Beyond Stereotypes and Spectacle: Understanding the Latino Threat Narrative

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Historically, the United States has been referred to as a "melting pot"; a country rich with cultures, ideas, traditions, and immigrants. Immigrants, in particular, have played a pivotal role in the foundation of the United States as a nation. Despite their contributions to this country, perceptions towards immigrants have always varied and over the last few decades, Americans' perceptions have drastically changed towards one group in particular; the Latino immigrant population. Feelings of negativity and animosity that exist towards Latino immigrants have given way to a larger threat narrative built upon a set of premises, or taken for granted truths, regarding Latinos. Stereotypes perpetuate this national dialogue and are to blame for the ways in which Latinos are perceived in the United States. This research highlights the prevalence of the Latino Threat Narrative in today's society and the ways in which it continues to reaffirm the Latino community's place on the margins of American society.

Hypothesis

Prior to beginning this project, I was aware that Latino immigrants living in the United States found themselves encountering a larger threat narrative existing on a national level. This threat narrative has been built upon stereotypes and assumed "truths". These stereotypes place Latinos at the center of national conversation, as immigration is a very current issue in our country today and many Americans have harsh attitudes towards the topic as a whole. This discourse is highly detrimental to the Latino immigrant population and ultimately keeps them on the margins

of society. The media plays a significant role in the production of the threat narrative because it is the most common means of producing irrational propaganda thus hurting the group in which the propaganda is aimed towards. With a large emphasis placed on the media in society, I hypothesize that the national Latino threat narrative discourse will continue to thrive under these circumstances.

Point of Departure

Marshall Soules in his book *Media, Persuasion and Propaganda* discusses Ellul's (1965) two contrasting categories of propaganda, each with its own motivations and strategies: irrational versus rational propaganda. Irrational propaganda is often times filled with false logic, makes arguments to emotions and appeals to beliefs, myths, and symbols. Rational propaganda presents itself as scientific evidence, sound reasoning, realism, and common sense (Ellul [1965] 1973: 62-87; Marlin 2002: 36-9). In the case of the Latino Threat Narrative in the United States, Ellul's (1965) category of irrational versus rational propaganda is an integral part of the discourse. In analyzing the threat narrative discourse that targets Latino immigrants in the United States, the premises and set of purported "truths" that act as a foundation for the threat narrative are exemplary of irrational propaganda. The media has played a key role in putting forth ideas and stereotypes concerning Latino immigrants. For example, the media often depicts Latinos as criminals or drug lords that bring contraband into the United States. Propaganda, as a tool, is implemented to further reinforce the ideas and stereotypes that the media has created in regards to Latino immigrants in this country.

Soules (2015) in his discussion of compelling images, highlights the concept of spectacle. He notes that "the spectacle presents itself as an instrument of unification working through social

relations mediated by images…the spectacle justifies elite priorities, whether posing as information or propaganda, advertising or entertainment" (p. 51). Moreover, the spectacle "colonizes the public sphere with its messages and even more significantly, infiltrates the life-world by promoting commodities that engage identity issues and confer status" (Soules, 2015, p. 51). Soules is correct in the ways in which spectacle presents itself, however, spectacles may also be favorable in the way that they positively benefit a group. Spectacle, as a concept, is a central aspect of the Latino Threat Narrative. Latino immigrants are transformed into a spectacle of their own inside the borders of this country. Through the use of propaganda, the public sphere in the United States becomes colonized by stereotypes that have developed over time. The application of spectacle has acted as one of several factors that play a role in furthering the marginalization of Latino immigrants in the U.S.

Review of Literature

In effectively conducting this research project regarding the Latino Threat Narrative and the ways in which it travels through created spectacles on the part of the media, it was important to analyze and review existing literature that pertained to the topic. It was also important to include literature that did not directly relate to my research, but nevertheless, reinforced both topics of threat narrative and spectacle and allowed for critical thinking, by means of looking at a bigger picture that exists. Literature included in this review are separated by category respectively: the threat Narrative discourse and notion of spectacle. Literature used throughout the course of this project had been obtained through various databases online and those offered through Oneonta Milne Library.

The Threat Narrative Discourse

Leo R. Chavez's "The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation" has acted as a foundational text or platform for my research project. Chavez, in his book, addresses the popular discourse that exists towards Latinos in the United States today, particularly targeting Mexican immigrants. The Latino Threat Narrative, a term attributed to Chavez, "posits that Latinos are not like previous immigrant groups who ultimately became part of the nation…Latinos are unwilling or incapable of integrating, of becoming part of the national community. Rather they are part of an invading force from south of the border that is bent on reconquering land that was formerly theirs (the U.S. Southwest) and destroying the American way of life" (Chavez, 2013, p. 3). The book is divided into two distinct parts, "Constructing and Challenging Myths" and "Media Spectacles and the Production of Neoliberal Citizen-Subjects". Leo R. Chavez focuses his attention on several stereotypes that he has found to give way to the national discourse. In the first section of the book, Chavez deconstructs and analyzes the multitude of stereotypes and premises that have given way to the development of the threat narrative in the U.S. In addition, Chavez delves into the negative perceptions attached to undocumented immigration and the ways these perceptions are put forth by the media.

Similar to the work conducted by Chavez, The National Hispanic Media Coalition, in September of 2012, published a report titled "The Impact of Media Stereotypes on Opinions and Attitudes Towards Latinos". This report, as the title suggests, focused on media stereotypes in respect to Latino immigrants and how these media stereotypes ultimately impact the opinions and attitudes of non-Latinos towards the Latino community. The opinions and stereotypes of the Latino community put forth by the media in the United States are what have laid the groundwork for a threat narrative to exist and to continue to grow. In September of 2012, in order to analyze negative

Latino stereotypes, the NHMC conducted a poll, posing a series of questions to 900 non-Latino respondents. One question in particular asked: "How well does each term describe Latinos?" Those who participated in the poll voted on the following six terms: Don't keep up with their homes, take jobs from Americans, too many children, refuse to learn English, less educated, and welfare recipients. The data revealed that 51% of non-Latinos believed that the term "welfare recipients" correctly described Latino immigrants, 50% of non-Latinos believed that the term "less educated" correctly described Latinos, and 44% of non-Latinos believed that the term "refuse to learn English" accurately described Latino immigrants (NHMC, 2012, p. 8). This poll question is important to my topic of research the six terms presented in the poll are terms that play a role in creating the popular national discourse in terms of Latinos being a threat to society. The NHMC, in their report, also makes it a point to address that stereotypes often hold a negative connotation. Most often, stereotypes are believed to be those beliefs or assumed to be truths that hurt or marginalize a group of people, as the Latino Threat Narrative suggests. However, this report emphasizes the idea that stereotypes may also be positive because favorable assumptions are attributed to certain groups.

Kier-la Janisse and Paul Corupe's *Satanic Panic: Pop-Cultural Paranoia in the 1980's* focuses on the 1980's as a time in which many in the United States could not seem to break free from the influence that Satan supposedly had over society. There was a panic over the perceived Satanic influence in the U.S. The media had put forth warnings about an evil conspiracy, creating a cultural hysteria. The idea of the "Satanic Panic" was that Satanic cults operated unchecked and were responsible for crimes including murders and child molestation. The "Satanic Panic" used the media to target Americans and unstill fear in the general public. The goal was to make the

public believe Satan did indeed have a deep influence on the U.S. during the 1980's. In essence, the panic had been caused by the media with little evidence and its repeated claims.

The "Satanic Panic" created by the media during the 1980's is similar to my topic of research because in analyzing the threat narrative surrounding Latinos in the United States, the media puts forth ideas about Latino immigrants as being a particular type of individual with particular types of characteristics (often times, as "illegal aliens" that all appear to "look the same) and therefore lack essence or personality. The Satanic Panic, like the Latino Threat Narrative was created and furthered by the United States media.

Xia Wang, in her journal article "Undocumented Immigrants As Perceived Threat: A Test of the Minority Threat Perspective", examines the minority threat perspective and the effects of objective and perceptual measures of community context on perceived criminal threat from undocumented immigrants in Florida, Texas, California, and Arizona. The minority threat perspective "argues that prejudice and intergroup hostility are largely defensive reactions to perceived threats by subordinate groups" (Wang, 2012, p. 5). Xia Wang explains that "in particular, Blumer (1958) has contended that the dominant group has developed a sense of group position and seeks to preserve its advantageous position in the society. Members of the dominant group are more likely to express prejudice against the subordinate group when they feel the subordinate group will threaten their position" (Wang, 2012, p. 5).

In addition, Wang outlines the causes of perceived threats in terms of the minority threat perspective. Blalock (1967), in further developing the minority threat perspective, maintained that, as the number of minority group members increases, members of the majority group will perceive a higher level of threat, which leads to discrimination and prejudice against the minority group. Perceived threat can also take on the form of both political and economic threats. In terms of

economic threats, as members of the minority group compete for jobs, housing, and economic resources, those who find themselves in the social majority feel that their economic well-being and dominance is being threatened. In terms of political threat, as members of the minority group enhance their political power and their influence in the political sphere, members of the majority group feel that their own political hegemony is threatened and therefore take measures to ensure that they remain the dominant group in society, as seen through the demonization of Latino immigrants. Xia Wang's "Undocumented Immigrants As Perceived Threat: A Test of the Minority Threat Perspective" provides a frame that focuses on the perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrants in the United States. The minority threat perspective places undocumented immigrants at the center of political and economic threats. This threat perspective introduces a frame of reference for the national discourse Chavez refers to as "the Latino Threat Narrative", thus uniting both perspectives.

Yu-Li Chang, through content analysis of U.S. newspaper editorials, in her article "Framing of the Immigration Reform in 2006", focuses in on newspaper editorials in the United States and the ways in which they framed discourse around immigration reform in 2006. Similarly, Chang focused on a series of community characteristics that may have contributed to the frames put forth in the editorials including structural pluralism, Hispanic ethnic identity, partisanship, and religion. Structural pluralism, as an independent variable, referred to those who held bachelor and/or graduate degrees within a community, the population of the county, the county per capita income, and the percentage of those in the workforce that do not hold agricultural, forestry, or fishery occupations (Chang, 2015, p. 8). Ethnic identity, on the other hand, referred to the percentage of Latino or Hispanic population in a county during the 2006-2010 estimates of U.S. Census data (Chang, 2015, p. 9). The more religiously or politically conservative the community,

the more likely its editorials perceived illegal immigrants as "harmful". Partisanship, as stated by Chang (2015), was represented in this article by the percentage of those American citizens who, in the 2004 presidential election, voted for George W. Bush (p. 9). Lastly, religion was "represented by the percentage of citizens engaged in devotional reading in a community" (Chang, 2015, p. 9).

In the United States, the issue of immigration and its reform has divided the country. In 2006, U.S. Congress had attempted to pass a bill that would provide a solution to a problem that has continued to exist concerning the eleven million "illegal" immigrants living within the borders of the United States. During this time, Americans grappled with the new turn of events and "the news media moved quickly to 'frame' the issue by analyzing and interpreting for the audience the controversies surrounding the issue" (Chang, 2015, p. 2). The results showed that editorials in communities that were more structurally or ethically pluralistic and less politically or religiously conservative were more likely to support granting citizenship to undocumented immigrants. The more structurally or ethically pluralistic the community, the more likely its editorials perceived illegal immigrants as "beneficial" to the country.

This article pertains to my research because it is important to not only look at the discourse that targets Latino immigrants in the United States, but the factors that ultimately play a role in shaping the frames within editorials put forth by the media in the United States and consider to what degree such editorials reflect public sentiments. This article demonstrates that events that occur in regards to Latino immigrants in the nation are, once broadcasted by the media, shaped and framed in ways that are particular to the communities in which they are published in. Although there is a national discourse that encompasses Latino immigrants in the U.S., Chang argues that a

single event, immigration reform of 2006, can create perceptions that vary, especially when it comes to particular factors in regards to communities and the size of the newspaper.

On October 30th, 2015, Jesus Trivino, *Latina* Magazine Entertainment Editor, published a video on the magazine's website that addresses ten different stereotypes that exist regarding Latino immigrants in the United States based on the ways that Latinos feel they are labeled as in this country. Stereotypes often include Latinos as the maids, the drug dealers, and the gang members, as being defined by the jobs they have, as taking on the jobs of mechanics, house keepers, and gardeners, as having large families and coming "in packs", as Latina women being crazy, as being loud, as all Latinos being Christian, etc (Trivino, 2015). Stereotypes mentioned in this video are just a few of the many that exist towards Latinos in this country.

Latina magazine's "Ten Latino Stereotypes That Need to Disappear" shows that negative stereotypes further marginalize those who are already living on the margins of society, including Latino immigrants that live within the U.S. Although both negative and positive stereotypes come to exist, it is the negative stereotypes that hurt this group of individuals. This video is helpful in allowing myself as a researcher to uncover a few commonly held stereotypes that exist. Similarly, it is helpful that the narrator of the video, Ariana Rodriguez, is Latina. She is encouraging the Latino community to deconstruct these stereotypes and keep them from continuing to circulate the United States

Robert Tracinski, author of "Is Immigration a Threat to Our Culture?" published in *The Federalist*, focuses on the anti-immigrant rhetoric that has become a large part of Donald Trump's presidential campaign platform. Specifically, Tracinski speaks about "the claim that allowing 'amnesty' for illegal immigrants will create tens of millions of new voters for the Democratic Party. Sean Trende at RealClearPolitics has run the numbers and concludes that this is vastly

overestimated. If we provide a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, not all of them will choose to devote the time and expense required to follow it." (Tracinski, 2015, para. 6). He alludes to a form of Latino Threat Narrative that exists in the United States, targeting undocumented Latino immigrants. He mentions the popular belief that "foreigners are taking our jobs" (Tracinski, 2015, para. 1) as well as touching upon the racism that has become an all too familiar part of Trump's campaign platform. The main focus of this article is centered around the idea that there is a subtler argument that "has gained a disturbing amount of credence" on the political right side; an "argument curbing immigration is about preserving our culture, specifically our political culture, from being diluted by hordes of newcomers who were raised in an alien culture that doesn't value liberty" (Tracinski, 2015, para. 2).

Robert Tracinski's article is highly important in my research because it demonstrates that this discourse is multi-faceted. It reinforces the idea that this narrative is still alive and well; Latinos are still perceived to be a threat to American society and the larger American culture. Tracinski reinforces the existence of the Latino Threat, but at the same token, questions the validity of the discourse and seeks answers. The idea that Latinos are viewed as a political threat is especially prevalent at the moment in time because our country has elected Donald J. Trump for office this coming January. The claim that immigrants are the individuals to blame for dragging America away from the ideal of liberty is ultimately contested. In terms of Latinos as a cultural threat to Americans and the United States, Tracinski makes it very clear that it is ultimately a complaint in disguise concerning Hispanic citizens and the ways in which they tend to vote, being Democrat.

Immigrants as "Spectacle"

Leo R. Chavez, in his article "Spectacle in the Desert: The Minuteman Project on the U.S.-Mexico Border", explains the Minuteman Project as American citizen volunteers traveling to the Arizona-Mexico border to patrol what they term "the front" in an effort to curtail illegal immigration. Jim Gilchrist, the leader behind the Minuteman Project, established it with two main goals in mind. The first goal was to effectively monitor the Arizona-Mexico border and catch any illicit border crossers. The second goal of this project was to produce a spectacle that would garner public media attention and influence federal immigration policies in the United States. The Minuteman Project created a spectacle out of those who illicitly cross the border, as it portrays these individuals in a very negative light, ultimately through catching the media's attention.

Leo R. Chavez's article further reinforces Latino immigrants and the ways in which they are transformed into a spectacle of their own in the United States, specifically through the media. The project itself acts as a spectacle in the way that the Minutemen and the media drew national attention with the goal of creating immigration policy change. Chavez uses a critical cultural analysis frame in the examination of the spectacle in the desert as well as its implications and connotations. In an attempt to contextualize the pseudo-military operation located at the Arizona-Mexico border, the author examines the project in relation to Michel Foucault's contrasting concepts of "spectacle" and "surveillance". Although Foucault introduces these two concepts as contrasting, the Minuteman Project employs a combination of the two. Public performance, a central aspect of the Minuteman Project, "is one that emphasizes the power and privileges of citizenship, which is controlled by the democratic state now standing in the place of the sovereign. The subjects in this spectacle are the 'illegal aliens' who dared to violate the law and in doing so put the privileges of citizenship into question…" (Chavez, 2006, p. 3). In terms of surveillance,

Foucault emphasized this as mode of discipline. Surveillance was a "practice of power that instilled discipline in subjects, producing docile bodies" (Chavez, 2006, p. 4), primarily for those who are aware of surveillance. Chavez's article touches not only upon the goals of the Minuteman Project, but its success in effectively reaching its target population, the media coverage it had received and its implications, and the public discourse that exists in regards to the U.S.-Mexico border being a place of great danger.

Janani Umamaheswar, in the article "9/11 and the evolution of newspaper representations of incarcerated Muslims", addresses the lack of media analysis surrounding incarcerated Muslims and the ways in which they are portrayed in the media throughout the United States. Umamaheswar looks specifically at newspaper reports that had existed prior to the attacks on 9/11 as well as the reports published after the fact. In examining both reports, the author seeks to find any shifts that have occurred in the representations of incarcerated Muslims in the U.S. Umamaheswar (2015) finds that there is an overlap that exists within newspaper reports prior to the 9/11 attacks and those surfacing after 9/11 (p. 17). The author makes sense of the findings by using the minority threat perspective in which Muslim immigrants are perceived as being a criminal threat to the United States as a whole. The author focuses on the attacks that occurred on 9/11 and examines how the media has changed its portrayal of incarcerated Muslims, demonstrating that Latinos are just one of many groups that are marginalized in this country, seen as a threat, and are transformed into a spectacle created by the U.S. media.

Review of Pop Culture Literature

On June 16th, 2015, CNN network released a video clip of Donald J. Trump speaking to a large group of his supporters during a political campaign rally. This video reaffirms Trump's political stance on the topic of immigration and his attitude towards those he refers to as "illegal aliens", as he makes the following statement: "When Mexico sends its' people, it isn't sending its finest". Trump continues on to say that Mexico sends rapists, drug dealers, and criminals to the United States (D. Trump, personal communication, June 16, 2015). His words allude to another aspect of his platform on immigration, insinuating that Mexicans entering the United States are dangerous and a threat to society at large. In his efforts to gain supporters, Donald Trump proposes building a wall on the border between Mexico and the U.S. In doing so, the United States and Trump, as President, would be able to "effectively" keep the "bad ones out" and forces immigrants from both Latin America and Mexico, to enter the country through a legal port of entry.

In this video clip, Trump is seen as actively furthering the threat narrative that exists in regards to Latinos in the United States as part of his campaign platform. Trump is making the argument that more needs to be done about immigration due to the "types" of individuals that enter our country, specifically targeting Mexico and its people. The Latino Threat Narrative has its roots in a set of perceived truths by those who live in the United States towards Latinos as a population. Trump touches upon but a few of the stereotypes that exist concerning Mexican immigrants and not only targets a specific minority population and places the blame on them, but also offers a solution to the problem that he perceives to exist in this country.

Leo. R. Chavez, in "The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation", features a photograph of a Tecate beer advertisement on a billboard placed by Labatt USA in Albuquerque, New Mexico in May of 2004. The billboard advertisement features a Tecate beer bottle that is ice cold, shown by the beads of sweat that cover the bottle in its entirety (Chavez,

2013, p. 75). The bottle is tilted in such a way that it appears to be reclined or falling down, and is accompanied by the text: "Finally, a cold Latina". The purpose behind Labatt USA creating this advertisement was to play into the preexisting stereotypes, or perceived set of truths, that circulate in this country concerning Latina women. Especially by means of the media, the perceived truth about these women is that Latinas are fiery, spicy, sexual beings that are promiscuous and overly-reproductive. This advertisement plays into this stereotype by making a spectacle out of Latina women. The term "spectacle" in this case refers to the objectification of Latina women, by means of the beer bottle which acts as the main focal point of the billboard. Latinas have been reduced down to a beer bottle as part of this visual pun that is not only advertising Tecate beer, but playing into the Latina discourse as it is part of the larger Latino discourse in the U.S. The chosen words by Labatt USA allude to the "hot" Latina rhetoric, as all Latina women are presumed to have a specific set of characteristics that label every single Latina in the same way.

This billboard advertisement is a testament to the Latino Threat Narrative. The advertisement fortifies a specific part of the discourse, targeting Latinas and the assumed "truths" that tend to categorize these women in mainstream America. It is important to note that Latina women are not alone in being the subject of objectification in beer advertisements, as women in general have found themselves portrayed as objects, at the center of advertisements for beer companies that include Budweiser and Original Red. In Labatt USA creating this billboard, they are appealing and reinforcing what every passerby has probably already heard whether they play into it or not concerning Latinas and their place in the national discourse.

Tom Jacobs, in his Pacific Standard article "Donald Trump's Appeal to American Nationalism", highlights American Nationalism as an integral part of Donald J. Trump's campaign. Two sociologists, Bart Bonikowski and Paul DiMaggio, argue that four distinct camps

exist in respect to nationalism, as well as patriotic fervor and distrust of outsiders: Ardent Nationalists, Creedal Nationalists, Restrictive Nationalists, and the Disengaged. Those who identify as Ardent Nationalists make up 24% of the population and had scored very high on levels of national pride and hubris, as "a large majority apparently viewed Jews, Muslims, agnostics, and nationalized citizens as something less than truly American" (Jacobs, 2016, para. 7). Creedal Nationalists make up 22% of the population and are representative of the form of national self-understanding that is associated with a set of liberal principles that include the rule of law, democracy, and universalism (Jacobs, 2016, para. 8). Restrictive Nationalists make up 38% of the population in the U.S. and these individuals only expressed a moderate level of national pride. Restrictive Nationalists can be depicted as those Americans who are disadvantaged at an intersectional level in terms of race, gender, and social class (Jacobs, 2016, para. 9). Lastly, the Disengaged make up 17% of the U.S. population. These individuals are the youngest of the four groups and do not identify strongly as Americans (Jacobs, 2016, para. 10). It is also noted within this article that Trump's campaign implements a highly particular vision of the United States, as a nation, emphasizing the superiority of the American people, the moral corruption that exists amongst elites, and the threats that are posed by both immigrants and ethnic, racial, and religious minorities.

Ardent Nationalists and Restrictive Nationalists are significantly more likely to view immigrants as those individuals who commit crime and take away jobs from Americans and are therefore a threat. As previously stated, Ardent Nationalists make up 24% of the U.S. population and Restrictive Nationalists make up 38% of the population, making up the highest percentages out of all four camps presented in the article. Both groups are likely to play into and believe the

stereotypes that exist surrounding the topic of immigration and Latino immigrants throughout the United States.

Literature included in my research project in terms of the Latino Threat Narrative discourse in the United States parallels each other by means of a similar point of interest seen within each source. Although the literature I have chosen to include in my research stands in relationship to the concept of the threat narrative and Latinos in the United States, it is important to note that not every single source, although a majority, addresses immigrants as solely being Latinos. Often times, the words "undocumented immigrants" are linked to Latino immigrants within the United States, however, Latinos are not the only population facing the issue of lack of documentation in this country. Similarly, as a researcher, it was highly beneficial to include literature that covered the topic of the minority threat perspective because it offers yet another frame that enables me to analyze and interpret the inner workings of the larger threat narrative concerning Latinos in the United States. Overall, the literature incorporated in this research project in regards to the national threat narrative paralleled one another, while providing a degree of difference allowing me to look at information in new ways.

The literature pertaining to the notion of immigrants as spectacle are similar to one another in the way that they all contribute to the topic in which I am researching. However, they are also contrasting. There are those sources that directly relate to my research question because the information contained in the articles is concerning Latino immigrants specifically. Other sources serve as examples that reflect my topic, such as moral panic or the ways in which groups are looked at before and after an event that has caused moral panic in the United States, as well as the ways in which they are portrayed in the media. As I have stated, not every single piece of literature is

directly concerning Latino immigrants as it is the focal point of my research, but the literature directly pertains to the notion of spectacle in one form or another.

"Protest: A Cultural Introduction to Social Movements"

In Chapter Five of James Jasper's "Protest: A Cultural Introduction to Social Movements", there is discussion of the idea of "untouchability". Untouchability "exists as a form of oppression often linked to another form of oppression; slavery" (Jasper, 2014, p. 108). Jasper, in this chapter, draws on the example of the Untouchable caste or Dalits in India. Most often, those who were part of the Untouchable caste were "restricted to occupations that their superiors could not perform without feeling a sense of pollution" (Jasper, 2014, p. 108). The concept of untouchability is undoubtedly present in the national discourse that is the Latino Threat Narrative. Latino immigrants living in the United States face oppression, not solely based on their intersectional identities, but also due to their characterization, as brought forth by the media, as being untouchable to a certain degree. A popular stereotype that circulates in the United States and is embedded in the threat narrative of Latino immigrants is that Latinos are coming to the United States and taking American citizens' jobs. However, it has become widely known that Latino immigrants come to this country and are willing to take on those occupations that Americans are not interested in nor are willing to perform. Similarly, these occupations, most of the time, must be performed at lower wages than others in society. The concept of untouchability presents itself in this situation because many Americans, although not all, would not perform many of the jobs taken on by Latino immigrants because of the feeling of pollution evoked by performing them.

"Contemporary Sociological Theory"

In Jonathan R. Turner's "Contemporary Sociological Theory", *Status Characteristics Theory,* a sub-theory of the Expectation States Theory, is introduced. This theory "describes how actors organize information about initial status differences that they use to generate expectations for performance" (Turner, 2012, p. 380). Expectations of performance ultimately control interaction, thus "ensuring that power and prestige are distributed in accord with expectations" (Turner, 2012, p. 380). Status distinctions are further categorized as diffuse status characteristics that include but are not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, educational attainment, occupation, and physical attractiveness. In addition to diffuse status characteristics, specific status characteristics are also a component of the larger theory. Specific status characteristics are those that produce internal or external expectations in regards to specific abilities of an individual or group.

The Latino Threat Narrative, as a national discourse prominent in the United States, has been constructed in order to continuously reinforce status differences that exist between immigrants, specifically undocumented immigrants, and those who are citizens of the country. This threat narrative suggests that both diffuse and specific status characteristics that Latino immigrants hold ultimately generate how they are expected to perform. The premises for this threat narrative are the stereotypes or assumed truths that're tied to Latino immigrants. Both historically and in the present day, these stereotypes have been constructed and repeatedly reinforced by the media. The media has been the driving force in generating the ways in which Latinos are expected to perform, by means of acquired diffuse status characteristics and specific status characteristics.

Sociological Explanations

Sociologically speaking, the stereotypes and premises of the Latino Threat Narrative, in addition to the transformation of Latino immigrants into a spectacle put forth by the media, are continuously developing in society today. It is crucial to call both into question, as the media is becoming more and more of a powerful source in our world. With this being said, it appears likely that the national discourse concerning Latino immigrants in this country will also continue to strengthen. The media has the power to construct new myths and reaffirm those already existing. The media and its' negative portrayal of Latinos within the larger American society is detrimental as the media keeps this population on the margins of society. The discourse that Latinos find themselves encompassed in is multi-faceted. The media, stereotypes or assumed truths, and notions of spectacle are a deadly combination; one in which thrives amongst Americans in the United States, but severely damages Latinos.

The Sociology of Morality

The Latino Threat Narrative and the notion of spectacle in regards to Latino immigrants are deeply rooted in the Sociology of Morality. Many Americans in the United States believe that the stereotypes and arguments that act as the foundation for the national discourse are true and therefore, appear to be morally sound. In the case of the Latino Threat Narrative, Latinos are often vividly painted as those subjects who are lacking morals. Latinos are "those immigrants" who are out to get American citizens, by means of stealing their jobs, living off of government resources, finding loopholes in the system and not paying taxes, etc. When referring to the discourse of Latinos as threat to the nation, on a national level, there appears to be a similar mentality when it comes to morality and Latino immigrants in the United States: Americans who are citizens are those individuals who believe that they the ones who are morally sound. On the other hand, as

previously mentioned, Latino immigrants are the ones who are lacking a strong set of morals due to the ways in which they are stereotyped by the media. In a review of existing literature, it is clear that different communities perceive Latino immigrants in a multitude of ways, as they are influenced by certain characteristics. Opinions and beliefs towards morality can both exist and differ from person to person, community to community, and on the national level.

Conclusion

The United States, referred to as the "land of opportunity", where the "American Dream" is within reach for all, for Latinos, the U.S. has fallen short. Latino immigrants have found themselves as the focal point of a threat narrative that thrives in the U.S. It is this same threat narrative that travels through spectacles put forth by the media, negatively portraying Latinos. As shown by research conducted in this project, the media is the means through which the threat narrative regarding Latinos lives on. The power that the media holds contributes to the ways in which perceptions and opinions of the general American public are formed towards Latinos in this country. The media's influence in American society is what keeps both the Latino Threat Narrative alive and the Latino immigrant population on the margins of society.

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