

**The Counter-Stereotypical Representation of Latinas  
in the American Police Procedural Comedy Series *Brooklyn  
Nine-Nine* (Fox & NBC, 2013-2021)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The representation of Latinas in America has always been stapled with stereotypical traits since their initial appearance in the mainstream media because the representation is depicted from the point of view of Anglo-Americans. It is then intriguing to analyze the representation of Latinas in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* which its Anglo-American producers claimed to be counter-stereotypical to the existing Latina representation in the American mainstream media. Using Roland Barthes' Semiotics, the analysis shows that these characters defy traditional roles by being depicted as competent, assertive professionals with legal citizenship. The findings show that these characters defy traditional roles by being depicted as competent, assertive professionals with legal citizenship. They also diverge from sexualized stereotypes through their portrayal as authoritative figures, avoiding overly sexualized tropes in speech and attire. This portrayal offers a counter-narrative to existing media stereotypes of Latina women.

Keywords: *american police procedural comedy series; counter-stereotype; latinass; representation; stereotype*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the American mainstream media, Latina representation often appears to be stereotypical because the representation is depicted from the point of view of Anglo-Americans (Molina-Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004). The stereotypes aim to justify the goal of U.S. imperialism toward Latin America by representing Latinas as lesser beings (Berg, 2002). The stereotyping of Latinas in the American mainstream media matches with Homi K. Bhabha's concept of stereotype, in which stereotype constructs the colonizers as superior to the colonized by reducing the diverse colonized to a degrading and discriminatory identity, fixated by the colonizers (Ong, 2022). Latinas' stereotypical identity comes from their stigmatized differences from Anglo-Americans or their Otherness. The stereotypes of Latinas are caretaking figures which are derived from their occupation, overly sexualized females which are based on their perceived bodies, and seductive females which point to their personalities.

The stereotype of Latinas as caretaking figures emerged during the anti-immigration era. According to Molina-Guzmán (2010), Hollywood

creates a representation of Latina maids and nannies that negates Latinas' identity from the perceived "cultural and criminal invasion" because of their immigrant status to a socially acceptable caretaking figure that caters to the white dominance, control, and heteronormative romance to make the Latinas marketable in the American mainstream media (p. 157). This stereotype conveys messages that Latinas are desired for their domesticity and femininity, powerless illegal immigrants, incompetent and uneducated females, and submissive subjects (Padilla, 2009; Molina-Guzmán, 2010; Enriquez, 2015).

The stereotype of overly sexualized females is perpetuated through the hyper-focusing on Latinas' bodies, the process of tropicalism, and the heavily accented English. Hyper-focusing on Latinas' bodies means that when Latinas appear in the mainstream media, the focus is mostly pointed to their body (Molina-Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004). Moreover, the process of tropicalism reduces Latinas to homogenous physical traits where they are always portrayed to have curvaceous breasts and hips, long brunette hair, and wear bright-colored clothes that

are seductive, high-heels, and extravagant jewelry (Matrynuska, 2016). Latinas are also sexualized through what Casillas et al. (2018) call their "vocal body", which is all aspects of someone's speech such as "perceived accent(s), intonation, speaking volume, and word choice" (p. 63). In the American mainstream media, Latinas' accent creates a cinematic representation of hot, spicy, and exotic Latina, contributing to the hypersexualization of Latina identity (Molina-Guzmán, 2010).

Lastly, the stereotype of Latinas as seductive females refers to their personalities that are perceived to be sexually alluring to male Anglo-Americans. Keller (1994) categorizes the stereotypical personality of Latinas into three categories: the cantina girl, the faithful self-sacrificing senorita, and the vamp (Merskin, 2007). Cantina girl is a Latina whose personality is based on her sexual allure. She is also known as the "naughty girl of easy virtue" because the cantina girl is most often represented as a sexual object. Faithful self-sacrificing senorita is a Latina who is portrayed as good in the beginning but will

do anything to save her Anglo lover from a dangerous situation. Meanwhile, the vamp is a Latina who uses her intelligence to seduce men to get what she wants (Merskin, 2007).

Besides Keller, Berg (2002) also has three categories of Latina stereotypical personalities: the harlot, the female clown, and the dark lady. The harlot is a lustful woman who cannot live without men. The female clown, also known as the spitfire, is the Latina stereotype which negates the erotic harlot stereotype. The female clown is still portrayed with sexual allure, but this allure comes along with her ridiculous actions or comical characteristics for the sake of humor in sitcoms. The dark lady is a mysterious, virginal, inscrutable, and aristocratic woman who appears to be erotically appealing to Anglo men because of those characteristics (Berg, 2002).

*Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is an American police procedural comedy series that aired on Fox from 2013-2018 and later on NBC from 2019-2021 that is set in a fictional New York City Police Department (NYPD) 99<sup>th</sup> precinct in Brooklyn. The story of this series follows a clever, but childish NYPD police detective Jake Peralta

(Andy Samberg), and his colleagues, the diverse detective squad of the 99<sup>th</sup> precinct. This squad is headed by a Black gay captain Raymond Holt (Andre Braugher) and features a Black family-man sergeant Terry Jeffords (Terry Crews), four White male detectives Jake Peralta (Andy Samberg), Charles Boyle (Joe Lo Truglio), Michael Hitchcock (Dirk Blocker), and Norm Scully (Joel McKinnon Miller), two Latina detectives Amy Santiago (Melissa Fumero) and Rosa Diaz (Stephanie Beatriz), and the squad's eccentric White secretary Gina Linetti (Chelsea Peretti).

The existence of the two Latina detectives has put the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* into the media representation discourse because, according to Columbian-Bolivian actress Stephanie Beatriz who plays Rosa Diaz, it is uncommon for an American television program to include more than one Latinas who are not blood-related as supporting characters (Associated Press, 2015). *The National* reports that the show's producers Michael Schur and Dan Goor state that the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* reflects the melting-pot world of NYPD

with its diverse police force consisting of people of all races, genders, and sexualities. Goor and Schur also claimed that in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, the characters' background does not determine what the character says or does because they "do not reduce people to one thing" (Associated Press, 2015).

Latina representation studies done by various researchers revealed that even though Latinas have secured places as main characters in American film and television, which appears to be a breakthrough in Latina representation, their representation still ends up being stereotypical. When Latinas become the main characters, they are either represented as maids (Padilla, 2009; Molina-Guzmán, 2010) or sensuous women (Beltrán, 2002; Molina-Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Merskin, 2007).

It is then intriguing to prove if the representation of Latinas in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013-2021) is indeed counter-stereotypical to the existing representation of Latinas in the American mainstream media as the producers claimed. Situation comedy was commonly

used to degrade racial groups through humor without gaining criticism because humor is a quality that is seen as "flawless and harmless" (Jontes, 2010, p. 718). Moreover, the producers and the leading characters of this series are white males, which opens up the possibility of the Latina representation being biased based on Anglo men's perspectives.

This research aims to prove that Latinas are represented as counter-stereotypical in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* by analyzing the representation of Amy Santiago and Rosa Diaz in comparison to the existing stereotypical Latina representation.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The primary data of this research were the *mise-en-scène* elements such as clothing, makeup, personalities, body language, lighting, setting, camerawork, dialogues, and background music of the selected scenes in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* as the source of data. The data collection was done by watching the series thoroughly on Netflix. Moreover, since this research aims to prove the producers' claim that the

representation of Latinas in the series is counter-stereotypical to the existing Latina representation, this research employed purposive sampling to choose the data that aligns with the three stereotypes of Latinas: caretaking figure, overly sexualized female, and seductive female. Thus, the data collection was focused on scenes that clearly showcased the occupation, the look, and the personality of the Latina characters. After the scenes were found, the *mise-en-scène* elements were identified and organized into three categories: occupation, look, and personality for analysis.

In the analysis, Barthes' concepts of denotation and connotation were used to interpret the data. First, this research determined the denotative meaning of the representation by elaborating how the Latinas are represented in the selected scenes. Then, this denotative meaning was linked to the ideological theme that is the cultural theme of Latinas in the United States to find the message implied in the representation. The myth or the ideology communicated through this representation would then be compared to the three stereotypes of Latinas in American mainstream media--

caretaking figure, overly sexualized female, and seductive female--to prove that the Latinas in the American police procedural *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are represented as counter-stereotypical to the existing stereotypical Latina representation.

This research also used supporting data such as pictures and film trailers of Latina representation that are relevant to the *mise-en-scène* to support the analysis of the primary data.

## DISCUSSION

The Latinas in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are represented as NYPD police detectives, which makes their representation counter the stereotypes of Latinas in the American mainstream media.

### Caretaking Figure

The Latinas in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are first portrayed with their occupation. Amy and Rosa's representation as NYPD police detectives counter the stereotype of Latinas in their representation as caretaking figures like maids and nannies because the nature and requirements of the police detective work are in contrast

with those of the maid and nanny work.

The nature of the police detective work signifies that Amy and Rosa counter the stereotype of Latina caretaking figures who are desirable for their domesticity and femininity. Latina caretaking figures work as maids or nannies in the domestic space, a space that was traditionally considered a private and feminine space (Rezeanu, 2015). Meanwhile, Amy and Rosa work in a police precinct as police detectives, which means that Amy and Rosa are represented as venturing into the masculine public sphere. In addition, working as police detectives at NYPD, Amy and Rosa's colleagues are people of different sex and race. It means that their relationship with people is not confined to the limited work with families like Latina maids and nannies.

Since the police institution is a traditionally masculine environment (Griffin, 2017), Amy and Rosa are expected to display masculine traits in their job as police detectives in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. According to Connell (1987, as cited by Yalley & Olutayo, 2020), the hegemonic form of masculinity is

displayed through "aggression, force, dominance, violence, and strength". Season 3 episode 21 titled "Maximum Security" shows Amy exhibiting aggression, force, dominance, violence, and strength when she challenges a criminal to a fight during her undercover in prison.

Image 1. Amy challenges a criminal to a fight.



Source: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 3 Episode 21 "Maximum Security"

In "Maximum Security", Amy is represented as a masculine woman because she displays masculine traits during her duty as a police detective. Amy initiates the fight by pushing the criminal to a trash bin. This action connotes her dominance, aggression, and force. It signifies that she creates a situation where she threatens the criminal and the criminal has no choice but to fight her back, just as she planned. The fight itself connotes her violence because fighting is a violent behavior that most certainly ends in physical damage, which shows that Amy

is as violent as the criminal. Lastly, the way Amy is confident in challenging the criminal connotes her strength because it shows that she has what it takes to win against the criminal in a fight.

Furthermore, the requirements of police detective work signify that Amy and Rosa are not represented to be powerless illegal immigrants, incompetent and uneducated females, and submissive subjects. Latina maids or nannies are usually undocumented immigrants. This status makes them subject to deportation. To avoid deportation, these maids and nannies usually marry Anglo men.

In contrast with the occupation of Latina caretaking figures that signify their powerlessness as undocumented immigrants, Amy and Rosa's occupation as NYPD police detectives connotes their citizenship. According to the official website of the NYPD (New York City Police Department, n.d.), U.S. citizenship is required to enroll as an NYPD officer. Thus, their job as NYPD police detectives signifies that Amy and Rosa are U.S. citizens who live legally in the United States. Because of this legal status, they are not in a

disadvantageous position where they are powerless due to the possibility of getting deported at any time.

The representation of Amy and Rosa as NYPD police detectives counters the stereotype of uneducated and incompetent Latinas in the representation of caretaking figures because by working as police detectives in the NYPD, Amy and Rosa appear to be educated and competent, unlike the stereotypical Latina caretaking figures. In episode 2 of the first season titled "The Tagger", Amy mentions that she "studied art history." (03:23). The NYPD requires the candidates to have earned 60 college credits with a minimum GPA of 2.0 (New York City Police Department, n.d.). It signifies that Amy and Rosa are educated because they pass those requirements and become police detectives in the NYPD.

Moreover, once the police candidates are admitted as police cadets, they need to enter and graduate from the police academy, a training facility that prepares police cadets to be certified police officers through academic and physical courses (New York City Police Department, n.d.). The police academy enables police cadets to acquire police skills such as

decision-making, impulse control, conscientiousness, and adaptability which make them ready to enter the police world that is emotionally, physically, and socially challenging (Spilberg, 2014, as cited in Blumberg et al., 2019). Being police detectives in the NYPD means Amy and Rosa already acquired those skills. Throughout the episodes of the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, Amy and Rosa display those police competencies, which show that they are not represented as incompetent Latinas like in the representation of caretaking figures.

In another cut of "Maximum Security" episode, Amy shows her decision-making skills as a police detective.

Image 2. Amy beats up Jake in front of other inmates.



Source: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* Season 3 Episode 21 "Maximum Security"

In the scene above, Amy comes up with a plan to beat up Jake during her undercover in prison when her cover is almost blown to gain a



criminal's trust. According to Spilberg (2014, as cited in Blumberg et al., 2019), when a police officer is able to quickly comprehend a situation and come up with an appropriate action to handle the situation, it can be said that the police officer acquires decision-making skill. "Maximum Security" showcases how Amy is able to come up with a plan to gain the criminal's trust during a critical situation, which shows that she masters decision-making skills.

Additionally, Rosa's impulse-control skill is shown when she is facing a dangerous hostage situation in season 7 episode 5, "Debbie".

Rosa: "... You know I was a lot like you. I spent years telling myself that their tough love made me stronger but you know what I really wish they'd done? Been nice to me... Debbie, you have made some really bad choices today. You are not a bad person. If we get out of this alive, I promise you I will help you however I can."

(*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 7 Episode 5  
"Debbie" (19:02))

According to Spilberg (2014, as cited in Blumberg et al., 2019), the impulse control skill of a police detective is shown when they are able to take proper precautions and avoid unnecessarily risky behaviors to ensure others' and their safety. Rosa empathizes with Debbie instead of provoking her. This way, she can talk Debbie into turning herself in without angering her and triggering her to shoot her rifle. Rosa is naturally a short-fused person, but she is able to calmly reason with Debbie. It shows that Rosa can control her impulses so that she can arrest Debbie without hurting anybody.

"Sabotage", from season 2 episode 19, portrays Amy and Rosa's conscientiousness as police detectives while they, as police detectives, are investigating Jake's saboteur case.

Jake: "Look, I know technically I'm not supposed to help out, but rules are made to be broken."

Amy: "They were made to be followed. Nothing is made to be broken."

Rosa: "...seriously, you

can't come with us."

(*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 2 Episode 19  
"Sabotage" (05:29))

According to Spielberg, when a police officer is diligently performing their work in a timely, logical manner that follows the organizational rules, regulations, and policies, it can be said that the officer is conscientious (Blumberg et al., 2019). The conversation above proves that Amy and Rosa are represented as conscientious police detectives because they diligently follow the procedures when they are investigating Jake's saboteur case by preventing Jake, who is suspended, from joining the investigation.

Moreover, the 18<sup>th</sup> episode of season 5 titled "Gray Star Mutual" where Amy is arresting a robber showcases her adaptability skill.

Image 3. Amy chases a bodega robber.



Source: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 5 Episode 18 "Gray  
Star Mutual"

In doing their job, police officers encounter different, sudden, and competing situations. Therefore, they need to have the ability to adjust to those situations (Blumberg et al., 2019). In the "Gray Star Mutual" episode. Amy immediately chases after the robber even though she is on her lunch break, indicating how quickly she reacts to an emergency. Moreover, she is wearing a wedding dress; the kind of dress that restrains the movement of the one who wears it. The way she holds the skirt proves that the dress actually gets in her way to catch the robber. However, she is still able to arrest him. This signifies that Amy is a competent police detective.

Lastly, the representation of Amy and Rosa as police detectives in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* counters the stereotype of Latina caretaking figures because as police detectives,

they appear to be assertive figures. This representation can be seen in season 2 episode 2 titled "Chocolate Milk".

Amy: "You're just gonna let her fail us?"

Holt: "I'm sorry about your precious grade, Santiago, but this isn't about you."

Amy: "Don't "this isn't about you" me! I'm "this isn't about you"-ing you! That grade is the only thing standing between me and a future where you're not my captain anymore. ... This precinct needs you in command. Cajole up, Captain!"

(*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 2 Episode 2  
"Chocolate Milk" (16:57))

In the "Chocolate Milk" episode, Amy boldly confronts Captain Holt for his pettiness toward the Deputy Chief Madeline Wuntch, his old friend, who is in charge of the precinct's evaluation. The dialogue above implies that Amy is a confrontational person. Amy has always respected Captain Holt, but she boldly scolds him when he acts indifferent because she

is concerned with the precinct and her future in it. She pushes Captain Holt to do what she says instead of following his ego. It shows that Amy is the type of person who will stand up for what is right, even when it means confronting her own captain.

### **Overly Sexualized Female**

In the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, Amy and Rosa break the stereotype of Latina representation that is based on their perceived bodies due to their job as NYPD police detectives. This job makes the camera-framing that captures Amy and Rosa and their clothing and speeches differ from stereotypical overly sexualized Latinas.

The comparison between the trailer of the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and Jennifer Lopez's *U-Turn* (1997) trailer below shows how the Latinas in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are captured differently from stereotypical overly sexualized Latinas. Trailers are analyzed because trailers aim to build the expectations of the viewers before their release (Karray & Debernitz, 2015). Therefore, trailers must contain scenes that the

producers think might attract the viewers.

Image 4. The shot of Jennifer Lopez's body.



Source:

[youtube.com/watch?v=uUK79LRP-Nc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=uUK79LRP-Nc)

Image 5. The shot of Amy interviewing a robbery victim.



Source:

[youtube.com/watch?v=sEOuJ4z5aTc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=sEOuJ4z5aTc)

Lopez's trailer signifies that her movie *U-Turn* (1997) overly sexualizes her by putting the camera's focus on her chest. This type of camera-framing is called objectifying gaze. Objectifying gaze depicts women as a sexual instrument to please the viewers by emphasizing the camera on certain body parts (Karsay et al., 2017). Lopez's trailer builds the expectations that

the viewers will see Lopez's sexy body in the movie.

In contrast with Lopez's trailers, the trailer of the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* shows that Amy is not represented as an overly sexualized female because the camera does not hyper-focus on her body. The camera shoots Amy from the waist up. When the viewers see Amy in this trailer, the viewers can also see the environments around her. This type of angle is called the medium-shot angle. The medium-shot angle is used to bring up a balanced emphasis on the characters and their surroundings and also bring focus to the characters' faces and their emotions (MasterClass, 2022). Therefore, instead of focusing on Amy's body, the camera puts more focus on her face and emotions.

Since Amy is portrayed doing her police detective job in the trailer of the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, the expectation for Amy's characterization is that she is a police detective who takes her job seriously. Thus, the focus of Amy's representation in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is on her personality at work

instead of on her body, which proves that she is not stereotyped as an overly sexualized female.

Stereotypically overly sexualized Latinas are usually represented as having voluptuous bodies and wearing revealing clothes, extravagant jewelry, and high heels, which is why most Latinas in American mainstream media have similar physical traits that make them sexually alluring to male viewers. The reduction of Latinas' physical traits to one type is called tropicalism (Matrynuska, 2016). Since Amy and Rosa work as police detectives, they are able to appear as non-tropicalized Latinas because their job obligates them to wear attires that are suitable to the nature of their work.

Image 6. Amy and Rosa's work attires.



Source: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* Season 1 Episode 3 "The Slump"

Image 7. The image that appears when the keyword "masculine outfit" is searched on Google.



Source: [quora.com/What-type-of-clothes-make-you-look-more-manly](https://www.quora.com/What-type-of-clothes-make-you-look-more-manly)

Image 8. The image that appears when the keyword "masculine outfit" is searched on Google.



Source: [onpointfresh.com/dress-more-masculine/](https://www.onpointfresh.com/dress-more-masculine/)

Amy is wearing a navy-colored suit on top of a cream-colored shirt while Rosa is wearing a leather jacket and a pair of jeans in "The Slump", from the season 1 episode. Their outfits cover most of their body parts except for their heads. These are the clothing that Amy and Rosa mostly wear throughout the series. Image 7 and Image

8 are the results that come out when the keyword "masculine outfit" is searched on Google. The outfits in Image 7 and Image 8 are similar to Amy and Rosa's attires. It means that Amy and Rosa's attires are categorized as masculine outfits.

Amy and Rosa's outfits connote their professionalism as police detectives instead of their sexualities. According to Fasoli et al. (2018), people would perceive women as professional when they wear masculine outfits. Thus, Amy and Rosa's masculine outfits build the expectation that they are good at their job and that they are just as competent and capable as their male colleagues. Moreover, their masculine outfits stray the viewers' attention away from their bodies because the outfits cover most of their body parts. It means that their bodies are not the focus of their representation, unlike tropicalized Latinas whose bodies overshadow their personalities because they wear revealing clothes. Thus, Amy and Rosa's representation is not stereotyped as overly sexualized females.

Lastly, Amy and Rosa's representation as NYPD police detectives breaks the stereotype of overly sexualized Latinas who are

sexualized through their accents. In the American mainstream media, the accent is used to sexualize and racialize Latinas because it marks their difference from Anglo-Americans and thus is considered exotic (Hinojos, 2019). Working in the racially diverse environment of the NYPD allows Amy and Rosa's speeches to be compared with those of the other characters whose racial and ethnic identities are different from them, including the White characters, showing that they are not Othered and exoticized in the series.

As mentioned by Michael Schur and Dan Goor, the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* reflects the melting pot world of the NYPD, which is why the characters in this series are racially diverse. When Amy and Rosa are interacting with those characters, it is apparent that they speak in Standard American English (SAE) like the other characters instead of speaking in heavily accented broken English like stereotypical Latinas. Sociolinguists stated that SAE is translated to "sounding educated, middle-class, and racially white" (Casillas et al., 2018, p. 64). Thus, the absence of accent in Amy and

Rosa's speeches shows that they are represented to be fully assimilated into American culture, not as exoticized Others. It means that Amy and Rosa's representation as NYPD police detectives breaks the stereotype of Latinas as overly sexualized females.

### **Seductive Female**

One of the staple stereotypes of Latinas is seductive female, which is based on their perceived personalities. When Latinas appear on film and television, they usually appear with stereotypical personalities that show their ethnical differences from the Anglos to maintain the control and dominance of the Anglo-Americans (Berg, 1990, p. 292).

Amy and Rosa break the stereotype of Latinas as seductive females because they are represented as NYPD police detectives. This representation allows Amy and Rosa's characterization to be different from those of the stereotypical seductive Latinas. This research identifies Amy and Rosa's personalities using Sedita's (2014) sitcom characterization and finds that Amy is

identified as "The Neurotic" while Rosa is "The Bitch". These personality types signify that they are not stereotypical seductive Latinas.

Amy and Rosa's representation as NYPD police detectives breaks the stereotype of the cantina girl because their personalities as police detectives contrast with the cantina girl whose sexual allure becomes her whole personality. In the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, Amy and Rosa's personalities are not defined by their sexual allures. The pilot episode shows how Rosa's personality is defined in the series.

In the pilot, Terry introduces Rosa to the newly appointed Captain Holt as someone who is "tough, smart, hard to read, and really scary" (06:50). The four adjectives are the common traits of Sedita's "The Bitch". It shows that those adjectives are the words that define Rosa. Terry's introduction of Rosa implies that Rosa is not portrayed as a seductive female in this series because the adjectives "tough", "smart", "hard to read" and "scary" in this context do not have any relation with Rosa's

sexualities, but it is related to her personality as a police detective. Moreover, since this conversation happens in the pilot episode that is meant "to establish the characters and situations" (Anders, 2012, as cited in Hunter et al., 2016), the descriptions of Rosa above can be seen as a pledge from the producers to portray Rosa as someone who is tough, smart, hard to read, and really scary, instead of a Latina whose whole personality is marked by her sexual allure like the stereotypical cantina girl.

The representation of Rosa as a police detective also counters the stereotype of a faithful, self-sacrificing *senorita*. This stereotype refers to Latinas who voluntarily put themselves in danger to save their White lover. In season 5 episode 20 titled "Show Me Going", Rosa is represented as a courageous police detective because she joins the massive NYPD response to take down the shooters in Brooklyn Heights and protect the civilians. Rosa's action sparks reactions from her colleagues:

Jake: "I'm really scared for Rosa."

Terry: "Me too. And it keeps making me

think about my kids. How do I deal with the fact that every day I leave for work, I might not come home?"

(*Brooklyn Nine-Nine* Season 5 Episode 20 "Show Me Going" (18:21))

The way Rosa's colleagues react to her responding to the shooting implies that the duty she is doing is a life-and-death situation. However, Rosa bravely does her job as a police officer by joining the other NYPD officers to control the situation. The representation of Rosa as a police detective who bravely puts herself in danger in order to fulfill her duty to protect the civilians in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* counters the stereotype of the faithful, self-sacrificing *senorita* who endangers herself for her White lover.

The representation of Amy as a police detective in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* counters the vamp and the harlot stereotypes. Different from the vamp who uses her intelligence to seduce men and the harlot whose actions are driven by her desire for sexual intercourse, Amy is portrayed as a career-driven



police detective who uses her skill and intelligence to achieve that goal.

Amy: "If I'm ever gonna make captain, I need a good mentor. I need my rabbi."

(*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 1 Episode 1  
"Pilot" (04:14))

The pilot episode introduces Amy to the viewers as a police detective who wants to make a captain one day through the line above. The line shows Amy's characterization as "The Neurotic". According to Sedita (2014), "The Neurotic" always have goals to achieve and they set meticulous rules to help them achieve that goal. It means that as soon as the show starts, Amy's characterization is based on her goal to be a police captain. It contrasts the harlot whose only purpose is a sexual relationship with Anglo men.

Moreover, how Amy says "I need a good mentor. I need my rabbi" when she and Jake are talking about the new captain signifies that she is willing to work her way to become a captain by learning from an experienced superior officer. It signifies that instead of trying to get what she wants by seducing men like the vamp, Amy plans to work hard to

achieve her goal. Thus, the representation of Amy as a police detective counters the stereotype of Latinas as seductive females because Amy's personality is associated with her goal to be a police captain instead of with her sexuality like the vamp and the harlot.

The representation of Amy and Rosa as police detectives counters the stereotype of the female clown. While the female clown becomes the source of humor in sitcoms for their visible distinction to Anglo-Americans like their exaggerated accent and body language, Amy and Rosa's humor comes from their personalities as "The Neurotic" and "The Bitch" that they display in their workplace, as can be seen in "Undercover" of season 2 episode 1.

Amy: "Captain, I hate to be harsh, but I think that these drills are slightly unnecessary, possibly. Although, you are the boss, and your judgment is impeccable. And I guess what I am trying to say is thank you."

Rosa: "I agree, with the stuff about the drills, not

the spineless  
ass-kissing."  
(*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*  
Season 2 Episode 1  
"Undercover" (09:30))

This episode reveals how Amy and Rosa's humorous depiction comes out of their personalities as "The Neurotic" and "The Bitch". "The Neurotic" are anxious and introspective individuals (Sedita, 2014). Amy's lines signify that she hesitates when she complains to Captain Holt. She says "possibly" after saying that the drills are slightly unnecessary, which means that she is not sure of her own judgment about the drills. Sedita also states that "The Neurotic" worries a lot. Amy looks up to Captain Holt as her mentor. How Amy uses flattery toward Captain Holt after complaining shows that she does not want to go against him, which is a typical "Neurotic" move. Meanwhile, Rosa directly says that she agrees that the drills are unnecessary and calls Amy's flattery "ass-kissing". According to Sedita (2014), "The Bitch" is direct, sarcastic, and brutally honest. They say things people normally cannot say. Rosa not hesitating to agree about how unnecessary the drills are and calling Amy's flattery "ass-kissing" show that she is "The Bitch".

Lastly, Rosa's representation as a police detective also counters the stereotype of the dark lady; a stereotypical Latina who is sexually alluring because of her mysteriousness. Rosa is someone who is extra private about her personal life. In season 1 episode 7 titled "48 Hours" she says, "You people already know too much about me" (06:05) to express her refusal to let her coworkers come to her place. This episode reveals that Rosa separates her personal life from her work life. She does not let her coworkers learn anything about her life outside of work and she protects her privacy seriously. This is a typical trait of "The Bitch". They are known to be self-centered, which means that they put themselves before others (Sedita, 2014). In this series, Rosa's self-centeredness makes her mysterious.

However, instead of being portrayed to be sexually alluring for her mysterious side, Rosa appears to be terrifying for her coworkers. Season 3 episode 21 titled "Maximum Security" shows Rosa's portrayal as a terrifying woman. In this episode, Captain Holt appoints Rosa to go undercover as an

inmate in a maximum security prison in Texas filled with hardened criminals. He chooses Rosa because according to him, "she is terrifying" (02:35), which is agreed by the whole squad, and thus they assume that she is perfectly suitable to infiltrate a prison filled with hardened criminals. Thus, even though Rosa has mysterious qualities like the dark lady, she appears to be terrifying instead of sexually appealing.

### CONCLUSION

The representation of the Latina characters in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is indeed counter-stereotypical to the existing stereotypical Latina representation because their representation is constructed by their occupation as NYPD police detectives instead of by their ethnic Otherness. The existence of counter-stereotypical Latina representation in the American police procedural comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* brings a breath of fresh air to the representation of Latinas in the American mainstream media, even though the Latinas are still represented as supporting characters. It shows that there is a progressive development in the

representation of Latinas in the American mainstream media. However, since this type of representation is still considered an anomaly in the American mainstream media, the representation of Latinas in the American mainstream media still needs to be studied more.

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