HOLLYWOOD PORTRAITS AND INFLUENCE THE LATIN AMERICA CULTURE

A literature review submitted as a requirement to obtain the degree of professional in Modern Languages

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Abstract

This research studies the influence that the cinema has over the Latin stereotypes. Over the years Hollywood has created a global phenomenon around the world as they have the control about the Cinematographic Industry, for this reason they are a communication bridge between cultures. In a sense, they have created stereotypes of people and in this way they created an image of people from different countries and cultures, but sometimes those images could be negatives and sometimes those are positives depending on how much Hollywood knows about the culture they are referring. It is highly probable that Latin American people have been adapted to the different behaviors that they perceive from the North American people and is this way they change their way to think. Also, this research focuses on the importance of being aware of the stereotypes that Hollywood are showing all the time with profitable purposes.

Keywords: North and Latin American people, cinematographic industry, stereotypes

Resumen

Esta investigación estudia la influencia del cine sobre el estereotipo latino. Al pasar de los años Hollywood ha creado un fenómeno global alrededor del mundo al tener el control en la industria cinematográfica, por esta razón ellos son un puente de comunicación entre culturas. De esta manera ellos han creado estereotipos en la gente introduciendo diferentes imágenes sobre países y culturas, pero algunas veces estas imágenes pueden ser negativas o positivas dependiendo de cuanto sabe Hollywood acerca de la cultura a la que se refiere. Es muy probable que los latinos adapten comportamientos diferentes los cuales han percibido en los americanos y de esta forma cambian su forma de pensar. Esta investigación también se enfoca en la importancia de tener presente los estereotipos que Hollywood está mostrando todo el tiempo con propósitos lucrativos.

Palabras claves: americanos y latinos, industria cinematográfica, estereotipos

Table of Contents

Introduction

The development of this research has based on the first hand the stereotype created by the influence, thoughts, manipulation and exaggeration of people, leading us to choose, study and analyze one of the most powerful entertainment organization that uses the subjects mentioned before, created by the people itself to be the untouchables in the cinema industry of the whole world and we know it as Hollywood. Talking about cinema actually is interesting, their genders and endless types of opinions of viewers about movies was the key to go beyond and ask ourselves the main idea of this research.

The research begins developing an understanding of the culture of the parties involved North and Latin America making comparisons, ways of think and act of both and their main influences here is where it comes out Hollywood and their strong and effective influence over the Latin people. Knowing this, the subject of "stereotypes" becomes one of the main focus to develop the investigation to get the precise conclusion of this research.

Problem statement

It is universally acknowledged that the North American Cinematographic has a large global impact and thus spread messages true or false about cultural groups to other countries where the Cinematographic Industry is established as a main source that give information and representations of countries, cultures or ethnic groups that do not know each other by physical contact. In North American films, it is possible to know how the Latin America stereotype is established according to the North American thought; however, some items are true but most of all are not, that it is known as plot in the film industry in general.

First of all, this specific subject has a strong influence in a person from this region, for instance it affects the way of dressing, eating habits, music preferences, the behave changes, so forth. On the other hand the North America culture has a strongly influence regarding stereotypes, actually stronger than the Latin America, hence, the Latin American people are modifying their own culture by seeing and being in touch with these types of American behaviors, which eventually impact the original culture.

For this reason it is necessary to find out why this happens and why this has a strong influence in the Latin American culture and their people, therefore the following research question is posted: How does Hollywood portrait11+ and influence the Latin America culture? This will be the path to investigate, analyze, and find out the true nature of this phenomenon that involves thousands of people around north and Latin America.

Literature Review on, North and Latin America Culture, the Hollywood Stereotypes

It is not clear sometimes what we understand as culture, North and Latin America culture, stereotype and finally the North America cinematographic industry; most of people believe on what other people say, only few get really interest and wants to know the true for also spread it among their friends or familiar, for this reason this research starts defining them with the purpose to clarify the context of this study.

Culture

First of all, Tharp (2009) stated, "Most simply, culture involves three basic human activities: what people think, what people do, and what people make. Further, several common properties arise: culture is shared, learned, transmitted cross generationally, symbolic, adaptive, and integrated." (p.3) taking that into account we can know that a specific culture can be share and adopt by a Latin person and one instance could be the music festivals such as Summerland, Lollapalooza, Estéreo Picnic, The Day After and Rock in Rio. Which has been adapted in Latin America but they origin is from North America.

Besides, in the research "Building Our Understanding: Culture Insights Communicating with Hispanic/Latinos" Beebe, Beebe, & Redmond (2005) emphasized culture as the broadest sense where it is including how people think, what they do, and how they use things to sustain their lives, also includes cultural diversity like the elements, values, and context of each culture distinguish it from all others (p.1) each culture is defined as a unique way of doing things not matter how, in order to have a normal live, Beebe, Beebe, & Redmond refers to the way of acting of a culture. On the other hand Tylor defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". (As cited in Spencer-Oatey, H., 2012, p.1).

Taylor refers to the tools and rules that an individual uses to add and also if it is possible modify inside his/her society. Example, musical liking, specific ways of dress, habits, sports, education and religion. All of these characteristics make a man a member of a specific society.

Additionally, T. S Eliot (1949) in his research "Notes towards the Definition of Culture", explains culture in an individual way that as a member of a culture can contribute with, regarding the way of thinking and acting:

> The culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and that the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which that group or class belongs (p. 19).

In this world there are many people with different ways of thinking, but from all those people there are some that has similar thoughts regarding what they like and believe, they get connected and get along creating a group that follows those thoughts and ways of living. According to the previously mentioned, for the research culture is a group of behaviors and attitudes of several people forming a specific social group which has unique ways of thinking and acting in a single way, also the fact that if a person is from another nation than the other does not mean they are enemies, the cultures must be teach no matter the beliefs of individuals, because it is by teaching that we get to know the truth of the other cultures and maybe join to them or not.

North and Latin American Culture

As far as the vital definitions of this research, North America culture, as the Lewis University (2002) mentioned "The United States has one of the most demographically diverse populations in the world from the immigration of so many groups of people. Because of this, it is not easy to characterize the people or the culture." (para. 1) America basically was forged by thousands and thousands of immigrant people, coming from countries like Africa, Ireland, Spain and of course Latin America, creating a multicultural environment in the American culture, over time, those cultures mixed with the America one and started to create a unique American Culture, that is the stereotype that Latin American people known, as always people just follows what other people say that is why a stereotype is created and it is what we all know, a clear example is that for a Latin person an North American person is skinny or fit, tall, white, blonde person with green eyes and very racist people.

Also, The North American are seen as people who are charitable or volunteer people, very positive and optimistic people, knowing as hardworking people in their jobs, to close this idea, we have a discussible behavior about the Americans are seen by the Latin as arrogant, egomaniacal, vain and promiscuous.

Moving on to the Latin America culture, Webster's 3rd International Dictionary defined Latinos and Hispanic as:

> Latinos are people of "Latin-American" descent widespread usage of the term "Hispanic" dates back to the 1970s, when the Census asked individuals to self-identify as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central/South American or "other Hispanic." While the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably, they do have different connotations. (As cited in creating a culture of healthy leaving. n.d., p, 1)

There are several connotations about Latin/Hispanic people, actually there is not a specific definition for both, in the United States the word "Hispanics" includes people from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, in the South and Central America, the word "Latinos" includes any person with Latin American origin. The international thoughts of the Latin culture is: they are violent people who live in an uncivilized robust environment, also they believe that Latin people live in exotic and maddening weather places, taking into account the experiences of the tourist in the Colombia country. Also, they are known as multi raze people, extrovert, happy, lazy people so forth.

For this research we will use the word "Latino" to include the population from Central and South America which is a culture rich and multi-faceted by lifestyles and ways of looking at life that are in common throughout the majority of the region.

Stereotype

Having the North and Latin American culture clear in this research it must be explained what a stereotype is. Regarding the origin of this study. As is cited in "Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination", Lippmann (1922), "Introduced the term 'stereotype' to refer to the typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group" (p.7). As Lippmann states, a lot of people get attracted by a particular image of a social group, for the research stereotype is the insight that the North America people have about the Latin people, such as they are violent, aggressive, passionate, and outgoing people. However it is bad to generalize the idea of a general behavior of its people, because all people are not the same.

On top of that, Williams and Spencer (2010) described this action as:

> Most recent definitions of culture characterize it as a set of shared meanings and practices that are transmitted, communicated, and reinforced among members of a cultural group, and that, in turn, influence the values, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors of their members. This transmission of a cultural group's shared knowledge is key to its sustenance. The use

of stereotypes, which are a means by which knowledge about social groups is shared among members of a culture, is an important component of a definition of culture as shared knowledge. (p. 591).

A clear example is how the North America people in their movies emphasize a "Latin" person as a drug dealer who comes to United States to make money with this illegal business, with this in mind, is important to understand that this transmitted ideas are negative for the stereotyped groups, who finally would be victimized or rejected by others. According with the previously said, Blum (2004) concluded that the stereotypes that a society has of another one are misleading generalizations held in manners that the rest of the world defined as a normal behavior of they, and this cultural wrong image would be larger and more difficult to remove over time (p.251).

The generalizations have always been bad in every aspects or subjects, people know this but still continues generalizing just because they do not like that aspect or subject instead of leave it alone they start to talk bad about it and start to generalize everyone that form part of it is a bad person. After generalize, inevitably creates stereotypes by what people say but we have to take into account that few people knows and do not exaggerated the true of a correct stereotype. As for stereotypes Bolardo, Coffman, Gennaioli, & Shleifer "Stereotypes" is cited Madon (2001):

> While some stereotypes are inaccurate, many are quite fair ("Dutch are tall," "Swedes are blond.") Moreover, many stereotypes are flattering to the group in question rather than pejorative ("Asians are good at math"). Finally, stereotypes change, so they are at least in part responsive to reality rather than entirely rooted in the past. (p.2)

Also, to conclude the stereotype subject for this investigation Bolardo, Coffman, Gennaioli, & Shleifer (2015) refers to stereotypes as an individual thinking that spreads trough out a society:

> Stereotypes are context dependent. The assessment of a given target group depends on the group to which it is compared. For instance, when comparing Irish to Scots, the stereotype of Irish may change from "red-haired" to "Catholic". In particular, when types are defined by several dimensions, stereotypes are formed along the dimension in which groups differ the most. (p.5)

Therefore, most of people have already a general stereotype of people by many reasons, for example the racism in America, where is the discrimination of Black people, who are associated with the crime and violence, which it is also know that not the whole color people are criminal, like William Smith, Jamie Fox, Denzel Washington, Samuel L Jackson, Tyrese Gibson,

Clifford Joseph Harris, so forth. They are the best color actors in America. But in Latin America the thoughts of what a color people are is exactly the opposite, they are working people, friendly, like to party in their own way and for us they are like the white people, regarding stereotypes.

Concluding this study and analyzes of what stereotype is, thus this research defines stereotypes as, the way that North American people have an image about the Latin American people and vice versa. The generalization is wrong and it is not good for people who belong to any kind of group or community might fall into misunderstandings and wrong ideas, so people have to know other cultures to change the image that they had, because it is a bad idea to pretend have always these images that someone else gave before.

Cinematographic Industry

The last vital definition for this research is the North America cinematographic industry; The film director Brooks (n.d) mentioned something very interesting regarding the evolution of the cinema "the images are the first, and with images, the same as music, the main reaction is emotional" (p.1) the emotional power of the cinema is easily translated to other cultures and make Hollywood movies been the main exports to other countries (as cited in Clack, n.d, p.1). Hollywood is the greatest industry around the world it is difficult and almost impossible that other industries can get this recognition or the influence that they already have, when an organization or association monopolize their market, there is few the competence can do. A perfect example is Coca-Cola, they have an unique product in which people have chosen and likewise positioned as the best of the best.

On the other hand "American Cinema connects subjects such as history, business, and English with other studies. In addition, it is a perfect vehicle for developing visual and media literacy skills and can be used as a springboard for creative-writing endeavors and media production." (New York Center for Visual History.1995. para. 3) it explains the exact style and way to create an American movie with a specific order, study, develop and production of itself.

With the advancement of technology the industry has changed in a dramatically way, there was a time were people stop getting interest going to cinema because it was always the same, there was not real change until the 3D technology arrived from there the evolution of the cinema regarding technology began a new era of making movies. Then, followed this Hollywood has had a million of ideas to dominated the global entertainment, as Douglas Gomery mentioned "while the activity of other national cinemas is limited themselves to their country of origin, the

Hollywood film industry made the world its own market" (as cited in Luis Laborda's research, 2007, p. 63) the cinematographic industry allowed that North America to extends its influence beyond the borders, and in this way it created the industrial development of North America and made large commercial positions around the cinematographic industry leaving aside the German and French industry. With this industrial growth Hollywood is all that nowadays we know, see and also adapt in our daily lives.

Cinematographic Influence

As the technology advance, it starts to get people's attention regarding the indirect creation of stereotypes in specifics movies, we also have to take in account the gender, the main characters, the plot and where the main idea of the movie comes from. An entire image of a country reflects of those kind of movies and starts to create a common though among people, starting to talk, exaggerating and as a result creating stereotypes.

As previously mentioned stereotyping are necessary for the production of films because Hollywood used the stereotype of melodramatic theater with the purpose of helping the viewer understand the thematic. In better words, Hayward emphasized that "For reasons of simplification, the stereotype helps save time in the cinema, because the viewer quickly understands the meaning of what is being presented, allowing no need for further characterization" (Hayward, 2010) however this industry has exaggerated those stereotypes creating negative images between cultures that do not know each other.

Incidentally, we must not forget that any media influence in the lifestyle of people, but only they decide how and what time of their life are influenced by the medias, "It appears that the preferences of young persons for certain programs are not determined entirely by supply, but are also influenced by other factors: age, level of development, sex, social and economic circumstances, etc." (UNESCO, 1961, p. 18) it is obvious that the age is an important part regarding the gender of the movie, when Latin people get connecting with a movie in a specific time of their life a bound is created and it is from here that not only create a bound but start to change their lifestyle according to what the movie shows.

"American movies account for more than 70 percent of films seen in most of Western Europe and have a 90 percent market share in many other countries around the world." (Stille, 2001, p. 1) it shows Hollywood as the dominant in the Cinematographic Industry and has a consequence they are able to use this stereotypes on their favor, a pretty good example to show

the influence and the control that Hollywood has over the world is the 7th saga of Harry Potter phenomenon, in the article Children's literature written by Bell (2001) explained:

> Harry Potter is a projected set of seven volumes, the fourth released in the United States at special midnight bookstore sales clearly not geared to children's attendance), which have now been published in over thirty-three countries, with a worldwide sale of over a hundred million copies. (p. 44)

How a book made for children was taken by Hollywood producers (Warner Bros) to convert it in, a mine of gold. They have used the power of books, they realize that if they make a movie from a book can create discussions, debates and even argues about which is the best, the movie of the book.

As this industry uses influences also it is expert creating prototypes on favoring their movies in a mechanical way, this research arrived to an interesting and also lurid example of how the Hollywood producers (Walt Disney Pictures) use this to keep the Latin audience kneel and waiting for the next movie. Crothers (2007) mentioned in one research that "Built from a few cartoon characters first drawn in the early twentieth century, by 2000 the company had grown to have $25 billion in revenues derives from the main entertainment resource "animated movies" (as cited Wantasen, Walt Disney as the icon of the American popular culture, p.4) this is the main reason why the producers use stereotypes, knowing that the audience will be there in the premiere of the movie and after.

It is necessary to mention the Latin/actors and actresses that are involved in Hollywood, there is particular Latin actress that Hollywood has been use here a while because it is a perfect example of a Latin material, the main character of the movie Hot Pursuit (Sofia Vergara) by her way of acting in the movies and TV series creates the perfect stereotype of Latin person specially in this case the Latin woman, in this particular case we found an interesting criticism of Hoffman (2015) "I can't believe just how dumb Hot Pursuit is. Moreover I can't believe just how much I laughed." (para. 6) here is where we realize that Hollywood knows what their intentions are.

As for the Hollywood industry the stereotype is the strongest way for them to call the attention of the Latin people, the movie produced by (Summit entertainment) Twilight, created a huge impact in the Latin people as we experienced in the Colombia country, this movie was so influenced that became a trendy among Colombian young people, creating a stereotype of an

impossible love between a vampire and a human in the middle of a conflict between vampires and werewolf.

The Hollywood Reporter*'s* Todd McCarthy (2012) observes*,* "If the entire five-part, 608-minutes-all-in running time of The Twilight Saga means anything at all, it is that vampires are the ultimate fairy-tale characters, as this is a story that literally ends happily ever after and forever for all concerned" (as cited in Exley, para. 2) here is the stereotype that Hollywood transmits to the Latin American people "the happy ending" that in Colombia is a must do in every production of a love story.

So far clearly as we said previously Hollywood is the one who rules in the global Cinematographic Industry, as well as Latin America filmmakers try to copy how Hollywood makes their movies, there are few director who makes movies exactly the opposite, in the research "Socio-Critical Aspects in Latin American Cinema (s)." Queipo (n.d) mentioned:

> Their common goal was to free the viewer through a cinema that not only represented their own reality and denunciated social injustice but also required them to actively participate in the construction of meaning and in political struggle. This perspective clearly opposed the escapism and passiveness proposed by Hollywood's commercial cinema. (p. 13)

Some Latin directors emphasizes their movies regarding the reality of their countries in contrast to the Hollywood Industry in which their power rely on stereotypes to get attention, on this manner the Latin writers have more inspiration at the moment they do their films, as people can know in the Latin films always is a representation about the situation and reality of a country.

While the Latin films directors make an effort to expose what they want to express on their movies the Latin American people still follows the Hollywood stereotypes, it is evident in the affirmation of Heatherton and Sargent (2009):

> (…) observed that adolescents with high exposure to smoking in films were about three times more likely to try smoking or become smokers than those with low exposure to media smoking; the effect remained significant after controlling for a number of risk factors including personality, parenting style and socio-demographics (p. 3)

We realize that what matters Hollywood is to get profit no matter if they show something that they should not, such as smoking in a movie, this simple habit might become a trendy in the Latin people. Another example besides "bad habits" like drugs and alcohol is the sexual content that Hollywood uses to get the attention of the audience. The movie of fifty shades of Grey is the perfect example to feed the morbidity of the Latin American male people.

The director Sam Taylor-Johnson (2015) **"**Tell the story of a virginal young woman in thrall to a man with "singular" needs" (as cited in Linden article. para. 3). In contrast but with the same objective the stereotype of the perfect men is created for the female audience. Hughes (2015) said "But an R-rated movie about bondage and kinky sex that's getting bad reviews and opposition from many women's organizations faces a lot of obstacles if it wants to climb beyond those numbers" (para. 8) showing that several female organization are against this movie because of the abusive actions made against women showing Hollywood not limits in order to accomplish their objectives.

Having enough evidence of how Hollywood affects the Latin American people by stereotypes, the Latin America individual starts automatically by those stereotypes the change of or think or acting, creating all this it creates the desire of go to the headquarters of Hollywood to also profit outside movie making, a clear example of how this works is explained by the essay Great Influence Of Hollywood To World Cinema (2003):

> There is a classical line in Pretty Woman: "welcome to Hollywood what's your dream? Everybody comes here. This is Hollywood, the land of dream. Some dreams come true, some don't. But keep on dreaming. This is Hollywood, always time to dream. So keep on dreaming. (para. 8)

Another example to show the power of the North American Cinematographic industry over the Latin American people is the use of the name of very popular cinema producer's brands to get more profit leaving on a side the strongest to that is the cinema. The Universal Orlando Resort has created the Universal Orlando's Wizarding World of Harry Potter to get the attention of the fans of Harry Potter in order for them to come to Orlando on vacational purposes.

Liston (2014) in her report mentioned the following main attraction of the Universal Orlando's Wizarding World of Harry Potter:

> The addition of Diagon Alley to the theme park is expected to provide a boost for the park's revenues and for tourism in central Florida. It recreates the wizarding business district in London described in J.K. Rowling's popular book series and featured heavily in the subsequent Warner Bros. movies. (para. 2)

One more time Hollywood has showing us that they are able to bring people from the whole world including the Latin American Fans. Hollywood makes their world their market they take advantage of every business opportunity that the world offers, Trueba (2010) qualified Hollywood as bunch of thieves, the same as Wall Street, Politics that manage the greatest

companies. Hollywood is a system based on power and humiliation. (para. 17) there is no boundaries for Hollywood, something that began with a great idea, with an original idea something that is will change the world and they did, it gets to places that they did not even imagine, they start to get seduce and corrupt by the power that people itself has given to them, they get stall and the only way out for them is a single goal, money.

Conclusion

It has been an interesting journey, through this research there were counter feelings interesting analysis, laughs and the discovery of seeing things always deeply to find out a new world hidden realizing good and not that good staff that right now are happening and unfortunately it is too late to reverse it. The "latinos" are proud, happy and strong people who will do whatever they have to do to carry on to assure the life of their love ones but has every culture, race or community nothing is perfect and easily can be break , seduce and corrupted by the modern material world, leaving behind costume, humility ways of acting and behave. This kind of influence is so strong that literally change the life of millions of people.

Getting inside the research there were unexpected discoveries, the north America cinema industry "Hollywood" has established a solid control over the Latin people with stereotypes to get their products on track, with simple examples of specific movies mentioned on the research we realize that, this movies indicate the "Latinos" what to do and how to do it in life situations, also what to buy how to think and how to wear by creations of perfect life's, dramatic beautiful love stories and even the change of a fictional character from horrible, bad, cruel and every bad things that people of this world can think into the perfect character, in love of an impossible love that in the end there was not that impossible, beautiful, and a protector of his family.

The Latin person knows the truth but in order to get acceptation in his or her community, does not say what it should, here is the first conclusion of this research. If a movie gets so much popularity and it becomes trendy topic in every were you go a stereotype has created for people to act in a mechanical way and if the person being precise "Latin person" does not follow he or she will be catalog has an ignorant, odd, rude, and not in fashion person.

This unfortunately but true reality leads us to the second conclusion, if this behavior were at the contrary that instead of following stereotypes we say what we feel and simply be ourselves, our Latin American people would not be exploited and would not be forced to live, in an entire life of appearances such has we are living right know.

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