



Juan in a Hundred: The Representation of Latinos on Network News

Otto Santa Ana

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Latinos constitute the fastest-growing and largest ethnic minority in the United States, yet less than one percent of network news coverage deals with Latinos as the focus of a story. Out of that one percent, even fewer stories are positive in either content or tone. Author of the acclaimed *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, Otto Santa Ana has completed a comprehensive analysis of this situation, blending quantitative research with semiotic readings and ultimately applying cognitive science and humanist theory to explain the repercussions of this marginal, negative coverage.

Santa Ana's choice of network evening news as the foundation for *Juan in a Hundred* is significant because that medium is currently the single most authoritative and influential source of opinion-generating content. In his 2004 research, Santa Ana calculated that among approximately 12,000 stories airing across four networks (ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC), only 118 dealt with Latinos, a ratio that has remained stagnant over the past fifteen years. Examining the content of the stories, from briefs to features, reveals that Latino-tagged events are apparently only broadcast when national politics or human calamity are involved, and even then, the Latino issue is often tangential to a news story as a whole. On global events involving Latin America, U.S. networks often remain silent while BBC correspondents prepare fully developed, humanizing coverage. The book concludes by demonstrating how this obscurity and misinformation perpetuate maligned perceptions about Latinos. Santa Ana's inspiring calls for reform are poised to change the face of network news in America.

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