

# INTISUN News

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## Hispanic Diversity

If you have seen the latest population statistics produced by the Census Bureau, you may have noticed that they allow people to classify themselves as being of Hispanic origin, and then by their racial origin.

This classification recognizes the fact that the U.S. Hispanic population is not defined by their racial characteristics, but by a common cultural background.

But how homogeneous is the Hispanic population? Can they indeed be classified under a single category?

## Who is Hispanic?

The Hispanic population seems to share a common history and a common set of values, but in reality, there is a quite complex picture.

It could be argued that a Hispanic person is an immigrant, or descendant from immigrants from a Latin-American country. Without forgetting that the descendants from the original Mexican settlers of the American Southwest were already here when a big portion of the original Mexican territory passed to American hands.

There is indeed a common historic thread among all inhabitants of Latin America; they all were at some point colonies of Spain, and achieved their independence at about the same time, around 1820. But from that point on, they developed their own cultural identity,

resulting in clearly distinguishable populations.

Keep in mind, for example, that for a person from Chile, tortillas, mariachis and tequila are as alien as for a person from Mongolia.

Also, Hispanics born and raised within the American culture, have a very different cultural identity from first generation immigrants.

Are then Hispanics people that speak Spanish? This would eliminate a great number of second, third and greater generation Hispanics for whom English is their first language, and who do not have command of the Spanish language.

As is becoming evident, the use of one term that attempts to define such a large sector of the population as one entity has to be inadequate. A very proper analogy would be to treat all the English-speaking people of the world as if they were Australian.

## Become educated

As with any situation that involves people diversity, the first thing that we need to do is to resist our tendency to profile them based on their apparent racial or ethnic origin. We must treat people as the individuals that they are, and learn about their true character and values as we interact with them.

At INTISUN we provide comprehensive workshops that will help you learn about the rich and varied Hispanic culture.