Latino Abstract:

Research demonstrates that people of color are presented in highly stereotypic ways within traditional news outlets. For example, African Americans have historically been portrayed as criminals and Latinos as undocumented immigrants—thus creating an inhospitable media environment for minority audiences. However, the representation of these groups in social identity focused news (SIFN) outlets has yet to be studied and provide an alternative media source which could serve as a locus of empowerment for these audiences. To explore this potentiality, the current project investigates the portrayals of Latinos in SIFN outlets. Using an equal probability sampling procedure, a composite month was created drawing from one year of archived news content from four Latino online media outlets (e.g., Remezlca, Latina.com, Latino Voices, and El Día News), with a final sample of N=600. Subsequently, using a team of undergraduate coders, inter-coder reliability was established using 10% of the overall sample. Preliminary results indicate that in terms of both quantity and quality, the portrayals of Latinos in SIFN present a more diverse set characteristics than those found in traditional media outlets. Drawing on extant media effects theories such as the cultivation hypothesis, we argue that exposure to this content has the potential to bolster the collective self-esteem of Latino audiences.