AUDIENCE'S PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL/ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN TV SHOWS

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Abstract

Ethnic Stereotypes in media and why they matter: Much research has focused on the existence of both positive and negative stereotypes in television. The fact is that stereotypes are still present in the media and have several implications for the ethnic and social groups included. Racial or ethnic stereotypes, which are the main topic in this research, are generalizations about an out-group. Processes of this research: This study examines relevant research articles about the portrayals in television of ethnic and cultural groups. Literature suggests that television still plays an important role in reinforcing stereotypes. These articles provide the starting point for future research about the possible effects on the audience regarding cultural stereotypes in TV shows, especially African American stereotypes; Latino stereotypes; Asian stereotypes; and interracial relationships. Results: The repeated depiction of cultural stereotypes in television shows reinforces and validates the notion of the "other." The articles reviewed for this research provide the most relevant findings regarding this issue. However, further research needs to be done to determine the possible effects on the audience and changes in attitudes towards different cultural or ethnic groups after the exposure to these stereotypes and how the effects could impact real-life interactions among different groups.

Keywords: Stereotypes, ethnic groups, cultivation theory, dehumanizing

Introduction

Recent research on the portrayals in television of ethnic and cultural groups shows that television is filled with stereotypes depicting these groups. However, further research must be done to determine if these stereotypes produce an effect on the audience. Literature used for this research suggests that television still plays an important role in reinforcing stereotypes. While researching articles written about stereotypes in television, I found several authors that studied the existent mediated stereotypes in television about

certain ethnic groups and some others that conducted relevant studies about the stereotypes´ effect on the audience and whose results showed that stereotypes "influence real-world feelings and beliefs about these outgroups" (Ramasubramanian 102). These articles provide the starting point for the research questions for this paper about the possible effects on the audience regarding cultural stereotypes in TV shows. The following is a more detailed literature review about this topic divided in different sections: stereotypes in media; African American stereotypes; Latino stereotypes; Asian stereotypes; Interracial relationships; and the study of the issue in other countries. The last section is a projection of what my detailed research questions could be, and what research method would be most appropriate for conducting my study.

I:
Stereotypes in media and why they matter

Much research has focused on the existence of both positive and negative stereotypes in television. The fact is that stereotypes are still present in the media and have several implications for the ethnic and social groups included. Racial or ethnic stereotypes, which are the main topic in this research, are generalizations about an out-group. In this section, we can see some articles focusing on the stereotypes in the media.

Lee and his colleagues conducted a research on stereotypes as a result of heavy television consumption with college students. Departing from the powerful assumption that; "Positive and negative stereotypes exist in our society" (95), Lee and his colleagues set a study to evaluate the effects of heavy media use in the audience. The study examined the audience's perception of different ethnic groups by means of a voluntary survey. Their findings showed that heavy television consumers perceived more negative stereotypes and that Caucasians were the group associated the least with these negative stereotypes (107). There was also a difference between television genres, since "heavy viewers of entertainment, educational and sports program appeared to have more negative ethnic perceptions" (107), while viewers´ information programming, such as news, had more positive perceptions. Their results support the idea of the media having an impact on the audience's perception, which has several implications; there is a need a more active role on how the media educates society. Lee and his colleagues state that, considering the amount of influence the media have on consumers, consumers should be educated to question the information given, and that scholars can "encourage media critique as well as promote efforts to reduce stereotypical portrayals" (108).

Ramasubramanian´s study on television viewing and racial attitudes also explores the perception of White viewers about other ethnic groups,

specially African-Americans and Latino-Americans, and the influence on their beliefs about these groups. In his words, "television has a history of underrepresenting, marginalizing, and caricaturing non-White characters" (103). Stereotypical portrayals in television of these groups on television are considered to contribute to negative stereotyping, because these groups are depicted as "different, inferior, andʿotheredʾ" (Ramasubramanian 104). Ramasubramanian's findings suggest that stereotypes influence negative feelings toward ethnic groups; in his research, African-American and Latino-American groups were associated with criminality and laziness. As we can extract from both articles, television is still an influential medium for reinforcing racial attitudes and opinions.

But how about the content created by the viewers themselves? Guo and Harlow conducted a content analysis regarding Youtube videos containing stereotypes of Black, Latino and Asians. Departing from the Youtube´s motto "Broadcast yourself", they expected to find alternative media. For their analysis, they watched 150 Youtube´s most-viewed videos about each ethnic group (Blacks, Latinos, and Asians). They were trying to find how "racial stereotypes were treated in the Youtube videos" (2). In order to do so, they coded the videos as reinforcing (if they showed the stereotypes as true), or as challenging (if they showed nonstereotypical images). The common stereotypes they coded in the videos were "law breaker", "uneducated", "poor", "rapper" for Black people. The most common stereotypes for Latino coded were "law breaker", "uneducated", "poor", "illegal immigrant" and "sexualized women". Asian stereotypes coded were "model minority", "hard-working", "business oriented", "nerdy" and "sexualized women". Their results showed that videos related to Black stereotypes were challenging them more than the other videos regarding the other races (45%). Latino videos, however, where the less challenging (2%). The most common stereotype portrayed for the different ethnic groups was "lawbreaker" for Blacks, "sexualized women" for Latino and "nerd physical appeareance and language pronunciation" for Asians (291). The analysis showed that individuals, not companies or professional organizations, uploaded 86 % of the videos. The authors found also that videos with stereotypes had more views than videos without stereotypes. Finally, their results supported that the majority of videos (85%) were reinforcing racial stereotypes, while just a few were challenging them. Their study suggests that even user-generated Youtube´s videos support the "racial hierarchy as emphasized in the mainstream media" (299).

As we can infer from what the articles propose, stereotypes are present in television, whether they are positive or negative. The existence of stereotypes composes a mainstream generalized view about a specific group. Our last article proofs that not only the mainstream media produce

stereotypes, but also the consumers; even consumer-generated videos are full of ethnic stereotypes.

African american stereotypes

After stating the importance of stereotypes, I will focus on specific examples of stereotyped ethnic groups or stereotype´s research. The present section will deal with the existence of African American Stereotypes in television and how this group is portrayed, as well as the implications that the stereotypes have for the audience.

Northup conducted a study on implicit and explicit attitudes toward African Americans using Cultivation Theory as a framework. The author states that media can have an important role in maintaining and creating the dominant culture: in this case, the negative attitudes towards African-Americans (29). In his research, Northup was testing the differences between heavy viewers of television and light viewers in their perceptions of African Americans. He used a quantitative method based on surveys conducted after watching a piece of news. This piece of news was different for two different groups: in one group, participants were exposed to an African American suspect, while in the other group, participants were exposed to a Caucasian suspect. Participants were surveyed about the level of guilt the would assign to the suspect as well as some other demographic questions to evaluate the amount of media watched by the participant. The results of the study are highly interesting in relation to the present research, since they showed that those participants who were heavy viewers thought the African American suspect was guiltier than the light viewers (22). The clearly different level of guilt assigned by the two types of participants was compared with the almost no difference shown between heavy viewers and light viewers when assigning a level of guilt to the Caucasian suspect. In both groups, the piece of news was contained the same information, with the only difference being the picture of the Caucasian suspect or the African American suspect. Therefore, as Northup points out that, a heavy consumption of media has an influence in the audience´s attitudes towards African Americans, since the media´s criminal portrayals of this ethnic group are higher. According to Northup, findings show the potential damage of a high use of criminal stereotypes by the media: "If new users are trained to believe that an African American they see is guilty, then the entire justice system could be undermined" (38).

These mediated stereotypes also affect the stereotyped ethnic group. Sanders and Ramasubramanian conducted further research on the audience's perception of the stereotypes when the audience itself belonged to the stereotyped group. According to the researchers, viewers of television shows exposed to limited depictions of some groups were influenced and would

categorize these groups. Categorization is the maximization of differences between social groups and minimization between group members, creating an "us" and "them" perspective (Sanders and Ramasubramanian 19). While recent research has focused on the non- minority audience´s perception of the various ethnic groups in relation with the judgments the audience makes, this study has centered in the presentation of stereotypical depictions of different ethnic groups to the stereotyped groups, specially African Americans. Sanders and Ramasubramanian conducted a study by means of an online survey with 154 African American participants regarding their perceptions of 30 fictional media characters, such as Hispanics, African Americans and Asian Americans. Participants were asked to describe the characters by choosing among the adjectives they were given. The results showed that perceptions of African American characters were favorable, while the support for the other groups was mixed. Therefore, Sanders and Ramasubramanian come to the conclusion that ethnic groups do not have the same perception of themselves that Caucasians have about them, although there is still the media´s impact in how the groups think about one another (35). Their study is highly important because it corroborates the media´s ability to affect the audience's emotions towards different ethnic groups from their own, but it does not have an effect on the stereotyped group itself.

We can see that African American stereotypes still exist in the media and that they have an influence in the audience with possible implications. African American stereotypes found in research include images such as the aggressive figure.

Latino stereotypes

Similar to the previous section, this sections deals with Latino stereotypes in the media and how they impact the audience. Some studies start to show a difference in tendencies towards stereotypes, although they are still present in primetime television. In this regard, Mastro and Morawitz conducted a content analysis of the television representation of the largest ethnic minority group in the United States, which is Latino (12.5%). Departing from the fact that former content analysis have found Latino characters being depicted as stereotypic and often with negative characterizations, including "the criminal, the law enforcer, the Latin Lover, the Harlot, and the comic/buffoon" (111). Following the frame of Cultivation Theory, a heavy exposure to television changes viewers perceptions, which means that learning from television´s depictions of Latinos could influence interactions in real life. Mastro and Morawitz´s findings in their study showed that, in a two-week television programming on the most popular networks, Latinos only represented 3.9% of characters, which is highly underrepresented, compared to the actual population, and they were not

likely interact with white peers. They had lower job authority, but the tendency to depict them as subordinate was decreasing. They were generally thin and attractive, depicting them as "additively romantic, sensual, sexual, and even exotically dangerous" (125). Latinos were also depicted as least intelligent and articulate, the laziest, and most verbally aggressive. Therefore, Mastro and Morawitz get to the conclussion that, ethnicity "does, in fact, impact the manner in which characters are depicted on primetime television" (124) and, although there are improvements over previous decades, stereotypes persist.

Merskin also investigates the perpetuation of the stereotypes in television. Her study is focused on the hot-latina stereotype. Merskin conducts a textual analysis of the show *Desperate Housewives*. Although a Latino character as a lead character is not usual, the hispanic character Gabrielle Solis plays an important role in the show, which at first can be seen as an achievement. However, Merkin´s study shows that the depiction of Gabrielle´s character during several episodes is still filled with the usual behavior that belongs to the female hispanic or latina stereotype. Gabrielle Solis and even the actress in real life, Eva Longoria, appear often in the show and in magazines in a way that reinforces the "prominent, oversexed, under-dressed" latina character (Merskin 134). According to Merkin, beliefs about race, ethnicity, sex and gender are reinforced through television and "an ideology of White/Anglo racial superiority is maintained by using stereotypes" (134). She also states that stereotypes "reduce individuals to a single, monolithic, one-dimensional type that appears and is presented as natural and normal" (135). In her article, she suggests that stereotypes become naturalized through their repetition and support cultural beliefs and values about certain groups of people based on distorted presentations of qualities, which increases the sense of the "other".

Avila-Saavedra studies also the Latino stereotypes in television, but focuses on the Identity of Latinos in the U.S. In his research, he analyzed Latino television comedies that "articulate an implicit tension between ethnic otherness and desire for assimilation for U.S. Latinos" (271). Three comedies are analyzed exploring the Latino identity and how media legitimates or defies cultural perceptions: *George Lopez, Freddie,* and *Mind of Mencia*. He found that Latino comedy shows are full of ethnic insults that on the one hand, "is an explicit articulation of cultural otherness", and, on the other hand "it makes the joke acceptable for Latino and non-Latino audiences" (282), in an effort to be included in U.S. mainstream culture. Latino comedians affirm their otherness by ridiculing themselves and non-Latinos, in order to "provide relief for the accumulated tensions that originate from Latinos´ self-perceived lower social status. In any form of struggle for social power, a desire to challenge dominant values competes

with a desire to become part of the dominant ideology" (286). The comic content requires adaptation, since it has references to U.S. history and culture, making it Latino comedy for U.S. Latinos, not for Latin Americans. The use of Latino stereotypes confirms the Latino ethnic identity, but also the inclusion in American mainstream. These comedies are popular among U.S. Latinos for identity construction and among the non-Latino audience as a new source of information about Latinos that embrace U.S. values, which ease social fears (289).

Mastro and Tukachinsky, however, look at the issue from a different perspective. Their study is based on media´s depictions of good stereotypes and the possible good effects that these can have in the White audience, regarding their possible improved judgment of the stereotyped groups. The authors conducted a triple study in which they looked for the effect on the audience after being exposed to favorable Latino depictions. They exposed the participants in the first study to a well-liked Latino actor and then their evaluations of Latinos were analyzed. In the second study, they showed a group of Latino portrayed favorably in a television show, and in the third study, a mixture of the group and the picture. Their hypothesis was that the audience´s evaluations would be more favorable after the exposure. The results of their study suggested that the depiction of favorable stereotypes has an effect on the audience regarding their evaluation of ethnic groups. Their findings showed that the exposed audience was more likely to give a generous evaluation of the group. Their study also showed that to reduce the negative stereotypes is not enough to affect the audience but there is a need for the inclusion of favorable or counterstereotypical data. However, their findings also suggested that an "extreme disconfirmation of the stereotype is likely to overly challenge audience members' existing views leading to dismissal of the information as too deviant" (933). Their conclusion is to increase favorable media depiction of these ethnic groups, but also adding audience´s preexisting cognitions, such as positive stereotypes.

Murillo and Escala conducted a study on the popular television show *Ugly Betty*, examining the transformations of the media constructions of the Latino population in the US, providing a more complex cultural portrayal. The character of Betty Suarez, tries to attract the people in her community representing the Latina stereotype, but also, having a Latino character as the main character is a novelty in the Latino excluded television world. According to the authors, *Ugly Betty* is an example of how culture is represented and the meaning constructed through the characters of television shows, and their qualities and representations. Betty is a character in a context in which others (White Americans) perceive her as foreign and different; not only someone ugly, but someone that does not belong in the culture. The television show, however, after proposing the social exclusion

issue, proposes also a solution through the acceptance of multiculturalism in the US. Betty will fight for being accepted, while conserving her culture and family values. Her final transformation, more than being a physical change, it is also a social and cultural change. When she is accepted and she achieves integration in society, the television show depicts a world in which difference is possible. This television drama, produced by the Latina actress Salma Hayek, it is a proposal of a social project; a representation of exclusion methods and possibilities of inclusion of the Latino population in the United States.

Latino stereotypes have been extensively researched, as well as African American stereotypes. We still find the existence of Latino stereotypes in the media, increasingly even due to the current growth of this population. Latino stereotypes found are several, such as the passionate Latin Lover or Hot Latina, and the aggressive *bandido*.

Asian stereotypes

This section will deal with Asian American stereotypes, even it they have not been extensively researched. However, the scarce existent research is highly relevant. Here a single article is depicted:

Asian Americans have also been stereotyped, as we can see in Zhang´s study on the impact of stereotypes on the interactions between Asians and non-Asians. Applying also from Cultivation theory and the presence of stereotypical characters in media, Zhang tested different hypothesis on how Asian Americans will be perceived. The hypothesis were that they will be perceived as more likely "to achieve academic success" (Zhang 25), "to be perceived as nerds" (26), "to be left out" (27), and peers will be "less likely to initiate friendship with Asian Americans" (27). Zhang constructed four scenarios for her research and asked the participants to read them and respond a survey afterwards. For instance, in the first scenario, Jane was a student with a perfect GPA who had won various math contests. Participants were asked to rate if they thought Jane was "Asian, Black, Hispanic or White" (29). After having participants read the four scenarios and answer similar questions, Zhang´s findings showed that Asians were rated "the highest in academic achievement" (30), "the highest in the lack of social skills" (31), "the highest in peer rejection" (31), and that "the likelihood to initiate friendship with Asians was found to score the lowest" (31). Zhang´s results demonstrated that Asians are perceived "as nerds who are intelligent, hardworking, and technologically talented but clumsy and lacking appropriate social and communication skills" (32), exactly as the Asian stereotype. People´s judgements of Asians are influenced by ethnic stereotypes, and they affect the interactions between this groups and other groups.

Although there is a need for research focusing on this ethnic group, we can still find stereotypes such as the hard-working or nerdy figure, which confirms that Asian Americans are also a stereotyped ethnic group in television.

Interracial relationships

Finally, another research matter is the representation of stereotyped interracial relationships that include current racial stereotypes. As in the case of Asian American stereotypes, it is not an extended topic for research, so I will just mention one article.

In her article, Washington studies the depiction of interracial relationships in television. Specifically, the author looks at the relationship between the Black and the Asian characters of the popular television dramas *Grey´s Anatomy* and *ER,* regarding the representation of interracial relationships from a hegemonic point of view. Washington argues that much research on interracial relationships has been done with Black and White, Latino and White or Asian and White, but not much among the non-hegemonic ethnic groups, such as Black and Latino or Asian and Black. These representations, although they reflect the change in times towards a multicultural society, depict the traditional stereotyped Black male and the traditional Asian female, and "reproduce power relations that support the White privileged racial hegemony" (256). Under a label of *color-neutral* or *color-blind* and including more and more ethnic characters in television, *"*Whites avoid being labeled racist" but representations of race are still stereotypical and their stories are told from the White hegemonic narrative perspective (258). In the analyzed television show *Grey's Anatomy*, the character of Cristina Yang represents the stereotype of the "dragon lady" (the hypersexualized lady with fiery temperament), she is brilliant in her work and aggressive, and she seems unable to control her sexual desire (259). The opposing stereotype is the "lotus blossom" (a virginal, submissive young woman). This stereotype is represented in the second analyzed show *ER*, with the characters of Jing-Mei Chen and Neela Rasgotra. Both dramas show how "Asian Americans should conduct themselves in order to fit into White Society" (260). They should be brilliant, either hypersexual or virginal, and they should not complain about the hard work. On the other hand, the Black male characters who they are paired with in the shows, represent also the two Black stereotypes: the "tom" (the submissive, kind and selfless) and the "brutal black buck", oversexed and dangerous (260). The representation of the tom is used to "remind Blacks that they need only to obey their White 'masters' to solve all their problems" (260). The character Dr. Burke, who is paired with the furious Cristina Yang, is the representation of the tom in

Grey´s Anatomy. He never gets angry and remains loyal to the; he is extremely kind and even dies for his country. Finally, the relationship between the stereotyped Asian females and Black males is depicted either as a marriage without sex, like Rasgotra and Gallant´s relationship, or as a "sexual relationship that cannot lead to marriage", like Yang and Burke´s relationship or Chen and Prat´s relationship. It is worth mentioning that Dr Chen´s character had had a previous interracial relationship with a Black male that ended in a multicultural baby that she gave up for adoption. This representation "addresses popular culture´s discomfort with multiracial people" (266), and the audience is not shown what a multiracial baby could bring to the "color-neutral" world of *ER*. A similar case happens in *Grey's Anatomy* when Yang gets pregnant and she has a miscarriage. Yang and Burke´s relationship ends up when Burke leaves her at the altar: the hierarchies remain (264). As a conclusion, Washington argues that the depiction of Asian females and Black males in relationships in television "as examples of attempt at resisting the dominant hegemony, these shows are doing the opposite by playing directly into the racial hierarchy" (265), since they are dramatic and have a tragic end: the children that they could have, are either eliminated (miscarriage) or silenced (adoption). These television shows, according to the author are of highly importance because they construct cultural symbols, and these representations do not challenge the stereotypes or try to understand Asian or Black people. In addition, while this troubled interracial relationships are represented, "Whiteness maintains its position at the top of the hierarchy". As we can see in this article, interracial relationships are also stereotyped and represented in a way that favors the hegemonic dominant view, still increasing the importance of the hierarchy.

Perceptions of media stereotypes in other countries

The issue of the effect of mediated stereotypes on the audience and how to promote a different media strategy have also been addressed in other countries. Therefore, even though the common stereotypes will be different in other cultures, the fact that the issue is also relevant in other countries makes this problem become important worldwide.

Igartua, Barrios and Ortega address this issue focusing on prime-time television in Spain. Their study focuses on depictions of immigrants on television entertainment produced in Spain. Immigration increased highly in Spain in the last few years, and immigrants now consist of the 12.2% of the population, accompanied by xenophobic reactions and attitudes towards immigrants (6). In order to evaluate the media representations of immigrants groups Igartua, Barrios and Ortega conducted a content analysis of the characters that appeared in Spanish fiction in television. Their hypothesis

were to find an underrepresentation of immigrant characters compared to native characters, as it is found in the United States television shows (e.g. 3.9% of Latino characters, while this group comprise the 12.5% of the population in United States); immigrants characters occupying a higher level of secondary roles and/or antagonists roles than native; and a lower socio-economic level and lower level of education is shown among immigrants characters. For the analysis, two full weeks of prime-time programming were selected randomly and recorded, but only fictional programs were analyzed. Although only 19.3% of the shows were actually produced in Spain (versus the 71.6% of shows produced in the United States), they focused on the Spain-produced programs for the study. Results of the study showed that there was in fact an underrepresentation of immigrants characters (7.8% of characters were immigrants, although there is a 12.2% of immigrant population in Spain); the immigrant characters were depicted with a lower educational and job level, and a higher violent behavior. According to Igartua, Barrios and Ortega, media´s depictions of foreigners may "strengthen or foment prejudicial attitudes towards immigrants" (22). This study allows us to see the expansion of the issue in other countries where different ethnic or cultural groups are in contact.

Inzunza-Acedo also conducted research to determine the audience´s perception of stereotypes in television, by analyzing the fans´ reception of the television show *Lost* with focus groups in Mexico. The selection of the show was due to the multicultural variety of its characters, since they are from diverse origin such as American, Hispanic, European and Asian. After conducting the study, the results indicated that several stereotypes were reinforced. Inzunza-Acedo suggests that the lead character*,* Jack,of Caucasian origin, represented the perfect American hero and the audience admired him (23). His antagonist and also Caucasian, Sawyer, who is depicted at first as the villain but later as a secondary hero, invents nicknames for the rest of the characters that reinforce the stereotypical idea that they represent. When it comes to non-Caucasian characters, however, they are no longer depicted in the role of the hero. First, Inzunza-Acedo determined that the Hispanic characters were depicted as fat and naive in the case of one male character, Hurley, and as rude and aggressive in the case of two female characters, Ana Lucía and Ilana. The audience liked Hurley and disliked the two female Hispanic characters. Second, Merskin found that the European characters in the show were depicted as dirty and crazy, (e.g. the French character named Rousseau), extremely romantic, (e.g. the Scottish character Desmond), and drug abusers, (e.g. the British character Charlie). Third, the Asian characters were depicted as highly traditional: the female Asian character, Sun, is completely submissive to her husband Jin, a male Asian character. These characters are isolated from the rest of the group until

they start their westernization: they learn English and she acts more liberally. The audience thought this depiction of the two characters was completely normal, and participants even affirmed that "Asian people were like that" (Merskin 25). The African-American character, Michael, was depicted as skilled in manual work; and the African character, a Nigerian named Eko, depicted as stubborn and wild. The audience felt indifference for both of them. Finally, the Middle East character, and Iraqi named Sayid, is a veteran specialized in torture, and is perceived by the audience as the "terrorist" (25). Inzunza-Acedo's analysis of the characters suggests that all characters are stereotyped according to the culture that they belong to and that there is a sense of superiority in the Caucasian characters compared to the rest of cultures and nationalities. These stereotypes are not only promoted but also validated by comical situations that please the audience.

Another article on the issue has been conducted in Norway, with Halse´s study on the audience's perceptions of the portrayal of a Muslim family in the action show *24*. According to Halse, the traditional Muslim stereotype has been constructed on a 'Middle East' image the Muslim Arab-American, and *24* has contributed to the promotion of this stereotype. This portrayal of a character is always related to terrorism, even if the character is integrated in the neighborhood and lives an ordinary life in the United States. Halse conducted his research by means of recording and identifying attitudes through focus groups interviews. Five of the seven focus groups consisted of young adults from a secondary school, while two groups of participants were Muslims immigrants from an Immigrant Education Centre. Selected scenes regarding this terrorist family from the show were screened, and they were asked about their perceptions of the characters. Norwegians participants tend to expressed more excitement and found the show more entertaining than the Muslim participants, who actually found it unpleasant and offensive. Norwegians tended to associate the Muslims as "the foreigners", while the Muslims participants tended to see "Americans" as responsible for the offense in the show. From the study´s results, Halse states that "texts like *24*´s can function as stimuli for interpretive communities in the negotiation of boundaries between us and them" (49) and that "the new Muslim stereotype, in addition to eliciting insecurity and xenophobia among non-Muslims, is also troubling for the Muslim immigrant community" (49). Halse´s findings have serious implications, since the proposed stereotype is no longer innocent or funny, but have a secret violent desire to attack and destroy Western life, which certainly leads to a negative and discriminatory attitude towards, and from, Muslims, and deteriorate the environment in which these two cultures have contact.

These articles demonstrate that the study of stereotypes is a new but increasing research topic in other countries and cultures, outside the US. The

stereotypes found in the articles are, however, similar to the ones found in the research articles in the US.

Conclusion

The repeated depiction of cultural stereotypes in television shows reinforces and validates the notion of the "other." The articles reviewed for this research provide the most relevant findings regarding this issue. However, further research needs to be done to determine the possible effects on the audience and changes in attitudes towards different cultural or ethnic groups after the exposure to these stereotypes and how the effects could impact real-life interactions among different groups.

From the literature review, we can see the vast amount of research conducted around the depictions and representations of ethnic groups in television. However, not much has been done around the perceptions of the audience and the impact that these perceptions have in real life. It is true that measuring the impact in society is a difficult task, but conducting research to prove that there is in fact an influence or that there is not, it is important to help determine if there is a need for change. If research proves and supports the evidences of a negative influence in the audience after the heavy consumption of stereotyped content, it would be highly possible that these acquired beliefs will play a role when encountering people from these stereotyped ethnic groups. If the negative effect is proven, then there is a need for change in television representation. Television representations that provide tools and promote discrimination should not be encouraged or tolerated. Also, possible measures against stereotypical content or the promotion of counterstereotypical content should be studied, which is why conducting further research on the audience´s perceptions of biased television ethnic representations is vitally important.

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