Hispanic Americans Essay, Research Paper

HISPANIC AMERICANS

Hispanics are a group of Americans who share common cultural origins and language. However, Hispanic Americans come from diverse nations and backgrounds with their own history, religion, economy and political experience.

Today, nearly 30 million Americans are identified as Hispanics in the fifty states. The largest group are the Mexican Americans, who account for 64% of the Hispanic Americans. Then come the Central and South America and the Caribbean with 13%, Puerto Ricans with 11%, Cuban Americans with 5% and others are classified with 7%. The states with the largest absolute numbers of Hispanics are California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois and New Jersey.

The reasons why these people immigrated to the U.S.A are different: Some came because they needed money, and with working in the U.S.A they would earn more than what they did in their homecountry (but still less than what white Americans earns). After earning money, they send them back to their poor families in South/ and Central America. Especially in Mexico that’s an important factor in the Mexican economy. Another significant category of Hispanic Americans are formed by refugees who fled Cuba when dictator Castro came to power in 1959. Puerto Ricans came to the U.S.A when after the war with Spain in 1898, America took the Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico to their territory. So, many Hispanics moved to the U.S.A to get a better life, to get away from civil wars, dictators and poverty in their homecountry.

A problem that has appeared among the immigrants in the U.S.A is the assimilation process. The idea of making all the different cultures into one culture; “a pot of stew”, has not been very popular among the Hispanic Americans. They are part of American life, even though they tend to stick to their original language more than many other groups. With complete assimilation OR when completely assimilated in a new country, you forget your culture and identity, and become a part of a new culture, which is here the American culture. They want to preserve their own identity, defined by their Hispanic social and cultural background, rather than see their culture melted with other cultural influences.

Many Hispanics have, very likely because of the assimilation process, problems with fitting in in the American culture. Is this a lack of assimilation? Do they need to get forced into the American culture? Or should they keep their own culture? Has the assimilation gone too far? Maybe it’s not a lack of assimilation at all, maybe it’s just gone too far, and they should think more about adaption rather than assimilation? This last sentence that’s written is by the way the slogan for the Puerto Ricans in New York; “Adaption yes, assimilation no”. As mentioned earlier, the Puerto Ricans came from the Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico after America took it as their territory. They were poor, and many moved to New York city hoping to earn more money there. In New York Hispanics have got very little political influence, and they are trying to get people more active politically with their slogan.

The Hispanics are, unfortunately, not always welcomed the same way as other immigrants, forexample those who came from Europe. When they moved to the USA, they were taken good care of, and helped to become a part of the American society. The Hispanics were not helped the same way. They are often very poor, and many live in parts of big cities together with thousands of other poor Hispanic Americans.

Searching on the internet, I have found facts (I can not be sure, but I assume that they are correct) showing that Hispanic Americans have problems fitting in in the American society:

? Hispanis youths are most likely to abandom the classroom. Their dropout rate is 29,4 percent. Yet the statistics also show that the dropout rate for secondgeneration Hispanic students is higher than for first generation youths, suggesting that assimilation does not always work as intended.

? Gang culture: several hundred members each. Omaha has an estimated 1800 “hard core” gang members.

? Students who are the least assimilated often do better in school than other immigrants and sometimes top even the native born (native born here refers to white Americans).

? An attatchment to one’s home country, culture and language can be very positive for immigrant children in the USA schools. The attatchment helps maintain a sense of identity and self-respect when the family drops in status.