STEREOTYPE OF LATINO PEOPLE IN *OUR FAMILY WEDDING* MOVIE

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ABSTRAK

Amerika merupakan pusat berkumpulnya semua imigran dari berbagai belahan dunia. Negara yang maju serta ditunjang dengan sumber daya alam, manusia yang hebat dan tentu banyaknya kesempatan yang tersebar membuat bangsa ini menjadi magnet bagi para imigran yang mencari kehidupan lebih baik. Namun, berawal dari sinilah, para imigran menemukan rintangannya. Banyak dari mereka, terutama orang *latino* mengalami serangan-serangan dingin berupa persepsi buruk tentang mereka yang disebarluaskan melalu media bahasa, *stereotip*.

Dalam project ini, penulis menggunakan film *Our Family Wedding* sebagai media untuk menganalisis beberapa stereotip dari orang-orang latino di Amerika Serikat dengan menggunakan teori Kartz and Braly untuk membahas unsur ekstrisnsik film ini.

Intisari dari pembahasan project ini adalah adanya kecenderungan untuk mempunyai pandangan negatif terhadap ras-ras lainnya dan penulis menemukan beberapa stereotip orang latino dari film *Our Family Wedding* ini sebagai bukti bahwa mereka mengalami masalah stereotip.

1. Introduction

The United States is a diverse country where many immigrants during the waves of "new immigration" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were leaving home in an effort to find work. Million immigrants entered into cities such as New York, Boston and Philadelphia, found the better life and settled there. The coming of immigrants led to social problems. They, of course, found some obstacles in making integration with the dominant groups in which they did an offensive behaviour to make all immigrant feel excluded, fall behind and feel degraded by stereotype attitudes toward them. The dominant groups did the other offensive behaviour by giving label to all immigrants based on race, gender, behavior or other factors which is called by stereotype. Cardwell (1996) in McLeod (2008) defines stereotypes as fixed, over generalized beliefs about a particular group or class of people.

The term stereotype was first introduced by Walter Lippmann in 1922. In *Public Opinion*, he anticipated several important positions in contemporary research on stereotypes:

> Their predominant cognitive nature, their utility as cognitive economy and energy-saving intruments, and the antagonism between stereotyping and individual processing (Walter Lipmann, 1992)

Streotype could lead the prejudice that has definition as an attitude toward members of some groups based solely on their membership in that group (Tamara, "Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination" p.2, par 31).

Shortly, in the movie *Our Family Wedding*, many common stereotypes of Latino family are described in this movie. This is such an interesting case to discuss, and therefore, the writer chooses this topic.

To support the topic, the writer uses exponential approach. In *A Handbook of Critical approaches to Literature*, Guerin defined exponential approach as:

> We designate this method as the exponential approach because the inclusiveness of term suggest at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol and archetype (1992:97).

Here, the writer analyzes some of intrinsic aspects such as theme, character, setting, plot, conflict in *Our Family Wedding* movie. Related to theme, *Our Family Wedding* is a kind of family diversity movie that its major characters are America Ferrera (Lucia, Latino women), Lance Gross (Marcus, African American man), Forest Whitaker (Marcus's dad), Carlos Mencia (Lucia's father) and its minor characters are Shannyn Sossamon, Charlie Murphy and Regina King. The main setting of the movie takes place in Los Angeles where the two families met for the first time. The setting of environment is cultural environment where this movie contains two cultures. Based on the plot, *Our Family Wedding* is a 2010 American romentic comedy movie directed by American movie director, Rick Famuyiwa in which this movie is about diversity that could lead an integration even this movie presents some stereotypes, yet it is packaged not serious way inside it, of two races, Latino American and Black american. This movie begins with the two main characters, Lucia, the Latino woman and Marcus, Black American man in which they fall in love with each other and they decide to get married, but both

of their family try to block this plan, especially from Lucia's family. Stereotype is the main reason why they have bad opinion on each other.

Shortly, here comes the two conflicts in the story, internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict occurs when Lucia has to decide between right and wrong or between two solutions to a problem and her options are being wife of black man or retain her family tradition. Meanwhile, external conflict occurs between Lucia and his father, in which Lucia has to convince her father in order to accept Marcus as her husband and explain that race is not a big deal. In the end of the story, Lucia's father realizes that Marcus has made his daughter happy and realizes that race should not be a matter, and finally they decide to get married in using Latino and African customs.

They can integrate and melt away in a wedding that uses African and Mexican culture. To support the topic, the writer uses pyschological approach of Kartz and Braly in analyzing the extrinsic element of the movie. In their research of why racial stereotype exists, they explain that there is negative stereotype among ethnic groups. There are considerable stereotypes of Latino people represented in this film through some scenes.

2. Stereotypes

In simple way, stereotype is over generelized belief about people in such good or bad characteristic and making people belive in those categories. Mostly, stereotype focuses on the negatif things and disadvantageous things, but sometimes stereotype represents the truth. According to Tessa Perkins, stereotypes are not always negative, yet it has large influence to our lives:

> Rethinking stereotypes that stereotype is not a simple process and contains five assumptions, such as stereotypes are not rigid and unchanging, stereotypes can be held about one's own group, stereotypes are not always about minority groups or the less powerful, stereotypes are not always negative and stereotypes are not always false (1979:345).

Stereotype is classifying people based on the rumours or false belief that are widespread in our large society. To understand more about the common stereotypes, here are some examples of different types of stereotype in *Stereotype Examples*:

> First, racial stereotype, the race that more common stereotype is Blacks who are considered as good at sport, the second is gender stereotype: men and women stereotypes that share some beliefs such as women are weaker than men; then cultural stereotype which exists about cultures in the whole of countries, such as mexican considered as illegally immigrants; next, group of individual stereotype which involves some groups of people, for instance, Punks wear messy clothes and disliked by society; and the last, sexual stereotype occurs when you have bad perception on gays, lesbians, and so on (Disqus, 1996-2014).

In summary, stereotypes really affect people's perceptions to the other people and stereotypes tend to establish negative mind about something which is different. Unconsiously, stereotypes try to invent the word "we" as the best people and they are not. Mostly, stereotypes reinforce the people who can not

accept the difference, diversity and togetherness. The false belief that spreads continuously to all members of particular group is the answer of how the streotypes are invented or constructed in the society. Even there is some truth behind the representation of those races, people, genders, cultures. Thus, stereotypes are not just focused on different races and backgrounds, yet gender, sexual, racial, group of individuals stereotypes also exist. Shortly, stereotyping is bad attitude that can make its target degraded and isolated.

2.1. Background of the first streotype of Latino people

Many of Latino countries encountered weak economic situation in the 19th century. When the U.S grew rapidly and became the land of opportunity in the American continent, it attracted bulk of immigrants from all over the world including the U.S's neighbour. Lots of Latino people decided to immigrate to U.S massively for getting the better job and life, with the result that Latino people were the most immigrants who settled in the U.S. However, Latino people's desire to mantain their culture, make them difficult to assimilate with American. Thus, it will be so hard for Latino people who get in to the U.S and recognize the new life without any provision. That is why American people get mad and here comes the stereotypical attitudes toward Latino people for the first time. This can be proven through Katz and Braly in the research of racial stereotyping (1993:280-290) in which there is tendency to have stereotypical attitudes of Americans toward many different races. In the end, the stereotype spreads widely and imitated by other immigrants to degrade each other and eventually becomes a new culture and affects our large society.

Over the years, many of Latinos in the United States have been stereotyped. Those common stereotypes in *Common Mexican Stereotypes* include:

> Some common stereotypes consist of: laziness, being iilegal immigrants, unable to speak the English Languange, drunks, gang members, among others. These stereotypes have been transmitted not only from person to person, but across the media. These

stereotypes have been channelled through all different avenues of the media; from the internet, movie, television, and to the radio (Maritza Guzman, 2011).

Those common stereotypes have been existed since many of undocumented in the United States came from South of the border to seek the better life and the better job, much of the people believe that Latinos are the largest ethnic minority groups in the united states and all recent unauthorized immigrants to the country from Mexico. The coming of Latino people to United States are welcomed badly since million illegal immigrants come to look for the better life. According to Passel Cohn in *Authorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends 2010*:

> Undocumented immigrants from Mexico were estimated 7 millions who lived in the united states in 2007 although the illegal immigration has dropped to 6.5 million and in 2010, only about 58% of undocumented immigrants living in the united states, but the American has shared belief that all latinos are undocumented immigrants(Paseel Cohn, "Pew Hispanic Center" p.1, par.2).

Thus, the first stereotypes toward Latino appears since many of Latino decided to move eventhough they did not have a proper job and had difficulty in assimilating with others.

2.2 Stereotypes of Latino People Represented in *Our Family Wedding* Related to Theory

Our Family Wedding movie represents the common streotypes of two races, latino and the black, yet the writer will discuss the stereotypes of Latino people only. Related to history, Latinos in the United States have been stereotyped in some characteristics. Here, the writer finds six common stereotypes showed in this movie through its scenes, for instance, Latinos do not marry with other races, Latinos love goat for their wedding, Latinos work as cheap labor, Latinos tend to have big family and live together as extended family, Latinos are lack of education and the last, Latino women are the seductrees.

Related to the racial stereotypes theory by Kartz and Braly in *Abnormal and Sosial Pyscholgy*, there is tendency the other ethnic groups to have the negative stereotypes toward other different races (1993:280-290). This case begins with all immigrants have the negative stereotypes from the other immigrants as an attack to get the label of the most super race in degrading the other races. This negative stereotype comes for the first time as an imitation of the American who gives the bad labelling to all new comers. The same case happens in this *Our Family Wedding* in which the ethnic group (The Latinos) have the negative stereotypes toward other different race (the Blacks) based on the false belief that they have known. This film is made by full of stereotypes of both races, such as the Latino cannot speak English,

will not get marry with the other races and so do the blacks which are good at sports and as bad people. Thus, this can be proven that there is negative stereotype among Blacks and Latinos described in this movie. In short, there is tendency stereotypical attitude toward a lot of immigrants as a result of habit which they hear and imitate daily in their lives where the stereotype evolves.

Our Family Wedding presents all stereotypes that have been developing in long time even it represents truth or false belief, yet the stereotypes have brought the negative effects to Latino people. It is seen clearly in this movie, Latino people described as people who lack of education since they cannot speak English, as the people who have the strong desire to keep the heritage with the result that they are hard to mingle with American culture and to accept the difference, as the people who will not get marry with the other races, as the people who get the lower payment as cheap labor at the towing company due to lack education and lack of skill and as the people who consider the family has high value, plus the Blacks also admit that Latino people are truly like that. This can be concluded that ethnic streotypes are widespread and shared by all the people through media language to identify own ethnic groups and to degrade the other ethnics in order to promote the success of the group and those stereotypes are spreading through media even language to be a show indirectly.

2.3. **Some Scenes of Common Latino Stereotypes in** *Our Family Wedding*

The writer finds six common stereotypes showed in this movie through its dialogue and its scenes, for instance, Latinos do not marry with other races, Latinos love goat for their wedding, Latinos work as cheap labor, Latinos tend to have big family and live together as extended family, Latinos are unable to speak English language and the last, Latino women are the seductrees.

All stereotypes are proven by scenes, pictures and explanation as well

1. Low level job

   Latinos work as cheap labor in the towing company. They even do not care about the cheap job as long as they can stand the life in the U.S.

Picture 1	Picture 2
01:36:12	01:05:57

Another factor is caused by the way of the U.S system works, the lighter of the color of your skin is the more access to power and privilege, which

divides and classifies people by race when they arrive here. For exampe all Latinos are reclassified as people of color.

2. Seductive woman

The latino woman are seductress where they tend to show their curves. This kind of stereotype of Latino women should look like where they have to attract opposite sex with the curve of body that they have, the dress that they have to wear. Shortly, they make themselves as an ideal women on earth.

Picture 3
01:40:22

3. Mantaining their ethnics

The Latinos do not marry with other races. The grandma as the first generation gets faint and shock to know her granddaughter's fiance. The Latinos who were not born in the U.S could not assimilate well since they tend to retain their culture and their spouse. Yet, the Latinos who were born in the U.S tend to have family diversity. For the first generation, to mantain the tradition is a must, even they dont use speak English daily in the U.S, they are hard to assimilate with the other races.

Picture 4
01:25:20

The grandmother as the first generation cannot speak English which Spanish language keeps her connected to her roots. A Latino who was not born in the U.S speaks Spanish due to retain their language. Some of Latinos were encouraged to practice it if they are born in the U.S, yet for some Latinos were forced to forget it.

01:07:42

Picture 5   Picture 6

Dialogue:

> Miguel : we'll have my cousin come over. They're gonna speak spanish.
> (Our Family Wedding, 36:02:78)
> Brad : what ? you dont speak English?
> (Our Family Wedding, 07:32:44)

This can be proved that many of Latino people who has moved to the U.S still mantain their heritage, especially language (dialogue 1) and there is

stereotype also every races considers Latinos do not speak English even cannot speak English due to lack of education (dialogue 2).

5. Retaining their native culture

Picture 7
(01:24:41)

The Latinos love goat for their wedding. The latinos tend to retain their culture and tradition since they consider that its functions as a way for latinos community in the U.S to connect.

Dialogue:

Brad boyd : yeah. I've never seen no goat. I've never seen anything
Miguel : No, we gotta give it to Jesus.Come on, baby, give it to Jesus.
    (Our Family Wedding, 01:24:16:20)
Brad boyd   : what is this ?
Miguel   : Oh, my God. It's a dish called birria. It's for Mexican celebrations.
    (Our Family Wedding, 01:24:31:15)

Latinos people mantain their tradition, for instance, for their wedding, they always slaughter the goat presented to God as thankfulness and a sign of celebration as well (dialogue 1 & 2).

6. Loving family

The Latinos tend to have extended family: mother, father, children and grand daughter. The importance of extended family is vital to latinos for example the third cousin is just as important as the first child or Latino takes care of any child that comes to them. Some of the latino people will not forget about who they are even when they are in the U.S. If they cannot bring their family with them, they always help them when they get back to their country or give some money to improve their family's economic condition.

Picture 8
(01:20:47)

3. Conclusion

Over the years, the U.S is considered as the most powerful and the richest country of resources, people and territory. Hence, it is no suprise when all immigrants from all over the world want to come in. For those reasons, latino people decided to immigrate to the U.S massively to improve the quality of life. However, this immigration experienced some obstacles. Lots of Latino people were being degraded by some false beliefs that shared which is called, stereotype.

Based on the racial stereotypes theory by Kartz and Braly in *Abnormal and Sosial Pyscholgy*, it is true that stereotype always happens in the diverse country such as the U.S where its citizen practice offensive behaviour to the new comers like Latino people. There must be a tendency to have negative perceptions toward other races. It can be proven through this *Our Family Wedding* that describes Latino people such as people who lack of education since they cannot speak English, as the people who have the strong desire to keep their native tradition with the result that they are hard to mingle with American culture and to accept the difference, as the people who do not get marry with the other races, as the people who get the lower payment as cheap labor at the towing company due to lack education and lack of skill and as the people who consider the family has high value. Even if stereotypes can represent the both false thing or true, yet in my opinion it is not kind of fair attitude to do.

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