

## HISPANICS AND VIOLENCE: A RESEARCH AGENDA LEADING TO MORE MEASURED RESPONSES

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### Abstract

*There is a great need for a serious sustained study of the reality that interpersonal violence acts and its consequences pose among the Hispanic population and communities. This essay provides a brief overview of IPV in Hispanic populations within the United States. Furthermore, the essay calls for placing Hispanic youth's and young adults' increasing involvement with IPV within a broader discussion of violence within the criminal justice system and public health agencies. There is also an increasing need to call for basic, applied, and policy data and understanding for cooperative, sustained inquiries that would lend themselves to more measured evidenced-based policies and practices sustained to ameliorate IPV in Hispanic populations as well as in other populations.*

Most Americans remain troubled by interpersonal violence as it presents itself in their respective communities (American Psychological Association, 1993; Brooks, 2003, in McShane; Feld, 1999; Feyerherm, 1993; McCord, et al. 2001). While almost American families experience some personal duress with their children's coming of age, those who are termed serious violent offenders or state raised youth trouble their respective families, communal institutions, and policymakers (Currie, 1985; Edelman, et. al. 2006). According to McCord, Widom, and Crowell (2001:7), "Public policy on juvenile crime, particularly the trend towards more positive sanctions appears to be influenced in part by predictions of future crime rates...predictions that proved notoriously inaccurate". In many of the major Hispanic barrios

and related community centers of Hispanic populations, the looming specter and reality of interpersonal violence (IPV) remains a key concern for those moving from home to school, work, or recreation. The specter and reality of interpersonal violence is also influenced by electronic media and popular culture. Some use these currents and trends in response to heightening fears and concerns with the Hispanic populations' growth, spread and advances (Huntington, 2005). Nevertheless, the reality of interpersonal violent acts, processes, and consequences marks our barrios and communities' social fabric and the quality of life, for both their neighbors and families.

Over-representation of Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians in the juvenile justice system requires immediate attention. The existence of dis-

proportional racial representation in the juvenile justice system raises concerns about differential exposures to risk and the fairness and equal treatment by the police, courts, and other players in the juvenile justice system (McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001: 258). There is great need for a serious sustained study of the reality that interpersonal violent acts, processes, and consequences pose among Hispanic population and communities (Jenson, 1999; Kempf-Leonard, et al., 1990; Leonard, 2005).

This essay provides a brief overview of IPV in Hispanic populations in the United States. Furthermore, this essay calls for placing Hispanic youths' and young adults' increasing involvement with IPV within a broader discussion of violence in the criminal justice system and public health agencies. This essay suggests that violence (i.e., murder and non-negligent manslaughter, manslaughter by negligence, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and other assaults, needs to become the main focus of not just state and federal oversight agencies, but also of leading national voluntary action agencies like American Civil Liberties Union, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, and the National Council De La Raza and Children's Defense Fund. While this issue has been subject to two major NSF (National Science Foundation) workgroups and IOM (Institute of Medicine) report efforts, the calls have

been left without actions and recommendations posited and underscored. Professional associations and CJS have partially heeded calls for attention to violence to move from "silo" approaches and perspectives to more collaborative and comprehensive ones (Harrell, 2007; Harrison, et. al., 1989; Herrera & McCloskey, 2003; Menard, 2002). No less demanding are calls for basic, applied, and policy data and understanding for cooperative, sustained inquiries that would lend themselves to more measured evidenced based-policies and practices sustained to ameliorate IPV in Hispanic populations as well as in other populations.

### *Background and Context*

Hispanic populations in the U.S. have grown considerably the past 2 1/2 decades. Only in the past 2 1/2 decades have Hispanic criminal offending and victimization become important national and community concerns. Nevertheless, beyond local and state reports, there remains little national data on Hispanic violence to inform national policymaking and programming about this concern.

The need for sound, reliable, systematic data on criminal offending and victimization has led some to explore the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) reports, OJJDP's (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention) Annual Reports,

National Center on Health Statistics, and BJA National Crime Victimization Survey data. The more commonly touted data reporting homicides and lesser offenses related to violence is the FBI's UCR program. These data come from local CJSs enforcement agencies through their state lead agency to the FBI. Yet with the exception of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), a comparable, robust, reliable, ethnic indicator is missing or wanting. Some have made calls for exploring and using local and state educational institutions such as Schools Critical Schools incidents, Emergency Hospital Trauma Registry Systems, and the Child Fatality Review reports. While promising, they are far from being able to provide quality national data needed to inform state or federal policy making.

Yet even with the growth and spread of the Hispanic population throughout the United States, many cities and states still do not collect or report offending or victimization by ethnicity of Hispanic origin populations. For some time, there have been calls for collaborative, private-public ventures to deal with violence. The need to address Hispanic IPV at the local and national levels will require significant collaborative and cooperative efforts from public CJSs, educational, health and social service agencies. These efforts are needed to provide essential data that

will lead to evidence-based strategies and programs.

Most commonly associated with IPV were at-risk and marginal Hispanic youth and young adults residing in more strained and problem filled families and neighborhoods (Leonard & Sontheimer, 1995; Penn, et al., 2006). A half century ago the deviant and delinquent actions of young adults from Black and Hispanic populations residing in inner city ghettos and barrios drew occasional concern from the media, occasional social science investigative interests, and usually drew the attention of some public policy-making agencies and groups at the state level.

*There was a surge in serious juvenile crime rates beginning in the late 1980s through the early 1990s. The juvenile arrest rate for violent crime began decreasing in 1994 almost as rapidly as it had increased and by 1999 was back to the rate of the late 1980s. Most of all the increase in U.S. youth homicides from 1987 to 1993 involved homicides committed with guns. (McCord, Widom, Crowell, 2001: 2)*

There has been a steady influx of youths and young adults from Black and Hispanic populations into almost all states and major SMSAs (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area) in this country (Lauritsen, 2005; Leonard & Sontheimer, 1995; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2007). Their presence and needs challenge social and public institutions who are mandated to serve

these youths and young adults (Leonard, 2005; Leonard, et al., 1995; Zimring, 2005). Solving the problem of youth violence and young adult IPV is a priority in almost all major American cities, suburbs, and even rural communities.

The composition of youth gangs in America has changed from southeastern European immigrants to contemporary society's new, urban village, street-oriented youth, especially those linked to urban street, drug violent gang nexus and networks. Urban street, drug violent gang nexus and network images associated with Bloods/Crips, MARA Savatrucha, Latin Kings, and the Skinhead Nation were mentioned a few times. The youth gang drug violence nexus and networks are now common throughout the Metropolitan Statistical Areas and some rural communities. Firearms and illicit drugs are two factors that some pose as key to this nation's community youth homicide and serious violent offending. For those who work with these children, families, school staff, child/family advocates and CJS, interpersonal violence experiences remain common and vexing concerns. Those drawn to deal with IPV, which is more commonly experienced and concerns most Hispanics, will argue for attention to those acts, processes, and consequences in familial and communal settings. The limiting of discussions to Hispanic gangs, drugs, and firearms among youths and young adults fails to address more common unaddressed

violence experienced in their families, neighborhoods, and social networks (Jargowsky, Desmond, & Crutchfield, 2005). The context of violence is associated with intimate relationships of parents, loved ones, partners, and friends. No less important is IPV related to child neglect, maltreatment, abuse and fatalities, which must also be addressed in schools and related public settings.

Some have posited for over a decade that a Hispanic crime wave was on the horizon. While violence and crime have been declining over the past decade, those involving serious IPV, assaults, rapes, and homicides provide grist for those stoking political themes supporting their campaigns. Some drew attention to the rise of super predatory violent offenders who test the challenged Criminal Justice System (CJS) with their drug, guns, and violent activities (Huntington, 2005). Wilson and Guilio's (as cited in Zimring, 2005) expected prognostications have not developed, and some critics suggest that their work has fallen short of their dire warnings (Penn, 2006).

It is difficult not to associate violent crime and victimization with cities containing vast numbers of multi-problem families and neighborhoods (Feld, 2005; Frazier & Bishop, 1995). However, violent crime and victimization are no longer just problems of inner city barrios and ghettos. School violence has opened discussions about violent crime and victimization

of youth and their families across urban, suburban, and rural communities. National and state leadership provide a substantive but measured response to IPV and familial violence, and the public at all levels recognizes that it is a problem that cannot be ignored (CDC, 1986; Griffin & Bell, 1989; Snyder, Sickmund & Poe-Yamagata, 1996).

For the past 2 1/2 decades, national, state, and local advocacy groups and policymakers have made calls for action regarding NCLR and IPV, a persistent problem challenging Hispanic populations and their respective communities. Criminal offending, a staple of the FBI's annual reports on index crime in the United States, is reported by race but not by ethnicity, especially that pertaining to Hispanic groups in the United States. The NIJ's (National Institute of Justice) Bureau of Justice Statistics through the OJJDP Annual report provides some limited data concerning IPV offending and victimization, but does not provide complete ethnic indicator data for essential items related to offending and victimization that it reports for all racial groups. The NIJ's Bureau of Justice Statistics through National Crime Violence Survey reports IPV offending and victimization data sources by global ethnicity measuring Hispanics. BJA National Crime Violence survey provides data concerning offending and victimizations by ethnicity that FBI Uniformed Crime Index needs to collect and report.

Despite the NCVS, many advocates further argue IPV is a persistent concern among Hispanics in the United States suffering from a lack of existing data sources. Only when we have these reliable valid data sources and specialized studies may evidence based driven understandings policy and practice address the challenges that IPV criminal offending and victimization pose our nation and respective communities. Even more problematic is the need for sustained ongoing data, and theoretical understandings address the complex issues that IPV presents in different Hispanic populations and communities in the United States.

## **Methods**

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) remains the key data source for violent crime and victimization and is collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The NCVS survey collects estimates of violent acts of simple assault, aggravated assaults, robbery, sexual assaults and threatened, attempted and completed rapes. The NCVS suggests augmenting their limited data on homicides by turning to NCHS Vital and Mortality data. The NCVS respondents to the survey who identify themselves as Mexican, Chicano, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Central or South American are grouped as one ethnic body, defined in the survey data as Hispanics. Comparisons of population groups include non-Hispanics

who are identified as White, Black, American Indian, and Asian; yet a comparison of ethnicity to the FBI UCR does not allow comparing these two major NIJ data and reporting systems.

From these data, BJS draws estimates of national criminal victimizations. This essay will first report NCVS data based on the numbers and rates of criminal victimization collected in 2000. These data will provide a profile of the victims' characteristics by gender, age, income, marital status, and household income from 1993 to 2000 (Rennison, 2001). Next, we will review NCVS rates of violent crime by gender, marital status, annual household income, and place of residence for 2000. Additionally, the research will describe the relationship of the offender to the victim. The presence and use of weapons used in the violent incident will also be examined. Next, the research will describe the injury inflicted during the incident and treatment provided thereafter. The victims' perception of the offenders' use of alcohol and drugs relative to the incidents will also be discussed. The question of the victim reporting these incidents to law enforcement will also be described.

### ***The National Crime Victimization Survey***

In 2000, the NCVS found that Hispanics age 12 and over had experienced 690,470 violent incidents (rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated or simple assault) (Rennison,

2002). In a special NCVS report covering 1993 to 2000, the most vulnerable persons during this period were juvenile males, ages 12 to 17, who came from households with incomes under \$7,500 and whose parents never married. In 2000, a person of Hispanic origin experienced 11% of all violent crime. In terms of the number of victims associated with the violent crimes, this statistic translates to about 10% of the population of the United States were involved in violent crimes. Most of the violent acts were simple assaults, acts without the use of a weapon and resulting in minor injuries.

Nearly one in five of all Hispanics were robbed or victims of assault with a weapon, resulting in serious injury or both. The NCVS further noted that Hispanic assault rates were lower than that for Whites, Blacks, and American Indians. The survey further found that Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites reported similar rates of aggravated assaults, yet less than those reported by Native Americans but higher than those persons of Asian American descent. Hispanics reporting rapes and sexual assault accounted for 2% of all victimizations. The NCVS reported that in 2000, persons of Hispanic origin experienced 11% of all violent crime among persons 12 years of age or older in the United States, while also reporting 690,470 rapes, sexual assaults, robberies and aggravated and simple assaults. In terms of crime victims' relationship to the offender, 9%

stated that the offender was an intimate friend or relation, and 34% reported it was an acquaintance or friend. Similar to Whites and Blacks, Hispanics were as likely to have reported their victimization to the police. Hispanics who were victims of robbery reported rates as high as their Black counterparts, which was highest among the groups examined. The NCVS study demonstrated that while all persons may be vulnerable to violent crime, some individuals and groups are differentially victimized. Blacks and Native American rates of victimization are higher than Hispanics, but Hispanic rates are higher than Asian Americans'. Rates of violent victimizations varied by gender, age,

marital status, annual income and residence status. By racial groups, Hispanic male victimization rates were higher than that of Hispanic females. Hispanic male victimization rates were closer to Black rates, yet both were higher than White rates. For Hispanic females victimization rates were closer to rates for Whites but less than that for Black females. During the NCVS survey study period, Hispanics ages 18 to 49 were victims of crime at rates lower than Blacks and Whites. Young Hispanics were more likely to be violently victimized than were older Hispanics as the rates decreased by age cohort.

In terms of marital status, Hispanics report differential rates by whether

Table 1. Number & Rate of Violent Victimization by Type of Crime, Race, & Hispanic Origin, 2000

	Non-Hispanic				
	Hispanic	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Number of Victimizations					
Total violent crime	690,470	4,363,350	929,860	50,970	68,880
Rape/sexual assault	13,810	183,180	39,760	7,540	1,990
Robbery	140,450	400,290	176,810	2,5101	5,300
Aggravated assault	131,150	871,900	164,480	15,880	7,680
Simple assault	405,060	2,907,980	548,800	25,050	43,910
Rate of victimizations per 1000 in each group					
Total violent crime	27.9	26.5	34.	52.3	8.4
Rape/sexual assault	0.6	1.1	1.5	7.7	0.2
Robbery	5.7	2.4	6.5	2.6	1.9
Aggravated assault	5.3	5.3	6.0	16.3	0.9
Simple assault	16.4	17.7	20.1	25.7	5.4

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. From National Criminal Victimization Survey by P. Klaus and C. Maston, 2000. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Table 2. Rate of Violent Crime by Hispanic Origin, Race, Gender, Age, Marital Status, Annual Household Income, and Residence

Victim Characteristics	Average Annual Victimization Rate per 1,000 Persons Age 12 or Older				
	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic			
		White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	44.8	40.8	51.2	105.0	21.7
Gender					
Male	53.9	48.0	56.6	125.6	28.6
Female	36.0	34.0	46.7	86.4	15.2
Age					
12 to 17	90.1	98.0	99.9	159.1	43.6
18 to 24	70.3	89.7	91.3	153.0	36.2
25 to 34	39.5	53.0	52.9	167.2	22.7
35 to 49	28.5	34.3	39.2	62.4	16.4
50 to 64	14.2	15.9	15.6	42.1	8.5
65 or older	7.1	4.1	7.6	22.8	3.5
Marital status					
Never married	72.3	80.8	76.5	143.7	35.0
Married	22.8	20.1	22.0	56.0	11.9
Widowed	10.4	7.9	11.5	39.3	6.6
Divorced/separated	56.3	69.1	54.3	147.5	49.8
Annual household income					
Less than \$7,500	64.2	83.3	72.4	152.1	28.8
\$7,500 to \$14,999	49.6	51.2	61.7	144.1	30.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	42.0	45.1	53.8	62.0	22.9
\$25,000 to \$34,999	40.9	44.8	46.6	95.0	23.6
\$35,000 to \$49,999	39.1	40.7	42.0	122.2	15.8
\$50,000 to \$74,999	48.3	37.7	41.8	36.1	18.2
\$75,000 or more	46.7	30.0	51.9	49.7	17.1
Location of residence					
Urban	46.6	55.0	60.8	121.3	22.7
Suburban	43.6	39.2	45.3	103.7	21.1
Rural	41.2	31.1	28.2	70.8	17.9

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See Methodology, page 8. From National Criminal Victimization Survey, by P. Klaus and C. Maston, 2000. Bureau of Justice Statistics.



they were single, married divorced/separated or never married. Hispanics who never married reported the highest rates of victimization. Yet, their victimization rates were less than those of Blacks or Whites. Among those married, Blacks and Hispanics both reported similar rates, but rates higher than Whites. Yet, among Whites, who never married or were separated/divorced, rates were higher than those for both Blacks and Hispanics.

In terms of annual family household income, Hispanic families with annual incomes of \$7,500 or less reported the highest rates of victimization among that ethnic group. Hispanic rates were less than rates for both Whites and Blacks in terms of annual family household income and criminal victimization with one exception. Whites with incomes of less than \$7,500 reported higher rates than did Blacks or Hispanics. The rate of vio-

lent victimization for Hispanics did not provide major, consistent patterns across levels of income. In terms of residence, Hispanics reported smaller differences in the rates of violent victimization: urban 46.6%, suburban 43.6% and rural 41.2%. Only for rural residents were Hispanic rates higher than they were for Blacks (28.2%) or Whites (31.1%). Hispanics residing in urban households reported victimization rates lower than that of Blacks (60.8%) and Whites (55.0%). Hispanics (43.6%) residing in suburban households recorded victimization rates second to their Black (45.3%) counterparts but only slightly higher than that of their White (39.2%) counterparts. Next, NCVS reported on the characteristics of crime victimization event: the relationships to offender, presence and type of weapon and injury, and the nature of the injury and treatment of criminalization injury. Hispanics reported that they were more

Table 3. Relationship of Victim to Violent Offender by Race and Hispanic Origin of the Victim, 1993–2000

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of violent victimization				
	Hispanic	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Intimate*	9	11	12	12	3
Other relative	4	5	6	6	2
Friend/acquaintance	34	38	38	38	30
Stranger	52	46	45	44	64
Average annual number	942,360	6,631,250	1,318,130	105,690	155,700

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Table 4. Presence and Type of Weapons by Race and Hispanic Origin of Victim for the period 1993–2000

Presence and type of weapon	Percent of victims of violent crime				
	Hispanic	White	Black	Non-Hispanic American Indian	Asian
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No weapon	59	69	54	66	57
Unknown if weapon was present	8	8	10	7	10
Weapon	34	23	36	26	32
Firearm	14	7	17	11	8
Knife	8	6	8	5	8
Other weapon	10	9	9	13	9
Don't know type of weapon	1	1	1	1*	1*
Average annual number	942,360	6,631,250	1,318,130	105,690	155,700

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology*, page 8. From *National Criminal Victimization Survey* by P. Klaus and C. Maston, 2000. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

likely to be victimized by a stranger (52%), followed by a friend/acquaintance (34%), then intimates (9%), and finally by other relatives (4%). The rates of being victimized by intimates or some other relative were similar to the rates for Blacks and Whites in this same category. In terms of IPV, Hispanics reported lower rates than did Blacks (12%) or Whites (11%), but these were minor differences.

Between 1993 and 2000, almost all victims reported incidents that did not involve a weapon: Hispanics 59%, Whites 69%, and Blacks 54%. From 1993 to 2000, the percentage of Hispanic victims of violence with a weapon (34%) was only slightly lower than the percentage reported by Blacks (36%) but significantly higher than the percentage reported by Whites (23%) and Native Americans (26%). Blacks and Hispanics were more likely to report that their offenders used a firearm

than were Whites, Asian Americans, or Native Americans. In terms of injury from violent offense, almost 7 in 10 of all victims reported not being injured. Native Americans (35%), Blacks (29%) and Hispanics (27%) reported higher rates of injuries from their violent incidents than did Whites (25%) or Asian Americans (23%). In terms of seeking treatment for their injuries, 15% of Hispanics, 15% of Whites, and 13% of Blacks did not seek treatment. Of those injured seeking treatment, Native Americans (20%) and Blacks (16%) were more likely to seek treatment than were Hispanics (12%) or Whites (10%). As to whether the victim perceived the offender to have been using alcohol or drugs, only 32% of Whites, 28% of Hispanics, and 24% of Blacks reported these incidents to be alcohol or drug related. Almost all groups reported that they were not able to discern if their offender had

Table 5. Injury from Crime and Treatment of that Injury by Race and Hispanic Origin of the Victim, 1993–2000

Injury and type of treatment	Percent of victims of violent crime Non-Hispanic				
	Hispanic	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Not injured	73	75	71	64	77
Injured	27	25	29	36	23
Not treated	15	15	13	16	12
Don't know if treated	0	0*	0	0	0
Treated	2	10	16	20	11
At scene/home	5	4	6	8	4
Doctor's office/clinic	1	1	2	2*	1*
Hospital but not admitted	4	4	7	8	5
Treated other locale	0*	0	0*	0*	0*
Admitted to hospital	1	0	1	1*	0*
Average annual number	942,360	6,631,25	1,318,130	105,690	155,700

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See Methodology, page 8. From National Criminal Victimization Survey by P. Klaus and C. Maston, 2000. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

been using alcohol or drugs. Almost 4 in 10 of all groups reported their victimization to police. Blacks (48%) were more likely than Hispanics (44%) and Native Americans (45%), followed by Whites (42%). Asians were less likely to report their victimization than all other groups. Rennison (2001) further notes that victimized Hispanics were least likely to be reported by males under the age 20 and those who never married. Moreover, she observed that at all income levels, Hispanics were likely to report their victimization to police at similar levels. Hispanic females (53%) were more likely than males (39%) to report their incident to the police.

In terms of residence, one in two victims of crime did not report their

crime to the police (Urban 46%, Suburban 42%, Rural 47%). As for their reasons in not reporting to the police, Hispanic males and females posited a range of reasons. Hispanic males were more likely than females to offer the reasons for not reporting their victimization as minor crime or lack of proof of the crime.

One observes small variations between racial groups for various reasons in not reporting. Most racial or ethnic groups' victims suggest that it "was a private matter" or it was "a minor crime" (Rennison, 2002:5-6). In terms of non-fatal violent crime, there was a major decrease from 1993 to 2000, from 63% to 29.8%. Rennison (2002) observed that for every demographic characteristic the rate of vio-

Table 6. Victim's Perception of the Violent Offender's Use of Drugs or Alcohol by Race and Hispanic Origin of the Victim, 1993-2000

	Percent of violent victimizations Non-Hispanic				
Victim's Perception of Drug or Alcohol Used by the Offender	Hispanic	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Using Alcohol or Drugs	28	32	24	44	19
Not Using Alcohol or Drugs	28	29	29	19	25
Don't Know	44	39	47	37	55
Annual Average Number	927,410	6,553,650	1,303,740	105,410	152,920

**Note:** The annual average numbers differ from those in other tables because sample cases in which the respondent did not provide an answer were excluded. From National Criminal Victimization Survey by P. Klaus and C. Maston, 2000. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Table 7. Reporting of Violence to the Police by Race and Hispanic Origin of the Victim, 1993-2000

Reported violence to police	Hispanic	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	44	42	48	45	39
NO	55	56	50	53	61
Don't know	1*	1*	1*	2*	0*
Average annual number	941,750	6,628,660	1,316,660	105,690	155,700

**Note:** The average annual number differ from those in other tables because sample cases in which the respondents did not provide an answer were excluded. Based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See Methodology, page 8. From National Criminal Victimization Survey by P. Klaus and C. Maston, 2000. CBureau of Justice Statistics.

lence substantively declined. While violence and crime have been declining over the past decade, those involving IPV, assaults, rapes, and homicides remain catalysts for political campaign electioneering. School violence has opened discussions about violent crime and victimization to suburban and rural communities. For some, interpersonal violence is a persistent problem challenging Hispanic populations. Hispanic criminal offending and victimization have been important national and community concerns. The NCVS remains the key data source for violent crime and victimization and is collected by the BJS. Comparison population groups include non-Hispanics who are identified as White, Black, American Indian, and Asian.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) found that Hispanics age 12 and over have experienced 690,470 violent incidents (rape, sexual assault, robbery & aggravated or simple assault) (Rennison, 2002). In 2000, individuals of Hispanic origin experienced 11% of all violent crimes, which represented 10% of the United States' population. The NCVS further noted that Hispanic assault rates were lower than for Whites, Blacks and Native Americans. Hispanics reporting rapes and sexual assault accounted for 2% of all victimizations.

The NCVS survey also found that violent crime incidents against Whites, Blacks and Hispanics markedly declined from higher rates in 1993. The rate for Whites declined 50% and for

Blacks 51%. The NCVS survey found that violent victimization rates for Hispanics dropped from 63% per 1,000 to 28% per 1,000. Blacks and Native American rates are higher than Hispanics, but Hispanic rates are above Asian Americans. Rates of violent victimizations varied by gender, age, marital status, annual income and residence status. By racial groups, Hispanic males' rates were higher than Hispanic females. Hispanic males' rates were closer to Black rates, yet both were higher than White rates. For Hispanic females their rates were closer to Whites, but less than Black females. During the NCVS survey study period, Hispanics ages 18 to 49 were victims of crime at rates lower than Blacks and Whites. Those Hispanics, who never married, reported the highest rates of victimization.

In terms of annual family household income, those Hispanic families with annual incomes of \$7,500 or less reported the highest rates of victimization among Hispanics. Hispanics rates were less than for both Whites and Blacks in terms of annual family household income and criminal victimization, however, with one exception. Whites with incomes of less than \$7,500 reported higher rates than did Blacks or Hispanics. The rate of violent victimization for Hispanics did not provide major consistent patterns across levels of income. In terms of residence, Hispanics reported smaller differences in the rates of violent victimization: Urban 46.6,

Suburban 43.6 and Rural 41.2. Only for rural residents were Hispanic rates higher than they were for Blacks 28.2 or Whites 31.1. Those Hispanics residing in urban households reported rates lower than for Blacks 60.8 and Whites 55.0. In terms of IPV, Hispanics reported lower rates than did Blacks (12%) or Whites (11%) but these were minor differences. Native Americans (35%), Blacks (29%) and Hispanics (27%) reported higher rates of injuries from their violent incidents than did Whites (25%) or Asian Americans (23%). 15% of Hispanics, 15% of Whites and 13% Blacks did not seek treatment. Blacks (48%) were more likely than Hispanics (44%), Native Americans (45%) followed by Whites (42%) to see treatment.

### *Summary and Recommendations*

The Hispanics' over involvement in violence is not borne out by one of the few national data survey. The NCVS's data from a limited community sample or institutional data may suggest findings and trends regarding Hispanics and interpersonal and victimization that is misleading or suggest inaccurate conclusions. The NCVS data discussed previously in this paper shows that Hispanics usually were not the largest group of perpetrators unless compared to Asian Americans. The over criminalization of Hispanics in the media continues to be evident although NCVS data states otherwise. Overall, national and state criminal justice sta-

tistics need to include ethnicity data, yet few have turned to this pivotal data for analysis. Although crime and victimization rates have surged and waned for the last three decades, Blacks and Hispanics remain disproportionately impacted as offenders and victims. The need for national data and understandings that states and communities can gauge violence by Hispanic populations remains a key priority. However, without the recasting of ethnic identifiers that more comprehensively, systematically, and precisely attend to Hispanic groups in the United States, substantive data and understandings will not be forthcoming. Some states such as Texas do collect this information, however, there needs to be a concerted effort to streamline this effort and allow policy makers and researchers easy access to it to support future evidence-based strategy efforts to advance the field of in-depth analysis.

### **Recommendations**

Increasing and facilitating multi-agency and multi-system efforts in collection of CJS data, reflecting calls for services to law enforcement departments and agencies and responding to these calls for services by these law enforcement department and agencies, is greatly needed with particular attention paid to data containing ethnic indicators for Hispanic populations in the United States. All efforts made to have UCR reports collect ethnic indicators for Hispanic populations

in the United States should be made similar to that collected by NCVS.

There should be an increase and facilitation of multi-agency and multi-system efforts in the collection and monitoring of child fatality review (CFR) data. Attention to calls for service are beyond CFR's current abilities, but a national workshop between NIJ and ACF (Administration for Children and Families) should address these child fatality issues as well as calls for services from state to local child protection services, law enforcement departments, and government and non-profit agencies, and county health departments. The focus should be to revitalize the data collection and practice recommendation related to child fatalities with particular attention paid to reliable ethnic indicators for Hispanic populations in the United States.

The United States Department of Education and Safe and Drug Free Schools should make a multi-agency and multi-systemic effort to collect of critical school data about incidents that occur at schools. These efforts may seek to reflect those related to BJA offenders and victimization programming concerning national to local school systems. They may explore NCVS ethnic data measures with data collected by the Center for Disease Control's Youth Risk Behavioral Survey. The calls for data would allow for school administrations and boards to collaborate with law enforcement departments and agencies to better pre-

pare for school violence and related incidents. Again, these efforts need to collect and contain ethnic indicators for Hispanic populations in the United States.

With regard to homeless/runaway youths and youth street gangs, an exploration and facilitation of cooperative and collaborative efforts among NIJ/VOCA/OJJDP and Administration for Children Youth and Family is needed. Homeless, runaway, and throw-away youths and youth street gangs' careers and involvement with programming care and service episodes require specialized and distinct outreach, intervention, and follow-up approaches.

Further discussions are required to create, support, advance, and implement evidence-based practices in creating seamless data archival and analysis systems to support CJS and AFCY policy and programming efforts at federal and state levels.

Finally, some discussion is required to take advantage and to advance IOM, NSF, and MacArthur Foundation forays into researching violence, with particular attention to Hispanic populations and violence (Chalk & King, 1998; McCord, et al., 2001; National Research Council, 1993a; National Research Council, 1993b). Without close attention to these reports, moving on to the next generation of capacity building of exemplary models involving IPV and Hispanic populations in the United States, the potential impact of future reports will be attenuated. These efforts afford great lessons learned and possible points of depar-

ture for third sector planning and programming efforts. The collection of valid, reliable data for monitoring and surveying violence offending and victimization data would not only help support policy makers at the federal and state levels with investigations and interventions, but it also could help encourage a follow-up to the MacArthur Foundation by the W.T. Grant Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson, Pew Foundation, Annie Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Carnegie Foundation in addressing violence offending and victimization in America's next largest minority populations and respective communities in which they reside.

The call for sustained investigations, quality data, and collaborative interdisciplinary perspectives to address violence in Hispanic populations has been made for over 50 years. The dearth of national, comprehensive, self-reported data, and studies of non-institutionalized Hispanic populations to complement the limits of the NCSV efforts to build evidence-based policy and programming is great. The NCVS remains the major data and reporting base, but due to global measures may not be able to focus and ground understanding and discussion.

The Hispanic population in the United States is now the largest ethnic minority population. Hispanics are now part of almost all SMSA communities in the United States. Hispanics are well covered in the Department of Labor's, U.S. Census's, and National Institute

of Health's surveys and monitoring and reporting systems. With the exception of NCVS, Hispanics remain outside the FBI Index I and II reporting data. There is a need to address Hispanic and violence issues: child fatality reviews, neglect/abuse/sexual assault of children and youth, calls for services to criminal justice agencies, and court dispositions and incarceration as it involves violence and its consequences. It is crucial for a workgroup to collaborate with NIJ and these data and reporting systems. The workgroup could serve to identify key issues, priorities, and measures that NIJ, BJA, OVC, and OJJDP could address regarding Hispanics and violence. Until this is done, the efforts, results, and recommendations of the National Research Council and IOM will be lost to time. Measured actions and policies rest on sustained, solid, reliable and valid data and understanding in order to help shape prevention, intervention and incapacitation policies and programs. Without it, the nation's meager resources, current, past and future, will not be utilized to effective and efficient ends.

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