**Tu No Eres De Aqui (You're Not From Here) Transcript**

<https://youtu.be/MG0UlfibHcE?si=_Mo3Nai1PoybN_HY>

You know, I have to explain myself like, hello, I am, I am a citizen. You know, I have the skills to do this job. That's why I'm in this position, you know?

Discrimination against Latinos has been a persistent problem for decades. Ever since large numbers of Mexicans started coming to the US in the early 20th century, they have had to deal with unequal pay, unfair work conditions, deportation, language discrimination, and more. These issues remain a problem today. In addition to these injustices, many Latino workers also face the risk of deportation. Latinos coming to this country with the hope of work and a better life are not only denied career advancement but are often sent home once employers have finished exploiting them. Latino workers face these problems regardless of their job, from factories to fields to white-collar office jobs. They must also deal with discrimination in everyday life outside of work. For many Latinos, as soon as someone hears an accent in their English, they are automatically seen as inferior. But discrimination is not limited to an accent. It could be due to physical appearance or simply speaking Spanish.

The first big wave of Latino immigrants to the country were Mexicans arriving after the Mexican Revolution began in 1910. Between 1910 and 1930, the number of Mexican immigrants counted by the U.S. Census tripled from 200,000 to 600,000. Many of them were first welcomed as laborers in the United States as they provided companies with cheap, abundant labor. But once the Great Depression hit, many were sent back to Mexico because job opportunities disappeared. Additionally, some Americans blamed Mexicans for the economic disaster.

A second wave of Latino immigration began in the 1940s and fifties. Mexicans were no longer the only group as more Puerto Ricans and other Latinos began coming. Starting in the mid-1960s, Latino activists like Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez began organizing and working to unite Latinos to fight for things like better pay and equality.

Dolores Huerta was an advocate for farmworkers' rights, fighting for higher pay and better working conditions for farmworkers. Thanks to her consistency, she became a co-founder of the National Farm Worker Association. Cesar Chavez led successful boycotts and strikes that eventually led to the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act in 1975. This law guaranteed farmworkers the right to negotiate work hours, working conditions, and wages with their employers. To this day, this movement created the only law that protects the rights of farmworkers to unionize.

In Wisconsin, cities like Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine, and Waukesha drew large numbers of Latinos looking for better job opportunities in the 1960s and seventies. By 1980, there were around 35,000 Mexican-Americans living in the state. Today, around 63.7 million Latinos live in the United States, with around 447,000 in Wisconsin alone. Of Beloit’s 36,000 people, Latinos make up about 21%, which is approximately 7,600 people. Latinos in Beloit live an average lifestyle. They work, pay bills, attend to their families, and they repeat the cycle every day to make ends meet.

Despite these numbers and the work by people like Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, Latinos still face discrimination in work and life. For example, Maria Delgado, who worked at the School District of Beloit as a school board member and is now currently working at Rock County as a division manager for economic support, has faced discrimination in and out of the workplace. I have actually had clients tell me, “Why don't you just go back to your country? You should not be having that job. That's a government job. That should be for someone, you know, that as a citizen.” And you know, I have to explain myself like, hello, I am a citizen. I have the skills to do this job. That's why I'm in this position, you know?

But I have actually been discriminated against myself. I've been discriminated against a lot based on my accent. At one time, I was in a restaurant with my kids, and we were all speaking Spanish. A gentleman sitting in front of us kept complaining that the restaurant should not be serving people that don't speak the language and just complained about us speaking Spanish. I do feel like I have to work twice as hard to feel like I'm where I need to be, and it's a struggle.

Despite the continued discrimination, the increasing diversity in workplaces and public spaces means Latinos no longer feel alone in their struggle. We share the same background, same experiences, and we often have someone to relate to. Due to the growing numbers of Latinos in Beloit, there are special events for Latinos that anyone can attend. There are more small-owned Latino businesses, and there are more Spanish speakers available to Latinos in Beloit. As long as we're doing work we enjoy, we should focus less on proving ourselves to others and feel comfortable with who we are and what we do.