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Television and the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents.

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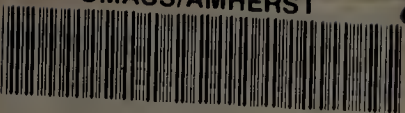
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TELEVISION AND THE SELF-CONCEPT
OF HISPANIC ADOLESCENTS

A Dissertation Presented

by

PILAR MUNOZ-SUGLA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1988

Education

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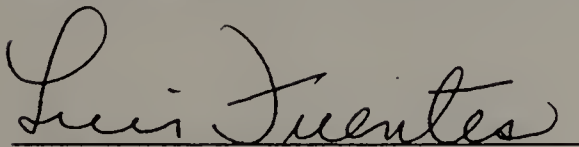
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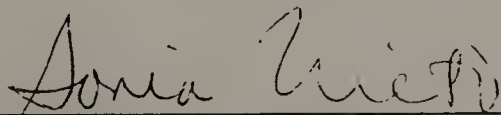
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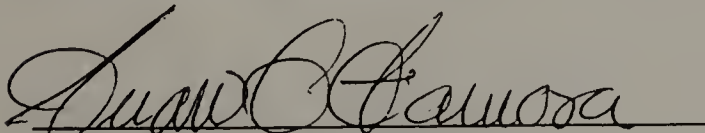
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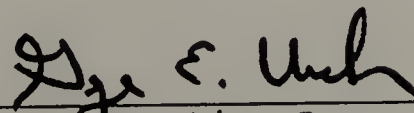
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ABSTRACT

TELEVISION AND THE SELF CONCEPT
OF HISPANIC ADOLESCENTS

MAY 1988

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Previous research indicates that the self-concept of minority adolescents is related to their educational aspirations. It is therefore of significant interest to study the factors that shape the self-concept of minority adolescents. In modern times television, as a mass communication media, has the potential to influence and mould the perceptions of Hispanic adolescents about themselves and the world. In this context, this study examines the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents with respect to television viewing habits and demographic characteristics.

A questionnaire consisting of a comprehensive set of questions was administered to a group of 120 Hispanic adolescents in the city of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. The questions ranged from queries about their background to seeking information about their aspirations and perceptions, as well as their television orientation. The data gathered from the survey profiles a group of adolescents belonging to the lower socioeconomic strata, with high self-concept, and strong family and ethnic identification. Despite the long

number of hours of exposure to television, no relationship was found between their television viewing habits and their self-concept.

The study points to the importance of the subculture in the development of a healthy self-concept among Hispanic adolescents.

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

The Problem

Jose, eight years old, sits down to watch television after a day of hard work at school. Like so many other days, Jose senses that being Hispanic is not always considered good. Although he is trying hard to keep up with the rest of the kids at school, he is falling behind. Today, the other students in the class made fun of him because he could not understand what the teacher was telling him. Jose tries to put all of that on the back of his mind as he turns on the television set. It is Monday, he thinks, as he switches channels looking for something to watch. He has several choices: Scarecrow and Mrs. King, Hardcastle and McCormick, Silver Spoons, Kate and Alley, Newhart, and Cagney and Lacey. Although he probably does not realize it, he is watching the world of "mainstream" America. In this world of television there is not much place for minorities. In whatever small place there is, minorities are presented as either hopeless cases or in the way to improve their social status by falsely imitating the ways of the white middle- or upper-class. In the world of television "women are incomplete human beings, Blacks are lazy and don't work. Life's goal is to have a good time. Spanish people steal. Orientals are not discussed. The Indians are still losing the war and white men rule on" (Hartman, 1978, p. 17). This is the

"reality" of television, where almost all successful people are white middle- or upper-class Americans. A few are Blacks; there are even fewer Asians, Native Americans, or Hispanics. Jose might find a comedy program where a Hispanic might be either the funny or dumb character. Most probably, he will find a crime adventure show where either a Puerto Rican or a Chicano has killed someone or has robbed a bank. Very few of the Hispanics he will see on television have ever finished school. Those who have are in no better situation than those who have no education at all. There will be a couple of successful and decent "mainstreamed" Hispanics, but the only Latin trait in them will be their names.

Jimmy is a white "all American" boy. When he sits down to watch television on Monday night he might internalize the "reality" of television. But since he is part of the dominant culture both in real life and in television, his world and his culture are not threatened. Jose, on the other hand, is a minority in mainstream America. What goes through Jose's mind? How much does he believe? How much does he ignore? What does it do to his self-esteem? Does he resent it? Does it create a sense of ambivalence towards either his own culture or the dominant culture? How does this ambivalence affect his/her self-esteem?

The importance of these questions cannot be underestimated. During the development of the self children learn to differentiate between the self and others; they

learn to identify with others, and to evaluate themselves based on how they perceive other people's thoughts and evaluations of them. Children also become aware of racial and ethnic differences. They learn to evaluate racial and ethnic groups, including their own (Johnson Powell, 1982). Parents and immediate family members, young children, peers, the community, the ethnic group, and the society at large become the "generalized others" used by young people to evaluate themselves, their status and role in society. How young minority group members can develop a healthy self-concept in American society has become the concern and the challenge of educators and researchers. In the case of minority adolescents, an answer to the question becomes imperative. According to Rosenberg (1965), adolescence is a particularly crucial time. During this period young men and women are neither children nor adults. It is a time for decisions, a time of constant physiological and psychological change during which the concern of adolescents with their self-image is substantial. They question more who they are, how good they are, and what standards they should use to judge themselves by. If the development of a healthy self-concept is dependent on the environment, and if these adolescents look up to society for guidance and support, it is then very possible that a large number of elements in their sociocultural environment work to undermine both their ethnic identity and their self-concept (Banks, 1972; Longres, 1974; Prewitt Diaz, 1980).

Hispanics constitute the largest minority ethnic group in the United States. Let us consider for a moment the situation of Puerto Ricans, the largest Hispanic group in the Eastern part of the United States. Along with Blacks and other ethnic groups, Puerto Ricans have the dubious honor of sharing the label "socially disadvantaged." Although minority groups represent heterogeneous groups with different cultural traits, they share a number of characteristics under the label: low economic status, low educational achievement, high unemployment, and limited participation in community organizations. The latest statistics indicate that there are 2.3 million Puerto Ricans living in the United States. They are one of the youngest ethnic groups in the United States, with a median age of about 22 years, as compared to 32.6 years of age for the non-Hispanic population (Pear, 1987). For young Puerto Ricans the outlook is not good. They are at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. They receive the lowest salaries and lag behind on income, employment, and education. According to the Bureau of the Census (1983), the Puerto Rican community in the United States is characterized by the following:

1. A lower median family income and a higher rate of poverty than other U.S. families and other Spanish-origin families as well.
2. A lower educational level of attainment than other groups in the U.S., including other Hispanic populations.

3. A lower rate of participation in the labor force, a higher rate of unemployment, and a lower percentage of white collar jobs than any other ethnic group.

According to Banks (1972), the elements in the sociocultural environment of the minority child include parental attitudes, school, societal influences (health, courts, government, and others), and the mass media. Let us, for a moment, use Banks' model to consider the situation of Puerto Rican children in the United States. If statistics are accurate, Puerto Rican children and adolescents looking for sources of self-evaluation find a racist society and a community characterized by economic problems, a disproportionately large number of broken families, lack of sufficient parental education, deteriorated public housing projects, and high rates of unemployment. Although we know that it is very important for minority children to develop their own cultural norms and values, these norms may be alien and thus unacceptable to the white middle/upper-class amidst which young Puerto Ricans have to live. In order to become "acceptable," they may have to forget the cultural traits they call their own and be mainstreamed into the system:

The integrated social norms of the larger North American society do not function well in a slum; residents of slum areas have their own norms, nevertheless they are expected to accept the norms of more privileged groups in society and reflect those norms in their behavior; yet the realities of the immediate social and cultural milieu and life chances of Puerto Ricans in slums have resulted in norms and values that are at variance with and seemingly contradict the norms and values of other groups in the society. (Bucchioni, 1982, p. 239)

In the school system there is little tolerance for the cultural differences of ethnic minorities. Children are expected to "accept" the standards of the majority culture. It is "a cruel sort of assimilation forced onto children in the name of equality....Jose must become Joe" (Margolis, 1968, p. 7). Conflicts arise within the children, who have to choose between "being" or "becoming." These conflicts have an inhibiting effect on the student, who is hindered in his desire to succeed (Prewitt Diaz, 1980).

According to Banks' model (1972), the mass media also play an important role as one of the "generalized others" used by children and adolescents to evaluate themselves as members of their own community and society at large. As a mass medium, television can serve as a source of information about the world and its social structures. At the same time, in the world of television members of minority groups are de-legitimized in their portrayal. Television offers only two messages to minority group members. The first one is a clearly negative stereotype. The other one is less obvious but not less biased. It consists of the forced invisibility that comes with the denial of the group's existence.

The impact of commercial portrayals of Hispanics on the self-concept of Hispanics is an area of interest in which very little research has been done. Research evidence indicates that self-images are often determined by the appraisals of others in society. Consequently, the media, TV in particular, may play an important role in shaping negative

self-images among stereotyped minority group members. It is necessary to study how television images are perceived by minority children and in what ways these images are internalized into a perception of the world and themselves. More specifically, it is important to study how television portrayals affect the self-concept and ethnic identification of minority children. If family and social variables are significant correlates to the child's acquisition of a healthy self-concept, how do they affect the impact of television content on minority children and adolescents?

Rationale and Statement of Purpose

Television has come to be viewed as the most prominent medium for the socialization of our children. General statistics indicate that 95% of the American homes own television sets; 60% of those homes own two sets (Hiebert, Ungurait, & Bohn, 1974). The same statistics indicate that the average American home uses the television set at least +44.5 hours per week. These numbers do not seem impressive in isolation. Let us put it in some more practical terms. Research indicates that children start watching television regularly between the ages of two and three. Let us say then that children watch television an average of at least 3 hours per day. A little multiplication gives us 84 hours of television per month, or 1008 hours per year. According to Liebert, Neale, & Davidson (1973), a child born today will have spent, by the age of 18, more time watching television

than any other activity with the exception of sleep. According to our numbers, that child will have spent 15,120 hours of his/her life watching television. By watching only one hour more per day, the number would jump to 19,440 hours (810 days), or 2.22 years of that child's life.

Statistics are not much different for Hispanics. In his review of the literature on the media characteristics of Hispanics, Valenzuela (1981) found the following:

1. Television set ownership has been found to be at least 75%.
2. Hispanics spend more time with television than with any other medium. Radio and newspapers alternate as the second most used media.
3. Results are inconsistent on whether Hispanics watch more television than other groups. In general, data indicates that Hispanics watch less than Blacks but more than Asians or other minorities. On the average, Hispanics spend between 3.2 and 3.9 hours/day watching television. Teenagers spend an average of 4.5 hours/day.

Research also indicates that minority children become more involved with television, have a greater motivation to learn about life and self-adaptive behaviors from television than whites. They get more of their information about themselves and the world from television. Unfortunately, the information they get is very distorted. In the world of

television minorities are either invisible or stereotyped.

At the same time, children see a glorified world:

A complex of one-family houses with one or more bathrooms, one or more automobiles, supermarkets that one drives to in order to make the necessary purchases, trees, lawn, flowers, and new modern schools, Puerto Rican pupils [and other young minority group-members] thus learn early to desire these symbols of respectable middle-class status. (Bucchioni, 1982, p. 240)

Some researchers have suggested that for some viewers television characters may play the part of "generalized others" (Davis & Abelman, 1983). Through television young people learn the ways of society. Like another parent, "television will correct, refine, and clarify his or her [the child's] thoughts and feelings" (Berry, 1977, p. 42). As a "generalized other," television can hypothetically contribute to a low self-concept among minority children and adolescents. The fact that young people tend to choose as models those powerful and successful characters that are similar to themselves presents a real problem to minority children. For them, who are viewing role models of their own ethnic background (whichever few there might be), the choice of powerful and successful models is almost nil. The choice is limited even for Black children. The fact that among all minority groups Blacks have the highest representation on television does not mean much. Quantity does not imply quality. Although characters like Nell (Give Me a Break) and Mr.T (A-Team) seem to provide positive role models for Black children, some researchers believe that they are nothing more than fancier versions of the old stereotypes:

The role of Nell is little more than that of a sophisticated mammy of earlier TV days, and the A-Team's Mr.T casts a Black male in the role of a super masculine menial, a brainless eunuch who is no real threat to the white male. (Staples & Jones, 1985, p. 14)

Staples and Jones add that Mr.T and other television personalities are presented as "lovable pets" who "like a loyal pet, need the help of the master. As pets they are nice and have human-like characteristics, but they are not quite human" (p. 16).

If young minority group members choose models of their own ethnic group they might learn that they are worth less than white children. If they accept white characters as models, they are forced to learn white values and behaviors, forcing them to give up part of their own ethnic identity (Dorr, 1982). What sort of guidance do these young people find in a medium that has not legitimized the status of their minority groups in society? The choice for them seems to be very limited: either they follow the white model with its white norms and white values, or they "accept" their "non-existence." Television is part of the society. If appearance on television brings legitimation to an ethnic group, then the message to a minority child is that he/she does not exist:

A child's sense of self is affected by how he views his environment, both through direct involvement and through various media presentations...Even a child in a strong family may develop self-doubt if he lives in the midst of poverty and social disorder. A poor young Black viewing television...may decide that "worthwhile" people live in the middle-class homes and neighborhoods he sees in television commercials. (Poussaint, 1974, p. 141)

Television is then a definite agent of socialization in the environment of young people. From it they learn not only about themselves, but also about behavioral patterns, value orientations, personality traits, and the recognition and respect given to particular groups (Barcus, 1983). According to Greenberg (1972), 40% of the white children in his study believed that television accurately portrayed Blacks, even when the portrayals contrasted with their own personal experience with Blacks. If television plays a role in determining white Americans' conception of minorities, it would be pertinent to ask how the same television images influence minorities' conception of themselves and other minority groups.

Speculation on the role of television on the self-concept development of minority children abounds (Barnes, 1980; Berry, 1982; Dorr, 1982; Graves, 1982; Powell, 1982; Stroman, 1984). At the same time, available empirical studies have been few and inconclusive in their results. It is an accepted fact today that television's impact depends on a combination of television- and viewer-related variables. In other words, television is not the omnipotent center of the television-viewing situation. What television brings to the viewing situation is not more important than what the viewer brings to it. Although available studies have examined such viewer variables as education, gender, age, and grade level, they have failed to account for other viewer related variables that have been demonstrated to

relate to television's impact. By focusing on the simplistic assumption that increased television viewing leads to a low self-concept, researchers have turned the relationship into a stimulus-response process that concentrates on what television does to the viewer, at the expense of the individual differences mediating the process.

It is the purpose of this study to examine how specific social and psychological variables mediate the process between television viewing and its potentially negative effect on young Hispanic viewers. Following the basic rationale of existing research, the basic proposition is that television's social reality can play a negative role in the development of the self-concept among minority group members. At the same time, it is the contention of this study that the relationship is not as direct and unidirectional as implied by the available empirical research. Existing evidence from other areas of television research indicates that television's impact is influenced by a complex set of TV- and viewer-related variables (Dorr, 1982; Greenberg & Atkin, 1982). Viewer-related variables that have been studied include the structure and interaction patterns of the viewer's family, the degree of involvement and/or identification with television's characters or specific content, the viewer's perceived reality of television, and the degree to which the viewer utilizes television in order to acquire knowledge about the world and himself/herself. These variables play an important role in determining the

degree of impact the stereotypical depiction of the viewers' own ethnic groups on television might have on the conceptions and beliefs they have about themselves.

This study examines the relationship between television viewing and perceptions of self-concept among a group of Hispanic adolescents. The following research questions set the agenda of this study:

1. What is the Hispanic adolescents' self-concept? In other words, what attitudes and perceptions do they hold towards themselves and their environment?
2. What is the Hispanic adolescents' orientation towards TV? In other words, what do Hispanics do with television, with what content, and for what purpose?
3. Is there a relationship between television viewing and the self-concept of the Hispanic adolescents?
4. If there is a relationship, how do specific family and child-viewer characteristics correlate with exposure and interpretation variables in determining the impact of TV content on the Hispanic adolescents' self-concept?

In order to present a comprehensive analysis of the relationship, this study considers the juxtaposition of specific mass media and viewer-related variables. Survey data was collected from a group of Hispanic adolescents in the area of Perth Amboy, New Jersey in order to obtain an indication of their self-concept and measure a set of medi-

ating variables. More specifically, the instrument was designed to encompass the following areas:

1. Adolescent-viewer characteristics: family structure (background, structure); self-perceptions (educational, occupational, and social); ethnic identification; and demographics.
2. Mass media variables: exposure (access, usage, preferences, and gratifications); parental mediation and control; and interpretation (perceived reality, credibility of TV versus other media, and content stereotype perceptions).

This study is both descriptive and exploratory. The data provide information on the demographic characteristics of the sample and descriptive information on the attitudes and beliefs of Hispanic adolescents. In addition, the study examines the relationship between the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents and specific media-related characteristics. The measurement of these characteristics and variables are described in more detail in the Methods section of this report. The basic model for this study comes from a modification of Greenberg & Atkin's Model for Social Role Learning from Television (1982), presented in Figure 1. In the original model, Greenberg & Atkin suggest that personal and TV-related variables have to be considered when examining the effects that TV messages have on the role orientation of

adolescents. The modified model examines the relationship between those personal and TV-related variables and the self-concept of the viewers.

The relevance of this model lies in the prevalent role given to the combination of personal and social factors in determining the impact of television's content on individual viewers. Greenberg and Atkin hypothesize that parental and peer influences, the background of the viewer, the direct experience of the young viewer with the televised topic, the presence or absence of previous attitudes, and exposure/interpretation variables influence the effects that the televised content will have on the viewer. This approach does not minimize the importance of television or its messages, but it limits its power to cause dramatic changes among "powerless" viewers. Following Greenberg & Atkin's line of thought, this study looks at the interrelationship of personal and social factors that influence the impact of television on the self-concept of adolescents of Hispanic origin.

Definition of Key Concepts

Hispanic. For the purpose of this study, this term refers to a person possessing a Hispanic cultural heritage. It could be a person born in a Latin American country now living in the United States, or a person whose parents or ancestors immigrated to the United States from a Latin American country.

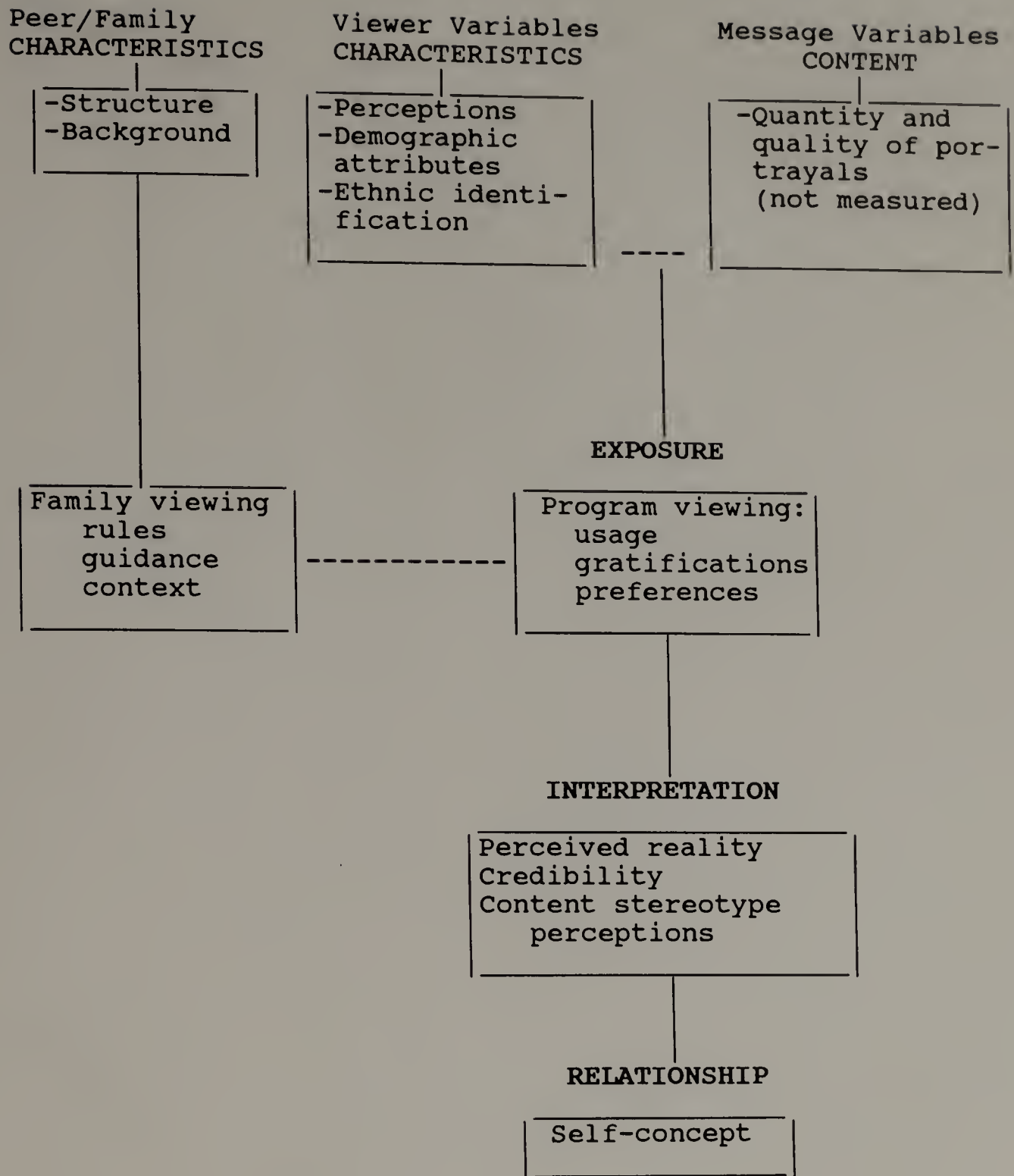


Figure 1. Modified Model of Key Variables in Social Role Learning from Television (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982)

Adolescent. A person 14-19 years old.

Socio-Economic Status. For the purpose of this paper, socio-economic status is an approximate measure reflecting the status of an adolescent's household in the social and economic ladder of society as determined by the occupation and educational level of his/her parents.

Ethnic Identification. The degree of attainment to an ethnic group and the positive/negative orientation towards being a member of that group.

Self-Perceptions. The current way of thinking that an individual has regarding different aspects of the self.

Self-Concept. For the purpose of this paper, self-concept is equivalent to self-esteem. It is "the positive or negative attitude that a person holds towards a particular object, namely, the self" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 30).

TV Orientation. A person's general attitudes and beliefs towards television.

TV Exposure. The direct contact that an individual has with TV and its content, as determined by the access to TV sets, the number of hours spent watching TV, and the types of programs watched.

TV Gratifications. It refers to the reasons or motivations for watching TV. Gratifications included are: for arousal, for relaxation, for companionship, to pass time, to forget, to learn about myself, and to learn about people and the world.

Parental Mediation and Control. It refers to the set of rules and limitations placed by the adolescent's parents on the amount and quality of TV content to which he/she is exposed.

Perceived Reality of TV. It refers to a person's perception of television as a source of reality versus fantasy content.

Credibility of TV vs Other Media. The choice of TV and its content over other types of media as a source of trustworthy and reliable information.

Content Stereotype Perceptions. The awareness of the stereotyped portrayals on TV as determined by the perceived frequency and the perceived traits of Hispanics on TV.

Significance of the Study

Hispanic Americans constitute the fastest growing population in the United States. The United States has become the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Hispanics are expected to become the "majority minority" in this country by the year 2000 (Greenberg, Burgoon, Judee, & Korzenny, 1983). At the same time, they are at the bottom of the economic scale, with the lowest median income in the United States. They also tend to lag behind the majority of the population in education. There are 80% of an estimated 3.5 million elementary and secondary school students who speak little or no English (U.S. Government Printing Office,

1983). In addition, 56% of all Hispanics in the United States are classified as either functionally or marginally illiterate (Kelley, 1985). These grim statistics make it imperative for researchers to look for explanations to our students' problems and for programs that will improve the situation of our young people. But before we go on to design educational programs for them, we still have a lot to learn about their nature, their attitudes, beliefs, and preferences.

It has become clear to researchers that the academic progress of minority students is influenced by a complex set of interacting variables. Factors such as the individual characteristics of the students, their background, the attitudes they hold about themselves and their environment, and the attitudes and behaviors of the surrounding society toward minority groups are as important as linguistic and sometimes educational variables in determining the educational outcomes of minority students. According to Cummins (1984), the attitude a child has toward his/her own identity, the motivation the child has to learn the second language and maintain the first, and the attitudes of the family and the community are essential to the educational process. Cummins (1984) has also determined that one common characteristic among students performing poorly at school appears to be a pattern of ambivalence or hostility toward

the majority cultural group and insecurity or even shame about the home language and culture. The consequences are clear:

When reinforced by the cultural and linguistic message conveyed by the school...students fulfill their preordained role in the system and mentally withdraw from academic tasks. (Cummins, 1984, p. 120)

If positive ethnic identification is essential to academic success, it is then important to consider all factors affecting its development. It cannot be denied that television reflects the dominant social structure and its values. As such it serves, or can serve, as a potential socializing agent in the lives of our children and adolescents. Thus the need for empirical research on the ways in which minority adolescents process and utilize the information on television to learn about themselves and their role in society. If television provides information about how to be a member of one's own cultural group, then careful thought should be given to the information that television transmits to the members of that group. Instead of de-legitimizing minority groups, the creation of appropriate programs could be used to validate the cultural identity of children and students, thus reducing the ambivalence towards themselves and their own particular culture. In addition, the need would arise for the development of educational programs aimed at teaching young people the television-processing skills they need to become discriminating viewers.

The potential relationship between television viewing and self-esteem has far-reaching implications for bilingual

education and other existing minority-oriented educational programs. Bilingual education has been used as the scapegoat for all non-English speakers' educational problems. Although bilingual education is a solution, it is not a solution that can work in isolation. Educational and social changes must occur concurrently. Putting the blame of Hispanic students' problems on bilingual education is the easy way to take us "off the hook"; it satisfies our sense of responsibility to know that it is all the fault of the educational system and that there is nothing we can do. A realization of the possible relationship between media portrayals and self-esteem would do two things for bilingual education. First, it would prove that the success of bilingual education is closely related to other social factors. Second, if self-esteem is important for students' achievement, then the need for good bilingual educational programs could serve to emphasize the values of the home culture and could serve as a source of cultural affirmation would become paramount.

Limitations of the Study

This study attempts to examine how the interaction of mass media variables and viewer-related variables bear on the impact of televised messages on the self-concept development of Hispanic adolescents. It is limited to one geographic area, Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and one sample, a group of Hispanic adolescents living in the target area.

Although some of the observations from this particular study may be useful in examining television's influence on specific Hispanic groups, generalizations should be made with caution. The term Hispanic encompasses a heterogeneous group of people from diverse cultures and origins. They include persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, Central, or South American origin. By focusing on "Hispanics" in general and not on specific subgroups, individual cultural differences are overlooked. In addition, the study group was not randomly selected. The participants were part of a nonprobability convenience sample of 120 Hispanic students enrolled in any of five sections of a course entitled Spanish for Native Speakers. It is possible that the Hispanic students enrolled in this class might have a more positive cultural identification than other students not enrolled in the class. Hence it might be difficult to generalize from this sample of Hispanic adolescents the factors and processes that may be operating on specific Hispanic groups.

Summary

At the Research Conference on television and Children and Youth in 1975, Lee Barrow made the following statement:

My tentative conclusions are that we know virtually nothing about either the short- or the long-term effects of television on minority children...If I were to place all of our knowledge in a thimble, I would probably still have room for my thumb. (As quoted in Greenberg & Atkin, 1982, p. 240)

Thirteen years have passed since then. Although we know more about the so called "effects," we do not know enough. We know that minority children watch television for information about the world, but we do not know for sure how that information is internalized into beliefs about themselves. If television provides information about how to be a member of one's own cultural group, then careful thought should be given to the information that television transmits to the members of that group. Instead of de-legitimizing minority groups, the creation of appropriate programs could be used to validate the cultural identity of children and students, thus reducing the ambivalence towards themselves and their particular culture.

Television portrayals and their impact on the minority child's self-image have been more extensively studied with public television. For shows like Sesame Street and Villa Alegre, gains have been demonstrated in cultural pride, self confidence, and interpersonal relations. A wave of other studies confirm that children can learn positive behaviors and a host of prosocial skills and messages from carefully designed programming. Although there has not been yet an opportunity to examine the impact of the commercial portrayal of Hispanics on their self-concept or ethnic identity, we could assume that some impact does occur. This being true, the need arises for the development of commercial television programs that can serve as a source of cultural affirmation.

Leifer, Gordon, & Graves (1974) believe that if the choice is between no portrayal or unfavorable portrayal, the first choice is better. What they do not seem to realize is that, if Hispanics are not seen on television, perhaps that would imply that minority groups are not worth seeing:

Nonportrayal is much like passing in front of a mirror and seeing only nothingness. Indeed, invisibility is a powerful statement of value. The message transmitted may be that as a culture you are of little value within the society-of little consequence. It says that your cultural heritage, your traits, your triumphs are not even print worthy. It says that where your culture is concerned no one cares...At the very least, when the image is stereotypically projected, you can scream out against the unread, distorted portrayal...How do you change nothingness. (Alexander, 1984, p. 212)

The solution does not come with a forced invisibility. If we want to help our children, we need to further develop programs that will respect their language and culture, and that will help them realize self-actualization:

To the extent that the child feels that his language and culture are unacceptable in the school which is a reflection of the society at large, the child will suffer a loss of self-esteem....Learners who view themselves as being respected, loved, and therefore accepted as they are will develop a positive self-concept. (Reyes, 1980, pp. 164-165)

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter has been organized in five sections. The first section focuses on the content of the media. It summarizes the findings of content analysis studies about the frequency and nature of the portrayals of minorities in English language television and other forms of media. The second section focuses on the minority viewer of television. It presents a comprehensive review of relevant empirical studies that constitute the present state of knowledge about television's socializing impact on young minority viewers. The third section focuses on the development of the self-concept, with special emphasis on the self-concept of young minority group members. The fourth section summarizes whatever little is known about the effects of television on the self-concept of minority group members. The last section summarizes the most relevant points provided from the review of the literature.

Hispanics and the Media

In 1970 W.C. McAlister, the mayor of San Antonio, Texas, made the following statement about Mexican Americans:

You have to bear in mind that there is a special temperament between the Anglos and our Americans of Mexican descent. Our citizens of Mexican descent are very fine people...uh...they're...they're home loving... they love beauty...they love flowers...they love music-ah-they love dancing...perhaps they are not quite

as, let's say, as ambitiously motivated as the Anglos are to get ahead financially, but they manage to get a lot out of life. (As quoted in Lewels, 1974, p. 50)

Comments like McAlister's are not new. We are all too familiar with the image of Hispanics in mainstream America. According to the general stereotype, Latin men have been described as ignorant, lazy, macho-oriented, sneaky, dirty, poor, and sometimes humble and honest. Women, on the other side, have been described as hard-working, poor, submissive, shy, sweet, undereducated, sexy, self-sacrificing, religious, marriage-oriented, and with a preference for white men (Council on Interracial Books for Children, n.d., p. 53). We all know that stereotypes exist and that they are shared by different groups of people. They exist at all societal levels: in the family, the school, the church, the community. They are part of our daily bread. Whether we like it or not we are in contact with them every day: when we read the newspaper during breakfast; on the radio on our way to work; in the books children read at school; in conversations with fellow workers; when we watch television or read a magazine at home, or what we watch at the movies.

Stereotypes play an important role in perpetuating the myths of mainstream America. According to Allport (1954), a stereotype is "an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) conduct in relation to that category" (p. 191). It is a fact that, when compared to the white Anglo majority in the United States, members of racial minorities find themselves at a disadvan-

tage, both socially and economically. Jobs for them are hard to find; when available, these jobs require mostly manual skills and are poorly paid. Housing for them is limited to specific areas and, many times, condemned buildings. Rather than bear the responsibility for the injustices committed against the members of these groups, people find it easier to wash their hands from all responsibility by putting the blame on the victims themselves. As long as Hispanic men and women are visualized as ignorant, lazy, dirty, violent and unmotivated, then society rationalizes that they do not deserve to be given equal status or a chance to improve themselves:

If Mexican-Americans are deceitful and immoral, they do not have to be accorded equal status and justice; if they are mysterious and unpredictable, there is no point in treating them as one would a fellow Anglo American; and if they are hostile and dangerous, it is best that they live apart in colonies of their own. (Simmons, 1971, p. 66)

Stereotypes simplify the world for many people, helping them rationalize their injustices, while at the same time maintaining and perpetuating the status quo. The role of stereotypes, then, is to help "achieve a racial-cultural domination of colonized populations—a process that parallels and reinforces the political and economic forms of domination" (Limon, 1973, p. 259).

If society has created stereotypes, the mass media have served the function of perpetuating those stereotypes. Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) have called the mass media "the collective consciousness" (p. 39). Since the beginnings of

mass media, decision-makers have aimed to please and attract majority audiences. In order not to jeopardize an economically fruitful relationship with the mass audience, decision-makers had to go consider the values and beliefs of the majority. Those values and beliefs included all the stereotypes about racial minorities, especially those minorities with distinct physical characteristics. The stereotypes created by the majority became part of the world of media and served to attract and influence mass audiences:

Virtually every minority characterization was designed to reinforce the attitudes of white superiority. Given the low socioeconomic status of working-class whites during the heyday of the industrial age, movie producers capitalized on audience insecurities by using minority stereotypes to bolster their self-esteem and reinforce racial attitudes. (Wilson and Gutierrez, 1985, p. 78)

Eventually, certain characteristics became the established norm, the common denominator shared by several racial minorities. Intellectually, Latins were portrayed as simplistic in their ideas, with a low occupational status, and with poor language skills and ability. Morally, Latins were depicted as having low regard for human life, as being sexually promiscuous, dishonest, and with no self-control over drugs or alcohol (Wilson and Gutierrez, 1985, p. 79).

The Latin characteristics established by the media form part of the Latin image of today. It has pervaded all forms of media, from television to literature.

Depiction of Hispanics in Literature

As the two largest Hispanic groups in the United States, both Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans have the "honor" of sharing the stereotypical image of the media. Mexican-Americans are depicted in literature as poor, ignorant, and with very little culture of their own. According to Cotera and Hufford (1980b), the most recurrent theme in stories about Mexican-Americans is the "poverty plot." A "poverty plot" would go as follows: a Chicano kid is living in poverty. He cannot get out of it because he is unmotivated, passive, and cannot speak the language. But Anglos are good hearted, and there is always one willing to help. The Anglo helps the Chicano kid, who in the process learns that the Anglo's culture and ways are the "right ones." The message is, in other words, that acculturation is the only road to success for Chicanos:

In order for Mexicans and/or Chicanos...to be "good", "right", and "happy", they must learn to speak English, behave as Anglos and adopt Anglo values-that is, acculturate. The message to Chicanos is always reject your own culture, language and roots and become "American." (Cotera & Hufford, 1980b, p. 351)

Puerto Ricans do not fare better in literature, especially in children's literature. Among the themes mentioned by Nieto (1983) that fall within the category of "poverty plot" are: the settings; the "problems" that Puerto Ricans have created for themselves but which they cannot solve due to their passivity, their lack of motivation, and

their inability to learn the language; the lack of a real culture; the dependence on Anglo help; and the message that assimilation is the only alternative.

No study on the effects of media portrayals on the self-concept development of minority students can afford to ignore the role played by books and other printed materials. At home children spend a considerable amount of time watching television. But they also spend a considerable amount of time at schools, in contact with books and magazines that are no less biased than television. Schools, and whatever is read in the classroom, are part of the social determinants of minority children (Banks, 1972). As such, they have serious implications for their self-concept. We cannot afford to try to change television and ignore reading materials, because "children will be unable to value themselves highly as long as their people are continually degraded in the textbooks which they are forced to read and memorize" (Banks, 1972, p. 18).

Promotion of Negativism via Film

Although the Latin image in American films has somehow changed through the years, these changes have very infrequently followed a positive direction. Latin Americans have been depicted as violent bandits and murderers, ignorant peasants, frustrated lovers, and mambo and carioca

dancers, among others. One characteristic has been common among all these variations: the Latins have always been the losers in both war and love.

A bullfight is the first image of Latin America received by the American people. The movie was a success and Mexico started to be considered an important thematic component. By the turn of the century the transformation of the Latin American image was already taking place. Movies like Pedro Esquirel and Dionisio Gonzalez: Mexican Duel began to show Mexicans as vile and violent murderers and gamblers. Mexicans came to be known as "greasers" and their negative traits were emphasized in Tony the Greaser (1911) and The Greaser's Revenge (1914), among others.

These movies did not differ too much from the more common Western genre, the main difference lying in the nationality of the villains: Mexicans instead of Indians. They were still violent and dangerous people, but now they were given a chance to redeem themselves by leaving their people to join the American people, "the dominant race" (Woll, 1980a, p.9). Tony the Greaser is the perfect example. Tony is a poor Mexican man who has made the mistake of falling in love with an American woman. His only chance of redemption is to die saving the woman he loves from the hands of the Mexicans:

The humble Tony loves the landowner's daughter, but as an American she cannot return his attention...A band of "dissolute Mexicans" arrive...Tony eventually saves the day but is killed in the process. His only reward is to kiss the daughter's handkerchief as he expires. Here

is the true noble greaser ..."he is a Mexicano, but a man of noble instincts and rivalrous nature." (Woll, 1980a, p. 9)

This reflects another characteristic of the Latin image of the time. Not only were the Americans more intelligent and morally superior; they were also superior in matters of love. The image of the Latin lover did not appear until the mid 1940's with Latin American actors such as Cesar Romero, Fernando Lamas, and Ricardo Montalvan. During the silent cinema and up to the Second World War the image was that of sensual Latin women that would always choose an American man over a Latin one. American men could easily conquer any Latin woman while the Latin men had no chance of being accepted.

The ignorant and stereotypical perception that Americans had of Latin Americans was reflected not only in the portrayals in the movies, but also at the decision-making level in Hollywood. By the 1930's Hollywood had realized the economic importance of Latin American audiences, but the coming of sound films was making it very difficult for Hollywood to attract the Latin audiences they imagined so simple and easy to please. In their desperation, and imagining that all Latin American audiences were one and the same, Hollywood producers looked into several alternatives (Woll, 1980a):

1. The translation of all movies into Spanish. This alternative failed because of Hollywood's general belief that all Latin American countries were the same and

that there were no linguistic differences. Consequently, the translations resulted in a ridiculous mixture of Spanish accents.

2. The creation of American-produced Spanish language films. Over 70 of these movies were produced during the years 1930 and 1936. They were nothing less than Spanish-speaking versions of the original American movies. Hollywood made the mistake of believing that all Spanish-speaking people talked the same way. One movie could be acted by a Spaniard, along with a Mexican, an Argentinian, and a Cuban. What Latin Americans heard was what to the Americans would have sounded like "a film version of Hamlet performed by a Southern Colonel, a New England dowager, a Texas cowboy, and a Brooklyn taxi driver" (Woll, 1980a, p. 32). This mixture of accents was considered offensive by most Latin American countries and forced Hollywood to look at other alternatives.
3. The production of all Spanish versions using only Castilian Spanish. Spain had stated that "if the "c" or "z" were not ortographically pronounced the American studios need not bother sending their films." (Mora, 1982, p. 32). This alternative failed too; ninety percent of all Spanish-speaking audiences were Latin and they found Castilian Spanish completely unacceptable.

By 1935 Hollywood had realized how complicated it was to deal with the countries they thought so simple and stopped most ventures into Spanish-speaking films. At the same time the 1930's brought the return, although a little milder, of the conventional Latin stereotype. The beginning of the Second World War forced a change in the stereotype. The years between 1939 and 1945 became the years of Hollywood's Good Neighbor Policy. Movies emphasized inter-American relations; Latin actors became very popular; movies emphasized Latin American settings, Latin American music, and Latin American dances. This sudden change did not come out of Hollywood's good heart. First, the film industry was responding to the pressures of the government. Second, and more important, it was responding to its own economic interests. With the war most of the European markets became unavailable. As a result, Latin America became a prime market and Hollywood had to do its best to improve the Latin image in order to attract Latin audiences.

Unfortunately, what started as an effort to improve the Latin American image turned out to be the substitution of one stereotype for another. The development of the "musical cycle" during the war identified Latin Americans as very sensual people who were more concerned with dancing and singing than about anything else. Although that image eventually mellowed down, it was only to be substituted by a less gay and more negative one. As the Hispanic population in the United States increased, it became more of a threat to the

established order. The image of the "greaser" seemed to reflect very well the general attitude of the American society , and Hollywood very conveniently brought it back. By the 1960's Puerto Ricans were sharing the "greaser" image with Mexicans. Puerto Ricans shared the Mexican taste for blood and violence in movies like West Side Story (1961), The Young Savages (1961), Saturday Night Fever (1977), and Fort Apache, The Bronx (1980). The Mexican image fared no better.

For the most part, a look at the Latin American image in American films are a reflection of the Latin American myth and of the marginality of Hispanics from mainstream America:

Thus, Hollywood's themes and images of race and ethnicity collectively...work[ed] to reinforce viewers' conceptions of the world...to define and direct American values and behavior. (Miller, 1980, p. 11)

Television and the Hispanic Image

In television, as in film, quantitative gains and qualitative gains have not been proportionate. Unlike any other medium, television has become an ubiquitous item in most American homes. Research indicates that by 1976 most American homes owned at least one television set. This makes it very difficult for anyone to spend a day without coming in contact with televised reality. The pervasiveness of television makes it especially easy for young children, the most vulnerable audience, to spend 4-5 hours a day watching television. For these children, as for most adult viewers,

television is the prime source of information about Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Unfortunately, a large part of them fail to realize that the social knowledge available on television represents a composite of American values with no place for the diversity in our society. Although researchers disagree among themselves on what the real impact of the televised reality might be, it is the general consensus that viewers, especially young viewers, might indeed develop attitudes or beliefs that reflect those of the televised world. It is imperative then that we examine what racial, social, religious, and cultural messages are available to young viewers in order to have a better understanding of the kind of social learning that may be occurring.

Over and over, research has indicated that characters on television do not correspond to the demographics of the real population. In general, in the world of television there is an overrepresentation of majority males, teenagers and middle-aged people, middle and upper classes, and employed professionals. Women, ethnic minorities, the poor, and the non-professionals are grossly underrepresented. A closer look at the distorted social reality of television indicates the following:

1. An overrepresentation of ethnic majority males. According to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (1979, p. 9) the demographics by sex and race in television are in sharp contrast with real life:

	Television Drama	Real Life
Majority Males	62.7%	39.9%
Majority Females	24.1%	41.6%
Minority Males	9.6%	8.9%
Minority Females	3.6%	9.6%

2. An overrepresentation of characters breaking the law. While in real life 1% of the population has committed a violent crime and 4.8% has committed a property crime, the percentage of people breaking the law on television is 10% (Greenberg, Simmons, Hogan, & Atkin, 1980).
3. An overrepresentation of teenagers and people between the ages of 20-40, and an underrepresentation of the elderly and young children (Greenberg, Simmons, Hogan, & Atkin, 1980).
4. An overrepresentation of professionals, managers, and service workers (Greenberg, Simmons, Hogan, & Atkin, 1980).
5. An overrepresentation of middle and upper classes and an underrepresentation of the working class (Butsch & Glennon, 1983; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1979). According to Butsch & Glennon (1983) almost half of all the family series analyzed in their study had professional heads of household. Almost one in four were managers or proprietors (two thirds of all heads of household). Middle-class occupations (professionals, managers, police people, sales) consti-

tuted 72% of all heads of household, while blue-collar workers constituted only 4% of all heads of household. This is in sharp contrast with real life where, in 1970, managers and proprietors constituted less than one fourth of the labor force, the middle-class occupations less than 27%, and blue-collar workers 36% of the United States labor force. To make the television world even more unreal, around one fourth of the programs studied included families with at least one servant. In addition, only 9.6% of all wives were depicted as working wives, as opposed to 52% in real life in 1970.

6. An overrepresentation of minorities in lower status positions (Seegar & Wheeler, 1973). There are more whites than minorities in professional jobs. Minorities are in less important occupations, mostly in service positions, such as household work and hotel-restaurant services (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1979).

The American public has always had what could be called a "blind faith" in the truthfulness of television news. We have always counted on newscasters to tell us the facts as they are, truthfully and objectively. But we do not always realize that truthfulness can be a very subjective word. By choosing what events of the day will be reported, how they will be reported, in what section of the newscast they will be reported, and who will give the report, television news

bring to us their own version of the world, a world that is not so much real as it is a reflection of the hierarchical organization of our society.

According to Wilson and Gutierrez (1985), news about individual ethnic minorities in the United States go through five developmental phases: exclusionary, threatening-issue, confrontation, stereotypical selection, and integrated coverage. As the word exclusionary indicates, a minority group starts by being invisible to all news reporting and, consequently, to the American social reality. During the second phase the minority group is perceived in the news as a threat to the established system. The minority group and their "threatening" actions are then confronted by the news and society. In order to restore the social order, news agencies proceed to present news items about the "success stories" of minority members. One of the outcomes of this phase is the belief, by both majority and minority group members, that minorities are not really a threat. The "success stories" serve to show that those members of the group that do well owe it to the American values and not to their own group. This phase includes too all news reporting on the problems of the group, with the implicit message that the group's problems are their own fault. The integrated coverage phase represents the ideal situation, in which news reporting about minority groups reaches a level of fairness in its reporting and an increase in the employment of minorities. This phase has yet to be seen.

In 1977 the United States Commission on Civil Rights reported that women and minority newsmakers and correspondents were seldom presented in the news. The Commission also found that news on the problems and successes of minorities were scarce. The update of the report two years later (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1979) indicated that the picture had not improved. Of all the stories analyzed for the report, only 2.4% were specifically related to women or minorities (as compared to 5.2% in the earlier report). The only news item (out of eight) directly related to Hispanics dealt with the bombings in New York by the Puerto Rican group FALN. The report included a background story on the problems in Puerto Rico. None of the stories about minorities were reported by Hispanics. None of the stories dealt with the accomplishments of ethnic minorities.

As with the news, all minority groups in entertainment television have gone through several developmental phases: nonrecognition, ridicule, regulatory, and egalitarian (Clark, 1969). At this point, both Hispanic and Black portrayals on television fall mainly between the ridicule phase and the regulatory phase. The recognition for the two groups is there, although it is very small. It consists mostly of Blacks and Hispanics in comic roles, law maintenance roles, or lawbreaking roles. The only difference between Blacks and Hispanics consists mostly of the slightly larger proportion of Black characters in television.

Most of the empirical studies on minority characters on television have been on Blacks, and they have consisted mostly of content analyses measuring different aspects of Blacks in television. Although the number of Blacks in television increased systematically between the 1950's and the 1970's, research indicates that the number has remained steady during the last ten years. The general consensus seems to be that despite the increase in the number of Blacks, the Black representations on television have continued to be stereotypical (Allen, 1981; Atkin, Greenberg, & McDermott, 1979; Barcus, 1983; Barcus & Wolkin, 1977; Dominick & Greenberg, 1970; Donagher, Poulos, Lieber, & Davidson, 1975; Greenberg & Atkin, 1978; Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980b; Greenberg & Neuendorf, 1980; Northcutt, Seggar, & Hinton, 1975; O'Kelly & Bloomquist, 1976; Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Wills, 1978).

In their examination of segments of television content of the major three networks, O'Kelly and Bloomquist (1976) determined that Blacks and other minorities constituted only 4.9% of all television characters. In their analysis of Black television characters, Greenberg & Atkin (1978) found that Blacks were segregated among themselves, with nearly half of the Black characters existing on only six shows and the other half widely diffused. Most Black characters exist in situation comedies or Saturday cartoons (Greenberg & Atkin, 1978; Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980b). The characters tend to be portrayed in minor and less presti-

gious roles (Atkin, Greenberg, & McDermott, 1979); they are more likely to be concentrated in personnel service occupations (Northcutt, Seegar, & Hinton, 1975); They are most likely to be poor, jobless, or have low-status jobs (Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980); within the Black families there is an overrepresentation of mothers, broken homes, and conflict situations (Greenberg & Neuendorf, 1980); Blacks are more often both crime victims and criminals involved in violence and killing, and they are more troubled by problems (Atkin, Greenberg, & McDermott, 1979). Blacks are sometimes portrayed in non-negative roles (Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980b; Northcutt, Seegar, & Hilton, 1975). In the positive portrayals they are depicted as "good" as white, as more moral and kind than whites, and dominated by whites in crime drama. The "positive" aspect of the portrayals is not the light at the end of the tunnel. By portraying "white" Blacks who nobly support the system and accept their status, television is serving to perpetuate the established social order (Clark, 1972; Gerbner, 1972; Dorr, Gordon, & Graves, 1974; Staples & Jones, 1985; Wimmer & Wright, 1985).

Hispanic Americans have been called "the new minority" on television (Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980a). This status is the result of both a gross underrepresentation and a gross misrepresentation of Hispanic characters. Gerbner & Signorielli (1979) found that in their sample of programs for the years between 1969-1978, Hispanics constituted only

2.9% of prime-time and 1% of weekend daytime television. In their study of Hispanic television characters for the 1974-1976 seasons, Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez (1980a) found that Hispanics constituted 1.5% of the speaking characters analyzed. According to the latest Census, both legal and illegal Hispanics in the United States constituted 9% of the total population. Greenberg and Baptista-Fernandez also found the following:

1. Most clusters of Hispanics are shown as part of gangs and living in barrios.
2. The sex distribution of Hispanics is five males to one female. This means that the female Hispanic population is almost nonexistent.
3. Most Hispanics on television are either crooks or law enforcers (regulatory roles).
4. Hispanic characters appear mostly in comedies and crime adventure shows.
5. Hispanics are presented as having dark complexion and dark hair. They are "nice", family-loving, macho-oriented, loud, lazy, uneducated, and with no future.

An analysis of Hispanic characters indicated that of a total of 33 Hispanics found in three sample weeks, 22 were comic characters, and 22 were cast in law-breaking or law-enforcing roles. The occupations of Hispanics were limited to "the funny Hispanic, the crooked Hispanic, and the Hispanic cop" (Greenberg, 1982, p. 184). In 1971, Seggar & Wheeler conducted a study on the portrayal of minorities. The

data were collected from a total of 250 half-hour units. Whereas in the sample data there were 1,112 white Anglo males and 260 white Anglo females, there were only 62 Hispanics (60 Chicanos and 2 Chicanas). One of the Chicanas was a maid; the other one was a nun. Seggar and Wheeler concluded the following:

It would be exceedingly difficult for a viewer to obtain much accurate information about the distribution of occupations by watching his television screen. The concentration of occupations on all ethnic groups indicate that television provides distorted ideas and false conceptions about important characteristics of occupation distributions. (p. 214)

The real impact of statements like Seggar & Wheeler's comes with the realization that children do learn from that world of "distorted ideas and false conceptions." Research has shown over and over that both children and adults use the world of television to make inferences about the real world (Greenberg, 1972; Greenberg & Atkin, 1978; Stroman, 1983). For many, television is their primary source to learn about minority groups. According to Greenberg & Atkin (1978), two thirds of their sample of white children used television to learn about Blacks in real life. Unfortunately, this "learning process" is also true for minority children. In the study mentioned above, Greenberg & Atkin also found that 50% of the Black children in their sample reported watching television in order to learn about different people, and 52% reported learning from television what they know about parent/children interaction, jobs, and decision-making. Stroman (1983) reported that 48% and 43.4% of the

Black children in her sample indicated using television to learn and to get useful information, respectively.

What effects the distorted world of television has on children, particularly on minority children, is the focus of the next section.

The Viewer: The Minority Child

One of the primary functions of the media is that of information transmission (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). By transmitting its own version of the values and attitudes of the world, television has become an agent of socialization for our children, sharing the function with other, more traditional agents (Atkin, Greenberg, & McDermott, 1979; Barcus, 1983; Hartman, 1978). Research indicates that although adolescents are surrounded by numerous agents of socialization, the development of their perceptions of social conflicts seems to depend on a large extent on television. If television can influence and, in some cases, supplant the individual reality constructed by the viewer, it would be pertinent to ask exactly how television contributes to the adolescents' acquisition/learning of social roles and social values. According to Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1980), television contributes to the individuals' perception of reality in an implicit manner. By offering a stable and homogeneous picture of society, television helps cultivate a common perspective of the world. By not being able to distinguish between media reality and social

reality, heavy viewers of television will be more likely than light viewers or non-viewers to see social reality in terms of the reality of television. If their hypothesis is accurate, then television plays a very important role in our society. It selects and focuses attention on the values and beliefs of the dominant culture and "provides a mainstream view of the world that serves to maintain, stabilize and reinforce-not subvert-conventional values, beliefs, and behaviors" (Signorielli, 1981, p. 99). For its powerful role in modern society, Gerbner (1977) has called television "the new state religion."

It is an irrefutable fact today that whatever a particular person brings to the television viewing situation plays as important a role as media variables in determining what effect the media will have on that person. Each person comes to the television viewing situation bringing with him/her a complex set of psychological and sociological variables that make it very difficult for communication researchers to reach any definite conclusions regarding the effects of the mass media on particular segments of the population:

The nature of [television's] effects depend upon many limiting conditions: on the nature of the individual child's temperament, intelligence and needs, and the quality of his personal adjustment; on the amount of information a child has, and the strength of his existing beliefs and values, before exposure to relevant [television] content; and on the opportunities which occur in real life for the child to put into practice what he has learned from [television]. (Maccoby, 1964, p. 941)

The role television plays in the development of our children has been extensively studied. Hundred of studies

later, there is not much that we can say conclusively, except that " for some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful...for most children, under most conditions, most television is neither harmful nor particularly beneficial" (Center for the Study of Communication and Culture, 1984, p. 1). This does not mean to say that research on television and children has been unsuccessful. Although most research has served as evidence of the complexity of the relationship, it has also pointed to a causal relationship between children's perceptions and exposure to television programs (Barcus, 1983). Researchers agree that the media do have an effect, but they disagree among themselves on the nature and extent of the relationship.

In order to understand the real impact that the delegitimizing messages of television have on minority groups, it is necessary to review the available evidence on the television behavior of minority children and adolescents. Unfortunately, research on the media and minorities, especially children, has been very limited. Comstock's 450-study annotated bibliography (1975) listed around 55 studies that included minorities. Only around 30 of them focused on minority children. The conclusions that can be drawn from most minority-oriented studies are also limited, on two accounts. First, many of the studies have been written from the point of view of government and media institutions. As such, they have focused on minorities as the problem rather than on the problems behind the institutions

(Fife, 1981). Second, most of the research on minorities has been on Blacks. The assumption among many researchers has been that there is not much difference between Blacks' communication behavior and other minority groups' communication behavior. Research on the communication behavior of non-Black minority groups indicate that the assumption is wrong (Allen & Clark, 1980; Tan, 1978).

The bulk of the the evidence suggests that ethnic minority children have a particular orientation toward television (Comstock & Cobbey, 1979). Black and other minority children are, on the average, heavier viewers of television (Greenberg, 1972; Greenberg & Dervin, 1970; Greenberg & Dominick, 1969; Greenberg & Dominick, 1970). In a study by Greenberg and Dervin (1970), Black adolescents indicated spending an average of 6 hours watching television on Sundays. The poor whites reported watching an average of 4 1/2 hours and the middle-class white teenagers an average of 3 1/2 hours. In another study, Greenberg and Dominick (1970) reported that Black children between the ages of 9 and 10 reported viewing television 7 hours a day, as opposed to 6 hours for low-income whites and 4 hours for better-off white children. Nielsen data comparing television viewing by household income indicates that the poorest families watch 4 more hours of television per week than the wealthiest families, with adolescents from the low-income families watching 12 1/2 hours more a week (600 more a year) than adolescents from more well-to-do families

(Greenberg & Atkin, 1982). Although the numbers vary from study to study, it is estimated that the average Black child spends 3-4 hours a day watching television. It is important to note here that many of the differences mentioned above cannot be ascribed solely to racial differences. Although research indicates that Blacks, regardless of socioeconomic level, watch more television and have a more positive attitude towards television, it is also true that the television behavior of white low-income viewers tends to resemble that of low-income Blacks and not middle-class whites. This indicates that there are both racial and economic differences involved in the media orientation of particular viewers, and they should not be confounded (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982).

Children of ethnic minorities also have different tastes and preferences in TV programming (Comstock, 1982). Blacks and other minorities are more likely than whites to use television as a source of information and guidance (Atkin, Greenberg, & McDermott, 1979; Block, 1970; Bower, 1973; Comstock, 1982; Greenberg & Atkin, 1978; Greenberg & Dominick, 1969). Bower (1973) found that persons of lower SES (i.e. minorities) reported learning as a motive for watching television more often than persons of higher SES. Greenberg & Dervin (1970) found that Black children and adolescents from low SES more often reported learning as a motive for television viewing. Stroman (1984) found that the Black children in her study mentioned learning as an important motivation for watching television. In order of impor-

tance the motivations included "for excitement" (78.8%), "to relax" (74.3%), "to get mind off things" (57.6%), "nothing better to do" (53%), "to get useful information" (43.4%), and "to learn" (48%). Research indicates that Blacks and other minorities use television for political news and information (Stroman & Becker, 1978), to learn how to behave with the opposite sex (Gerson, 1966), to discover information about Blacks (Allen, 1968; Allen & Clarke, 1980; Shosteck, 1969), and to learn about occupations with which the children had no firsthand experience (DeFleur & DeFleur, 1967).

Blacks and other minorities hold more favorable attitudes towards television and perceive it as representative of real life more than whites (Greenberg, 1972; Greenberg & Atkin, 1978; Greenberg & Dominick, 1969, 1970; Greenberg & Mazingo, 1976; Greenberg & Reeves, 1976; Lyle & Hoffman, 1971). According to Greenberg & Reeves (1976), Blacks and economically disadvantaged children are more likely to judge television as true to life. They are also more likely to believe television more than any other medium, and they perceive television to be more fair to minority groups than do majority group children. Greenberg & Atkin (1978) found that 46% of the Black children in their sample agreed that "Blacks on television behave like Blacks in real life" and "the jobs men/women do on TV are like the jobs men/women do in real life." Greenberg & Mazingo (1976) concluded in their study that for low-income Blacks television is "the

main source of news, of information, of entertainment. It is trusted, believed, and not to be parted with. It consumes enormous portions of their daily lives" (p. 331). At the same time, Mexican-Americans have been found to be less critical of television than Blacks (Tan, 1978) and to agree more with the statement that the children on television are more like themselves and their friends. The percentage of agreement was 71% among Mexican-Americans, 59% among Blacks, and 51% among Caucasians (Lyle & Hoffman, 1971).

The Self-Concept of the Minority Child

Theories and definitions on the self-concept abound. Each approach has its own way of looking at the self and explicating its relationship to society. Relevant to this paper are the premises underlying symbolic interactionism, originally conceived by Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934). Basically, symbolic interactionism has two underlying premises. The first one is the inseparability of society and the self. The second one is the acknowledgment of the important role of society in giving shape to the individual self-concept. The self and society are seen as forming an inseparable and mutually interdependent relationship. The self-concept is seen as a product resulting from an individual's interaction with the environment and members of the society. It cannot be explained out of the social context, and vice versa. They serve as each other's point of reference, mutually modifying and defining each other.

Cooley (1902) described the relationship between the self and society as the "looking glass self." He believed that the self is significantly influenced by the way a particular person believes others think of him. This subjective interpretation of other people's evaluations about the person becomes a part of the self, what Cooley called "the other-self." The term "looking-glass self" was used by Cooley to explain how "the other-self" arises out of the interaction between the person and the social environment:

In imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it...A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of his judgement of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification. (Cooley, 1902, p. 152)

Mead (1934) expanded the idea of the "looking-glass self" by suggesting that the self consisted of two parts: the "I" and the "Me." The sum of the two constitute the nature of the self, although each operates in a different context. The "I" is the experiencing subject, the part of the self that perceives itself as reflected by the beliefs and values of others. The "I" perceives the "Me" or experiencing object. The "Me" operates as a role player, a member of particular groups and of society in general. It is the part of the self that recognizes and incorporates the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the "generalized others." In a statement like "I hate myself," the "I" is the part of the self that has the ability to make evaluations about "me,"

the object. In combination, both become the judge and the individual being judged (Cuzzort and King, 1976, p. 105).

Another important element of Mead's work is his rationalization of how children develop their self-concept. If the self-concept is learned through the interaction with society and "generalized others," it becomes evident that a newborn baby will have no structured self-concept. It develops as the child grows up and becomes conscious of the "generalized others." According to Mead, children go through three stages in the development of self-awareness. During the first stage, preparatory stage, young children learn to imitate the behavior of the people around them that are engaged in real role performances. During the play stage children learn to "play" with social roles, by taking the roles of others around them. The game stage is essential in the process of socialization. By assuming and internalizing the roles of others, children acquire a sense of the "generalized others."

Burns (1979) visualized the structure of the self as a hierarchical tree. The totality of the person, or the global self, is composed of two parts: the "I" or experiencing subject, and the "Me" or the self as the content of that experiencing. Each person has both a picture of himself/herself and is capable of going through the process of self-esteem. The self-esteem includes both an evaluative and affective component. The evaluative component is capable of making judgements about the self. It is based on what is

learned as acceptable in the surrounding culture and in social interaction with the generalized others. The self-worth component involves a feeling of self-worth and self-respect. It is the feeling the person has that "he is a person of worth, respecting himself for what he is, not condemning himself for what he is not, and the extent to which he feels positively about himself" (Burns, 1979, p. 55). Both add up to self-esteem, or:

the evaluation that the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds. (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 4)

The person evaluates him/herself using three reference points (Burns, p. 64):

1. The Ideal Self Image: a comparison between the self image and the ideal self image, or how the individual would like to be.
2. The Other Self: a comparison between the self-image and the self as the person believes it is perceived by others.
3. The Basic Self: the individual evaluates the self as he/she thinks it really is.

Burns warns against the conceptualization of the self-concept as a static structure. He believes that the self-concept should be conceptualized as the "sum of self-atti-

tudes" charged with emotional and evaluative components (Burns, p. 67). The self-attitudes range along a positive-negative scale, with positive self-concept being equated with positive self-evaluation, self-respect, and self-acceptance, and negative self-concept equated with negative self-evaluation, self-hatred, and lack of self-acceptance (Burns, p. 57).

There has been a lot of speculation concerning the self-concept of racial and ethnic minorities. According to Nobles (1972), the basic question underlying all research on Blacks' self-concept has been: does the Negro like being a Negro? Answers to this question fall within two major trends. The first trend, which characterized the majority of the studies done between the 1940's and the 1960's, gave a negative answer. It was accepted as an unquestionable fact that Blacks and other minority group members used the white majority as the "generalized other." In statements like the following, researchers assumed without a second thought that "community" meant the white community:

The individual self is shaped, developed and controlled by his anticipating and assuming the attitudes and definitions of others (the community) toward him. To the extent that the individual is a member of this community, its attitudes are his, its values are his, and its norms are his...Each self, then, though having its unique characteristics of personality, is also an individual reflection of the social process. (Poussaint & Atkinson, 1972, p. 56)

It was taken for granted that the words "others," "community," "its attitudes," "its values," and "its norms" referred to the white American community, with the atti-

tudes, values, and norms of the white society. It was assumed that Blacks would look up to the white majority, that they would see it as the "generalized others," and that they would evaluate themselves using the white "yardstick," its values and beliefs, as the point of reference with which they would evaluate themselves. Since the norms and values of the majority culture equate Black with bad and ugly, it was assumed that the logical consequence would be for Blacks to see his/her own racial group as inferior, hating his/her own racial group and eventually himself/herself. According to Rosenberg & Kaplan (1982), minority group members' low self-concept assumption has traditionally been rationalized using one of three principles. First, through the principle of reflected appraisals, it was assumed that minority members derogated by society would naturally develop negative self-attitudes. Through the principle of social comparison, it was believed that minority group members would judge themselves by comparing themselves to more acceptable "others" in society. The third principle assumed that minority group member would judge themselves on the basis of overt behavioral outcomes (such as report cards and tests). Since minority group members had a lower level of academic achievement, it was assumed that they would judge themselves negatively. These explanations made so much sense that many researchers did not question their logic. Instead of testing the veracity of the assumption, most research accepted it as a fact and just went on to further confirm its validity.

In 1940, Clark & Clark conducted the classic study that was interpreted by other researchers as indicative of Black children's preference for white standards, self-hate, and rejection of their own racial group. Subsequent studies indicated similar results (Asher & Allen, 1969; Deutsch, 1960; Goodman, 1973; Pettigrew, 1964; Porter, 1971; Rainwater, 1966; see also annotated bibliography in Greenberg & Dervin, 1970). All the studies assumed that Blacks had taken the image that whites, the "generalized others," had of Blacks and internalized it as their own self-image. The following quotation provides a perfect example:

The looking glass of white society reflects the supposed undesirability of the Black youth's physical appearance: Black skin and wooly hair, as opposed to the valued models of white skin and straight hair. In order to gain the esteem of the generalized other, it becomes clear that he must approximate the white appearance as closely as possible. He learns to despise himself and to reject those like himself...The looking glass of the Black youth's self reflects a shattered and defeated image. (Poussaint & Atkinson, 1972, p. 114)

According to Banks (1972) the "significant others" that influence the Black child's self-concept include parental attitudes, the school, the mass media, and other, such as government, business, and church. Based on his model, it is assumed that the "generalized others" in the environment of the Black child lead to incorrect racial identification and self-hate. The Black child is thus condemned to have a lower self-concept. Although Banks is not wrong, he is not right either. His conceptualization of the Black child's sociocul-

tural environment puts the finger on those elements of the white society that support, rather than challenge, the existing middle-class and white oriented societal values. There is no doubt that these sociocultural influences play a negative role in the development of the self-concept of Blacks and other minority children. But Banks makes the same mistake as other researchers. First, he assumes that the values and attitudes of the white majority become Blacks' "generalized others." Second, there is also the assumption that Blacks' self-concept is condemned to be lower. And last, among the factors in the Black child's sociocultural environment there is no mention of the Black community as a "generalized other." Although parental attitudes are considered part of the sociocultural environment of the child, Banks model gives the idea that parental attitudes are among the negative factors leading to a negative self-concept. It is in reaction to these assumptions that the other major research trend on minorities' self-concept operates.

Researchers questioning the widely accepted "low self-concept" hypothesis claim that the assumptions behind the hypothesis are too simplistic and incorrect and that they have only served to reinforce the idea of white superiority and the inferiority of every other ethnic and racial minority group (Goodman, 1972; Mack, 1981; McCarthy & Yancey, 1971; Nobles, 1972; Proshanski & Newton, 1968). McCarthy & Yancey (1971) suggest that all the evidence leading to the

lower self-esteem hypothesis is really very weak and that, in reality, it is wrong to assume that Blacks are characterized by low self-concept. Mack (1978) asserts that research on Blacks suffers from serious methodological flaws. The research is conducted by white researchers, the instruments are standardized on white children, the content is done without relevant ethnic content, and the results are evaluated using white behavior and the perspective of the broader society as the norm and any deviation as inferior. In addition, Blacks are evaluated using one of the following models: deficit model (blames Black children and their parents); cultural difference model (the problems are seen as coming out of the culture); school as a failure model (school as responsible); and the bicultural model (which requires minority children-but not white children-to know both languages and cultures). As a result, the "problems" and deficiencies are considered to lie within the Black culture, the behavior of Black children are seen as inferior, the inferiority is concluded through comparisons with whites, and the requirements for change are placed on the Black children themselves.

Research indicates that Blacks do not passively comply to the norms of the white society (Proshansky & Newton, 1968). Jones (1980) found that children do not readily accept labels such as "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived," terms that have usually been associated with a low self-concept. Other research suggests that Blacks

give an important place to their own racial group as part of the "generalized others." The racial/ethnic group to which a person belongs, as well as the person's degree of identification with the specific group, play an important role in the development of his/her self-conception (Driedger, 1976; Heiss & Owens, 1972; Noel, 1964; Parker & Kleiner, 1965; Ward & Braun, 1972).

In contrast to Clark & Clark (1940) and the related research demonstrating Blacks' preference for white stimuli, more recent research has indicated Blacks' preference for Black stimuli (Brand, 1974), a growth in Black pride (Hraba & Grant, 1970), and a rejection of the "lower self-concept" hypothesis (Gibby & Gabler, 1967; Guggenheim, 1969; Rosenberg, 1965, 1973; Zirkel & Moses, 1971).

Studies measuring the self-concept of other minority children show that they do not possess a lower self-concept than the white majority. Carter (1968) found that nothing in his study supported the hypothesis that Mexican-American students had a more negative self-image than "Anglo" students. Mexican American students seemed to reject society's norms and chose instead the norms of their own group. At the same time, he found that both teachers and administrators believed that Mexican-American students did have a lower self-image. Rice, Ruiz, and Padilla (1974) studied the ethnic preferences of Anglo, Black, and Chicano children. They found that neither Blacks nor Chicano preschool children expressed a preference for their own ethnic group. Among the

third grade children only Chicanos expressed a strong preference for their own ethnic group. The authors speculated that some aspects of the environment in which Chicano children are raised fosters a higher degree of ethnic pride that increases as the children grow older.

The conclusion arising from these studies seems to be the important role played by group identification in the development of the self-concept of minority group children. The pattern seems to be that children with a high degree of group identification also tend to have a higher self-concept than children with a low degree of group identification. It was hypothesized by McCarthy & Yancey (1971) that individuals belonging to lower-class minority group members would have a higher ethnic identification and a higher self-concept than members of the same minority group but higher social classes. They believed that low-class Blacks (and other minority group members) develop their own norms and criteria for success, rather than accept the ones dictated by the dominant society. At the same time, lower-class whites and middle-class Blacks have a lower self-esteem, since their standards for success are those of the white majority. In their own words, "lower class Blacks will manifest higher self-esteem than lower-class whites, and middle-class Blacks will manifest lower self-esteem than middle-class whites" (p. 666). Further research has indicated that minority children of lower socioeconomic status have a higher ethnic identification and are more accepting

of their own ethnic group than children belonging to the middle and upper classes (Asher & Allen, 1969; Porter, 1971).

According to Goodman (1972), group identification is essential to the development of a healthy self-concept. Those who identify with the majority culture and adopt its values and beliefs run the risk of accepting the limitations that society puts on them, and consequently the status quo. In order for Blacks to develop a healthy self-concept, the self-concept "must exist only as a reaction to white identity" (Goodman, 1972, p. 125). Nobles (1972) modified Mead's conception of the self by asserting that there are three parts to the self: I, Me, and We. The "We" is the "people" identity of the individual, the feeling that the individual has towards his/her own particular group. If there is a "We" to the self, it then becomes essential to study the role of group identification in the development of the self-concept of individuals belonging to ethnic or racial minority groups. According to Barnes (1972), the Black community is an important variable in the development of the self-concept of Blacks. It serves as a mediator between the negative messages of the society and the development of a healthy self-concept. He sees the relationship from the perspective of general systems theory. The Black family, the Black community, and the wider society constitute a social system, or an "aggregation of social roles or persons bound together by a pattern of mutual interaction and inter-

dependence" (Barnes, 1972, p. 173). A social system is characterized by being both a system for smaller units, and a subsystem of larger units. In Barnes' model, the relationships among family members constitute the subsystems of the Black family. Among the subsystems of the Black community are the schools, churches, social clubs, and community organizations. The wider society includes political, economic, health, welfare, value, and communication subsystems, among others. Both the family and the community serve as a filter and help give the individual a sense of belonging and peoplehood.

TV and the Self-Concept of Minority Group Members

There has been a lot of speculation about the impact of the media on the self-concept of minority children (Barnes, 1980; Berry, 1982; Dorr, 1982; Graves, 1982; Powell, 1982; Stroman, 1984; Wimmer & Wright, 1985). Most of these researchers agree that the negative value placed by the media on particular minority groups will probably have a negative influence on the self-concept of minority children. Few studies have demonstrated empirically the relationship between television viewing and self-concept. Korzenny & Neuendorf (1980) demonstrated a link between television use and adult self-esteem. Graves (1975) showed commercially developed animated shows portraying Blacks as major positive and negative characters to both Black and white children.

Results indicated that both Black and white children exposed to positive portrayals had more positive attitudes towards Blacks than children exposed to the negative portrayals. In another study (Dimas, 1970), an animated film with Black actors and actresses was shown to have a positive impact on the self-concept of Black children.

In his comparative study of television use and the self-esteem of Black and whites, Tan & Tan (1979) collected telephone data on attention given to public affairs and entertainment programs, demographic information on age and educational level, and a self-esteem measure. The study utilized two separate self-esteem measures. The Janis-Field Feeling of Inadequacy Scale was utilized to assess the self-esteem of whites. The self-esteem measure for Blacks consisted of five questions designed to elicit Blacks' preference for their own racial group in relation to whites: "In general, who do you think are nicer/more dependable/smarter/behaves better/tries to get ahead more?" The answers "Blacks" and "whites" were given the highest and lowest scores for each question, respectively. Those respondents who dared believe that both Blacks and whites were equally nice, dependable, smart, well behaved, and ambitious were not considered to have a high but a medium self-concept. Tan & Tan found that heavy television viewing among Blacks could result in low self-esteem among Blacks, but not among whites, "for whom there are adequate positive role images on television" (p. 134).

Stroman (1986) collected data on television exposure, frequency of watching specific types of programs, a measure of the self-concept, favorite programs and characters, whether or not they liked to imitate television characters, comments about how they felt when viewing a Black person on television, and demographic information on age, gender, and grade level. She found that television viewing was related positively to the self-concept of Black girls and unrelated to Black boys.

The limitations of these studies are many. First, most of the studies have used only Black subjects. From the results researchers have drawn conclusions applicable to all minority groups. In applying the conclusions to all minority groups, they are lumping them in one homogeneous mass. There is very little understanding of the cultural differences that arise from differences among subgroups. Second, although we have come a long way from the time of the stimulus-response approach, we still assume that television has a unidirectional effect on the self-concept of minority children. Moreover, none of the existing studies on television and its influence on ethnic identity have actually measured ethnic identity or have controlled for essential variables such as social class (Takanishi, 1982). Neither one of the two studies that have actually looked at the relationship between commercial television and self-concept have actually included ethnic-identity or degree of ethnic identification among the variables. Both Tan & Tan (1979) and Stroman

(1986) are limited in their approach. In addition to the limitations mentioned above, they fail to account for parental/family variables, viewer characteristics other than demographics, and interpretation variables such as perceived reality, gratifications, and credibility of television content.

Summary

The following points are provided from the review of the literature. They support the rationale of this study and will serve as its guiding principles:

1. A positive self-concept is essential for the healthy development of young people.
2. Their self-concept develops as they assimilate the attitudes of "generalized others." It continues to be developed throughout their lives from life experiences with the environment.
3. Major parts of the self-concept can be perceived by the person him/herself. This allows the person to make evaluative judgements regarding his/her own self-concept.
4. Television is part of the "generalized others" that constitute the child's environment.
5. Television's image of minority groups is limited and stereotypical. The Hispanic image is characterized by a lack of positive models and a "vision" of

Hispanics as crooks, drunks, and problematic for American society.

6. This image can, under certain circumstances, have a negative impact on the self-concept and race-related expectations of young minority group members.
7. Television's impact on individual minorities is not direct. It is closely interrelated to social and psychological variables.
8. Minority group members have a distinctive orientation towards television and other mass media.
9. The specific set of experiences and perceptions that a minority group member brings to the television-viewing situation are crucial variables in determining the impact of the televised content on the viewer.
10. The background of the minority viewer, the degree to which he/she identifies with his/her particular ethnic group or society at large, and the orientation towards the family and community are as important as mass media variables in determining the degree of television's impact.
11. Knowledge of the attitudes and orientations of specific population subgroups are helpful in planning educational programs particular to their needs.

The following chapter contains the research design, description of the sample, and statistics to be used in collecting and analyzing the data.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examines the relationship of television viewing to self-concept, as well as the role played by a set of mediating variables. This study is as much descriptive as it is exploratory. In addition to summarizing the demographic characteristics of the sample, the study provides descriptive data on the attitudes and beliefs that Hispanic adolescents hold towards themselves and the environment about them.

This study also examines the relationship of television viewing to self-concept. More specifically, it examines what relationship, if any, exists between the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents and a set of mediating variables, such as overall media use patterns (exposure, parental control, perceived reality, credibility, motivations for watching, perception of Hispanic portrayals) and some of their socio-demographic attributes. This study is concerned not so much with prediction as with describing the correlations and patterns of association among the variables.

Sample

The data for this study come from a survey administered to a nonprobability convenience sample of 120 Hispanic students in the Perth Amboy High School, New Jersey. The

sample group consisted of all the students enrolled in any of five sections of a Spanish course for native Speakers.

Perth Amboy High School is the only high school in the city of Perth Amboy. The population of the school consists of approximately 1700 students, of which approximately 70% have Hispanic ties. These students have either been born in a Latin American country and are now living in the United States, or come from families in which the parents or ancestors immigrated to the United States in previous generations.

Data Collection

The thirteen page questionnaire was designed to elicit a variety of data relating to social and demographic characteristics, as well as information on Hispanic adolescents' orientation towards television. The data were collected in the school during the month of September. Permission had been secured from the Board of Education of Perth Amboy and the principal of the school. The questionnaire, available in both Spanish and English, was administered during the regular class time to all students in the five sections of the Spanish course. It required between 30-45 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire collected data on the following areas:

1. Demographics and self-perceptions
2. Self-concept

3. Media orientation

- o TV access
- o TV usage
- o TV content preferences
- o Perceived reality of TV
- o TV use motivations
- o Credibility
- o Parental mediation and control
- o Content stereotype perceptions

The measurement of each individual characteristic is described in more detail in the following portion of the Methods section.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire collected data on the demographic characteristics of the sample population, their self-concept, and their media-related characteristics.

Background Characteristics of Respondents

The survey included a variety of questions related to social, psychological, and demographic characteristics.

Ethnicity. Respondents were given a list of four choices and were asked to check the word that they most commonly used to describe their cultural background. The choices given were Hispanic, American, American of Hispanic origin, and other.

Socio-economic status. Two items of information were included in this index: parental education and parental occupations. Education was measured by asking respondents to indicate the highest year of school completed by both parents from this provided list of responses: some elementary school, finished elementary school, some high school, finished high school, some college, finished college. The following question was asked in order to determine the occupation of both father and mother: If your father/mother has a job--what is it? Write down the name of his/her job and what he/she does in it.

It was not possible to learn about the parents' actual income. Pre-tests indicated that it was difficult to get valid assessments of parental income from respondents since many high school students did not know the income of the household. Therefore the household's financial status was at best only estimated through indirect questions.

Ethnic orientation. To assess ethnic orientation, respondents were asked how important it was for them to be Hispanic or of Hispanic origin. Response categories included very important, somewhat important, not very important, and not important at all. Two related questions asked them to write down the names and ethnic origins of their best friends and two words that they felt best described Hispanic people and/or their culture.

Additional demographics collected included sex, place of birth and the number of years residing in the United States, the school level, the grades most frequently received in school, the languages spoken fluently by the respondent and the language most frequently used among family members at home, the composition of the household, the marital status of the parents, the number of brothers and sisters living at home, and other family members living at home.

Aspirations and perceptions. The way an individual perceives himself/herself in relation to others has been viewed by researchers to be crucial in the development of the self-concept. It was mentioned in the literature review that a large part of the traditional self-concept literature followed the premise that Blacks and other racial minority groups evaluated themselves on the basis of the attitudes, values and norms of the white American society. Consequently, members of racial minority groups were assumed to have a low self-concept along with other characteristics such as denial of or hatred for their ethnic group, low educational and occupational aspirations, and a poor perception of their family social status. These assumptions have been challenged by other social researchers (Jones, 1980; Proshansky & Newton, 1968; Rosenberg, 1965, 1973; Yancey, Rigby, & McCarthy, 1972). In order to try to shed some light on this controversy, the questionnaire tried to elicit information

on the aspirations and perceptions of our sample of students. Questions in this area dealt specifically with their educational perceptions, educational and occupational aspirations, and perceived family social status:

1. Educational perceptions: What kind of student do you think you are?
2. Educational aspirations: How far do you think you will go in school?
3. Occupational aspirations: The occupational aspirations of respondents were assessed on two levels: occupation desired and occupation expected. Respondents were asked the following questions: (a) What kind of job would you like to have if you could have any job you wanted? Write down the job you would most like to have; and (b) Think about when you are all finished with school and ready to start working. What job do you think you will probably have?
4. Perceived family social status. In contrast to the questions intended to determine the approximate socioeconomic level of the respondent's family, these questions looked into the perception that the respondent has about his/her family's location in the stratification system. The two questions included were: (a) If you were asked to choose one of the following terms to describe your family household, which one of the following would you choose?; and (b) How well do you think your parents have done in life? Would you say they have

done_____. Response categories were: very well, pretty well, not very well, or not well at all.

Self-Concept

For the purposes of this study, self-concept and self-esteem are considered equivalent terms. Operationally, self-concept has been defined as an attitude towards the self as reflected in a score on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Index (1965).

The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Index is designed to give a measure of global or overall self-regard. It constructs a Guttman scale aimed at achieving unidimensionality. In the idealized Guttman scale the items are arranged in an order reflecting the percentage of respondents who endorsed them. Thus, in principle, a respondent's position in the scale can be easily determined because he/she would have endorsed all the questions up to a certain one (relative to the order) and none higher. Since such idealized outcomes are unlikely to occur in practice the coefficient of reproductibility measures the deviation from the idealized behavior. For Rosenberg's scale this coefficient has been determined to be 0.93. A minimum of .90 is necessary to ensure unidimensionality.

The scale consists of the following statements:

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on equal plane with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. All in all, I tend to think that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times, I think I am no good at all.

Respondents were asked to indicate on a four point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) how accurate each statement was of him/her.

According to Rosenberg (1965), there is a distinction between high self-esteem as a person feeling that he/she is very good and a person feeling that he/she is good enough. The first case includes the possibility that the person might consider himself/herself better than others. A high score in the Self-Esteem Index indicates that the person feels that he/she is good enough. It does not necessarily mean that the person considers himself/herself superior, but just that he/she is a person of worth:

When we speak of high self-esteem, then, we shall simply mean that the individual considers himself worthy; he does not necessarily consider himself better than others, but he definitely does not consider himself worse; he does not feel that he is the ultimate in perfection but, on the contrary, recognizes his limitations and expects to grow and improve. (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31)

A low self-esteem, on the other hand, is characterized by self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt, and a lack of self-respect:

Low self-esteem...implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt. The individual lacks respect for the self he observes. The self-picture is disagreeable, and he wishes it were otherwise. (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Index was chosen for several reasons. A study of this type required an index that would measure the general or global self-esteem rather than specific aspects of the self. It was also necessary to find an index that could be culturally acceptable. That is, the index had to be applicable to Hispanics without ignoring cultural differences. Because of time restrictions (the questionnaire had to be filled out within one class period), the study required an instrument that could be administered with ease and in a brief period of time. Finally, the index had to have proved to be a valid and reliable measure of the self-concept. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Index fulfilled all the requirements. It provides a global measure of the self-concept that the researcher believes to be culturally acceptable. It is short and easy to administer. The Index has been used with samples of various ages, socio-economic levels and cultures (Garza & Ockerman, 1979; Kaplan & Pokorny, 1969; Kohn, 1969; Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1973; Silber & Tippet, 1965) and has demonstrated to be a valid and reliable measure of self-concept.

Media Related Characteristics

This questionnaire was designed to encompass the major areas of mass media research that have been studied in relation to youth. The questions are related to the respondents' attitudes, perceptions, preferences, likes and dislikes towards television and its content.

TV access. TV access questions included number of TV sets in the household, respondents having TV sets in their bedrooms, and households receiving specific cable channels. The questionnaire also asked for VCR ownership.

TV use. Respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours they watched TV on a school day before school, after school before dinner, and after dinner before bed. Estimates were also requested for Saturdays and Sundays.

TV content preferences. To assess TV content preferences, respondents were asked how often they looked at the following types of programs:

- o Daytime soap operas
- o Night soap operas
- o Cartoons
- o Game shows
- o News/News shows
- o Situation Comedies/Sit-coms
- o Movies

- o Police/Detective shows
- o Musical variety shows/Talent shows
- o Sports/Sport shows
- o MTV
- o Spanish language shows/movies
- o Spanish language news

Other preference questions included naming their favorite show and whether they mostly watched Spanish language TV, English language TV, or both.

TV use gratifications. To measure motivations for watching TV, respondents were asked which of the following were their reasons for watching TV:

1. Arousal
 - ...because it excites me
 - ...because it cheers me up
2. Relaxation
 - ...because it relaxes me
3. Companionship
 - ...because it makes me feel less lonely
4. To pass time
 - ...when I'm bored
5. To forget
 - ...to get away from the rest of the family
 - ...to forget about my problems

6. Self-learning

...because it teaches me how other people deal with the same problems I have

...because it helps me know how I am supposed to act

7. Social learning (learning about the world, people, and life)

...to learn about Hispanic people and their culture

...because I get to see what people are like

...because it shows what life is really like

...to know what is going on in the world

...because I learn things on TV I do not learn in school

Credibility of TV versus other media. Credibility was measured by asking respondents which specific type of media they would believe more in the case of conflicting reports about the same thing. The choices included TV, radio, newspaper, and news magazine.

Perceived reality of TV. In this section respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements asserting a correspondence between the content of television and real life. The televised images mentioned included the following:

- o Jobs (men/women)
- o Families
- o Teenagers
- o Things that happen to people

o Hispanics

o Blacks

o Asian

Response categories included: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Parental Mediation and Control. Parental mediation and control of TV viewing included the following questions:

1. How often do your parents know what you are watching on TV?
2. Have your parents ever told you that you are watching too much TV?
3. Are there any shows your parents won't let you watch because they think the stories or characters are not good for you? (If yes, which?)
4. On school nights, how late can you stay up to watch TV?

A related question asked respondents whom they usually watched TV with. Response categories included: alone, with brothers and sisters, with parents, with friends, or with others. More than one answer to this question was possible.

Content stereotype perceptions. The perception of Hispanic character portrayals were assessed on two levels: perceived frequency and perceived traits of Hispanics on TV. Respondents were asked the following questions:

1. Perceived frequency: How frequently do you find Hispanics in the shows you usually watch on TV?
2. Perceived traits: (a) TV is more likely to present Hispanics as _____. (good people/bad people/both good and bad people); and (b) How similar are the Hispanic characters you see on TV to Hispanics in real life?

An open ended question asked respondents to write down two words that they felt accurately described the Hispanic characters they usually saw on TV.

Analysis of Data

The key analyses in this study examine the relationship between the TV viewing variables (exposure, perceived reality, motivations, credibility, stereotypical content perception), specific demographic characteristics, and the self-concept. Descriptive statistics are an important part of this study. Therefore extensive statistical information has been extracted about the data relating to the TV viewing variables, the self-concept, and the characteristics of the sample population. To examine interrelationships, T-tests, correlations, and the routine descriptive statistics have been computed. Correlations between variables have been computed and factor analyses have been performed to examine dimensionality. Unless otherwise specified, one-tailed tests were used to determine significance.

In any such study validity and reliability are important concerns. There have been three methods to establish validity in the literature: face, trait, and construct. Face validity, used extensively in previous studies, is shown when the questions seem to pertain to the subject under investigation. Trait validity validates one's measure by comparing it to other measures of the same concept. Construct validity is established when the measure is related to measures of other concepts in theoretically meaningful ways.

Establishing validity for this study is particularly interesting because the questionnaire attempts to measure several different variables which do not seem to be directly related. Therefore the approach taken here has been to use scales for measurement of the concepts which have been established elsewhere and combine them together. These individual measurement schemes have proved to be valid under one or more of the validity criteria mentioned earlier. The validity of the ensemble of scales was tested primarily by two methods. The questionnaire clearly fulfilled the requirement of face validity. In addition, it was pre-tested on a separate group of Hispanic students. Their responses to the questions were utilized to modify and refine the questionnaire. These responses were also compared with the previous results on individual measures to ascertain and ensure consistency.

The same method of pre-testing was also used to established reliability. The responses to the questionnaire were consistent with the set of responses taken earlier. The individual scales measuring different concepts have been previously used and are already known to be reliable by previous researchers (Garza & Ockerman, 1979; Greenberg, 1974; Greenberg, Burgoon, Judee, & Korzenny, 1983; Greenberg & Devin, 1970; Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1973; Siber & Tippet, 1965; Stroman, 1984).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between TV viewing and the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents. The presentation of results in this chapter has been organized into five basic sections. The first section focuses on the characteristics of the sample population. It summarizes the basic demographic characteristics of the sample, and provides information on the students' ethnic orientation, educational aspirations, and perceptions of family social status. The second section focuses on the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents, as assessed by the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Index. (Rosenberg, 1965). The third section deals with the TV orientation of Hispanic adolescents. This section is subdivided into seven major TV viewing categories: access, exposure, content preferences, gratifications, TV credibility, parental mediation, and perceived reality of TV. Each viewing characteristic is described separately, and significant differences by sex and age are reported. Differences by country of birth are also reported where deemed appropriate. The following section examines the relationship between some of the TV viewing variables (exposure, content preferences, gratifications, credibility, and perceived

reality) and the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents. The last section summarizes the most relevant points provided from the presentation of the data.

Characteristics of the Population

The sample population in this study consists of a total of 125 Hispanic adolescents selected from the only high school in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. All the students in the sample were enrolled in one of five sections of a Spanish class for native speakers. Out of the 125 students, 42 were male and 83 female, all between the ages of 14 and 17. The average age of the students was 15.3 years of age. The educational level of the participants ranged from first to fourth year of high school, with the majority (74.4%) classified as either first (29.6%) or second (44.4%) year students.

Approximately 64% of these students were born in the United States, while the remaining 36% were born outside the United States. For people born outside the United States, the number of years spent in this country ranged from less than a year to fifteen years, with an average of 7.4 years. Table 4.1 reports the countries of birth mentioned by the students.

The majority of the students identified themselves as Hispanic (60.8%) or American of Hispanic origin (31.6%).

Puerto Rican and Dominican were the most common Hispanic origins reported by these students. Results are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1
Country of Birth

Country	n	%
United States	80	64.0
Puerto Rico	15	12.0
Dominican Republic	15	12.0
Cuba	4	3.2
Mexico	3	2.4
Peru	3	2.4
El Salvador	2	1.6
Honduras	1	.8

Table 4.2
Self-Reported Background

Background	%	Subgroup	%
1. Hispanic	60.8	Puerto Rican	56.0
2. American of Hispanic origin	33.6	Dominican	31.6
		Cuban	4.0
		Other	8.4
3. American	3.2		
4. Other	2.4		

Ethnic Identity

In order to ascertain the degree of identification with the Hispanic culture, students were asked how important it was for them to be Hispanic or of Hispanic origin. Possible answers included "very important," "somewhat important," "not very important," and "not important at all." The majority of the students (51.2%) responded that being Hispanic was "very important", while 35.8% considered it to

be "somewhat important." Only 9.8% and 3.3% said that being Hispanic was "not very important" or "not important at all," respectively. A significant relationship was found between the place of birth of individual students and their degree of ethnic identification. Students born outside the United States seemed to have a higher degree of identification with the Hispanic culture ($M = 3.55$) than students born in the United States ($M = 3.24$, $F = 4.32$, $p = .04$).

Academic Performance

The questionnaire attempted to ascertain the academic standing of the students by asking them to evaluate themselves as to the kind of student they considered themselves to be. The students could describe themselves as "a very good student," "a good student," "an OK student," "not a very good student," or "not a good student at all." The students were also asked to report the grade they most frequently received at school. Most students (92%) considered themselves to be good/Ok students. Surprisingly, no students chose the answer "I am not a good student at all," and only 1% reported that they were not very good students." A similar pattern was reflected in the grades question, with 92.8% reporting receiving mostly B's and C's. These percentages are partly consistent with the informal impressions obtained from the class teacher. Even though her evaluation of the students was limited to their performance in her class, it was her assessment that the majority of the stu-

dents could be classified as good and average student. At the same time, it was her opinion that the percentage of students performing below average was larger than than the percentage obtained from students' self-reports.

Educational Aspirations

Students were asked how far they thought they would go in school. Seventy-two percent of the students responded that they expected to graduate from college. Around 22.4% of those students expected to continue their education after college. Approximately 18.4% said that they would graduate from high school, and 8.8% expected to graduate from technical or business school. Only one student thought that he/she would not graduate from high school.

A small, although non-significant, difference was found between the educational aspirations of individual students and the educational level of the parents. Students whose fathers had an educational level of high school or less had slightly lower educational aspirations ($\bar{M} = 3.75$) than students whose fathers had continued studying after high school ($\bar{M} = 3.95$, $F = .75$, $p = .39$). A similar difference was found between the educational aspirations of the students and the educational level of their mothers ($F = .69$, $p = .41$). The educational aspirations of students whose mothers had an educational level of high school or less were slightly lower ($\bar{M} = 3.75$) than those of students whose mothers had continued studying after high school ($\bar{M} = 3.91$).

Language

Only 8% of the students spoke only Spanish, while 80% of the students reported being fluent in both English and Spanish. A small number of students (12%) were fluent only in English. On the other hand, the primary language spoken at home was divided between Spanish (52.8%) and both Spanish and English (44%). Only 3.2% of the students reported English as the primary language spoken at home.

Family Structure

The questions related to the family structure were geared towards determining the size and structure of the family. Results indicate that 65.6% of the respondents lived with both parents, while 24.8% lived with the mother only. The average number of brothers and sisters were 1.86 and 1.48, respectively. The majority of the students (74.4%) did not have any other family member living at home. Grandparents, aunts/uncles, and cousins were the family members most frequently mentioned by those students having other family members at home.

Family Orientation

One of the questions in the questionnaire asked the students to report how close they felt to their parents. The majority (74.4%) responded that they felt very close or quite close to the parents, while 25.6% felt that they were somewhat close or not close at all. When asked if the quan-

tity of time spent with the parents was enough, 73.6% answered affirmatively. A small percentage (14.4%) felt that their parents spent too little time with them, while 12% thought that their parents spent too much time with them.

Socioeconomic Status

It was not possible to assess the socioeconomic level of the students in this sample. Pre-testing indicated that it was difficult to obtain a valid assessment of respondents' incomes from their self-reports due to the fact that a considerable number of students did not know how much their parents earned. The questionnaire had thus attempted to obtain an approximate measure of each student' socioeconomic status based on the educational levels and occupations of the parents. Unfortunately, a considerable number of students failed to provide enough clear information about either the occupation of their parents or their educational attainment. Other students did not know the information at all. For these students, it was not possible to assess their socioeconomic status. After evaluating the information supplied by the remaining students, it was deemed futile to try to estimate their socioeconomic status. The sample of students who had given sufficient information about their parents was small in itself. A rough estimate of their socioeconomic status indicated that between 75 and 80% of the students' families were classified as either low- or low-middle income families. As indicated in Table 4.3, 68.1% of

all fathers and 60.9% of all mothers never finished high school. Most working parents held blue collar jobs that could be classified as either "semiskilled" or "skilled" jobs. The majority of them performed some form of manual labor at one of the many factories or department stores in the area. The percentage of students whose families were classified as middle income or higher was too small to make any significant statistical difference in the analysis. For this reason socioeconomic status was eliminated from the analysis.

Table 4.3
Parental Education

Education	Percentage	
	Father ^a	Mother ^b
1. Did not finish elementary school	30.4	26.4
2. Finished elementary school but not high school	29.6	33.6
3. Finished high school	15.2	23.2
4. Business/technical school after school	1.6	4.8
5. Some college	4.0	2.4
6. Finished college	6.4	7.2
7. Graduate school after college	.8	.8

^aFifteen missing cases. ^bTwo missing cases.

Two questions were geared towards determining the perceptions of the students about the socioeconomic status of their families. Asked to classify the status of their families as low, middle, or high income, 80.8 % chose middle income, 12% chose low income, and 6.4% chose high income. When asked how well they thought their parents had done in

life, the majority of the students responded that their parents had done very well (33.6%) or pretty well (52.8%). A very small group (11.2%) thought that their parents had not done very well. Only 2.4% of the students thought that their parents had not done well at all.

Self-Concept

The self-concept of the target population was measured using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Index which utilizes Guttman's scaling to insure unidimensionality. In this Index, respondents are asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with ten items. The items are combined to yield a seven-point scale. A person displaying the highest self-concept score under this measurement scheme would obtain a zero. The lowest possible self-concept would be denoted by a score of 6.

As indicated in Table 4.4, the self-concept level of the students in the sample was quite high. Scores ranged from 0 to 5, with a mean of 1.5 and a standard deviation of 1.3. The coefficient of reproducibility was .92.

Table 4.5 reports the means for each individual item in the Index. The item to which students answered more positively was "I feel I do not have much to be proud of." The statements to which students answered more negatively were the following: "I wish I could have more respect for myself," "I certainly feel useless at times," and "At times, I think I am no good at all."

Table 4.4
Self-Concept Scores

High		
0.0		
1.0		33.1%
2.0		37.9%
3.0	9.7%	15.3%
4.0	3.2%	
5.0	.8%	
6.0	0	
Low		

Table 4.5
Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Index

Statement	Mean
a. I feel that I am a person of worth...	1.78
b. I feel that I have a number of good qualities...	1.80
c. I tend to think that I am a failure...	1.68
d. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1.86
e. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1.66
f. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1.96
g. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1.94
h. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	2.43
i. I certainly feel useless at times.	2.48
j. At times, I think I am no good at all.	2.14

The statistical analysis of the self-concept revealed the following:

1. There was a small, although nonsignificant, difference between the self-concept of males and females, with boys having a slightly higher self-concept than girls ($F = 1.04, p = .31$).
2. The self-concept of Hispanic adolescents born outside the United States ($M = 1.09$) was slightly higher than

the self-concept of adolescents born in the United States ($\underline{M} = 1.18$). The differences were not significant ($\underline{F} = .16, p = .83$).

3. An interesting but nonsignificant difference ($\underline{F} = .89, p = .44$) was found between the self-concept of students reporting that being Hispanic was "very important" to them ($\underline{M} = 1.06$) and those who reported that being Hispanic was "not very important" ($\underline{M} = 1.16$) or "not important at all" ($\underline{M} = 2.0$).
4. A small but nonsignificant relationship was found between the self-concept of individual students and their educational aspirations. Students who expected to continue studies after high school had a slightly higher self-concept ($\underline{M} = 1.50$) than students who just expected to graduate from high school ($\underline{M} = 1.05, \underline{F} = 2.99, p = .09$).
5. Students who perceived themselves as very good students had a slightly higher self-concept ($\underline{M} = .78$) than students who considered themselves good students ($\underline{M} = 1.05$) or OK students ($\underline{M} = 1.37$). The relationship was not significant ($\underline{F} = 1.47, p = .23$).
6. The self-concept of students seemed to increase as the educational level of the parents increased. Students whose fathers had an educational level of high school or less had a lower self-concept ($\underline{M} = 1.20$) than the

students whose parents had continued studying after high school ($M = .81$). The relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($F = 1.94, p = .17$).

TV Orientation

This section focuses on the TV use, preferences, and attitudes of Hispanic adolescents. Results are grouped into seven major categories: TV access, usage, content preferences, gratifications, credibility, perceived reality, and stereotypical perception of Hispanics. Statistical analyses examine possible differences by sex, age, and birthplace for each of the television categories.

TV Access

Access to TV is reported in Table 4.6. As the table indicates, the average home of the Hispanic adolescent in this study owns at least one TV set, receives cable TV, and owns a VCR. The majority of the respondents also report having a TV set in their own bedrooms.

TV Usage

Table 4.7 presents the measure of estimated TV viewing time. Students were asked how many hours they usually watched TV in different time periods.

Students in this sample estimated watching 26.41 hours per week. They reported watching 3.69 hours of TV during school days, for a total of 18.45 hours of TV per school

Table 4.6
Media Access

	%
<u>TELEVISION</u>	
a. How many TV sets?	
1 TV	8.1
2 TV's	45.2
3 TV's	31.5
4-5 TV's	15.3
b. Have TV set in the bedroom?	63.2
<u>CABLE</u>	
a. Receive cable TV?	64.0
<u>VCR</u>	
a. Have a VCR at home?	74.4

week. For both Saturday and Sunday, they estimated watching 4.35 and 3.61 hours, respectively.

No significant differences were found by age. A significant difference ($F = 2.07$, $p < .01$) was found by gender in the amount of TV watched on Sundays, with boys watching more TV ($M = 4.45$) than girls ($M = 3.17$).

Table 4.7
Estimated TV Viewing Time

TV Viewing	Average number of hours
a. After school before supper	1.30
b. After supper before bed	2.39
<u>TOTAL/SCHOOL DAY</u>	<u>3.69</u>
c. Saturday	4.35
d. Sunday	3.61
<u>ESTIMATED TOTAL/WEEK</u>	<u>26.41</u>

TV Content Preferences

A total of 14 categories of TV content were assessed in the questionnaire and are itemized in Table 4.8. Analysis of the program preferences indicate that movies, comedy shows, and police/detective shows were the preferred types of programming. Movies received the highest rating, with 95.2 % of all Hispanic adolescents reporting that they "always/sometimes" watch movies on TV. The second and third choices were comedy shows (92.8%) and police/ detective shows (71.2%). If we consider only the percentage of adolescents answering "always" to each type of programming, sit-coms/comedy shows are by far the preferred category (60%), followed by movies (42.4%), sports, and MTV, both with a score of 25.6%.

Table 4.8
TV Content Preferences

<u>Program</u>	<u>% of respondents watching always/sometimes</u>
How often do you watch	
a. Movies	95.2
b. Sit-coms/comedy shows	92.8
c. Police/detective shows	71.2
d. Musical/variety shows	61.6
e. News/news shows	60.0
f. MTV	59.2
g. Cartoons	56.6
h. Game shows	55.7
i. Sports/sports shows	52.0
j. Spanish shows/movies	42.4
k. Daytime soaps	32.6
l. Spanish news	28.8
m. Night soaps	27.6

Program preferences were then examined for both gender and sex differences. The only significant differences by sex

are reported in Table 4.9. Girls were more likely to watch daytime soaps, night soaps, and sit-coms. Boys, on the other side, watched more sports/sports shows.

Table 4.9
Program Preferences by Sex

Program	Sex		<u>F</u>
	Male	Female	
Daytime soaps	1.19	2.43	6.51*
Night soaps	1.31	2.05	2.82*
Sit-coms/comedy shows	3.33	3.63	1.99**
Sports/sport shows	3.21	2.46	5.70*

* $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$.

Another question in this section asked students to write down the name of their favorite TV show. Table 4.10 lists the shows that Hispanic adolescents report as being their favorite. Sit-coms were the programs most favored by all adolescents (62.5%), regardless of sex and age. The Cosby Show, Who's the Boss, and Growing Pains were the most frequently mentioned comedy shows as well as the favorite programs overall. The second most popular show category consisted of police/detective shows (10.4%).

A related question asked respondents if they mostly watched Spanish language programs, English language programs, or both. The majority of the students (74.4%) report-

ed watching mostly English. Their percentages of students watching mostly Spanish or both about the same were 2.4% and 23.2%, respectively.

TV Gratifications

There are several reasons or motivations for watching TV. The general categories included in this study were

Table 4.10
Favorite Shows by Category

<u>Program</u>	<u>Percentage of endorsement</u>
<u>COMEDY</u>	
<u>The Cosby Show</u>	19.2
<u>Who's the Boss</u>	12.8
<u>Growing Pains</u>	6.4
<u>Family Ties</u>	6.4
<u>Alf</u>	4.0
Other comedy shows	13.7
<u>POLICE/DETECTIVE SHOWS</u>	
<u>Moonlighting</u>	4.8
<u>Miami Vice</u>	4.0
Other police/detective shows	1.6
<u>SPANISH SHOWS/PROGRAMS</u>	
SOAPS	4.0
DRAMA	4.0
SPORTS	2.4
MTV	1.6
OTHER	8.0

arousal, relaxation, companionship, to pass time, to forget, for self learning, and social learning. Respondents were asked to accept or reject 14 possible reasons for watching TV. Table 4.11 outlines Hispanic adolescents motivations for watching TV. As the table indicates, the adolescents in this table reported watching TV for a variety of reasons. Among

the reasons most frequently mentioned were boredom (91.1%), relaxation (78.4%), cheering up (74.4%), to know what is going on in the world (72.4%), and to see what people are like (56.9%).

There were no significant gender differences for any of the possible gratifications. The only difference by age was for the gratification "because it makes me feel less lonely," with 14 years old more inclined than students of any other age to watch for that particular gratification ($F = 3.94, p = .05$).

Table 4.11
Rated Importance of TV Viewing Motivations

I watch TV	Percentage of agreement
a. When I am bored.	91.1
b. Because it relaxes me.	78.4
c. Because it cheers me up.	72.4
d. Because I want to know what is going on in the world.	72.4
e. Because I get to see what people are like.	56.9
f. Because it teaches me how other people deal with the same problems I have.	55.6
g. Because it excites me.	49.6
h. Because it makes me feel less lonely.	46.3
i. So I can forget about my problems.	44.7
j. Because it shows what life is really like.	39.8
k. Because I can learn about my own Hispanic culture and people.	37.4
l. Because I learn things on TV I do not learn in school.	34.1
m. So I can get away from the rest of the family.	19.7
n. Because it helps me know how I am supposed to act.	19.5

Some differences by birthplace were evident from the analysis, although only one of them was found to be significant. As Table 4.12 indicates, adolescents who were not born in the United States were more inclined to watch TV for escapism, while students born in the United States watched TV to learn about things and life in general.

TABLE 4.12
Gratifications by Place of Birth

I watch TV...	Birthplace		
	U.S.	Other	F
a. because it excites me.	1.44	1.61	3.26**
b. because it cheers me up.	1.23	1.36	2.23**
c. so I can get away from the rest of the family.	1.76	1.89	3.03**
d. because I learn things on TV I do not learn in school.	1.72	1.56	3.38**
e. because it shows what life is really like.	1.68	1.47	5.55*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .10$.

A significant relationship was found between exposure to TV and learning "about my own culture and people." In general, students agreeing with the previous statement also reported watching more TV than students who disagreed with the statement ($F = 4.05, p < .05$).

TV Credibility

In order to assess the relative credibility of television, students were asked the following question: " If the newspaper, a news magazine, radio and TV all gave conflicting reports about the same news (e.g. the sale of arms to Iran or the Iran-Contra hearings), which one would you believe more?" Results indicate that the majority of the Hispanic adolescents in the sample would believe TV over any other media (71.8%). The second choice was the newspaper (21.0%). No significant differences were found by sex, age or place of birth.

Parental Mediation of TV

This section examines the degree to which parents are aware of the time their children spend watching TV, the types of programs they watch , as well as their control over specific programming and TV viewing time. Results indicate that slightly over half the parents (52.0%) are aware of the amount of time their children spend watching TV, 31.2% always know what programs they are watching, and 77.6% do not have any restrictions over the types of programs watched. Around 46.4% of the students reported being allowed to watch TV until 11:00 PM, while 37.4% reported not having any special time restrictions.

Perceived Reality of TV

Respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement with 8 statements asserting the correspondence between the content of TV and real life. The percentage of agreement with each statement is reported in Table 4.13. Results indicate that "female jobs," "teenagers," and "male jobs" were the categories that respondents considered more true to life, while "families" and "Hispanics" were perceived as the least true to life. It should be noted that very few respondents agreed strongly with any of the 8 statements.

The only significant gender differences found were in the jobs and minorities categories. Girls in the sample believed more that minorities on TV were closer to real life ($F = 1.58$, $p = .05$). Boys, on the other side, believed that jobs on TV were closer to real life ($F = 2.22$, $p = .002$). No significant differences by age were found.

Table 4.13
Perceived Reality of TV

<u>How real to life are TV</u>	<u>Agreement</u>
a. Female jobs	63.2%
b. Teenagers	59.7%
c. Male jobs	57.6%
d. Things that happen to people	56.8%
e. Asians	37.4%
f. Blacks	37.1%
g. Hispanics	33.9%
h. Families	28.2%

People have different perceptions about the frequency and reality of traits of Hispanics on TV. The questionnaire attempted to assess respondents' perceptions about perceived frequency, perceived traits, and perceived dissimilarity of Hispanics on TV. The general perception among the students in the sample was that there were only a few Hispanic characters on TV, that those characters were portrayed as both good and bad people, and that they were somewhat similar to Hispanics in real life. The majority of the students (50.4%) responded that there were "a few characters." The second choice was "quite a few characters," with a 22.4% endorsement. A total of 79.2% of the students thought that TV portrayed Hispanics as both good and bad people. Around half the students (52.8%) responded that TV Hispanics were "somewhat similar" to Hispanics in real life, while 30.4% thought that TV Hispanics were "not very similar."

No significant differences were found by sex, age, or place of birth.

TV and Self-Concept

Previous studies have linked self-concept to various TV variables. As it was pointed out earlier, these studies have proved to be inconclusive. In this study several statistical methods were used to establish what relationships, if any, exist between self-concept and TV viewing variables. Unfortunately, due to the small number of samples and highly uneven distribution of variables, statistical methods

available failed to give any significant relationships. Therefore, no conclusions may be drawn about the impact of television on the self-concept.

One interesting correlation was obtained from the data. For adolescents living in families headed by single parents a negative correlation coefficient was observed between self-concept and exposure to TV ($R = .202$, $p = .05$). In other words, adolescents living in single parent homes who watched more TV seemed more likely to have a lower self-concept.

Summary

The following points can be summarized from the analysis of the data presented in this chapter:

1. The sample population in this study consists of adolescents characterized by a fairly strong sense of identification with the Hispanic culture, high educational aspirations, a positive perception of themselves as students, a strong family orientation, and a positive view of their parents' achievements in life. Most students consider that they come from middle-income families. They are mostly bilingual.
2. A large number of students have no clear knowledge of their parents' occupations and/or educational levels.
3. The majority of the students in this sample have a very high self-concept.

4. The place of birth of the students, their degree of ethnic identification, educational aspirations, self-perceptions, and parental education seem to be related to the self-concept in one way or another.
5. The students in the sample have between two and three TV sets at home, and watch an average of 26.41 hours of TV per week. Their favorite types of programs are movies, comedies and police shows. They watch TV to relax, to get aroused, and to pass time. To a lesser degree, they also watch to learn about the world. They believe TV over other types of mass media. "Jobs," "teenagers," and "things that happen to people" are the themes of TV that they see as closer to real life. There is very little parental mediation of TV viewing.
6. No relationship was found between the TV-related variables and the self-concept of the students in the sample.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter the results obtained from the survey data are discussed and analyzed in the context of previously reported research. The observations are compared and contrasted with the conclusions reached by other researchers in similar studies. This chapter is broken up as follows. First a profile of the sample population is presented and their key characteristics enumerated. This profile is followed by a discussion of the interaction between the adolescents' self-concept, his/her family, the hispanic subculture and the society at large. Then the results establishing or denying a relationship between media viewing variables and the adolescents' self-concept are described. Finally a set of conclusions, together with their significance for education and future research, are given.

Hispanic Adolescents: A Profile

The sample population for this study consists of a total of 120 students attending the only high school in the city of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Of the total 1,700 students in the high school, 70% have some sort of Hispanic ties. The largest percentage consists of students of either Puerto Rican or Dominican background.

The average age in Perth Amboy is 32.75 years of age. Slightly under 13% of all Perth Amboy residents are under the poverty line. Only 45.3% are high school graduates. The current high school dropout rate is not clear; estimates range between 7% and 10% (Bureau of the Census, 1985).

The city of Perth Amboy has a large Hispanic population. By 1985, 52.38% of the population of the city was Hispanic; the percentage seems to be increasing at a fairly fast pace. The average income for a Spanish household is \$15, 154, as compared to \$20, 136 for the average white household (Bureau of the Census, 1985). Hispanics living in Perth Amboy consider themselves better off than Hispanics living in other cities such as Newark. They constitute the majority of the population; the considerable number of industries and businesses gives them better job opportunities; churches in the area are actively working with the Hispanic community and seem to have a fairly strong influence on the population. Schools and other organizations also seem concerned for and involved in the future of the Hispanic community of Perth Amboy.

The ages of the sample population ranged between 14 and 17 years of age, with the average age at 15.3. The majority were first and second year students. Two-thirds of the population consisted of female students. Puerto Rican or Dominican were the most common ethnic backgrounds reported by the respondents. Sixty-four percent of the students were

born in the United States. For the remaining 36% born outside the United States, the average number of years spent in this country was 7.4.

The students in this sample seemed to place considerable importance on their Hispanic ethnic background. Given a choice, the majority of them chose to identify themselves as either Hispanic (60.8%) or American of Hispanic origin (31.6%). Eighty-seven percent of them considered that being Hispanic was either very important or somewhat important to them. The majority reported speaking Spanish and English equally.

Slightly under 70% of the students lived in two-parent homes. Very few were only children; most had between one and two brothers/sisters at home. The majority had no other family members living at home. Among those who had, the most commonly reported family members were grandparents, aunts/uncles, and cousins. Spanish was reported as the language most commonly used among family members at home.

Although it was not possible to assess the socioeconomic status of the students' households, a rough estimate indicated that the vast majority of the households could be classified as either low- or low-middle income. Sixty-eight percent of all fathers and 60.9% of all mothers never finished high school. Most of them were employed in occupations characterized by low pay and low skill requirements. This profile was at odds with the perceptions of the students. Slightly under 81% of the students classified

their households as middle-income and 86.4% felt that their parents had done very well or pretty well in life.

The students in this sample had considerably high educational aspirations, and a very healthy self-concept. The majority considered themselves to be good or Ok students and reported receiving mostly B's and C's in school. Seventy-two percent of them expected to graduate from college; only one student reported that he would not graduate from high school. The global self-concept of the students was very high. According to Rosenberg (1965), the global self-concept as assessed by his Index is an indication of the extent to which the respondent feels that he/she is a person of worth. A high score does not mean that the respondent feels superior to others, but that he/she feels "good enough."

Television seems to occupy a considerable amount of the respondents' time. A total of 76.7% of the students reported having between two and three TV sets at home. Most received cable, had VCRs at home, and had TV sets in their own bedrooms. They watched TV an average of 26.41 hours/week (3.6 hours/school day, 4.35 hours on Saturdays, and 3.61 hours on Sundays).

Slightly over half of the respondents reported that their parents were either aware of the time they spent watching TV or put any kind of time restrictions on the amount of TV they could watch during school days. Very few parents placed any restrictions over the types of programs their children could watch.

Students' preferences were for English language TV (74.4%), situation comedies, movies, and police/detective shows. There was an overwhelming preference for comedy shows depicting family situations, such as The Cosby Show, Who's the Boss, and Growing Pains.

They reported watching TV for a variety of reasons. The most common ones were boredom, relaxation, and cheering up. Students also reported watching to learn: to know what is going on in the world, to see what people are like, and to learn how other people deal with the same problems they have.

The credibility on TV as a source of truthful news was quite high. The overwhelming majority (71.8%) said that they would believe TV over any other medium in the case of conflicting news about the same issue.

Respondents did not overwhelmingly believe in the reality of TV, although over half the students believed that televised female jobs, teenagers, male jobs, and the things that happen to people on TV were similar to jobs, teenagers, and happenings in real life. On the portrayal of Hispanics on TV, the tendency was for them to believe that there were only a few Hispanic characters on TV, that the characters were portrayed as good and bad people, and that they were somewhat similar to Hispanics in real life. Only slightly under 40% believed that Hispanics on TV were like Hispanics in real life. The percentage of agreement was slightly higher for Blacks and Asians.

In the following section, the relationship between the self-concept of the adolescents in this sample and their environment, global and local, is discussed.

The Family, Subculture and Society

Several studies in the past have addressed the issue of self-concept of minority group members in the United States. According to Nobles (1972), the basic issue underlying research on Blacks' self-concept has been whether Blacks like being Black. This question could be expanded to include all other minority groups in this country: Does the minority group member like being part of the subcultural group of which he/she is a member? Two opposing hypotheses have been proposed (Rosenberg, 1965). Both deal with the issue of whether the self-concept of minority group members, particularly ones which do not have a fair share of the economic wealth or the political power, should turn out to be different to the self-concept of the majority population. Both hypotheses agree that the self-concept is partly dependent on whom the individual compares himself/herself with, his/her reference group. At the same time, both hypotheses differ in their prediction of the level of self-esteem. The stratification hypothesis proposes that individuals belonging to a minority community not doing as well as the majority will use the standards of the "other community" to judge themselves. The person will rank himself/herself according to the status and prestige given to

his/her group by society at large. Since minority groups in this country seldom have the status and prestige of mainstream society, minority group members are in essence condemned to have a low self-concept. They are thus characterized by a low self-concept, a poor self-image, low educational and occupational expectations, self-hate, no sense of pride for their own ethnic background, and resentment towards their own subcultural group. Under this hypothesis, the white society is seen as the "generalized other." Its values and norms become the values and norms of the minority individuals. The individuals' own group is seen as a liability and the source of unending conflict within the individuals.

The subcultural hypothesis, on the other side, asserts that subcultural factors are more important than the prestige of the society at large. Members of societal subgroups share certain characteristics, certain norms, values, and customs to which they look for evaluation and support. The major determinant of self-concept of the minority individuals is the sub-cultural standard rather than the societal standard. The subgroup is not seen as a liability, but as an asset, the "significant other" and the source of self-support and enhancement (Barnes, 1972; Heiss & Owens, 1972; Nobles, 1972; Noel, 1964; Parker & Kleiner, 1966; Rosenberg, 1965).

The Hispanic adolescents in this sample do not fit the profile suggested by the stratification hypothesis. This

survey data reveals some interesting facts regarding their self-image, and the relevance of the family and the sub-culture in their lives. The primary conclusion is not only that the sub-culture seems to be an important factor in the development of a healthy self-concept, but that the family also plays a very important role. Moreover, it seems to be desirable that it should be so. Recognition of this fact may also suggest some new approaches to improving the well-being of Hispanic adolescents in the United States.

The first interesting observation is that the self-concept of the sample adolescents turned out to be high. As it was reported in Chapter 4, the students in this sample were characterized by a very healthy self-concept, with 86.3% of the scores ranging between 0 and 2 (a lower score indicates a higher self-concept). According to the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Index, the students in this sample had a positive attitude towards themselves, felt that they were worthy, that they had good qualities, could do things as well as other people, and had reasons to be proud of themselves. They were satisfied of themselves and definitely did not believe that they were failures. This result is supported by other researchers, some of which have found that minority group members not only have a positive self-concept, but sometimes higher than the self-concept of members of more prestigious groups (Carter, 1968; Garza & Ockerman, 1979; Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1973).

Carter (1968) found that the Mexican-American children in his sample had very positive attitudes about themselves. His data indicated that teachers and administrators at the school were certain about the children's low self-concept and poor self-image. At the same time, it seemed that the children appeared to reject the stereotype that their teachers had of them. They rejected the norms of success and failure imposed on them and judged themselves instead by the norms established by their own subsociety. Garza & Ockerman (1979) obtained similar results with a sample of Mexican-American adolescents. Rosenberg (1973) found that Blacks did not have a lower self-concept than whites. In another study, Rosenberg (1965) concluded that the data did not support the stratification hypothesis. It appeared that the subcultural norms and values of the adolescents were more important than society's evaluation in determining their self-esteem.

The self-concept of the adolescents in this sample seemed to be unrelated to the low socioeconomic status of their households. It is interesting to note that students did not perceive or describe their households as low-income but as middle-income. Even though the majority of their parents had very limited formal education and job opportunities, most adolescents felt that their parents had done quite well in life. According to Rosenberg (1965), for low socioeconomic status to have a negative impact on the self-concept, the individual has to be aware of how low his/her status is in relation to others. In addition, awareness of

the low status does not mean that the individual has to agree with the standards of society or feel that he/she is unworthy. The meaning of the phrase "doing well in life" and the definition of low socioeconomic status can be very different if the individual is judging himself/herself by the standards of his/her subculture. It could be that students in this sample were judging themselves and their families by their own subcultural standards. The area where the respondents live consists of a majority Hispanic population. Within the Hispanic culture and the community of Perth Amboy, successes and failures can have a totally different meaning. Within that meaning, the parents of the students in this sample might have done very well in life.

A second observation which points to the importance of the subculture is the positive correlation between the self-concept of the individuals and the extent to which they deemed their Hispanic background important. Given the subcultural hypothesis, this observation is understandable. If a person has a high degree of identification with his/her own ethnic background, it is possible that the norms, values, and standards of his/her subculture are also important to him/her. If the individual and his/her family are "doing well" in the context of their subgroup, it seems likely that this will help foster a sense of worth and well-being in him/her.

Yet another observation that seems to reinforce the importance of the subculture is the fact that adolescents in

this sample that were born in their native countries (outside the United States) had a higher self-concept than their counterparts who were born inside the United States. Dworkin (1965) found that Mexican-Americans who had come recently to the United States had a better self-image than Mexican-Americans born in the United States and who had lived all their lives in this country. It seemed that the respondents born outside the United States evaluated themselves from the frame of reference of their native country and culture.

Two statistical figures are worth mentioning in the context of the family and the adolescent. It was found that individuals who had high self-concepts were also more likely to have high educational aspirations. In addition, the educational level of the parents seemed to be linked to both the educational aspirations and the self-concept of the adolescents. Thus an adolescent having at least one college educated parent was more likely to aspire to do the same and to have a high self-concept.

The previous points in the discussion raise some very interesting questions. It seems that the family and the immediate environment or subculture are essential factors influencing the self-esteem of the Hispanic adolescent. They do seem to play a positive role in protecting the adolescent from possibly negative attitudes emanating from the mainstream population. This seems to be reflected in the high self-esteem the adolescents possess. The question that may

be raised now is what happens when and if the adolescent is suddenly exposed to new standards of judgement and consequently new basis for self-evaluation? Is it possible that an inadequate handling of this sudden exposure by educators has profound implications for the adolescents' self-esteem and perhaps educational aspirations? Could this "transition period" be responsible for the high dropout rates among adolescents who showed high aspirations and self-esteem in the past? When does this exactly occur? It is possible that high school brings a new sense of awareness of the majority's standards on the adolescent. This could then potentially lead to a reassessment of self-esteem and widely deviant aspirations than would otherwise occur.

As it was mentioned earlier, the role of the family and the subculture seems to be predominant and positive. It can potentially be a useful channel to enhance the self-esteem and educational aspirations of the Hispanic adolescents.

Hispanic Adolescents and TV

Over and over researchers have emphasized the importance of TV in the lives of our young people. As a potential agent of socialization and a source of information about people, society, and the world, TV can potentially serve the role of a generalized other. The influence of this medium on minority audiences is potentially greater. Research indicates that young minority group members watch more TV, have more favorable attitudes towards TV, watch

more in order to learn, and believe more in the reality of TV (Comstock & Cobbey, 1978). Regardless of whether or not TV serves the role of a generalized other among minority viewers, it is an agent of socialization. On one side, it serves to provide them with needed information about the world. On the other side, it gives them a particular view of the world and their society:

Minority group people are never depicted in their lives because a community of gracious houses with lawns and guest houses, a nonworking mother, a successful lawyer father, and a maid are unattainable to a minority group family. Minority group people are invisible, non-existent, unacceptable in, and worse still, inaccessible to that world of affluence and leisure...They all depict a middle-class, white, mostly suburban life exclusive of minority group people and any cultural diversity. (Schary, 1970, pp. 126-127)

A major purpose of this study was to describe the TV orientation of Hispanic adolescents and to examine the relationship between TV viewing and their self-concept. We have already seen that the Hispanic adolescents in this sample seemed to judge themselves by subcultural rather than societal standards. Given the narrow societal view of the world, of good and bad, and of success and failure reflected on TV, it is relevant to ask how, if at all, TV influences their self-concept and other aspects of the self.

The analysis of the data in this sample reveals several interesting facts about the TV viewing habits of Hispanic adolescents. All adolescents had TV sets at home; most also owned VCRs and had access to cable TV. Not unlike the general population, these respondents have more faith on TV over other media as a source of accurate information in case

of conflicting news. Over 50% believe in the reality of televised jobs, teenagers, and events. They also watch TV to pass time, for relaxation, excitement, social learning (to learn about people and the world) and self-learning (to learn how to deal with their own problems).

Not only did these students depend on TV as a major medium but, given the number of hours spent watching TV, depended on it rather heavily. The average number of hours spent watching TV was 26.41 hours/week. At a first glance, it would seem that, if the negative impact hypothesis is to be validated, one would expect a negative relationship between self-concept and exposure to TV.

The findings in this study fail to provide any evidence of a relationship between TV and the self-concept of Hispanic adolescents. The amount of time spent watching TV is not associated with a poor self-concept. Other TV related variables (content preferences, credibility, motivations, and perceived reality) also failed to account for any pattern of association with the self-concept.

In the previous section the subject of the environmental impact on the adolescent was considered. Besides the family, the subgroup, and the society at large, TV may also have an impact as a generalized other. Despite the high level of exposure and considerable amount of credibility placed on TV, respondents reported watching TV for some form of escapism or arousal. Although a significant fraction used the TV to learn about the world (72.4%),

people in general (56.4%), and how to deal with problems (55.6%), only 37.4% reported watching TV to learn about their own culture and people; slightly under 34% believed that Hispanics on TV were like Hispanics in real life. The learning of TV seems to be a selective process. Students absorb the information relevant and useful to them and ignore what is not relevant or what is contradictory to their beliefs. In the same way that the students deemed to ignore society's definition of "doing well" and socioeconomic status, it is possible that the perceptions generated by the immediate family and the standards provided by the subculture could serve as a filter for the messages received from the generalized others in the media. If this is so, it would seem that the role of TV in influencing self-concept is still small as compared to other personal variables in the students' lives.

The reported findings should be interpreted with caution. In evaluating the results, a variety of factors should be taken into consideration. The sample population in the study may not be representative of the Hispanic population in general. The participants were all students in an elective course of Spanish for Spanish speakers. Seventy percent of all the students in the high school have Hispanic roots. In addition, over half the population of Perth Amboy is Hispanic. It is possible that these factors make it more likely for the students in this sample to have a greater degree of cultural identification than other

students not in the class, the particular high school, or the community. This makes it difficult to generalize from the sample group to the general Hispanic population.

The fact that the data did not indicate a relationship between self-concept and TV viewing can be attributed to the relatively small number of students who showed a low self-concept. Most statistical methods, when used to analyze patterns in data with highly uneven distributions, give poor results. The inadequacies of these statistical techniques become more paramount when the total number of cases is small, as it was in this study. Our data awaits future verification, validation, and replication.

Recommendations

If academic success is one the main goals of schools, more attention should be paid to the nature and needs of minority students. All aspects of their environment should be taken into consideration in order to create a healthy learning environment. Schools cannot function outside the context of the students' community. They are part of the community and, as such, they have to be supportive of that community.

If parental characteristics play a relevant role in the educational aspirations of our students, care should be taken to actively involve them in the educational process of their children. In order to improve the quality of urban education and subsequently achieve a greater student

retention and academic success, student-oriented programs are a necessary but not sufficient component. The education of parents and children have to occur concurrently. Efforts should be made to develop programs aimed at serving the educational needs of Hispanic parents.

The findings of this study point to the importance of positive ethnic identification in the development of a healthy self-concept. Thus the importance of bicultural and bilingual programs that foster attitudes of self-worth. We need to further develop programs that will foster a sense of peoplehood in our students.

Results of this study are limited and await replication. Research should be conducted in various contexts, with other ethnic groups, and across socioeconomic class lines, settings, and age groups.

Teevision is a powerful source of information. Most of the adolescents in this sample reported that they watched a lot of TV and that they used TV to learn about a variety of things. Future research should focus on how TV interacts with other socializing agents to influence ethnic identification and the self-concept across different sexes, age groups, ethnic backgrounds, social classes, and experiences.

Even though the findings of this study do not support the hypothesis that TV viewing is related negatively to the self-concept, that does not mean that TV cannot be one of the means to enhance self-concept. Educational programs like Sesame Street, The Electric Company, and Villa Alegre have

successfully promoted cultural awareness and positive role models among multilingual and multicultural populations. Parents, educators, and researchers should seek ways to promote the positive use of TV for adolescents by offering programs with greater cultural diversity and positive role models.

Summary and Conclusions

The future of the Hispanic population is of paramount importance. Since 1980 the Hispanic population in the United States has increased 30%, five times as fast as the rest of the population. The 18.8 million Hispanics living in this country are characterized by a high birth rate, a younger population, a high dropout rate, one-fourth of the population living below the poverty level, limited education, limited occupational opportunities, and a reduced income (Pear, 1987). Given the large and fast-growing Hispanic population, it can be assumed without any doubt that the Hispanics of today are an essential part of the future of this country. This should be incentive enough for government agencies, industries, and researchers to try to examine and understand the nature and the needs of the Hispanic population.

Traditionally, research on the self-concept has considered the "I" and the "me" as the referential components of the self. According to Nobles (1973), the referential components of the self have to be expanded to include "we," the

organizational character of the self, the group to which the individual belongs and with which he/she identifies. A Hispanic individual is not just a minority in the United States, judging himself/herself by the standards and norms of the white society. He/she is also a member of a cultural subgroup possessing its own norms and values. From the moment that the subculture is seen as an inseparable aspect of the self-concept, it becomes imperative to look at the variables of that subcultural environment in order to create programs that appropriately serve the needs of our young people and foster in them a healthy self-concept. Parents/families and the communities are a definite part of the subculture. Any programs that attempt to successfully deal with the future of the Hispanic youth have to bring both into the process.

The role of TV in the lives of minority children is still very unclear. Although the results of this study did not suggest any relationship between TV viewing and the self-concept, it cannot be assumed that TV has no impact. Students spend more or less 30 hours/week in school. They spend an average of 26.41 hours/week watching TV. Those hours add up to an average of 1,373 hours/year, or 57 days/year in the lives of the students. For these students, TV is not only a source of entertainment but also a source of information. Seventy-two percent use TV to learn about the world; fifty-six percent watch to see what people are like. Over 50% believe that jobs, teenagers, and things that

happen to people on TV are pretty much like real life. At the same time, the "world" and "people" from which they learn, the jobs and teenagers that they consider real depict an affluent and homogeneous white society where minority groups do not exist, and where the message for minority viewers speaks of assimilation and acculturation (Schary, 1970).

Although most students reported that they did not use TV to learn about their own Hispanic culture and people, 37% did use it for that reason. In addition, 34% of the students believed that Hispanics on TV were like Hispanics in real life. Even though the Hispanic image on TV has improved slightly, the image is still far from real. There are still few Hispanic characters on TV, and most of them are lazy, ignorant, violent, passionate, and with little concern for their future.

No medium from which our young people learn, whether that learning is about themselves or the world, can be ignored by responsible members of this society:

No medium which has the potential to be such a powerful influence on the child can ignore the collective impact of that power. (Berry, 1977, p. 53)

Some progress has been made. There are, or have been, a few positive Hispanic role models in shows like Hill Street Blues (now off the air) and L.A. Law; a few more Hispanics can nowadays be seen in TV commercials. The success of programs like The Cosby Show would have been unthought of a few years ago. Although the show has been

criticized for depicting a "white" Black family oblivious to the plight of Blacks, the show is a big step in the right direction. It presents positive Black role models, successful Blacks who are proud of their background and cultural heritage.

There is the need for more diversity in TV content and for programs that depict minorities in positive role models. There is also the need for programs that reflect the values of the home culture and that can serve as a source of cultural affirmation to groups whose reality is different from that of mainstream America. We have to further study how TV interacts with other variables in the Hispanic adolescents' socialization process. We also need to foster a greater cooperation among media policy makers, schools, communities, and families in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of young minority group members. By doing this we could help young Hispanic students and other minority group members reduce the ambivalence towards themselves and their own culture, thus moving them one step further into the road to success.

APPENDIX

Dear Participant:

I am Pilar Munoz, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I am in the process of completing the requirements for a doctoral degree at the University. This questionnaire is an important part of my dissertation. The questions in this booklet are designed to examine high school students' perceptions of the content of television.

It is up to you whether or not to take part in this study. If you do wish to answer the questions, please read the box below and sign your name (Please write clearly!). If you decide not to answer the questions, it will in no way influence your grade in this class.

```
*****
*
* I, _____ agree to take
*      (your full name)
*
* part in this study. I understand my answers will
* be used for research purposes and my name will be
* kept confidential. My teachers will not see the
* responses, and my name will never be used when
* discussing or writing about the data.
*
*****
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All of your answers will be confidential. The data will always be used as group data and your name will not be connected with any specific answer. If you do agree to answer the questions, then please turn the page and begin.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH !!!!!!!!

General directions: Please answer the following questions. Do not leave any question unanswered. Remember, there is no such thing as right or wrong answers. For each question, put a check mark () on the line to the left of the response you choose, or fill-in the information requested. Some questions ask you to circle your answer.

1. Sex: _____ male _____ female
2. Your age: _____
3. What grade are you in at school? _____
4. Were you born in the United States? _____ Yes _____ No

If NOT BORN IN THE UNITED STATES, Which is your country of origin? _____ How long have you lived in this country? _____

5. Please check the phrase that you most commonly use to describe your origin. (Check one only)

I AM ...

- _____ Hispanic (What specific Hispanic group? Write in: _____)
- _____ American
- _____ American of Hispanic origin (Which group? _____)
- _____ other (Please specify _____)

6. What kind of student do you think you are? (Check one)

- _____ I am a very good student
- _____ I am a good student
- _____ I am an okay student
- _____ I am not a very good student
- _____ I am not a good student at all

7. Check the letter grade that you receive most often in your classes at school. (Check one)

_____ A's _____ B's _____ C's _____ D's _____ F's

8. How far do you think you will go in school? (Check one)

I won't finish high school

I'll graduate from high school

I'll graduate from vocational or business school

I'll graduate from college

I'll continue studies after graduating from college

9. Think about when you are all finished with school and ready to start working. What job do you think you WILL PROBABLY HAVE?

10. Also, what kind of job would you LIKE TO HAVE if you could have any job you wanted? Write down the job you would MOST LIKE TO HAVE:

11. What languages do you speak fluently?

Spanish English

Both Spanish and English

12. What language do you and your family use most frequently at home? (Check only one)

Spanish English

Both Spanish and English

13. Who do you live with at home? (Check one)

My mother and father

Just my mother

Just my father

a parent and a step-parent.

(Check one: step-father

step-mother)

Sometimes one parent, sometimes the other

Other (please explain: _____)

14. How many BROTHERS do you have (including step-brothers and half-brothers)? _____

Their ages are: _____

How many of your brothers live with you at home? _____

15. How many SISTERS do you have (including step-sisters and half-sisters)? _____

Their ages are: _____

How many of your sisters live with you at home? _____

16. In addition to your parents, brothers, and sisters, what other family members live in your home (e.g. grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers/sisters-in-law, or other)? (Write in)

17. If your father has a job--what is it? Write down the name of his job and what he does in it: (be as specific as you can)

18. If your mother has a job--what is it? Write down the name of her job and what she does in it: (be as specific as you can)

19. How far did your father and mother go in school? Check the appropriate response for both your father and your mother.
 (CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH)

	<u>FATHER</u>	<u>MOTHER</u>
a. Did not finish elementary school	_____	_____
b. Finished elementary school but not high school	_____	_____
c. Finished high school	_____	_____
d. Vocational or business school after high school	_____	_____
e. Some college	_____	_____
f. Finished college	_____	_____
g. Graduate school after college	_____	_____

20. If you were asked to choose one of the following terms to describe your family household, which one of the following would you choose? (Check one)

- _____ low-income family
 _____ middle-income family
 _____ high-income family

21. How well do you think your parents have done in life? Would you say they have done _____. (Check one)

- ___ Very well ___ Pretty well
 ___ Not very well ___ Not well at all

22. How close do you feel to your parents? (Circle one)

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| very
close | quite
close | somewhat
close | not close
at all |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|

23. Think of the amount of time your parents spend with you on a regular day. How do you describe this time? (Check one)

- _____ My parents spend too much time with me.
 _____ My parents spend just enough time with me.
 _____ My parents spend too little time with me.

24. Please read each statement carefully. Circle the term that more closely represents your own feelings. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, only what you think:

a) I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on equal plane with others.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

b) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

c) All in all, I tend to think that I am a failure.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

d) I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

e) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

f) I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

g) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

h) I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

i) I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

j) At times, I think I am no good at all.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

25. Who are your closest friends (like friends you eat lunch with, hang around with, see outside of school)? Write down their first names and their ethnic origins.

FIRST NAME	ETHNIC ORIGIN
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

26. To what extent is being Hispanic or of Hispanic origin important to you? (Circle one)

Very important Somewhat important Not Very important Not important at all

27. If you had to choose two words that you felt best described Hispanics and/or their culture, which words would you choose?

28. How many TV sets does your family own? _____

29. Do you have a TV set in your bedroom?

_____ Yes

_____ No

30. Do you have cable TV at home?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If YES, what cable channels do you get?

_____ A sports network

_____ MTV

_____ Movies without commercials

_____ Anything else? (Write in _____)

31. Do you have a VCR (videocassette recorder) at home?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If YES, how often is the VCR used?

_____ Almost everyday _____ A few times/week

_____ About once/week _____ Once a month or less

32. On a typical school day, about how much TV do you watch:
(FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE NUMBER OF HOURS AND MINUTES)

a. Between the TIME YOU GET HOME and DINNER?

_____ Hours _____ Minutes

b. Between DINNER and the TIME YOU GO TO BED?

_____ Hours _____ Minutes

33. How much TV do you watch:

(FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE NUMBER OF HOURS AND MINUTES)

a. On SATURDAYS? _____ Hours _____ Minutes

b. On SUNDAYS? _____ Hours _____ Minutes

34. How often do your parents know what TV programs you are watching on television? (Circle one)

Always | Sometimes | Rarely | Never

35. Has one of your parents ever told you that you are watching too much television?

_____ Yes

_____ No

36. Are there any shows your parents won't let you watch because they think the stories or characters are not good for you?

Yes

No

If YES, list the names of such shows: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
--

37. On school nights, how late can you stay up to watch TV? (Check one)

8:00 pm 10:00pm No special time

9:00 pm 11:00pm or later

38. Who do you usually watch TV with? (Check all that apply)

Usually alone

With brothers or sisters

With parents

With friends

Others (Who? Please write in: _____)

39. Which one of the following do you watch more frequently? (Check one)

I mostly watch Spanish language TV

I mostly watch English language TV

I watch both about the same

40. How often do you watch the following kinds of TV programs? Circle the appropriate response for each program category (Please note that the examples in parentheses are examples only)

a) Daytime Soaps (e.g. General Hospital, All My Children)

ALWAYS SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER

- b) Night Soaps (e.g. Dallas, Dinasty, Falcon Crest)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- c) Cartoons
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- d) Game Shows (e.g. Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- e) News/News Shows (e.g. News, Sixty Minutes)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- f) Situation comedies/sit-coms (e.g. Family Ties, The Cosby Show, Who's the Boss, Cheers)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- g) Movies
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- h) Police/Detective Shows (e.g. Cagney and Lacey, Miami Vice, Magnum P.I., Ohara)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- i) Musical variety shows/Talent shows (e.g. Star Search, Music Machine, Putting on the Hits)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- j) Sports/Sport shows (e.g. Baseball and basketball games, boxing, Wide World of Sports)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- k) MTV (Music Television)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- l) Spanish language news (e.g. Local News, National News)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
- m) Spanish shows/Movies (e.g. Charitin; El Chavo del Ocho; movies)
- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|

41. Write down the name of your favorite TV show. You may list an English or Spanish Language show. Please be specific.

My favorite TV program is _____

42. Why do you watch TV? Circle YES or NO for each possible reason.

I WATCH TELEVISION . . .

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| a) ...because it excites me. | YES | NO |
| b) ...because it cheers me | YES | NO |
| c) ...because it relaxes me. | YES | NO |
| d) ...because it makes me feel
less lonely. | YES | NO |
| e) ...when I am bored. | YES | NO |
| f) ...so I can get away from the rest
of the family. | YES | NO |
| g) ...so I can forget about my problems. | YES | NO |
| h) ...because it teaches me how other
people deal with the same problems
I have. | YES | NO |
| i) ...because it helps me know how I am
supposed to act. | YES | NO |
| j) ...because I can learn about my own
Hispanic culture and its people. | YES | NO |
| k) ...because I learn things on televi
sion I do not learn in school. | YES | NO |
| l) ...because I get to see what people
are like. | YES | NO |
| m) ...because it shows what life is
really like. | YES | NO |
| n) ...because I want to know what is
going on in the world. | YES | NO |

43. If the newspaper, a news magazine, radio, and television all gave conflicting reports about the same news (e.g. the sale of arms to Iran or the Iran-Contra hearings), which one would you believe more? (Check one only)

- a. _____ radio
- b. _____ television
- c. _____ newspaper
- d. _____ magazine

44. Please indicate how much you AGREE/DISAGREE with each of the following statements (Circle the appropriate response)

a) The jobs men do on TV are like the jobs men do on real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

b) The jobs women do on TV are like the jobs women do on real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

c) Families on TV are like families in real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

d) Teenagers on TV are like teenagers in real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

e) The same things that happen to people on TV happen to people in real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

f) Hispanics on TV are like Hispanics in real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

g) Blacks on TV are like Blacks in real life.

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY

h) Asians on TV are like Asians in real life. DISAGREE

STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE

45. How many Hispanic characters are there in the tv shows you usually watch?

A LOT OF CHARACTERS QITE A FEW CHARACTERS A FEW CHARACTERS NO CHARACTERS AT ALL

46. In your opinion, TV is more likely to portray Hispanics _____. (Check one)

_____ as good people

_____ as bad people

_____ as both good and bad people

47. In your opinion, how similar are Hispanic TV characters to Hispanics in real life? (Circle one)

Very similar | Somewhat similar | Not very similar | Not similar at all

48. Write down two words that you feel accurately describe Hispanics as you usually see them on TV.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!!!!!!

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