

# How the movie spanglish depicts hispanic people

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



At age twelve, Christina, the daughter of a young single mother is going through one of the toughest times of her life. Spanglish is a film of her integration into the American culture. Many have gone through the same process as, 1/7th of the US population is Hispanic. Being a Hispanic American has its challenges. Those challenges range from; language barriers to, racial discrimination to, job offers. One thing Hispanic families have the most trouble with is, the integration of their children into a larger national family with a different culture. These families and their children feel as though they have to embrace a certain way of living known as the American culture in order to fit in. This process is known as assimilation. Assimilation is when people of different backgrounds adopt the culture, traits, language and traditions of a larger national group. As depicted in the film Spanglish; Christina attends middle school in southern California, begins the assimilation process adopting the American culture, and exemplifies the complex challenges both positive and negative each immigrant family is faced with. More specifically; the challenge to maintain ones own identity, sense of family heritage, respect and, values while concurrently being submerged in a non-native culture or country. The reason Flor brings her daughter to the US is not unique to Hispanics, it is consistent with all immigrants that bring their families to the land of opportunity. The ability to; provide a better life for their family, a brighter future for their children, the opportunity for a good education, a different well paying job, the possibility of buying a home and, to raise a full new family in America is, the dream. Christinas journey begins when her mother Flors tries to raise her while she works three jobs and struggles to provide a better life for her and her

daughter. While working as a maid in Los Angeles and keeping Christina sheltered, clothed and fed she is committed to the maintenance of their Mexican heritage, its language, and their values. Flor's attempt to separate Cristina from being Americanized is challenged when Flor's employers, the wealthy Caucasian Clasky family, needs her to work 7/24 during the summer. During this time, Flor is no longer able to prevent Christinas exposure to way of life because they now live with the Claskys. They start to concern themselves with Cristina's upbringing. During that summer, Cristina is slowly exposed to the American way of life; contemporary teenage fashions, teenage practices and even being enrolled in a private school. Deborah, Flors employer, treats Christina as if she were her own daughter. She introduced her to every aspect of American culture. As the American values start to over power the Mexican values Flor realizes what is happening to her daughter. This frustration becomes apparent when Flor quits working for the Clasky family, pulls Christina out of the private school she was attending and, reenrolls her into a public school. This decision angers Cristina to the point where she publicly scorns her mother. This is a highly disrespectful gesture in the Mexican culture, especially to a family member. Her experiences with the Claskys have shown her how vulnerable Cristina is with respect to losing her Latino roots. Cristina would have lost her values even faster if Flor allowed her to continue her studies in the private school. This struggle between assimilation and cultural preservation is the greatest challenge most Hispanic parents are faced with.

As seen in the movie Spanglish and in situations all around us, when children are brought into the country they usually compare their circumstances to the other children in their school.

This can either motivate them to achieve or conversely force them to search for a source of belonging and identity. Unfortunately for some students, the need to feel like they're back home leads to the creation of or, affiliation with gangs which can offer an outlet for the alienation in their new environments. Through these gangs they can keep their old tradition while at the same time they can adapt their new way of life. These gangs can also provide a false sense of security for them and their family, kind of built in protection. The protection or a feeling of belonging when tied to a gang is a misguided assimilation to one form of community. On the other hand, these same children could learn the language, participate in elections, and perhaps be elected officials. The changes outlined above cannot happen overnight. However, with these changes it is hard for family values to be kept. Familialism is a common theme among Hispanic groups. This is the inherent sense of family pride and confidence within the Hispanic culture. This is why gangs are such an easy and comfortable place for Hispanics to go to when they need a sense of home.

Another challenge faced by families that migrate to the United States of America is income. These families in their search for a better life often find themselves working much harder for less money. As depicted in Spanglish, Flor needs to work 3 jobs to make ends meet. This in itself creates a number of challenges. These challenges are; less time spent with their families,

difficulty pursuing opportunities, and becoming part of a lower class income population. As a result, a large percentage of immigrant families are low-income and are forced to live in areas with high crime rates. Hispanic children who grow up in these neighborhoods often assimilate to the rest of the children in their schools and neighborhoods in order to fit in and not be seen as different by their peers. Unfortunately these neighborhoods can be ridden with gangs and crime. Therefore, gang culture can also become a part of the norm to first generation immigrant children. Even though most children and teens are not involved in gangs, most do dress in stereotypical gang attire in order to blend in with the rest of the crowd. Thus, gang music, life, and culture is hyped up and looked upon as a positive model. While not all-underprivileged Latino youths join gangs or turn to drug dealing or theft, helping to educate this group of people would be a benefit.

When a family decides to immigrate into the United States with children, some of the ethics and values can be lost in the transition and translation. These losses can be seen predominately in the work ethic and sense of strong family values and respect. The work ethic that Hispanic parents come to this country and Hispanic family values which are very strong and keep a family bonded with is not always passed on to their children. This is another challenge with assimilation as a child's perception of reality may be jaded by their surroundings and environment. In the film Spanglish, this aspect is very clear as the young girl Christina slowly changes over to the new more appealing American values and way of life. Christina watches her mother's boss's privileged children play and enjoy life without a care in the world. Deborah Clasky decides to take Christina out shopping and spoil her. Since

this is what Flor is trying so hard to prevent she finds it difficult to understand and accept.

The children of families that emigrate from other countries have a variety of challenges assimilating into the new American culture that they face. This challenge of assimilating while maintaining and preserving ones and culture is not unique to any specific immigrant population. These challenges are; the ability to maintain ones own identity, sense of family heritage, respect and, values while concurrently being submerged in a non-native culture or country. While some of the challenges can be overcome and provide a springboard into a better life some can do the opposite. The perfect dream for these parents is for their child to get an education, obtain a well paying job, buy a house, and raise a family in America the land of opportunity and diversity.