

Intra-racial discrimination

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



Krystal Lopez Page 1 10/23/11 Hipics Vs. Hipics: Inter-racial Discrimination

Many Americans believe that racial discrimination is no longer problematic in today's society. Situations of interracial discrimination are often cited, but this does not take into account that there is often conflict within the race as well. This misconception stems from the fact that diversity amongst the racial groups is often overlooked. Intra-racial discrimination is when a person or group of people of the same race use factors including, but not limited to, socioeconomic background, appearance, and skin color. Social or workplace hierarchies often develop under racial influence. Hostilities and tensions can reside in every race of minority, but it is highly apparent in the Hispanic community. Intra-racial discrimination has far reaching effects on not only the individual minority, but on the race as a whole. The pressure of this type of discrimination affects how Hispanics collaborate within a society of American superiority. For instance, people of Hispanic descent who do not speak Spanish are often mistreated by people of their own ethnic background. These people might be found culturally lacking and treated differently from those that speak the language. The differences within a specific race are nothing more than that. They are purely genetic or cultural, and do not hold any value. It becomes a matter of cultural perception of what is expected rather than an actual cultural lack. Typically among Hispanics and other ethnic minorities, discrimination is an increasing actuality witnessed even in the workplace. With the Hispanic population growing rapidly, along with their increasing numbers of employment, it is becoming more apparent that inter and intra-racial discrimination will target them as both victims and perpetrators. A hierarchy, or pecking order between races

and within races, and biased management are some of prime examples of workplace inequalities. Situations like these occur because of the lack of people's understanding of diversity. Page 2 Discrimination is also prevalent within a race as seen in how some believe that varying skin tones is cause for racial disparity. With a wide array of skin tones, Hipics believe they are easily targeted for ridicule and mistreatment. Even within their own race, some believe that lighter skin tones provide them much more opportunities, and can help them to be more successful in a white dominated community. More opportunities were provided for those with lighter skin. Not only do Hipics in America face more discrimination in regards to their outer appearance, they also deal with the constant battle of being accused that they are not being ethnic enough, or being too "Americanized" and not keeping their culture and traditions alive. Part of the Hipic population across the Mexican border feel that American Hipics are "traitors" to their ethnicity because they have denied themselves their rich, historical culture and thus abandoned their roots. Some Non-White Hipics discriminate against their own race, not because of any physical differences, but because of the similarities they share. Some identify with whites to such an extent, that they believe they are white themselves. Ultimately, being discriminated against can lead to the shameful denial of one's self and their heritage, in hopes of becoming a more easily accepted member of a predominantly White America. Their wish is to assimilate into the culture and to "fit in".

In the article, Raising the Status of the Cashier, Agius and Lee report on their findings while observing the interaction between Hipic cashiers born in another country and their white customers. The results of their three month

long observations and their twenty interviews, was very surprising. La Canasta is an ethnic market catering to the Hispanic population in the area. When it was originally proposed for that area, local communities tried to stop it from being put in. The employees are all Hispanic and the cashiers are all Hispanic females that were born in another country and do not speak Page 3 English. Due to the fact that this store caters to the Hispanic population, it was interesting to learn that over a period of time, the white customer base actually jumped dramatically. What the researchers found even more interesting was the fact that the Hispanic cashiers actually treated the white customers better than the Hispanic ones. The cashiers thanked the white customers on an average three times compared to one on the Hispanic customers. They spent more time and lingered on the sale with the white customer. The Hispanic cashiers tended to be more friendly and smile with the white customers.

These findings went against the findings of previous research under McCormick and Kinloch (1986). This research indicated that it was more about the racial situation between whites and Hispanics rather than the race of the cashier. This was not the case at La Canasta. It appeared that the cashiers went the extra mile for their white guests. Even though, it was impossible to verbally communicate, the cashiers would joke with the white customers more than the Hispanic ones. When asked why they went to this specific store, the white guests indicated that they liked being the only white person in the store and receiving personalized attention. When the cashiers were asked about the diverse background visiting the store, they all

indicated that there was a fair percentage of white people. When asking the white customers, they all indicated that they were the only white people in the store even if there were other white people in the store at that very time. La Canasta shows that there can be discrimination within the same race. “ The cashiers do not resent their White customers... and accept their place in the social hierarchy” (Agius & Lee, 214).

It appears that the cashiers felt that there was a growth in social status by helping the white customers. Thus, consciously or subconsciously, they treated the white customers better than their own nationality. The cashiers believe that “ their presence alone raises their status” (Agius & Lee, 215). They are not just cashiers, but cashiers that serve white customers. Page 4 Discrimination has been around for thousands of years. It seeps into all societies and often changes rational men to irrational. It is not just between two races; it knows no bounds or restrictions.

Within a culture, there can be discrimination. It can be based upon the slight shade in a skin tone, to the perception that one's race may elevate social status. It covers all facets of a culture from customs to speaking the language. Diversity within the Hispanic culture provides many outlets for discrimination of all kinds. It is just as destructive intra-racially as it is inter-racially. Works Cited Jody A. Agius and Jennifer Lee, “ Raising the Status of the Cashier: Latina-White Interactions in an Ethnic Market,” 18/10/201: 27 pages, Springer