

Change the Narrative, Change the World

How Immigrant Representation on Television is Moving Audiences to Action

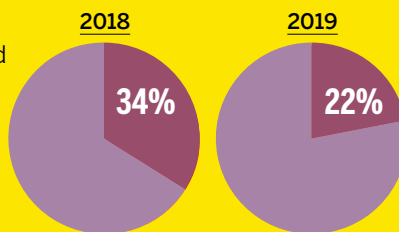
The second study from Define American and USC's Norman Lear Center finds that immigration storylines on shows like *Orange Is The New Black*, *Superstore* and *Madam Secretary* foster more inclusive attitudes and can move viewers to action.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

We analyzed 97 episodes of 59 scripted TV series featuring immigrant characters or immigration-related storylines that aired between August 2018 and July 2019. What we found reflects a significant shift in the industry, but with much more work to be done around authentic storylines and greater representation of multidimensional immigrant characters. For example...

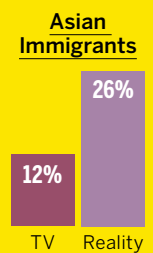
Fewer immigrants were associated with a crime on TV than in 2019 ↓ – but far more than in reality.

In 2018, 34% of immigrants were in some way associated with a crime; in 2019, this dropped to 22%. In reality, immigrants commit less crime than native-born Americans.



Asian and Black immigrants and other marginalized communities continue to be underrepresented on TV.

For the second straight year, specific at-risk immigrant communities were largely invisible, including those with disabilities, transgender immigrants, and undocumented Black immigrants. Asian/Pacific Islander (API) representation on TV declined from 2018, though they comprise more than a quarter of immigrants in the U.S.



CHANGING THE WORLD

We also surveyed viewers of three TV shows that featured prominent immigration storylines in their 2018-2019 seasons to measure their impact.

TV shows with nuanced immigrant characters and immigration storylines can shift attitudes and inspire people to real-life action.



Watching *Superstore* (NBC) showed increased action around:

- talking to a friend (48%) vs. those that didn't see it (32%)
- writing a social media post (20% vs. 11%)
- attending a community event (7% vs. 2%)



Watching *Orange Is the New Black* (Netflix) showed increased action around:

- commenting on social media (17% vs. 7%)
- seeking more information (41% vs. 32%)



Watching *Madam Secretary* (CBS) showed increased action around:

- attending a rally (15% vs. 3%)
- signing a petition (26% vs. 15%)
- going to a community event (12% vs. 2%)

CHANGING HOLLYWOOD

By harnessing the power of entertainment, we can engage audience members, empower them to take action on immigration, and inspire a cultural redefinition of what it means to be American.

Involve immigrants in the process.

Hire more immigrant writers and consult with immigrant communities.

Tell untold stories.

Seek out compelling stories about under-represented immigrant communities: those who are LGBTQ+, older, disabled, and Black & undocumented.

Transcend stereotypes.

Broaden immigration issues beyond the U.S.-Mexico border by including stories about the challenges faced by authorized immigrants and immigration backstories for regular or recurring immigrant characters.