same characteristics as stereotyping such as homogenous characterisations of an Other (Pickering 2001: 47). Othering can be based on various characteristics, e.g. on physical appearance, where people who look different than the in-group becomes the other just based on how they look. This paves the way for both stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination (Merskin 2011: 68). Stereotypes are often based on appearance and physical attributes, where race or ethnicity often becomes an important factor. When looking at how appearance is used in order to discriminate or stereotype, there are some factors that are constructed to represent what is “good” and what is “bad” (Merskin 2011: 68). The factors representing the physical appearance of the dominant group is usually represented in a more positive way, which are often characteristics as fair skin, blond hair and blue eyes, whereas darker skin, dark hair and brown eyes will more often be associated with something negative (Berg 2002: 20). Looking like an “other” is a polluting factor on the “clean” society as the majority group knows it (Merskin 2011: 68).

Othering is also about control, and maintaining and protecting the position as well as the culture of in-group (Merskin 2011: 69). That can be done by discrimination, which can be done in the media more “discreetly” with stereotyping, since the stereotypic images can be seen as humorous and innocent in a perspective of a sitcom or other kinds of shows of

entertainment purpose. It can also be images that have been consistent over many years, so most people do not regard the portrayals as stereotypes (Laughey 2007: 21).

Another way of othering is the way of distinguishing the in-group main character where out-group members are used as opposites to the (usually) white hero of the film or show. The in-group hero is portrayed in a more positive light than the members of the out-group, who are often appearing in minor and unimportant roles, and/or are portrayed less favourable and by characteristics viewed as negative in order to make sure that the out-group members will not be confused with the white hero (Berg 2002: 56).

Despite the tendency of Latinos to appear in secondary or supporting roles, Latino main characters and Latino heroes do exist, but the difference between a Latino protagonist and an Anglo protagonist is evident. Whereas the Anglo hero usually succeeds in what he is working towards, somehow the Latino hero tends to end up at status quo, his struggles being pointless (Berg 2002: 124). This kind of “negative” ending, may result in returning to “el barrio”, having to give up the struggle to move up the social ladder, which is another way of controlling the power between the in-group and the out-group, and it emphasise the differences between the Latino hero and the Anglo hero, that where the Anglo is able to succeed in his quest, the Latino hero has to give up and remain at, or return to, the same level as where he started out. The audience usually identify with the hero of the film or television show, and admires the way a hero’s struggle is rewarded with success. Since mainly the Anglo hero experiences success, he will be the one the audience identify with, meaning the Latino audience will most often identify with the Anglo hero and not with the hero looking like them (Berg 2002: 124).

One of the classic Latino stereotypes is the image of an illegal immigrant, which is used by Latinos as a humorous element as well as by the in-group (Porter, 2002). This is a good example of how stereotyping and othering often goes hand in hand, since the stereotype helps create a distance between the in-group and the out-group, in this case Latinos. By perceiving Latinos as immigrants, they lose a sense of belonging in the United States the same way the in-group belongs there and as if they are less part of society compared to the white majority, and thereby they are again different than the in-group, and also inferior to the in-group, due to the notion of “we were here before you were”. So by creating or reinforcing a gap between the two groups, the in-group maintains the feeling of superiority and at the same time boosts the self-esteem of the group, and the out-group is kept at an inferior level.

Social Identity

“A social group can be defined as two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or....perceive themselves to be members of the same social category.”
(Turner 1982: 15)

The concept of Social Identity can be used when talking about how people act and communicate with each other as well as interaction between groups. According to Jenkins (2006), defining yourself as a group can only be done when there is an “Other” to define yourself against, where you differentiate your own group from the “Other” (Jenkins 2006: 112). A social group need not to have more in common than the sense of unity in this particular social group (Turner 1982: 15) and being part of a group gives its members a feeling of social cohesion and belonging, which gives us a social identity (Jenkins 2006: 115). A social group emerges based on affiliation as well as shared values and beliefs, where the group connect as a group on the background of e.g. a common ideology or a common threat, which connects them within a social identity (Turner 1982: 15) through a process of labelling the social categories that define the unity (Turner 1982: 18). The concept of social categories is defining a person by specific categories, deciding if the person is part of these categories or not. The categories define which group the person belongs to (Turner 1982: 18). Social categorisation creates a social identity which through social comparisons creates positive or negative self evaluations.

The background for a group to define itself as a social group, may arise of different reasons, one being pressure from the society. Jenkins (2006) uses an example of the how the working class mobilised itself as a social group due to a common pressure from the upper class and capitalism (Jenkins 2006: 113). That was a similar kind of mobilisation minority groups in the United States went through during the 1960s and 1970s, where especially the African American population mobilised itself as a social group, having experienced common discrimination from the white population through centuries.

An important element of social identity and group behaviour is that groups seek to compare themselves to other groups in order to boost their own self-esteem as a group, and to differentiate themselves from the other groups (Jenkins 2006: 116). This can be done by enhancing the in-groups positive characteristics which adds a feeling of superiority and

high status, which is further enhanced by applying negative characteristics to the out-group (Turner 1982: 34). A substantial part of the notion of a social identity and the feeling of belonging to a group is comparatively based, where the confidence of the in-group is partly based on the notion of feeling superior to the out-group, or to distinguish itself from the out-group based on perceived characteristics that separate the two. It is further important for an in-group to differentiate itself in order to “*maintain a positive social identity for its members*” (Turner 1982: 34). Thus, the social identity is important when looking at intergroup relations since it creates the foundation for how groups perceive each other and how they act towards each other.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is used in order to determine long-term effects on the media on how viewers perceive the images they are exposed to on television (Laughey 2007: 20). According to Cultivation theory, the media is a key player in creating images that by the viewers are perceived as “real”, and that these images are repeated and reinforced to a degree where they have become normalised. The images are, so to speak, “cultivated” in the minds of the viewers by the repetitive pattern of the exposure, and become the primary source of information that the viewers are exposed to (Laughey 2007: 20). Due to the fact that television is the main window to the world for many people, who receive their information through this medium, the number of people who will most likely be exposed to the cultivated images is huge, and therefore it is very important to understand the effect or consequence thereof and how this is connected with stereotyping and Othering.

Cultivation may arise after thorough exposure to repeated images of specific themes, which can create a general notion of concern among viewers. As an example, Laughey (2007) claims that viewers have been heavily exposed to crime during primetime television, and that this has created a perception of the world as a more dangerous place, and that people tend to trust other people to a lesser extent as an effect of the images people have been exposed to on primetime television (Laughey 2007: 21). This is the same case with images regarding society and culture that tend to homogenise specific ethnicities, occupations or areas of a country, and the images of these are often portrayed similarly every time they appear on television and

consequently, over time, the images have been cultivated in the minds of the viewers who perceive the specific groups this way regardless of what they might experience in the real world (Laughey 2007: 21).

Cultivation results in a more homogenous way of viewing the world around us, and it affects how we perceive groups that we are not exposed to in our everyday life, therefore it is important to be aware of the effects and the power of television when examining how stereotypes emerge and how they are used.

Television as a Mediator

As described in the previous section, the concept of Cultivation theory is the thought of an image being cultivated in the minds of the viewer after repetitive exposure, which indicates that television is an important player when it comes to influencing the attitudes of the general population. Stereotypes can arise from various sources, but one source that has been able to maintain and reinforce stereotypes, is the mass media. Stereotypes exist everywhere in the world of the media, e.g. on the news, in commercials and on TV shows. Throughout the history of television, television has had a huge influence on how viewers perceive minority groups, due to the capability of creating images, which has made television a key player in the game of underrepresentation and stereotyping (Ramasubramanian 2010: 103).

There are different concepts of which indicators on television that are participating in shaping the attitudes of the viewers. Mutz and Goldman (2010) discuss a range of concepts that by their presence in the media, is able to affect how viewers perceive ethnic minorities in a more positive perspective (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 249-250). One of the concepts that has an effect on shaping the perception of ethnic minorities into a positive direction, is what Mutz and Goldman (2010) call "*parasocial interaction*", which requires positive relations between in-group members and out-group members (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 249). People tend to trust the judgement of their peers, in this case, the members of the in-group on television, and when they see members of their own group in positive intergroup relations with out-group members, they may change their perception of the members of the out-group (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 249). Another concept is the reaction of when a viewer

identifies with a character on television, where the viewer is more likely to copy the behaviour of that character. This concept Mutz and Goldman (2010) call “*social modelling*”. When identifying with a character, most likely from within the same group, e.g. an in-group viewer identifying with a character also from the in-group, an emotional bond to this character is created, and it extends to out-group characters interacting with in-group members, as long as there are positive intergroup relations between the members of the in-group and the out-group (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 250).

Latino Stereotypes

Throughout the history of film and television there have been a number of Latino stereotypes that has been used and reinforced when depicting Latinos. Berg (2002) has listed and described six of the most commonly used Latino stereotypes, which I will use to compare to my findings in the sitcoms, where I will examine if the stereotypes Berg has found are also present in one shape or the other when exploring the themes and stereotypes in the sitcoms. All of the stereotypes Berg (2002) describes are characters who serve the same purpose in a storyline, which is to enhance the positive qualities of the hero which is usually done by portraying them as representatives of values and behaviour which do not correlate with Anglo norms and ideologies (Berg 2002: 67).

Berg (2002) describes six stereotypes like this:

“El bandido”, is a stereotype that takes many forms. It can be the classic portrayal of a sombrero-wearing villain from a western movie, over Columbian drug lords to gang members in barrios in the United States (Berg 2002: 68). The appearance of “el bandido” is unkempt and grubby, forming a sharp contrast to the prototype of a hero and “el bandido” is therefore easily recognised no matter what shape he appears in (Berg 2002: 68). Despite being altered through time, the appearance of “el bandido” still contains characteristics that reveal who he is (Berg 2002: 69).

The female equivalent to “el bandido”, according to Berg (2002), is the harlot. She matches “el bandido” in the characteristics of being untrustworthy and relentless (Berg 2002: 70). She is a hypersexual being who will throw herself at any man available, and if she does not get what she wants, she will try to get revenge (Berg 2002: 71).

The male buffoon is another commonly used stereotype, which in many ways is a lot like “el bandido”, but in a version used as a humorous element, who’s purpose in the storyline is to make the audience laugh and is therefore not as much of a threat (Berg 2002: 72). The measures used in order to make the character comical are often the lack of English proficiencies, simple-mindedness and emotional outbursts (Berg 2002: 72).

The buffoon is also found in a female version, the female clown, which shares many characteristics with the harlot, but poses less of a threat, due to her silly and comical appearance (Berg 2002: 73). She is very erotic and uses her sexuality to get what she wants, which is the kind of behaviour that most often makes her unsuitable for the hero as a love interest, and therefore she will always be a secondary character, who serves the purpose of comic relief, instead of a leading lady who is the main love interest for the hero (Berg 2002: 75).

Another well-known stereotypical Latino image is the latin lover. He is sexual, seductive and exotic, and he lures women into his web with his sexuality (Berg 2002: 76). He is not to be trusted, but is dangerous due to his ability to seduce the female characters with cruel intentions (Berg 2002: 76).

The last of the six stereotypes Berg examines, is the dark lady. She is more reserved and aloof than her two female counterparts, but the mystery that surrounds her is what makes her attractive to male characters (Berg 2002: 76). She is not trustworthy due to the way she confuses men, and turns them into lusty creatures who cannot think straight (Berg 2002: 76).

All of the stereotypic images are used to enhance the positive characteristics of a (white) hero and thereby the images are reinforcing Othering of Latinos in a negative way, since they will come off as an Other that is inferior to the hero. The Latino stereotypes are embraced by characteristics that go against values and ideologies that are supported by the white in-group.

All of the theory examined in this chapter will be used as a basis for the analysis, and the different concepts of theory will assist in determining how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television and how it influences the minds of the viewers and their attitude towards Latinos.

Four Sitcoms, Starring Latinos

In the next chapters the thesis will examine the portrayals of Latinos in four different sitcoms that have been airing on primetime television in the United States. This chapter will give an overview of the four sitcoms, the Latino characters and the Latino actors portraying them.

In chronological order the four sitcoms used for analysis are:

- I Love Lucy, airing from 1951-1957
- Chico and the Man, airing from 1974-1978 (focusing on 1974-1977 while Freddie Prinze was on the show)
- The George Lopez Show, airing from 2002-2007
- Modern Family, airing from 2009-

All of these shows have been successful in the sense that they have been running on primetime television in the United States for more than one season, and all of the shows have at least one recurring lead character who is Latino.

The shows are all different in the way the storyline have been built up, and it is clear that the shows have aired in different time periods, which is evident in the themes that are addressed, although some of the shows share similarities which will be discussed in a later section. But the one thing they *all* have in common, is the fact that they are the only four successful sitcoms on primetime television throughout the history of television that have a cast that consist of at least one Latino actor or actress.

I Love Lucy

I Love Lucy originally started out as a radio show, under the title “My Favourite Husband”, starring Lucille Ball, and when the show was adapted into a television show, Lucille Ball demanded/suggested that the lead male role went to her husband, Desi Arnaz, who was Cuban (Beltran 2009: 52).

Desi Arnaz, a Cuban actor who was married to Lucille Ball for many years, had arrived in the United States as a teenager after his family fled Cuba due to political reasons (Beltran 2009: 44). Desi Arnaz experienced great success, and through his career he established himself as a musician, an actor, a producer and the president of his own production company (Beltran 2009: 40). Despite the success of Desi Arnaz, his appearance on primetime television did not pave the way for other Latinos to appear in lead characters on sitcoms, since it was not until the 1970s that another Latino would be successful in achieving similar success (Beltran 2009: 60;Avila-Saavedra 2011: 276) and this may indicate that his success was partly due to his marriage to Lucille Ball (Beltran, 2009:52). However, he was accepted by the viewers “despite” of his Otherness as Latino, which was probably due to his marriage to Lucille Ball, but also due to the fact that he had lived out the “American Dream”, which he always expressed he believed in, as well as he believed in the United States and always expressed very positive feelings towards the country and its opportunities for a foreigner as himself (Beltran 2009: 58).

The character of Ricky Ricardo was an out-group member due to his Cuban heritage, which was primarily marked by his heavy accent and sometimes lack of English vocabulary, but he was in some respects the more serious character on the show compared to the character of Lucy who was the main comedienne of the show (Beltran 2009: 55).

I Love Lucy was a very “all American” show, that fit into primetime television in the 1950s with a more clean and carefree atmosphere, that refrained from approaching topics or issues regarding ethnicity and immigration. At the same time, while it was obvious to viewers that Ricky Ricardo was foreign, his “otherness” was toned down, although his Cuban heritage was used in many episodes as a humorous element, either in confusion of his language and mispronunciations, or Lucy meeting his Cuban family, not being able to speak or understand Spanish. This was seen e.g. on season six, where Lucy and Ricky visit Cuba, and on their way, they discuss language, Lucy complaining about Ricky joking about her Spanish proficiencies since Spanish is a foreign language. Ricky says she’s been joking about his English, which is a foreign language to him, where Lucy responds: “Well, the way you speak it, it is to me too” (S.6, ep.9, 00.02.08). Despite using his accent as part of the storyline, his Cuban and foreign heritage was toned down, and even on the episode the couple went to visit Cuba, there is not much of “Cuba” exposed to the audience. There are no pictures of Cuba or the Cubans that reveals that it is a different country than the United States, and Ricky’s family, despite of their

dark hair and slightly darker skin, does not look foreign or strange, wearing similar clothes to Lucy and Ricky (S.6, ep.9, 00.07.27).

The success of *I Love Lucy* is seen in the fact that the show was airing through most of the 1950s and reruns been airing on television ever since it originally aired in the 1950s (Elliott, 2012).

Chico and the Man

Chico and the Man was a sitcom from the 1970s, which starred the comedian, Freddie Prinze, in the role of the young Chicano, Chico Rodriguez. Freddie Prinze himself was half Puerto Rican and half Hungarian, but referred to himself as “Hungarican” (Beltran 2009: 87). Before starring in *Chico and the Man*, Freddie Prinze worked as a successful comedian, which resulted in him being cast as Chico Rodriguez, on the sitcom about a grumpy old white man, Ed Brown, encountering a young “Chicano” in East L.A. in the 1970s, a neighbourhood densely populated by Latinos (PEW Research Center, 2012). Mexican-Americans disagreed on the choice of Freddie Prinze due to his lack of Chicano background, although the show still became a success on 1970s primetime television (Beltran 2009: 93).

Freddie Prinze was important for various reasons. He was the only Latino in a lead character on a successful sitcom on U.S. primetime television during the 1970s, and he was more or less the only Latino influence on the show. This means that the authenticity brought to his character was mainly his doing, and he was solely responsible for representing Latinos on primetime television during his years on the show (Beltran 2009: 103).

In the 1970s when Freddie Prinze became a sitcom star, it was evident that times had changed since Desi Arnaz had been a television star in the 1950s, since the image of Freddie Prinze did not need to be as “clean cut” and “all American” as it had been for the image of Desi Arnaz (Beltran 2009: 98). The reasons for that may be that the television audience were younger at the 1970s than it had been in the 1950s, and television aimed at the young population of the United States as a target group (Beltran 2009: 98).

The storyline of *Chico and the Man* revolves around the relationship between the odd pair of Ed and Chico, whose relationship starts off rather bumpy as co-workers at Ed’s garage, but they end up becoming genuinely good friends and in some ways like father and son. It is evident to the viewer how the relationship evolves through the seasons of the show where

Chico starts off by living in an old van parked in the garage, to moving into a spare room, which indicates he is a permanent resident (S.3, ep.15).

Chico and the Man aired on primetime television for four seasons before it was cancelled, but the show changed for the fourth season due to the suicide of Freddie Prinze, who was replaced by a little Mexican-American boy (Beltran 2009: 87). The show was very successful while it was airing, and both of the lead actors were nominated for awards based on their performances (emmys.com). Freddie Prinze never won though (goldenglobes.org).

The George Lopez Show

The George Lopez Show was the first sitcom in 25 years to feature a Latino as a recurring lead character, and the first successful sitcom where the storyline revolved around a Latino family. George Lopez, playing the main character, is a Mexican-American comedian turned actor, like Freddie Prinze who inspired George Lopez by his work, and made George Lopez realise that being Latino did not mean he could not be a successful comedian (Navarro, 2002). George Lopez has used his own life as inspiration to his stand-up material, and also for the George Lopez Show, where his own experiences of having a father who walked out on his family is used as direct reference in the storyline where George Lopez in the show also grew up without his father (Navarro, 2002). Besides his work on the George Lopez Show and being a stand-up comedian, George Lopez has worked as a talk show host, and actor and he is a prominent Latino voice through his work (Navarro, 2012).

The Lopez family in the sitcom lives in Los Angeles and is made up by a Mexican-American father, George, and a Cuban-American mother, Angie, their two children, Carmen and Max, and George's mother, Benny. Angie's Cuban father, Vic, is a recurring character who becomes part of the lead cast in some of the last seasons. The storyline revolves around the members of the Lopez family, and the issues addressed are mainly everyday problems, as occurring in most family-based sitcoms, such as issues with teenage daughters, the relationship between a wife and the mother-in-law and the likes, but also issues like an absent parent, and on a few episodes even issues of being discriminated against as a Latino in the United States.

Despite being cancelled after five seasons, the show was a success and a change to the "primetime picture" in the sense that Latinos had been absent in lead roles on successful sitcoms for 25 years. George Lopez himself was also one of the creators of the show, meaning

that there was Latino influence on the storyline and the show in general. Today, reruns of the show are aired on television in the United States, although not during primetime.

Modern Family

Modern Family is a currently running sitcom that has been experiencing huge success which has led to great exposure for the Latina, Sofia Vergara, who plays the character of Gloria Delgado-Pritchett on the show who is a young Colombian woman who has married an older man. Gloria has a son, Manny, played by child actor, Rico Rodriguez, with her ex-husband, Javier Delgado, played by Benjamin Bratt. Manny is part of the main cast of the show, and Javier is a recurring secondary character. Sofia Vergara is Colombian, like her character, and has worked as a model and a TV hostess before becoming an actress. She moved to the United States to boost her career (People.com), but she did not fit into the “classic” Latina image, due to her natural blond hair and had to dye it dark brown in order to be cast (Lopez Tonight, 2010 – 00.03.18). On Modern Family she plays Gloria, with whom she shares many resemblances, such as having raised a child without the father of the child and of course, being Colombian.

Modern Family is a sitcom in the “mockumentary” genre and the storyline revolves around the members of one family, a patriarch and his two children and their families. The patriarch, Jay Pritchett, of the family has divorced his first wife, the mother of his two children, and is now married to a young bomb shell of a Latina, Gloria. Gloria speaks with a heavy accent and has problems pronouncing many words, which is used as an element of comedy on the show. On the pilot episode, Jay’s son-in-law, Phil, compliments Gloria on a dress, Gloria says “Thank you, Phil” and Phil thinks she wants him to “feel” the fabric of the dress due to her pronunciation of his name (S.1, ep.1, 00.18.30).

Gloria has a son, Manny, who lives with her and Jay and she is very caring, supporting and protective of her son. Her ex-husband, Javier, has disappointed her many times, and it happens that he does not show up when he is supposed to visit Manny, or when he is supposed to take him on holiday, and therefore Jay, as a step father, is a big influence in Manny’s life.

Modern Family is at the moment of writing on its fourth season airing on primetime television, and it has recently won an Emmy Award for best comedy series for the third year in a row (emmys.com, 2012).

Analysis

The aim of this thesis is to explore how the Latino are portrayed on primetime television in the United States and how it influences viewers and participate in shaping their attitude towards the Latino population. In the chapter on theory I have covered the concepts of stereotyping, of how stereotyping emerges and how it is used to distance in-groups from out-groups as well as discriminating against minorities and to maintain the social hierarchy and power relations between the groups. In the analysis, the thesis will first discuss the power of television and how the images on television are participating in shaping viewers' attitude towards Latinos. Subsequently, a number of studies and reports on Latino representation on primetime television through a decade will be examined and compared in order to discuss the development as well as the consequences thereof. Then there will be an examination of the common themes in the sitcoms, and a discussion on how these themes may be perceived by the viewer and how the portrayals of Latinos on the sitcoms are connected to the social hierarchy and power relations between in-group and out-group. This section will also examine and discuss the positive and negative characteristics of the Latino characters and their relationship with in-group members on the shows, in order to determine whether the general image of Latinos in sitcoms is leaning towards a positive portrayal or a negative portrayal.

The Power of Television

When looking into how ethnic minority groups are portrayed, it is important to keep in mind what kind of the power the mass media has in communicating an image or a message to its viewers. This section will examine the power of the images mediated by television, and discuss how images can be cultivated into becoming the image of how ethnic minority groups are perceived and how Othering becomes a part of the narratives told on television.

For many people television is the window to the “real” world, and television has become the primary source of information when learning about what is going on in the world (Mutz and

Goldman 2010: 250). The same is the case when looking into how television viewers are influenced in how they perceive other human beings and how they look upon race/ethnicity, physical attributes, behaviour as well as cultural and social status. The information and the images these perceptions are based on, are often information and images obtained by watching television due to the fact that most people do not have the opportunity to retrieve information by first hand encounters (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 250). This means that viewers tend to believe that what they see on television is a reflection of the real world, which is not always a problem, but it depends on which images viewers are being exposed to, which is very important when looking into how Latinos are portrayed and represented on primetime television. This creates false ideas about a group which is “legalised” by television (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 692) meaning the media is used as a source of information to form an opinion that is generally accepted by without having a real life experience to base the opinion upon (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 112).

“Media...have a history of under-representing ethnic minorities” (Hodkinson 2011: 200), which means underrepresentation has been cultivated throughout time, and has become the norm of the television range of programming. Due to the power of television it is important to examine how minorities are portrayed in the media, because a stereotype repeated often enough, turns into a common and believed image in the mind of viewers when repeated and cultivated (Hodkinson 2011: 201). The movement of people has made many countries more ethnic diverse, and one of the best examples of this kind of “melting pot”, is the United States due to immigration of people from all over the world (BBC News, 2006). This has automatically increased intergroup relations throughout U.S. history, where the majority and in-group, the Anglo population, continually has perceived the non-white minority groups as inferior, in the media often portrayed either as harmless or as threatening to the in-group’s position of power (Berg 2002: 27). This is evident in a media as television, where stereotypic portrayals of out-group members have been used repetitively often based on physical appearance and a different culture, which is connected to the construction of a national identity (Hodkinson 2011: 198) which is established through Othering in the sense that the differences between in-group and out-group is emphasised on, making a clear distinction between the two groups.

Othering has occurred as a measure of differentiating and distinguishing the in-group from the out-group in order to retain the power relationship between the two, which television has

the power to do in the images viewers are being exposed to (Hodkinson 2011: 201). This way, television is able to portray out-group members as Others who do not share the same ideologies and values as the in-group, which reinforces the differences between the groups, which maintain a feeling of dissimilarity amongst the viewers. Furthermore it maintains the power relationship, where ethnic minority groups are portrayed as inferior to the majority group.

Changes in society are, to some extent, able to change the composition of the images on television. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s had a great influence on the African-Americans depicted in the media, compared to how they were depicted before, and the number of African-Americans on television increased during the following decades, resulting in having been represented accordingly to the percentage in the population since the 1990s (Hodkinson 2011: 200). This confirms that although societal changes do influence the images of television, the power of already established images can be maintained due to cultivation of the image in the minds of viewers meaning that the images viewers are already familiar with, are continually believe to be true due to the long-lasting effect of them (Berg 2002: 16).

The consequences of repetitive stereotyping and Othering on television may appear amongst the minority group through withdrawal from the society that differentiates itself from the minority groups. This is done by rejecting the values and the culture of the in-group dominated society, which can be perceived as a “survival strategy” in order to distance oneself from the in-group (Hodkinson 2011: 2004). This has been seen in the way that the Latino population tend to choose to watch Spanish language television in the United States, like Univision and Telemundo, instead of the national networks. This is clear when looking at the top ten ratings of which programmes the Latino population is watching, which show that all of the ten most watched programmes were to be found on Univision, the biggest Spanish language network in the United States (Nielsen.com, 2012).

The consequences of continually underrepresentation and negative portrayals of ethnic minority groups on television in general is that it generates a prejudicial and preconceived attitude and it has a huge impact on social relations between ethnicity groups (Hodkinson 2011: 203). When looking into how television images influence viewers it is easy to categorise it as one group prejudicing towards another group, but being influenced by the images on television counts for all viewers, not just from in-group members towards out-

group members, or the other way around. Television portrayals of ethnic minority groups influence the way they are being perceived by viewers no matter the ethnicity of the viewers (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 690). For the members of the majority group, the repetitive feeding of negative images will be reflected in their attitudes towards minorities in real life, which may lead to hostility and discrimination, and the out-group exposed to stereotypic images and the cultivation thereof may start to believe in the images exposed by television and influence their image of themselves (Hodkinson 2011: 203). As an example, if out-group members are continually being portrayed as less intelligent, less ambitious and less likely to succeed, these negative characteristics may be reflected in their self-esteem and belief in their possibilities to succeed in a world where it is not expected of them to do so (Hodkinson 2011: 203).

Since television, as well as mass media in general, has got the power to shape the viewers' attitude towards certain groups, and has been able to reinforce stereotypical images, it should be possible for mass media to reduce and reverse the negative attitude viewers may have due to the exposure to negative images. Creating positive Latino role models appearing on primetime television long-term may result in a positive model of Cultivation theory, which argue that an image being repeated over and over again, is cultivated in the minds of the viewers who will start to believe in the image from television, which will be transferred to their perception of the same image in the real world (Laughey 2007: 20). This could be combined with the concepts examined by Mutz and Goldman (2010): "Parasocial interaction" and "social modelling" which are the concepts that concentrates on the interaction between in-group and out-group and the identification with characters in the media (249-250). Within "Parasocial interaction" positive intergroup relations between the in-group and the out-group are essential in order to change the perception of the members of the out-group. It would therefore be important to see members of the in-group and the out-group interact in a positive way on prime time television, which could be reducing prejudice towards out-group members (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 249).

The concept of "social modelling", where the viewer identify with a member of the in-group, is interlinked with "parasocial interaction" since it may not occur on its own, and therefore many factors need to be in sync for it to function. First, the intergroup interaction has to exist, and second of all, the interaction has to take place between a member of the out-group and an in-group member who the viewer identifies with (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 250). Although

when these factors do fall into place, the chances of reduced stereotypes and enhanced positive attitudes towards minority groups are likely to occur.

Applying these concepts to the four sitcoms, it is clear that the concept is present and three of the sitcoms have elements of social modelling, which can have an effect on how the Latinos on the shows are perceived by viewers. Following are examples from the shows:

Intergroup Relations and Social Modelling on the Four Sitcoms

To determine how stereotypes on the four sitcoms have been avoided, the concepts of Mutz and Goldman (2010) is used in order to determine how viewers may perceive the characters on the shows. On three out of the four shows there are regular positive interaction between members of the in-group and Latinos, as members of the out-group. "Social modelling" is likely to occur as an extension of the positive intergroup relations on the shows.

On *I Love Lucy*, Lucy is a character that many viewers identify with or respond to in a positive manner, and the positive interaction between her and Ricky, will lead to a positive attitude towards Ricky due to Lucy's affection towards him.

On *Chico and the Man* viewers may not identify with Ed as a person, since on the surface he is not a pleasant character, but underneath the negative exterior, he is a caring person, and since the grumpy attitude is also a comical element, he is relatable for other in-group members who will also be able to relate to him due to his membership of the in-group. Overall the interaction between him and Chico is positive, and their relationship and their closeness end up becoming the centre of the sitcom, so the "social modelling" concept can be applied.

This is also the case on *Modern Family*, where Gloria and Manny have become part of a family which members belong to the in-group. They are portrayed as a close-knit family, and the show is built on the relations between the members of the family, which are most often of the positive kind, therefore, "social modelling" can be applied to this sitcom as well.

The George Lopez Show is the exception in this analysis due to the storyline mainly concentrating on the Lopez family who consists of Latinos only. There are some in-group member secondary characters, but there is not much interaction between them. Therefore, the concept of “social modelling” cannot be applied to The George Lopez Show.

Theoretically, if “social modelling” results in a more positive attitude towards Latinos, due to positive interaction with members of the in-group, viewers will react positive on the Latino primary characters of the show, due to overall positive intergroup interaction on most of the sitcoms. These findings will be taken into consideration in the chapter examining the sitcoms thoroughly, although there are more factors to examine in order to define how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television as well as the influence of the images of Latinos on viewers’ attitude towards Latinos.

The following chapter will examine Latino representation on primetime television, based on a number of reports on the matter, to determine how Latinos are represented compared to the percentage of Latinos in the population in the United States and what consequences it has on how Latinos are perceived by viewers.

Representation

While the Latino population in the United States has been growing, so has the interest in Latino representation on prime time television. Being the largest ethnic minority group, it is important to see advancement in the representation of Latinos in the media as well, and also on how Latinos are represented, due to several reasons. One of the reasons is, that as the Latino population grow, so does the percentage of Latino viewers, and not seeing their own group represented on television, or seeing their group being portrayed in a negative way, may disturb their image of themselves (National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts 2000: 5) as well as increasing their feeling of not belonging and the feeling of being discriminated against (Children Now 2001: 3). On a social level, it is also important to be represented in order of promoting focus on minority cultures and issues and create a general understanding of the Latino population which may lead to more equality and less discrimination in society

due to the way television images are able to shape the minds and attitudes of the viewers (National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts 2001: 12).

In this chapter, a number of reports and research papers on the subject from the late 1990s and onwards will be examined. The reports will then be compared and the outcomes of them and the development of Latino representation and portrayals, both positive and negative, will be discussed.

The studies and research papers used are:

- Children Now (2001), examining the primetime season of autumn 2000.
- Children Now (2004), examining the primetime season of 2003-04, and the development since 2001.
- National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (2000), examining the development of Latino representation on primetime television between the late 1990s and 2001.
- National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (2001), examining the development of Latinos on primetime television in 1999-2001.
- Mastro and Greenberg (2000), examining the primetime season of fall 1997.
- Mastro and Behm-Morawitz (2005), examining the primetime season of 2002.
- Monk-Turner et.al. (2010), examining the primetime season of fall 2007, and a replica of the Mastro and Greenberg report from 2000, looking into development during the decade passed since then.

Since the late 1990s there has been increasing focus on representation on prime time television in the United States and the issues concerning the representation of Latinos. In general, all research papers and studies found and used for this section conclude that Latinos have been underrepresented throughout time. This chapter will examine how representation of Latinos has developed using the numbers from the research papers and studies, and discuss how Latinos were placed in the different categories, such as appearance, behaviour, use of accent and occupation, compared to the black and white characters on primetime television. Furthermore, these findings will also be used in order to discuss the consequences of the way Latinos are being portrayed on primetime television.

The reports and research papers are looking at different factors when looking into the representation of Latinos on primetime television. Representation is not only about

the quantity of Latinos on primetime television and Latino portrayals on the shows, but also on what type of roles Latinos are cast in. There is a big difference whether a character is recurring on several episodes influencing the storyline, or if the character appears in the background on a single episode, since the recurring character will be more memorable to the viewer and therefore leave a bigger impression. The reports and research papers also look into how Latinos are represented, examining what images of Latinos are being projected by television.

According to Mastro and Greenberg (2000), during the 1970s Latinos were represented half as often on television than what they were represented in percentage in the population of the United States (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 691). At the time of Mastro and Greenberg (2000)'s research, this number had decreased further due to the dramatic rise in the Latino population in the United States, with Latinos representing 12 per cent of the population, but only three per cent of the characters on primetime television in the late 1990s were at the time Latinos (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 691). Despite the Latino population of the United States increasing at high speed, this was not reflected on the Latino representation on prime time television. While Latinos were an underrepresented ethnic minority group, African Americans were doing better, and representation of this group had improved over the previous decades, and the representation on primetime television now added up to the representation of the African American ethnic minority group in the population of the United States (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 695). This may be a result of great mobilisation amongst the African American population during the 1960s and the Civil Rights Movement, and a more general common culture amongst blacks in the United States, sharing a heritage due to their ancestors who came to the United States as slaves. Latinos in the United States have arrived from several nations, where cultural and historical heritage vary in many ways, and therefore Latinos do not have the same kind of solidarity as a group as African Americans have due to their history and their background, instead they identify with the country of origin of their family, rather than identifying as neither American or Latino (Taylor et.al, 2012). This can have resulted in Latinos not having mobilised themselves as a group to the same extent African Americans have.

In the fall of 2000, Children Now reported that there was less ethnic diversity on television during the hours of prime time, than if watching late night television, and Latinos constituted only two per cent of the total prime time occupation primarily in roles not

characterized as primary roles (Children Now 2001: 2). Out of the 1688 characters on prime time television during the time of the research, 75 per cent were white, African Americans were fairly visible, representing 17 per cent of the characters, and Latinos were grossly underrepresented representing only two per cent of the characters in the research, as before mentioned (Children Now 2001: 9). Furthermore, there seemed to be less diversity during the early hours of prime time, where mainly sitcoms had been taking up the space, which means viewers of sitcoms were less exposed to ethnic diversity (Children Now 2001: 10). When looking at viewing patterns, children and teenagers are most likely to watch television during early primetime, and thereby sitcoms (Children Now 2001: 10). This means that from an early age, children are used to not seeing ethnic diversity on television, and this image is cultivated in their minds, meaning that if they do not have intergroup contact with ethnic minorities in real life, they will barely have intergroup contact with ethnic minorities at all.

According to Children Now 2001, sitcoms are the least diverse genre on prime time television, where the characters are mainly all of one colour, and the storylines revolve around a non-diverse group of people (Children Now 2001: 12). The members of other ethnic groups that do appear are rarely of much importance to the storyline and appeared only momentarily. This results in brief and one-sided impressions of ethnic minority characters, whose personalities will never be unfolded on a nuanced level. At the same time it leaves the impression of a secluded community where ethnic minorities do not have much influence, and that they do not participate or contribute to society.

All other genres on prime time have a more diverse cast although still not representative compared to Latino population numbers (Children Now 2001: 13). This assertion is further established by Mastro and Greenberg (2000) who have found that Latinos predominantly starred in crime shows (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 695), and since most of them appeared on the same show at the time of the research, a television viewer who did not watch this one show in particular, would have less of a chance of ever seeing a Latino character on primetime television (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 699). This concentration of Latinos on a single show, results in less “contact” between viewers and Latinos, and thereby Latinos are still appearing to be a minor or non-important part of the United States of primetime television, and furthermore, this may also be participating in maintaining a specific attitude towards Latinos since viewers do not experience Latinos in influential roles on television shows. With a concentrated representation on crime shows, only few Latinos

appeared on the sitcoms which, according to Mastro and Greenberg (2000), make up half of the shows on primetime (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 698). This means that half of the shows on primetime television are more or less excluding Latinos, and viewers are not accustomed to see Latinos in this genre. Thereby the non-existing Latino on sitcoms has become a cultivated “image” in the sense that viewers will be surprised when they do see Latinos on sitcoms, and viewers will not associate Latinos with the sitcom genre.

The report from Children Now (2004), released in 2004 acknowledged that positive progress had emerged in the representation of Latinos on primetime television in the United States since the previous report on the matter from 2002. According to the research, Latinos at this point represented six per cent of the characters on primetime television, gone up from two per cent, and the number of Latinos in the opening credits had tripled (Children Now 2004: 2). One of the biggest changes since the previous report from Children Now in 2001, was that there was now a category of opening casts consisting of Latinos only, due to *The George Lopez Show*, which occurred in the early hours of primetime which was still predominantly white, and least diverse (Children Now 2004: 4). This development helped varying diversity in the range of programmes during the early hours of primetime television at the time. *The George Lopez Show* is also mentioned by Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005), which highlights the show as positive progress although the show is still, more or less, one of a kind in the way that it is the only successful sitcom consisting of a dominant Latino cast and the only sitcom portraying a Latino family (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 125). The show is not unlike other sitcoms in the way that the storyline of the show primarily revolves around one ethnic group, in this case Latinos, and thereby secludes Latinos from other ethnicities which depict Latinos as a closed community. Therefore there is not much intergroup interaction, and Anglo viewers could be less likely to identify with the characters, due to the lack of social modelling (Mutz and Goldman 2010: 250).

The latest hour of primetime was still the most diverse in 2003-04 (Children Now 2004: 4). The reason for this is still that sitcoms, which are showed in the early hour of primetime is the least diverse genre, and dramas, which are showed in the late hour of primetime, is the most diverse genre on primetime television (Children Now 2004: 5). Therefore, viewers who watch television during early primetime, continue to be exposed to non-diverse programmes, and will be exposed to a minimum of ethnic minority members and thus, the image of the “missing” Latino was further cultivated.

In 2010 when Monk-Turner et.al (2010) researched the development since the Mastro and Greenberg report from 2000, Latinos represented 15 per cent of the population in the United States (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 102), and represented 5 per cent of the characters on primetime television (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 105) which is not a dramatic increase over ten years compared to the increase of the Latino population, and second of all it is a decrease from the six per cent registered in 2004 (Children Now 2004: 2).

The most significant difference within the decade was the findings on the representation in the type of character played by Latinos. In earlier studies Latino had been playing mainly secondary roles, but by 2007 the majority of Latinos on primetime television starred as primary characters that had influence on the storyline and it seemed as if Latinos and Blacks had switched places in this aspect, since Blacks were considerably less represented in primary roles in 2007 although still represented accordingly to representation in population (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 106). Other than an increase in the number of Latinos in primary roles, no counter stereotypical findings occurred in the study, which means that despite the increase in the number of Latinos in primary roles, Latinos are still often negatively portrayed and the development of Latino images on primetime television have been more negative than both Blacks and White (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 110).

The latest report on Latino representation was, to my knowledge, published in 2010, examining the primetime season in autumn 2007. It is interesting that there has not been more recent research on the matter, compared to a decade ago, where there were new findings every year, especially because the Latino population has continued to increase which is why this issue is still relevant.

Portraying Latinos on Primetime Television

While the findings concluded that there has not been a major increase in the number of Latinos appearing on primetime television in the United States, the following section will examine how Latinos have been portrayed, based on the findings in the same reports, including findings on appearance, behavioural patterns, how Latinos speak on primetime television and occupation, since all of these factors are participating in shaping an

image of a character which influences how viewers, Anglos as well as Latinos, perceive Latinos on primetime television.

Appearance and Behaviour

The Latinos appearing on primetime television were in the early 00s more likely to be young, compared to other ethnicities, and only a small percentage of Latinos were middle aged or older (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 118). Young characters will most likely be taken less serious than the “older and wiser” characters, and thereby Latinos will in general be perceived less seriously by viewers. This can be perceived in a negative way combined with the results that Latinos tended to be less appropriately dressed (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 118), which is also an indicator of less seriousness. If most Latino characters on primetime are young and/or less appropriately dressed than other ethnic groups, they overall come across in a less serious way.

Looking at demography, Latinos as a group are predominantly younger than the other ethnic groups in the United States (Motel, 2012), so being portrayed younger on primetime television is not a wrong portrayal of Latinos as a group as such. Although, as all homogenous portrayals participate in shaping a one-sided image of a group, and no group is entirely homogenous, it is important that all groups are portrayed more multi-faceted due to the power television images have (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 692).

In 2010 by Monk-Turner et.al reported that the Latinos represented on primetime television were still predominantly young, but in this study, as opposed to Behm-Morawitz’ (2005) findings, most of the characters on primetime were fairly young, and Latinos did no longer stand out on this factor (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 106).

In 2005, the behaviour of Latinos on primetime television were found to be more hot-tempered amongst male Latinos, while Latinas tended to be more sexual aggressive and verbally aggressive compared to Anglos and blacks (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 122-124). These characteristics correlate with the classic Latino stereotypes of the Latin Lover, the harlot and the female clown described by Berg (2002: 70-76) and indicates that these stereotypes, or at least traits thereof, still persist, in the portraying of Latinos in a hypersexual

way. Portraying Latinos this way also results in giving Latinos a less serious image, and viewers will maintain the perception of Latinos as hyper-sexualised beings after repetitive exposure to the image (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 125). These characteristics are perceived as negative, which will reflect the attitude towards Latinos, who, by cultivating these images, become impersonation of negative values.

Mastro and Greenberg (2000) found positive and counter stereotypical portrayals of Latinos in their study, where Latinos were portrayed equally intelligent and “clean” as both Caucasians and African Americans, and compared to the other groups, Latinos were even portrayed as the least lazy and most motivated group of the three ethnic groups (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 700). In contrast to Mastro and Greenberg (2000), Mastro and Behm Morawitz (2005) concluded that Latinos were portrayed lazier and less intelligent than both Blacks and Whites in the report five years later (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 121). Within the five years between the two studies, this development in the Latino portrayal on primetime television had gone in a negative direction, but the image seemed not to have been cultivated further, since the findings in 2005 did not correlate with the findings on the same topic in 2010, finding no significant differences amongst the three ethnic groups when looking at laziness (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 108). This change may be coincidental. The characteristics have not been cultivated, and they have been fluctuating over a decade. In order to conclude on these characteristics being repetitive stereotyping of Latinos, it would be necessary to examine future research on the matter.

Other negative findings are that Latinos are less respected and more ridiculed than the other groups, which is a change on primetime television compared to the study ten years earlier (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 108-109) where this was not prevalent.

Accent and English Proficiencies

On one matter where Latino have been standing out compared to the other groups, is when it comes to the use of accent and English proficiencies. In research from 2000, the Latinos were the group speaking with the heaviest accent and were the least articulate (Mastro and Greenberg 2000: 700). Findings of Latinos being the group on primetime television speaking with the heaviest accent and being less articulate are recurring in the later

reports, which means that these characteristics are common features of Latinos on primetime television and characteristics that viewers will most likely associate with Latinos (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 120,122). According to Monk-Turner et.al (2010), in 2007 Latinos are still the ethnic group on primetime television who speaks with the heaviest accent (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 107), which has continued to be cultivated into viewers' minds over the years and can be seen as a characteristic of a person who is not native-born in the United States. The heavy accent and lack of English proficiencies indicate that the person with these characteristics is a foreigner or a stranger, and thereby Othered as someone who is not a part of U.S. society on the same level as Anglo viewers. The image of Latinos who do not master Standard English and therefore are not "real" Americans does not correlate with the numbers of the demographics in the United States. First of all, the increase of the Latino population is now based on reproduction rather than immigration, meaning that much fewer Latinos are first generation immigrants (Lopez and Taylor, 2010). Second of all, more Latinos use English to a greater extent both in and outside their homes, and therefore an increasing number of Latinos, especially U.S.-born Latinos, will not speak with a heavy accent or lack an English vocabulary (Motel, 2012). By maintaining and cultivating an image of Latinos as immigrants, not mastering the English language, it is further established that Latinos are foreigners, new to the United States, who does not belong in the country in the same way as the Anglo population. This reinforces Othering by maintaining Latinos as outsider, the Others, not as "real" Americans, and being exposed to this image repetitively, will influence the attitude of the viewers who will perceive Latinos this way.

As Latinos were the group most often speaking with a heavy accent, as well as they were still the least articulate group along with the Blacks (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 107), characters from the same groups were also depicted as most unintelligent compared to almost none of the white characters (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 107), and both of the groups were also characterised as the most immoral and most despicable which were all negative qualities, that most often was connected to characters from ethnic minority groups, and rarely from the white majority group (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 108). This "generalisation" of the minority groups containing negative qualities and the lack of Anglo characters portrayed in a similar way, is maintaining the inferiority of ethnic minority groups, who are portrayed representing values that are negative. This will lead to association between negative

characteristics and ethnic minorities due to the way it is continually portrayed on primetime television and viewers' attitude towards the minority groups may be shaped thereafter.

Occupation

When looking at the occupational pattern of Latinos on primetime television, research showed that Latinos are most likely to be portrayed in service jobs, which indicate lower income, and hereby lower social status (Children Now 2001: 22). Portraying Latinos on primetime television less nuanced, as for instance when repetitively portraying Latinos holding low status jobs, creates an image of Latinos that is being cultivated and that image becomes what is expected by the viewers. Another result was that Latinos were more likely to have less authority in their occupation (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 117) which adds to the cultivated image of Latinos being inferior, working in low-skilled jobs with less authority. But the occupation of Latinos on prime time varies a lot depending on what kind of role Latinos occupy. If a Latino appears in a non-recurring role, it is more likely that their profession is low-skilled, often working a service job, or being a criminal, whereas Latinos appearing in recurring roles are more likely to be a character with a higher social status job (Children Now 2001: 23). It is positive that viewers see the recurring Latinos in higher social status jobs, but the issue in the early 00s is that there were more Latinos playing non-recurring roles, and since these roles are often of lower social status, this image would be seen more often (National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts 2001: 9) and this image may have been the one viewers would most likely base their opinion of Latinos on, according to the Cultivation theory (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 111), in the sense that the image of Latinos of being low-skilled was the image most often occurring on primetime television and therefore, this image would be cultivated to be the one viewers would tend to believe in and base their opinions on (Laughey 2007: 20).

Looking at the findings from Children Now 2004 concerning occupation, Latinos are still lagging behind being the least likely of the ethnic groups in the study to appear in high status occupations, and at the same time Latinos was also the most likely by far to appear as domestic workers, which confirms an existing, and persisting, stereotype (Children Now 2004: 6). Even though Latinos were also in the high end of the scale of being portrayed as

criminals, compared to Anglos and Blacks, Latinos were also the most likely to appear on primetime television as law enforcement officers, showing a bit of a diversity amongst Latinos as an ethnic group, showing Latinos on both sides of the law (Children Now 2004: 6). This image seems to be changing according to the findings of Monk-Turner et.al (2010), which claimed that by 2007 there was a majority of the Latinos on primetime television who appeared in primary roles and thereby it is more likely that the Latinos on primetime television appear in a more diverse range of occupations, which will provide viewers with a more broad and nuanced image of Latinos (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 106). This portrayal is more likely to reflect the reality and it will be able to expose viewers to a broad range of Latino characters, which can lead to a better attitude towards Latinos in general.

Even though it seems like a stereotypic characterisation when Latinos are portrayed in low skilled jobs, it is also important to take official numbers on the U.S. workforce into consideration. A high number of Latinos in United States do work in low skilled jobs, and on average, Latinos make less money than Anglos (Motel, 2012). Therefore this stereotype of Latinos being of lower social status is not exactly wrong since it is a fact that there are more Latinos than Anglos in low skilled jobs. Throughout the generations of Latinos in the United States though, the number of Latinos who attend college is increasing (Motel, 2012), which makes a rise in social mobility more likely to occur. This happens as a large number of Latinos are born and raised in the United States instead of being first generation immigrants, and in many ways the young Latinos have integrated more into society in a different way than first generation immigrants have (Motel, 2012).

When Latinos are often being depicted as criminals in higher numbers than e.g. Anglos, it cultivates the image of Latin criminals as the norm and the attitude towards Latinos will be shaped thereafter, resulting in a negative attitude towards them. Despite of this, official numbers do state that more Latinos than Anglos are criminals, and the number of Latinos in U.S. prisons has been increasing drastically over the last decades (Lopez and Light, 2009). It is interesting to notice that a big percentage of Latino crime stems from illegal immigration, and issues related to illegal immigration. In 2007, three quarters of the Latinos who were sentenced as federal offenders, were non-U.S. citizens (Lopez and Light, 2009). This does not change that there is registered a high number of Latinos criminals in the United States, although, since a majority of them are non-citizens, it would be misleading to portray a majority of all Latinos on television as criminals.

Overall, it is clear from these reports that Latinos have been continually underrepresented on primetime television compared to the percentage of Latinos in the population in the United States. Within the ten years between the oldest and the most recent report, there has been a small increase in the number of Latinos seen on primetime television in the United States and furthermore, Latinos have gone from being primarily represented as characters in secondary or tertiary roles, to being mainly represented in primary roles when appearing on primetime television (Monk-Turner 2010: 106).

On the background of the reports used, it can be argued that there seems to have been a repetitive pattern on specific areas of how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television, which is defined as a general tendency of negative images compared to the other two groups, Anglos and African Americans. Paired with underrepresentation of Latinos on primetime television compared with the representation of Latinos in the population of the United States, this indicates that primetime viewers are exposed to few and many negative images of Latinos, which may lead to a general negative attitude towards Latinos as a group. The Latinos appearing on primetime television are not all portrayed in a stereotypic way, although there are some negative images that are being repeated, which can result in cultivating these specific images in the minds of the viewers, based on the images portrayed on television. Instead of trying to change the negative images, viewers are being fed with well-known stereotypes that they may continue to believe in and treat as facts, meaning that television keeps normalising these images and this indicates that television reinforces negative stereotyping rather than fighting it.

The next section will look further into the chosen sitcoms specifically to determine how the Latino characters are portrayed in that genre.

Latino Portrayals on Four Sitcoms

The following chapter will look into specific themes and portrayals on the four sitcoms that have been chosen for the analysis. The choice of sitcoms was based on the criteria that the shows had to be successful in the way that they had aired on primetime television for more than one season, and that at least one Latino is starring in a primary role.

The purpose of examining these sitcoms, is to explore how Latinos in these sitcoms have been portrayed and if there are specific themes that are recurring, which thereby cultivates certain images of Latinos and participate in shaping viewers' attitude towards Latinos as a consequence thereof.

In order to analyse how Latinos are portrayed on primetime television, I have watched several episodes from the four sitcoms starring Latinos that are categorised as successful. It is clear that out of the four, *I Love Lucy* stands out in the sense that the show does not share many similarities with the other three shows. The reasons for this may be found in the changes that occurred in society between *I Love Lucy* in the 1950s and *Chico and the Man* in the 1970s, such as the intensification of the Cold War, noticeable the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960s as well as the Civil Rights Movement and the development of youth culture which was also reflected in the range of programming on television. Where *I Love Lucy* was a sitcom which purpose was to entertain the audience without being too serious, in the 1970s, television had developed into producing programmes with a wider range, also including a more serious tone sometimes also criticising/questioning society, rather than being just light entertainment for viewers. Therefore the four shows are difficult to compare, since *I Love Lucy* does not share many similarities with the other three shows that have several themes in common despite the 30 years gap between airing on television.

In this chapter the main focus will therefore be on the three shows that do share similarities, but *I Love Lucy* is still an significant show due to Desi Arnaz' role as Ricky Ricardo, through six seasons on primetime television in the 1950s, because he is one of a few Latinos who has accomplished that through television history. The show will also be part of the analysis of the similarities that do occur between *I Love Lucy* and the other three shows, such as when examining the use of heavy accent on the shows.

On the remaining three shows I have been studying for the thesis, there are various themes and images that are reoccurring. On the shows *Chico and the Man*, *George Lopez* and *Modern Family* there are similarities in the themes/stereotypes, despite the fact that the three shows have been shown on television on different times – one of them in the 1970s and the other two in the 2000s. The stereotypes/themes that are reoccurring, both if it is attached to a person or just something being talked about or referenced to, are primarily these:

- Latinos being criminal and lazy
- The loud Latino (especially Latinas) using excessive body language and gestures

- The Latino leaving his wife and baby

But this section will also examine other factors on the shows, comparing them to some of the findings from the previous section, such as use of accent and occupation, since these characteristics are also part of generating an image of a person in the minds of viewers, due to preconceived opinions based on a person's social status, which is often shaped by occupation and how a person talks. At last, this section will also examine the Latino themed issues the shows deal with, which can participate in enlightening viewers who may not be in regular contact with Latinos, and thereby create knowledge and awareness of Latino issues, which therefore can affect viewers' attitude towards Latinos.

The Criminal/Lazy Latino

The criminal Latino is mainly something referenced to on the shows as a common Latino stereotype, something the characters use when joking about stereotypes, or as quick comments, more than the characters actually capturing the thieving Latino stereotype. Yet there are a few examples. For instance on *Chico and the Man* where Chico tells about his past as a criminal youth in "el barrio", and on the pilot episode he also shows that he is capable of "cheating" people, when he swaps a hub cap from one side of the car to the other, instead of installing a new one, without the customer noticing (S.1, ep.1, 00.12.20). In the same episode (S.1, ep.1) he is about to be arrested for robbery, but gets out of it when Ed gives him an alibi. It is never revealed whether or not he is actually innocent, which maintain suspicion around Chico from a viewer's perspective, although due to his sympathetic behaviour, he seems trustworthy. The lazy Latino stereotype is also mainly used in references on the shows although George Lopez' friend, Ernie, falls under the category. He is not very clever and does not seem to take anything that seriously. He talks about going out for beers on his lunch break (S.1, ep.1), which portrays him as an easy-going and lazy character who does not care much about his job, but is more interested in spending his time on fun and leisure. The references of the criminal/lazy Latino is used by both Anglos and Latinos on the show, so in that case it is not primarily members of an in-group using stereotypical references towards out-group members, but both groups uses the references as if they are normal and acceptable, which reinforces the stereotypical image of Latinos as thieving and lazy, and does not

question this kind of portrayal. Even though it is used for a humorous effect, it can strengthen an already formed opinion of viewers who will not look at the joke of the stereotype as a caricature or an ironic way of using the image, but will recognise an image that correlates with the image in their minds, due to the cultivation of it (Laughey 2007: 20).

The Loud Latino/a

The loud Latino, most often Latina, is also present on all three shows. On *Chico and the Man* she can be found in the shape of one of Chico's girlfriends who takes up a lot of space on the screen by being very loud along with using extreme body language (S.2, ep.19, 00.01.35). She takes the shape of one of Berg's stereotypes, the female clown (Berg 2002: 73, which can be seen in the way she is being harmless but silly, although she uses her sexuality in to gain the attention of the two men (S.2, ep.19, 00.12.30).

On "George Lopez" it is George Lopez's mother, Benny, in particular who fits the stereotype of the loud Latina. She may not use extreme body language, except for some hand gestures from time to time, but she is quite mouthy, she is being rude towards everyone and in general she shows quite aggressive behaviour. This aggressive behaviour is exemplified in several episodes, e.g. She does not come off very sympathetically since she seems to have been a mean mother when George Lopez was a child, and she has lied about many things throughout his life, which makes her come off as an untrustworthy character and an uncaring mother, which does not correlate with norms and values of society. There are rare moments yet, where a more positive side of her comes out in the open, but they are rare.

Gloria on *Modern Family* is the quintessence of the loud Latina with extreme body language. When she enters a room there is no doubt she has arrived, and she stands out from the other family members (with the exception of the flamboyant homosexual character, Cameron). Gloria is very dramatic and emotional and she uses her entire body when talking. Due to the characteristics like obvious sexuality and sometimes silly appearance, Gloria at times embodies the female clown which Berg described, but her character is combined with more serious and likeable characteristics as well, such as being a good and caring mother, which balances her personality into being generally positive, and easier to identify with as a viewer.

The Absent Latino Father

On all three shows there is a father who has abandoned his child to some extent. In *Chico and the Man* (S.3, ep.15) and the *George Lopez Show* (S.2,ep.1), where Chico and George have grown up without having a father around, both of them have believed that their father has died and are both surprised when their fathers turn out to be alive. Both of their fathers have turned out quite well and are now wealthy men and more “trustworthy” types in the shape of their financial stability, and now they want to get to know their sons and be parts of their lives. On top of that they are both able and willing to help their sons financially, since they are now able to help despite not having been in touch for most of their lives.

On *Modern Family* Gloria’s ex-husband, Manny’s father, Javier, has been a part of Manny’s life, but on his own terms (S.1, ep.11). He does not always show up as promised and he lies to Manny about it in order to not come off as the “bad guy”. This makes him an untrustworthy type of person who cannot be relied on or trusted; although there is no doubt that he cares about Manny (S.1, ep.11, 00.09.17). He has just not got his priorities right, and his own needs comes first, which makes him a flightily and self-centred person which are both negative characteristics. Thereby his character will automatically be perceived in a negative way, since his values do not correlate with the norm of the society, where a parent is expected to take care of a child.

Another example of the caring, yet untrustworthy, father is also found on *George Lopez*, in this case, that type of character is combined with the “criminal Latino”. George Lopez’ brother-in-law has not always been there for his daughter who the Lopez family has taken in, and they are guardians of her trust fund, while her father has been in jail due to fraud (S.5, ep.16). When he comes back on the pretext of wanting a relationship with his daughter after getting out of jail and becoming an honest man, he tries to trick her into giving him access to her trust fund in order to pay out his own debt, and his plan is to disappear on his daughter without telling her (S.5, ep.16, 00.13.51). This combination of two extremely negative stereotypes makes this character exceptionally unsympathetic and paints a negative picture of the Latino father figure, which again is not associated with acceptable behaviour. Having examples of untrustworthy Latino fathers on the three shows, will participate in cultivating a negative image of male Latino behaviour, and the consequences of this image is that viewers will believe in this image and base their attitude towards Latino on it.

Counter-stereotypical Behaviour and Positive Portrayals

Despite finding the various recurring Latino stereotypes on the shows, there are also counter stereotypical behaviour to be found on all the shows. All of the Latino lead characters on the three shows are generally portrayed quite sympathetically.

Chico is a nice and hardworking young man who helps out Ed and makes him a more pleasant person due to a generally positive alteration in his mood after Chico arrives, and somehow Chico makes Ed reveal a softer side of him. Chico proves that he is trustworthy and hardworking which results in Ed taking him in as an employee at first, but later also as a friend, almost as a son, and gives him a home at the garage (S.3, ep.15).

George Lopez and his wife Angie are classic “American sitcom parents” – predominantly likeable people who make decisions in life in order to give their children better opportunities in the future. George has a job, and Angie is a “stay-at-home-mom”. In the beginning of the show, George is promoted to a position as a manager at the factory where he works. This demonstrates that he is hardworking and trustworthy since he has been able to work his way up the ladder in the company without having a degree (S.1, ep.1).

Gloria is also a very likeable, caring and considerate character, which overshadows the stereotypical traits of her character. It is easy to believe that she is a “gold digger” who has married a rich, older man for his money, but during the show it is evident that she loves her husband very much and that they have a deep relationship based on more than her looks and his money. She is not just “the pretty woman by her man’s side”, but also a woman who can take charge of the situation, and he is not just her provider, but someone who calms her down when she becomes dramatic or her temper rises. Their relationship seems balanced.

Overall the recurring primary characters are portrayed in a positive angle, and the negative Latino stereotypes are most often portrayed by secondary characters, recurring as well as non-recurring. This means that the most memorable characters, the primary roles, are cultivating generally positive images of Latinos, which will create a positive attitude towards Latinos amongst viewers and if cultivated long enough, these images should be able to become the image that viewers believe in, and consider the general Latino image. But due to the persistency of ingrained images, the positive images would have to be equally persistent repetitively over a long period of time.

The Inferior Latino

Even though the counter-stereotypical traits overshadow the more negative stereotypical characteristics, there is another dimension of how the Latino characters are portrayed on these three shows, which indicates that on some level, Latinos are continually being portrayed inferior to Anglos, and continually Othered as a group.

On *Chico and the Man*, Chico may be a hardworking and likable Latino character, but it is clearly indicated that he has been helped by a member of the “in-group”. First of all by the army that may not be an in-group member in itself, but the army is an institution of authority of the United States and the army is considered a measure of upward social mobility (Berg 2002: 139). Secondly Chico receives help to get on the right track by Ed, who is an Anglo man. Even though Chico is ambitious and determined to work hard, it is not until Chico is hired by Ed that Chico seems to be able to carry out his ambitious and believe that it is possible. In a way you can say that Ed is “the Anglo behind the Latino”. In some ways Ed also becomes a father figure in Chico’s life, which Chico’s biological father has never been around to be for him, and thereby Ed emerges as a better man than Chico’s Latino father (S.3, ep.15). Furthermore, Ed is also the one who has to be the voice of reason when Chico does not seem to think straight or make rash decisions and calms him down. All of this indicates that Chico’s success has been accomplished with the help of a member of the “in-group” which reaffirms the in-group position as being a superior group.

On the *George Lopez Show*, George Lopez is portrayed as a hard working Latino who achieves success because of his hard work and determination, when he gets a promotion at the factory he works in, and becomes a manager (S.1, ep.1). He thereby becomes the leader of a large group of workers, which includes his own mother and his best friend. The group is made up by various ethnicities, so he is not just in charge of a group of Latinos, which indicates that being a minority or out-group member does not stand in the way of a promotion. Despite being a manager and being in charge, he still has to report to the owners of the factory and they are both Anglos. Thus the power and responsibility George Lopez is granted, is controlled by members of the “in-group”, so even though a large group of workers answers to George Lopez, George Lopez himself answers to the owners of the factory, i.e. the Anglos and once again the position of the in-group as superior is reinforced. The Anglo managers are secondary recurring characters, and their presence on the show is not

overshadowing the storyline, but despite that, it is still a present factor on the show. The Anglos being the owners of the factory is not a surprising factor, though, since it is more likely that Anglos than Latinos are the owners of a factory, and that Latinos are working for them (Motel, 2012).

On *Modern Family*, there is also an example of a member of the “in-group” being a “saviour” of one of the Latino characters, looking at how Jay behaves towards Gloria’s son, Manny. At times when Manny’s father, Javier, does not show up as planned, Jay steps up to help Manny, either to comfort him, or other times to lie on behalf of Javier, who never showed up (S.1, ep.2). He comes up with a lie to secure that Manny will not get hurt and will not lose all confidence and trust in his father, who he looks up to (S.1, ep.2, 00.19.28). Jay also becomes a more trustworthy father figure to Manny which his own Latino father is not, and portrays Jay as a better father, compared to one who is never there for his son and does not keep his promises. Thereby indicating that the father who is a member of the in-group is better and more reliable, shedding negative light on the father from the out-group. Due to his financial situation, Jay is also an “in-group member” who is able to provide for his Latina “stay at home”-wife and her son, making him indispensable and it makes Gloria, the out-group member, dependent on him, although the fact that Jay is financially better off than Gloria, does correlate with reality, where the majority of Latinos make less money than Anglos (Motel, 2012).

Accent and the Use of Spanish

In the findings of the reports examined in the previous section, one characteristic of Latinos on primetime television that was recurring was the heavy accent that tended to be recurring, in all the reports. Latinos was the only group who predominantly spoke with a heavy accent and the only group severely lacking English proficiencies (Monk-Turner et.al 2010: 107). In all of the four sitcoms there are several examples of Latinos speaking with a heavy accent, which support the findings from the reports, although it varies from one show to the other, whether the characters speaking with an accent are primary or secondary/tertiary.

On *I Love Lucy*, Ricky Ricardo speaks with an accent, which is one of the most dominant characteristics that reveal he is not American-born. His accent is used for humorous

purpose on several episodes, where Lucy sometimes indicates that she does not always understand him due to his accent and lack of English vocabulary (s.6, ep.9). Ricky Ricardo at times uses Spanish, mainly as outbursts when he becomes frustrated, as if lacking an English vocabulary to express his feelings (Berg 2002: 71).

On *Chico and the Man*, Chico is a native born Mexican-American, but he does speak with some accent, although this is mainly in the beginning of the show (s.1, ep.1), and it seems as if the accent is faded out on later episodes (S.3, ep.15). Chico is more reluctant to use Spanish expressions or slang

The characters of the *George Lopez Show* are a mix of first, second and third generation Latino immigrants, of Mexican and Cuban descent. George Lopez is a second generation Mexican-American, and speaks English without much of an accent. He does use Spanish words, mainly slang, intertwined in the regular conversation in English (S.6, e.15, 00.09.38). Entire sentences in Spanish are rarely used, but do occur. The characters on the show with the most distinctive accents are George Lopez' father-in-law, Vic, who is a first generation immigrant from Cuba (S.5, e.16, 00.01.33), and George's friend, Ernie (S.5, ep.16, 00.00.40), and they are both secondary but recurring characters.

On *Modern Family* there are three recurring Latino characters; Gloria, Manny and Javier. Gloria and Manny are primary characters, and Javier is a secondary character, but the only one who speaks with a distinct accent is Gloria. This is not necessarily odd due to her status as first generation immigrant, since, according to Motel (2012), fluency in English increases within second and third generation Latino immigrants, and a higher number of first generation Latino immigrants are still less likely to speak English than to speak Spanish (Motel, 2012). While her ex-husband, Javier, also speaks with an accent (S.1, ep.11, 00.01.38), Manny is fluent in English, which correlates with the findings of Motel (2012).

It is clear that this repetitive image of Latinos speaking with an accent, which was discussed in the chapter examining findings on portrayals of Latinos, has also been cultivated in the sitcoms of the analysis. Although, accent is not used by all Latino characters, it is still a dominant characteristic on all the shows. This reinforces Othering of the Latinos, who are differentiated as a group compared to Anglos, due to the lack of fluency in English. The image of the Latino not mastering English is cultivated in all four sitcoms, meaning that this is the most commonly cultivated characteristic of the various Latino characteristics, and viewers

will most likely expect Latinos on primetime television to speak with an accent, due to the well-known image.

Latino Issues on the Shows

Three of the sitcoms address more serious Latino issues despite being sitcoms. This chapter will look into how serious Latino issues have been incorporated into the sitcoms, and thereby bringing attention to these issues.

On *Chico and the Man*, the show addresses more serious Latino issues like Latino immigration and the perception of all Latinos being immigrants. On the very first episode of *Chico and the Man*, where Chico is being accused of being a criminal by two Anglo police officers and Chico becomes upset due to their reasons for accusing him, which he feels paints a stereotypical picture of a Latino, and he is furthermore offended when the officers suggest that he is an illegal immigrant (S.1, ep.1, 00.20.03). Chico has an outburst in front of the officers where he addresses the fact that Mexicans lived in California before the Anglos, referring to how the United States acquired the territory at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 (Coerver and Hall 1999: 21) and that the officers are wrong to accuse him of being illegal based on him being Latino (S.1, ep.1, 00.20.10). It is a serious topic in a sitcom, since it addresses an issue that is sensitive due to the history of the United States.

The issue of Latino stereotypes is addressed on an episode of *The George Lopez Show*, where a neighbour has put up garden gnomes in the shape of sleeping Mexicans, which offends the members of the Lopez family. The family talks about how they feel about the “stereotype” and how they have been treated due to their heritage. E.g., George’s mother, Benny, tells a story of when she was in school, and was blamed for stealing only on the background of her heritage (S.6, ep.15, 00.11.50). In the episode there is also a face to face conflict between George Lopez and the neighbour who owns the offensive statue, where George Lopez complains about being blamed for smashing the statue (S.6, ep.15 – 00.09.45). During the conflict both stereotypes and prejudice is addressed, George Lopez using examples on why the neighbour suspects him to be the culprit, but also stereotypes of Anglos judging minorities (S.6, ep.15). Furthermore, the members of the Lopez family discuss what to do in a situation like this, and the conclusion of the episode is, that the way to fight ignorance, is to get an education and be able to master to discuss and debate rather than using violence in

order to be treated with fairness and to change discriminatory behaviour (S.6, ep.15, 00.19.55). It is a serious issue for a sitcom and rare for the show to be addressing something that serious, but it is a very relevant issue which also enlighten Anglo viewers on a matter that they may not know much of, and through this exposure of an issue that Latinos may have to face, Anglo viewers become more aware of that, and therefore, it is a good initiative to bring up an issue like this on the show.

On *Modern Family*, in the marriage between Jay and Gloria some obstacles occur due to cultural differences between them. The show addresses issues that may occur in an intercultural marriage, where traditions vary and may seem strange to one another. It is evident in an episode where it becomes clear that the way the two celebrates Christmas, is very different from each other (S.1, ep.10). Gloria and Manny have Columbian Christmas traditions that they want to share with Jay who is very enthusiastic about the Christmas traditions used in his own family. The episode storyline revolves around how they introduce each other to various traditions of their respective countries and families, trying convince each other that it is the right way to celebrate Christmas, but in the end they decide on bringing the best from both cultures together, and create their own traditions as a family (S.1, ep.10, 00.20.31). This is a positive way of portraying an intercultural family with different traditions. It focuses on intercultural contact, and the positive effects from it. It does not have to be in a marriage, Latinos are present in society in the United States in many different ways, and therefore, it is likely that most Americans will be exposed to Latino culture at some point, which is being portrayed on *Modern Family*, which a large number of the population watch and become familiar with.

Addressing issues that may occur for Latinos in the United States on primetime television is very important due to the number of viewers who will get acquainted with the issues, and thereby become more knowledgeable on which problems and issues Latinos in the United States may face. Over all the Latino lead characters on all of the shows are very positive images despite the few stereotypic characteristics that all of them do contain. The least positive Latino images are portrayed by secondary, recurring as well as non-recurring characters. Since the lead characters are the most noticeable and are repeated on the show through several seasons, these are the images most cultivated in the minds of the viewers, and can be part of shaping the attitude towards Latinos. The positive images will also be able to

reduce or reverse stereotyping if cultivated over a long period of time, and the images become more nuanced instead of being demoted into negative stereotypical images.

When it comes to concluding on how Latinos are portrayed on sitcoms, and how it has developed, it is clear that there are both positive and negative aspects. On the negative side, Latinos are still portrayed in stereotypic roles, and the roles still consist of many classic stereotypic Latino characteristics. Latinos on sitcoms are still to some extent inferior to the white characters, which upholds the grouping of the different ethnic groups and reinforce the Othering of Latinos as a group.

On the positive side, the Latinos in sitcoms have been portrayed as quite likeable, yet non-threatening, characters. Latinos have been able to seize the stereotypes often used on them, and have turned them into something humorous, and in many ways proved them wrong as well as they have been portrayed in a somewhat counter-stereotypic way, or at least while there have been stereotypic characteristics, there has been counter-stereotypic characteristics as well, to balance the stereotypes, making the portrayal more nuanced, and maybe also more realistic, when the character contains both sides.

Looking at characters on sitcoms during primetime television, more or less all of them are stereotypic in one way or another, which indicates that not only Latino images are being generalised. Yet, since Latinos appear much less than e.g. whites on primetime television, so where the general image of whites is much more nuanced, due to their presence on a variety of shows and in a larger range of characters, the Latinos are seen less often and the few images exposed to the viewers will be the ones that the general attitude towards Latinos will be based upon. Since this is the case it is very positive that Latinos on sitcoms are portrayed as likeable characters, but it is disturbing that the Latino characters are still “Othered” to the extent where they are still inferior to the white majority, and despite it being less obvious due to all the positive images on the shows, it is participating in shaping and reinforcing an attitude towards Latinos as an inferior Other in the United States.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the portrayals and the representation of Latinos on primetime television in the United States and the consequences thereof, in shaping viewers' attitude towards the Latino population. In order to conclude on this, there has been many factors taken into consideration, such as quantity: representation and quality: the way Latinos are portrayed, combined with the power of television that influences viewers attitude towards Latinos in the United States.

Television has got the power to expose viewers to images which, done repetitively, becomes the images viewers believe in as if they are true, without questioning the portrayal. This reinforces often used stereotypes which, through cultivation, become synonymous with Latinos and images deviating from the known stereotype are considered unrealistic. Because of this power, television will also be capable of influencing viewers to a positive attitude towards Latinos, which is often done by showing Latinos in positive intergroup contact with Anglos.

Having examined how Latino representation on primetime television has progressed over time, it is clear that despite some increase in the number of Latinos on primetime television, the number still does not match the percentage of Latinos in the population of the United States, which steadily continues to increase. Latinos are still grossly underrepresented, and Latinos are still mostly present in drama and crime shows that are airing in the latest hour of primetime, meaning that it is a smaller segment of all viewers who get acquainted with Latinos on primetime television, and Latinos are not evenly spread out over the various programmes shown during primetime, due to the fact that many teenagers and young people watch the shows on early primetime and therefore they are not familiar with Latinos on television.

Over all, it is important to compare the representation of Latinos with the portrayal of Latinos to conclude on how Latinos are faring on primetime television today. The concepts of quantity: representation, and quality: portrayal, correlates in many ways. It is not necessarily sufficient that Latinos are represented on primetime television accordingly to the percentage of Latinos in the population in the United States; it is also about how Latinos are portrayed, since the image that viewers get acquainted with on television reflects how viewers will perceive Latinos in reality. Therefore the quality of the Latino characters needs to

be portrayed in a range of different images that reflects the diversity in the Latino population, not just a few stereotypes that do not replicate the Latinos as an entire group, in real life.

Since Latinos are underrepresented on primetime it is therefore even more important that the few Latino characters that do appear on primetime television portrays Latinos in a positive way as well, so even though the quantity: representation, is not correlating with the percentage of Latinos in the U.S. population, at least the quality: the portrayal, is generally positive or realistic, so viewers get a broad and diverse image of Latinos in the United States. After comparing the findings of the research on Latinos on primetime television, it is clear that some Latino images have been cultivated, such as a heavy accent and lack of English proficiencies, which reinforce Latinos as an Other, resulting in a distance between Anglos and Latinos. Today, the image is currently not as factual as it may have been previously, where most Latinos in the United States were first generation immigrants whereas currently, the majority of the Latino population is born and raised in the United States and are fluent in English. The continuation of exposure of negative characteristics like this, on television, results in an incorrect conception of Latinos in the United States and the consequence is a generally negative attitude towards Latinos amongst viewers, who do not identify with Latinos who are portrayed as foreign and different – as an Other.

This thesis focused on sitcoms in order to find examples of Latino portrayals through television history, due to the popularity of sitcoms that make up half of the shows on primetime television in the United States. The Latino characters on the sitcoms varied a lot, depending on their importance on the show, thereby portraying recurring primary characters in a mainly positive way, and negative characteristics were mainly portrayed by recurring as well as non-recurring secondary/tertiary characters. This means that the Latinos viewers encountered most often were portrayed in a positive way, and the negative characteristics were not as conspicuous to viewers watching the shows regularly because they were represented by characters who were less important to the storyline. Overall, sitcom viewers have gotten a relatively diverse image of the Latinos appearing on the shows of my analysis, but there are still some critical points that appear in the shape of negative stereotyping, or lack of intergroup relations between the Anglos and the Latinos, that leaves Latinos as an inferior ethnic group compared to Anglos.

In sum, it is important to focus on the representation of Latinos on primetime television in the United States as well as the portrayal. It is difficult to eliminate all stereotypic

images, but if Latinos continue to be portrayed with both positive and negative characteristics, but in greater numbers, it will lead to more exposure of Latinos on television, creating more awareness of Latinos and Latino issues, good as well as bad, and a more nuanced picture will be cultivated in the minds of the viewers. Latinos may still be placed lower in the social hierarchy than the white majority, but it may not be as profound as it has been previously, as the attitude towards Latinos in U.S. society improves.

Future research: Throughout the reports on Latino representation, and the analysis of sitcoms starring Latinos, it was clear that Latinos had been underrepresented on primetime television in the United States throughout television history. Since Latino representation on primetime television in the United States has not been covered since 2007, it would be interesting to see how the development has been since then, since Latino population is still steadily increasing, making it relevant to look at the development. Are Latinos still as underrepresented as they were in 2007, and what kind of portrayals are used when Latinos are depicted on primetime television anno 2012?

Furthermore, this thesis briefly touched upon possible out-group reactions to underrepresentation and stereotypic portrayals, e.g. Latinos watching programmes on Spanish networks. It would be interesting to examine the viewing patterns of Latinos in order to determine whether Latinos watching Spanish language television is a reaction to being underrepresented on primetime television on the national networks, or if there is another reason for Latino viewers to choose to watch the Spanish language television rather than the national network.

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