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## **“ILLEGAL”: JOB ATTAINMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AMONG FIRST-GENERATION MEXICAN AMERICANS, 1980s-2000s**

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# “Illegal”: Job Attainment and Socio-Economic Status Among First-Generation Mexican Americans, 1980s-2000s

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## ABSTRACT

Between the 1980s to 2000s, Mexican Americans greatly transformed American society by leaving an imprint on culture, education, and the workforce that continues to resonate today. However, their successes did not come easy as they were challenged with numerous stereotypes, which, in turn, effected the jobs they received and their socio-economic status within society overall. Upon immigrating into the United States, first-generation Mexican Americans struggle with finding stable jobs as their illegal status carried a negative connotation that was influenced by the increase of Hispanic gang violence in the 1980s. Even today, a Mexican American living in the United States may face a limited job market affecting their socio-economic status due to said negative stereotypes. This study seeks to examine the stereotypes experienced by Mexican Americans particularly in the Southwest of the United States, and how said stereotypes affect their job access and their economic stability. These stereotypes that are common in society will be examined through films and media to determine how these forms of art are used to influence or combat stereotypes. Taking a closer look at these stereotypes and their impact on Mexican Americans will consequently allow others to better understand the impact of news media and entertainment on current politics, policies and economic disparities in the Latino community.

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