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# False Stereotypes

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### Recommended Citation

Everard, Jordan, "False Stereotypes" (2018). *2018 Symposium*. 33.  
[https://dc.ewu.edu/scrw\\_2018/33](https://dc.ewu.edu/scrw_2018/33)

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False Stereotypes  
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Author's Note

Jordan Everard is an Eastern Washington University Student. This paper was submitted for consideration to the 21 st Annual EWU Research and Creative Works Symposium on March, 2018 in Cheney, WA and submitted as an assignment for Introduction to Chicanx/Latinx Culture (CHST 101/ANTH 161)

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### Abstract

Despite the Latinx community being misrepresented in mainstream American media, countless Latinx individuals have accomplished prestigious milestones throughout history in America. The stereotypical notions that have formed over the years towards Latina/o's are both insulting and undermining. Common traits that these stereotypes follow often include the idea that Latinx people are poor, uneducated, violent and unsuccessful. My intent is to discuss self and societal impacts of these stereotypes and to nullify these negative stereotypes toward Latinx individuals by identifying positive traits that outstanding Latinx citizens possess, along with important positive impacts the Latinx community has made in American society. Through compare and contrast analysis, of peer review and scholarly sources logically rational statements are formed to solidify the conclusion stating that Latinx individuals are not what these stereotypes claim.

**Keywords:** stereotype, equality, contradiction, misrepresentation, latinx

### Introduction

During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, many stereotypes began to form as Euro-Americans migrated into California to participate in the gold rush. Many Latinxs from Mexico joined into the gold rush in hopes to strike it rich. It didn't take long before notices appeared in several mining towns stating that any non-American citizens must abandon the area within 24 hours or suffer consequences. Even though many Latinxs were American citizens, they were targeted for their appearance. A group of armed Anglo men enforced these notices through violence. Lynching of Latinxs would become a common method of asserting Anglo dominance in the region. Anglo squatters began to settle on land that was owned by rancho families. (Bosch, 2013) Many of the stereotypes that formed during this period still linger around in America today.

It is important to note that stereotypes are harmful towards individuals who are involved and to society as a whole. While some may think it is fun and games, it is extremely harmful mentally and in many cases physically to stereotype someone because of their culture and/or appearance. Ignorance builds off of stereotypes, forming an illusion of justification through *bandwagoning* and narcissism. Even a little bit of *ethnicism* and stereotyping can end up drastically changing another's perspective and influence elevated negative actions. Instead of targeting each other's differences and culture, we should be focus our energies towards unification to stop suffering around the globe. We tend to blame our hardships and problems on anything but the actual source itself. Some twisted people get a raise putting others down and gain a selfish sense of superiority I'm going to talk about the self and societal impacts stereotypes can have in America as a result of these stereotypes floating around to highlight the significance they have on our daily lives.

Of course, the self-impact of stereotypes leaves victims feeling excluded, less valuable and inferior. Even at a young age without direct confrontational experiences regarding negative stereotypes,

the remnants that are subliminally embedded into the minds of those who have been exposed rub off into various types of media and social interaction. Young children of the targeted groups are able to pick up on these discrepancies and abnormalities from imposed views lingering around in the United States. According to Núñez & Garcia (2017) "...Latina/o children hold their race/ethnicity in lower regard when compared to Whites, exhibit an ambivalence regarding identity that negatively affects their self-esteem and their perceptions of college as an attainable goal..." If children's self-esteems are impacted at such a young age, they will grow up never believing in themselves and often won't attain their maximum potential due to a mental blockage of self-doubt.

Moreover, the societal impact of stereotypes have effected more than most would be comfortable to admit. From America's economy, to our general culture. We take pride in being Americans but yet not all citizens are represented equally. Mainstream media encourages stereotyping and splitting ethnic groups to fight against one another by supplying an endless supply of garbage examples to prove a point that is irrational and abnormal. One example would be the rare inclusion of Latinx related stories in mainstream news. Most of the time a story is aired including Latinx's on the news, it is negative and often gang, drug or criminally related. (Bosch, 2013) The common person who does not know any Latinx people may conclude that all or most Latinx people are exactly how they are portrayed in the news. This creates a social barrier between ethnicities and could possibly effect job opportunities, friendships, relationships and much more. Various groups have formed out of narcissistic ignorance such as the Ku Klux Klan. The sole purpose of these groups are to breed hatred, violence and ethnic supremacy. In the end, these groups hurt society and take us backwards in psychological evolution.

#### Analysis

After reviewing a few generalized Latinx stereotype derivations and effects on society and self, it is time to determine whether any of these stereotypes hold up to their notoriety in any shape or form. To counter these claims, I will utilize contrast analysis to provide contradicting evidence and logic to formally falsify them. For each stereotype, I will attempt to describe the origin and take into consideration historical events, geography, technology and minimal psychology.

The first stereotype to address is the idea that all Latinx people are poor. Since when does a person's ethnicity dictate their financial status? Millions of Latinx immigrants have migrated into the United States during the past two centuries to escape poverty and war. (Bosch, 2013) Moving into another country isn't a cake walk. Many arrived in the country with the clothes on their back, eager to get a piece of the "American dream." Since most Latinx immigrant's primary language is Spanish, it was difficult for them to find decent jobs. Jobs that do not require much communication were naturally adopted by non-English speaking Americans, most of which were Latinx. These jobs usually required employees to work to the bone and barely get by. If non-citizen workers complained about getting short paid, they were reported to immigration, usually deported and made out to be a lesson for the other workers. All of them would work to the bone just to barely get by.

The second stereotype is the notion that Latinx individuals lack intelligence and education. Education in America is sparse and has been extremely neglected in many ways including funding and standardization. According to Zhao (2016) "Children of color and from low-income families have, on average, performed worse on virtually all indicators of academic success: standardized test scores, high school graduation rates, and college matriculation rates. This gap perpetuates the existing inequalities in society." Equal opportunity requires a minimal standard of education for everyone, yet low-income families such as newly arrived immigrants are forced to send their children to the school(s) in the nearby

geographical area from which they live. The irony of this phenomenon is that school funding is directly associated with student attendance and performance. Low income areas generally have a poorly funded schools and therefore teachers.

Adding on, With many families being first or second generation immigrants, the sudden change in culture, agenda and priorities take time to get adjusted. Even with government aid, it is hard to sustain and even more difficult to get ahead. Affordable housing is usually available near the schools that doesn't receive the funding they need to assist students perform academically. The opportunity for learning was not even remotely as close as it is today with the internet. This oppression caused an unavoidable gap in education. Immigrants could not afford to move into a better neighborhood with a better school having recently migrated into the United States seeking a better life. They became compressed into similar locations and standards. These conditions left the Latinx community feeling like second class citizens. After fighting for the natural rights every citizen is promised, more funding and variety have been supplemented in public schools. Educational standards still lack today but college attendance for Latinxs have increased dramatically during the last few decades in America.

Throughout American history, there are countless successful Latinxs that have accomplished things that most people could only dream of. For example, Rita Moreno is a Puerto Rican-American actor who has received all of the major entertainment awards including an Oscar, Tony, Emmy and a Grammy. Her career took off after she performed as Anita in West Side Story. To win even one entertainment award requires outstanding talent and discipline. Moreno is one of only twelve artists to reach this milestone and is considered one of the top role models for Puerto Rican actors. There is no doubt that Rita Moreno is a successful and talented actress. (Bosch, 2013)

The third and fourth stereotypes claim Latinxs are violent and aggressive, this may or may not stem from the rebellious acts after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo where Mexico lost half of its original land to the United States. Many Mexicans were portrayed as angry with the outcome and rebelled through vigilante acts. J. A. (2001). Early media in America often portrayed Latinos as bandits and thieves, bandwagoning off the rebellious acts of a few.

Identically, even though most Latinx individuals in America have had to deal with inequality, harassment and physical harm, most did not commit violent acts or retaliate in the slightest. Instead, the Latinx community formed various forms of human rights campaigns and committed to non-violent protest. Dolores Huerta and César Chávez are great examples of leaders in the fight for equality during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two formed the United Farm Workers of America in California to fight for worker's rights. According to Huerta (2018), "By 1970, the union had achieved many of its goals, and Huerta negotiated the new contracts. In 1972, the NFWA joined with the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and formally became the UFW"

Furthermore, César Chávez organized one of the most powerful political movements in history. La Causa or "The Cause" was a march to Sacramento that spanned over weeks, growing and growing in followers over time and distance. See Roger (2018) "On March 17, Chávez leads strikers on a 340-mile march from Delano to the steps of the state capitol in Sacramento; a rally in Sacramento on April 10 draws 10,000 people." Despite the large amount of concentrated people marching, no violence broke out during the entire event. April 10<sup>th</sup> 1966, Dolores would deliver one of her most memorable speeches at the end of the march in Sacramento. The grand finale brought a lot of attention and support to the cause. According to Roger (2018) "During the march and after a four-month boycott, Schenley Vineyards negotiates an agreement with the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), the first genuine union contract between a grower and farm workers' union in U.S. history."



In conclusion, the lingering negative stereotypes that have pestered the Latinx community over the past century are deemed false through contrast analysis and contradicting examples that Latinx individuals possess. It is wrong to classify any group of people negatively from the actions or traits of a few. Modern media continues to target ethnic, age and political preference groups. Subliminal segregation is a big issue in today's society and will continue to cause misrepresentation, confusion and inaccurate conclusions. By focusing on the negative aspects, a biased perspective forms for viewers against the targeted group. Even though it is common sense that no particular group is all the same, a logically structured formal rebuttle against these stereotypes is necessary to address and deny the notorious notions in a publicly documented entity.

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