

## Theorizing Latino Rates of Crime and Deviance

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### **Abstract**

*Theorizing crime in the United States has been an endless task for academics for decades. Grand theories such as functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction, have characteristically offered potential explanation for general social phenomena in relationship to crime. Many sub-theories employing general themes of grand theories have allowed for potential support for specific social forces in the crime relationship. Examining Latino crime and deviance in the United States is an interesting academic undertaking as well. This research argues Latino crime offers distinct theoretical characteristics that are universal in nature and not specific to amount. Presentation of these characteristics allow for the research to offer theoretical explanations for Latino crime.*

### **Introduction: Historical Context of Latino Crime Statistics**

The United States Federal Government defines Hispanic Americans (also known as Latinos and/or Latinas) as those living in the United States of America who has immigrated or whose ancestors have emigrated from Spanish or Portuguese-speaking countries (United States Office of Management and Budget, 1997). Such countries include Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Cuba, Puerto Rico, South American countries, and other Central American areas. Hispanics are known as an ethnic origin group, not necessarily a separate race category. Racially, Hispanic Americans are most often classified as whites. Due to this racial classification, terms such as non-Hispanic whites, Anglos, and not Hispanic/Latino/Latina are most often used to differentiate between Latinos and white Americans not of Hispanic origin. The terms Latino and Hispanic should be considered interchangeable within this discussion, as should the terms whites, Anglos, and non-Hispanics in describing those who are not of Latino or Hispanic descent. For this project Hispanic/Latino populations will be statistically compared with White/Anglo populations, due to this group's status as the majority population in the United States they are the most viable reference group. Such practice is common in explorations of race and ethnic group crime variations (Ellis et al., 2009). Having covered these definitions and terminology concerns, we move on to the content overview of this chapter.

The key subject of this chapter is to theoretically explore subtopics in Latino crime studies that correlate to crime and delinquency rates. Such a discussion is important because Hispanic/Latinos are the largest minority race or ethnic group population in the United States at 54 million people, which accounts for approximately 17 percent of the population according to 2013 population estimates (United States Census Bureau, 2014). Extensive growth of this ethnic population has been recorded over the last thirty-five years as Latinos were estimated to account for only 6 percent of the United States population in 1980 (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

Further estimates project that the Latino population will grow to encompass approximately 28 percent of the U.S. population by the year 2050 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Due to the steady growth of Hispanic people in America it is paramount that academic study and research be mindful now, and in the future, of an ethnic group that will likely represent the majority race/ethnic group in the U.S. at some time in the near future, projected to be as early as the year 2044 (Frey, 2014). Thus, a myriad of issues relating to Latino crime rates and victimization are important to academic studies conducted in the United States; many of which have been conducted previously and a number of those are reviewed in this project. Subtopics to be examined include Hispanic-Anglo comparisons for crime rates in terms of both official and self-reported data, Hispanic population percentages in relation to crime rates in given areas, Hispanic-Anglo comparisons correlating to antisocial behaviors in children, and, finally, Hispanic-Anglo comparisons in terms of crime victimization.

The goals of reviewing these subtopics in this section are threefold: (1) To theoretically understand the variation that exists when official data and self-reported data are used in comparing Hispanics and Anglos in relation to crime and delinquency rates; (2) to theoretically highlight the variation existing in studies that look at Hispanic population percentages in a given area and the rate of crime and delinquency in said areas; and finally (3) to theorize if belonging to either the Anglo or Hispanic populations makes one more likely to be victimized by homicide. Theoretically, these examinations allow for a thorough examination of relevant Latino crime statistics from different research perspectives, which create a contextual overview illustrating whether or not Latinos are more likely to commit crimes, what types of crimes they are more likely to commit if they do, and finally whether Latinos are more likely than Anglo counterparts to be victimized by crime. The importance of Latino crime studies has been argued before as the ethnic group was growing into the largest minority population in the United States (Martinez, 1997a & 1997b), such a sentiment is as ever important now as Latinos are slowly becoming the majority race/ethnicity in America (Frey, 2014).

### ***Latino-Anglo Comparisons in Criminal and Delinquent Behaviors***

Research findings that compare Latinos and Anglos crime and delinquency rates are mixed. This variation mostly results from the type of data used in each study. Research utilizing government data suggests Hispanics have higher rates of offending than do whites. Self – reported data studies results are mixed at best; many report offending at similar levels. Theoretically, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) in their work titled *A General Theory of Crime*, argue the criminal justice system has little impact on criminal behavior. They offer crime may be “glamorous and profitable for law enforcement” which suggest official statistics may not offer the “perfect” picture of crime in the United States – it may be a result of self – promotion and/or a vehicle for additional resources more than a reasonable illustration of crime. With that said, critically assessing varying crime data sources is necessary to develop a “clearer” understanding of Latino – Anglo crime rates. This will be accomplished by first, reviewing research utilizing official data, second, reviewing research utilizing self – reported data, and third, critically assessing both and presenting a theoretical interpretation based on the “clearer” understanding. This allows for better understanding not of the inherent validity of either set of results relative to one another, but in what these results mean relative to how they are framed by the data they use. We continue this discussion by detailing a number of studies using officially collected data. Some argue that increased rates of violence among racial and ethnic minorities, especially Latinos, are not due to intrinsic group dynamics, but to the social and institutional conditions present in the communities where these groups typically live (Martinez, 1996; Sampson et al., 2005). Racial or minority threat theory postulates “that social control measures directed against Blacks intensify as the Black population grows larger in size” (Eitle & Taylor, 2008:p. 1104). We suggest as Latino populations increases, so will the official control mechanisms, including, but not limited to, increased arrests.

In her landmark Chicago study, Block (1985) found that increases in Latino population within the city correlated with increased rates of homicides that surpassed rates of Latino population influx. This was especially true in relation to assault homicides committed by Latinos (Block, 1985: p. 107). This study is significant because its use of official data came not from arrest records, but from Chicago Police Department investigation files (Block, 1985: p. 106). Pokorny (1965) found that Latinos in Houston from 1958 through 1961 had homicide rates per 100,000 group members over two times higher than whites (p. 480). This study, like Block’s (1985), used police investigation files to obtain official data.

It was also noted that percentages of Latino on Latino homicide was quite high for the time period, accounting for 86.2 percent of all Latino murders studied (Pokorny, 1965: p. 484). Another study found that homicide rates among Hispanics in the Southwest were two times as high as rates for Anglos, and that rates for young Hispanic males, aged from 15 to 24 years, were nearly on par with that of young black males nationally (Smith et al., 1986: p. 269).

Sommers and Baskin (1992) used official arrest data from the New York Police Department and found that rates of violent crimes for Hispanic males, including homicide, robbery, assault, and burglary, were exponentially higher than that of white males (p. 194). It should be noted that this same table depicts violent crime rates as higher among Hispanic females in relation to rates for white females (Sommers & Baskin, 1992). These data are supported by the Subculture of Violence theory which postulates Latino cultural traits such as *machismo* and *marianismo* promote violent tendencies to maintain communal status. Additionally, research concentrating on gang-related homicides in Los Angeles County, found that Hispanics are disproportionately victimized in comparison to not only whites but also all other races and ethnicities contained within the study (Hutson et al., 1995). Zahn and Sagi's (1987) study on stranger homicide in nine American cities purports that Latinos are more likely than whites to commit homicide, but are not as likely as blacks. They found that the rate of Latino committed homicide for males is 42.8 per 100,000 populations, whereas rates for whites are only 10.5 (Zahn & Sagi, 1987: p. 387). For reference the rate for black male committed homicide was found to be 72.7 (Zahn & Sagi, 1987: p. 387). Bradshaw and his colleagues (1998) found, in their study on lethal violence in San Antonio, that Mexican American homicide rates are in-between that of African Americans and Anglos. This result is similar to various other studies in that rates of Hispanic violence are between the rates of blacks, which typically rank the highest, and whites, which typically rank the lowest.

In terms of other officially detected offenses, Latinos are again found to have higher rates of criminal and delinquent behaviors than Anglos. Such offenses in this discussion include drug offenses, general delinquency, and rates of recidivism for property offenses. Many scholars have theorized the "war on drugs" (Lynch, 2012). Wacquant (2009) suggests "punitive drug" policies are utilized to socially control minority group members by "neutralizing the risks" posed by the "underclass". Garland (1996) argues officials utilize punitive drug laws to mask the government's inability to responsibly provide adequate health and welfare to the masses. Lynch (2012) furthers this theoretical interpretation of the 'war on drugs' by including "has likened the contemporary US criminal justice system to a 'racial caste system' of social control that has replaced de facto exclusionary laws and policies" (p. 176).

Brownsberger (2000) found that Hispanics are considerably more likely to be imprisoned for drug offenses than their white counterparts. In this study incarceration rates for drug offenses in Massachusetts were examined and showed that such arrests represent almost 55 percent of the Hispanic prison population. This percentage is considerably larger than whites and blacks in the same settings, at approximately 10 and 28 percent respectively (Brownsberger, 2000: p. 10). It is also noted in the study that Hispanics are imprisoned for drug offenses at rates 8 times higher than whites (Brownsberger, 2000: p. 1). With historical circumstance considered, Brownsberger (2000) argues that the data of his study depicts the "war on drugs" as a "war on minorities" targeting the "racial/ethnic groups that are the most disadvantaged and who identify themselves as the most disadvantaged in our society" (p. 11).

Research suggests a correlation between delinquency and future criminal behavior (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Many theoretical assumptions suggest this is the case – Differential Association, Social Learning, Social Disorganization, Strain, and Labeling. Of course these are not exhaustive, however, each suggest a correlation between delinquency and future propensity for criminal behavior. When looking at delinquency between whites and Latinos, the relevant research presented highlights higher rates of delinquency for Latino youth. Kaplan and Busner (1992) found that Hispanics have higher rates than whites in being admitted to the youth correctional system in New York, but they are not as likely as black youths to be admitted (p. 770). In another study, Kingery and his colleagues (1995) examined juvenile violence in rural Texas middle and high schools. This study led Kingery et al. (1995) to argue that high rates of intrapersonal violence by adolescents near the United States and Mexico border in Texas may be linked to the "large and constant influx of illegal Hispanic immigrants" (p. 343). This suggests the influx of immigrants into a socially disorganized society may produce violence as a means of protection and/or frustration due to the insecurities perceived by the strain of attempting to assimilate.

Finally, we examine a study using officially collected data on recidivism for property offenses. The Benedict and Huff-Corzine (1997) study used a measure of first re-arrest while on probation and found that the re-arrest rate for Hispanics was 39.8 percent, while the rates for whites and blacks were 25 percent and 35.8 percent, respectively (p. 248-249). Benedict and Huff-Corzine (1997) also note that histories of drug use are significant in the likelihood of recidivism, especially among Hispanics and whites (p. 249). Theorizing recidivism postulates returning a criminally labeled offender into the same disorganized environment of which she/he came, does not legitimately result in a likelihood of successful reentry. Studies using self-report data compare crime and delinquency between whites and Latinos, and unlike officially generated data, comprise of mixed results. Few studies concentrate on comparing general crime and delinquency, but the majority of self-report research explores offenses surrounding illegal drugs. Thus, the discussion on self-report studies will be two-fold: first we will examine studies on general offenses and second we will outline the studies on illegal drugs.

A number of studies find that Hispanics have higher rates of general criminal and juvenile offending (Huizinga et al., 1994; Kingery et al., 1995; Kelley et al., 1997; Vazsonyi & Flannery, 1997), while others find no significant relationship exists (Winfree et al., 1994; Felson & Staff, 2006) or that Anglos have rates higher than Hispanics (Weber et al., 1995). Using data from the Denver Youth Survey and the Rochester Youth Development Study, Huizinga et al. (1994) found that annual prevalence rates of juvenile delinquency held that Hispanics had a higher percentage of offenders than whites. These longitudinal data sets found that Hispanic rates of delinquency were generally between that of whites and African-Americans (Huizinga et al., 1994: p. 9). Kelly et al. (1997), using the same data sets, found that Hispanic youths have higher levels of violent offending prevalence from ages 11 through 17 (p. 6). A self-report study on middle school adolescents in a southwestern city found that Hispanics reported “significantly” higher levels of delinquency than did Caucasians (Vazsonyi & Flannery, 1997: p. 288). The Winfree et al. (1994) study tested self-reported delinquency through gang-related activities in a social learning informed context, while Felson and Staff (2006) looked at the links between delinquency and academic performance. Neither study found statistical significance in terms of whites or Latinos being more apt to report offenses than the other. Each study found that other factors related to the increase or decrease of delinquency among race and ethnic groups, such factors include gang membership, social learning variables, ties to social bonds, and measurable levels of self-control. In their study on a middle school aged sample, Weber and her colleagues (1995) examine race and ethnic culture as informed by social bonding elements and the effects these constructs have on delinquency. Ultimately, they determine that whites report higher levels of delinquency than Hispanics (Weber et al., 1995: p. 369). This study serves as the only example of such a result among the relevant studies gathered for this project.

The greatest amount of research on Latino-Caucasian comparisons of self-reported criminality and delinquency gathered for this project focus on illegal drug offenses. Unlike comparisons for officially detected offenses, this focus uncovers nearly as many studies that find Anglos have higher rates of illegal drug offenses than Hispanics (Johnston et al., 2002; Newcomb et al., 1987; Robins et al., 1991; Whitmore et al., 1997). Beyond these uncharacteristic results, even more studies have found no statistical significance to differentiate Latino offending from white offending when rates of illegal drug offenses are measured (Barnes & Welte, 1986; Flannery et al., 1994; Flannery et al., 1996; Kandel, 1991; Maddahian et al., 1986; Mieczkowski, 1996; Parker et al., 1995; Wallace & Bachman, 1991; Winfree et al., 1994). Despite more evidence to the contrary, there exists a number of studies that purport higher rates of drug offenses by Latinos than by whites (Bachman et al., 1991; Bloom et al., 1974; Brunswick, 1969; Chavez & Swaim, 1992; Flewelling et al., 1994; Grunbaum et al., 1996; Mott & Haurin, 1998; Swaim et al., 1997). Similarity exists in the number of studies per result category when considering this subject. While these results show great variability in drug offense rates between these two groups, some studies note that Latinos are more likely to be involved with hard drugs (Bachman et al., 1991; Mieczkowski, 1996), while whites more often use marijuana and partake in underage drinking and underage cigarette smoking (Bachman et al., 1991; Flannery et al., 1996; Robins et al., 1991).

What we can glean from the review of relevant research results on Latino-white crime comparisons is that variation exists dependent upon type of data used in a given study. Generally for studies using officially recorded data Hispanic crime and delinquency rates tend to be higher than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, while self-report studies tend to exhibit no correlation between Hispanics and higher rates of criminal involvement. Furthermore, a few studies find Anglos to have higher crime and delinquency rates than Latinos.

As such, these divergent results beg for consideration of the following question: What ultimately does the differentiation in results from relevant studies tell us about types of data being used? Obviously, the answer to such a question is not so easily uncovered. Despite the complexity of this issue, three possible conclusions emerge as a surface level answer to this question. First to consider is that official data used to document Latino crime statistics may be inherently biased and as a result overestimates the incidence of this ethnic phenomenon. Second, that self-report data could also be flawed and, as such, plagued by recall bias and underrepresentation. Thirdly, we must consider that one of the data sets used could be deemed viable and thus correctly reports the relationships between statistical evidence of Latino crime and delinquency rates in relation to Anglo rates. Lastly, the “true” picture of these crime and delinquency rates is a result of critically assessing both methods of data collection. Obviously these answers are quite simplistic and fail to address all probable issues therein, yet they serve as a fair overview to assess the possible reasons why such result variation exists within the studies explored. It should be noted that a myriad of other possible problems could be at work here: incorrect measurements, ineffective methodologies, misplaced research foci, and even imprecise data analysis. Despite these possible problems and the previously discussed issues, the critical assessment of the varying results allows a clearer picture of Latino crime rates in comparison to Anglo counterparts. These studies are especially significant in that they touch on a wide variety of different types of crimes. It should be noted that official data studies on the subject tend to be more frequent and longitudinal in nature. Ultimately the results from both official data and self-report data studies are comparatively consistent in their differing outcomes. The majority of official data studies find Latinos with higher crime rates than that of Anglos. Interestingly, most self-report studies suggest the comparison relationship between Latinos and higher crime rates have a loose correlation at best, with most reporting no existing relationship at all.

### ***Latino Population Percentage and Crime Rates***

Limited research has suggested the relationship between the percentage of Hispanics in a population and crime rates in a given area is either positive or nonexistent. In other words, some studies find that higher percentages of Hispanics in the population relate to higher rates of crime in that area, while other research finds that no such correlation exists. This work finds a lack of research to support a negative correlation between Hispanic population percentages and relative crime and delinquency rates. The data used in these studies are officially detected offenses, which we have noted before are more likely to represent positive relationships between crime rates and Hispanics. Kposowa et al. (1995) purports a positive relationship exists between the percentage of Hispanics in a population and the rate of crime offenses, especially violent ones. Using data from 3,076 United States counties, Kposowa and his colleagues computed OLS regression estimates that found population percentages of Hispanics as a strong determinant in relation to homicides, other violent crimes, and property offenses (Kposowa et al., 1995: p. 92-94). They also found that urbanity, population density, poverty, and divorce rates were strong determinants of violent crimes, homicides, and property crimes alike; leading them to argue that “the factors that explain crime in areas in which these groups [blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans] are highly represented are the same factors that explain crime elsewhere”. Thus, they “conclude that race- and ethnic-specific explanations of crime are unwarranted” (Kposowa et al., 1995: p. 99). Such a claim centers on the contention that environmental conditions, such as population density, urbanity, poverty, and high divorce rates, are institutionalized factors that permeate areas with heavy ethnic populations.

The social disorganization which permeates these neighborhoods is suggested as a catalyst for these crimes. Merton’s Anomie theory suggests overpopulated areas with limited resources are structured to produce alternative, or at times, criminal behavior to meet assimilation goals within a society of limited means. Hagan and Palloni (1998) assert that property crime offenses are higher in neighborhood areas with greater percentages of Hispanics. They found that among arrest records studied from the border cities of El Paso and San Diego that Hispanics were much more likely to be involved in petty property crimes than drug offenses (p. 381). They contend that “young male illegal immigrants” are more likely to engage in these types of crimes while “they attempt to satisfy basic subsistence needs while moving through the early stages of seeking, finding, losing, and regaining employment” (Hagan & Palloni, 1998: p. 381), again, a contention supported by the principles of Anomie Theory. In their study on foreign-born Hispanics in American metropolitan areas, Reid et al. (2005) report that a positive relationship exists between Latino population percentages in terms of robbery rates, but argue that no significant relationship exists between Hispanic population percentages and crime rates in metro

areas when exploring homicides and property offenses. Another study focusing on homicide rates in the three border cities of Miami, El Paso, and San Diego conducted by Lee et al. (2001) found similar results and subsequently report no correlation exists between a population’s percentage of Hispanics and the rate of murders in that area. Ultimately and quite plainly, Lee et al. (2001) claim “immigration is not related to higher Latino homicide rates in these three cities” (p. 570). Despite the lack of correlation between Latino population and homicide rates Lee and his colleagues (2001) contend that one “effect” was consistent in their study, namely that higher levels of poverty are related to higher incidences of Latino homicide (p. 570).

***Latino-Anglo Variation in Crime Victimization***

The main purpose of this section is to better understand whether being Latino makes an individual more or less statistically likely to be criminally offended against. Victimology, an area of Criminology, examines the likelihood of one group’s propensity to be victimized in relation to the victimization of other groups (Ellis et al., 2009: p. 223).

Lifestyle/exposure theory posits the likelihood of victimization is a result of experience with the criminal element. Lifestyle theory suggests victimization is not a result of learning criminality, but a result of relationship. The more a person interacts with the criminal element, the more likely one is to be victimized – higher crime areas in the overpopulated “underclass” environment produce a greater likelihood of victimization. These high-risk communities offer a substantially increased risk of victimization. This is a form of exposure, and the association to it results in victimization, which is increased within higher populated communities – more people, more associations. Thus, lifestyles produced in socially disorganized limited communities’ results in high levels of exposure to the strains resulting in criminal activities and victimization through high – populated forced association.

This section suggests a difference exists when critically assessing rates of Anglo-Hispanic homicide victimization. Some of the earliest efforts to study Hispanic homicide as a subtype uncovered empirical evidence that Latinos are victimized by homicide at rates higher than Anglos (Block, 1987; Pokorny, 1965; Smith et al., 1986, Zahn & Sagi, 1987). Examination of the Texas Annual Vital Statistics reports, (Texas Department of Health, 2001-2013) representing one of the largest sources of official data on Latino homicide, indicates Latinos have higher homicide victimization rates than whites. From year 2001 through 2013 the number of Latino homicide victims was higher than their fellow white Texans, except in the year 2007 when there were 506 white homicide victims versus 505 Hispanics victims. Also, Hispanic Texans were the most likely group to be victimized by homicides in all years except 2013 when more black victims were recorded, 475 blacks were victim to homicide versus only 437 Hispanics during this year (Texas Department of Health, 2001-2013). The following table outlines the number of homicides by race/ethnicity contained within the Vital Statistics Annual Reports from year 2001 through year 2013, excluding the year 2008 due to lack of homicides by race/ethnicity category in that annual report.

<b>Texas Department of Health Vital Statistics Annual Reports, 2001-2013, excluding the year 2008* Homicide Victimization by Race/Ethnicity by Year</b>				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Race/Ethnicity of Victim, Number of Homicides</u>			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
2001	415	405	548	39
2002	405	433	538	36
2003	488	412	581	38
2004	380	462	532	29
2005	386	446	613	51
2006	349	483	567	51
2007	506	433	505	64
2009	411	410	513	160
2010	382	429	489	71
2011	365	409	432	42
2012	373	444	492	33
2013	416	475	437	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,876</b>	<b>5,241</b>	<b>6,247</b>	<b>657</b>

\*Data for the year 2008 is excluded because no such category exists for homicide deaths by race/ethnicity of victim.

This table suggests Hispanic homicide victims are on average the highest annually in numbers of homicide victims among all races/ethnicities. Also of note is that from the year 2001 through the year 2009, Hispanic homicide victims eclipsed the 500 mark every single year. During this same time period 500+ homicides for one group only occurred one other time: In the year 2007 as the number of white homicide victims reached 506. For the period of 2001 through 2013 the occurrence of Hispanic homicide victimization was at its highest during the year 2005, when 613 Latinos were murdered in Texas. This 2005 number of Hispanic victims is the highest single year total by any race/ethnicity during the covered period of time. During the time period covered within the table the total number of white homicide victims were 4876, black victims totaled 5241, Hispanic victims totaled 6247, and other race/ethnicities totaled 657 victims. In relation to this data, Hispanic homicide victims accounted for nearly 37 percent of the homicide victims in Texas from 2001-2007 and 2009-2013 while white Texans accounted for approximately 29 percent of the homicide victims during the same time period. Statistically speaking a Hispanic person is more likely to be a victim of homicide in Texas than a white person or a black person according to these Vital Statistics Annual Reports (Texas Department of Health, 2001-2013).

Despite the empirical evidence covered in this section, conflicting research found Anglos are more likely to be victimized by homicide than Hispanics (Martinez, 1997a, Martinez, 1997b, Martinez & Lee, 1998). In his study on ethnic group homicide in Miami, Martinez (1997a) found that Latinohomicide was underrepresented in relation to their population size for the area; Latinos account for 63% of population with homicide rate at 38 percent (p. 25). Martinez (1997a) points out that whites are the only ethnic group within the Miami study that is killed in proportion to their population size and at a comparable percentage rate as Latinos per 100,000 group members (p. 25 & 30). In another study Martinez (1997b) analyzed the commission of violent crimes and the victimization of immigrants from Mariel, Cuba in Miami between the years 1980 and 1990. This research found that Mariel immigrants were victimized at levels that far outweighed their population size, and that their victimization far exceeded what pre-Mariel Cubans in Miami faced (Martinez, 1997b). It should be noted that media accounts portrayed the Mariel immigrants as an extremely violent subgroup during this time period, whereas this research shows that homicide rates among this group were drastically sensationalized and overrepresented (Martinez, 1997b). In yet another study by Martinez with his colleague Lee (1998) results were similar in homicide victimization for Latinos in Miami from 1985 to 1995. They found that immigrant Latinos and Haitians, though representing a much larger proportion of the population, had lower homicide rates than whites and blacks (Martinez & Lee, 1998). Martinez and Lee (1998) note that homicide victimization per 100,000 group members is at approximately 27 percent for Anglos and at approximately 24 percent for Latinos (p. 297). It is important to note that the discrepancy in crime victimization rates among whites and Latinos may exist, in part, due to the country of origin for the Hispanic subjects in each of these studies. Ellis et al. (2009) argue “the majority of Hispanics in the United States are of Mexican ancestry” whereas the Martinez (1997a, 1997b) and Martinez & Lee (1998) studies were “conducted in Florida where the majority of Hispanics are of Cuban descent”. However, more research is needed to solidify such a conclusion.

Theorizing Latino crime rates is an interesting project. There are many “theories of crime” to explain the differing types and distributions of crime. However, what, if any, is specific to Latino crime rates in comparison to other groups? This chapter argues theoretically, Latino crime rates are not specifically different, with the possible exception of the machismo/marianismo argument within the Subculture of Violence perspective. This work suggests Latino crime rates are similar to previous immigrant population rates. As Latino immigration and assimilation continues for the group as a whole, Latino crime rates will mirror those of other ethnic minority relegated to the “underclass”. Social control theory suggests the majority will continue to utilize minority populations, more specifically, the most recent immigrant populations, as a vehicle for prosperity giving rise to the need to utilize institutional mechanisms of social control, resulting in higher rates of crime and delinquency for Latinos.

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