

2014-01-01

# Que No Te Eduque La Rosa de Guadalupe - Stereotypes in Telenovelas

Ana Gomez

University of Texas at El Paso, ana.gomez.parga@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open\\_etd](https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open_etd)

 Part of the [Communication Commons](#), [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Latin American Studies Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Gomez, Ana, "Que No Te Eduque La Rosa de Guadalupe - Stereotypes in Telenovelas" (2014). *Open Access Theses & Dissertations*. 1248.

[https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open\\_etd/1248](https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open_etd/1248)

¡QUE NO TE EDUQUE LA ROSA DE GUADALUPE! A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF  
GENDER AND STEREOTYPES IN MEXICAN TELENOVELAS.

ANA C. GÓMEZ PARGA

Department of Communication

APPROVED:

---

Roberto Avant-Mier, Ph.D., Chair

---

Richard Pineda, Ph.D.

---

DeAnna Varela, M.A.

---

Charles H. Ambler, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

Copyright ©

By

Ana C. Gómez Parga

## DEDICATION

Dedicado a las mujeres de mi vida:

A las de mi familia, porque de haberla elegido yo, no hubiese tenido una tan perfecta:

*Alicia Reynoso de Parga (Aya)*: Porque tu vida es un ejemplo de lucha, de sacrificio, de sufrimiento y de determinación. Porque tu historia no se repita, y porque a tus casi 90 años sigues siendo un ejemplo de valentía.

*Teresa Parga Reynoso (Tato)*: Porque eres la tía buena onda, la hermana que nunca tuve y la hija que nunca podré ser. Tu nobleza me inspira. Eres única.

*María de Lourdes Lunz (Coca)*: Por ser mi abogada personal y por creer en mí. Porque con nadie estoy más endeudada que contigo. Tu recomendación me abrió la puerta a un mundo que parecía inalcanzable. Gracias por hospedarme estos dos años, por surtirme de coca-colas para poder desvelarme y por todo lo que haces. Gracias, siempre.

*Yolanda Janacek (Tía Yolanda)*: Por darme un voto de confianza y permitirme empezar de nuevo. Gracias a usted estoy donde estoy y voy hacia donde voy. La puerta que usted me abrió cambió mi vida.

A las mujeres que han dejado huella en mi vida, porque alguna vez escuché que uno es la combinación de quienes nos rodean y los libros que leemos: *Estela Vélez, Carmen Solís, Adriana García, Nathalie Núñez, Tania Leal, Dana Vieczas Gabriela Lara y Diana Rivera.*

En especial a:

*Ana Alicia Parga de Gómez (Señora Gómez)*: Porque soy lo que soy gracias a ti... y a pesar de ti. Porque me es imposible no amarte. Porque de todas las cosas de este mundo que no me

importan, tú, toda tú, no dejas nunca de importarme. Te admiro y te respeto. Y entre lágrimas y risas no pierdo la esperanza de que un día te sientas tan orgullosa de mí, como yo me siento de ti.

*Lola:* Porque mis valores se los debo. Porque en sus abrazos sentí el amor de madre. Por darme de comer cuando yo no podía alimentarme sola, por limpiarme las rodillas cuando empezaba a caminar, por prenderme la luz en las noches que tuve miedo, por escucharme desde el día que aprendí a hablar, por esperarme despierta cuando descubrí la calle y por haberme esperado un día más cuando usted sabía que el final estaba cerca. Porque la extraño todos los días y su partida me sigue doliendo. ¿Cuántas cosas no haría si la tuviera de vuelta? Porque su historia me llena de rabia y solo haciendo lo que hago siento que se le hace un poco de justicia. Por usted y para usted, en donde quiera que se encuentre.

Y por último, pero no menos importante, a:

*Denisse Zepeda Díaz:* Por leerme, re-leerme y apoyarme en todo lo que hago. Porque sin tu ayuda todo hubiera sido doblemente difícil, y porque sin tu complicidad muchas de mis locuras perderían sentido. ¡¡Este es el borrador final!! Espero te guste.

Y a *Carlos Humberto Gómez García (Señor Gómez):* porque tú no eres mujer, pero eres el hombre más importante de mi vida. ¡Gracias por todo pá!

¡QUE NO TE EDUQUE LA ROSA DE GUADALUPE! A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF  
GENDER AND STEREOTYPES IN MEXICAN TELENOVELAS.

By

ANA C. GÓMEZ PARGA

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Communication

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

August 2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank every single one of my professors at UTEP, without whose guidance this thesis and this degree wouldn't have been accomplished.

To *Dr. Stacey Sowards* for being so patient and helpful even before I started the program, for believing in me, and for helping me in so many ways.

To *Dr. Arvind Singhal* for proving me wrong since my first day of school and for helping me to see things from a different perspective. Thank you for teaching me the human part of academia.

To *Dr. Richard Pineda* for giving me an opportunity to work and for inspiring me to become a professor. For supporting every single one of my efforts, and for being not only the best boss and a wonderful leader, but also an excellent friend. It was an honor to be your TA.

Special thanks to *Dr. Roberto Avant-Mier* for the hard work you put into making this thesis possible, for your patience, and for your coaching. For believing in my project and for understanding how important it was for me. For being a wonderful advisor, an incredible mentor, and an exceptional friend.

To *Professor DeAnna Varela* for saving my life at the very last minute and for showing me a different side of school. Because the passion that you put in every one of your classes inspired me to do the same as a student. I never had a chance to tell you how much your class challenged my perspectives in so many ways and how important I think that class is. However, its impact wouldn't be as strong if the professor who taught it wasn't as good as you are.

And last, but not least, to *Dr. Thomas Ruggiero, Dr. Kenneth Yang, Dr. Ana Schwartz* and *Dr. Eduardo Barrera*. You can all be sure you have had a very positive impact in my life and that if I ever become a professor I have a lot to live up to.

In the same way I would like to thank my classmates, my new friends, the people who work in UTEP's different departments, and the people from El Paso for being so welcoming, so understanding, and so helpful all the time. You made of El Paso my second home.

## ABSTRACT

Gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence prevail in cultures where sexism and violence are usual. According to feminist organizations our best solution is education from an early age. However, in places where means of formal education are scarce, we may turn to alternative solutions such as television. Television has been examined in multiple studies for its role in the formation of gender, and other type of stereotypes. But also it has been considered a useful tool in challenging traditional notions about gender and in helping to promote social change. For this reason, a textual analysis was conducted on *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, a telenovela that claims to be educational, in order to analyze gender-role representations in Mexican media and evaluate if they either challenged or reinforced traditional notions about gender, which have proven to be detrimental in the advancement and empowerment of women in Mexican society.

*Key words: women, telenovelas, education, culture.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 The Situation of Women in México: From Gender Discrimination to Femicides.....	1
1.2 Discrimination and violence begin with (or end with) Education.....	8
1.4 ¡Que no te eduque la Rosa de Guadalupe!.....	13
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	18
2.1 The Significance of Mexican Television and the Birth of Telenovelas.....	18
2.2 Telenovelas, Media, and Education.....	24
2.3 Gender Stereotypes in the Media.....	29
2.4 The Virgin of Guadalupe: The Archetype of Mexican Womanhood.....	31
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY.....	37
3.1 Theoretical Framework: The Second Wave of Feminism in the U.S.....	37
3.2 Theoretical Framework: The Second Wave of Feminism in México.....	40
3.3 Theoretical Framework: Second Wave Feminism as Theory.....	42
3.4 Theoretical Framework: Second Wave Feminism in Media Studies.....	44
3.5 Methodology: Textual Analysis.....	47
3.6 Methodology: Data Collection.....	50
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS.....	54
4.1 Portrayals of Physical Appearance.....	54

4.2 Portrayals of Professional Occupation.....	56
4.3 Portrayals of Family Responsibilities.....	60
4.4 Women as Victims, Men as Heroes.....	62
4.5 Normalization of Violence in LRG.....	65
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	70
5.1 Conclusion.....	70
5.2 Limitations and Implications.....	74
REFERENCES.....	78
APPENDIX.....	87
VITA.....	89

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

“The media we use and the stories they tell help us to make us who we are.”<sup>1</sup> Maria Mastronardi

### 1.1 The Situation of Women in México: From Gender Discrimination to Femicides

Analyzing the role of women in México is important for one particular reason: México has a history of violence towards women. Although certain groups within Mexican society believe that México is no longer a country that suffers from sexism, and federal governments have created institutions which focus entirely on women’s problems, inequality and discrimination are still prevalent in this country, and violent forms sexism still manifest themselves in many places in México. The feminist culture does not exist in México, according to Rosario Castellanos, and even though there are laws to prevent gender-based violence or discrimination, the reality and the law are not equal (Castellanos, 2012). But this equality fails to exist not because Mexican men are culturally sexist, but because Mexican women are mostly ignorant about and uninterested in participating in the intellectual arena or in the political debate (Castellanos, 2012). Machismo is not just about men, almost every machista man has a machista mother.

I will begin this study by providing some background statistics about Mexican reality. In contemporary society a substantial number of women in México often fail to attend school, finish school, or have access to formal jobs (INEGI, 2014). In 2013, out of the total number of

---

<sup>1</sup> Mastronardi in Julia T. Wood, *Gendered Lives* (p. 260, 2012)

population employed in the formal sector in México, 60.1% were males and 39.9% were females, in a country in which the sex ratio is 95 males to 100 females (INEGI, 2014). When it comes to higher education, 23.7% of men have a bachelor's degree, compared to 20.3% of women (Alvarez de Vicencio, 2002). What these numbers reflect is that women still struggle to find equal opportunities in México. Whether it is for education or job opportunities, it is still the men who have easier access to most of them.

When discussing education, research suggests that gender constructions in México may be the cause for this inequality (SEP, 2009). For example, Mexican families place more interest on the fact that men should get an education; women are instead often required to help with the housework. In addition, families who can't afford education for all of their children prefer to send their boys to school instead of the girls, mainly because they feel that the girls will eventually marry someone who supports them and therefore they will be protected. Furthermore, when girls do have access to education in México, they oftentimes deal with high levels of discrimination from peers, teachers, and other authority figures (SEP, 2009), resulting in an unfriendly environment that obstructs their academic development and also, an environment that shapes their understanding of gender. From a very young age, Mexican girls learn that discrimination and abuse is normal and accepted as part of the definition of womanhood.

When it comes to access to jobs and gender constructions in Mexican society, it is interesting to note that women who have access to formal jobs in México often come from specific civil status. When analyzing women's participation in the formal job market in México, 74% of them are divorced, 63.6% are separated from their partners, and 40% of them are single (Alvarez de Vicencio, 2002). Married women are not desired by Mexican employers, and experts suggest this is because of the possibility of pregnancies and because employers feel that their

primarily commitment will be towards their families instead of their jobs. On the contrary, married men are desirable for employers because, according to Mexican society, a man who already has a family is perceived as a man who is already mature and responsible.

Another good example of gender inequality in México is in family responsibilities. According to Álvarez de Vicencio, in México child care responsibilities are female activities, whereas men's only expected responsibilities are to be providers even although they are considered the natural leaders of the families (Álvarez de Vicencio, 2002). Andres Oppenheimer, a Latin American journalist and advocate for a comprehensive immigration reform, discusses parental roles in Latin American societies by examining the effects of so many years of male immigration from Latin American countries into the United States, which has resulted in many children growing up without a father. In his opinion, the absence of a father figure in so many families and the overwhelming responsibility placed only on women, may be related to the increasing number of teenagers involved in delinquency in these places (Oppenheimer, 2009). He says that the definition of *fatherhood* should mean something more than “sending money and buying sneakers” (p. 49). In other words, in Latin American cultures most fathers believe that their only job is to provide material goods for their families, and we must challenge this notion by analyzing the possible consequences of placing all the educational and child-raising responsibilities on only one parent, particularly the mother.

According to Marina Castañeda, there is another concept that we must consider when analyzing gender discrimination in México: “the invisible male chauvinism” [el machismo invisible] (Castañeda, 2007, p. 13). She defines *male chauvinism* or *machismo* as a group of attitudes and behaviors that operate under two basic assumptions: 1) the exaggerated contrast between what is considered to be feminine and what is considered masculine, and 2) the

overwhelming cult to masculinity, and the idea that masculine qualities are better than feminine ones (p. 26). Invisible chauvinism, according to her, regulates the norms and codes in Mexican every-day-life, social communication, public discourse, health discourse, and sexuality (p. 29). She argues that every woman in México knows that the way to communicate is through a language full of sexism in which it is understood that women will communicate better with men if they decide not to contradict them. In that same way, Mexican women understand that the way to be accepted in society is by approving or disapproving certain attitudes in other women. In short, invisible chauvinism hides behind conventional conversations and subtle attitudes, which guide relationships and mark a difference between men and women (p. 29).

Moreover, Castañeda argues that Mexican chauvinism is a condition that marks a notorious difference not only in the division of housework and in the rules of social life, it also affects economics (p. 334). She argues that in contemporary society machismo has affected productivity, competitiveness, and economic rates in México. She discusses that if more than the half of a country's population is displaced to secondary positions in places like home, the workforce, and the decision making processes, then the whole population suffers the consequences. In México half of the population is neglected, which unnecessarily complicates the economic and social development of México as a country. Castañeda concludes that machismo in México, whether visible or invisible, is hurtful and it is not economically efficient (p. 334).

Although some forms of chauvinism, particularly the invisible ones, are not necessarily violent or at least not physically violent, México does have unfortunate problems related to violence towards women. In 1993 México, most specifically Ciudad Juárez, appeared in the international headlines due to a then unknown phenomenon called *femicides*. Femicides are

defined by Koutsoyannis as “the killings of women by men because they are women” (Koutsoyannis, 2011, p. 1). According to this scholar, femicides are considered to be “the most extreme form of misogynistic violence” (p. 1), victims of femicides are usually mutilated, raped, or tortured before they are murdered, and the killings are most likely to occur in environments where violence has become normal. Normalization of violence, along with a culture of sexism and crime impunity, results in government’s insufficient efforts in dealing with the problem due to the lack of social pressure in the demand for justice. In the year 2012, almost 20 years after the first documented femicide, México still appeared in the rankings of incidences of femicides in the world, appearing in 16th place according to the organizations Catholics for Choice [Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir] and the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights [Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos], (CDD and CMDPDH, 2012). Thus, in México, being a woman does not only represent a disadvantage, it also represents a danger.

In addition to the historical problem of femicides and violence towards women, the recent struggle with the drug war has provided new complications for Mexican women. Research indicates that drug gangs have always been a considerable threat to women in many places in Latin America (Koutsoyannis, 2011). Lydia Cacho, a Mexican acclaimed journalist, makes three statements about the relation between drug cartels and crimes against women: 1) that in any patriarchal society, being a woman is always dangerous because women are not only likely to be abused, but also society and family may not prevent or challenge such violence by considering it normal; 2) that there are no stories of mafia without sex, which means that in the history of mafia, prostitution and women trafficking have always been present; and 3) that based on her investigations, men who control the industry of women trafficking prefer to work in societies in

which women are culturally “loving and submissive” (Cacho, 2010, p. 265), and this is because women who are taught to please men and think of men as superior, are easier to be deceived and abused by them.

All of these types of discrimination, violence, and inequalities that women suffer in México have been linked to the constructions of gender in Mexican culture, and researchers agree that this culture is possible largely due to the complicity of an entire society. Washington argues that the only possible explanation for the lack of interest from the local authorities to solve the killings and disappearances of hundreds of women from the state of Chihuahua, is the indifference and silence from the local people (Washington, 2005). About this, Tabuenca Córdova criticizes the indifference from middle and upper classes because the victims of these murderers came mostly from lower and working classes. In her words, it was until the elites were disrupted by the extreme violence towards women, that later spread to the whole state and began to affect the middle classes as well, that they became aware of a problem that had been occurring for over 15 years, and then began to clamor for justice and peace (Tabuenca Córdova, 2013).

The involvement of the middle and upper classes, men and privileged women, whose role in Mexican society will be explained throughout this analysis, is crucial if we seek to challenge these notions of gender, and to prevent this type of discrimination and violence. In this regard, Castañeda states that machismo exists because the whole society participates in it, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, and uses it as a language to communicate. In her experience, educated men and women are sometimes blind to the types of attitudes that make them sexist, and she believes that by helping them to identify these attitudes and become aware of the hidden norms that prevent them from understanding and valuing each other, change is possible (Castañeda, 2007). She explains that in order to create a new way of communication

different from machismo, we all must identify the sources for this type of education, and take a stand in the process of change (Castañeda, 2007). In short, gender construction involves society in general, which means that just as an entire culture is an accomplice for gender-based violence, it is also the one with the power to change it.

In summary, whatever problem in México one desires to analyze, the most vulnerable parts of Mexican society are always the people who live under circumstances of extreme poverty such as the children, but most importantly, women in general. If you want to discuss poverty, poor women are always at the bottom. If you want to discuss education, women are the first ones who drop out of school. If you want to discuss violence, women are assaulted and murdered in some places in México, just for being women. And if you want to discuss the recent struggle with the drug war, women are now the merchandise that is being trafficked. However, if we seek to find new ways to produce changes in gender construction in Mexican culture, we must first consider three major conditions: 1) the historical situation of women in México; 2) the importance of education as a tool for a change within cultures; and 3) the importance of the participation of society in general.

For this investigation I turned to the media because I consider it offers the possibility to cover the three elements described above. Television in México, as it will be explained later on, is a very important source for gender construction within Mexican culture. In this work I will analyze one particular television show called “La Rosa de Guadalupe” (2008), whose elements offer a chance to examine the Mexican culture by reflecting the cultural understandings of gender. What I seek to analyze are the potential dangers in the current representations of gender in Mexican television, along with the opportunities for change that, based on literature, are viable through the combination of entertainment content that is produced with social responsibility. All

of these are in an attempt to analyze some of the elements involved in the normalization of violence and discrimination towards women, but at the same time in an effort to create awareness which will lead us to demand television content that challenge harmful representations of women and men, and to praise the ones that are helpful in this urgent process of change.

## **1.2 Discrimination and violence begin with (or end with) Education.**

One of the best ways to challenge gender discrimination is through education, especially education from a young age. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, puts special interest on the importance of education from an early age because they consider that “working with youth is our best bet for faster, sustained progress on preventing and eradicating gender-based violence” (Focusing on prevention..., 2014).

“Education for Prevention” is a campaign whose efforts are targeted at the education of younger audiences, usually from 5 to 25 years old, with the goal to eliminate violence by helping young men and women to communicate, coexist, and value each other (UN Women, 2014). However, among the various solutions proposed by the UN Women, they also believe that it is important to include campaigns that create awareness in the general population, not only the youth and children. In this regard, the efforts are centered in collecting and publishing evidence, research studies, and statistical analyses, which help in the understanding of the situation of women in different parts of the world in order to create specific campaigns depending on each situation (UN Women, 2014).

In the particular case of México, the Mexican National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) created a report in 2000 dividing the Mexican population by level of education, and the results described that most of the population was located under the classification of incomplete basic education. Basic education in Mexico includes elementary and

middle school, which means that most adult Mexicans did not finish either of them (INEGI, 2005).

In the year 2009, the Mexican Federal Department of Education [Secretaría de Educación Pública] (SEP) published a whole book about an extensive study conducted in public schools around the country. In it, researchers describe the challenges faced by young and teenage girls whose educational life is hindered by various forms of discrimination and violence. In this report the findings were divided in three categories: 1) the persistent culture of sexism in México, which focuses on the ideas of gender that children learn at home which clearly mark a difference between men and women; 2) the challenges that arise when girls and boys coexist within a physical environment, when discrimination, intimidation, violence, and abuse become part of the lives of Mexican children; and 3) the notions of gender that teachers, principals, and other authority figures have, which prove that they are not properly qualified to deal, solve, or change gender-based discrimination nor violence (SEP, 2009). All of the findings reflect that the current notions of gender within the Mexican culture obstruct the education of boys and girls and end up being harmful for the advancement of Mexican society, and at the same time, they exhibit an urgent necessity for providing better training for education authorities.

The first argument described in the book describes the notions that children learn at home about gender. The first finding describes how 50% of the children in sixth grade believe that women should not be sexually active until marriage, and that pregnancies are a female responsibility. At the same time, Mexican children seem to have different expectations about their future based on their ideas of gender. On the one hand, girls are expected to be less professionally ambitious, and if they do become professionals, they are expected to go for caregiving professions such as teaching or working in health care. On the other hand, Mexican

boys know, from a very young age, that they have to become the providers for their future families and the professions that they imagine for their futures are professions like policeman, firefighters, engineers, architects, etc. (p. 16).

A last element described in this matter was the background from most children, their expectations for their lives reflected the situation that they experienced at home. According to the interviews that the researchers conducted, children expressed that their fathers worked and that their mothers didn't, expressing, sometimes explicitly, the idea that housework was not as important as having a job (p. 21), something that has been repeatedly stated by Mexican feminists who express that housework is never appreciated, until it is not done (Poniatowska, 2012). This first argument described in this book is crucial if we mean to understand not only the rest of the report, but also the importance of gender construction at home, because children who go to school already have an idea of what is expected from them and what possibilities they have for their futures. Before they even begin to receive formal education, Mexican children have already been conditioned under certain ideas about gender that they imitate and adopt from what they see at home.

The second major outcome described in the report from the SEP, describes the conflicts that arise when girls and boys coexist within a physical space, in this matter, researchers were able to witness how discrimination and violence arise and how both of them are normalized in public environments. Discrimination occurs in three different cases, discrimination against girls, discrimination against children who come from the lowest socio-economic background, and discrimination against sexual orientation. Among the manifestations of discrimination were insults, bullying, or exclusion from group activities. In addition, manifestations of physical violence occur from boys against other boys, boys against girls, and girls against other girls

(SEP, 2009). The most disturbing aspect about this research was to learn that both, discrimination and violence, are a persistent and systematic part of Mexican childhood, so much, that they have been normalized by children themselves and by education authorities.

Because this argument relates perfectly to the study that I am about to present, I think it is important to describe in detail some of the findings about violence in Mexican schools. To provide some general ideas, it is important to consider some statistics, such as: 1) more than 40% of the children stated that either their mother or their father hit them regularly; 2) more than 10% of the children described having seen their mothers hitting their fathers, or their fathers hitting their mothers; and 3) most of the children expressed having heard mom or dad yelling at each other (p. 33). Furthermore, it was interesting to note that when answering to the question of what is it that they did not like about their father, a common answer was that their father drank too much (p. 34). Substance abuse, according to family therapists, has been related to incidents of violence, and therefore considered a type of child abuse.

Among the findings about adolescents violence was a little different. Teenage girls expressed to the researchers that there were certain public spaces in which girls were not welcomed. In the case of recreation and sport fields, boys claimed those spaces as theirs. If girls came near those places, they would be yelled at, intimidated, or even assaulted; and whenever they tried to report aggressive behaviors regarding the use of space, the authority figures would answer by letting them know that girls are safer out of the fields. In addition, it is interesting to note that when researchers asked the teachers about the use of space, most of them believed that girls did not go to the fields because they were naturally passive and most of them said they were not aware of the situations of intimidation (p. 89).

One last finding about violence in schools was the sexual violence. In middle school teenage girls reported that they had been victims of improper behavior from their male peers. They suffered from improper touching, they were sometimes forced to hug a male classmate or even forced to kiss someone else. Only 10% of the total children and teenagers, males or females, reported not having suffered from any kind of violence at school (SEP, 2009).

The fact that violence is an aspect so systematic in the lives of Mexican children, and the fact that these children experience violence at home and at schools, makes a clear case about the dominant culture of violence in Mexican society. If a child suffers from violence at home, but has a safe environment at school, the child is able to compare both environments and differentiate between the two. But if the child suffers from a violent environment at home and he or she is surrounded by a similar environment at school, then the child is likely to believe that violent behavior is normal. Another aspect that I will analyze further in this study is how the media contribute to this argument. If violence is present at home, at schools, and in the media, then violence will be normalized in three of the most crucial aspects of cultural influences.

The third and last important outcome presented in the study from the SEP, talks about the notions of gender that teachers, principals, and other authority figures have, which demonstrate how they are not properly qualified to deal, solve, nor change gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence (SEP, 2009). The most valuable findings about this part, for the purposes of this study, were the differences between the notions of male and female teachers, and the way in which principals, depending on their gender, dealt with the challenges of gender-based conflicts. When it comes to the number of times they witness or acknowledge a case of bullying, female teachers are 43.2% more likely to report those incidents than male teachers, whether because male teachers don't acknowledge it, or because they try to solve it by themselves. And

when it comes to the way in which principals deal with the reports of conflicts, female principals usually call the mother of the child and try to work an agreement, whereas only 8% of male principals call the child's mother. Male principals usually preferred to solve the problem by suspending the child temporarily (p. 100). It is important to note that in this report neither of the principals consider calling the father, and neither of the researchers identified this as a problem.

The deficient levels of education are a very complex problem to discuss, but the unsafe and unpleasant environments within the schools in México, and the lack of training from the education authorities, are problems that are closely related to the notions of gender in this country. If the United Nations proposes to change the education from a young age, it is imperative to change the education of teachers, mothers, and fathers as well. Because, as we have seen, children already have their own notions of how to behave by the time they go to school. But because anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists have been unable to create a sustainable strategy to challenge these notions, I believe it is important to try to evaluate other sources of cultural influences that may be impacting the notions of gender in Mexican society. Almost everyone in México, as it will be described later on, have one thing in common, and that is: access to the media, particularly, access to television.

### **1.3 ¡Que no te eduque la Rosa de Guadalupe!**

“La Rosa de Guadalupe” (2008- present) is a very famous Mexican *telenovela* that has lasted six years, something that makes it outstanding because most telenovelas usually last less than a year. *La Rosa de Guadalupe* (which will be further referred to as LRG) is a serial drama in which each episode is unique, and in which producers claim that the problems presented on each episode are based on current real life conflicts that affect Mexican society. Real life stories,

along with religious content, and family representations are presented in this show, elements that have granted *La Rosa de Guadalupe* both, criticism and acclaim.

The real-life problems reflected in *La Rosa de Guadalupe* are problems that affect today's Mexican society, and that are addressed in Mexican newspapers on a daily basis (Altamirano, 2012). These situations often include drug use, bullying, teenage pregnancies, drug dealing, divorce, and crime, among others. Most of the time, a teenager is presented as the main character facing the problem, and the family has to find a way to resolve each situation. By the end of each episode and after a heartfelt prayer, the teenager along with the family, will be able to overcome each conflict. These representations of real life problems and real families, are the ones that I seek to analyze, in order to identify the role of gender and gender notions in Mexican media, and in order to see if gender plays a role in the representation and resolution of family problems in Mexican media.

Also, a lot of religious symbolism can be found through the show and will be thoroughly analyzed further in this study. Altamirano has already analyzed this religious content and describes LRG as a fictional narration that proposes a resolution through prayers and cult. His critical remarks are addressed towards the limited information that, in his opinion, LRG offers to guide audiences in the resolution of the current obstacles. This scholar explains that the show not only presents limited useful information, but also resolves the problems relying on religious miracles. And the danger of including miracles implies divine intervention denying any kind of human participation, which can result in preventing the audience from taking a particular course of action that would assist them in real life (Altamirano, 2012)

*La Rosa de Guadalupe* is broadcasted three times a week by *Televisa* in México, and by *Univision* in the United States. *Televisa*, as it was explained before, is known to be the most

important television network in México. *Univision* on the other hand, is known to be the largest Spanish-language television network in the United States (Bielby and Harrington, 2005). By being a show broadcasted by two major television networks, Latin American audiences from México and the U.S. are likely to watch LRG.

In addition, the fact that LRG is a product made by *Televisa*, the leading figure in Latina/o audiences, it is important to mention the effect that it has caused on the competition. Just like *Televisa* created a genre that later became the format followed by subsequent networks which is the *telenovela*, *La Rosa de Guadalupe* has been replicated by other networks in the U.S. as well. Such is the case of *Telemundo* which in 2012 created “Historias de la Virgen Morena” (2012), and *Azteca América* which in 2009 created two similar shows, the first one called “El Milagro de Los Santos” (2009), and the second called “Cada quien su Santo” (2009); imitations that confirmed the importance of *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, and that failed in the attempt to be as successful.

Meanwhile, *La Rosa de Guadalupe* has gained so much notoriety that it even provoked its own *hashtag* in the cyberspace. A hashtag is defined as “a string of characters preceded by the hash (#) character and it is used on social platforms like *Twitter* as descriptive label or to build communities around particular topics” (Posch et al., 2013, p. 1). With the availability of mobile communication technologies, and with the increase of social media usage, audiences now have the opportunity to relate to each other around ideas and conversations that they perceive as valuable. When these online interactions occur and discuss specific topics, and those topics begin to gain notoriety, a label is created to identify such conversations so that other users can add to the debate. These labels are called hashtags.

It is undeniable that in today's world social media have gained plenty of attention. Some people have described the use of social media as indispensable and inescapable. Scholars have argued that its importance is such that this new way of social bonding makes face-to-face interactions almost unnecessary (Mosco, 2004). Moreover, telenovela researchers have now turned to the social media to analyze the impact that the combination of traditional media along with these new technologies will have on the users. Rios and Castañeda suggest that new innovations in technology, such as social media, will advance the persistence of these types of melodramas (Rios and Castañeda, 2011). In summary, thanks to the accessibility of new technologies and the increasing numbers of social media users, media conglomerates are now broadcasting their contents through the internet, which makes them even more accessible. And, at the same time, users are discussing media content through social media, something that opens new possibilities for media researchers who are now able to find online communities who discuss particular shows.

In the year 2012 a hashtag created in México earned international visibility under the name: *#Que No Te Eduque La Rosa de Guadalupe* which translates as *#Don't be Educated by La Rosa de Guadalupe*. The amount of viral content under this hashtag, and the implications of the fact that audiences perceive *La Rosa de Guadalupe* as having educational potential, led me to believe that a study on *La Rosa de Guadalupe* was necessary. I wanted first to become a viewer of such telenovela. Then, I wanted to compare my own perceptions to the ones from the users to identify the elements that were perceived as educational. And last, I wanted to analyze exactly what those teachings from *La Rosa de Guadalupe* were and identify whether those teachings were related to gender.

The success of LRG over the competition is evident. None of the imitations have been able to survive six years, plus none of the imitations have produced social communities online. *La Rosa de Guadalupe* has produced online communities, provoked protests around México, and made critics write about it. Whether it is for the explicit use of *The Virgin of Guadalupe* (the most important Mexican Catholic symbol), for attempting to reflect Mexican society, for the importance of *Televisa* and its controversial attempts for monopolizing Mexican media, or because a lot of audience members believe that it is an educational show, *La Rosa de Guadalupe* represents a rich text for any media scholar to conduct an analysis about Mexican culture.

*La Rosa de Guadalupe* includes three major components that I seek to analyze: 1) it is a *telenovela*, therefore I will explain the importance of *telenovelas* in Mexican and Latino/a audiences and their relationship to education; 2) it attempts to portray current Mexican society, which offers the possibility of analyzing the definitions of womanhood and manhood in contemporary Mexican culture; and 3) it explicitly includes a catholic element that dictates moral values and behaviors, which may impact the way in which the social problems are addressed and resolved.

All three components and their analysis provide and opportunity to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How do Mexican media communicate messages about gender?

RQ2: How do Mexican media communicate values and morality messages?

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 The Significance of Mexican Television and the Birth of Telenovelas.

For the last 50 years, television has been the main medium of mass communication in México (Dresser and Volpi, 2006). In 2010, the INEGI published a report describing the use and availability of information technologies in México. According to this report, regardless of the limited accessibility for services such as formal schooling and other supplies, 94.7 percent of Mexican homes in the year 2010 owned at least one television (INEGI, 2010a). This implies that the analysis of the media in México should be particularly concerned about television content and its impact, because in a country in which television is more accessible than education, the media become a means by which people get informed and make sense about the world.

However, although television has been the main medium of mass communication for more than half a century, there are only two mayor Mexican television networks, and only one of them has ruled the media since the beginning. The first Mexican television network was called *Telesistema Mexicano*, and was created by three of the most powerful Mexican businessmen of the time: Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta, Rómulo O’Farril, and Guillermo González Camarena. These businessmen were already successful managing radio stations, and also had been influential in, and constantly linked to politics, particularly to the conservative PRI party which ruled the Mexican government for more than 70 years (Abad-Izquierdo, 2011). *Telesistema Mexicano* later became *Televisa*, and until 1996 it was the only Mexican television network. In 1996 Ricardo Salinas Pliego, another successful Mexican businessman, created a new television network called *TVAzteca*, and his intention was to create a network which provided a different set of content for viewers, along with another vision with regard to the information presented.

Nevertheless, regardless of some momentary highlights of TVAzteca, Televisa maintains its control over most of the television audience in México, and Emilio Azcárraga Jean (who is the grandson of Azcárraga Vidaurreta) continues to hold the presidency of *Televisa*.

During the early 1950s in México, only the elites were able to pay for television receivers. Therefore, television content was sophisticated and elitist, but once the middle and working classes began to own televisions as well, the content began to change accordingly (Fernández and Paxman, 2000). By the late 1950s and early 60s, most middle-class Mexican homes owned at least one television. This situation, along with the spread of international advertising enterprises who were sponsoring television content, resulted in a new corporate necessity for creating content that appealed to the new audiences, and at the same time, content that promoted a new culture of consumerism in México. Televisa's communication experts began to notice that episodic content such as television series were becoming successful in the U.S., so they decided to create a new genre of entertainment that was segmented, that appealed to Mexican middle and working class audiences, and that was not complicated to produce, a genre that was called *telenovelas* (Fernández and Paxman, 2000).

Telenovelas were born as a combination of *radio-novelas* and Mexican films. Radio-novelas were dramatic serials broadcasted through radio on a daily basis, and were popular among radio listeners who identified with the stories. The Mexican films that influenced the birth of telenovelas were the films that were particularly famous during the golden age of Mexican cinema. These movies were a combination of romantic stories along with drama, a combination that seemed to be favored by Mexican and Latin American audiences already. About this, Mexican intellectual Carlos Monsiváis expressed that melodrama has been the Mexican form of

cultural expression throughout history, because one can find it in the films, the music, the radio, and then in telenovelas (Monsiváis in Uribe, 2009).

In order to understand the importance of telenovelas as a genre of entertainment, one must first understand the history of its elements. The history of radio-novelas in Latin America goes back to the 40s and 50s in Cuba. They were stories that were targeted to the working classes who would listen to them while working at the tobacco factories. Allegedly, according to some scholars, the purpose of these stories was to keep the workers distracted and at the same time engaged, to the point in which they wanted to go to work to listen to later episodes of the shows, given that they were unable to buy their own radio receiver (Fernández and Paxman, 2000).

The history behind the golden age of Mexican cinema is extensive, but there are specific aspects that are important to highlight because they will persist throughout the history of the entertainment industry in México. The first element is the portrayal of gender. Pedro Infante is probably the most iconic figure of the golden age of Mexican cinema, and “Pepe El Toro” (1953) is one of the main productions for which he will be remembered as the ideal for Mexican manhood. The conservative story of Pepe El Toro, a man who struggled with poverty but was brave and courageous, set the record for the future storylines for telenovelas.

Furthermore, another movie that shaped the portrayal of gender in this new genre came after the success of the first telenovelas and was the classical story of “Cinderella” (n.d.) (Fernández and Paxman, 2000). Given the popularity of the first telenovelas among the female audiences, an archetype for female characters was developed according to the traditional notions about femininity of the time. The story of Cinderella defined the future for female portrayals and set the record for the definition of womanhood in telenovelas. In these stories, poor women would suffer humiliation and struggle, but eventually would find love and a prince who would

rescue them and reward all their suffering. The model for the representations of gender in almost every telenovela can be traced to the portrayals of gender in the golden age of Mexican films.

Moreover, there is another element that can be found in telenovelas and comes from Pepe El Toro and other Mexican movies, this element is the representation of social class. Understanding class in Mexico is almost as important as understanding race in places like the United States. In movies like Pepe El Toro, being poor was a dignified living-style, and being rich was not really considered *Mexican*. The dignity and strength found in characters who struggled with poverty were values shared by Mexican society, who at first considered wealth as a foreign feature. Nevertheless, because telenovelas were made to respond to sponsors' interests and corporate needs, in telenovelas poverty was still a popular living-style. However, unlike in the films, wealth was now made desirable (Fernández and Paxman, 2000). Moreover, Televisa was not only responding to sponsors and audiences, but also to governmental dispositions. Televisa's link to the Mexican government has been extensively reported by media scholars, who suggest that the blindness from middle and upper classes to the reality of poverty in México was produced during the first years of telenovelas. The government, as content evaluator, began to scrutinize telenovelas, and Televisa responded by creating content that eluded any complications with ideologies. That is how the middle-class began to appear as the norm in telenovelas, supposedly because in this way the government would feel supported in its attempt to create a Mexican identity of a country that was prosperous, urban, and middle-class (Abad-Izquierdo, 2011). In this particular case, the misunderstanding of social class in México has been attributed to telenovelas and the portrayals of class in the media, and this can again be traced to the golden age of Mexican movies.

The last element within the stories presented through entertainment contents in México is the element of morality. Since the golden age of Mexican cinema, certain values have been elevated and others have been condemned. For example, going back to the story of Pepe El Toro, values like humility, conformity, resilience, gratitude, and hopefulness; were emphasized as the ones every person must look for in order to achieve happiness. And at the same time, features like ambition, expectancy, power, or beauty; were often seen as irrelevant and were sometimes related to selfishness or evil. In the case of telenovelas Uribe discusses three values that one can find: 1) conservative sexuality; 2) social Darwinism, and 3) racial elitism (Uribe, 2009). Conservative sexuality refers to the idea that men are more sexual than women, but there are also other elements that could be considered under the label of morality that will be further explained in the analysis section of this study. Social Darwinism describes the idea that the higher classes are better. And racial elitism defines the norms for beauty where actors who have darker skin will often play characters who serve the light-skin characters, and beauty will reflect the beauty standards of whites and Europeans.

Radio-novelas, melodramatic films, and telenovelas, independently or as a combination, have been scrutinized and criticized by intellectuals and scholars. Supporters and conservatives describe telenovelas as cathartic. They claim that the audiences deserve to have access to pleasant stories to which they can relate and at the same time forget about the daily struggles. But detractors and liberals are not so convinced. Their argument relies on the fact that telenovelas are broadcast all day long, and the fact that educational or informational contents are almost non-existent in Mexican television. Because of the repetition of content that portrays a pleasant but distorted reality, liberal scholars have described telenovelas as opium for the masses (Fernández and Paxman, 2000). Nevertheless in the words of Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, second

president of Televisa after his father Azcárraga Vidaurreta, “telenovelas have influenced politics, religion and society.” in México (p. 197). Which is why they offer great possibilities for understanding gender, class, and morality in Mexican culture.

In summary, television in México plays an outstanding role, because more than 90 percent of Mexican homes have access to it. However, the only networks that most people are able to receive are Televisa and TV Azteca which are the only networks available in México without cable television, and their programming consists mainly of telenovelas. In this sense, Televisa is the leading figure, and its market dominance is on the one hand, due to its capacity of handling and owning other types of media like radio and music (Taylor, 2015). And, on the other hand, due to of its self-censoring philosophy that has prevented any conflict with the Mexican government (Hallin, 2000). Televisa’s overwhelming dominance has been described as unique, Hallin states that “there is no country comparable in size to México in which a single private company so dominates the airwaves (Hallin, 2000, p. 98).” In addition to the criticism of Televisa, their telenovelas have also been criticized for being highly sentimental, and for featuring unrealistic characters who face improbable situations (Taylor, 2015). The impacts produced by repeating such contents during most of the day, and on a daily basis, have been widely studied and questioned by several scholars who seem to debate whether or not there should not be some kind of social responsibility placed on Televisa its contents. However, not so many scholars have analyzed Televisa’s contents from a gender perspective, something that makes this study important. Analyzing one particular product of Televisa in order to understand the concepts of gender and violence within the Mexican culture, seems suitable because the portrayals in Televisa’s telenovelas impact a large part of México’s population, more so than

other means like formal education, not to mention that these portrayals have persisted for many years almost without alterations.

## **2.2 Telenovelas, Media, and Education.**

Telenovelas are a widely recognized format in Spanish and Portuguese-language television, and they are described as Latin American soap operas. As was explained before, they were first produced in México, but were later adopted by foreign Latin American networks in countries like Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, and Argentina. Regardless of the country in which they are produced, what all telenovelas have in common is that they are shows that present a fictional story that develops around a romantic drama. In México, as well as in most Latin American countries, telenovelas are known to be the main genre of entertainment preferred by women (Guadarrama, 1999), which is why they are constantly elected as a means to understand women in these parts of the world.

The appeal of telenovelas is not limited by the gender of the audience, although several studies suggest that due to cultural and gender associated values, women feel attracted by the romantic melodrama that is commonly found in these types of shows (Bielby and Harrington, 2005). Other studies describe how Mexican audiences from all ages, genders and social statuses have admitted to watch telenovelas at some point in their lives. Furthermore, even though telenovelas are targeted at adult audiences, many Mexican parents have also admitted to have let their children watch these types of shows with them (Guadarrama, 1999). All of this information suggests that Mexican people in general know about telenovelas, have watched telenovelas, or watch telenovelas on a regular basis.

Moreover, the appeal of telenovelas is not limited by nationality nor residency either. In the United States the trend seems to be the same. According to some scholars, due to the large

Latino/a population, telenovelas are the most popular format on Spanish-language television (Glasscock and Ruggiero, 2004). In this regard, Bielby and Harrington (2005) argue that “telenovelas allow viewers in the United States to remember or revisit Latin America” (p. 395). Other scholars comment on this by affirming that the ritual of watching telenovelas in Spanish at home allows the Mexican migrant living in the United States to take pride in a language that symbolizes identity, and at the same time, allows the viewer to imagine a country that they are not able to experience anymore (Uribe, 2009).

Regardless of the reasons that make telenovelas that appealing to men or women, young and adult, migrant or resident, scholars have stated that telenovelas are notably “the most watched television genre globally” (McAnny and La Pastina, 1994, p.828), and that “the fascination with Latin American telenovelas is worldwide (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003).” On the one hand, in the case of México, the networks have profited by producing a format that is easy to produce and reproduce. On the other hand, in the United States the audiences have indicated their preference over networks that broadcast telenovelas all day. Either way, by election of the network or by election from the audiences, telenovelas are a critical medium to consider in the study of Mexican and Latin American cultures.

The appeal of telenovelas is only one of the many aspects that scholars have already analyzed. In recent studies however, the concern has moved to the study of the impact that telenovelas have had over the audiences. Willnat and Wilkins (1997) for example, have been concerned about the negative attitudes resulting from media exposure. Such is the case of gender-role stereotyping, which according to them appears to be associated with television viewing (Willnat and Wilkins, 1997). In this regard, George Gerbner developed a concept called *cultivation theory*. This theory refers to the idea that viewers who spend substantial amounts of

time watching specific television contents experience the world through the lens of the television portrayals (Harris and Sanborn, 2014). This means that if the viewer is exposed to repeated portrayals of a particular group of people, or a particular position over an issue, when confronted with a real-life situation that he or she has only experienced through television, his or her memory will retrieve the information from the television show and then interpret it as real, which will even guide the attitude that the viewer will have before experiencing the event for the first time. It is important to mention that cultivation theory focuses primarily on the cumulative effect that repeated images produce in the audiences (Harris and Sanborn, 2014), which means that if the portrayals are not repeated, then the theory does not apply.

Another element that has already been explored in literature is that telenovelas play an important role in social constructs and meaning-making. On this subject, Acosta-Alzuru believes that telenovelas contribute to the debate on social issues, and that they can have tremendous impact on those who watch. She describes that telenovelas set the agenda for the discussion on certain topics, and that audiences are likely to be influenced by the positions presented in telenovelas over social issues. For example, regarding the meaning-making process, even though the audience is aware that what happens in telenovelas is fiction, oftentimes the audience thinks of the characters as people they know, and even include them in conversations with others (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003). This means that not only the audiences are highly influenced by the ideas presented in telenovelas, but they also become attached emotionally to the characters presented on such stories. This emotional attachment between members of the audience and specific characters in fictional stories is defined in the academic world as a *parasocial interaction*.

Parasocial interaction helps in the understanding of how the influence from these shows produce changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the viewers. In a study conducted by Singhal

(2010), it is described how a specific population in India began to discuss health issues and embrace gender equality thanks to the broadcasting of a soap opera called *Taru* (2002-2003). In another article, Singhal describes how in Africa, a soap opera story was based on real life stories and developed in collaboration with audiences, in order to help real women to liberate themselves from domestic violence from which they were constantly suffering (Usdin and Singhal, 2004).

However, even scholars like Singhal who believe in the potential of soap operas as a means for social change, they also explain the implications and cautions that one may have in using these kinds of strategies. Singhal explains that the interpretation of television content differs depending on the viewers, and that sometimes the audiences understand the messages selectively, according to their own biases and mental schemas (Singhal, 1996). This means that even though some producers may intend to create content that will prevent or help in the solution of some social issues, it is ultimately the viewer who will interpret the content based on his or her own experience within his or her culture.

Relatedly, in a 2001 study conducted by El Tecnológico de Monterrey in México researchers found that there were differences in the perception of telenovela content depending on the audience's levels of education. On the one hand, the viewers with a higher level of education reported to watch telenovelas for mere entertainment, and they claimed to be aware of the fact that they were watching fictional stories. On the other hand, the viewers who were identified as having lower levels of education insisted that the problems portrayed in telenovelas were not entirely fictional, and they believed to have experienced similar problems to those presented in the telenovelas and reported that the information provided in these shows was helpful for their daily lives (Casas Perez, 2005). This study is a good example for Singhal's

cautionary advice for the interpretation of portrayals. The subjects in this study shared the same cultural background, however, their experiences in terms of levels of formal education were different and therefore their interpretation of the content was different as well. In simple terms, some scholars have compared the influence of television fictional stories to the influence of television news, and these scholars suggest that, in many cases, television fiction is more important and meaningful than the news (Tufte, 2003).

Television, according to many studies, is the most powerful form of media and this importance could be exploited as a tool for either formal or informal education (Kakade and Raut, 2012). Instead of focusing on the negative impacts that television content may have, some scholars argue that television could be “an agent for social change” (p. 12). In this regard, there is a concept called *entertainment education* which refers to a strategy of intentionally combining educational issues with media entertainment products in order to “influence audience members' knowledge, attitudes, and overt behavior regarding an educational issue” (Papa et. al, 2000, p. 32). What this means is that some scholars believe that instead of focusing on studying the possible negative consequences of watching television contents, we should target our efforts at utilizing the importance of television and its influence, which goes beyond political or physical borders, in order to produce content that is socially responsible and that promotes community development.

In summary, literature suggests that media should be observed with caution. Whether certain content is intended to produce social change, or whether they are only focusing on agenda setting, parasocial interaction or cultivation theory provide cautionary advice for how the media should be studied and interpreted. Buckingham describes it better by explaining that the partiality, the vision, and representations that media offer “are colored and they provide us with

selective visions of the world, rather than providing direct access to it” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 3). Nevertheless, beneficial or harmful, in words of Kakade and Raut “it can be said without any hesitation that television has greater influence on society” (Kakade and Raut, 2012, p. 29). And when it comes to telenovelas and Mexican audiences living inside and outside of Mexico, this influence has gained such notoriety that there are numerous institutions devoted to the understanding of Latinos and their relation to the media such as The Latino and Media Project [LAMP] (Uribe, 2009). For all these reasons, the study of telenovelas in the attempt of understanding cultural ideas about gender, and the possibilities for social change, is a developing field in which this work attempts to contribute.

### **2.3 Gender Stereotypes in the Media.**

As stated before, mass communication media are powerful mechanisms for the production and reproduction of culture. Bonavitta and de Garay argue that the ability of the media to reach large parts of the population makes them powerful tools in the transmission of ideologies and in the maintenance of values. At the same, because media representations are based on partial discourses and presented repeatedly, the media are an extremely influential, but tendentious force within the public discourse. Some of those representations have to do with gender, power relations, and violence towards women (Bonavitta and de Garay, 2011).

On this subject, the United Nations reported in 2005 that media promote the subordination of women by failing to properly address the stories of women in the media. When analyzing media content about news, the Global Media Monitoring Project (2005) declared that media fail in both, in portraying enough stories about women, and in the way in which the scarce stories about women are told (UN, 2007). By portraying some issue in a particular way, or by failing to address a particular issue, the media “tell us what to think about” (Wood, 2012, p. 264),

these are some of the examples of how the media set the agenda for the stories that are important to tell and how we should interpret those stories. For example, by neglecting or trivializing the problems that affect women, the media indirectly tell us that those problems are not important (Wood, 2012). And when women are portrayed in television stories they are usually presented in stereotypical roles. According to Wood, the media “emphasizes traditional roles and normalizes violence against women” (p. 231). Although the normalization of violence is an extensive subject, for this analysis I will include it as part of the stereotypical representation of gender in the media.

However, the debate about media representations does not exclude male portrayals. Some authors claim that male portrayals are just as hurtful as female portrayals are. Men in the media are usually presented as totally independent, somehow aggressive, mostly heterosexual, powerful and always in charge (Wood, 2012), something that leads men to believe that if they fail to adopt all these features they are not being masculine enough.

When it comes to gender representations, the most discussed aspects of portrayals have to do with physical appearance, professional development, family roles, gender relations, and gender competencies, along with a story of morals behind such portrayals that tend to indicate which features are right and which ones are wrong for each gender to adopt. Because of these gender expectations, these rigorous representations, and these unrealistic portrayals of men and women, Wood says that media often lead us to believe that we are inadequate or deficient (Wood, 2012). To this day, extensive research has been conducted in an attempt to promote a less stereotypical portrayals of gender in the media.

But regardless of the inaccuracies in gender representations and their implications, Wood explains that it is possible to subvert media messages by becoming critical consumers (Wood,

2012). By turning our attention away from harmful television content, the media will respond by producing other types of formats. However, we must first be able to understand the relation between our culture and the portrayals of the media, and the influence that they both have on each other. At the same time, we must develop a sense of awareness to identify the detrimental aspects of television representations, given that most of the times the values that are so inherent in our culture are hard to distinguish as unfavorable portrayals. If we seek to become educated consumers of the media, there are three considerations that we must acknowledge when analyzing media content: 1) that “media advance representations of gendered and racial identities; 2) that media have both progressive and regressive tendencies; and 3) that media content can be challenged and changed” (p. 261). This means that even though the media do influence us in the way we think about gender, when these notions are not building an equitable society, society can begin to demand better contents. And the result is a relation that is always cyclic in a way that media influence society in the same way in which society influences the media.

#### **2.4 The Virgin of Guadalupe: The Archetype of Mexican Womanhood.**

According to Mexican historians, there are three archetypes for Mexican womanhood: *La Malinche*, *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, and *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Hind, 2010). *La Malinche*, also known as *Malintzin* or *Marina*, represents the figure of evil and disgrace. Despite the many investigative reports about her historical contributions to the construction of México as a country, she is commonly known as a betrayer for being the mistress of *Hernan Cortés*, the most renowned conquistador of the Aztec empire. *La Malinche* is an iconic example of the female representation of temptation for men, and as the creature that draws innocent men to the ruin and condemnation (Castellanos, 2012). In Mexican popular culture there is even a pejorative term

called *Malinchista*, which is used to refer to those Mexicans who have a particular preference for something foreign. La Virgen de Guadalupe, is probably the most important archetype of Mexican womanhood, and she will be the figure that will be explained throughout this work. She represents almost all the values that are important for Mexican women: motherhood, purity, and abnegation. The third female archetype in Mexican culture is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a creole nun considered by many, as the first Mexican female intellectual. She represents the type of woman that is “smart, gendered, but sexually inactive (Hind, 2010, p. 34).” According to some scholars, the archetype of Sor Juana supports the myth that women who pursue intellectual curiosity sacrifice motherhood or family life, an idea that has helped in the misunderstanding of feminism in Hispanic cultures (Hind, 2010). The most iconic Mexican female artists or intellectuals often fall under the archetype of Sor Juana, such is the case of Frida Kahlo, whose art is known all over the world but was unable to have children, or even Rosario Castellanos, who decided to pursue a life of asexuality. In Mexican popular culture, women who pursue intellectual development are often considered troubled, sorrowful, or even misfortunate, and to this day, the pursuit of motherhood still accounts for one of the most important aspirations of Mexican women. Gil describes this better by arguing that in Latin American cultures it is not only that in order to be a mother one needs to be a woman, instead it is understood that in order to be a woman one needs to be a mother (Gil, 2011). This, along with other notions of womanhood in Mexican culture, will be specifically addressed in the current work by analyzing the figure of La Virgen de Guadalupe, and her role in *La Rosa de Guadalupe*.

The story of La Virgen de Guadalupe began many years ago, in the times of the Aztecs. According to the popular belief, the Aztecs did not know the Catholic religion because, like many indigenous tribes of the time, they were warriors who worshipped several different gods. It

was until the Spanish came and brought priests called missionaries, who had the special mission of spreading the faith, that the Catholic religion began to be recognized by the indigenous tribes. However, the battle for religion was not easy because not all the natives recognized the faith, and it was until La Virgen de Guadalupe appeared in person, that their souls were able to recognize the true faith (La Verdad Católica, 2014).

According to the Catholic Church, the resolution of the battle came with a miracle. Among the many natives who were interested in the real faith, and came along once a week to learn about religion, there was a man called Juan Diego. The story explains that one day Juan Diego was walking by el Cerro del Tepeyac (the Tepeyac Mountain), a place near Tlatelolco in the State of Mexico. He was on his way to the church when suddenly a sweet voice called him by his name and then referred to him as “the smallest one of my children.” Juan Diego observed a lady who claimed to be the mother of God, and then asked him to go to the bishop and let him know that she would like to have a temple built under her name, in that same place, to be able to expand the religion and convince the others of the true faith (La Verdad Católica, 2014). After a couple of visits to the bishop without any response, Juan Diego tried to avoid the Tepeyac Mountain because he had no response to the lady’s request. Regardless of his attempts, he was confronted by the mysterious lady who appeared before him once again. He told the lady that the Bishop needed evidence of her miraculous appearance, and that his word was not enough. The lady asked Juan Diego to cut some flowers, tuck them under his clothes and visit the bishop again. Juan Diego did as told, and according to the faith, in his last visit to the bishop he opened his clothes and let the flowers fall. When the flowers dropped to the floor both men witnessed the image of the lady, miraculously painted, in Juan Diego’s clothing (La Verdad Católica, 2014).

The Catholic interpretation of this miraculous appearance is that when the new land was discovered, the Virgin wanted to be, as the mother of Christ, the one who taught the true religion. She appeared to convince the rebels and save their souls. It is worth noting that according to the Catholic religion, a miraculous appearance is defined as a physical manifestation of a saint that has no scientific explanation. The Catholic Church argues that because of her, the natives were able to know the real God and could stop worshipping idols. Other Catholic interpretations state that she brought together the Spanish and the natives, giving birth to what is called a *mestizaje*. Zires argues that this was the beginning of her use as a symbol for nationalism and identity (Zires, 1994). In recognition for her evangelizing ability, the Catholic Church baptized her as *The Queen of México* and *The Empress of the Americas* (La Verdad Católica, 2014).

The Virgin of Guadalupe owns two more titles besides the Queen of México. Her most distinguished title within the Mexican popular culture is *The Mother of Mexicans*, once again describing the importance of motherhood within this culture. It is well known that she appeared allegedly to save the souls of those who were living in ignorance, and served as a symbol for conciliation, therefore she is repeatedly worshiped as protector and referred to as a mother. Given that she appeared in crucial moments such as the birth of México as nation, and because she did nothing similar with any other country in the world, Mexican Catholics believe that the Virgin of Guadalupe favors México over other countries (La Verdad Católica, 2014; Zunzunegui, 2010).

In addition, another element that is important to mention is the significance of the Virgin of Guadalupe as an artifact of national and racial identity. Her third title is *La Virgen Morena*. *Moreno* in Spanish means brown. It is an adjective used to indicate that a person has brown skin. Because the Mexican race is thought to be the result of the combination between the Spanish and

the indigenous natives, Mexicans think of themselves as mestizos (mixed, or cross-bred) and most of them feel comfortable identifying themselves with that skin color.

La Virgen de Guadalupe serves as a symbol for many things within the Mexican culture, as a symbol of national identity, as a symbol for racial identity, or as an archetype for womanhood, this last one is the one that I seek to explore in this study about gender and México. *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is a television show that clearly utilizes the image of La Virgen de Guadalupe, which is why it is especially important to analyze the images of women represented in their stories.

It is no surprise that the values in certain religions are likely to be traditional and conservative. They may or may not represent the values of any particular culture, however, it is important to understand them in a country that proudly recognizes a particular religion as a part of their identity. When it comes to La Virgen de Guadalupe as a model for womanhood in a country that struggles with violence towards women, it becomes necessary to analyze their definition of womanhood and the values portrayed by the models within that culture.

Along with the importance of motherhood and the recognition of La Virgen de Guadalupe as the mother of Mexicans, there are other values that she represents. One of the most discussed values that La Virgen reflects, and that have caused enormous criticism by scholars is the value of submission. As stated by the Catholic Church itself, La Virgen is a model of obedience, of sacrifice, and of service. Anderson and Chávez state that La Virgen represents the *feminine* value of service, and she must be understood in her feminine relation to the Church as “the servant who listens” (Anderson and Chávez, 2009, p. 160). Moreover, they describe how according to their Catholic beliefs, masculine and feminine are features that are exclusive, but complementary (Anderson and Chávez, 2009).

Unlike the United States, México was not born as a country that had the premise of freedom of religion. Catholicism is an element that was present since the rise of México as an independent nation-state. Since the time when México fought for its independence from Spain, La Virgen the Guadalupe and Catholicism were used as symbols of patriotism, national pride, and unity (Favron, 1992). La Virgen de Guadalupe was even the icon in the battle for Mexican independence (Zires, 1994). Besides, in addition to the symbolism in the many titles of La Virgen de Guadalupe, other scholars and historians have explained her significance within Mexican culture. Zunzunegui, for example, argues that in México only soccer and the veneration to the Virgin of Guadalupe can bring together the poorest and the richest man in a society, in a culture that clearly marks a difference between socio-economic classes (Zunzunegui, 2010). Her significance is such that her magnitude in economic terms reaches an importance similar to the Vatican (Zunzunegui, 2010). Even today, being Mexican means being *Guadalupano*, in recent census 88% of Mexicans still consider themselves Catholics (INEGI, 2005). Catholicism in México centers its faith under the myth of La Virgen de Guadalupe (Altamirano, 2012), and she represents a model for Mexican womanhood. Therefore in the study of media, culture and gender, a telenovela that uses La Virgen de Guadalupe as a primary feature in its content becomes an important tool in the analysis and understanding of gender dynamics in Mexican culture.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework: The Second Wave of Feminism in the U.S.

Before I explain the importance of *feminism* as a theoretical framework, and the reasons why I believe *second wave feminism* is better suited than *first* or *third wave feminism*, I will begin by describing the historical context in which second wave feminism arose. It is important to understand the historical moment and the complexities behind second wave feminism in order to be able to make a connection between gender, violence, and media studies.

The sixties in the United States were a decade of activism. After a ban on employment discrimination practices, surrounded by a national environment of campaigns and movements calling for civil rights for minorities, and after witnessing many small victories for women activists who had been struggling during the cold war, many women understood the importance of becoming political. Some women began to join organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) in order to pursue what was called the women's liberation movement. This increase in the participation of women in political activism gave birth to what is recognized as the second wave of feminism (McLean, 2009).

In 1966 a group called the National Organization for Women became the largest feminist organization in the United States. They had been working extensively creating awareness and advertising campaigns, which combined humor in order to ridicule the absurdity of some forms of sexism in the workplace. NOW focused primarily on rights that had to do with employment equity, equal education, and women's right to control their sexual life and fertility. However, they also participated in the fight to extend maternity leave and child care. They were among the first organizations that emerged in order to challenge traditional notions about gender. Some members of NOW were very outspoken about the fact that all the weight of family

responsibilities were placed on women, something that put women at disadvantage with men in public life. NOW, along with other organizations of the time, offered the possibility to end sex discrimination, at least in the workplace, and by 1974 they went from having 1,000 members, to having more than 40,000 (McLean, 2009).

Second wave feminism, as a movement, was identified for having fought for women's civil rights. Unlike first wave feminism, which was concerned mostly about basic rights for women, second wave feminism was more concerned about conquering gender-equity and ending gender-based discrimination. Second wave feminism is described to be either the result of, or a movement that emerged alongside with other movements like: student protests, the anti-Vietnam war movements, gay and lesbian movements, civil rights movements, black power movements, and the birth of the New Left, during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006). What all these movements had in common was to end discrimination on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, or class. And one the most interesting aspects of second wave feminism is that it created unlikely alliances with other groups in order to work together to be able to accomplish some victories in social policy.

As a result of all of these movements during the 60s, women who were young and in college during those times developed a different set of ideals, and they were a key component in the advancement of feminism. College women and recent college graduates were exposed to different types of activism, and were able to engage in different causes. In addition to this exposure, these women had numerous role models that represented female strength. Young women of the 60s observed a change around them, which enabled them to become aware of sexism and power dynamics, and become more critical about their own intimate relationships. According to many scholars, their repeated participation in different political movements gave

them confidence to challenge what their considered unfair notions of gender (McLean, 2009), and their ability to form alliances and convince other women, resulted in a spread of feminist ideas.

To have a better understanding of the second wave of feminism, as a movement, it is important to know some of the key moments of its development in the United States. Some important dates for the second wave of feminism include: 1964, the year in which the Civil Rights Act outlawed sex discrimination in the workplace; 1970, when thousands of people marched in a massive demonstration of feminism demanding equal opportunities for women, the right to abortion, and the right for child care; and 1973, which was the year in which the UN included women's rights as part of the Human Rights Declaration and stated that gender equity was the only way to ensure sustainable economic development (McLean, 2009). However, one of the most iconic moments of the second wave feminism happened during a Miss America Pageant in 1968 and 1969, in which feminist women protested to eliminate the notion of women as a beauty product (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006). This protest remained in history because of a myth that was created accusing several women of burning their brassieres during the protest. This action was utilized as a way to portray feminist women as irrational and immoral, when in reality the only thing that happened was that some women were invited to throw their brassieres to the trash as a symbol of a protest against restrictive notions of femininity.

In summary, the movement of second wave feminism, in the United States, fought for women's right for equal jobs, women's body rights, and women's right to exercise their sexuality, and it challenged well-established obligations for women to pursue marriage and motherhood. Their goal was to abolish gender discrimination by empowering women and granting access to equal opportunities, regardless of gender (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006). And

it was a movement that has been widely criticized for an inaccurate interpretation of one of their iconic protests. Nevertheless, thanks to the alliances that women activists from these times were able to collect, second wave feminism accomplished several victories for women around the world and created awareness in men and in women of later generations. It is important to note that college-educated and middle-class women were a key component, which is why I am going to move on to the influence that the second wave of feminism had in México, and the reasons why I believe it is important that privileged Latinas become aware of the importance of becoming political about women's rights and that Latina scholars conduct more research under this theory.

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework: The Second Wave of Feminism in México.**

The second wave of feminism in México appeared a little later than in the U.S., during the 1970s. The participants came primarily from middle-classes, university-level educational backgrounds, just like in the U.S., and were women who identified with the political positions from the Mexican Left, something that is also similar between both countries. Feminism in México was tremendously influenced by other feminist movements that were already gaining some notoriety in Europe and in the U.S. (Lamas, 2011). This influence accounts for the importance of education and the involvement of women in the process of raising awareness in other women, and men, for the advancement of women's rights.

Adopting the slogan that was already being used, "the personal is political" (Lamas, 2011, p. 16), the movement arose as an attempt to create awareness around the moral double-standards that kept Mexican women oppressed and at home taking care of the children. These ideals were echoed by personalities like Rosario Castellanos, a Mexican famous writer of the time, who included in some of her novels the Mexican ideals of virginity as womanhood,

passivity as the main quality of any perfect wife, and selflessness as the definition for motherhood. Castellanos believed that almost every men, whether they were husbands or sons, manipulated women under the idea of common welfare (Castellanos, 1975), and was particularly critical of women from middle and upper classes who viewed feminism as choice, rather than an necessity for collective advancement (Lamas, 2011). The contributions from personalities like Castellanos were an attempt to invite women to engage in activism, and at the same time, these contributions have helped Mexican feminists in the attempt to collect historical pieces to describe the second wave of feminism in México.

The second wave of feminism in México also brought women together, and they were able to gather in a common place called the Coalition of Feminist Women (Coalición de Mujeres Feministas). This group was born in 1976 and demanded three basic principles: 1) the right for voluntary maternity, which implied education about the use of contraceptives and the right to abortion; 2) the end of sexual violence, which included rape by their husbands; and 3) the right to free sexual choice, which dealt with the double standard of the unreserved male sexuality and the demand for female virginity (Lamas, 2011). The Coalition of Feminist Women was a group intensively committed to cultural criticism which demands were influential around the country and replicated by subsequent organizations such as the Support Center for Raped Women (Centro de Apoyo a Mujeres Violadas) and the Collective for Solidarity Action with Domestic Workers (Colectivo de Acción Solidaria con Empleadas Domésticas).

During the 70s around the country of México, these organizations succeeded in increasing awareness and political participation of city-based and educated women. They were able to resonate in many Mexican women's experiences with sexism and violence. Nevertheless, because Mexican feminists were not as politically experienced as feminists from the U.S., they

failed at creating alliances with other activist groups. This refusal and inability to understand the importance of collaboration, resulted in the lack of political influence and facilitated the vanishing of the movement by the late 70s and early 80s (Lamas, 2011).

The history of Mexican feminism sets a record for the positive influence that activism can have across countries and the similarities between both movements of the re-emergence of feminism are quite interesting. On the one hand, middle-class and educated women had access to political participation in the U.S., and they were able to detect common objectives with other movements which encouraged them to create alliances for stronger political influence. On the other hand, middle and upper-class educated women in México noticed the changes and results that had been accomplished in the U.S., which inspired them to do the same for their country. However, women in México were not as observant or experienced as their counterparts in the U.S., and they underestimated the power of alliances with other Mexican protesters of the time, resulting in the movement's low influential power over social policy, and the weakening of the movement in later years. Because second wave feminism was concerned with ending gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence, it is the perfect match to conduct the present study.

### **3.3 Theoretical Framework: Second Wave Feminism as Theory.**

The use of second wave feminism as a theory is important for many reasons. Although second wave feminism appeared almost forty years ago, its goals haven't been fully accomplished in developed countries like in the U.S., which leaves the developing countries even further back. In countries like México and places like Latin America, where traditions, religion, and family practices are still very conservative and maintain traditional notions of the ideas of gender, women struggle even more to find equal opportunities, either for education or in the

workplace. In addition, feminist researches have continually denounced that Mexican media has played an important role in keeping these traditions almost untouched through the years, resulting in the deficient advancement of women in these places. Not to mention that the idea of the female body as an object, along with violence towards women is reflected directly in social problems like prostitution, women trafficking, rape, femicides, etc.

Second wave feminist theory distinguished itself from the first wave in several aspects. For example, second wave feminists wanted to conduct research *for* women, not *on* women (Spalter-Roth and Hartman, 1999). What this means is that because many of the second wave feminist were also activists, they wanted to produce research that was useful for other women and not just an attempt to explain women's experiences. Feminist researchers of the time wanted to collect evidence about aspects like sexism or violence that was strong enough to resonate in other women, so that they could become aware of the unfavorable situations that surrounded them at work, at home, or at school. As a result, these women would become inspired to participate in social movements and attempt to produce changes in social policy.

Second wave feminists also differentiates from the first wave in the sense that researchers from this time considered science to be socially constructed and affected by power dynamics related to gender (Spalter-Roth and Hartman, 1999). Researchers from the first wave believed in the hard facts, namely in the quantitative approaches. Quantitative approaches, according to feminists from the first wave, were less likely to be criticized in terms of gender or race, since they were not offering interpretations as much as they were offering numbers. However, researchers from the second wave were not fully satisfied with the quantitative approaches because they believed such strict methods and concepts were discarding the social relations

behind the problems. Second wave feminists believed that such complexities were better expressed through qualitative methods.

The research produced during the years of the second wave of feminism focused on areas that referred to family, for example: spouse abuse, rape by the partner, and divorce. Also on subjects that referred to the workplace and equity like: employment discrimination, medical leave, medical care, and child care (Spalter-Roth and Hartman, 1999). Women's health was also included, women's right to exercise their sexuality and the right for abortion, and women's poverty which included the discrimination that women suffer to go to school in order to advance in their social status.

In summary first wave feminism, as it was explained before, was concerned about accomplishing basic rights for women, and at the same time, it favored quantitative approaches over qualitative approaches. Because second wave feminist theory was born as an attempt to produce research that would assist women in their daily struggles, because it was concerned primarily about gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence, and because it embraced the qualitative approaches and the importance of women's personal experiences as a valuable tool for promoting awareness in other women; second wave feminism is the best suited theoretical framework for the purposes of this study. Not to mention that it is almost impossible to discuss third wave feminism in places where women's lives are still in danger due to the prevalent violence that affects them. Therefore, because the importance of television and media representations have already been explained, it is time to make a connection between sexism, violence, media, and feminist studies.

### **3.4 Theoretical Framework: Second Wave Feminism in Media Studies.**

Second wave feminist research was not only used during the sixties or seventies, a lot of current research is still conducted under some of its principles, particularly research that focus on media criticism. According to Van Zoonen, feminist theory in media studies has produced research mainly in three areas: 1) stereotypes and socialization, which is concerned about the notions of gender that are reinforced by the media and the effects that these portrayals have in audiences; 2) pornography, which has produced important amounts of research, and provoked anger among feminist women who claim that male behavior is markedly influenced by their constant exposure to these types of media content; and 3) ideology, which is related to political ideas, particularly socialist trends and Marxist principles, let's not forget that second wave feminism was heavily influenced by movements of the political Left (Van Zoonen, 1994). However, other scholars have also included the normalization of violence as a fourth subject for feminist media research (Wood, 2013), but because it may be related with the power dynamics based on gender stereotypes, for the purposes of this analysis I will stick to Van Zoonen description and conduct this study under the subject of stereotypes and socialization.

As it was explained before, some of the rights that second wave feminists were trying to conquer have not been fully accomplished yet in first world countries, and the case is a little worse in the developing countries. In Latin American cultures, most particularly in México, the constructions of gender are tightly related to other aspects of identity like tradition, religion, or family, which is why the challenge to change certain notions about gender can be an extremely complicated.

However, the media offer a possibility for analyzing the reality of women in any particular culture. Through media content a researcher can find a reflection of certain ideas and notions that are accepted in a particular community. In the example of LRG, a telenovela by

Televisa, I have already explained that part of Televisa's success is due to the fact that they produce content that will not upset neither the audiences nor the government. Therefore, a telenovela by Televisa may provide important cues to the notions of gender that are acceptable within the Mexican culture. In addition, *La Rosa de Guadalupe* offers a valuable opportunity for feminist research, because its producers base their stories on real-life problems, and they attempt to portray real Mexican families that are explicitly Catholic. By analyzing these elements combined a feminist researcher may find important links between gender, family, and religion.

In a nutshell, second wave feminism, as a movement, was concerned for the empowerment of women, the movement began because there was a need to denounce gender inequality. Second wave feminists understood the importance of activism, but most importantly the importance of creating awareness in other women. The women who initiated the movement were aware of the privilege that they had by being educated, middle-class, and for having the opportunity of being exposed to other civil movements. These privileges enabled them to become aware of sexism, inequality, but mainly to be confident enough to become engaged in social policy.

Second wave feminism, as a theory, was produced during the years of protest as an attempt to produce research that served that purpose of creating awareness. Feminist researchers of the time were concerned about the causes and effects of traditional gender notions, and the failures behind some of those notions in creating a fair society. Among the subjects that feminist researchers covered were the ones that had to do with gender notions, family responsibilities, and gender inequality. And the subsequent second wave research, produced in recent years, has covered some of these issues in the criticism on the media.

For all the reasons explained above, I believe *La Rosa de Guadalupe* offers undeniable opportunities as an object of feminist study. It is a text that could produce research that could serve as both: as an instrument for understanding Mexican society and their notions of gender, and a study that could be used to raise awareness about the notions of gender that are hindering the advancement of women in México. This study will borrow several arguments about the second wave of feminism to conduct a textual analysis about the stereotypes of gender in the media in an attempt to find if *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is positively educating the audiences about gender, or if it is reinforcing notions about gender that could be hurtful. It is important to note that this study is not concerned about the effects of the media, it is more an analysis of the media, a criticism of a show that claims to be educational and that it's broadcasted by a network which influence has been evident. This will be an analysis of the portrayals of gender in the media that will hopefully pinpoint some links between the current reality of Mexican women, and their representation in Mexican television.

### **3.5 Methodology: Textual Analysis.**

Feminism can be considered both a methodology and a theory. However, for the purposes of this analysis second wave feminism will be the philosophical standpoint in which I will conduct this work, it will not be the methodology. Feminist research, according to feminists themselves, has always encouraged interdisciplinarity, and feminist researchers have utilized many different techniques to produce research both in qualitative and quantitative approaches (Hesse-Biber, GilMartin, and Lydenberg, 1999). Nevertheless, if we were to define feminism as a methodology it would be described as a procedure that “critiques the ways that our assumptions about gender tend to influence research and knowledge in subtle and not-so-subtle ways” (Leslie, 2010, p. 171), in other words, research committed to accomplish gender justice.

For this study on *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, the use of second wave feminist theory will be accompanied with the methodological approach of *textual analysis*. Textual analysis is a process of gathering information from a *text*, in order to understand how individuals make sense of the world (Mckee, 2003). A *text* may or may not be written artifacts, a text can be anything that can produce interpretations, anything from which we can produce research and obtain information or meaning from (Mckee, 2003). In this case *La Rosa de Guadalupe* will be the text utilized, which meaning I plan to obtain through a feminist lens.

It is important to mention that in feminist research, textual analysis is becoming more and more frequent as a methodological approach. During the years of first wave feminism and the first years of second wave feminism, when researchers were looking for results that would produce hard data, content analysis was frequent. However, content analysis then became “less and less fashionable” (Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 73) because feminist researchers considered that it worked under the assumption that frequencies in certain features of a text were valid indicators of meaning (Van Zoonen, 1994). This assumption left no room for the cultural background, and the complexities behind the experiences of the subjects, in this case women. The goal of this analysis is to investigate the possible interpretation that Mexican, and Latin American audiences can give to a show like *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, because it is important to understand that these cultures have a strong attachment to religious images and patriarchal values. Content analysis may be valid if I were to produce an analysis of the number of times in which women are presented in certain roles, but if I want to explore the impact of a telenovela that uses meaningful symbols for specific audiences, repeatedly or not, then a textual analysis seems to provide better options.

According to Dines and Humez, every methodological approach has its strengths and weaknesses, content analysis may be a strong fit in order to produce a formal analysis, however it has been criticized for being reductionist in the analysis of culture or gender (Dines and Humez, 2014). In their words “the textual analysis of cultural studies combines formalist analysis which critique how cultural meanings convey specific ideologies of gender, race, class, sexuality, nation, and other ideological dimensions” (Dines and Humez, 2014, p. 13), ideas that will be explored in an interpretation of *La Rosa de Guadalupe* from an audience that understands machismo as a way of expressing gender identity, and Catholicism as a way of understanding national identity.

Textual analysis has not only been valuable in feminist research, it has also been a valuable method for researchers that conduct media studies (Mckee, 2003). In the particular case of telenovelas, Acosta-Alzuru explains that textual analysis is a common methodological approach (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003). Just like second wave feminists argued that quantitative methods were unfitting if a researcher wanted to analyze the complexities behind the social issues because those methods were limited by concepts and numbers, Acosta-Alzuru argues that textual analysis is preferred over content analysis because it offers certain advantages if we mean to study relationships and not concepts. In the case of *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, I will not try to examine the portrayals of women as an isolated concept, I will explore the relationship between the portrayals of women in telenovelas, the significance of telenovelas for Mexican audiences, the importance of the network that produces LRG, the symbolic meaning of the images used in LRG, and the relation of all of these to the current ideas of gender in Mexican culture; a relation that will be valuable in the understanding of Mexican culture and Mexican media.

In the process of creating telenovelas producers, writers, and audiences work together in the development of stories, and this collaborative creation is best analyzed through textual analysis since it offers the possibility of examining both, “the conditions of production, and the consumption of the text” (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003, p. 278). In this sense the conditions of production refer to Televisa being the network that produces LRG, and that has historically produced similar content under a certain philosophy. Its producers are mostly men, Mexican men, who may, or may not have certain ideas about gender. And the conditions of the consumption of the text refer to LRG being broadcast in a country in which social problems are intrinsically related to the notions of gender. Moreover, LRG claims to be based on current social problems, which sort of defines the importance of the audience because they sort of define what stories need to be told. These relationships work together in the success of *La Rosa de Guadalupe* as a notorious television show that has managed to remain for almost 6 years, and therefore, from an academic perspective provide valuable elements that will be better explored through the approach of textual analysis.

### **3.6 Methodology: Data Collection.**

A total of 25 episodes from *La Rosa de Guadalupe* were selected from the *YouTube* site. Several of them are available in the *Univision* website. However, I wanted to discover which episodes were registered in YouTube as having more views and more likes by the viewers themselves. I have already explained the importance of social media and the internet in modern society, and also the availability of communication technologies for the middle and upper-classes, but before I continue to describe the methodology for this analysis it is important to clarify certain definitions. In the language of cyber space views indicate the number of times a video posted on the YouTube website has been watched by YouTube users. In addition,

whenever a user likes a social media content, social media offers the possibility for the user to indicate that a particular content was enjoyable for him or her. In the case of YouTube a user can make these indications about a video by clicking over a button that is called a *like*. The number of likes collected by a video are, therefore, indicators that the users considered the video as valuable or amusing. The first 25 full episodes displayed by YouTube when entering the words “La Rosa de Guadalupe capítulos completos” in the website’s search engine were selected.

In addition to the indicators of views and likes by the users, I selected YouTube over the Univision website because it offers some unique advantages. YouTube is the most utilized video-sharing website in the world, and according to some scholars, the third most visited website worldwide (Kelly, Fealy, and Watson, 2011). Because looking for formal rating statistics from a television network is highly complicated, YouTube offers the possibility to explore what audiences like in a simple manner. YouTube results are based primarily on three statistical controls: 1) the date in which the episode was uploaded; 2) the number of views that a video collects; and 3) the number of likes collected by the videos (Cheng, Dale, and Liu, 2008). Moreover, researchers like Kelly, Fealy, and Watson (2011) have already conducted research based on the number of views that a video collects in YouTube, in order to conduct analyses that describe how audiences participate and engage to indicate what they like, what they don’t like, and how they build identity based on that participation. Which means that scholars who are concerned about media reception are already turning to the social media as a credible indicator of current media trends, not to mention that one of my primary motivations for this analysis was, as I already explained, the fact that online communities were particularly interested in *La Rosa de Guadalupe*.

I am a Mexican myself and Catholic educated, and after conducting a lot of research on feminist theory I was able to formulate research questions that I wanted to answer by watching *La Rosa de Guadalupe*. After watching each of the episodes selected several times, I made a list with some of my interpretations. In the list I made about the episodes I collected: 1) the episode's name, in order to be able to identify the episode if I decided to quote in the article; 2) the character's names, in order to be able to describe features about them like physical aspect, profession, or even quote them if it was necessary; 3) the relationship between the characters, I made a chart to be able to identify family representations, how many parents appeared, how many siblings, how many relatives, etc.; and 4) everything that I could find that fit under the category of gender stereotypes, if women appeared doing only housework, if men were physically strong, if any of the characters said explicitly or committed an action that could fit under that category. I was able to write two to three pages in notes about each of the 30 episodes.

After watching the episodes and writing the notes, I found that the best way to organize my findings was by creating categories. Based on literature, as it will be explained in detail in the analysis section, I concluded that four labels were appropriate to divide my findings, the name of the categories are as follows: 1) portrayals of physical appearance; 2) portrayals of professional occupation; 3) portrayals of family responsibilities; 4) women as victims, men as heroes; and 5) normalization of violence in LRG.

The last step was to get some conclusions about the categories in order to evaluate if *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is portraying gender roles in a stereotyped manner, or if it is presenting non-traditional prototypes of gender. Due to the prevalence of women's subordination, sexism and violence towards women in México, I wanted to explore if there is a relationship between media

portrayals and cultural beliefs, because there is sufficient research claiming that the media plays a key role in maintaining, or in challenging gender ideas that may be damaging.

In addition, there is an element of religion in this telenovela that could play an important role in the construction of the moral values shared by younger generations of Mexican and Latina women all over the world who watch LRG. As it was explained earlier, religion plays an important role in the notions that women have about their gender identities and obligations, something that makes it even harder for them to challenge these notions for fear of being criticized by society or their own families. Therefore it was also important to include a category exploring the values and morals portrayed in *La Rosa de Guadalupe*.

In summary, what I seek to analyze is how beneficial or damaging these representations are in *La Rosa de Guadalupe*. If they are in fact being educational like Cueva argues, if *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is in fact providing content that will empower Mexican women and families in the resolution to their problems. Or, if they are promoting the same values and beliefs that belong to patriarchal societies, blaming women for their own fates, failing to portray women who are professional, or even forcing men to be alienated from emotional contact, and leaving all the family responsibilities on women.

The following questions were the base for this analysis:

RQ1: How do Mexican media communicate messages about gender?

RQ2: How do Mexican media communicate values and morality messages?

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Portrayals of Physical Appearance.

The first finding that I was able to recognize in most of the episodes watched in *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is the portrayal of physical appearance of the characters. Once you begin to watch the show it is easy to appreciate that the representation of the characters becomes repetitive and stereotypical, even an inexperienced viewer will be able to identify the characters that are from low socio-economic status or high socio-economic status, the ones that will be the victims in the episode's story, or the ones that are going to be the perpetrators of any type of crime.

I will begin by describing the physical appearance depending on socio economic class. Ruggiero and Glasscock have already noted that in most telenovelas the characters that pertain to higher socio-economic status are lighted-skinned, whereas characters who represent people from low socio-economic status are usually dark-skinned looking (Ruggiero and Glasscock, 2004). Another element about the class representation has to do with clothing. Characters from low socio-economic status usually use service uniforms like driver suits or maid uniforms, or work-related clothing like overalls, aprons, smocks, or caps. Characters that represent people from middle socio-economic classes are more likely to be presented in regular clothing such as jeans, skirts, sweaters, jackets, etc. And characters who represent people from high socio-economic classes are usually exaggerated, wearing overly stylized hairstyles, high-heel shoes, elegant suits, and accessories.

There is also a difference between the representations of class depending on gender. In the case of characters from low socio-economic status, men are usually wearing overalls or caps, and women are usually wearing smocks or aprons. The hairstyles are also different, men usually

wear short hair, and women usually wear long hair with braids. In the case of middle-class characters, women usually wear conservative clothing like medium to long skirts, and formal blouses. They wear light make-up and few clothing accessories like small earrings or bracelets. Middle-class men wear clean short hairstyles, however, their clothing is also usually related to their occupation. Middle-class men wear professional clothing like suits if they are lawyers or businessmen, doctor uniforms, or conservative clothing like dark-colored dress pants and dress shirts. Lastly, when it comes to characters from high socio-economic status, the differences between the clothing of men and women are even more notorious. Rich men are presented wearing, again, conservative clothing, dark-colored dress pants combined with light-colored dress shirts, and in some cases they wear suits or ties, and formal footwear. In the case of rich women, most of them are shown wearing skirts, however, they are usually wearing short skirts. It seems that the higher the socio-economic level of women, the shorter the length of the skirt. The make-up of rich women is heavier than the one used by middle-class women, and the shoes are also different. The high-heel is even higher.

In Mexican culture the use of short skirts and high-heels by women is not exactly related to success. The use of fashionable and notorious clothing is usually seen as superficial and related to women who are selfish, dumb, or gold-diggers. In Mexican culture a decent woman has to wear conservative, low-profile, modest clothing. A woman that is too elegant is commonly perceived as being too concerned about her looks to be efficient at work, a good mother, or smart enough. Which is why it is interesting to note that this is the representation of rich women in LRG. They are not presented in the Mexican archetype of decent women, but the women of low and middle classes are presented under these archetypes. These observations are best described

by Lee and Moscovitz who refer to this shallow representation of women from higher classes under the label of *the rich bitch* (Lee and Moscovitz, 2012).

Another element found in LRG has to do with weight. Whereas in the portrayals of men from any of the socio-economic status did not follow any particular pattern, in the case of women, in all the portrayals observed in the episodes selected, none of the women presented as the main characters, from none of the socio-economic status were overweight, most of them looked slender or thin.

Lastly, when observing the physical appearance of the characters, men who were the perpetrators of crime came mostly from lower socio-economic classes. When they were presented as adults, they were presented wearing tattoos, exaggerated hairstyles, earrings, or long hair. In the case of teenagers who were the trouble makers, the social class pattern was not applicable. It is important to note nevertheless, that in the case of adult male villains, they were mostly evil, but in the case of teenagers who were villains, they ended up regretting their wrongdoing and becoming good people in the end.

#### **4.2 Portrayals of Professional Occupation.**

Another element that I found repetitive in LRG is the portrayal of occupations depending on gender. In this case, social class is also an element involved. Male characters from low socio-economic status usually appear working as gardeners, construction workers, drivers, etc. Female characters from low socio-economic status usually appear working as maids, cooks, or flea market vendors.

Male characters from middle-class status are usually professionals. Middle-class men, although almost never appear in working environments, when they do appear in such conditions, they usually occupy management professions, head doctors, policemen chiefs, small business

owners, etc. Female characters from middle-class status, when appearing in professional environments, they appear occupying professions such as teachers, nurses, therapists, or assistants. It is interesting to note that female characters very rarely appear in management positions or in professional occupations that differ from the ones related to caregiving. In the selection of episodes for this analysis I was able to find just a few female characters in non-traditional professional environments, but even in these cases they fell under traditional roles.

In the first example the episode is called “La Niña Sicario” [The Assassin Girl] (2013). The story is about a little girl who is involved in the organized crime. Azela Robinson, a Mexican renowned actress, plays the role of the head of the investigation. This is an unusual role for a female character in LRG, however, she is dealing with children’s problems, she tries to protect them, and gets close to the children under her care. Azela Robinson still plays a role of a caregiver and an emotional protector, her non-traditional role as a police officer investigator is not different from the traditional notions of women’s abilities.

Then I found another example of non-traditional roles for women in which they are presented in professional circumstances or as the head of any professional department. The episode is called “Sextorsión” [Sex-extortion] (2012), the victim who is a female teenager decides to go to the police and let them know that she is a victim of blackmail by her ex-boyfriend. She is turned to the Office for Sexual Crimes and the head of the department is a woman. The first thing I noticed about this representation is that the woman in charge looks particularly masculine, and after she educates the victim about the consequences of engaging in intimate relations through digital technology, she is told by the victim that she feels relieved for being able to discuss these issues with a woman. The dialogue that follows is when the police woman answers that in these cases the main office tries to have women in these positions

because they make it easier for the victim. On the one hand, assuming that the victims will always be women. And on the other hand, building an argument that men are inadequate for these positions and that women's are naturally suited for dealing with sexual-related problems. I was reminded of the study by the INEGI in which it is stated that even current Mexican childhood strongly believe that women are responsible for the sexual education.

Furthermore, male characters from high socio-economic status are always presented in situations where they discuss business or work, but in this selection of episodes they were never presented in professional environments. Based on the dialogue from the episodes where they appeared, they are all important businessmen who usually own their own companies. Female characters from high socio-economic status were also never presented in professional environments. Nevertheless, unlike male rich characters, rich women were never observed discussing neither business nor money, they were always presented at home, and usually presented in a situation where they were giving orders to the service employers. This last idea was also explored by Lee and Moscovitz who argue that the media usually portray rich women as superficial, bad caregivers, and as leaving all the responsibilities to the service employees (Lee and Moscovitz, 2012)

Another element found in *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is that when women are presented as professionals, they are presented as the unfitted provider. Not only does LRG fails to portray images of professional women in non-traditional occupations, they also condemned women who have ambitions. For example, in the episode "Fácil Tentación" [Easy temptation] (2012), the main character is a woman who is a professional realtor. She is not presented as having a job related to care-giving, but she is also excused by the fact that her husband struggles with finding a job. Her husband states that he is a man who prefers to stay at home and allow his wife to be

the breadwinner, and although this is not the main problem in the episode, it will be eventually changed by the end of the episode as part of the solution.

The story in this episode is that the woman falls into crime when she is presented with an opportunity to make easy money, while the side story is that her husband likes to stay at home and take care of their three daughters. Although he is allegedly in charge of the house, the woman is presented in several scenes cooking and serving the meals for him, and the fact that the man of the house is not a good provider is largely criticized through the whole episode by several characters: the daughters' classmates, the mother's workmates, and the family relatives as well.

As the story develops and the main problem is resolved when the woman decides to turn herself to the police after stealing some money. And even though she consulted with her husband whether she should steal it or not, he is never accused nor blamed as being an accomplice. This is consistent with the Catholic story of Adam and Eve and how Eva was the one who drew Adam to sin.

LRG does not address verbally the issue of the appropriate breadwinners in families. Nevertheless, the episode presents a set of images while providing the conclusion of the story in which the environment takes a different stand. In this new environment we see that the man is now the provider, the mother is staying at home, she is presented welcoming her renewed husband and giving him a back massage. The problematic situation had to do with a theft, but while the problem is miraculously resolved, once the man becomes the provider there are no longer money-related problems anymore and the balance and harmony return to their life.

One last aspect found in the few representations of women as professionals, is that when women are presented as professionals, they are also presented struggling between their professional life and their ability to care for their families. In the episode "Mamás de Hoy"

[Modern Moms] (2012), one of the main characters is a successful lawyer, another unlikely profession for women in LRG. In this episode, the fact that she has a job is not portrayed as the main problem either. However, as the story develops, the main problem begins when her daughter wants to talk to her and the mother says that she is very busy. Although the problems are not addressed specifically, in this episode a mother that has a professional life is somehow responsible of the future problem in the story. It seems that another repeated pattern in LRG is that some of the problems that influence the main problem presented are not explicitly addressed, but one can detect them once we take a closer look at the story.

In LRG when a mother is presented in a working environment it is usually because there is an absent father or an economic struggle, and most of these representations are usually from women who belong to the lower status of social class. Rich women were not found in this selection occupying professional positions, and middle-class women in LRG are either accused of neglecting their families, or do not pursue professional lifestyles by choice, but by necessity.

In Mamás de Hoy the conclusion at the end of the episode explicitly talks about how given the economic struggles of today's world, women have been forced to become providers. LRG assumes that they are not providers by choice. In addition, it is also stated in the conclusion of this episode, that this new responsibility of women should not cause mothers to forget that they still have a responsibility in educating their children, a statement that is not made in the episodes where the father is the only provider. The last conclusion of this episode states that mothers have the privilege of giving life, and that privilege provides them with the responsibility for educating future generations, a statement that diminishes the role of men in both, the conception of new life, and the education of a family.

#### **4.3 Portrayals of Family Responsibilities.**

In most of the episodes selected of LRG the caregivers and the ones responsible for the children in the family or the house duties were women. One of the most interesting findings that I was able to observe was that most of the families presented in LRG have more female members than men. In many cases LRG presents families with more than one maternal figure, in these cases the families are integrated by a mother and her children, a grandmother, an aunt, or older female siblings who in various occasions collaborate with parental functions.

Mothers and grandmothers in Mexican culture are very important. Usually they live with their daughters or sons when they are unable to care for themselves or when they become widows. In LRG, grandmothers serve as babysitters while the parents are at work. In most occasions the presence of grandmothers appeared in families where the father was absent, and the mother had to be at work providing for the family. In this selection of episodes I was not able to find any grandfather characters in any of the families.

Along with the presence of grandmothers, aunts were also present in several episodes. They were in charge of nephews who had become orphans, or in charge of teenagers whose parents lived in the country and not in the city. The noticeable pattern was to observe that it was always an aunt, in the selection of episodes I was able to find only one uncle that served the same purpose in taking care of nephews or nieces. This example was found in the episode “Más allá del Dolor” [Beyond the Pain] (2013).

Más allá del Dolor is an episode based on the life of Marisela Escobedo, the mother of a Mexican young teenager who was murdered by her boyfriend in 2008. Marisela Escobedo became an activist who fought for justice for victims of femicides in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, and was murdered in front of the Government’s Palace in the city of Chihuahua while she was holding a protest against the government of the state. This episode in LRG has a

sequence called “Sed de Justicia” [Thirst for Justice] (2013), and they both are emblematic due to the fact that they give the impression that LRG is engaging in a political discourse. However, the criticism of this analysis is not about the sequence of these two episodes, it is about a man whose sister is killed along with his eldest niece, and he becomes the tutor of the youngest niece who has lost her entire family. However, even though they are the only two survivor family members, in the last scene the girl appears to have found a maternal figure in the character of another victim of femicides. This is important to note because when women appear to be the single mothers LRG shows no necessity for masculine parental figures, but when a man is forced by circumstances to become the tutor of a minor, then LRG shows an alternate maternal figure for the child.

Another element repeated in LRG is the authority figures within the families represented. In most of the episodes where the father figure is present, he is the one who decides if the children are allowed to go out, he is the one who decides the course of action in case of a problem, and even when the mother gives an instruction, in a couple of episodes the father has the right to overrule her authority. Examples of this occur in the episodes “Sextorsión” [Sex-extortion] (2012), “Tan Grande Amor” [A Love so Strong] (2014), or “Hechos con Amor” [Made with Love] (2014).

#### **4.4 Women as Victims, Men as Heroes.**

Another argument that I was able to elaborate is that in LRG women are usually naïve, whereas men are portrayed as being experienced and natural problem solvers. In most of the episodes selected, whenever a woman suffers from a particular problem, or is involved in some kind of difficulty, a man will help her to resolve the situation. These men can be portrayed as being part of their families in the figure of a husband, a boyfriend, a father, a brother, or a son.

Or they can also appear as professional problem solvers like medical doctors, policemen, professors, priests, etc. This pattern is easy to compare to the story of *Cinderella* previously discussed, and typical from telenovelas, a woman will find a prince that will resolve all her problems.

This story of Cinderella has already been discussed in media studies and referred to as *women's incompetence* (Wood, 1994), and it is compatible with the reality of Mexican culture. Mexican psychologists argue that Mexican women often receive messages, from a very young age, in which they are told that they will not make it in this world by themselves (Armendáriz Ramírez, 2002).

Relatedly, another pattern in LRG is that female characters appear to be concerned more about trivial and unimportant matters, and male characters are usually concerned about important situations. For example, in the episode *Facil Tentación*, already described above, the main character is a young mother who struggles because her husband is unemployed and she does not make enough money to support her family. However, even though the mother mentions that she is heavily in debt and that she might have to sell her youngest daughter's computer, she seems to be especially concerned because she will not be able to sponsor a quinceañera for her eldest daughter. In the episode "El Amor da más Fuerza" [Love Brings Greater Strength] (2013), Sofia and Elisa are two teenagers who suffer from depression and engage in destructive behavior such as cutting, Sofia is caught in the bathroom of her school and they call the mother to let her know about the situation. Her mother, however, seems to be more concerned for the fact that she was exposed as an incompetent mother and not for the fact that her daughter has a psychological problem.

About the argument of superficial concerns, in the episode “El Valor no está en un Rostro” [Worth is not in a Face] (2013), the story develops around two teenagers who begin a romantic relationship. However, the mother of the young boy does not approve the relationship because the girl’s face is burned since her childhood. Another example occurs in the episode “Hechos con Amor” [Made with Love] (2014), in which by the end of the story two teenagers whose social class background is different begin a romantic relationship, and the mother of the young boy, again, disapproves their relationship and engages in discriminatory behavior.

About this subject, in various episodes of LRG not only do female characters seem to be concerned about superficial and irrelevant matters, they are repeatedly overruled by the male characters, and this is justified by the fact that male characters are either defending a moral value or have made a better decision. In the episode Sextorsión, a teenage girl talks to her parents about a relationship that she is having with an individual online, in this scene the mother responds by stating that online websites are dangerous, but she fails to provide any argument to support her statement. However, the father responds by stating that he prefers her daughter having a virtual romance because that way he will not be concerned for having her daughter engaging in a physical and intimate situations, and the girl in question accuses her mother for overreacting and praises her father for supporting her. In the scene that follows both parents have an argument about this conversation and the male character decides to praise his wife’s culinary abilities, something that makes her forget about the argument.

About this, I found a peculiar scene in another episode called “Para Ver la Vida Mejor” [To Better Appreciate Life] (2013), the story is about a young girl who has vision problems and struggles because she lives under circumstances of extreme poverty. In one scene, the parents of the girl are discussing whether she should continue with her education or not given that they

struggle to provide her with the elements for it, the father gives an opinion and the mother contradicts him. This in essence is unusual in LRG, but following the scene the father complains by stating that his voice does not count anymore. In all the episodes in which women are contradicted by their husbands they never complained.

A last element about this subject is that men are usually the heroes of the story. In the episode *Para Ver la Vida Mejor*, a young girl who is the main character is constantly bullied because she has vision problems, and the only classmate who defends her is a little boy. In the episode *El Valor no está en el Rostro*, the main character has a huge mark on her face and she is also constantly bullied by her peers, in this episode too, the only one who defends her is a boy. In the episode *Hechos con Amor*, the main character is a teenager who struggles with money, and she is in danger because she works for a man that plans to sexually abuse her, she is defended by her boyfriend Miguel Angel who will also solve her money-related problems. The most iconic episode about this pattern is probably found in *El Amor da Más Fuerza*, and the whole argument of the story is that when we fall in love our problems become less difficult, the main character, a girl who suffers from cutting falls in love with a boy who will eventually encourage her to stop hurting herself. Even though most stories are at first sight about woman, the heroes are most of the time, the men.

#### **4.5 Normalization of Violence in LRG.**

Another element of LRG that I found in these episodes is repetitive violence, physical and emotional. In almost all the episodes I found different demonstrations of violence, it could be physical violence that involved mostly male characters, or verbal violence, that included mostly women. The surprising thing about these portrayals of violence is that they are mostly

justified in the case of men in LRG, whether because they fight in order to defend themselves or others, or because they are provoked and their violent reactions are normal.

In the episode *Fácil Tentación*, the main characters consisting of an adult couple are presented having an explosive argument about money, in this argument they insult and yell at each other, something not uncommon in Mexican families according to the study from the SEP presented in the first chapter of this study. Nevertheless, the most disturbing part of the scene comes when the female character puts into question the manhood of her husband, and he responds by slapping her. This is an explicit example of physical violence. Nevertheless, it was the female character the one who started the fight, it was the female character the one with the problem because she stole money from someone else, and therefore, she is sort of the villain of the story. By not addressing the slapping of the female character, and presenting it as a result of the argument, LRG minimizes the magnitude of the problem. And in no further scene this demonstration of physical violence is addressed or resolved, it becomes irrelevant to the rest of the story.

There are many episodes in which teenagers are disrespectful to the mother figure, but not so many episodes in which the teenagers are disrespectful to the father figure. Whether it is by yelling, not listening and even responding in a rude way, LRG makes it seem like it is part of the teenage behavior, but it is part of the teenage behavior that affects only the maternal figure. For example, in the episode “*El Síndrome del Emperador*” [The Emperor Syndrome] (2014), a young boy is diagnosed with an allegedly psychological syndrome called The Emperor Syndrome, what this means is that the boy believes he deserves attention, gifts, favors, and everything he wishes only because he wishes them. According to LRG, one of the manifestations of this syndrome is the lack of tolerance this boy has towards frustration and that he may react

violent when he does not get what he desires. In many of the scenes the boy disrespects female figures: his mother, his teacher, and one of his female characters. He even pushes a young girl, slaps her own mother, and threatens his aunt, in all of these demonstrations of violence he only appears reacting violent to his father once, but the amount of violence is relatively smaller than the violence he shows towards other women. Nevertheless, given the fact that the mother asks her husband to control the boy, she gives the impression that she is unable to do so by herself. And, after doing so, the father questions whether the boy actually had the intention of hurting the mother and following the story they treat it as a consequence of the syndrome, not as a serious problem that could produce bigger implications.

In the episode “Amor Ideal” [Ideal Love] (2014), Iker is a teenager who falls in love with his teacher Gala, who turns out to have a history of having inappropriate relationships with students. After the problems arise and Iker’s family notices that he is engaging in a romantic relationship with his teacher who is older than him, they found out that Gala lives with another student called Luis with whom she has a daughter. By the end of the episode Luis finds out that Gala is planning on leaving him for Iker, so they engage in a heated argument that ends when Luis pushes Gala and she ends up on the floor. Gala is, again, the villain of the story. She seduces young teenage men and then leaves them when they get a little older. Luis on the other hand, is portrayed as a victim of Gala, and therefore the fact that he is strong enough to push her to the point in which she ends up in the floor, and he does so in front of their daughter, is excused by the fact that she is the perpetrator and he is the victim.

Female characters in LRG also engage in violent behavior, and although most of these representations of violence are verbal violence, I was able to find physical violence from women towards other women. In the episode “La Baja Novios” [The Boyfriend Thief] (2014), Aranza is

a teenager who likes boys who have girlfriends, and because she is not discrete about it she is repeatedly attacked by other teenage girls, particularly by girlfriends of these young men. What I find interesting about this episode is not only the fact that violence is justified because she misbehaves, but also the fact that LRG is sending the message, repeatedly in this episode, that men have no way to resist Aranza's seductive ways, and therefore, their girlfriends have to claim their men. When I began to follow the patterns about verbal violence used amongst women, the insults that I found were: slut, easy, bimbo, fat, crazy, and ugly; all of them referring to physical appearance, sexual behavior, and emotional incompetence.

One of the most disturbing findings in this selection was that I found more extreme forms of violence like murder. Murder in Mexican telenovelas is not unusual, but murder in a religious show that claims to reflect the current society should be analyzed more carefully given the social circumstances of México. In the episode "Falso Amor" [Fake Love] (2012), we are presented with a story of two stepsisters that hate each other. Their hate becomes so strong that one of them tries to kill the other. It was a murder attempt, but still the resolution portrays it as a common problem. After the attempt is committed, no one calls the police, no one calls for help, and the only solution is that we see is the father saying: "Now we are not going to travel that often, because we need to build a family." He then explains that he is going to send his daughter to a psychiatrist because she tried to kill her stepsister, but this comment comes after the solution, minimizing the fact that one of his daughters tried to kill the other.

The last argument that I was able to elaborate on the issue of violence is that violence in men is not only justified but considered valid, and it was repeated in several episodes. Men engaged in fist-fights quite often when they were defending another woman, an ideal, or when

they wanted to demonstrate their bravery. Such examples are found in *Tan Grande el Amor*, *Hechos con Amor*, and *Sed de Justicia*.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Conclusion.

In the beginning of this project I was focused on analyzing a particular telenovela, and in the process of doing so I conducted a lot of research about my culture. The process of developing this study allowed me to combine my experience as a Mexican woman, my knowledge as a feminist researcher, my understanding of the religion in which I was raised, and my experience as a telenovela viewer.

It is improbable to find indisputable evidence which proves that telenovela producers portray certain roles with any particular intention, in the same way that it is complicated to demonstrate the impact that a particular show may have on certain audiences, because impact and influence are based on individual and collective interpretations. However, the goal of this study was to conduct an analysis of Mexican gender culture by utilizing a successful telenovela that claims to reflect real Mexican stories and real Mexican families.

In this regard, *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is an instrument by which a researcher may find indicators of what it means to be a man or a woman in Mexican culture. What men and women do as professionals, how they interact with each other, what individual features they usually have, and what attitudes and behaviors are expected from them. In this sense, I believe I have found that *La Rosa de Guadalupe* sticks to traditional male and female roles, which may not be either real in modern Mexican society, or beneficial in the social struggle for the integration of non-traditional families.

The patterns that I was able to find were similar to the ones found by Ruggiero and Glasscock (2004) ten years ago. When they analyzed Spanish-language television content they

found that female characters on these shows “were less represented, had less job status, had greater parental and marital responsibilities and had more emphasis placed on attractiveness than male characters” (Ruggiero and Glasscock, 2004, p. 394). The fact that LRG, a telenovela that claims to reflect *current* social realities follows the same archetypes for male and female characters to the ones that Ruggiero and Glasscock discussed ten years ago, leads to two possible assumptions: 1) that current Mexican society hasn’t changed in ten years; or 2) that *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is not reflecting current society as it claims.

The stereotypes related to class and gender found in this selection of episodes of *La Rosa de Guadalupe* were exaggerated. People who have low socio-economic status were presented as uneducated, with heavy colloquial accents and always with darker color of skin. They usually came from broken homes, talked about money problems, and they were heavily discriminated by the highest classes. Nevertheless, based on the episodes watched, it seems that the class struggle happens between the rich and the poor, and that the middle classes are therefore more inclusive. Something that is not the case in the real Mexican culture because the middle-classes are often accused of being as discriminative as the highest-classes.

Rich people are usually presented as educated, as owning luxurious cars, and as talking elegantly. They have lighter color of skin and colored eyes, something unusual in Mexican across the Mexican racial spectrum. In the case of rich women, they were the ones that discriminated the poor people in a more explicit way, just like they were repeatedly portrayed as incompetent for making important decisions, and portrayed as needing help from a male figure in the character of a police man, a husband, or a medical doctor.

When it comes to the problems that affect Mexicans, as reflected in LRG, rich people’s common problems have to do more with addictions, whereas poor people’s main problems have

to do with crime. Middle-class characters are the ones that I found more complex in the situations that they faced. Again, portraying the middle-class more realistically, probably as an attempt to support *Televisa*'s purpose of setting the middle-classes as the norm in Mexican society (Abad-Izquierdo, 2011). Media scholars suggest that when fictional characters are presented realistically and in complex situations, it is because they are thought as the norm. Something that does not happen often with portrayals of minorities or female characters in the media.

The problem behind representing social problems in such a binary form, is that these representations misinform the viewers. Based on this selection of episodes in LRG, it appears that poor teenagers are immune to drug addictions, or that rich teenagers will never commit crimes. The problems presented by lower and highest classes are likely to be trivialized, giving the idea that the only valid problems are the ones that affect the middle-classes. In addition, the problem behind the binary forms of representations of gender fuels the notions that men and women are different in nature, and that they are destined to engage in specific activities that are exclusive and segregated.

Literature suggests that a major disadvantage for any feminist study is that it will be misunderstood as an attack on men, but most feminist researchers argue that men are also affected by these binary representations of gender. According to many scholars, media have encouraged men to become emotionally disabled. According to the Center for Media Literacy, the media ridicules men who show any type of emotion, these emotions include "fear, hurt, confusion or despair" (Femiano and Nickerson, 2011). Moreover, "men are also not encouraged to learn to work cooperatively without the need for control, to love in a nonsexual way, to have friendships or to solve conflicts without violence" (Femiano and Nickerson, 2011).

In LRG violence in men is justified under the premise that they are defending a woman, a moral principle, or they are being provoked; physical violence is explicit in several episodes of la LRG and portrayed as a masculine feature. If we go back to the history of telenovelas and their archetypes taken from Mexican movies like *Pepe El Toro* (1953), Pedro Infante was also presented in violence scenes, and these scenes were perceived as normal.

The combination of the validation of violence as a masculine quality and the portrayals of women as inferior than men, are aspects that can be found in many episodes of LRG. The repetition of these two representations in a religious telenovela and the fact that they are portrayed in a network which premise is to support noncontroversial content, reflect that neither of these components are unusual for Mexican audiences. This statement is an important element to consider when we try to understand the relationship between media and culture.

The reality is that even though Mexican homes are increasingly being supported by women, Mexican women still have less professional ambitions than men. Although Mexico's society in general struggles with poverty and insecurity, women seem to be at the bottom of the economic struggle and are victims of violence because of their gender. In addition, Mexican women are not only subjected, abused, and violated by some men; Mexican women are significantly more critical, judgmental, and severe towards other women (Dresser, 2014).

The role of media in perpetuating these situations in Mexican culture is important because even though television content is targeted principally towards middle-class women, disadvantaged women who do not have access to school or other means of education are exposed to the representations that the media offer. Entertainment media are the means by which they learn about their identity, their problems, their expectations, and their possibilities.

The role of class is another element important in this analysis because Mexican middle-class women seem to be careless about the implications of having only these types of contents. In the study made by El Tecnológico de Monterrey previously described, women see with humor the content of telenovelas, they don't seem critical about the portrayals and representations in these type of stories, nor concerned about the implications that these may have in women who believe that telenovelas are informative.

All these implications make a substantial case for what media literacy advocates have already discussed. If we mean to produce a change in Mexican society one way could be to use the consumer power of middle-class women so that they demand varied and realistic content. Another possibility could be to include media literacy programs in schools so that Mexican boys and girls learn to be critical of the stereotypes perpetrated by the media and learn to have other expectations for their own lives. Something that will eventually create a more equal society, which will be reflected in a more diverse media content and will finally bounce to the non-privileged parts of Mexican population.

## **5.2 Limitations and Implications.**

One of the limitations of this study is that the episodes analyzed were selected based on the amount of views and likes in YouTube. The amounts of views and likes in social media may not be reliable indicators of the amount to people actually watching the videos (Molyneaux et al., 2008), which means that this selection may not reflect the most recent or repeated portrayals in LRG broadcasted in television. Nevertheless, this study contributes to the debate around the importance of analyzing the media in the attempt to understand a culture, because in this case the portrayals of gender presented in LRG are similar to the dominant notions of gender in Mexican culture.

Understanding the causes of gender-based violence in México is not only important in this country, it is particularly important in the United States as well. Violence towards women in any part of the world is repulsive, unacceptable, and it should be challenged. It affects, directly or indirectly, every woman in the world. Gender-based violence causes social problems and it is inefficient for economics, politics, and many other social-related implications.

For example, violence causes immigration, and the subject of immigration has been widely discussed by politicians in the U.S. in the last couple of years. It seems that the issue develops around the topic of how to stop it. Experts suggest that as long as there is crime and poverty, and as long as the gap between the first and the third world countries continues to grow, there will be no wall capable of stopping people from trying to enter a country that promises better opportunities (Oppenheimer, 2009). Women in México are struggling and have been struggling for a long time, which is reflected in the amounts of women migrating into the United States during the last years.

When discussing national security, economics, and politics; México and the United States are intrinsically linked. In all three aspects research suggest that there is a relationship between some policies implemented by the U.S. government and the increase of such problems in Mexico. In the first case, in the case of national security, the operation “Fast and Furious” (2009-2012) implemented by the American government, resulted in some of the Mexican cartels obtaining their weapons from the U.S. (Moore, 2012). In addition, one of the many operations of the cartels have to do with the exploitation of women in México (Cacho, 2010). About economics, some scholars argue that international agreements such as NAFTA have caused devastating results in the Mexican economy, affecting particularly Mexicans, women, and other minorities, causing an increase of unemployment and a decrease in wages in both countries

(Chomsky, 2011). And last about politics, agreements like NAFTA and the environment of violence in México have caused the migration from people from rural areas to the cities in Mexico, and from Mexico to the U.S., and recent census suggest that 57 percent of these Mexican legal immigrants are women (Segura and Zavella, 2007). A statement that reflects the crisis that Mexican women are facing in recent years.

Whether the argument is in favor or against the immigration of Latinos/as, the truth is that Latinos/as presence in the United States is not recent. Scholars have already discussed the presence and importance of Latinos/as as part of the U.S. history (Avant-Mier, 2010). At the same time, recent census claim that Latinos are now the largest minority in the U.S. Arguments that imply that the patriarchal values and practices of Latin American cultures are present in the U.S., not to mention that even though the U.S. has conquered several victories in the gender-equality arena, sexism is not entirely abolished.

For all these reasons it is important to understand that some cultures, Mexican or not Mexican, have stronger attachments to patriarchal values and identify them as part of their identities, whether they do it consciously or unconsciously. Consequently, we need to understand these women's backgrounds before we attempt to change their cultural beliefs. Furthermore, some of these women also raise future generations of U.S citizens, something that may impact the future definitions of womanhood or manhood. Therefore it is important that U.S. feminist scholars become interested in understanding the problems of gender outside of the U.S.

Chauvinistic and sexist ideas limit and hinder the potential that women have in positively contributing to society. In addition, these ideas are taught and learned from generations to generations. Sexism and chauvinism, to greater or lesser extent, are values that are still present in

every part of the world, and the indifference towards both of them can result in devastating violence.

Because middle and upper Mexican classes have the most influence in México, and because of the closeness and mutual influence that exist between México and the United States, I believe that the only possible way to stop violence towards women in México is by defeating indifference and by raising awareness in both sides of the border. And one way to make this possible is by supporting programs that create awareness and encourage the ones that enable critical consumption of the media.

## REFERENCES

- Abad-Izquierdo, M. (2011). The Cultural and Political Economy of the Mexican Telenovela. In *Soap Operas and Telenovelas in the Digital Age* (93-110). United States: Peter Lang.
- Acosta-Alzuru, C. (2003) Tackling the Issues: Meaning Making in a Telenovela. *Popular Communication*. (4), 193-215.
- Acosta-Alzuru, C. (2003). "I'm Not a Feminist... I Only Defend Women as Human Beings": The Production, Representation, and Consumption of Feminism in a Telenovela. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 20 (3), 269-294.
- Altamirano, S. L. (2012). La Representación Social del Guadalupanismo en el programa de televisión La Rosa de Guadalupe. *Revista Comunicación*, Vol. 1, (10), 991- 1005.
- Alvarez de Vicencio, M. E. (2002) Realidad de la mujer mexicana y propuestas para mejorar su situación. *Derechos humanos. Memoria del IV Congreso Nacional de Derecho Constitucional III*. Vol. 64. (1), 127-151. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/publica/librev/rev/derhum/cont/55/pr/pr22.pdf>
- Anderson C. and Chavez E. (2010). *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: Madre de la Civilización del Amor*. México: Grijalbo.
- Armendáriz Ramírez, R. (2002). *Ayudando a amar amando: Cómo vivir tu relación de pareja con madurez y crecimiento continuo con PNL y Psicología Transpersonal*. México: Editorial Pax
- Avant-Mier, R. (2010) *Rock the Nation: Latin/o Identities and the Latin Rock Diaspora*. United States: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Bielby, D. D. (2005). Opening America? The Telenovela-ization of U.S. Soap Operas. *Television and New Media*, Vol. 6, (4), 383-399. doi: 10.1177/1527476405279831

- Bonavitta, P. and de Garay Hernandez, J. (2011). De Estereotipos, violencia y sexismo: la construcción de las mujeres en los medios mexicanos y argentinos. *Anagramas*, Vol. 9, (18), 15-30.
- Buckingham, D. (2003). *Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture*. United Kingdom: Polity.
- Cacho, L. (2010) *Esclavas del Poder: Un viaje al corazón de la trata sexual de mujeres y niñas en el mundo*. México: Grijalvo.
- Carpenter, T. G. (2005). *Mexico is becoming the Next Colombia. Foreign Policy Briefing. Cato Institute*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/fpb87.pdf>
- Casas Pérez, M. L. (2005). Cultural Identity: Between Reality and Fiction. *Television and New Media*, Vol. 6, (4), 407-414. doi: 10.1177/1527476405279956
- Castañeda, M. (2007). *El Machismo Invisible Regresa*. México: Santillana, Ediciones Generales, S.A. de C.V.
- Castellanos, R. (1974). *El Eterno Femenino: Farsa*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Castellanos R. (2012). *Declaración de Fe: Reflexiones sobre la situación de la Mujer en México*. México: Alfaguara.
- Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir., Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A. C. (2012) Femicide and Impunity in Mexico: A content of structural and gearlized violence. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. Retrieved from: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/CDDandCMDPDH\\_forthesession\\_Mexico\\_CEDAW52.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/CDDandCMDPDH_forthesession_Mexico_CEDAW52.pdf)

- Cheng, X., Dale, C., and Liu, J. (2008). Statistics and Social Network of YouTube Videos. In IWQoS (2008) 229-238. Retrieved from:  
[https://learnit.itu.dk/pluginfile.php/92313/mod\\_resource/content/1/youtube\\_description.pdf](https://learnit.itu.dk/pluginfile.php/92313/mod_resource/content/1/youtube_description.pdf)
- Chomsky, N. (2011). *How the World Works: Four Classic Bestsellers in one Affordable Volume*. United States: Soft Skull Press.
- Covarrubias, A. C. (1980). La Televisión en la solución de problemas sociales: necesidad de dar educación por televisión. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, Vol. 12, (1), 145-157.
- Cueva, A. (2013) ¡Que Viva la Rosa de Guadalupe! *Milenio*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.network54.com/Forum/651078/thread/1367449445/1367540124/Alvaro+Cueva-La+rosa+de+Guadalupe+es+el+mejor+programa+de+Mexico>
- Dines G. and Humez J. (2014). *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*. United States: Sage.
- Dresser, D. (2014). Delito: Ser Mujer. *Reforma*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.am.com.mx/notareforma/7249>
- Dresser, D., Volpi, J. (2006). *México: Lo que todo ciudadano quisiera (no) saber de su patria*. México: Santillana Ediciones Generales S.A. de C.V.
- Favron Peterson, J. (1992). The Virgin of Guadalupe: Symbol of Conquest or Liberation? *Art Journal*, Vol. 51, (4), 39-47.
- Fermiano, S., Nickerson, M. (2011). How do Media Images of Men Affect Our Lives? Re-Imagining the American Dream. *Center for Media Literacy*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/how-do-media-images-men-affect-our-lives>

- Fernández C. and Paxman A. (2000). *El Tigre: Emilio Azcárraga y su imperio Televisa*. México: Grijalbo.
- Focusing on Prevention to Stop the Violence. (2014). *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/prevention>
- Gil, A. S. (2011). Sobre mujeres, mitos, estereotipos y medios de comunicación. *diáLogos: Revista Científica de Psicología, Ciencias Sociales, Humanidades y Ciencias de la Salud*, Vol. 2, (1), 127- 156.
- Guadarrama Rico, L. M. (1999). Géneros Televisivos en México: Un paseo por la Geografía de Cuatro Décadas. *Convergencia: Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, Mayo-Agosto, (19), 179-205.
- Hallin, D. C. (2000). Media, political power, and democratization in Mexico. In *De-Westerning Media Studies* (97-110). United States: Routledge.
- Harris, R. J., Sanborn, F. W. (2014). *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*. United States: Routledge.
- Hesse-Biber, S., Gilmartin, C., and Lydenberg, R. (1999). *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: An interdisciplinary reader*. United States: Oxford University Press.
- Hind, E. (2010). *Feminism and the Mexican Woman Intellectual: From Sor Juana to Poniatowska*. United States: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Institute for Research and training for the Advancement of Women. (2011). *United Nations [INSTRAW's Strategic Framework for the period 2008-2011]*.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática. (2005). *INEGI [La Diversidad Religiosa en México. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda]*. Retrieved from

[http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod\\_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/integracion/sociodemografico/religion/div\\_rel.PDF](http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/integracion/sociodemografico/religion/div_rel.PDF)

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. (2010) Estadísticas sobre Disponibilidad y Uso de Tecnología de Información y Comunicaciones en los Hogares, 2010. México. Retrieved from:

[http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod\\_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/encuestas/especiales/endutih/2010/endutih2010.pdf](http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/encuestas/especiales/endutih/2010/endutih2010.pdf)

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. (2012). Conociendo México. México. Retrieved from:

[http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod\\_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/integracion/pais/mexcon/folleto\\_nacional\\_pliegos\\_baja.pdf](http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/integracion/pais/mexcon/folleto_nacional_pliegos_baja.pdf)

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. (2014). INEGI México. Retrieved from:

<http://www.inegi.org.mx/>

Kakade, O., Raut, N. (2012). The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Education. *International Indexed & Referred Research Journal*. Vol. 4, (36), 10-14.

Kelly, J., Fealy, G. M., and Watson, R. (2011). The image of you: Constructing nursing identities in YouTube. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 1804-1813.

Koutsoyannis, S. (2011). Background paper Femicide in Ciudad Juarez: Ever-Present and Worsening. *The Canadian Peacebuilding Network*. Retrieved from:

<http://peacebuild.ca/Koutsoyannis%20final.pdf>

Krolokke, C., Sorensen, A. S. (2006). *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance*. United States: Sage Publications.

La Verdad Católica. (2014) Historia de la Virgen de Guadalupe. Retrieved from:

<http://www.laverdadcatolica.org/fl11.pdf>

Lamas M. (2011). *Feminism: Transmissions and Retransmissions*. United States: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lee, M. J., Moscovitz, L. (2012). The "Rich Bitch": Class and Gender on Real Housewives of New York City. In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A critical reader* (143-156). United States: Sage.

McAnany, E. G., La Pastina, A. C. (1994) Telenovela audiences: A review and methodological critique of Latin American research. *Communication Research*. Vol. 21, 828-849.

McKee, A. (2003). *Textual Analysis: A beginner's guide*. United Kingdom: Sage Publications.

MacLean N. (2009). *The American Women's Movement, 1945 – 2000: A Brief History with Documents*. United States: Bedford.

Molyneaux, H., O'Donnell, S., Gibson, K., and Singer, J. (2008). Exploring the Gender Divide on YouTube: An Analysis of the Creation and Reception of Vlogs. *American Communication Journal*, Vol. 10 (2) 1-14.

Mosco, V. (2005). *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace*. United States: MIT Press.

Moore, J. (2012, June 20). Full Coverage: ATF's Fast and Furious scandal. *L.A. Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.latimes.com/nation/atf-fast-furious-sg-storygallery.html>

Nava, J. (2011) Mexico: Failing State or Emerging Democracy? *Military Review*. Retrieved from:

[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20110430\\_art007.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20110430_art007.pdf)

- Oppenheimer, A. (2009). *Los Estados Desunidos de Latinoamérica: Las mejores columnas 2006-2009*. Primera Edición. México: Debate.
- Papa, M. J., Singhal, A., Law, S., Pant, S., Sood, S., Rogers, E. M., Shefner-Rogers, C. L. (2000). Entertainment-Education and Social Change: An Analysis of Parasocial Interaction, Social Learning, Collective Efficacy, and Paradoxical Communication. *Journal of Communication*. Vol. 50, (4), 31- 55.
- Poniatowska, E. (2012). Tú, quietecita. In *Miradas a la Discriminación* (205-214). México: CONAPRED.
- Posch, L., Wagner, C., Singer, P., and Strohmaier, M. (2013). Meaning as Collective Use: Predicting Semantic Hashtag Categories on Twitter. *International World Wide Web Conference Committee*, 1-8.
- Rios D. and Castañeda M. (2011). *Soap Operas and Telenovelas in the Digital Age: Global Industries and New Audiences*. United States: Peter Lang.
- Rubio, L. (2009). Mexico: A Failed State? *Perspectives on the Americas: A series of Opinion Pieces by Leading Commentors*. University of Miami. Retrieved from: <https://umshare.miami.edu/web/wda/hemisphericpolicy/Rubio-Mexico-Failed-State.pdf>
- Ruggiero, T. E., and Glasscock, J. (2004) Representations of Class and Gender on Primetime Spanish-Language Television in the United States. *Communication Quarterly*. Vol. 52. (4), 390-402.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2009). *Informe Nacional sobre Violencia de Género en la Educación Básica en México*. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/Estudio\\_violencia\\_genero\\_educacion\\_basica\\_Part1.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/Estudio_violencia_genero_educacion_basica_Part1.pdf)

- Segura, D. A., Zavella, P. (2007) *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: A reader*. United States: Duke University Press.
- Singhal, A., Brown, W. J. (1996). The Entertainment-Education Communication Strategy: Past Struggles, Present Status, Future Agenda. *Journal Komunikasi*. Vol. 12, 19-36.
- Singhal, A. (2010). *Riding High on Taru Fever: Entertainment-Education Broadcasts, Ground Mobilization, and Service Delivery in Rural India*. Entertainment-Education and Social Change Wisdom Series. United States: Oxfam Novib.
- Spalter-Roth, R., Hartmann, H. (1999). Small Happinesses: The Feminist Struggle to Integrate Social Research with Social Activism. In *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: an interdisciplinary reader* (333-347). United States: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2005). Telenovela: Mexico. In *Pop Culture Latin America! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (238). United States: ABC-Clio.
- Tufte, T. (2003). *Telenovelas, Culture and Social Change: From Polisemy, Pleasure and Resistance to Strategic Communication and Social Development*. Retrieved from: [http://www.academia.edu/822907/Telenovelas\\_Culture\\_and\\_Social\\_Change\\_-\\_from\\_Polisemy\\_Pleasure\\_and\\_Resistance\\_to\\_Strategic\\_Communication\\_and\\_Social\\_Development](http://www.academia.edu/822907/Telenovelas_Culture_and_Social_Change_-_from_Polisemy_Pleasure_and_Resistance_to_Strategic_Communication_and_Social_Development)
- United Nations. (2007). *Women and the Media*. Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingat10/J.%20Women%20and%20the%20media.pdf>
- UN Women. (2014) *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unwomen.org/>

- Uribe A. (2009). *Mi México imaginado: Telenovelas, televisión y migrantes*. México: Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Van Zoonen L. (1994). *Feminist Media Studies*. Great Britain: Sage.
- Usdin, S., Singhal, A. (2004) No Short Cuts in Entertainment-Education: Designing Soul City Step-by-Step. In Rogers & m. Sabido (Eds.), *Entertainment-Education and Social Change: History, Research, and Practice* (153-175). United States: Routledge Communication Series.
- Willnat, L. and Wilkins, K. G. (1997). International and Local Media Impact on Cultural Values and Political Attitudes: The Case of Hong Kong. In Bryce T. McIntyre (Ed.), *Mass Media in the Asian Pacific* (29-43). United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Wood, J. T. (1994). Gendered Media: The Influence of Media on Views of Gender. *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*, Chapter 9, 43-57.
- Wood, J. T. (2012). *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*. Tenth Edition. United States: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Zires, M. (1994). Los mitos de la Virgen de Guadalupe: Su proceso de construcción y reinterpretación en el México pasado y contemporáneo. *Mexican Studies/ Estudios Mexicanos*. Vol. 10, (2), 281- 313.
- Zunzunegui, J. M. (2010). *El Mito Guadalupano: Símbolo de la eternal conquista*. México: Editores Mexicanos Unidos S. A.

## APPENDIX

This is the list of episodes selected for this study, the dates were taken from the YouTube site because that indicates the amount of time in which they have collected the views and the likes.

“La Niña Sicario” [The Assassin Girl] (2013)

“Sextorsión” [Sex-extortion] (2012)

“Facil Tentación” [Easy Temptation] (2012)

“Mamás de Hoy” [Modern Moms] (2012)

“Más allá del Dolor” [Beyond the Pain]

“Sed de Justicia” [Thirst for Justice] (2013)

“Tan grande amor” [A love so Strong] (2014)

“Hechos con Amor” [Made with Love] (2014)

“El Amor da más Fuerza” [Love Brings Greater Strength] (2013)

“El Valor no está en un Rostro” [Worth is not in a Face] (2013)

“Hechos con Amor” [Made with Love] (2014)

“Para Ver la Vida Mejor” [To Better Appreciate Life] (2013)

“El Síndrome del Emperador” [The Emperor Syndrome] (2014)

“Amor Ideal” [Ideal Love] (2014)

“La Baja Novios” [The Boyfriends Thief] (2014)

“Falso Amor” [Fake Love] (2012)

“Pregúntale a tu Corazón” [Ask your Heart] (2014)

“Drogas Auditivas” [Sound Drugs] (2013)

“Busca el Sol” [Look for the Sun] (2013)

“Mr. Narco” [Mr. Dealer] (2013)

“El Valor de un Ser Humano” [The Value of a Human Being] (2011)

“No hay Sueños Rotos” [There are No Broken Dreams] (2013)

"La novia del Narco" [The Dealer's Girlfriend] (2012)

"El Día en que me Quieras" [The Day that you Love me] (2013)

“Ladronzuela” [Little Thief] (2013)

## VITA

Ana Gómez Parga was born in Chihuahua, Chihuahua, México. She graduated from high school from El Tecnológico de Monterrey Campus Chihuahua in the spring of 2003. She earned a Merit-Based Bachelor of Arts degree in Graphic Communication at the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua. Ana worked for the State Government of Chihuahua for more than six years performing various activities related to advertising, social communication, political communication, and public relations.

In the year of 2011 she was offered the Jimmy and Yolanda Janacek scholarship to pursue higher education at UTEP. She moved to El Paso, Texas in the summer of 2012 and started a graduate program in Communication Studies. She is expected to graduate in August of 2014 and she has been accepted to attend the University of Utah in the same year in order to pursue a Ph.D. in Communication.

Among her research interest are: cultural studies, feminist studies, and media studies.

This thesis was typed by Ana Carolina Gómez Parga.