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# Discrimination of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans

## Reflection

Puerto Ricans and Dominicans encountered discrimination and prejudice when they settled in Chicago, Pennsylvania and Florida. Both created ethnic enclaves in order to preserve their culture. When they arrived to the United States they struggled with the language and adjusting to the community.

In *Implicit Social Knowledge, Cultural Capital and "Authenticity"* among Puerto Ricans in Chicago by Ramos-Zayas states that Latin American and Caribbean migrants were cultural impurities and were viewed as tainting the culture. Chicago residents encouraged Puerto Rican migrants to become Americanized. Their culture was questioned and the media created stereotypes.

The reason their authenticity was questioned was because they did not speak "proper Spanish" Their place of birth was even questioned in order to see if they correlated with other Puerto Ricans who have already assimilated. It was unjust in how Puerto Ricans were challenged in whether they knew the Spanish language or not. Questioning the place of birth was an over extent in generalizing Puerto Ricans.

Chicago Puerto Rican's Story, showed how Puerto Ricans were treated, and the obstacles they overcame in order to have political representation. Upon arriving to Chicago, Puerto Ricans encountered improper living conditions and constantly faced increasing rents and gentrification. The Puerto Rican community never created an ethnic enclave because they were not concentrated in a specific area.

Puerto Rican children were held back in the 1st grade due to the lack in bilingual programs. They were devalued and mainstream institutions, like schools, ignored their social capital. The police were constantly provoking the Puerto Rican youth through brutality and discrimination. However, this created an awareness and relief to the conditions that the Puerto Rican community was facing.

Similarly, to Puerto Ricans, Dominican migrants in Reading, Pennsylvania experienced discrimination because they were not fluent in English. In *English, Spanish and ethno-racial receptivity in a new destination: A case study of Dominican immigrants in Reading, PA* by R.S Oprea is about the difficult transitions when arriving to new destinations, that are often met with

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hostility.

Before the Dominicans arrived at Reading, PA, there were racial problems that made it difficult for an individual to assimilate into the culture. The former mayor of Reading even commented that immigrant groups had to learn English in order to have social mobility. This represents ignorance with a place with no prior history of immigration.

Puerto Ricans and Dominicans faced discrimination and dealing with communities that did not value diversity and preferred to have the status quo. The school administrators and teachers deliberately failed Puerto Rican children. Both groups were exploited by jobs that utilized immigrants by providing them with no job security. Unlike Puerto Ricans, Dominicans were racialized as being black and were systematically discriminated despite speaking Spanish.

Reading, Pennsylvania even exhibited linguistic discrimination from a public space, which meant Dominicans were limited in retaining their language while trying to survive hostile conditions. It got to the point that Dominican youth often tried to work across boundaries to either speak English or pretend not to know Spanish.

Despite, the horrible treatment that Puerto Ricans and Dominicans encountered in Chicago and Pennsylvania, Florida was the opposite towards Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. In *Puerto Rican Families in Central Florida: Prejudice, Discrimination, and Their Implications for Successful Integration* by Aranda stated how Puerto Ricans were concentrated in Orlando, Tampa, Kissimmee, and Poinciana.

Miami was a safe refuge for Hispanic immigrants because Spanish was spoken openly and the Latino culture was not stigmatized. Another attractive feature of living at these thriving Puerto Rican and Dominican communities was that integration was much easier because there was a support network that allowed accessibility to economic opportunities. Puerto Ricans and Dominicans benefitted from transnational family ties, which meant that their extended family connected to the networks, educational opportunities, and cultural capital.

Even though the Puerto Ricans and Dominicans persevered, their children assimilated and started succeeding. Something missing the native culture and that was their story, history, and culture. In *New York Afro-Puerto Rican Roots Music: Liberation Mythologies and Overlapping Diasporas* by Rivera explains that liberation mythologies and diasporas are taught to the children of Latin American and Caribbean descent instead of the glorified colonial, version of the United States. Rivera opens her ethnography with a liberation myth that shows Mama Africa hiding away the real treasures while Mister E demands her of resources.

The history of diasporas among African descendent Puerto Ricans and Dominicans that

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narrates the history that they often do not hear. The one common trait Puerto Ricans and Dominicans have is resilience to survive harsh conditions and acts of discrimination in order to thrive and pursue happiness. It was definitely harder moving to new destinations, especially when the towns were not welcoming.

However, Florida was the best destination especially with having a diverse network of immigrants who have already gone through the process of assimilation. Finally, I believe that change to accompany diversity is investable and one of the ways that is being done is through liberation mythologies

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