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What Role Can Propinquity Play in the Development of New National Allegiances? Immigrant Latinos Establishing Ties to the United States through Out-Group Contact

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ABSTRACT

Contact theory has primarily been applied to the study of interactions between Blacks and Whites, with particular emphasis on changes in the attitudes of Whites towards Blacks. How individual contact with an out-group can influence not just attitudes, but also actual behavior, has not been thoroughly explored. Through an analysis of the 2006 Latino National Survey, using a measure that contrasts the intensity of individual social interaction with various ethnic and racial groups, the study shows that a high intensity of friendly social contact with African-Americans increases the likelihood Latino immigrants will establish a closer link to the social and political structures of the United States. Latino immigrants are potentially experiencing movement towards deprovincialization through high levels of friendly social interaction with African-Americans. The development of friendly personal interactions with an out-group stigmatized in the mother country can help Latino immigrants develop an optimistic view of life in the host country.

KEYWORDS

Contact Theory; Deprovincialization; Out-Group Contact; Inter-Group Relations; Propinquity; Latino Immigrants; Latino Politics

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