

Summer 7-2018

Scripted Stereotypes In Reality TV

Paulette S. Strauss

Honors College, Pace University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/honorscollege_theses

 Part of the [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), and the [Social Media Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Strauss, Paulette S., "Scripted Stereotypes In Reality TV" (2018). *Honors College Theses*. 194.
https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/honorscollege_theses/194

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Pforzheimer Honors College at DigitalCommons@Pace. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors College Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Pace. For more information, please contact rracelis@pace.edu.

Scripted Stereotypes In Reality TV

Paulette S. Strauss

Pace University

Abstract

Diversity, or lack thereof, has always been an issue in both television and film for years. But another great issue that ties in with the lack of diversity is misrepresentation, or a substantial presence of stereotypes in media. While stereotypes often are commonplace in scripted television and film, the possibility of stereotypes appearing in a program that claims to be based on reality seems unfitting. It is commonly known that reality television is not completely “unscripted” and is actually molded by producers and editors. While reality television should not consist of stereotypes, they have curiously made their way onto the screen and into our homes. Through content analysis this thesis focuses on Latina/Hispanic-American and Asian-American contestants on ABCs’ *The Bachelor* and whether they present stereotypes typically found in scripted programming.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------|
| Abstract..... | p. 1 |
| Table of Contents..... | p. 2 |
| Introduction..... | p. 4 |
| I. The First Impression Analysis..... | p. 6 |
| Background..... | p. 8 |
| I. The Problem..... | p. 9 |
| Literature Review..... | p. 10 |
| I. Media and Types of Racism..... | p. 10 |
| II. Stereotypes and the Racial Narrative..... | p. 11 |
| III. Authenticity of Reality TV..... | p. 13 |
| IV. Minorities Among the Minority..... | p. 14 |
| Methodology..... | p. 15 |
| I. Analysis..... | p. 15 |
| II. Variables..... | p. 16 |
| III. Classification of Minorities..... | p. 16 |
| IV. Latina/Hispanic-American Stereotypes..... | p. 17 |
| V. Asian-American Stereotypes..... | p. 17 |
| VI. Stereotypical Traits..... | p. 18 |
| Findings..... | p. 19 |
| I. Latina/Hispanic American Findings..... | p. 20 |
| i. Sassiness..... | p. 20 |
| ii. Hot-Temperament..... | p. 21 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| iii. Comical..... | p. 22 |
| iv. Sexual Factor..... | p. 23 |
| II. Asian-American Findings..... | p. 23 |
| i. Sexuality..... | p. 23 |
| ii. Subservience..... | p. 24 |
| iii. Business Oriented..... | p. 25 |
| III. Production Influence..... | p. 25 |
| Overview..... | p. 26 |
| Conclusion..... | p. 27 |
| References..... | p. 30 |

Introduction

During an era of television where “reality” programming has appeared to frequent our screens more than scripted programming, it is important to note that it has become its own empire. Various types of reality programming based on “real people being real” as well as celebrities “trying to be real people” (Kitman, 2009) span across channels under guises of competition, hidden camera, talent contests, and dating shows. The authenticity of such television programming has often been questioned. With producers’ ability to interfere with the program before and during production, it is understandable why many doubt the legitimacy of storylines and personalities on these programs.

But the issue is not based on whether or not these programs are authentic, in fact, a lot of “media-reflexive” people still consume these programs even when aware that some portion of it, if not all, is scripted or heavily influenced by producers and have even come to expect it (Deery, 2015). The main issue that this thesis will examine is the personalities of minority characters, or contestants, on one of the most popular types of reality television—dating shows.

Lack of representation and misrepresentation has been a constant issue in all types of media. However, some minorities have been more underrepresented than others and are very rarely represented at all. Because of the little representation given to minorities such as Latina/Hispanic and Asian women, their presented characteristics and image has an even greater impact on how they are viewed when that is the only thing seen on the screen. With the help of this analysis the main question to be answered is whether real people are being boxed into stereotypes that have been crafted for scripted programs.

Some studies and investigations into people's exposure to stereotypes in television and their effects revealed that "majority group member's (i.e., White's) consumption of even a limited number of stereotypical portrayals of Latinos in the media is associated with negative judgments about Latino characters' disposition, stereotypic evaluations of Latinos in society, and even unsympathetic race-related policy preferences" (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz 2008, p. 2). These findings are helpful in understanding that there is a connection between stereotypes and negative judgements towards minorities, whether conscious or unconscious biases and beliefs, since heavy media consumption will result in shaping "viewer's beliefs and conception of reality" (Bandura, 2001, p. 281).

Theories like the cultivation hypothesis suggests that behavior of individuals can be shaped through exposure to television since our knowledge and thoughts on the world is "indirect" and does not necessarily need to be molded by our own experiences but "by accounts, both fictional and true, of other's experiences" (Hammermeister, Brock, Winterstein, & Page, 2005, p. 254-255). Such formulated conceptions can only be assumed to have more of an influence when viewers are primed to believe that programming is based on being genuine and authentic, no matter to which extent. The influence of television viewing is not only limited to those who are not included in a specific ethnic or cultural group but can also have an impression on those who find themselves to be a part of a specific ethnic or cultural community. Social identity theory places importance on social aspects and communicative behaviors which influences our sense of self, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors through the groups or categories we see ourselves as being a member of (Guan & So, 2016). Albert Bandura (1977) has theorized about self-efficacy, one's beliefs and judgements of their own capabilities, and identified four

factors that can contribute to one's self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Guan and So, 2016, p. 588-589). The most notable factor relating to this study would be vicarious experience due to the portrayal of minority contestants on a reality television program might influence those who categorize themselves into a similar group as those contestants.

The First Impression Analysis

Looking over 22 seasons of *The Bachelor* which aired between 2002 and 2018, there have been an overwhelming number of women presented for "the man looking for love." Seasons averaged about 26 women per bachelor and, after counting all seasons, totaled 580 women vying to be the woman with the final rose. A brief subjective overview of each season's first episode promotional shots, which include all the women surrounding the bachelor, resulted in a count of 55 women of color. While this number is based on physical traits and may not account for women who are considered "white-passing," it mainly covers women who showcase obvious physical characteristics that align with a minority such as darker skin and hair. Some seasons were also given the benefit of the doubt of possibly having a woman of color in the case of lower quality photos.

Twenty of the 22 seasons of *The Bachelor* featured 5 or less women of color, with at least two of the seasons having absolutely no minority contestants. The two anomaly seasons that both had a cast that featured nine and ten contestants that were visibly women of color were interestingly the two most recent seasons of the show. This could possibly be due to the backlash producers of the show have received (Rice, 2011; Pozner, 2012) and the more upfront acknowledgement of lack of diversity in film and television. However, it should be noted that it

can also be credited to the bachelor of each season who apparently supplies information to producers and casting directors on types of women they are attracted to, both physically and personality-wise (Baldwin, 2013).

This project investigates five seasons of *The Bachelor* that include at least one minority contestant who is either Latina/Hispanic or Asian-American. A content analysis will be performed during viewings of each season, noting the way these minorities behave, how long they remain on the program, the way they are presented, and whether they showcase any stereotypical traits based on stereotyped characters that have been based on each minority. When it comes to their presentation, there is some influence from producers and editors who craft the “real life” experience to compound it into a 2-hour television slot every week. This will also contribute to the analysis due to the fact that this is what was chosen to represent the characters whether it is a choice of non-diegetic sound or a shot of a contestant reacting to onscreen drama.

After all minority contestants are studied they will then be split into categories regarding the race they represent. This categorization will further be analyzed to see if the minorities presented in the show share similar traits and characteristics in order to determine whether they fall under stereotypes with a stereotype being defined as “a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group” as well as tools that “shape people’s interpretation and influence public opinion” (Stereotype, n.d.; Qingwen & Murrillo, 2007, p. 35).

Background

ABCs' *The Bachelor* is a prime example of a reality show based on dating. The program garnered so much popularity that it actually spawned a few spin offs since its 2002 debut. The reality TV program has become iconic in many ways—its' whole premise is finding true love in a pool of women (sometimes that pool is very literal) within a time span that lasts about three months. Despite it being extremely rare in 30-plus seasons of the franchise including *Bachelor*, *Bachelorette*, and *Bachelor in Paradise*— to culminate a long-lasting relationship, the series continues to reach millions of viewers each season and have a vast number of people auditioning to be on the show.

The show follows a main character, the bachelor or bachelorette, as they enter a house full of women or men who are to vie for their heart and television time and hopefully claim a coveted rose each week. If they do not receive a rose, they are out of the competition and the number of suitors dwindle down until they finally reach the end, become engaged for a few months, then call off the wedding after some more television appearances in most cases of the series.

After so many seasons, the shows' formula has become obvious as were the casting choices. Contestants have been predominantly white even after 16 years of being on air with an exception of a few seasons that have had more than one or two token minority contestants. Interestingly enough, there has only been one bachelor lead that is categorized as a minority—season 18's Juan Pablo Galavis. Showcasing fair skin, lighter hair and bluish-grayish-greenish eyes, it is a bit difficult to classify him as visibly Latino. Production was criticized for this choice, mainly citing his “culturally white” passing *Bachelor* appearance that fans are typically

accustomed to, seemingly erasing the fact that he was Venezuelan. It was only until Galavis spoke and his name was known that his background was more obvious. Despite producers' attempt at trying to present this season as groundbreaking, it was more of a slight tremor, especially since the first impression analysis of Galavis' season showcases only two women of color, both of which were black women.

The Problem

The greatest issue with representation, especially within reality TV programming, is normally cited to be misrepresentation and the constant showcasing of stereotypes. But these numbers on *The Bachelor* demonstrate a whole other issue, which is lack of any representation. The breakdown of the already small number of minority characters present on the program show that although there is a huge lack of diversity, there is more diversity for some than others. Black women have been much more present in reality programming than Hispanic/Latinas and Asian Americans. This issue repeats itself in research based on minorities in reality programming as a majority of the content was limited to black women on the programs.

Over 500 white women on a show allows reality TV consumers to see every kind of white woman—the single mom who wants to find love, the woman so invested in her work she has not had time to date, the girl who had fallen in love with “the one” before and was ultimately crushed when “x, y, z” tragedy occurred. Such a small percentage of representation puts even more importance on that small number to portray an entire race/ethnicity in an appropriate and fair light. It is also important for them to be presented in a multidimensional way rather than just a stereotype or a token quota.

Most, if not nearly all, research done on minorities on *The Bachelor* primarily focus on black contestants. Very little research and insight has been done to reflect on the Latina/Hispanic presence and stereotypes on reality TV programming and even fewer studies have been conducted based on Asian presence. Because of the lack of research into stereotypes of comparably less represented minorities, this study will primarily focus on the Latina/Hispanic-American and Asian-American minority and the stereotypes they fulfill in reality television programming.

Trying to understand how Latinas and Asian Americans are represented will not solve the diversity issue in reality TV, but will provide some insight into the problem. The underlying question seeks to analyze whether familiar stereotypes created for scripted television have somehow made its way into “unscripted” television.

Literature Review

Media and Types of Racism

Media images are incredibly influential as they are a “dominant means of ideological production.” Media—specifically in this case, reality TV—create representations of the social world, images, descriptions, and contribute to our own understanding of our surroundings. When it comes to ideas about race this can be distinguished in two ways of being articulated through media: “overt” and “inferential” racism (Hall, 1995).

Overt racism was defined by Hall as “the many occasions when open and favourable coverage arguments, positions and spokespersons who are in the business of elaborating an openly racist argument or advancing a racist policy or view” (1995, p. 20). Inferential racism was detailed to be “naturalized” representation of events and situations relating to race. These

representations have racist premises and may be “unquestioned assumptions.” This type of racism is particularly harmful due to its’ casual display and its’ enabling of racist statements to be presented in a way in which the racism may not be incredibly obvious and many may not be aware of the racist grounds (Hall, 1995).

Reality TV, a media developed for entertainment purposes, is possibly one of the guiltier forms of media to present inferential racism. The issue of inferential racism has spanned over time and types of media, and its influence on those consuming the material is still present. The influence not only affects how some might view other races, but also how different racial communities view themselves.

One author, Robin M. Boylorn (2008) reflects on her own experiences watching reality TV programs and the effects the stereotypes of black women had on her. Boylorn acknowledges that “black women are misunderstood, misrepresented and misportrayed” (p. 418) as well as making note that her viewing of the stereotypes she had seen on TV actually formulated a personal dilemma for herself: Was she not the norm? Was she the one performing an identity rather than being herself? One of the most valuable points that Boylorn makes in her auto-ethnographic piece is that the false representations she was exposed to resulted in her own criticism of herself as a black woman.

Stereotypes and the Racial Narrative

One author also made the interesting point that stereotypes presented in reality TV creates discomfort in the ethnic group (Squires, 2008). Squires cites this in regard to black women in fear of “how to talk about the entire range of thoughts she has about Black images on reality TV with family and friends without being seen as critical of Blackness or working class

Blacks” and credits it with being a crucial part of the issue (p. 434-436). Dismissal of certain personalities being presented in a format that claims to be real is sensitive because of the carefulness to not devalue another within the ethnic group.

Oftentimes black women featured in reality TV are depicted as loud and having extremely strong personalities that often result in them being the center of drama, arguments, and/or actual physical altercations. In “Reality TV Trashes Black Women,” writer Allison Samuels (2011) uses examples of NeNe Leakes and Star Jones during their time on Donald Trumps’ *Celebrity Apprentice* in which the two women were typically pitted against each other. Jones acknowledges the fact that the two clashing personalities made for “good TV” but that does not necessarily make it completely real (p. 26).

Commenting on the racial narratives presented on reality TV, Katrina Bell-Jordan (2008) breaks down the racial issues in five ways:

- (1) They dramatize race and racial issues by juxtaposing opposing viewpoints;
- (2) they promote conflict in the framing of race and racial issues, specifically in terms of interracial and interracial conflict;
- (3) they perpetuate hegemonic representations of race by emphasizing violence and anger;
- (4) they personalize racism by privileging individual solutions to complex social problems; and
- (5) they leave conflict and contradictions unresolved. (p. 357-358)

Another article compared race and dating shows *Flavor of Love* and *The Bachelor*, noting that both shows may feature multiracial casts but focus on a “blackness” and “whiteness,” respectively (DuBrofsky & Hardy, 2008, p. 374). One controversy occurred during the most recent season of *The Bachelorette* which featured the series’ first black lead. A former white

contestant tweeted on her account an exchange between her and her roommate that fell along these lines: “I’m sitting here watching [*The Bachelorette*] and my roommate just sat down and said, ‘What is this? *Love and Hip Hop*? DEAD” (Wanshel, 2017).

The tweet was met with criticism and eventually deleted, but it had already been exposed and picked up by news media. This statement not only seemed to support the idea that there are certain television programs created to feature and entertain a certain group, but also suggests that racism is already embedded into us as consumers. When something different than what we are used to is presented, some people will be confused as they made a racist inference and generalization about the specific racial community.

Authenticity In Reality TV

Another constant issue is “authenticity” when it comes to viewing these cast members that seemingly become characters on television. Boylorn commented on a process that occurs on *Flavor of Love* when Flavor Flav renames the contestants during the beginning of the show, in order to rebrand them as a new character while also casually stripping them of their own personalities and, as a result, warping the reality of reality TV (Boylorn, 2008, p. 420-421).

Catherine Squires (2008) truly examines the authenticity aspect of race in reality TV and raises the question of what its guiding comparison is. The diversity represented on screen in reality TV often repeats itself and seems formulaic, such as the loud, angry black woman who will argue with nearly anyone who crosses her path. Surely this must not be the only type of woman out there, and Squires makes the point that when we only see the same one to two stereotypes on screen, it seems that casting directors and producers “don’t know how to frame Blackness except as deviant, [and therefore] can only recognize one or two ways of being Black

and a woman” (Squires, 2008, p. 437). With the constant repetition of the same characters being used to depict a race, it makes Squires wonder whether specific attributes and characteristics associated with being black cause anyone outside of those behaviors and characteristics to be perceived as inauthentic.

While there are many comparisons between the two programs and, overall, a plethora of information and analysis on black contestants on “white” TV, a vast chunk of material was missing from this research. That missing piece happened to be the minorities that barely receive any representation—Hispanic/Latinos and Asians.

Minorities Among the Minority

In terms of representation of minority groups in reality TV, the Hispanic/Latino and Asian communities are severely underrepresented in comparison to the black community. Sung-Yeon Park (2015) states that in a “systematic analysis of U.S. reality dating shows revealed that Whites were overrepresented whereas Hispanics and Asians were severely underrepresented” and also notes that there was more likely to be an overemphasis of infighting within racial/ethnic minority cast members (p. 383). Park even analyzed the nature of representation of different races and their portrayal in different scenarios, such as whether a character is portrayed as likeable, attractive, and popular. One example of Park’s analysis concludes that black characters on *The Real World* were more likely to be disliked and less likely to be in a relationship or even romantically desired.

When it came to Asian Americans, Grace Wang (2010) describes the representation best in “A Shot at Half-Exposure.” Wang details the lack of Asian Americans in reality TV shows that are based on dating and romance, and their greater presence on competition reality shows

such as *Project Runway* and *Top Chef*. Wang cites this to peoples' attributing of talent and skill to Asians which, while some might not view as completely harmful, still demonstrates the issue of lack of representation. These people seem to only be showcased as holders of few, specific traits rather than being well-rounded people.

When researching roles of Latino/Hispanic participants in reality TV, there was a major gap in articles that cover the topic. There was considerably more research analyzing the proportion of Latinos populating the United States and their presence in scripted television over the course of history. Overall, results had shown that Latino representation in scripted media is lower than what it once was comparing the present to the 1940s while characters appear to be repeated portrayals of stereotypes (Negron-Mutaner, 2014).

Methodology

Analysis

Through content analysis of romance based reality TV, specifically and exclusively *The Bachelor* series, this study will gather evidence that stereotypes that are typically scripted are depicted in these programs. The study will focus on only five seasons of the program and on the Latina/Hispanic and Asian American contestants due to their severe underrepresentation. Out of the 22 seasons of *The Bachelor*, only 9 seasons— seasons 13 through 22— were available for viewing online at the time of the study. The seasons that were able to be viewed were then cut down after looking through the seasons promotional shots and scoured for at least one visible Latina/Hispanic or Asian-American minority. All five of these seasons feature at least one woman who is of Latina/Hispanic or Asian heritage, totaling seven women who will be a part of the content analysis. To be exact, three of these women who are Latina/Hispanic are Raquel from

season 13 and Bekah M. and Bibiana both from season 22. Four of these women have Asian heritage, Channy from season 14, Catherine from season 17, Danielle L. from season 21 and Marikh from season 22.

The original analysis detailed in the introduction, dubbed the “First Impression Analysis,” involved viewing the first promotion photos of each *Bachelor* season. These photos feature the bachelor surrounded by all of the contestants that begin the season before any elimination. From these photos, the total number of women of color were noted based on obvious physical characteristics such as darker skin and hair. The total number of each season was then broken down into subcategories of minorities such as black, Latina/Hispanic, Asian-American, and racially ambiguous, which was comprised of women who were obviously a minority but could not be clearly guessed.

While it is possible these numbers are not an exact representation of the number of women of color on the series because of “white-passing” appearances, or the look of being white despite ethnically being a minority, this study focuses on women who can physically represent assumed characteristics relating to a culture and ethnicity.

Variables

Classification of Minorities. Contestants were classified as Latina/Hispanic-American by either showcasing obvious physical attributes (i.e. darker hair, darker skin), verbally explaining their backgrounds/ethnicity (i.e. countries in Central America, South America, Spain, etc.), or by revealing a surname with Latin/Hispanic roots (i.e. Martinez). Contestants classified as Asian-American in the program were similarly categorized through physical attributes, backgrounds/ethnicity, and surnames with Asian roots (i.e. Choch). It is important to note that

when classifying Asian-American contestants, countries for ethnic background were not only limited to East Asian countries (i.e. Cambodia, China, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, etc.) but also extended to South Asian countries (i.e. Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, etc.).

Latina/Hispanic-American Stereotypes.

Representations of Latino characters have typically been shortlisted as “sexually provocative, as blue-collar or unprofessional, and as cops and crooks” (Tukachinsky, Mastro & Yarchi, 2017, p. 541). Latinas specifically have been recurrently dubbed “hypersexual ‘spitfires’” (Martinez & Ramasubramanian, 2015, p. 211).

Three stereotypical female characters that have been associated with Latina/Hispanic women would be the “Halfbreed Harlot,” the “Female Clown,” and the “Dark Lady.” The “Halfbreed Harlot,” who does not necessarily have to be a “halfbreed,” is the “lustful and hot-tempered” character; the “Female Clown” is less sexualized and offers a neutralization of the Harlot, she is controlled by her “emotionalism and her inability to restrain her baser instincts” and is noted her “exaggeration” is extremely operative in the stereotype; and finally, the “Dark Lady” has been named to emphasize her contrast to the typical Anglo woman— she is sexual and a personification of eroticism while also being “mysterious, virginal, inscrutable and aristocratic” and distant, making her a dream for Anglo men (Berg, 1990, p. 295-296).

Asian-American Stereotypes

The most frequent identity Asian-Americans have been associated with is as the “Model Minority.” Oftentimes, Asians are affiliated with being “smart and nerdy” and “dovetailed with unsociability and awkwardness.” They are also predominantly depicted as “diligent workers in

business settings” that are unfortunately evened out with less of a focus on social life (Ramasubramanian 2011).

Specifically reflecting on Asian women stereotypes, a huge note has always been the oversexualizing and fetishization of these women. The distortion of sexuality has been uneven with Asian men seemingly being unsexual humans and Asian women seemingly being “exotic” and a “colonial adventure” relating back to colonial thoughts and contrasting images of the West (“‘strong,’ ‘rational,’ ‘virtuous,’ ‘mature,’ and ‘normal’”) versus the East (“‘weak,’ ‘irrational,’ ‘depraved,’ ‘childish,’ and ‘abnormal’”) (Shim, 1998, p. 389). Interestingly, it’s also a different type of sexuality in comparison to the Latina/Hispanic stereotype; while the Latina/Hispanic woman is portrayed to be sexual out of her own desires, it seems as though the Asian woman is sexual out of her desire to please males.

Shim regards previous literature as evidence of what Asian women represent—a source to fulfill white men’s sexual desires. Interestingly, Shim also goes back to early immigration stages of Chinese people and how press focused on the problem of Chinese prostitution which also contributed to the idea that Asian women are “immoral and oversexed” as well as a “threat to white ‘purity’” (1998, p. 390). Another prominent characteristic relating to Asian women stereotypes along with being childlike would be their subservience as noted by Shim and the line “‘I will love you until you let me go’” (1998, p. 390).

Stereotypical Traits

From these stereotypes, I have derived traits as a list of features to watch out for in each Latina/Hispanic-American and Asian-American contestant in the program. Analysis of Latina/Hispanic-American contestants will be based on the following characteristics:

1. Sassiness (i.e. talking back to other characters, eye-rolling, mocking other contestants).
2. Hot-temperament (i.e. fighting/arguing with others).
3. Comical (i.e. making other contestants laugh through jokes, providing entertainment for viewers through commentary or exaggerated facial expressions).
4. Sexual factor (i.e. appearance is commented on, focus on make-up and wardrobe).

The main characteristics being noted of Asian-American contestants during viewings of the program will be noted under the following traits:

1. Sexuality (i.e. comments on sexual activities, appearance).
2. Subservience (i.e. explicit commentary on being submissive or needing protection/dominance, soft-spoken in conversation).
3. Heavily work/business oriented (i.e. focus on career, emphasis on work, showcasing a serious attitude).

Findings

Overall, characteristics from various stereotypes made its' way onto *The Bachelor* with every minority Latina/Hispanic-American and Asian-American contestant. While some of the traits that were being noted and coded during viewings stemmed from contestants and the actions themselves, some of the traits were also emphasized through productions' editing of the show. Although, there was not necessarily one contestant that was designated one specific stereotype, it seemed as though some contestants were crafted to have traits of each stereotype.

Latina/Hispanic-American Findings

Sassiness. Season 13 of *The Bachelor* featured Brazilian-born Raquel whose attitude towards the end of the second episode most likely contributed to her leaving the show. Initially quiet and reserved, Raquel was unhappy with not receiving any time with the bachelor in the second episode which led to her “sassiness” coming out. After Bachelor Jason had returned to the mansion to say goodnight to all of the women he had brought on a group date, Raquel subsequently hid in his limo and waited for his arrival. After Jason returned to his limo, Raquel responded to him opening the door with “have you had enough of me?” resulting in the bachelor visibly appearing uncomfortable and eventually deciding that Raquel was not suited for *The Bachelor* or to be his wife.

Season 22 introduced Bekah M. and Bibiana who both had their fair share of sassiness within the season. Bekah M. was undeniably a source of sass and entertainment during her period on the show and was often shown rolling her eyes whenever she had felt annoyance with some other contestants. One event in particular had Bekah M. clashing with contestant Krystal over a bowling group date. The contestants were divided into two teams— both Bekah M. and Krystal were on the red and blue team, respectively— and the winning team was allowed more time with Bachelor Arie while the losing team had to go back to the mansion. After the blue team won, Bekah M. noted her annoyance with Krystal being a “sore winner” and openly commented her thoughts with Krystal’s celebration strategy with cameras. However, things quickly turned when Arie decided both groups would join him at an after party which resulted in Krystal becoming extremely angry. Bekah M. continued to be sassy by mocking and imitating Krystal’s outlandish behavior while also eye rolling and commenting on how immature she

believed Krystal was behaving. Bekah M. was also used as a source for producers for comment on other contestants and oftentimes was seen sipping drinks when disclosing her thoughts which is seen as a reference to sharing gossip.

Miami native Bibiana was similar to Raquel of season 13 in the sense that they were both initially very quiet and not focused on but soon were portrayed as sassy and outspoken Latina women. Much of Bibiana's sassiness was also connected to fellow contestant Krystal as Bibiana gave her fair share of eye rolls, negative comments on women while sipping drinks, and even raising her hand up to keep another contestant from speaking. However, it should be noted that while some of Bibiana's sassiness was harmless drama viewers have grown accustomed to, such as the eye rolls and comments about other women, a majority of Bibiana's sassiness was tied into hot-temperament.

Hot-Temperament. Out of the three Latina/Hispanic women studied on the program, Bibiana was the contestant to showcase having a hot-temperament in addition to her outspoken personality. In times of frustration with the process and not having enough time with Bachelor Arie—similar to Raquel's issue—Bibiana would have attitudes with the other girls, specifically Krystal. Tensions rose to a high when Krystal, who had already been granted a rose for the week and thereby would continue in the show, interrupted Bibiana's time and conversation with Arie, resulting in a huge argument that left other contestants quiet in observance. Bibiana cursed at other contestants and camera/production people as well as confronting Krystal in her angered and emotional state. When commenting on the situation to cameras in her fit of anger, Bibiana even jokingly threatened Krystal by saying "if [Bibiana] goes home tonight... good luck, Crystal. [She'd] sleep with one eye open." Thankfully, Bibiana got a rose that night and was able

to continue providing entertainment for America. It's also interesting to note that Bibiana does reference her own anger during a group date involving a demolition derby in which the contestants are to demolish each others' cars in hopes of being the winner. In commentary to the camera, Bibiana states her enjoyment with this date and that it's going to be a new way to handle her anger.

Comical. Contestant Bekah M. was the main source of comedic relief throughout her time on the season. Her amusing and comical personality was not only relief for fellow contestants, but viewers as well. Any time there was a dramatic situation, whether or not she was involved in the situation, production either focused in on her exaggerated facial expressions that alleviated tension some viewers might feel or had Bekah provide commentary and explain the situation as an outside perspective.

Bibiana was also comical during her stint on the show but in a different way than Bekah M. Bibiana's comedy was a bit more deprecating of herself or pointed out one of her flaws. When a contestant returned with Louis Vuitton shoes gifted from Arie, Bibiana's reaction to the shoes were a joke in the fact that this accented Latina woman had never even seen shoes of that brand and status in person before. One group date based on wrestling had the women dress up in either sexy costumes (i.e. Bekah M.'s "Sex Kitten") or very comedic costumes (i.e. extremely old lunch lady), but Bibiana's costume did not fall strictly into either category. It leaned more toward comedic as a "Bridezilla" complete with a short white dress and a giant green dinosaur head while also seemingly playing towards Bibiana's rampage against Krystal the previous week.

Sexual Factor. Raquel might have only been a contestant for two episodes, but that was long enough time to emphasize how sexually appealing she was viewed to be. During introductions for the first episode, her only highlight before meeting the bachelor was her showing off the clothes and shoes she brought along for the journey. During her two-episode stint, she was consistently referred to as “sexy” and “beautiful” by Bachelor Jason and other contestants. These comments were made nearly every time Raquel or a photo of Raquel was shown.

Bekah M.’s sexiness was also evident as soon as she was introduced as well. Rather than appearing out of a limo like a majority of the other girls, Bekah M. came out of a classic cherry red Mustang, much to the other girls’ annoyance and jealousy. While Bekah M. was recognized by the bachelor to be sexy, her beauty and connection with Arie was judged harshly by fellow contestants and she became a target of jealousy due to her young age— 22 at the time of filming— and her strong relationship with Arie.

Asian-American Findings

Sexuality. Season 14’s Channy Choch graced only one episode but it was impressively filled with racist statements and overly sexualized portrayal. Her ethnicity was no mystery as the first thing she said to Bachelor Jake was a statement in Cambodian that was to be translated later on in the evening. Her first impression clearly focused on her ethnicity and knowledge of different languages but her commentary felt forced and was uncomfortable to watch. Channy’s personal time with camera crew was drenched in stereotypical and demeaning statements such as “[Jake’s] so nice... he needs a little Cambodian fever,” with an overly cheery smile and excessive giggling. Her statement is presumably relating to the sexual, fetishized saying “yellow

fever” that translates to a white man having a special, fetishized interest in Asian women. When speaking with fellow contestants regarding the bachelor’s kind, boy-next-door image, Channy stated “[she likes] that he’s a good boy, because [she] could be the naughty girl.”

Channy’s over-sexualized act hit a peak when she revealed to the bachelor that what she had said when they first met actually meant “[he] can land [his] plane on [her] landing strip anytime,” a joke that was meant to reference his occupation as a pilot. In a thought-provoking edit, her comments were then reflected on in conversation by the other women in the house who expressed disgust and annoyance over the statement, which almost seemed to recreate the reference Shim made about Asian women being viewed as a threat to “purity” (Shim, 1998). The bachelor later noted that her forwardness made him uncomfortable and when she did not receive a rose that evening, production chose to not include a goodbye scene between her and Jake.

Marikh’s, a south Asian-American woman’s, commentary was rather genuine in explaining that she wants love, but one statement that seemed particularly coached was the statement, “[she hopes] Arie is ready for [her] spice, he better be” before laughing. Whether it was in reference to her restaurant ownership, her ethnicity, or both remains unclear but the influence of producers in that clip can be argued since the start of her statement is cut to very suddenly and seems more like a response to someone else, most likely a producer.

Subservience. Marikh barely speaks in any episodes of season 22. While her conversation with Arie during the first night is shown, other girls’ commentary is edited over their conversation, placing little importance on Marikh and what she is saying. She is rarely featured in commentary and there is even little interaction shown between her and the other girls.

A contestant from season 21, Danielle L., is similar to Marikh in this. She's a relatively calm and reserved person, and though she is shown to have a much stronger connection with Bachelor Nick than Marikh has with Arie, she remains someone who isn't necessarily thrown into the drama of the house.

Business Oriented. Marikh asserts her ethnicity as an Indian-American woman in commentary prior to production of the show and reveals her Indian restaurant ownership and her partnership with her mom in the business. This is the most information viewers receive about her personal life in the entire 5 weeks she is on the show which was actually 50% of the season.

Half Chinese contestant Danielle L. fell more into the place of the "Model Minority." Danielle quickly appeared to be a top pick for who would receive the final rose as there was a more evident connection between herself and Nick shown through one-on-one dates. Danielle's small introduction prior to the start of the season featured her discussing her multiple businesses and the nail salon she has owned since the age of 23. One important comment that Danielle made during her introduction is that now that her "work is set up" she is now ready to "settle down and build a relationship." Despite not winning the final rose, Danielle made it relatively far into the season, finally being eliminated in week 6 which was more than half the season in.

Production Influence

Production influence can be a difficult thing to measure. The influence that producers have on whether they coached a contestant to behave in a certain way or say something specific is a debate, but influence that cannot be denied is editing. Non-diegetic music choice, or the selection of music that is edited in and only heard by viewers, is extremely important to *The Bachelor* and can often depict whether tension is arising between contestants, if there is a villain

emerging from the group, or if there is suspense during a rose ceremony, etc. This also rang true for two Latina/Hispanic contestants— Raquel and Bibiana. Nearly every time Raquel was on screen, sensual Latin music played in the background as if it were her cue from the moment she stepped out of the limo in contrast to the typical *Bachelor*-esque music played for the women before and after Raquel. During the previously mentioned demolition derby group date, Bibiana was also shown to be a victim of non-diegetic song choice. A clip showing her rampage through the derby and crushing fellow contestants' cars was covered by mariachi music, which was only played when Bibiana was the focus of the date.

Overview

The five seasons that were chosen to be viewed featured a total of seven contestants that were studied, three of which were Latina/Hispanic and four being Asian. Though only three Asian contestants were covered as suiting some stereotypical trait, only one, Catherine Giudici, was represented well-roundedly and did not appear to follow any code. It is crucial and necessary to note that Catherine is also the only Asian-American contestant to have made it as far as she did— she made it through the complete season, was given the final rose, and continues to be married to former bachelor Sean Lowe with whom she has kids. Her culture and background as half Filipino was also shown in a relatively respectful light and she even taught Sean to speak Tagalog so he could greet her grandmother during hometown visits. It's difficult to make assumptions as to why she was exempt from racial stereotyping, but it is possible to attribute it to the fact that Catherine did make it the farthest along in the season or even relating to her features that lean slightly more towards "white-passing."

Contestants who were present for a smaller percentage of the season appeared to have demonstrated more stereotypical traits. For example, Raquel and Bibiana who were both chosen to have ethnically linked non-diegetic music play during scenes in which they were the focus were only present for 25% and 30% of their seasons, respectively. Bekah M. who appeared to be more of a fan favorite, was constantly chosen by producers for extra commentary, and was tied for receiving the most roses while on dates with the bachelor than other contestants that season was less frequently shown in a stereotypical light and was present for 70% of her season.

The same correlation rang true among the Asian-American contestants. Overly-sexualized Channy lasted for only 12.5% of her season, with Marikh and Danielle who were both more reserved and had an emphasis on their hard work lasted 50% and 60% of their seasons, respectively. Finally, Catherine Lowe, formerly Giudici, did not demonstrate any stereotypical traits and made it through 100% of her season and is the only *Bachelor* contestant to receive the final rose and still be married to the bachelor.

Conclusion

While reality television is portrayed as being based on real life and real people, it remains questionable how much of this programming is scripted or has some influence from producers and crew members. After years of viewing stereotypes in scripted film and television, it can sometimes be difficult to decipher what a stereotype is when presented because of how accustomed some people can become to seeing it. The possibility of the Social Cognitive theory, the idea that individuals can “pick up values, ideals, and behaviors, from observing television programs through a process of modeling” (Dong & Murillo, 2007, p. 37), having influence on audiences is very high.

Reality TV's purpose is not to show reality and can be considered "synthetic." Rather than presenting something "raw," elements are managed, edited, and filtered in order to produce "profitable, dramatic entertainment" rather than an objective presentation of reality (Deery, 2015). But the repetivity of certain characters and contestants seems to be a reflection of scripted stereotypes that these producers, like us, may have been exposed to as consumers. The recreation of these stereotypes and racist undertones in *The Bachelor* are undeniable, so whether the choices made in the program that are classified as stereotypical are conscious or unconscious, they are still present in the programming and a problem to be aware of and fixed.

Referring back to Bell-Jordan's (2008) concept that the racial narratives created break down in five ways, it was evident that (1) juxtaposing opposing viewpoints (such as Bibiana and Bekah M. vs. Krystal) are there along with (2) the promotion of conflict (a snippet of Bibiana and Krystal arguing prior to the episode airing), (3) the emphasizing of violence and anger in race (Bibiana arguing and cursing at other contestants, Bibiana joking about ways to deal with her anger), and (5) conflict and contradictions are unresolved (Bibiana leaves feeling defeated and never truly getting to know Arie after her many attempts).

This study's insight into the scripted stereotypes in reality TV have shown that stereotypical characteristics that were formulated out of racism and prejudice are echoed in television that is supposedly based on reality. It has also covered research that has not been deeply delved into and highlighted the severe under-representation of minorities, specifically Latina/Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans, in reality television and their high possibility of only being presented through a stereotypical narrative. The combination of

under-representation and misrepresentation through stereotypes in reality TV only enforces these stereotypes into viewers' minds and allows their existence to continue.

While stereotyping has been around longer than television and other media, it is important to use that media to help dismantle these stereotypes. It is clearly not impossible to present minority contestants on a reality TV program as well-rounded individuals as well as showcasing their various ethnicities and cultural differences in a respectful manner, as shown through contestant Catherine Lowe. Minorities are more than just an explosive, angry Latina/Hispanic woman or business-savvy, socially-inept Asian woman and it is necessary to show that through media in order to administer positive ideas and perspectives on these minorities.

References

- Baldwin, K. (2013). 'The Bachelor' Preview: Sean Tells Robyn 'My Last Girlfriend [Was] Black' — Exclusive Video. *Entertainment Weekly*.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), p. 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication. *Media Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 265-299.
- Berg, C. R. (1990). Stereotyping in Films in General and of the Hispanic in Particular. *Howard Journal of Communications*, vol. 2, no. 3, p. 286-300.
- Bell-Jordan, K. E. (2008) Black.White. And a Survivor of the Real World: Constructions of Race on Reality TV. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 357-358.
- Boylorn, R. M. (2008) As Seen on TV: An Autoethnographic Reflection on Race and Reality Television. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 413-433.
- Deery, J. (2015). Reality TV. *Key Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies Series*. Wiley. p.
- Dong, Q. & Murrillo, A.P.. (2007). The Impact of Television Viewing on Young Adults' Stereotypes Towards Hispanic Americans. *Human Communication*, vol. 10, no. 1. p. 33-44.
- Dubrofsky, R. E. & Hardy, A. (2008) Performing Race in Flavor of Love and the Bachelor. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 373-392.
- Guan, M., & So, J. (2016). Influence of Social Identity on Self-Efficacy Beliefs Through Perceived Social Support: A Social Identity Theory Perspective. *Communication Studies*, vol. 67, no. 5, 588-604.

- Hall, S. (1995). The Whites of Their Eyes. *Gender, Race, and Class In Media*, Edited by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez. Sage Publications, p. 20.
- Hammermeister, J., Brock, B., Winterstein, D., & Page, R. (2005). Life Without TV? Cultivation Theory and Psychosocial Health Characteristics of Television-Free Individuals and Their Television-Viewing Counterparts. *Health Communication*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 253-264.
- Kitman, M. (2009) How Reality Works. *New Leader*, vol. 92, no. 3/4, p. 35-36.
- Martinez, A. R., & Ramasubramanian, S. (2015). Latino Audiences, Racial/Ethnic Identification, and Responses to Stereotypical Comedy. *Mass Communication & Society*, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 209-229.
- Mastro, D. E., Behm-Morawitz, E., & Kopacz, M. A. (2008). Exposure to Television Portrayals of Latinos: The Implications of Aversive Racism and Social Identity Theory. *Human Communication Research*, vol. 34, no. 1, p. 1-27.
- Negrón-Muntaner, F. (2014). The Gang's Not All Here: The State of Latinos in Contemporary US Media. *Contemporary Latina/o Media: Production, Circulation, Politics*, edited by Arlene Dávila and Yeidy M. Rivero, NYU Press. p. 103–124.
- Negrón-Muntaner, F. (2014). The Latino Media Gap. *The Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race Columbia University*.
- Park, S. (2015). Where Do I Belong, from Laguna Beach to Jersey Shore?: Portrayal of Minority Youth in MTV Docusoaps. *Howard Journal of Communications*, vol. 26, no. 4, p. 381-402.
- Pozner, J. L. (2012). 'The Bachelor' and 'Bachelorette': Inside the Racial Discrimination Lawsuit. *The Daily Beast*.

- Ramasubramanian, S. (2011). Television Exposure, Model Minority Portrayals, and Asian-American Stereotypes: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, no. 26.
- Rice, L. (2011). 'The Bachelor' Creator On His Long-Running Franchise: 'The Romance Space Is Ours'. *Entertainment Weekly*.
- Samuels, A. (2011). Reality TV Trashes Black Women. *Newsweek*, vol. 157, no. 19. p. 62.
- Shim, D. (1998). From Yellow Peril Through Model Minority to Renewed Yellow Peril. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol. 22, no. 4, p. 389-390.
- Squires, C. (2008). Race and Reality TV: Tryin' to Make It Real—But Real Compared to What?. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 434-440.
- Stereotype [Def. 4]. (n.d.). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved April 30, 2018, from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/stereotype?s=t>
- Taylor, C. R. & Stern, B.B. (1997). Asian-Americans: Television Advertising and the "Model Minority" Stereotype. *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 47-61.
- Tukachinsky, R., Mastro, D. & Yarchi, M. (2017). The Effect of Prime Time Television Ethnic/Racial Stereotypes on Latino and Black Americans: A Longitudinal National Level Study. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, vol. 61, no. 3, p. 538-556.
- Wang, G. (2010). A Shot at Half-Exposure: Asian Americans in Reality TV Shows. *Television & New Media*, vol. 11, no. 5, p. 404-427.
- Wanshel, E. (2017) Rachel Lindsay Responds Perfectly To 'Bachelor' Contestant's Racist Tweet.” *The Huffington Post*, TheHuffingtonPost.com.