

Chapitre 10 - La communauté hispanique aux Etats-Unis

Hispanics or Latinos constitute the fastest growing ethnic minority in the United States. After the African-Americans, they represent the second largest American minority with nearly 15.4% of the total population.

The constitution of this community has a great variety. First, the Mexican part represents most of 60% of the community. Then Puerto Ricans represent 9.6% with 3.4 million of inhabitant. Finally Cubans represent 3.5 % with 1.2 million persons.

The reason for this community is economic and political. They went to the US generally to search greater economic situation or to flee from political unrest. Mexicans immigrants passed over the Rio Grande to find good jobs and better situations. Cubans ran away from their country after Fidel Castro came to power or to escape the harshness of the Spanish colonial rule. Moreover, after the different wars of the US, the country is in lack of labourers, mostly farm workers and US encourage the labour immigration. But the biggest part of the creation of this community is due to political events. After a war in 1846, the United States bought all lands North of the Rio Grande with its entire population. Then, Puerto Rico became a dependency of US in 1898, and Puerto Ricans became American citizens in 1917.

The Hispanic community has a prominent role in the United States of America. In cities such as Los Angeles they represent half of the population; there are some Hispanics in Congress and with the importance of the religion in the community, their political weight is growing. They influence culture too with their language and their popular background.

Economically, Hispanic people lag behind other communities. Despite the rise of median household income, the unemployment rate soared during crisis reaching 30% in 2010 (8.8% for whites and 12.7% for blacks) and nearly 21% of Hispanic people are under the poverty line.

Hispanic community in the US

Key dates:

1846: border war broke out between the US and Mexico. At the end, Mexico was forced to sell to the US all lands above the Rio Grande river.

1898: Spanish-American War broke out. Puerto Rico became a US dependency after the war.

1942-1962: Bracero program was put in place to encourage the arrival of Mexican farm workers

1959: Fidel Castro comes to power in Cuba.

2005: first Hispanic mayor elected in Los Angeles since the end of Mexican control in the region.

