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REDUCING PREJUDICE THROUGH LATINO/A STANDUP COMEDY: A PARASOCIAL INTERGROUP CONTACT EXPERIMENT

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REDUCING PREJUDICE THROUGH LATINO/A STANDUP COMEDY: A PARASOCIAL INTERGROUP CONTACT EXPERIMENT

A THESIS APROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Abstract

This study ($N = 323$) investigated the positive potential for parasocial intergroup contact with Latino/a standup comedians. Building on Schiappa et al.'s (2005) Parasocial contact hypothesis (PCH) and other work, this study aimed to investigate the effects of standup comedy as a unique avenue to engage with performers from another group and how that can result in a decrease in prejudice. This study advances current research by looking at Latino/a comics who have a unique history and tradition (Gracia Student, 2014). This study also examined several different measures that may play a role in prejudice reduction. These include empathy, intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat, and inclusion of other in self (IOS). The results did not reveal significant evidence that parasocial intergroup contact led to a reduction in prejudice. I discussed some of the possible causes and underlying questions surrounding mediated intergroup contact.

Keywords: Parasocial, intergroup, comedy, prejudice

Reducing Prejudice through Latino/a Standup Comedy: A Parasocial Intergroup Contact Experiment

Negative representations of Latino/a people have had devastating social consequences. For example, in July 2023, a White gunman killed 23 people in a racist attack against Latino/a people in a Walmart in Texas (Lee & Weber, 2023). Racism and prejudice towards Latino/a people continue to plague society and ought to be further investigated. Negative media portrayals of minority groups and negative exposure in media have been demonstrated to produce prejudice (De Nolf et al., 2024; Saleem et al., 2016). Negative media portrayals of Latino/a people are prevalent in the media as Latino men are portrayed as violent gangsters and drug dealers while Latina women are portrayed as prostitutes (Haynes, 2018). Perez (2018) notes how negative media driven stereotypes of Latinos fuel xenophobic political rhetoric which has a history of producing racialized violence.

This paper aimed to advance our understanding of how media can be used to combat prejudice against Latino people by building upon previous research concerning mediated intergroup contact. Research aimed at addressing how different racial groups interact with one another to promote positive intergroup attitudes has been an integral issue in American society for the last 70 years (Allport, 1954). Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis marked the beginning of a line of research that has shown promise in reducing intergroup prejudice by focusing on what aspects of contact create positive intergroup interactions. Fifty years later, Schiappa et al., (2005) extended Allport's (1954) work by showing that the effects of positive intergroup contact can occur in mediated settings. Schiappa et al.'s parasocial contact hypothesis (PCH) specifically investigated the relationships people form with performers through media, building on Horton and Wohl's (1956) parasocial interactions. Parasocial relationships with performers from

different groups have been demonstrated to have the potential to reduce prejudice towards the other group, yet much is still unknown concerning the mechanisms of that process.

The goal of this study was to investigate the process of mediated intergroup context by examining potential mediating variables, a unique setting in Latino/a standup comedy, and investigating whether shorter duration exposure can produce positive mediated intergroup contact. Recent research on parasocial intergroup contact has investigated the mediating factors that affect the relationship between those relationships and a reduction in prejudice towards another group (Banas et al., 2020). While some key factors have been identified such as empathy and intergroup anxiety, there remain other components that need to be investigated further (Harwood, 2017). This study hoped to build on this foundation of research by exploring new potential mediators such as inclusion of other in self (IOS) while also investigating a novel setting in Latino/a standup comedy. This study looked at the potential positive mediated intergroup contact effects that come from viewing a portion of a standup comedy special from a Latino/a source. This study built upon previous research from Banas et al., (2024) that investigated the effects of exposure to a Muslim standup comedian. This study also examined other possible effects of positive parasocial contact including Aron et al.'s (1993) Inclusion of Other in Self (IOS) scale. This study also investigated whether shorter duration videos would be effective at reducing intergroup prejudice. Short form videos have become an increasingly popular format that warrants further investigation (Dodds, 2024). While longer duration has been thought to contribute to stronger parasocial relationships, research has shown that time may not be a significant factor (Banas et al., 2020). This opens the possibility that even short exposure may be enough to develop meaningful parasocial relationships.

Literature Review

Intergroup Contact

Allport's (1954) work set the foundation for intergroup contact studies that researchers continue to build on decades later. Harvard professor and renowned psychology scholar Gordon W. Allport published his seminal work *The Nature of Prejudice* in 1954 (Brittanica, 2022). The work came as Allport watched as America slowly began the process of desegregation following the Second World War, witnessing one of the greatest mass intergroup relational changes in recent history (Katz, 1991). In response to these societal changes, research was needed to understand how different racial groups can coexist together harmoniously. Allport identified four optimal conditions for intergroup contact that illustrate the kind of environment needed for positive interactions to occur. The first condition is equal status, that both groups must view themselves as having equal status in society and that one group is not privileged over the other. Second, Allport (1954) states that intergroup cooperation provides an optimal condition because it requires that the two groups work together in some way that creates collaboration. The third condition is the common goal that both groups are striving to achieve. Having a common purpose creates motivation to put aside differences so that those goals can be realized. Finally, Allport states that authority support is a necessary condition in that the controlling entities should allow and facilitate cooperation between groups for that cooperation to be successful. Although later research demonstrated that those conditions were not necessary for positive intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), Allport's (1954) original ideas still inform current contact research.

Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) added crucial contributions to intergroup contact literature by demonstrating that the key prejudice reducing mechanism of contact is reducing uncertainty. Their meta-analysis demonstrated that contact reduces prejudice in a variety of contexts and

towards many different outgroups. The results of the analysis confirmed that intergroup contact has the potential to reduce prejudice towards an entire group rather than only those involved in the contact experience, as well as showing that those effects could potentially carry over to other groups. Another important finding of the study was that Allport's (1954) original four conditions were not necessary for the prejudice reducing effects of contact. The researchers argued that the positive effects of contact could be explained in the context of Zajonc's (1968) mere exposure effect. The mere exposure effect states that repeated exposure to another person reduces uncertainty and that reduction in uncertainty leads to increased liking. This finding allowed contact research to expand far beyond the boundaries of the original four conditions for optimal intergroup contact.

A more recent meta-analysis done by Paolini et al. (2024) indicated that contact is not as generally successful as previously indicated pushing back against Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) findings, citing that there are other important factors that can affect the process such as the valence of the contact, intimacy level, and the ability to self-select. In their article, researchers demonstrated that when a proper sample of both positive and negative contact studies are included, the results indicated that mere exposure effect was not necessarily occurring. The study finds that there is an overall negativity bias in intergroup contact effects such that negatively valanced contact is more influential than positive contact experiences. They did however find that one avenue for reducing the effects of the negativity bias was the level of intimacy or previous familiarity with the outgroup during contact. The authors argue that individuals' previous experience with a group reduces the magnitude of contact effects because individuals' impressions of outgroups have already been shaped by that prior knowledge. The meta-analysis revealed that intimacy was able to weaken the effects of negative intergroup contact, specifically.

The researchers also found that self-selection, or the freedom to choose whether they want to engage in contact, led to a stronger negativity bias effect. Researchers argue that allowing self-selection creates the possibility for a strong negative spiral effect where one bad experience with an outgroup member could limit possible positive contact experiences in the future. Although these results challenge Pettigrew and Tropp's findings, the authors conclude that the original conclusion that contact reduces prejudice should hold up "as long as positive intergroup contact remains more prevalent than negative contact (Paolini et al., p .950, 2024)." It is also important to note that while this analysis did produce important findings that change our understanding of intergroup contact, they focused specifically on face-to-face interactions which may contain key differences from a mediated contact experience.

Mediated Intergroup Contact

Schiappa et al.'s *The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis* (PCH) (2005) proposed an analogue to Allport's (1954) original design by extending face-to-face interactions to parasocial relationships with characters in media that opened up an entirely new area of contact research. A parasocial relationship is a one-sided emotional bond where a person feels a strong connection to a performer like a celebrity, social media influencer, or fictional character despite having no real interaction with them. The researchers argue that exposure to figures in media elicits cognitive and affective reactions that constitute "parasocial feedback" (Schiappa et al., p. 95, 2005). The authors described that this back and forth between exposure and interaction is a type of contact. Building out this idea the authors argue that the same kind of contact effects that had been observed in person should also work in a mediated setting. To investigate this possibility, the researchers conducted three studies investigating mediated intergroup contact. Specifically, researchers examined the effects of parasocial relationships based on television shows with queer

content in *Six Feet Under* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* on homophobic prejudice among college students. In the second study, researchers examined the effects of exposure to the show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* because the program offered a richer stimulus that explicitly featured five gay men which allowed more opportunities for mediated intergroup contact. The third study also included an investigation of exposure to queer comedian Eddie Izzard compared to heteronormative comedians that also demonstrated a reduction in prejudice towards transvestites. The results showed that repeated exposure to queer characters in multiple contexts led to a reduction in prejudice. Since then, research analyzing the PCH has been an integral addition to understanding potential avenues to address intergroup prejudice, one of society's most harmful and prevalent social ills. Banas et al. (2020) performed comprehensive meta-analysis over 79 mediated intergroup contact studies that analyzed the effects on prejudice as well as several potential mediators. First, the results showed that positive intergroup contact reduces prejudice overall. They also found that empathy and intergroup anxiety serve as mediators of the relationship between prejudice and exposure to other groups through media. They also examined the influence of vicarious contact as well as the duration of the exposure although the findings did not reveal any significant effects on contact. Vicarious contact refers to watching a member of one's ingroup interact with a member from a different group that informs the viewer how the two groups can interact positively. Vicarious contact has the potential to increase the effectiveness of mediated intergroup contact at reducing intergroup prejudice because it reduces the uncertainty in understanding how to behave when interacting with another group (Banas et al., 2020; Cadenas et al., 2018). Researchers have empirically examined intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat, empathy, the duration of the mediated contact, biological sex, year of publication, racial composition of sample, and outgroups (Dovidio et al., 2017).

These findings emphasized the role that intergroup anxiety and empathy play in intergroup contact. Anxiety between groups limits the positive possibilities of intergroup contact by creating a negative contact experience that has been shown to lead to increased Intergroup prejudice (Banas et al., 2020; Lee & Chen, 2023). Empathy, by contrast, has a positive relationship with prejudice reducing effects of intergroup contact because empathy allows us to see the place and ourselves in the same category in our minds (Harwood, 2017). Guillermo et al. (2025) demonstrated that intergroup threat perceptions towards immigrants predicted support for punitive policy measures toward immigrants. Mediated contact allows groups that are otherwise separated by physical distance, language barriers, to be able to interact with each other where they otherwise could not.

Mediated intergroup contact has been applied empirically to a variety of groups and circumstances**.** There are studies comparing attitudes towards people with disabilities, (Marsden, 2019) migrants (Cadenas et al, 2018; Lee & Chen, 2023), Muslims (Khan 2022), and victims of sexual violence (Buscaglia, 2023). Banas et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis showed that regardless of the outgroup, intergroup contact has proven to be an effective method to reduce prejudice. Parasocial contact has also been examined in the context of stereotype reduction. Previous research has discussed the importance of counter-stereotypical exemplars that conflict with negative preconceptions of another group are particularly important in challenging prejudice (Garcia Student, 2014; Mustafaj, 2022; Mustafaj and Sonya, 2023). Exposure to counter-stereotypical exemplars can broaden an otherwise ignorant audience by expanding their understanding of another group and what members of that group can be.

The present study aimed to extend previous research that connects the mediating variables of empathy and intergroup anxiety onto prejudice reduction and also add the additional

Inclusion of Other in Self scale (IOS) (Aron et al., 1994) and intergroup threat which have been called for in the literature (Banas et al, 2020). Previous research has demonstrated that contact may not directly lead to prejudice reduction (Paolini et al., 2024) including in mediated settings (Lee & Chen, 2023), and so understanding the mediating factors that produce positive intergroup contact must be a priority. While other research has examined some of these concepts, this study fills a specific niche by examining these concepts in the context of Latino/a standup comedy. Prejudice against Latinos in the United States has a unique and important history that is worthy of further investigation.

Mediated Representations of Latino People

Negative media depictions have conclusively led to negative stereotypes concerning groups of people (De Wolf et al., 2024) and this has been demonstrated in the case of Latinos as well. Negative media portrayals of Latino immigrants have been demonstrated to produce greater intergroup anxiety as demonstrated by Atwell Seate and Mastro (2015). Their study demonstrated that heavy news consumption of negative stories about immigrants predicted intergroup anxiety. These parasocial portrayals of Latino/a people have been prevalent throughout American media. We are used to certain roles that Latino/a people are supposed to play in our media and how that can be subverted. We see crime-based television shows that routinely feature the Latino/a people being gang members involved in drug smuggling. Other harmful stereotypes lead to violent and maladaptive perceptions of Latino/a people. Many of these perceptions relate to media portrayals of Latino immigrants in the United States and how news and political institutions use those portrayals (Mastro, 2019). Immigrants are often viewed as a threat to practical resources as well as cultural identity according to intergroup threat scholars (Guillermo et al., 2025). This feeling of threat may have inspired racist attacks against

Latino/a people in the United States. Many of these plots are driven by racial conspiracy theories born from negative mediated contact (Lee & Weber, 2023).

There have been many harmful implications of these negative media-driven stereotypes that Latino/a people face. One example of that is in the context of education. Research has found the university experience of Latino/a people has been affected by the way the view themselves thanks to media driven stereotypes (Erba, 2018). Latino men are often depicted as violent gangsters and Latina women as promiscuous and aggressive. These negative stereotypes shape the views of American citizens and can lead to racialized violence as they have in the past (Perez, 2018).

Standup Comedy and Racial Prejudice

Standup comedy as a genre of entertainment provides a uniquely important avenue to address racial prejudice. Standup comedy has had a tradition of comedians from minority groups engage with larger audiences (Moulton, 2013). Many comedians engage in what is known as emancipatory humor that seeks to make salient otherwise underdiscussed issues such as racism (Rossing, 2016). This emancipatory humor allows comedians to challenge harmful racial stereotypes in a playful manner that allows for engagement even from audiences that otherwise may be uncomfortable discussing those issues. While standup comedy in American society has typically been controlled by members of the dominant status group, there has been a recent shift in that trend such that there is increasing opportunity for lower status groups to take the stage (Valon Levinston, 2013). Comedy has been shown to be an effective means to discuss issues that might otherwise be too difficult to discuss in everyday life (Vina, 2021). The humorous environment produced by standup comedy creates a safe place where it becomes possible to discuss issues like stigma and stereotypes in a way that reaches through to people in a positive

light. Standup comedy has been proven to be effective at this in multiple contexts throughout recent history (Price, 1998).

Standup comedy provides a particularly interesting examination of the PCH because of the relationship between the comedian and the audience. At its most fundamental level, standup comedy is a platform where performers have an extended humorous conversation with their audience. While the comedian does receive audience feedback such as laughter of course, standup comedy fits perfectly into Horton and Wohl's (1956) original concept of a parasocial relationship. The content of the comedy routine often involves personal elements of the comedian's lives and their personal experiences which may be shaped by their racial identity. Some comedians employ a narrative-style approach which has been shown to improve the effectiveness of intergroup contact (Moyer-Gusé et al., 2019) and could potentially cause consumers to engage in perspective taking which has had similar positive effects in reducing prejudice (Kulibert, 2023).

Latino/a Standup Comedy

Latino/a standup comedy has its own set of stereotypes that produce challenges that the comedians often engage with as part of the performance. *Machismo* is the masculine aspect of Latino/a culture that often presents itself among male comedians. While White people being masculine does not generally carry negative connotations in media. Latino/a *Machismo* helps feed into the negative aggressive stereotypes (O'Farril, 2022). There are ways to counteract this through mediated contact. Performers that break these stereotypes, including powerful female performers help reduce these stereotypes (Valdez, 2018). These examples of counter stereotypical exemplars or members of a group that go against previously conceived stereotypes

can be vital in reducing intergroup prejudice by expanding the concept of what it means to be a part of that group (Mustafaj & Dal Cin, 2024).

Latino/a comedians have long used standup comedy as a way of interacting with American audiences and to discuss their relationship with American society (Hinojos, 2016). Concepts like 'Pocho Humor' which is a comedic trope surrounding anglicized Latinos helps illustrate the conflict Latino comedians often find themselves in when having to assimilate into American culture (Alvarez Dickinson, 2008). These performances give us insight into how Latino individuals deal with American societal norms (Garcia Student, 2014). By reducing uncertainty in understanding Latino people's cognitions, emotions, and behavior, standup comedy has been a longstanding and important way in which prejudice can be addressed (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Inclusion of Other in Self

IOS is a variable that attempts to measure relational closeness between an individual and another group or an other. IOS looks at how one feels about another individual as to whether they are a close friend or a stranger (Aron et al. 1992). Examining IOS as an outcome variable of mediated intergroup contact is something that has been asked for in the literature (Banas et al., 2020) and has been examined in limited contexts (Lee & Chen, 2023). It stands to reason that standup comedy as a medium might have a greater effect on how close participants feel towards an outgroup because of the storytelling nature of the experience (Price, 1998). It is important to note that IOS has not always been positively correlated with empathy in stressful situations (Lee & Chen, 2023), comedy may offer an environment that fosters both relational closeness and an increase in empathy.

The Current Study

The present study aimed to investigate the role of standup comedy as a vehicle for positive parasocial intergroup contact and specifically how it affects prejudice against Latino people. This study built off previous work that has also included standup comedy (Banas et al., 2024; Schiappa et al., 2005) and looks to add the IOS scale as another potential effect of parasocial contact. This study also aimed to connect Stephan's et al.'s (1998) intergroup threat theory to these parasocial contact effects by measuring both realistic and symbolic threats. The current study looked to extend the previous work but also apply it in the unique context of Latino people who have stereotypes in parasocial relationships and a unique culture of standup comedy (Garcia Student, 2014; Valdez, 2018). This research attempted to find a potential answer to the prevalence of negative stereotypes against Latinos and the harm caused by those stereotypes. The question remains of how effective Latino/a standup comedy is at reducing prejudice. Thus, the following predictions were made:

H1: The Latino/a Standup Comedy condition produces greater A) empathy and B) inclusion of other in self and less C) intergroup anxiety and D) intergroup threat and E) Prejudice as compared to a White standup comedy condition.

H2: An increase in parasocial relationship with a Latino/a comedian reduces prejudice and this relationship is mediated by A) empathy, B) inclusion of other in self, C) intergroup anxiety and D) intergroup threat.

Method

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students at a South-Central University who were asked to complete the study for course credit. Participants were excluded from the analysis if they had seen the special before, if they were 3 or more standard deviations from the mean age, or if they

missed any of the attention verification questions. Older participants were removed because of the potential differences in racial prejudice and sense of humor. Only 2 participants were excluded based on age while the rest were removed for incomplete participation, failure of the attention checks, or if they had seen the standup before as that may alter their viewing of the video as well as their relationship with the comedian *(n* = 92; 22.17%). The final sample consisted of 323 undergraduate students (63% female; age: *M* = 19.59, *Md* = 19.00, *SD* = 3.17, range: 18-27). The overall sample was 77% White, 8% African American, 7% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 2% Native American, and 0.6% Middle Eastern.

Design and Procedure

Undergraduate students were asked to participate in a 30-minute online study involving intergroup contact. Participants were randomly assigned to four experimental groups. Each group watched an excerpt from a different standup comedy special, two of which were Latino performers (Cristella Alonzo or Felipe Esparza), and two of which were White comedians in the control condition (Leanne Morgan or Alex Flynn). The standup performances were matched based on the length of the performance (Alonzo, duration: 13.29 min; Esparza, duration:10.48 min; Flynn, duration: 10.02min; Morgan, duration: 14.12 min) and the fame of the performer determined based on the number of views on YouTube of each video (Alonzo, 3.3 million views; Esparza, 3.0 million views, Flynn, 3.7 million views, Morgan, 3.4 million views). One male and one female comedian were chosen for each condition to increase the generalizability of the stimuli. Participants were asked if they had any technical issues viewing the videos such as the video or the audio not playing properly. Participants who reported problems viewing the comedy video were excluded from the analysis. 15 participants were removed for having viewed the

study before, three were removed for reported technical difficulties, and 74 were removed for failing the attention check questions.

After watching the standup special, participants were asked to answer a series of questions measuring the mediators of empathy, intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat, and IOS as well as questions concerning prejudice towards Latinos and a one-item measure concerning prejudice against Muslims to see if there was any potential spillover effect. As identified in Banas et al. (2024), enjoyment of the comedy is key to the process of parasocial contact with the performer (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Schiappa et al., 2005). Second, participants were asked to report the amount of direct contact they had with Latino people because that previous contact could impact their views of Latino people and might affect the impact of mediated contact. Finally, attention checks were placed periodically throughout the study to ensure quality responses, especially since data collection was performed online.

Instrumentation

Data Preparation. All variables in this experiment were measured using 7-point Likert-type scales. All indexes were assessed for the assumption of normality, and when necessary (based on examination of skewness and kurtosis), the data were transformed. Based on the results of principal component analysis (PCA), the scales were found to be unidimensional. Variables were adapted from scales previously used in contact research, however, the measures for intergroup anxiety and empathy were shortened from their original versions to reduce the amount of time needed to complete the study. To create indexes, PCAs were performed, and variables were formed by saving regression scores. All reliability indexes reported in the study were computed as PCA reliabilities: $N/(N\text{-}1) \times (E\text{-}1)/E$, where N = the number of items, and E = Eigenvalues for principal components (Hampson et al., 1987; Serlin & Kaiser, 1976).

Parasocial Relationship Strength. An 8-item measure was adopted from Rubin et al.'s (1985) Parasocial Interaction Scale. These included items such as "The comedian made me feel comfortable, as if I were with a friend"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A shortened version of the original version that was used previously in Banas et al.'s study (2024) was used in this study.

Empathy. In this study, empathy was measured using a shortened 3-item scale from Shen (2010; e.g. "I can understand a Latino person's point of view") ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The scale captures affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and associative empathy. A shortened version of Shen's (2010) empathy scale was used such that one question for each component of the original scale was present. This concept has been documented in parasocial contact literature and has been shown to be an important mechanism for mediated intergroup contact (Banas et al., 2020).

Intergroup Threat. Realistic threat and symbolic threat create the measure of intergroup threat in this study. Both measures were adapted from Stephan et al. (1998) using an 8 item, 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) on items such as "Latino people have more economic power than they deserve in this country." Symbolic threat refers to the cultural differences between the two groups that threaten the group identity. An example of this in popular media today can be thought of as the idea of a "culture war" where the existence and prevalence of one culture affects another. In contrast, realistic threat refers to the perceived threat to economic and practical resources due to the presence of another group. This can include competition for labor but can also include strains on commonly shared resources like water and housing. This concept is particularly relevant in the context of the media portrayals of Latino people (Atwell Seate & Mastro, 2015).

Intergroup Anxiety. The measure of intergroup anxiety was adapted from Stephan and Stephan (1985) using a 7 item, 7-point scale. Participants were asked to rate the intensity of how much they felt certain descriptors captured their emotional state such as "worried" from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very intensely*). A shortened version of Stephan and Stephan's (1985) intergroup anxiety scale was used that was drawn from Barbati's (2023) research on mediated intergroup contact (2023) This measure includes details about how comfortable you would be around the other group and other similar questions. This measure was adopted specifically in the context of Latino/a people for this experiment. Both intergroup threat and intergroup anxiety have also been demonstrated to be significant predictors of prejudice reduction (Banas et al., 2020).

Inclusion of Other in Self. Finally, the measure for IOS was developed from Aron's et al (1993) original work using Venn diagrams in a one item, 7-point scale ranging from 1 (two separate circles) to 7 (two heavily overlapping circles). Participants were asked to report their closeness to the comedian. There is evidence to believe that comedy can help the audience feel closer to the performer (Valdez, 2018). See Appendix D for an illustration.

Covariates. Several covariate variables were analyzed to account for potentially relevant factors that may affect the results. First, A simple one item question on a scale from 1-9 developed from Banas et al. (2024) indicating whether how funny they thought the comedy video was. Second, political orientation was measured using a 1 item self-reported 7-point scale from 1 = *Liberal* and 7 = *Conservative*. Direct contact with Latino people was also measured because already being familiar with the outgroup could skew the effectiveness of mediated contact (Sink & Mastro, 2018).

Prejudice. Prejudice was measured using a 2-item 7-point scale measuring support for political proposals that directly harm Latino or are representative of prejudice against Latino

people ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). These items included support for the construction of a border wall along the Southern border of the United States and support for the immediate deportation of all illegal immigrants. An additional 1-item measure was added to assess if there were any possible spillover effects to other groups by asking participants if the supported placing a ban on Muslims entering the United States.

Results

Preliminary Analysis. First, the comedy specials were compared to determine if the participants found them all to be enjoyable. These results were analyzed by conducting a univariate analysis of variance (MANCOVA) to examine participants' level of enjoyment from each comedy special. The overall MANCOVA revealed a significant main effect of the comedian condition on how much each special was enjoyed, $F(3, 322) = 4.28$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.39$. Using the Bonferroni correction, planned comparisons revealed that Leanne Morgan ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.21$), Cristela Alonzo ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.52$) and Felipe Esparza ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.33$) were rated as equally funny. Morgan, Esparza, and Alonzo were however found to be significantly funnier than Alex Flynn ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.95$), all ps $< .05$. To investigate whether the perceived humor independently accounted for the prejudice reducing effects in mediated intergroup contact, two partial correlations, controlling for the effects of the comedy video, were conducted between the perceived humor and intergroup prejudice. The results were nonsignificant (ps $> .05$). This analysis shows that although there were significant differences in how funny the comedians were perceived to be, those perceptions did not account for the relationship between mediated intergroup contact and prejudice.

The goal of this experiment was to examine the potential differences between the White comedian condition and the Latino/a comedian condition. To investigate those differences, we

explored whether the four individual comedian conditions could be collapsed into two groups between the White comedians and the Latino/a comedians. To perform this analysis, two Multivariate Analyses of Covariance (MANCOVA) were performed to examine the differences between the two White comedians (Leanne Morgan vs. Alex Flynn) and the Latino/a comedians (Cristela Alonzo vs. Felipe Esparza). The results showed that in the Latino/a standup condition, Wilks' $\Lambda = .974$, $F(5, 156) = 0.85$, $p = .518$, there was no significant comedian effect as well as in the White standup condition, Wilks' $\Lambda = .919$, $F(5, 157) = 1.77$, $p = 0.331$, thus the two conditions warranted collapsing.

Hypothesis tests. First, an analysis of the main effects between parasocial contact with a Latino/a comedian and prejudice as well as the effects on the mediating variables: empathy, intergroup threat, intergroup anxiety, and IOS were examined using a MANCOVA. The collapsed comedian condition was used as the fixed factor while empathy, intergroup threat, IOS, and prejudice were the dependent variables. The same covariates of age, gender, and political orientation were used as the covariates. Age and gender were found to be nonsignificant and were thus removed from the analysis. The multivariate analysis revealed that political orientation, Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.40$, $F(5, 273) = 82.79$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.60$, and amount of direct contact, Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.89$, $F(5, 273) = 6.94$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.11$ were found to be significant and were used as covariates in the analysis. The means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between variables are available in Table 1 below.

H1a predicted that exposure to a Latino/a comedian would produce greater empathy towards Latino people compared to exposure to a White comedian. Controlling for political orientation and direct contact, exposure to a Latino/a comedian ($M = .06$; $SD = .95$) increased empathy $F(3, 277) = 5.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, relative to the exposure to a White comedian ($M =$

-.01; *SD* = 1.02). Thus, H1a was supported. However, the results indicated that exposure to a Latino/a comedian did not produce significant changes in inclusion of other in self, $F(3, 277) = 45.42$, $p = .672$, thus H1b was not supported. H1c predicted that the comedian condition would lead to a reduction in intergroup threat. The results indicated that intergroup threat $F(1, 279) = 0.18$, $p = 0.234$, was not significantly reduced by the comedy exposure. Thus, H1c was not supported. H1d proposed that the comedian condition would lead to a reduction in intergroup anxiety. The results showed that the effect on intergroup anxiety was nonsignificant, $F(1, 279) = 0.35$, $p = .553$. Therefore, H1d was not supported. Finally, H1e predicted that parasocial contact with a Latino/a comedian would lead to a reduction in prejudice. The analysis revealed that the main effect of reducing prejudice, $F(1, 279) = 2.98$, $p = .085$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, was marginally significant, but the effect size was very small. Thus, only marginal support for H1e is offered. These results are concerning considering previous research has demonstrated that parasocial contact with an outgroup member has been demonstrated to reduce prejudice along with the mediating variables, intergroup threat, intergroup anxiety, and empathy (Banas et al., 2020; Dovidio et al., 2017; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). The potential arguments as to what may have produced these results are addressed in the limitations section.

Additionally, following along with the research of Banas et al. (2024) strength of parasocial relationships was analyzed as it was found to be positively correlated with the outgroup comedian condition to determine if there were differences in participants' ability to form a parasocial relationship with the comedians of the two groups. The results of this experiment do not support any significant relationship between the comedian condition and the strength of the parasocial relationship, $F(1, 279) = 2.24$, $p = .135$. This possibly aligns with the researchers' analysis that perhaps the finding that participants formed parasocial relationships

more with the outgroup comedians had to do with the content of the specific comedy specials specifically related to the experience of college students.

Mediational results. To analyze the mediational predictions made in Hypothesis 2, I employed the use of the PROCESS macro in SPSS developed by Hayes (2014). Two distinct mediational models were carried out for each level of parasocial contact (Latino/a comedian vs. White comedian). One model examined the relationship between PSR and the mediating variables of empathy, inclusion of other in self, intergroup threat, intergroup anxiety while the other analysis compared those results to the White comedian condition to test Hypothesis 2.

A mediational analysis was conducted to examine the effects of the strength of the parasocial relationship with the Latino/a comedian and the effects on empathy, inclusion of other in self, intergroup threat, intergroup anxiety, and prejudice. The hypothesized model posited that a parasocial relationship with a Latino/a comedian would result in a reduction in prejudice and that that relationship would be mediated by empathy, IOS, intergroup threat and intergroup anxiety. The direct effects of this model that exposure to a Latino/a comedian would reduce intergroup prejudice were found to be nonsignificant -0.04. $SE = 0.04$, $p = 0.24$. The effects of PSR on inclusion of IOS, 0.12, $SE = 0.06$, $p = 0.131$, intergroup anxiety, -0.06, $SE = 0.06$, $p = 0.230$, and intergroup threat 0.02, $SE = 0.04$, $p = 0.602$ were all found to be nonsignificant. There were two indirect effects that PSR with a Latino/a comedian, 0.15, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ was found to be significant positive predictor for empathy and intergroup threat, 0.17, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$, was found to be positively correlated with prejudice. These findings, while encouraging by contrast, do not offer a logical pathway that connects parasocial contact with a Latino/a comedian and prejudice. Thus, hypothesis H2 is not supported. There is therefore no need to run a secondary mediation analysis to compare with the participants in the White comedian group.

Two unpredicted trends did emerge in mediational analysis. First, building off the finding that PSR with a Latino comedian led to an increase in empathy 0.18, $SE = 0.07$, $p < 0.01$, and empathy, 0.51, $SE = 0.13$, $p < 0.001$, was found to lead to an increase in IOS. While this was not one of the predicted relationships, it could be argued that the IOS measure could offer an instrumentation of real-world prejudice more effectively than the 2-item measure used in this study that focused solely on political policy endorsement. Future research should investigate these findings as well as the effects of different instrumentations for prejudice. Second, while exposure to a Latino/a comedian was not a significant predictor of prejudice towards Latino people, exposure to a Latino comedian was predictive of a decrease in prejudice towards Muslims ($MD = -0.45$, $SD = 1.6$, $p < 0.05$). This an interesting, albeit confusing, finding but nonetheless, it supports the idea that future research should investigate possible spillover effects from a reduction in prejudice towards one group to another group.

Discussion

This study found that mediated intergroup contact with a Latino/a comedian increased empathy towards Latino people and that there can be a possible spillover effect on prejudice towards other groups, however the study failed to find significant support for a reduction in prejudice from mediated intergroup contact that merits some discussion and further investigation. First, the study found that exposure to an outgroup comedian did result in an increase in intergroup empathy which has been a well-documented effect of positive mediated intergroup contact (Banas et al., 2020). Second, the study found a small but significant effect on reducing prejudice towards a different outgroup than the one engaged with during mediated intergroup contact. This finding suggests that future research should explore possible spillover effects from intergroup contact and why and how they occur. While these findings are important

contributions, the nonsignificant results of this study also merit further discussion because they fail to support previously demonstrated relationships including the relationship between mediated intergroup contact and prejudice (Banas et al., 2020; Schiappa et al., 2005).

This study demonstrated that mediated intergroup contact produces greater empathy toward an outgroup which is an important component of improving intergroup relations. Empathy indicates the ability of an individual to understand the emotions and cognitions of another person (Shen, 2010). In the context of intergroup studies, empathy not only applies to an individual but entire groups of people. Empathy influences intergroup contact by expanding individuals' perceptions of who is part of their ingroup (Harwood, 2017). Empathy is an important aspect of intergroup relations not only because of the positive impact it has but also because perceptions of intergroup competition can lead to a decrease in empathy such that people experience pleasure in another group's pain (Cikara et al., 2014). The finding that this instance of parasocial intergroup contact increased empathy indicates that this was not the case and signifies a positive step in intergroup relations. This study investigated a unique intersection of genre and outgroup by examining Latino/a standup comedy. Latino people face a unique combination of negative stereotypes in media representations (Erba, 2018; Mastro, 2019). Standup comedy offers an important platform for outgroup performers to discuss the discrimination they face in society in a positive way (Rossing, 2016; Valon Levinston, 2013). Standup comedy as a genre may act as an important pathway towards increasing empathy because of the relationship that is developed between the comedian and the performer (Becker, 2025). While empathy is one of several potential mediators of parasocial contact, this represents an important insight into the cognitive mechanisms behind parasocial intergroup contact.

Another important finding from this experiment was the effect of exposure to a Latino/a comedian resulted in reduced prejudice towards Muslims. While this effect size was very small and the measure only one item, a potential spillover effect that reduction in prejudice towards one group could potentially cascade to other groups as well. This possibility could create an entirely new line of research in mediated intergroup contact because of the importance of possibly finding a way to address prejudice towards multiple groups at once. While some studies have shown that contact experiences can carry over in other contexts (Karataş et al., 2023), there remains a need for future research to investigate this further (Harwood, 2017).

Perhaps the most provocative findings from this study were the lack of support for the mediation effects of empathy, intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat, and IOS on reducing prejudice because of the divergence from previous research (Banas et al., 2020; Harwood, 2017). These findings align closer to Paolini et al.'s (2024) meta-analysis on face-to-face intergroup contact that shows that exposure does not always lead to prejudice reduction. Additionally, other research has similarly struggled to find support for mediated intergroup contact's ability to reduce prejudice towards another group (Barbati, 2023; Lee & Chen, 2023). Reimer and Sengupta (2023) demonstrated that intergroup contact does not always lead to change in support for racially prejudiced policies among the disadvantaged group. Perhaps there may be a similar ironic effect occurring among the dominant group members following contact. These results show that further investigation is needed to investigate the mechanisms of mediated intergroup contact. Potential reasons for why the exposure to a Latino/a comedian was not shown to reduce prejudice are discussed in the future directions.

Future Directions and Limitations

Future Directions. Intergroup contact has been an evolving area of research from its inception in Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), and to further our understanding we need to investigate instances where contact between groups does not result in a reduction of prejudice (Lee & Chen, 2023). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) demonstrated that Allport's original four conditions for optimal intergroup contact were not necessary for improving intergroup relations. More recently, Paolini et al., (2024) has challenged those findings by demonstrating that contact research needs to include negative contact experiences as much as positive contact. There is still much to be uncovered concerning the mechanisms of intergroup contact and what makes contact successful. Examining shortcomings in contact research can provide important insights into these questions.

The findings of this study indicate that exposure to a Latino/a comedian increased empathy towards Latino people and indicated potential support for potential reduction in prejudice towards groups not involved in the contact exchange which deserve investigation in forthcoming research. Future studies should examine the relationship between empathy and standup comedy in other contexts and with other groups. Standup comedy routines often involve intimate details and experiences from a performer's life and address uncomfortable social issues such as prejudice and stigma. (Perez, 2017; Viña, 2021). This personal disclosure may make an audience feel more familiar with a performer and increase their understanding of the performer's thoughts and feelings. The potential spillover effect of a reduction in prejudice towards one group resulting in a reduction in prejudice towards another group merits further investigation because of the magnitude of impact those effects could have if properly harnessed. To explore this idea further, forthcoming studies should examine this possibility in other contexts by looking at other genres of mediated contact as well as potential differences between sets of outgroups.

While these findings will hopefully encourage future research, researchers should also investigate why the results of this study differed from previous research.

While it was not originally a focus of this study, political orientation was shown to be a significant predictor of prejudice which merits further investigation to understand its possible role in mediated intergroup contact. Research needs to be done examining the differences between how conservative and liberal participants engage in parasocial relationships with outgroup members. One key aspect of the external validity of demonstrating the effectiveness of intergroup contact through entertainment media is self-selection. Iyengar and Hahn (2009) demonstrated that political orientation predicted political news content selection. Mustafaj and Dal Cin (2024) demonstrated that preexisting beliefs predicted media preferences for popular media such that people often avoid counter stereotypical exemplars of minority groups. This is reflected in conservative backlash to diverse representation in entertainment media (Reysen et al., 2023). Under the right circumstances, comedy provides an opportunity to engage with people, ideas, and experiences that are otherwise foreign to us. Standup comedy has also historically been a key mechanism for outgroup entertainers to engage with audiences of the majority group (Price 1998; Valon Levniston, 2013; Viña, 2021). However, perhaps political orientation has predetermined whether consumers will be receptive to engaging with outgroup members through media. Additionally, the measure of prejudice used in this study focused specifically on support for political policy measure that directly affect Latino communities such as the construction of a border wall and the deportation of immigrants. Perhaps a different measure of prejudice might capture a more holistic picture of how prejudice behaves.

The content of the comedy special needs to be examined to understand how differences in the material of the standup routine and the jokes the comedians tell could impact the

effectiveness of parasocial contact. Ghaznavi (2016) showed that the presentation of the outgroup member's identity can impact how those performers are viewed and could be a potential force in intergroup contact. Pollack et al. (2022) also discussed that perceived similarities can impact exchanges between those groups. There are also larger questions about the role of media diet and why individuals decide to seek out entertainment that features members from an outgroup. Żerebecki et al. (2024) investigated what drove students to seek out content with diverse characters in media. Their research built upon Blumler and Katz' (1974) Uses and Gratifications theory to discuss the potential motivations people have to pursue such content. Researchers focused on the hedonistic and the eudaimonic motivations that can act as potential drivers for individuals as they determine their media consumption habits (Oliver & Raney, 2011). In this context, consumers are drawn by their hedonistic desire for pleasurable content that entertains them. Thus, it could be argued that content that is more entertaining would thus be more attractive to people, and they would be more likely to seek out repeated exposure. By contrast, the sometimes-personal nature of standup comedy could cause viewers to reflect on their own conditions and the world around them acting upon their eudaimonic desires. These eudaimonic desires are however beholden to one's own worldview and since of morality which often is affected by their political orientation (Haidt & Graham, 2007). Future research is needed to investigate how these motivations predict individuals' behavioral intentions in seeking out content that includes performers or characters from an outside group.

The length of exposure to the comedians could have played a role in the effectiveness of the intergroup exchange. A shorter duration of exposure could potentially compromise participants' ability to form a parasocial relationship with the entertainer, thus weakening the effects of mediated intergroup contact. While Banas et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis did not find

length to be a significant predictor for prejudice, perhaps more research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of short form videos. Modern social media sharing has shifted more towards shorter length videos (Dodds, 2024) which is the source of exposure for many consumers to content from outside sources. This study hoped to demonstrate that even videos that did not have the same length of exposure would still be effective, but the results did not support those claims.

Finally, social desirability must always be considered when measuring prejudice directly (Kim & Hauenstein, 2024). Other studies examining the effectiveness of mediated intergroup contact interventions have similarly failed to produce significant results and we must question underlying factors. Psychophysiological measures that go beyond simple self-reporting draw results from biological responses presents one possible solution to the challenge of potential lack of accuracy in reporting their own levels of prejudice, although such research can be expensive and time intensive (Potter & Bolls, 2012).

Limitations. The limitations of this study warrant examination because of the lack of support for the empirically demonstrated findings of mediated intergroup contact to better understand what went wrong. First, while the present study added several novel additions to Banas et al.'s (2024) research on standup comedy, more comparisons should have been made to understand the effects of those differences. This study was originally planned to be a replication of Banas et al.'s (2024) work but some important changes were made including the duration of the exposure and the components used to measure prejudice. Future research should investigate the length of exposure to an outgroup performer in the context of standup comedy by setting up a comparison between a prolonged exposure vs a short exposure condition.

Another limitation in this study was that participants were asked to complete demographic questions prior to answering the other measures which could have created a

priming effect by reminding participants of their identity which could have had stereotype threat effects (Derks et al., 2008). By priming or making the participants' identity more salient during the experiment may have affected the participants viewed their relationship with Latinos. The demographic questions asked included questions asking participants to report their race, political orientation and other information that could all potentially affect the results of this experiment. Previous research has shown that when individuals are reminded of their identities, there can be a stereotype threat effect where the perceived stereotypes concerning their identities can affect their responses on a wide range of issues (Yusuf et al., 2014). While it is impossible to determine exactly what effects this flaw in experimental design may have had, it remains important to report that this error was made.

There are also additional limitations to consider including the manner of data collection and the comparison and the relative similarities between the comedian conditions. This study collected data using an entirely online sample due to the convenience of data collection. While in some ways this may mimic consumers' natural viewing experience, there is no telling what kinds of behavior the college-aged participants were engaging in while completing this study. While young adults are an interesting demographic to research in this context, more information is needed to understand how older adults engage with outgroup comedians. Also, while I attempted to match the comedians as closely as possible in terms of age, gender, and relative popularity, future research should do more to properly quantify those differences and ideally include a wider range of entertainers in both the experimental and the control condition.

Conclusion

This study attempted to provide a novel and interesting extension to Schiappa et al.'s (2005) parasocial contact hypothesis by investigating a new outgroup in Latino/a comedians, the

potential viability of shorter exposure, a new potential mediator in Aron et al.'s (1992) inclusion of other in self in hopes of finding intergroup prejudice. Entertainment media provides a unique opportunity for otherwise isolated communities to interact with each other and become accustomed to their presence. Whether they are aware of it or not, consumers who engage with performers of a different group than their own often embark on a journey of discovery into experiences that are otherwise completely foreign. While the results did not support the overall predictions, this study still serves as an important contribution to the research because the results call into question previously established relationships. When discussing mechanisms at reducing something as malignant as intergroup prejudice, it is not only important to consider the successes but also to consider the failures (Lee & Chen, 2023).

Although the focus of this experiment was on a singular outgroup and one genre of entertainment, the lessons learned here can be applied to future mediated intergroup contact research. Future research should investigate the intricacies and mechanisms of what makes mediated intergroup contact effective at reducing prejudice towards another group. Political orientation remains a key component of furthering this understanding and researchers ought to investigate the effectiveness of contact among both conservatives and liberals, through exposure that is tailored towards each group. Finally, social scientists should investigate the external validity not only of mediated contact effects but participants' behavioral intentions to seek out other groups in media in their own lives as well as how mediated interactions with another group effect behaviors towards that group.

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Table 1. *Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Reliability Coefficients, and Bivariate Correlations between all Variables in the Study*

	M	*SD*	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. PSR with Comedian	-0.01	1.02	0.89	1							
2. Intergroup Anxiety	0.02	1.01	0.92	-.77	1						
3. Intergroup Threat	-0.03	1.06	0.93	.07	.33**	1					
4. Empathy	0.06	0.95	0.78	.15**	-.08	-.28**	1				
5.Inclusion of Other in Self[a]	3.78	1.54	—	-0.4	-.24**	-.27**	.32**	1			
6. Political Orientation[a]	3.62	1.87	—	.10	.22**	.52**	-.22**	-.07	1		
7. Direct Contact with Latinos[a]	2.97	2.05	—	.05	-.24**	-.30**	.23**	.51**	-.07	1	
8. Prejudice	0.24	1.02	0.88	-.10	.15**	.51**	-.27**	-.16**	.75**	-.19**	1

**$p < .01$ level (2-tailed).
*$p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

[a]A single-item scale; reliabilities were not computed.

Note. All alphas were computed as PCA reliabilities (for formula, see text).

Table 2:. *Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Two Mediation Models. Panel A: Empathy, Panel B: Intergroup Anxiety, Panel C: Intergroup Threat, Panel D: IOS.*

Panel A

		Consequent						
		M (Empathy)				*Y* (Prejudice)		
Antecedent		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*
X (PSR)	*a*	0.19	0.26	.008	*c′*	-0.10	-0.20	.062
M (Empathy)		—	—	—	*b*	0.01	0.06	.861
C_1 (Polit. Affiliation)	f_1	-0.11	0.03	.003	g_1	0.41	0.03	<0.0001
C_2 (Direct Contact)	f_2	0.07	0.03	.016	g_2	-0.02	0.03	.525
Constant	i_M	0.37	0.25	.15	i_Y	-1.46	0.20	.001
		R^2 = .14, $F(3, 143) = 7.75$, p = 0.0001				R^2 = .48, $F(7, 139) = 40.20$, p < .001		

Panel B

		Consequent						
		M (Intergroup Anxiety)				*Y* (Prejudice)		
Antecedent		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*
X (PSR)	*a*	-0.06	0.08	.43	*c′*	-0.10	0.20	.062

M (Intergroup Anxiety)		—	—	—	*b*	-0.08	0.06	.156
C_1 (Polit. Affiliation)	f_1	0.09	0.04	.023	g_1	0.41	0.03	<.001
C_2 (Direct Contact)	f_2	-0.08	0.03	.013	g_2	-0.02	0.03	.525
Constant	i_M	0.01	0.28	.97	i_Y	-1.46	0.20	<.001
		$R^2 = .08$, $F(3, 143) = 4.33$, $p = 0.006$				$R^2 = .67$, $F(7, 139) = 40.20$, $p < .001$		

Panel C

		Consequent						
		M (Intergroup threat)				*Y* (Prejudice)		
Antecedent		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*
X (PSR)	*a*	-0.08	0.06	.204	*c′*	-0.10	0.20	.062
M (Intergroup Threat)		—	—	—	*b*	-0.57	0.07	.159
C_1 (Polit. Affiliation)	f_1	0.27	0.03	<.001	g_1	0.41	0.03	.06
C_2 (Direct Contact)	f_2	-0.16	0.03	.001	g_2	-0.02	0.03	.525
Constant	i_M	1.15	0.18	.001	i_Y	-1.46	0.20	<.001

		R^2 = .61, F(3, 143) = 28.06, p < .001				R^2 = .67 F(7, 139) = 40.20, p < .001		

Panel D

	Consequent							
	M (IOS)				*Y* (Prejudice)			
Antecedent		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*
X (PSR)	*a*	0.19	0.11	.093	*c′*	-0.10	0.20	.062
M (IOS)		—	—	—	*b*	-0.09	0.05	.021
C_1 (Polit. Affiliation)	f_1	0.02	0.06	.716	g_1	0.41	0.03	<.001
C_2 (Direct Contact)	f_2	0.37	0.05	<.001	g_2	-0.02	0.03	.525
Constant	i_M	1.61	0.41	.001	i_Y	-1.46	0.20	<.001
		R^2 = .32, F(3, 143) = 22.55, p < .001				R^2 = .67, F(7, 1139) = 40.20, p < .001		

Appendix A: Empathy

The following scale was developed from Shen (2010) that breaks down empathy into three components of affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and associative empathy.

Affective Empathy:

1. Latino/a people's emotions are genuine.
2. I can experience the same emotions as Latino/a people when interacting.
3. I experience similar emotional state as Latino/a people when interacting.
4. I am able to clearly perceive Latino/a people's emotions.

Cognitive Empathy:

1. I can see a Latino/a person's point of view.
2. I can understand what Latino/a people are going through.
3. Latino/a people's reactions to their environment is understandable

Associative Empathy

1. When interacting with Latino/a people, I am fully attentive.
2. I can emotionally relate to what a Latino/a person is going through.
3. I can identify with Latino/a people.

Appendix B: Intergroup Threat

This scale is based on Stephan et al 1998 intergroup threat scale that has the components of realistic threat and symbolic threat. Participants were asked to endorse these statements developed from Shi (2022) on a 1-7 scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Realistic Threat:

1. Latino people have more economic power than they deserve in this country.
2. Latino people make it harder for other Americans to get into good schools.
3. Latino people make it harder for other Americans to get good jobs.
4. Latino/a people have more political power than they deserve in this country.

Symbolic Threat:

1. The number of Latino people in this country threatens American identity.
2. Latino norms and values in this country threaten American society.
3. Latino customs and traditions in this country threaten American culture.
4. The use of Spanish in this country threatens American culture.

Appendix C: Intergroup Anxiety

The following scale is drawn directly from Barbati's (p. 154, 2023) work addressing intergroup anxiety toward Latino/a people and Stephan & Stephan (1985):

Please indicate the degree to which you experience each of the following emotions when interacting with Latino people (1-7).

1. Not Anxious/Anxious
2. Comfortable/Not Comfortable
3. Not Worried/Worried
4. At Ease/Not At Ease
5. Not Awkward/Awkward
6. Confident/Not Confident
7. Not Apprehensive/Apprehensive
8. Not Worried/Worried

Appendix D: Inclusion of Other in Self

This scale was developed from Aron et al (1993) which specifically aimed to measure distance and inclusion of identity. Participants were asked to choose one of a series of diagrams they feel represents their relationship with Latino/a people.

