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How media stereotypes about Latinos fuel negative attitudes towards Latinos

by Latino Decisions on 09/18/2012

Latino Decisions was commissioned by the [National Hispanic Media Coalition](#) to assess how non-Hispanics across the country view the image of Latinos in the media today, and whether or not media portrayals of Latinos have a direct causal effect on attitudes in the general public towards Latinos. [[Full report here](#) | [Webinar slides here](#)]

Executive Summary of Report

Latino Decisions and NHMC completed a two-part, multi-method research project examining the impact of media narratives and stereotypes of immigrants and Latinos on non-Latino opinions and attitudes towards Latinos and immigrants.

- Part I: A national survey of nine hundred non-Latino respondents who answered over ninety different questions about their news and entertainment, media content and opinions about Latinos and immigrants in the United States.
- Part II: An interactive online experiment including 3,000 non-Latino participants who registered their opinions about Latinos and immigrants after watching video clips, reading articles, or listening to audio clips about them.

The comprehensive and innovative aspects to this study produce many compelling findings about the relationship between media messaging and opinions about Latinos and immigrants. Across both studies, we find three especially important trends emerge:

1. News and entertainment media have a strong influence on non-Latino perceptions about Latinos and immigrants.
2. Most people attribute a mix of both positive and negative stereotypes to Latinos and immigrants.
3. Media portrayals of Latinos and immigrants can diminish or exacerbate stereotypically negative opinions about them.

Throughout this report specific findings that exemplify these three broad trends are highlighted. Detailed results and methodology associated with the survey and experiment are provided in the subsequent sections and appendices of this report.

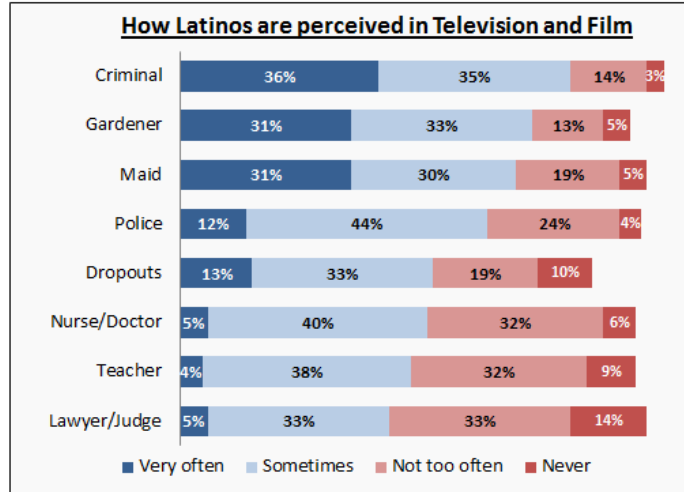
- Stereotypes people believe to be true about immigrants and Latinos reflect the images, characters, and stories they commonly encounter in news, television, film, and radio programming.
- Specifically, non-Latinos report seeing Latinos in stereotypically negative or subordinate roles (gardeners, maids, dropouts, and criminals) most often in television and film.
- People exposed to negative entertainment or news narratives about Latinos and/or immigrants hold the most unfavorable and hostile views about both groups.
- People exposed to positive news or entertainment stories about Latinos and/or immigrants hold the most favorable opinions about both groups.
- Negative portrayals of Latinos and immigrants are pervasive in news and entertainment media. Consequently, non-Latinos commonly believe many negative stereotypes about these groups are true.
- The impact of media framing on opinions and attitudes varies according to individual factors especially age and familiarity with Latinos.
- There are instances where media consumer groups (i.e. FOX, MSNBC) exhibit even more dramatic differences than ideological or partisan distinctions create.
- Conservative talk radio and Fox News audiences exhibit significantly more anti-immigrant and anti-Latino affect relative to other media consumer groups.
- Even those most disposed to positive opinions about Latinos (e.g. younger age cohorts, those more familiar with Latinos, etc.) have less favorable opinions when exposed to negative entertainment or news media narratives.

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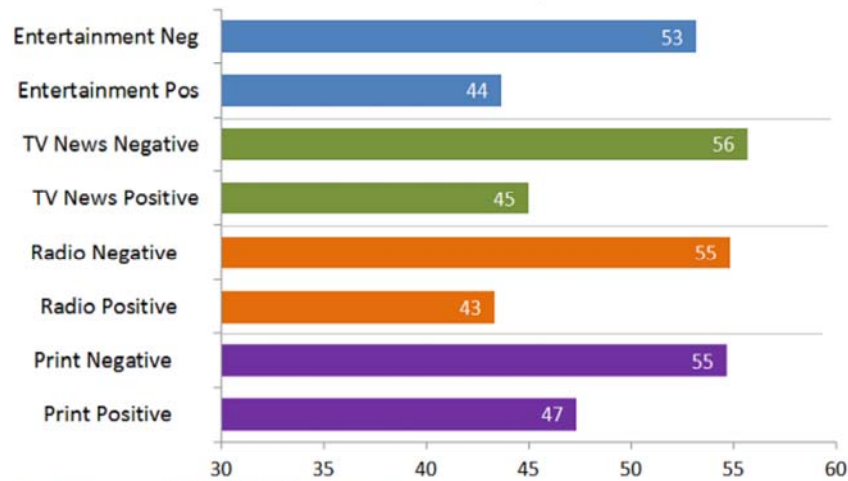
[Download full report here](#)



Source: Latino Decisions national telephone poll for NHMC, n=900, +/- 3.3%

How well does less educated describe Latinos?

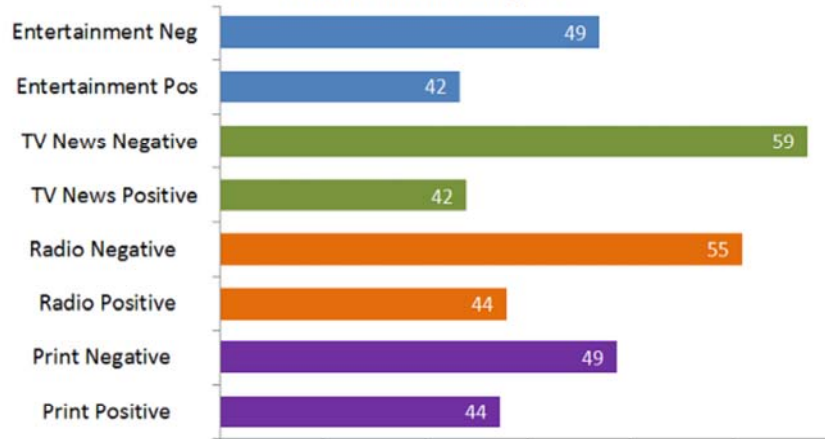
Percent who said "very well"



Source: Latino Decisions online survey for NHMC, n=3000 +/- 1.8%

How well does culture of crime and gangs describe Latinos?

Percent who said "very well"



30 35 40 45 50 55 60

Source: Latino Decisions online survey for NHMC, n=3000 +/- 1.8%

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Media Bias, NHMC, Stereotype

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