



THE UNITED STATES AND THE GROWING **XENOPHOBIA** TOWARDS THE MEXICAN **POPULATION**



+150

HATE GROUPS HAVE
BEEN IDENTIFIED



*©The United States and the growing
xenophobia towards the
Mexican population*

Care

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Our views seek to investigate the social, economic, political and cultural phenomena surrounding human migration in different areas of the world, with the aim of defending the universality of human rights.

We observe the migratory processes by looking at their structural causes, the vulnerable populations, the various actors involved and the possible strategies of alarm, denunciation, follow-up and resolution of cases.

We focus on the specialized production of reports, maps and pedagogical contents, which serve as tools for research and action, and which can be useful to social, academic, civil and multilateral organizations.

The evocation of the ARGOS myth -the one with multiple eyes- inspires us to observe, with a plurality of perspectives, the migratory phenomena and the possible recommendations that guarantee free human mobility in conditions of equality and non-discrimination.

In the United States of America (USA), hate crimes due to racial and ethnic discrimination are on the rise. The Latino population has been the most affected. The anti-immigrant discourse of former President Donald Trump was the driving force and co-responsible for the growing xenophobia towards the migrant population in general and towards migrants of Latino origin in particular. However, the anti-Latino discourse in the U.S. is of long standing and is related to the founding racialized policies of the U.S. nation, which paradoxically is formed in its origin by migrants.

Early U.S. immigration laws gave priority to migrants from northern Europe. In 1790, the Naturalization Act granted U.S. citizenship exclusively to “free white persons,” a situation ratified by the U.S. Congress for almost a century. Since then, migration policies have been based on a segregationist perspective, which established “acceptable” migration quotas (from Northern Europe), to the detriment of other populations. In addition, there was a deep racism towards Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, which was influenced by colonialism and its sequels of slavery and genocide.

In the 20th century, migration to the U.S. from Latin America was encouraged by programs to attract cheap labor, such as the Bracero Program, which involved the hiring of thousands of Mexican agricultural and railroad workers, mostly from the poorest rural regions of the region. This program was later denounced as a violation of the human rights of the migrant workers, who were exploited and overcrowded in deplorable conditions.

Approximately 12 million Mexicans currently live in the United States. A large part of this population is dedicated, in most cases, to various service jobs such as cleaning, caring for children, the elderly and the sick, food preparation, se-

curity and construction. Trump's anti-immigrant discourse attacked the Mexican population with particular viciousness, going so far as to state that from Mexico "they send rapists" or people with "the lowest IQ", making it necessary to "protect our families from those who seek to harm us", thus justifying the construction of the multi-billion dollar wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and the tightening of immigration policies on the southern border.

Trump's extremist nationalism fueled the already installed xenophobia against Mexicans and Latin Americans in general, including anyone who speaks Spanish. Anti-immigrant hate groups with supremacist affiliations and advocating the use of violence began to appear more strongly in border cities.

In August 2019, in the city of El Paso (Texas), a white man murdered 22 people in a Walmart supermarket, most of them were Latin Americans. The killer published a statement online where he claimed his intention to fight the "Hispanic invasion in Texas". This type of slogans are frequently issued by philo-Nazi hate groups whose main driver is ethnic cleansing. In the states bordering the Aztec nation alone, where the largest population of Latino origin is concentrated, more than 150 hate groups have been identified: California (72 groups), Florida (68 groups) and Texas (54 groups)¹. In the rest of the country, anti-immigrant hate groups also exist in the states of Arizona, Virginia, Alabama, North Carolina, Colorado, Nevada, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Washington, Mississippi and Colorado².

The xenophobia in the U.S. towards Latinos is only comparable to that suffered also by Muslim populations, victims of the "crusade against terrorism", installed since the events of

1 <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

2 <https://www.celag.org/cambio-de-gobierno-y-ascenso-de-la-ultraderecha-en-ee-uu/>

September 11 and encouraged by the then President George W. Bush. Violence due to xenophobia and discrimination has become a regrettable characteristic of recent times in the USA, both by the security forces, which have been systematically committing police abuses such as the one that led to the murder of the African-American citizen George Floyd and the consequent protests and mass mobilizations throughout the country, and by civilians and hate groups that are strangely allowed without major restrictions.

The proliferation of guns in the national territory is part of this social scourge that has become commonplace. The free bearing of arms has been in force in the U.S. since 1791, according to the second amendment of the Constitution: “A well ordered militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

For their part, governments do not seem to understand the magnitude of the problem. In December 2020, the United Nations met to discuss the approval of a resolution “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”, to which only the United States and Ukraine were against it³.

The recently elected Biden-Harris administration has expressed intentions to improve the situation of migrants, at least this has been expressed publicly, but the fear among migrants remains latent since under the Democratic Party administrations the problem has continued. An example of this happened during the Obama administration, when more than three million undocumented migrants were deported, to the point that several leaders of the Latino community

3 <https://www.axency.com/se-niegan-a-combatir-nazismo-discriminacion-y-xenofobia-espana-estados-unidos-y-la-mancomunidad-britanica/17/12/2020/>

referred to Obama as the “Deporter in Chief”. The largest number of people deported at that time were from Mexico, followed by the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened situations of xenophobia against the migrant population. From expressions such as “the yellow virus” against Asians in general, to the tightening of border security measures with the excuse of not “letting in” the virus from the south (despite the fact that the U.S. is the country with the most cases of infection and deaths). In this regard, in December 2020, Dana Graber Ladek, Head of Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Mexico, emphasized the need not to use the COVID-19 pandemic to stir up xenophobia and the importance of ensuring compliance with commitments made in this regard and protecting the human rights of migrants⁴.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is clear on the importance of race/ethnicity as a positive value to leverage the development of countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants and strongly urges respect for the human rights of migrants - whatever their migration status - refugees and displaced persons.

4 <https://www.onu.org.mx/respetar-y-garantizar-los-derechos-de-las-personas-migrantes-en-tiempos-de-covid-19/>

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