

# Racial profiling in CSI: Miami

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Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvpredmetni)



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## Racial profiling in CSI: Miami

Završni rad

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Zadar, 2016.



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## Introduction

In the modern world people are heavily influenced by popular culture. Although many are not really aware of that, opinions are constantly based on the things that are presented and the way they are presented. In such an environment, where people are constantly exposed to elements of popular culture, it is hard to stay unbiased and perceive the world the right way.

Although, many factors contribute to shaping people's opinion, mass media is the main culprit. This is particularly true for television as it is most widely available and enjoyed by people in all social classes. Therefore, if people are constantly exposed to certain ideas or stereotypes through television, their perception and beliefs change.

This thesis focuses on the popular TV show CSI: Miami and the possible impact it might have on the audience. Due to the large number of viewers worldwide and the popularity the show gained throughout years of production and filming it is important to analyse it and explain how it might influence the society. Many authors discussed the show and found several areas which raise concern as the representation is often quite different than the real world.

Furthermore, the concept of representation, as one of the basic concepts of cultural and media studies is explained. Representation is one of the main reasons for stereotyping because every content from the media can be perceived as an image that can influence an individual. Every image is a representation of an event that had happened and often the representation does not correspond to actual facts. When representation depicts reality, people who are exposed to it may shape their opinion based on wrong images and enforce stereotypes which are then hard to change.

Racial profiling is also a term that is connected with the issue of stereotyping. It is a method used by police officers and other law enforcement agencies when dealing with the members of the public. Individuals are treated based on their racial origin and stereotypes

usually connected with that race. Many stereotypes can be traced back to popular culture and become a reason for racial profiling.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse characters of the TV show CSI: Miami, taking into consideration their racial origin and racial representation, and to provide an insight how representation of race in this show deals with the question of racial profiling. The thesis mostly focuses on characters of Latino and African American origin, although other races are also mentioned. The theoretical approach used for analysis is the work of Stuart Hall. The majority of sources used are works by authors who thoroughly analysed several aspects of the show and then compared their findings with relevant data and analysed the potential influence on society.

## 1. The importance of representation

In the modern world, the media have a prominent role in shaping societies and their beliefs. However, this fact is not recognized enough by the media itself, or by the societies.

Stuart Hall developed an approach known as “cultural studies”. One of the main ideas this approach revolves around is the notion of representation. The representation is a complex process and often the created images will work in a different way than it was intended.

The way how things are represented is always connected with power. Those individuals who hold the power in a society will decide what will be represented and in which way. Therefore, it is not enough to simply accept the media images and consider them completely true. It is necessary to question them and point out their relation to power.

However, there is no such thing as a true representation. There is no fixed meaning because every individual perceives reality in a different way. Vital to representation is culture, which Hall defines as a way in which we make sense of or give meaning to things of one sort or another. It is basically a set of shared meanings. (Hall) Therefore, it is possible to conclude that people who belong to different cultures will give different meaning to things, just as those people who belong to the same culture will perceive things in a similar way.

When it comes to media images, it is important to point out that not only the things that are represented carry meaning. Sometimes, even the things that are left out can carry a message of its own. Every image consists both of the aspects that are represented and those that are missing.

Every act of representation has a potential to distort the perception of reality of an individual and influence that individual in a positive or a negative way. No representation can ever be completely accurate. However, it is important to be as close to reality as possible in order to allow people to shape their opinion on actual facts, rather than false and inaccurate representation.



### 1.1. Stereotypes

Instances of false representation can often lead to creating various stereotypes. The degree in which stereotypes are based on reality can vary. There are many kinds of stereotypes: race, gender, class, education, age, and many others. In stereotypes, a certain group is always associated with a certain characteristic.

The problem here is that individuals that belong to any stereotypical group are automatically associated with all the characteristics of that group. These individuals are not perceived for other qualities they possess, they are only seen in a stereotypical way. Hall argues that the basic problem of stereotyping is that it limits the range of possible meanings and therefore, limits what is expected from individuals. This is the biggest problem for individuals that are faced with stereotyping because they are often discriminated on the basis of stereotyping, although they might have completely different characteristics than what the society expects from them.

It is important to try to open up stereotypes because they are very bad, both for the individuals, and the society. Stereotypes limit knowledge and new experiences not only for the victims of stereotyping, but also to those who have stereotypes. It would be ideal to create a society without stereotypes, where individuals are judged only on their personal achievements.

### 1.2. Racial profiling

In recent years racial profiling is a term that has entered the American society and has been debated ever since. Although there are still those who disagree that racial profiling is a serious problem, many researchers devoted their work to better understanding the reasons behind racial profiling and the consequences it has.

Racial profiling first started as a method that police and other law enforcement agencies used when dealing with suspected criminals. It is used when trying to catch someone that has

committed a crime or when a person is suspected to be planning a crime. The idea behind racial profiling is that individuals are assessed based on their racial origin, and on stereotypes that certain races and certain groups of people are more likely to commit crimes than others.

The main reason why police officers often use racial profiling as a method when working is because it has proven to be effective. In America, there is a big disproportion between the number of crimes committed by white individuals compared to those of African American origin. Kops says that between the years 1992 and 1996, blacks were about 12 percent of the population. During that time, 58 percent of all carjackers, who steal automobiles by threatening the driver, were African American. (10) This disproportion is one of the main reasons why racial profiling has been developed as a method and has been so effective.

Because the question of race is a very sensitive topic in all societies, it is understandable that there is much controversy around racial profiling. This is especially true for the American society because of the great number of different races that share the same space and live together. Furthermore, due to historical reasons where certain races had more rights than others it is understandable that racial tensions are still high to this day.

Racial profiling, as a term, has entered all spheres of the American society and many individuals became accused of profiling others on the basis of their race, even in situations that proved not to be instances of racial profiling. This sensitive topic has even resulted in widespread protests ending with riots and sometimes even human casualties.

## 2. About the show

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation is a popular TV show where a group of forensic investigators works on solving complicated crimes, using modern forensic methods and computer technology. The show has an interesting and a modern approach with episodes with little or no connection between each other in the storyline. This allows viewers to tune in occasionally and not lose interest in watching if they miss an episode.

The show proved to be a success and soon after the original show was aired, new versions of the show appeared, with CSI: Miami and CSI: New York creating fans all over the world. Michael Allen contributes the success of the show to writers Anthony E. Zuiker and Ann Donahue who managed to keep the plot interesting and fresh and the narrative quality high. (6) The entire production team was under the guidance of Jerry Bruckheimer, the executive producer. Bruckheimer has proven his name in many other popular TV shows prior to CSI and worked hard to keep the show on top of the charts season after season. The actors were also not new in the industry, as many of them had important roles prior to CSI.

Due to the popularity of all three shows, it is necessary to understand the impact on the viewers. CSI franchise became a part of popular culture and as such influenced many people in America. Considering the global success of CSI: Miami, which was the most watched TV show in the world for several years, an even greater number of people were influenced worldwide. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the content of the show and analyse the messages that are passed on to viewers. Any content with such a wide audience has a potential to influence people and shape their opinions, often, on images that are not an actual representation of reality.

### 3. Representation on the show

When analysing the show from the beginning to the very end, and taking into consideration how races are represented, it is possible to conclude that representation is not always an accurate reflection of reality. It is also possible to notice two trends that are present in all seasons of the show. Firstly, there are not enough actors of different racial origins, as the majority of them are white. Secondly, in those rare instances where characters of different race do appear on screen, they are usually presented in a very stereotypical way. This is something that has led to many criticisms aimed towards the show because many groups considered to be inadequately represented.

The American culture is highly influenced by immigration. It is a country that was created by immigrants and they all left a mark in creating a society that it is today. It is also a society with a great number of individuals of different racial origins so it is clear that when choosing the cast of the show this matter was not taken into consideration. Therefore, it is possible to say that the images seen on the show are not a very good representation of the actual state of the matter.

Klein argues that the situation has improved, once the CSI: Miami first aired, in comparison to the original show, because there were more characters of Latino origin and Latino topics were far more common, however, still not as much as it was expected in Miami. (395) Miami is a city where people of different races, ethnicities, national origins, immigration statuses, and linguistic competences all live together. Furthermore, Florida, being very close to Mexico and other less developed countries is known to be very interesting for immigrants who come there in search of the American dream. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect that the racial origin of the characters on the show will correspond to the actual number of different racial groups in the society. However, once again, the producers of the show have chosen to represent the actual truth in a different way.

The problem here is that due to the popularity of the show and the number of viewers worldwide a false representation of Latinos might change the perception of those who do not come in contact with them every day. Additionally, the Latino communities themselves may disapprove of this and develop negative feeling towards the majority of white people. This can also be said for any other racial group that was stereotyped. Klein says that although a detailed analysis of a TV show might seem trivial, it is necessary to question all aspects of culture in order to see if there are any parts that give place to any type of discrimination. (396) When individuals are constantly exposed to a certain kind of images, they subconsciously start to make decisions based on the content that they are exposed to.

### 3.1. Representation of Latinos

The representation of Latinos on the show lacks in many areas. Unlike in other popular TV shows in history where the main issues with representation would be with African American characters, Latino representation here is the most questionable. Due to the setting of the show in Miami, there should be plenty of characters of Latino origin. They should also be equally distributed, some playing major roles, and some minor ones. However, both of these things are not present.

According to Klein the number of episodes related in any way to those of Latino race is steadily declining as the show progresses through seasons. (402) Moreover, while in the first season, five of the fourteen Latino-themed episodes primarily or exclusively focused on those themes, 20% of the total 25 episodes, by the fifth season, it was just four of nine Latino-themed episodes, reflecting a reduction in both number and percentage of episodes with either major or minor Latino themes. (Klein 400) This reduction in the number of Latino characters and episodes revolving around them clearly shows that for some reason Latino characters are not represented enough and as the show went on, they were substituted by characters of different racial origins, usually white.

Another area with poor representation of Latino characters is connected with stereotyping. As it was previously mentioned, Latino characters do not appear enough on screen. However, when analysing characters, it is possible to recognize a certain pattern. All Latino characters are based on, or often behave, in a very stereotypical way. According to a research by Latino Decisions, there is a stereotype in the American society that Latinos are less educated and more prone to criminal activities than others. (3) This is also something that is visible on the show as Latinos rarely play major roles, or if they do, they are usually the criminals, rather than members of the police, or the forensic team.

A great example of such a character would be Antonio Riaz. Riaz is one of the leading Latino characters on the show, the boss of the Latino criminal gang Mala Noche. He is portrayed as a cruel and evil person, with no education or source of income rather than criminal activity. He is also connected to drug smuggling and a personal enemy of the leading character of Horatio Caine. His character is based on a stereotype that many people in America have about people of this race who supposedly all behave in a way that Riaz does. If the actor portraying Riaz was played by an actor of any other origin, he would no longer fit the stereotype and his character would not make sense because different races are connected with different stereotypes.

Klein describes a typical Latino character as a stereotypical male Latino who is usually dirty with an unshaven face and missing teeth, a slightly longer oily hair, or no hair at all. A couple of big scars on the face or hands are usually there to complete the image. He is cruel and dishonest, usually involved in risky business and crime. He is very easily irritated and very emotional. He is also unable to control his temper and often resorts to violence. There is no need saying that he is poorly educated, his linguistic competence is very low. (Klein 403) The character described by Klein is often present on the show, usually a criminal that the main characters are fighting with. The previously mentioned Antonio Riaz would fit this description the best. However, there is also another way in which Latinos are represented, usually those with more money. Their appearance is different as they pay more attention to their looks. They have expensive clothes and luxury cars and boats. However, under the surface, they also have all the negative characteristics that Latinos are usually represented with.

### 3.2. Representation of African Americans

The representation of African Americans is also lacking in many areas when it comes to both the number of characters of this origin, or the way in which the characters are

developed in the show. As with Latino characters, many African American characters are based on stereotypes.

According to Byers and Johnson, in the American society, the majority of criminal acts are committed by people of African American origin. (150) Therefore, a certain picture of a prototypical criminal is present. This criminal is usually a young black male. He lives below the poverty line in city centres and has very little formal education. This means that such an individual is perceived to be involved in most criminal activities.

However, in CSI: Miami, black people in general are rather absent. There is simply not enough black people appearing on the show as it should be reasonable to adequately represent the reality. Due to the fact that the show revolves around crime, it would be reasonable to expect that such prototypical black characters are very common. However, Byers and Johnson state that the majority of characters committing crimes are white and belong to the middle class, rather than lower. (150)

Although rarely, when black characters do appear on screen, their representation is very similar to Latinos. Their roles are always marginalized and associated with negative images. Blacks are represented as criminals, less educated and more often committing crimes rather than being victims. The only major role played by an actor of African American origin is the character of Alexx Woods, portrayed by actress Khandi Alexander. However, her character was excluded from the main cast after only a few seasons, leaving the entire show without any black characters appearing on screen for several episodes.

Towards the final seasons of the show, the character of Walter Simmons, portrayed by actor Omar Benson Miller, was introduced. The character first started appearing irregularly and was portrayed having a minor role in the show. However, after a few episodes, Simmons was promoted to be one of the leading investigators. However, the black character, although a part of the essential team of investigators, was marginalized and was given less importance in

comparison to white characters of the same rank. Furthermore, his behaviour was heavily based on stereotypes about black people.

Simmons is often tasked to work on cases that require more manual labour than other members of the team with the same rank. In situations where an investigation requires of the team to get dirty, Simmons is always the one that will end up doing the dirty work, despite him trying to avoid it. Although he has an equal rank as the rest of his colleagues, he never issues orders to others, while in the same time, his colleagues often tell him what to do. Simmons never leads investigations, but rather helps other members of the team. Although not much about his personal life is known, it is mentioned several times that he enjoys playing basketball, a sport very stereotypical for African Americans.

### 3.3. Horatio Caine and Eric Delko

Both Horatio Caine and Eric Delko are leading characters on the show, with Caine playing a more important role than Delko. It is interesting to compare the two because both roles were based on stereotypes present in the industry that is often considered to be true in the society. Horatio Caine is a fictional character portrayed by David Caruso, a white actor, while Adam Rodriguez plays the role of Eric Delko. Delko is a person of Latin American origin and has the most prominent Latino role on the show as being one of the best investigators. However, many aspects of this character are based only on his racial origin.

Horatio Caine is an investigator in Miami Dade Police Department. When analysing the character, it is possible to come to a conclusion that many aspects are very stereotypical. Caine is a professional, who cares deeply about his work. He has a superior sense of justice and enforces the letter of the law in all situations. He has authority and good relations with other people. He is also perceived as a saviour to those in need or to those who need protection. Caine is basically a perfect white male, someone that every individual aspires to be, with very little negative connotations. According to Dirks and Mueller, such an image has long been



present in the American society, an image of superiority of the white race. (116) Caine is also perceived as a person who is there to guide others and help them when they fail. This aspect of the character is also based on a stereotype that white people are better than others and should lead the society and instruct others how to behave and what is right.

Eric Delko, on the other hand is a complete opposite of Caine. Delko's character is also heavily influenced by both positive and negative stereotypes that are present in the show or in everyday life. Delko is not a typical Latino character because he is not represented in that way. However, the character often struggles with his troubling background, and many Latino stereotypes can easily be detected. He is often portrayed as lazy and unprofessional, sometimes breaking the law. It is interesting that in all instances of stereotyping regarding Delko the character of Horatio Caine is always there to provide him with guidance. This is interesting because it intensifies the stereotype that Byers and Johnson claim has been present in America, that Latinos and other races always need guidance from white people in order to be productive and seen as positive. (187) Delko is a mixture of a Latino character and a white character, having many positive characteristics, however, his Latino side constantly has a perceived negative influence on his life.

Furthermore, Klein sees Delko as a highly sexualized character and a Latino lover. (412) This is also a part of the character that is based on a stereotype. There is a stereotype that Latinos are very desirable to women. Although this stereotype does not have any negative connotations, it is still a stereotype. Delko changes many partners throughout the seasons and his good looks are discussed several time on the show. He is very popular with women and often engages in short relationships. He has far more success in his love life than other characters of different races in same situations.

#### 4. Representation in numbers

The best way to explain how inaccurate racial representation is on the show throughout seasons is to analyse the racial composition of people who live in Miami and then compare the numbers to the racial composition of actors who appear on screen.

According to the data provided by Pineda-Volk and Philbin who rely on U.S. Census Bureau that collected the data on the actual ethnic composition in Miami between the years 2005 and 2007 there is: 17.9 percent of people of white racial origin, 19.8 percent of African American, 62.0 percent of Latino, and 1.5 of Asian. (8) When analysing these numbers, it is interesting to recognize the big disproportion in the number of Latinos in comparison to other races. People of Latino origin are the majority in this part of America and their culture is predominant.

Therefore, in order to create a proper representation of how a crime lab in Miami would look like, or the kind of people law enforcement would deal with, the producers had to rely mostly on characters of Latino race, including some minorities. These minorities would also include white people as they are a minority in this region, rather than creating a show where white actors are the majority and Latinos appear seldom.

The best proof for the assumption that the racial composition of actors on the show is much different than the actual truth is seen when analysing racial origins of main characters. Main characters would be those characters who appear on the show regularly, or basically, those whose name is seen in the introduction of the show. According to Pineda-Volk and Philbin, there are 6 white characters in relation to 1 African American, 3 Latinos and 0 Asians. (7)

The numbers are only a bit different when analysing not only the main characters, but also regular ones appearing in more than 10 episodes. Compared to 8 white characters, there is 1 African American, 4 Latinos and again 0 Asians. (Pineda-Volk and Philbin 7)

It is interesting to recognize here that from the first season of CSI: Miami, up until the last episode, there are no appearances of any characters of Asian origin who played a rather important role. Although the Asian minority in Miami is not large, it would be reasonable to expect that at least one Asian character would be included. However, this is not the case.

In total, the show features 61 percent of white characters, 9 percent African American, 31 percent Latino, and 0 percent of Asian characters. (Pineda-Volk and Philbin 7) These numbers clearly show that racial representation is not one of the things that the producers paid much attention to. There is an increase in the number of characters of different races when comparing CSI: Miami to other shows of the same franchise which is a clear example that the producers responded to criticisms regarding racial representation. However, they have still not managed to accurately represent the reality. Instead of creating characters which would realistically represent the setting in which the show takes place in, they relied mostly on white characters and failed to provide an actual representation of reality.

##### 5. Racism on the show

Racism has been a problem that had been present in the American society from the very beginning of colonization of the continent. Byers and Johnson argue that racial discrimination and violence was mostly created by white people and aimed towards other minority groups, mostly blacks, and Latinos in recent years. (190) However, although this is a serious problem in everyday life, it is not present in CSI: Miami. Racism has not once been a reason for committing a crime on the show.

This is once again a clear example of false representation as the situation is a complete opposite of American race relations where race is often a key factor in crime. Instead, the show creates an image that most crimes are committed out of jealousy, due to psychological problems or out of negligence. Racial crimes are for some reason not included and do not exist in CSI: Miami world. Furthermore, there is never prejudice or racial profiling when it comes to main

characters as they are guided strictly by their sense of justice and the feeling of differentiating between wrong and right.

Furthermore, racism as a concept is never mentioned and none of the characters acknowledge its existence. None of the characters seem to be aware of the stereotypes present in the society and never rely on them in their work.

These factors all contribute to creating a very strange and unusual situation. Although the show does not appear to be racist or based on stereotypes at first glance the actual situation is completely different. When making a more thorough analysis of the show and looking under the surface it is possible to recognize many patterns which prove that the entire idea behind the show is somewhat racist and based completely on stereotypes. Both the racial origin of characters and their representation are definitely something that should be worked on in order to create content that is not racist both on the surface level and when making a more detailed analysis.

## 6. White superiority

When taking into consideration how the representation on the show has been achieved it is possible to conclude that throughout the show, the producers have created a sense of white superiority. This is obvious both in the high number of white characters and in the roles they portray.

Byers and Johnson say that prior to CSI: Miami creating a sense of white superiority is not something which was rarely seen in popular TV shows (124) However, in CSI: Miami, although the sense of white superiority is present, it is clearly recognized only when carrying out a more thorough analysis.

Prior to this, this thesis provides examples of how different races are represented, mostly Latinos and African Americans. However, the representation of white characters is also

important. The white characters are a complete opposite of the minority characters. They play all the major roles and usually belong to middle class. They are well educated and well behaved. They are seen as more capable than others and often play paternal roles. The best example to illustrate this would be the character of Horatio Caine. He is seen as a heroic man, something that other members of his team aspire to be. Byers and Johnson refer to this as “the white man’s burden”<sup>1</sup>. (187) This concept is something that has been present in the American society for years. White people are perceived as leaders who are more capable than others and therefore have the right to offer advice and are supposed to be guiding others. Furthermore, white people also have the duty to guide them because other races are perceived as less capable. This is exactly the case with Horatio Caine because he feels a duty to help others, while in the same time thinks he knows what is best for the society.

## 7. Effects of the show

### 7.1. Effects on society

All media research to this day has concluded that the images from the media can easily influence an individual. Rizun says that the degree of the influence varies and is different from one individual to another. However, the bigger the exposure to a certain kind of content, the bigger the influence it might have. (22) Furthermore, an opinion is shaped by the media images much more when an individual has no personal experience, and the media is the only criterion to shape the opinion on that matter. In these situation no other external factors influence the opinion of an individual on a certain topic.

When taking into consideration the popularity that CSI: Miami, and other shows of the same franchise have reached, both in America and the world, it is possible to conclude that the degree of potential influence is very high. Another reason, for this is the lack of direct

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<sup>1</sup> “The white man’s burden” – a previously established concept of supposed or presumed responsibility of white people to govern and impart their culture to non-white people, omnipresent in American history

experience that the general public has with crime and violence, or in many cases with people of different racial origins or social statuses. Furthermore, the public shapes their opinions relying mostly on the images that they get from the media, both in fictional form, or in actual facts because they are perceived as truth. Rarely is the content from the media analysed and questioned.

As a result of the images portrayed in CSI: Miami it is very possible that the society or the individual viewers will change their opinion, or at least the opinion will be influenced to some degree, about people of different races. To be more specific, the show carries many images of white superiority and is often very negative towards Latinos, portraying them as criminals or as very insensitive to society and unable to respond to the demands that the American society wishes to meet. Furthermore, the show does not accurately represent other races, which reduces their influence and importance

## 7.2. Effects on justice and criminal system

In recent years, many studies have been aimed towards explaining how and if the media can influence the criminal system. Kopacki introduces the term “CSI Effect”. It is a term that has been used when talking about a socially constructed phenomenon by which exposure to crime media distorts the viewers’ expectation of justice. (1)

In the American legal system, it is the jury that decides if an individual is guilty or not based on the evidence they are presented. Kopacki claims that it has been proven that those individuals who are more exposed to shows such as CSI, in which crime and justice is the main focus, are less likely to convict a person guilty if they are not presented with actual evidence. (24) This means that they rely heavily on science to provide the answers while eyewitness testimony is no longer of such importance. This is because of images that the show created, where science is usually the only exact answer, and by being exposed to such content the perception of the people is distorted.

Although the “CSI Effect” is mostly concerned with the effects the media might have on the criminal system, it is yet another example of the importance of the images that are presented. When an individual uses the images from the media he is presented with in his decision making process when it comes to jury duty, it is also very likely that this individual will be saturated with false racial representations in everyday life and will enforce stereotypes that were created because of false representation of races in the media.

The “CSI Effect” is yet another example of the importance of the media and the high influence the media have on society. This is why it is important to analyse every aspect of media images and do more to provide the people with a representation that is as accurate as possible.

#### 8. The connection between CSI: Miami and racial profiling

It is possible to say that there is a strong connection between the media and the concept of racial profiling. The influence between the two is multidirectional as one is fuelled by the other. It is also hard to determine whether certain stereotypes have been created by the media and then influenced the society or vice versa, when a stereotype that was already present has been picked up by the media and intensified.

However, it is possible to conclude that racial profiling as a police method can easily be connected with certain images that constantly appear in the media, which have then influenced the society in many ways. This thesis provides multiple examples where the representation on the popular show CSI: Miami is full of very stereotypical images, and where these images are not an actual representation of reality. Furthermore, it has been mentioned that the media images can heavily influence and shape the opinion of an individual. Therefore, representation on the show and stereotypes it promotes can influence police officers in their day to day work, and subsequently the lives of those that deal with the police and criminal system.

Racial profiling can be perceived as a clear example how the media can have an effect on the “real world”. That is why it is important to constantly question the images that are presented and work hard to free certain groups of stereotypes that can present problems in everyday life.



## Conclusion

In recent years, more and more people are exposed to different media content in every aspect of their lives. This content can easily shape their opinion and influence them whether they are aware of that process or not. As the exposure to a certain kind of content gets bigger and bigger, the influence it has also becomes stronger. Maybe the most important media tool in the last couple of decades is television. It is widely available and it is watched, to a certain degree, by members of all groups, regardless of age, sex, race, social status, or any other factors.

With the rise of television, it is important to analyse the content that is featured because studies have shown that the media images can be the key factor in shaping an individual's opinion on certain topics, and also in creating and promoting various stereotypes. Television is also very often the only source of information for people and they do not have enough personal experience to be able to create and change opinions. Furthermore, it is necessary to question the possible effects the media images might have on a society in order to differentiate between positive and negative ones, and to root out negative and wrong influence.

The reason why media images might present a problem is connected with the concept of representation. Representation is an act of depicting something from everyday life and then transferring it to television or some other form of media. In this process it is very hard to represent the reality completely and there is often a distorted image in the end. The represented image is different for every individual and it is often very hard to predict how it might influence someone. Many times there is even no desire to represent the truth as accurate as possible. This is when stereotypes are born.

Stereotypes are often present in the media and also many times the media create stereotypes or enforce those that were already present to some degree. Once a stereotype is present, whether a positive or a negative one, it is very hard to change it and influence the people in order to try and avoid it.

When it comes to stereotyping, there is usually a mention of racial profiling. This is a method used by police officers or other law enforcement agencies in their work. Racial profiling remains a very controversial topic because the question of race or racial discrimination is a very sensitive question, especially in the American society.

As far as the CSI franchise is concerned, there are many proofs which confirm the assumption that the racial representation on the show is not an accurate portrayal of reality. In CSI: Miami, although progress has been made, in comparison to other shows of the same franchise, this is also very true. The show features mostly white characters and other races are not so common. Furthermore, the small overall number of Latinos and their representation is also questionable. In those instances, when Latino characters are featured, they are usually based on stereotypes that exist in the American society. The roles they have always present Latinos in a very negative way.

The problem with representation is not present only when it comes to Latino characters. When comparing the actual numbers of races living in Miami, where the show takes place, it is evident that other races were also falsely represented. There is a very small number of characters of African American origin and more amazingly, there is not a single Asian character with a more prominent role in all seasons of the show. Throughout the show there is also a sense of white superiority, as the number of white people is much larger than it should be. They are also presented as being far superior and more important than other characters of different racial backgrounds.

Due to the worldwide popularity of CSI: Miami and other shows of the same franchise it is necessary to analyse the images that are being created. These images then influence the society and change the way in which individuals think and behave. The media images often create stereotypes and influence the people to enforce the stereotypes although all their opinions are based only on the content that they are served with. The media images have also

been proven to influence politics and the criminal system. Therefore, it is important to realise the impact that representations might have on people and how it changes their life in a negative way.

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## Rasno profiliranje u seriji CSI: Miami

### Sažetak:

Završni rad se bazira na analizi likova popularne TV serije CSI: Miami, uzimajući u obzir njihovu rasu i rasnu reprezentaciju. Također, analiziraju se stereotipi na kojima su likovi građeni te njihov utjecaj na stavove pojedinca ili određenih društvenih grupa. Rad se uglavnom fokusira na likove latinoameričkog i afroameričkog podrijetla, ali se dotiče i pitanja reprezentacije ostalih rasa. Cilj rada je objasniti reprezentaciju rase u seriji i ukazati na velik broj stereotipa kod većine likova.

Ključne riječi: rasa, profiliranje, CSI: Miami, stereotip.

## Racial profiling in CSI: Miami

### Abstract:

The final thesis is based on the analysis of characters of the popular TV show CSI: Miami, taking into consideration their race and racial representation. The analysis includes the stereotypes that the characters are based on and their potential influence on an individual or certain groups within a society. The thesis mostly focuses on characters of Latino and African American origin, but also considers characters of different racial origins. The aim of the thesis is to explain how representation works in the show and to point out a great number of stereotypes in the majority of characters.

Key words: race, profiling, CSI: Miami, stereotype.