

ARTICLE REVIEWED

The intersection of class, race, gender, and generation in shaping Latinas' sport experiences

McGovern, J. (2021). The intersection of class, race, gender, and generation in shaping Latinas' sport experiences. *Sociological Spectrum*, 41(1), 96-114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2020.1850378>

THE PROBLEM

Title IX was enacted in the 1970s to protect people from discrimination based on their sex. Institutions receiving federal funding were required to provide equal opportunities for activities and access for all people. Title IX is notable for the opportunities it brought for women in sports. Decades after its enactment, Hall (2001) described the saliency of white, middle-class, heterosexual women within sport and sport psychology. According to the NCAA's (2021) demographics database, 6% of college athletes from all divisions were Hispanic/Latino. This small percentage of Latinos in collegiate sports warrants investigation to explore how social class, gender, race, and generation intersect and shape Latina women's sport experiences.



Research Summary:

Thirty-one female Latina athletes participated in this study. All participants were involved in varsity high school sports and 15 competed at the collegiate level. Latina participants were interviewed for approximately 45 minutes.

Conclusion:

Sport experiences were different for participants based on their economic status. High-income participants had parents who enrolled them in organized sports and camps, purchased equipment for practice, and paid for them to join traveling teams. Low-income participants played informally, and due to their family's financial situation joined school sport teams. Latinas with immigrant parents described them as strict in their upbringing due to living in unsafe neighborhoods. Race and ethnicity intersected with sport choice and Latinas' sense of belongingness on their sport team. Participants shared how they felt about sports with Latinx roots and their choice to pursue other sports. However, Latinas also acknowledged the challenges of this decision because of an absence of Latina role models in these sports. Some women played on teams with other women of color or predominantly white women and described how others perceived them in the context of the group. When considering gender, most of the high-income Latinas described how their male relatives encouraged them to participate in sports. Low-income Latinas recounted how female relatives encouraged their participation.

Key Takeaway:

This study explored how Latinas began their sport careers, how their parents engaged with them and their sport, and their sport choice. Participants' economic status, racial and ethnic identities, gender, and generation status are interwoven and have influenced their sport experiences throughout their lives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Hall, R. L. (2001). Shaking the foundation: Women of color in sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 15(4), 386-400. <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.15.4.386>

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National Collegiate Athletic Association. (2021, December). *NCAA demographics database*. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2018/12/13/ncaa-demographics-database.aspx>