

# Research paper on racial discrimination against hispanics

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



## **Introduction**

Racism has been a major issue in the US since the days of slave trade and colonization. Minority groups such as Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans and African Americans have been discriminated against other Americans for long time. These minority groups have been less privileged in regards to matters of immigration, citizenship, literacy, land acquisition, criminal procedures and voting rights among other issues for a period of not less than three centuries from 17th century to late 20th century. Many social institutions were racially structured as way of separating minority groups from other Americans. Such institutions include residential schools, native reservations, Indian wars, slavery, segregation and internment camps. Though formal racial discrimination was banned in 1960s, racism is still dominant in many areas like politics even today in the United States. This paper analyzes racial discrimination against Hispanics in the US for the last three centuries.

## **Background information**

Hispanics have their ancestry background from the Latin America in countries like Mexico, Argentina, and Chile among others and they may therefore be referred to as Latin Americans. This people come from different ethnics and racial backgrounds and it is not easy to distinguish them as minority group since they are just like other Americans in many ways. This people found their way into US during the Mexican-American war of 1846 where a large parts of the present region of southwest US was annexed from Mexico (Ruiz, 2006). All the Mexicans living in this area became American

citizens and they started to be discriminated just like other minority groups from as early as 1880s. Though there are no official records, it is approximated that about 597 Mexicans lost their lives through lynching from 1848 and 1928 (Ruiz, 2006). During the great depression of 1930s, the US government came up with a program for repatriating all Mexicans immigrants where they were supposed to voluntarily go back to their country. Unfortunately most of these immigrants were not willing to leave voluntarily and they were therefore forced to leave where about one million people were deported back to Mexico. About 60% of these deported immigrants had already acquired American citizenship and it was therefore contrary to what they knew as their rights as US citizens (Huntington, 2006). There have been cases of riots like the Zoot Suit in 1943 in Los Angeles against the Latinos especially Mexican Americans which continued for several days without being stopped (Huntington, 2006). In fact even the local police assisted those groups which were fighting Latinos until base commanders intervened. Hispanic discrimination in the US may be analyzed by looking at how this minority group is discriminated in several areas of their lives.

## **Economic discrimination**

Just like other minority groups such African-Americans and Native Americans, Latinos has continued to face discrimination in the work place for long time and the situation is expected to worsen with the recent increase in the rate of unemployment in the country. Past studies have found that 30 percent of the Hispanic in formal employment faces discrimination of one form or

another (Yang Lui, 2009). This discrimination is expressed through less payment, reduced chances of promotion, less recognition even when they perform better than other non-Hispanic workers and being seen as less qualified in the jobs they are doing (Yang Liu, 2009). In addition, the number of Hispanic in the management of many organizations is too low compared with other non-Hispanic whites.

## **Political discrimination**

Despite the fact that Hispanic forms about 15 percent of the current US population, they have continued to be discriminated when it comes to the main stream politics (Ruiz, 2009). Factors such as limited education opportunities and high rate of unemployment among the Hispanic have limited their ability to compete for political offices. Due to their increased proportion in the US population, Hispanics may be expected to form a large political bloc with great political influence; if they form a unified a political bloc, Hispanics have enough votes to propel their candidates to capture senior electoral positions in the US politics. They are highly concentrated in five states namely New York, Texas, Illinois, California and Florida where they form majority of the registered voters. Unfortunately, they are just but key political targets for non-Hispanic politicians who come to hunt for their votes. There are several factors that lead to political under-representation of this group. First, many adult Hispanics lack the necessary education to allow them to participate actively in public decision-making processes. Those who are literate are youths who are not really interested in politics. Secondly, majority of the Hispanic population is not legally allowed to vote in the US

elections since they are not legal citizens. This limits the numbers of Hispanics who participates in the US general election. Thirdly, political participation of this group is also limited by poverty. There is a correlation between income, level of education and political participation.

## **Social discrimination**

Hispanics also continue to face social discrimination in every aspect of their lives. Due to limited opportunities for empowering them, many Hispanics belongs to lower economic class compared to other non-Hispanic whites which gives room for social discrimination. In public places such as schools, hospitals, public transport and other places, Hispanics are treated with less dignity and respect just like other minority groups. For instance before formal banning of racial discrimination in 1960s, Hispanics were required to give seats to non-Hispanic whites in the public vehicles. In the public facilities such as schools and hospitals, Hispanic adults and their children were only attended to after all the non-Hispanic whites were served.

Currently, the numbers of uneducated Hispanics youths who are jobless and hopeless continue to rise which may create some social problems such as high crime rate in future. Hispanic children and teenage boys continue to face racial discrimination which may affect their future as they grow in an environment where they are treated as less human being. These children grow in an environment full of verbal abuse; misgivings and taunting that are ethnically based. Consequently, as they grow up they may experience social problems such as unworthy feelings, low self-esteem, short-temperedness and concentration problems at school. This may also make them to develop

deviant behaviors especially at teenage level where they just rebel against social system where they have grown up. For example teenage boys may become hostile towards other people, becoming burglars, drug addiction and other socially unacceptable behaviors (Taylor, et al., 2011).

## **Health care discrimination**

Though Hispanic continues to form a large proportion of the American population, they have been discriminated health-wise for many years compared with other whites who are non-Hispanic. Socioeconomic differences between Hispanic and other non-Hispanic whites contribute heavily to health disparities between these groups. Factors such as limited accessibility to good education, employment and other opportunities in the society also limit the ability of the Hispanic to access quality health care services. Lack of accessibility to health care services exposes them to chronic diseases such as cancer as they lack vaccination and cancer screening. Limited education opportunities put them in more health risks such as cigarette smoking, obesity among others due to limited knowhow. Some immigrants cannot speak fluent English which is necessary for them to seek appropriate healthcare services while others may not be familiar with the health care system in US hence limited accessibility to proper medical care.

## **Discrimination in education**

The rate of enrollment in schools for Hispanic population is low compared to non-Hispanics whites in the US. In fact many Hispanic adults have not gone through any formal educations due to language barriers and many other challenges (Jeria, 1999). Hispanic students just like other students from

minority groups encounter many challenges in schools that have resulted in low rates of completion. Many schools in the US do not offer curriculums that are taught in more than one language. The commonly used curriculum is taught in standard American English which has proved to be a problem to many students from minority groups. This affects their performance in school especially in the English proficiency test. Most of these students encounter problems in learning second language due to their first language influence. This has led to establishment of special class where Hispanic and other minority students are taught separately. These students are perceived to have low levels of intelligence compared with other students, which may not be the case. It is only that they are taught and tested in language they cannot understand well. This special education effects also extend beyond school into the work place where job candidates who have gone through special classes are viewed as less qualified than other students thus limiting their employment opportunities.

## **Hate crimes**

Of late there has been increased hate crimes against Hispanics in the US due to rising cases of anti-illegal immigrations (Huntington, 2004). The governments have invested in building a fence of multi-billion dollar on the Mexico-US border with the aim of preventing Mexicans from closing into the US. The fence also intends to prevent illegal entry of drugs and weapons into the country from Mexico. The has increased the hate that non-Hispanic whites has against Hispanic as they associate them more with crimes such as terrorism and drug-trafficking. By building this fence, the government

aims to stop all the illegal transactions in the border but even without saying, it intends to reduce entrance of Hispanics in the country. This may be seen as a form of discrimination against Hispanics since other borders like Canada-US border still remain open and there are no intentions of closing it. Thus many Hispanics are socially hated and associated with crimes even without any justifiable reason to do so.

## **Conclusion**

Hispanic has faced discrimination in US for many years just like other minority groups. This racial discrimination is expressed in every aspect of their lives ranging from employment, education, health care provision, politics, among others. This group also faces social discrimination where they are verbally abused, mistreated and denied opportunities for their socio-cultural development.

## **References**

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