



Exclusive Inclusion
of Latinx Representation

By
Jarod Todeschi



Systemic Racism in Film and Television

Historically, representations of hispanic and Latinx people (and all non-white bodies) in the media have been whitewashed. Characters written through a white racial frame, or portrayed in mimicry by white performers can equally embody the ways in which the white dominated media industry is intensely problematic.



Attempts to "diversity" industries even reinforce the white racial frame, suffering the consequences of exploitation within racial capitalism, exclusively using brown bodies as trophies of inclusion.

Representation Through the White Racial Frame

Latinos comprised none of the top 10 TV show creators, 1.1% of producers, 2% of writers, and 4.1% of directors.

IndieWire

Heterosexual Latinos are depicted as overbearing fathers, gun-wielding gangbangers, deadbeat stoners, and dutiful janitors, while heterosexual Latinas are represented as loud-mouthed lovers, gossipy maids, and passionate dancers.

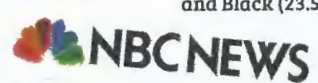
No Latinos currently serve as studio heads, network presidents, CEOs, or owners.

"If the casting continues to portray a very singular look for Latinos, then that means women continue to be overly sexualized and men equally have to be the dominant, macho role." - Felix Sánchez

Of all on screen female nudity Latinas,

37.5% MOST LIKELY

To partially or fully remove clothes in comparison to White (31.9%) and Black (23.5%) character.



HEADLINE | HOLLYWOOD

Of all actors in top Hollywood films,

5% are Hispanic.

Half of Latino Immigrant Characters on TV Are Portrayed as Criminals, Study Finds (Exclusive)



BLUES

"Wilmer Valderrama won over our hearts for his portrayal of Fez, the token foreigner in That '70s Show... the actor, now 36, is now using his own experience as a first-generation American to shed light on the contentious topic of immigration... Valderrama said his success — from the child of immigrants to a sitcom star — exemplified what America was supposed to be. 'Unfortunately, a lot of young people are growing up with the word 'immigration' being somehow negative... it's the biggest gift that this country has ever had.'"

That '70s Show



Wilmer Valderrama as Fez

modern family



Sofia Vergara as Gloria Delgado-Pritchett

Sitcom

Characters



Nora Rivera as Sandra Lopez



Ricardo Montoya de la Rosa Ramirez



Adrian R. Monte as Esteban Julio

69% of "Iconic Media Maids" since 1996 were Latina.

Latina



"When I did see Hispanic or Latino people on the screen, they were rarely portrayed in a good light. I know they had Esteban in 'The Suite Life of Zack and Cody,' but he was the comedic relief—a token character." - Kelly Quintana (Savannah College of Art & Design - The Connector)

HUFFPOST

"There are very few ethnic LGBT characters on television, so I am honored to represent them," Rivera told Latina.

aplus

"Vergara notes that though she is naturally blonde, she dyed her hair brunette because producers didn't know how to cast her when she started acting in the U.S., because I was voluptuous and had the accent... it was ignorance. They thought every Latin person looks like Salma Hayek."



Adaptation // Appropriation

Ugly Betty became a popular American television adaptation of Colombian telenovela, *Yo Soy Betty, La Fea* in 2006. It reformatted the traditional telenovela stylings in an act of homage to the source material, taking stylistic liberties and adding notably more comedic elements than the original. In similar style, 2014's *Jane the Virgin* adapted Venezuelan telenovela *Juana La Virgen*. Both were met with critical and consumer success. Though they share one executive producer, Ben Silverman who is Jewish, the projects fully involve the demographics that they are referencing.



with critical and consumer success.



Juana La Virgen



One Day at a Time is currently a Netflix sitcom based on the original CBS series of the same name. The 2016 revival focuses on a Latinx family opposed to a White family, like the original which was produced in the 70's and 80's. These formats and concepts restructured in referential imitation might be examples of **Pastiche**. Pastiche celebrates, rather than mocks. Parody might suggest criticism, though all of these adaptations take themselves, their characters, and their audiences seriously in their content.

Commonly seasonal television series feature predominantly white casts participating in Latinx cultural celebrations like *La Dia de los Muertos* and *Cinco de Mayo*. This objectification and trivialization of culture for entertainment might be **cultural appropriation**.



one day at a time

Connect the Latinx actor with the series or film in which they had a prominent role:



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Desi Arnaz | a. <i>Spy Kids</i> |
| 2. Wilson Cruz, | b. <i>Desperate Housewives</i> |
| 3. Danny Trejo | c. <i>Sleepover</i> |
| 4. Eva Longoria | d. <i>My So-Called Life</i> |
| 5. Kathleen Herles | e. <i>Miss Congeniality</i> |
| 6. Efren Ramirez | f. <i>Dora The Explorer</i> |
| 7. Benjamin Bratt | g. <i>Napoleon Dynamite</i> |
| 8. Alexa Vega | h. <i>I Love Lucy</i> |

I ♥ PEDRO



Answer Key

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5. Kathleen Herles, f. Original Dora the Explorer | 1. Desi Arnaz, h. I Love Lucy |
| 6. Efren Ramirez, g. Napoleon Dynamite | 2. Wilson Cruz, d. My So-Called Life |
| 7. Benjamin Bratt, e. Miss Congeniality | 3. Danny Trejo, a. Spy Kids |
| 8. Alexa Vega, c. Sleepover | 4. Eva Longoria, b. Desperate Housewives |

The Guardian
7% OF GAY
CHARACTERS ON
NETWORK TV ARE HISPANIC



Felix Sanchez, co-founder of National Hispanics Foundation for the Arts believes "It all depends on who is in the writer's room because they control the words and images the actors produce...when you don't have diverse writers, you won't have three-dimensional minority characters...when Latinos are represented, they just play stereotypes."

Intersectional Representation

The gay Latino then transforms from a character with agency into an object of scopophilic desire...spectacle due to his asexual buffoonery (Agador Spartacus dancing around in a red wig in "The Birdcage"), or his inability to speak proper English (many of the Puerto Rican contestants on "RuPaul's Drag Race" are given character arcs in which they try to overcome the language barriers). And on occasion, the central white gay character will investigate the gay Latino due to his cultural differences (Patrick in "Looking" investigates Richie's "Hispanicness" and even fetishizes the thought of Richie having an uncircumcised penis). The gay Latino has rarely been afforded the opportunity to be a subject (save for characters like Oscar Martinez from "The Office," Justin from "Ugly Betty," Carlos from "Quinceañera," and Rickie from "My So-Called Life"). He connotes (to borrow a phrase from Laura Mulvey) "to-be-looked-at-ness" due to his eccentric behavior, thus turning his cultural heritage into an exaggeration.

IndieWire

CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES
IN FILM AND TELEVISION
"HOVERS AROUND 2%"
NOMINAL LATINX PERCENT



"The entertainment industry should be a reflection of the society that we live in . . . The industry is failing in representing our nation and the humans that live in it." - Salma Hayek

"She speaks Spanish but she doesn't look Latina." 'Oh, she's exotic.' They would say to my agent, 'So your client, you know, the Latina who looks Black but speaks Spanish...' I was like, 'Wait a minute!'"

- Selensis Levya



"I had just won a top award at Sundance and my manager wanted me to audition for the chubby latina girl in a pilot... I said 'I'm not going for that. He told another one of my reps, 'somebody should tell that girl that she has an unrealistic idea of what she can accomplish in this industry.'"

America Ferrera



Latinx Voices

Awards as Validation ?



"I come to the living room and look at the shelf and think 'Wow, who would've thought I'm a woman, but I'm also that Puerto Rican child who was called a spick. And I feel it in my soul. They are wonderful, symbolic pieces of metal that mean a great deal to me.'"

- Rita Moreno

Rita Moreno is one of only 12 recipients of an Emmy for Television, a Grammy for audio recording, an Oscar for Film, and a Tony award for Broadway -- EGOT considered the "grand slam" of American show business.



NO!



As the present time ages historically, it will be undeniable that there was Latinx influence on mainstream American media and art. Political and cultural alignments, however, might suggest extreme imbalance.

Del Toro's victory is the fourth Best Director win by a Mexican director in the last five years. Del Toro's "compadres" — who he referenced during his onstage Oscars speech — Alfonso Cuarón (*Gravity*, 2014) and Alejandro Iñárritu (*Birdman*, 2015; *The Revenant*; 2016) have also won. The trio runs a production company together called Cha Cha Cha Films.

PeopleCHICA

Latinx Public



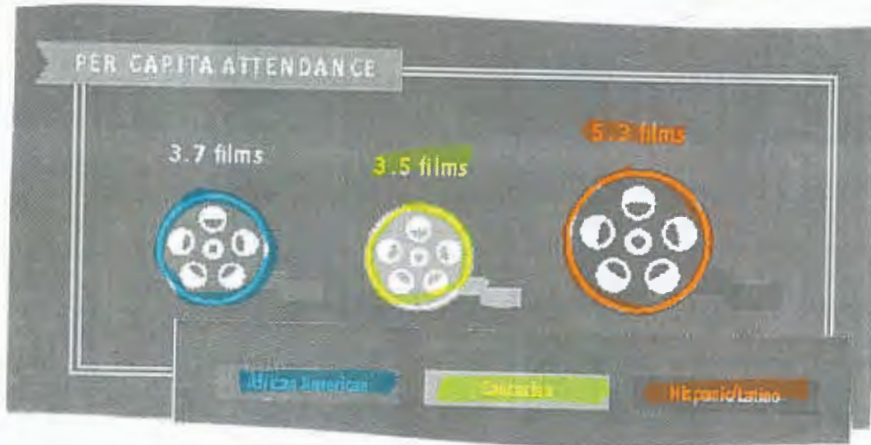
Denise Espinoza @dgecuts · Mar 13

There is a misconception going around that #latinx #qpoc don't have stories or not willing to share. Wrong! We lack the resources, funding, backing. #Support that is needed to share our stories. #RepresentationMatters #IndieFilmmaker

1 2 4

16.3%
OF US POPULATION

25%
OF MOVIE
BOX OFFICE SALES



K.poet @KatrinaPoet · Mar 8

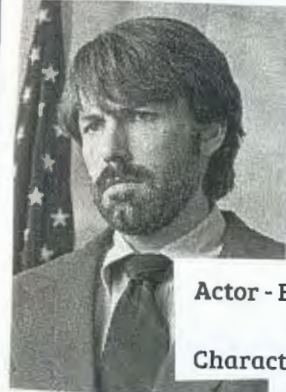
Grateful for the show One Day At A Time featuring Rita Moreno! There needs to be more representation for Latinos, and this show is not only hilarious, but it highlights the struggles that some Latino families go through. @OneDayAtATime #motherdaughterfestivities #latinx

17 73

A Columbia University Study suggests that in the 1950's, Latinos made up just 2.8% of the population, though accounted for 3.9% of leading actor roles. This means that media representation has not grown to reflect the populations growth. Latinx representation on Television was arguably stronger in the 1950's.

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White Washed Latinx Roles



ARGO

(2012)

Actor - Ben Affleck, English, Irish, German, Scottish ancestry. Also Director of project.
Character - Tony Mendez, CIA Operative Mexican, Italian, French, and Irish ancestry.



**COCAINE
GODMOTHER**
THE GRISelda BLANCO STORY

(2017)

Actor - Catherine Zeta-Jones, Welsh ancestry.
Also Producer of project.
Character - Griselda Blanco, Drug Lord, Colombian ancestry.



**A MIGHTY
HEART**
Based on a true story.

(2007)

Actor - Angelina Jolie, European ancestry.
Character - Mariane Pearl, Journalist, Afro-Chinese, Cuban, and French ancestry.



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In the listed cases of *Argo*, *Cocaine Godmother*, and *A Mighty Heart*, we see the unfortunate erasure of true stories, with real people who were not portrayed by performers that reflected their complex backgrounds and unique stories.

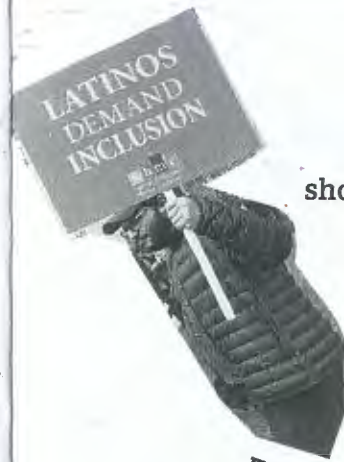


In other cases, such as *Nacho Libre* (2006), and *Drive* (2011) Jack Black and Carey Mulligan, white actors, portray fictional hispanic characters. This deepens the erasure as neither real nor imagined hispanic representation is clean slated.



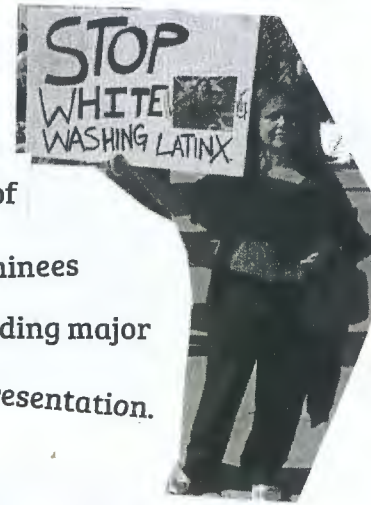
It's important we celebrate, employ and represent all Latinos from European to Afro-Latinos, because it is our responsibility as an industry to give this entire generation positive representation so that no one feels invisible.

VARIETY Gina Rodriguez



The 2018 ceremony showed a diverse range of

nominees excluding major Latinx representation.



Leading up to 90th Academy Awards in February of 2018, the Hispanic Media Coalition protested lack of executive-level Latinx figures in film and television production.



Hollywood Protests

Other Non-White Demographics

'We're the geeks, the prostitutes': Asian American actors on Hollywood's barriers

Films like *Ghost in the Shell* have fueled debate over whitewashing, while roles are few for Asian Americans - and when they are wanted, it's often to play offensive stereotypes



You May Know Me from Such Roles as Terrorist #4

All non-white people are subject to the white racial frame and the white gaze in industries with such racial inequality as media and entertainment.



Latin American Television reinforces white ideals and standards of beauty, creating a hierarchy that idolizes light skinned, white passing actors. This colorism is evident in the US examples presented.

Colorism Outside of Hollywood

The Dark Side of Hispanic TV

MARCH 14, 2016 BY GUEST POST

By SANDRA D. RODRIGUEZ COTTO

That is why in order to be on Hispanic television, people must be blonde, white-skinned, preferably with blue or green eyes, thin and tall and with straight hair. A little of black hair color is allowed, but all the better if it is dyed to blonde. They might allow some people with brown complexion, but the rest are outcasts.

Dismantling Coloniality

If white supremacy was fought with inclusion and more People of Color found themselves in executive entertainment positions, or with other creative agency over their own image portrayals, could **decoloniality** be celebrated?

Probably not. The structures of colonization would remain as the dominant structures, no matter the background of the individuals filling the positions.

Because of American culture and whiteness' intrusive influence on Latinx individuals through language **borders**, **environmental privilege**, and other products of white supremacy, decoloniality is far from reachable.

What do you do to ensure your media consumption is intersectional?

How can consumers assist in an institutional shift within the entertainment industry?

Do you think you accurately see yourself portrayed in the media? Why or why not?