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## Hispanics and violent crime in the United States: examining the effect of segregation

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HISPANICS AND VIOLENT CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES: EXAMINING THE EFFECT  
OF SEGREGATION

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

In

The Department of Sociology

by  
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B.S., Louisiana State University, 1997  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study focuses on Hispanics and violent crime. Previous studies (Krivo and Peterson, 1993, Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996) analyze crime rates among blacks; however, the research on Hispanics is very limited (Massey and Denton, 1992). The majority of sociological studies analyze racial residential segregation in order to explain higher rates of violent crime among blacks. (Peterson and Krivo, 1993; Frey and Farley, 1996.) Most researchers employ the Index of Dissimilarity (D), which measures evenness (distribution of the population), in order to measure segregation. (Fischer and Massey, 2000). In this study, I plan to fill the gap in previous literature by employing the segregation measure of evenness (D), along with several other variables, in order to see if it has a positive effect on Hispanic violent crime, specifically homicide

## INTRODUCTION

The comparison of crime rates among different racial groups has been the focus of much sociological research. However, the majority of this research centers on blacks and whites. (Shihadeh et. al, Krivo and Peterson, 1996). These studies show that factors such as poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and single family households indeed have an effect on the rate of black violence. (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996; Shihadeh and Maume, 1997). Overall, results indicate that blacks tend to experience these types of negative social consequences more so than whites, and that these experiences tend to increase violence. (Krivo and Peterson, 1996).

For many years, the black population has been considered the largest minority group in the United States. (United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/>) According to the 1990 Census, however, the Hispanic population is growing rapidly. Census estimates show that in the United States the Hispanic population is now increasing at a faster rate than the black population. Estimates also reveal that Hispanics will be the largest minority in the United States by the year 2010. (United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/>)

The purpose of the following study is to find models that predict high rates of Hispanic crime. Previous research has indicated that the black population has experienced an increase in violence due to various negative social conditions. (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Lee, 2000) There is little research on whether this link exists in Hispanic communities. Due to this, it is crucial that Hispanics become the focus of more research in social science. In the following analysis, I plan to incorporate several structural factors in order to discover which if any of these factors have an influence on the rates of Hispanic violent crime.

Segregation has been the focus of numerous studies. (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Massey and Denton, 1993) These studies argue that Blacks are segregated into areas of low disadvantage. These areas of extreme disadvantage have significantly high crime rates. Blacks therefore are subject to higher rates of crime as well as other negative conditions, thus the link between segregation and crime. (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Massey and Denton, 1993)

Most researchers have employed the index of dissimilarity to measure evenness in order to explain segregation. (Peterson and Krivo, 1993; Sims, 1999; Massey and Fischer, 1999; Fischer and Massey, 2000) In this study, I plan to utilize the segregation measure of evenness (D) in order to find models that predict high rates of Hispanic crime. The purpose of this study is to discover whether segregation, as well as other factors, have an effect on the rate of violent crime among Hispanics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Race and Crime

The focus of much sociological research is the link between race and crime. (Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987). Massey and Denton (1993) argued that segregation can be observed by focusing on race, not class. This is due to the fact that affluent blacks are segregated in certain areas as well the black underclass. The racial residential segregation of blacks is not voluntary, and it does not result from lack of income. In contrast, racial residential segregation results from white prejudice, institutional discrimination, and racial public policies. Massey and Denton (1993) argue that blacks are forced into extremely disadvantaged areas where they have no other option but to endure phenomena such as low income, poverty, unemployment, low education, family disruption, and crime. (Massey and Denton, 1993) Massey and Denton (1993) state that segregation is solely responsible for areas of extremely concentrated poverty, and the concentration of poverty automatically results in the concentration of other negative social conditions, specifically crime.

Wilson (1987) on the other hand argues that class, not race, is a predictor of life chances. He says that two structural changes in the United States economy have caused elevations in crime, drug abuse, unwed motherhood, illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty. The first change is a transition from goods-producing to service-producing industries. "Manufacturing industries have been a major source of black employment in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, these industries are particularly sensitive to a slack economy, and blacks lost a considerable number of jobs during the recession-plagued decade of the 1970s." (1991:647) The second is the relocation of manufacturing industries from inner cities to suburbs. Wilson explains that in earlier years, the ghetto neighborhood was composed of employed adults. According to Wilson, black working

and middle classes brought stability to these neighborhoods. When this “industrial restructuring” occurred, some low skill jobs vanished and were replaced by high skill jobs, while other jobs moved to the suburbs. This resulted in the black middle and working classes moving out of the inner cities in order to follow the jobs. Those who remained in these inner cities were left to suffer the lack of jobs. Wilson argues that joblessness and the disappearance of work in inner cities are the main causes of poverty and other negative social situations (crime, low education, single-parent households) for residents in these areas. (1996) Blacks in these areas were socially isolated, and this resulted in an increase in violent behavior. (1996)

### Segregation of Blacks

Massey et al. (1994) attempt to discover reasons for the geographic concentration of poverty. They study five different types of neighborhoods (white nonpoor, black nonpoor, black poor, black very poor, and racially and socioeconomically mixed neighborhoods) by analyzing the movement of the poor into and out of these neighborhoods. Their results show that the residential segregation of African Americans into urban housing markets is the cause of the geographic concentration of poverty.

Harris (1999) examined whether housing prices are lower in neighborhoods with high proportions of black dwellers. The researcher seeks to discover whether this phenomena is a result of discrimination or of other neighborhood characteristics not involving race. Results indicate that housing prices are definitely lower when there is a high concentration of blacks in the neighborhood. Whether discrimination or socioeconomic status effects these values depends on whether the houses are owned or rented.

Krivo and Kaufman (1999) develop a measure of racial residential segregation under conditions of low black-white contact. “The results show that black-white desegregation is likely



when the black population is small, but is unlikely otherwise. Yet, when multiple ethnic groups are sufficiently large, a moderate level of black-white segregation is necessary for whites to maintain low neighborhood contacts with blacks, even when the proportion of African Americans is small.” (1999:93).

South and Crowder (1997) analyze patterns of annual residential mobility between poor and non-poor neighborhoods. The researchers find that

“education and marriage increase the likelihood of leaving poor tracts, while age, home ownership, and receiving public assistance reduce it. Blacks are substantially less likely than whites to escape poor tracts and substantially more likely to move into them, even after socioeconomic status is controlled. Residential segregation by race and poverty status and the supply of new housing in the metropolis also influence the likelihood of moving between distressed and nondistressed neighborhoods” (1997: 1040).

St. John and Clymer (2000) measure exposure as opposed to the more commonly used measure of evenness in order to explain racial residential segregation by level of socioeconomic status. Results indicate that in their own neighborhoods, blacks with high SES have more possibility of interacting with high SES whites than low SES blacks do with low SES whites.

### Black Segregation and Crime

Shihadeh and Flynn (1996) focus on the link between segregation and crime. They measure spatial isolation of black from whites and its effect on black violent crime. Results indicate that black isolation has a strong impact on the rates of black violence. In cities where blacks were isolated from whites, there is a marked increase in the amount of black violent crime.

In a similar study, Shihadeh and Maume (1995) research segregation and crime by measuring the impact of black centralization in inner city areas on the rates of black violent crime. They find that there is a positive relationship between black centralization and black violent

crime. “Black homicide rates are highest when Black residents are heavily segregated to the core area of cities” (1995:275).

Peterson and Krivo (1993) study the effect of racial segregation on black urban homicide. They find a positive relationship between the two phenomena. Peterson and Krivo suggest that “social isolation, rather than social deprivation, is the mechanism by which segregation leads to higher levels of homicide among African Americans “ (1993:1001). Krivo and Peterson (1996) examine poverty and urban crime. The researchers draw from Wilson’s theory that social disadvantages in neighborhoods leads to social isolation. This isolation leads to negative social consequences such as poverty and lack of jobs. Krivo and Peterson argue that extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods have unusually high rates of crime. They also examine whether equally disadvantaged black and white neighborhoods experience the same crime rates. They find that

“extremely disadvantaged communities have higher levels of crime than less disadvantaged areas in both black and white neighborhoods. Overall, crime rates are substantially higher in black communities, however disadvantage has the same pattern of effects on crime in black and white neighborhoods.”  
(1996:640, 642)

In a later study, Krivo et al (1998) examine the variation of social disadvantage across cities among blacks and whites, more specifically the geographic concentration of poverty, male joblessness, and females-headed households. “We use the term concentrated disadvantage to describe the degree to which poverty and other disadvantages are confined to a limited number of neighborhoods within a city in contrast to being spread throughout an urban area.” (1998:61) The researchers find that between 1980 and 1990, Black and white disadvantage became more geographically concentrated with regard to poverty and female-headed households, but not male joblessness. Also, Black disadvantage is significantly more concentrated than white disadvantage

with regard to all three dimensions. The researchers reiterate the importance of racial residential segregation in explaining these black and white differences.

McNulty and Holloway (2000) test a conditional effect hypothesis “which predicts that the strength and magnitude of the association between racial composition and crime rates will dissipate with increasing distance of neighborhoods from public housing projects” (2000:707). They find support for their hypothesis among violent crime, but not among property crime.

Morenoff and Sampson (1997) examine joblessness, family disruption, and violent death across the black and non-black community areas of Chicago from 1970-1990. Findings suggest that high rates of joblessness and family disruption correspond with higher rates of both violent and accidental deaths. Evidence indicates that this phenomena occurs in both black and non-black communities, and that the relationship has strengthened over time.

### Segregation of Hispanics

There are other studies that have shifted the focus of segregation from Blacks to Hispanics. Frey and Farley (1996) examine residential segregation levels in 1990 and changes in segregation from 1980-1990 for Latinos, blacks, and Asians at the city level. They also examine multiethnic metropolitan areas in order to see if there is a difference in segregation levels. They explain that while black segregation was still the highest, there was a steady increase in Latino and Asian residential segregation in the 1980s. Also, black residential segregation declined during the 1980s. Results indicate lower levels of residential segregation in these multiethnic metros among blacks, Latinos, and Asians. Levels were even lower when other minority groups were growing in the same area.

Massey and Denton (1992) examined what effect race has on the spatial and ideological assimilation of immigrants from Mexico into the United States. They test three theoretical

perspectives: assimilation, ethnic enclosure, and ethnic competition. With regard to ideological assimilation, findings show that assimilation theory is most applicable. “Mexicans’ propensity to identify themselves as white rather than mestizo increases with age, education, income, occupational status, and English language ability among the foreign born” (1992: 255). In analyzing spatial assimilation, assimilation theory is again supported. “The likelihood of attaining suburban residence and the probability of residential contact with Anglos both increase substantially with rising education, income, occupational status, and with English language ability among the foreign born” (1992: 256).

Eggers and Massey (1991) study the structural forces that cause urban poverty, and they compare the effect of these structural forces among Hispanics, blacks, and whites. The researchers base their study on the theoretical arguments of Wilson and Murray. Wilson argues that urban poverty is caused by “the structural transformation of the urban economy and the decentralization of employment” (1991: 249). Murray argues that the welfare system is responsible for urban poverty. Results indicates that these two theories do account somewhat for poverty, but they are not the most important factors. The researchers find the overall earnings rates influences urban poverty the most among blacks, whites, and Hispanics. According to Eggers and Massey, neither theory accurately explains white urban poverty, Murray’s theory best explains black urban poverty, and Wilson’s theory best explains Hispanic urban poverty.

Fischer and Massey (2000) examine the link between residential segregation and entrepreneurship among different minority groups in U S. metropolitan areas. They argue that higher rates of residential segregation will lower the levels of entrepreneurship. The results indicate that this is true, and that blacks and Puerto Ricans experience the lowest levels of entrepreneurship.

“Compared with other groups, black and Puerto Rican household heads are considerably less likely to be married or foreign born; and compared with other households, those headed by blacks and Puerto Ricans have fewer working age members, fewer hours of unpaid labor, and the lowest levels of income. At the structural level, blacks and Puerto Ricans also experience higher rates of segregation and poverty. Given these disadvantages, a low level of entrepreneurial activity is hardly surprising” (2000:408).

Logan et al. (1996) employ a multiregional comparison to analyze residential patterns of non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. They employ models at the individual as well as the aggregate level. They find that several variables at both the individual and the aggregate level indeed have an effect on the racial makeup of suburbs. Logan et al. explain that the variables differ among racial groups, and they include income, education, home ownership, nativity, and language.

“After controlling for individual processes, the zero-order correlations suggest that Asians are more integrated with whites in regions where the average education level of Asians is higher, and Hispanics are more integrated in regions where Hispanics are more assimilated. No such effects are found for blacks, however. For example, higher-income blacks live in whiter suburbs, but the difference between where a black person lives is not affected by the average level of black income in the region. Also, the disparity in residential location between minorities and comparable whites is greater in those regions with larger minority populations” (1996:873).

Sims (1999) examines the degree to which high-status racial and ethnic groups are segregated from those that are low-status, as well as the degree to which these groups are isolated in neighborhoods with other high-status people. “Overall, whites and Asians live in neighborhoods more populated with persons of similar status, while blacks and Hispanics live in tracts more populated with persons of dissimilar status. Even when controlling for class, the racial and ethnic status of blacks and Hispanics is a factor in where they reside in these urban centers” (1999:556).

Rosenbaum (1996) examined how race influences the housing choices of Hispanic households. The results show that white Hispanics are more able to gain access to predominately white neighborhoods than black Hispanics and other-race Hispanics. “The findings reveal the individual-level processes underlying aggregate patterns of racial segregation among Hispanics and provide evidence of the influence of social and market forces that isolate not only Anglos from African-Americans and Hispanics but also, increasingly, African-Americans and black Hispanics from all persons of nonblack status” (1996:217).

Bobo and Zubrinsky (1996) examine the effect of attitudes of residential integration on actual residential integration. They utilize three different hypotheses: perceived economic status difference hypothesis, mere in-group preference hypothesis, and the prejudice hypothesis.

“The first argues that attitudes about racial residential integration rest upon assumptions about likely class background differences between ethnic groups. The second explains that ethnocentrism results in mutual across-group preferences for residential contact with in-group members. The last suggests that hostile attitudes toward an out-group shape views on residential integration” (1996:883).

Results indicate that there is little evidence in terms of perceived economic status difference hypothesis and mere in-group preference hypothesis. Theories of prejudice are found to have the strongest effect on residential integration.

### Hispanic Crime

There is limited research on the Hispanic population in the United States; however, there are several studies that focus on Hispanics and violent crime. Martinez (2000) attempts to formulate a link between urban Latino immigrants and the frequency of certain types of Latino homicide victimization rates. Results indicate that the size of the urban Latino immigrant population has a positive effect on the rate of felony homicides and a negative effect on the rate of acquaintance homicides.

Lee et al. (2000) study Latino homicides in two U.S. cities, Miami and El Paso. The results indicate similarities as well as differences in homicide patterns. “For example, in both cities, homicides were overwhelmingly intra-group, and males comprised the majority of victims in four out of five types of homicide. Despite similar employment, poverty, and family-structure characteristics for Latinos in both cities, important differences emerged. Miami’s homicide rate was almost three times that of El Paso” (2000:375).

Farley (1997) discusses racial trends in the United States during the thirty years after the Civil Rights Decade in the 1960s. He argues that racial diversity has increased “through nonwhite birth rates and, for Asians and Hispanics, increased immigration. The races are stratified in education, employment, and earnings, with Asians at the top and blacks, Hispanics, and Indians at the bottom, though the differences are smaller for women” (1997:235). According to Farley, many whites still consider black employees or tenants undesirable, which in turn continually limited their economic wellbeing. Housing integration is the last area to be accepted by whites. He concluded by stating that the new minority groups that are entering the United States may come to outnumber the black population.

### Hispanic Segregation and Crime

Most of the research shows that Hispanics are experiencing extremely similar circumstances, such as social disadvantage, in relation to blacks. (Massey and Denton, 1992; Eggers and Massey, 1991) Some studies have been conducted in order to examine Hispanic segregation (Sims, 1999; Fischer and Massey, 2000), and others have examined Hispanic crime. (Lee et al., 2000; Martinez, 2000) There is a lack in studies that focus on Hispanic segregation *and* Hispanic crime. It is mandatory to examine the link between segregation and crime among

Hispanics. If they are to be the largest minority group in the years coming, their experiences as a whole will contribute to the vast pool of sociological knowledge.

“In 1990 the United States had 188.3 million whites, 29.3 million blacks, 22.4 million Hispanics, 7.0 million Asians, and 1.8 million Amerindians. The United States is a racially darkening economy. By November 1, 1999, those figures had changed to 196.4 million Whites, 33.3 million Blacks, 31.8 million Hispanics, 10.4 million Asians, and 2.0 million Amerindians.” (United States Census Bureau; <http://www.census.gov/>)

When comparing the changes in population numbers between these nine years, it is very apparent that the White and Black populations in the United States are maintaining their numbers and not increasing much, and the Hispanic population in the United States is rapidly increasing. This is even more evidence of the need for more sociological study of this steadily enlarging minority group. It is possible that their previous numbers in the United States did not warrant more sociological study. However, this is definitely not the case now. This group simply must be analyzed; their effects on the United States' violent crime rates must be of relevance in this current day and age. The Hispanic population is steadily becoming an integral part of the United States. Their numbers are rapidly increasing, and it is mandatory that they become more of a focus in sociological research.

### Measures of segregation

There is numerous research that studies segregation. Most of these studies utilize the index of dissimilarity in order to measure evenness. (Massey and Eggers, 1993; Krivo et al., 1998; Peterson and Krivo, 1993; Sims, 1999; Massey and Fischer, 1999; Fischer and Massey, 2000) Massey and Denton introduced five measures of residential segregation (1988). Evenness (D), the most commonly used measure, refers to the distribution of the population, exposure or isolation involves potential contact, concentration refers to the amount of space that is occupied, centralization measures how close a group is located to the center of an



urban area, and clustering involves the degree to which minorities live disproportionately in neighboring areas.

I plan to show that evenness (D), a strong predictor of violent crime among blacks (Peterson and Krivo, 1993), will also be a strong predictor for Hispanics. This will indicate that Hispanics are indeed experiencing disadvantage and negative social conditions in urban areas just as blacks do; therefore resulting in similar consequences that the black population faces.

The study of Hispanics and violent crime is rather limited. Due to the fact that Hispanics are the fastest growing group in the United States, it is necessary to research the implications of this phenomenon. The United States is now becoming more multicultural, and it is important to discover what effects this will have on society as a whole. Previous studies have shown that the black population does indeed experience higher rates of violent crime due to segregation as well as other social disadvantages. Due to these findings, it is crucial that Hispanics become more of a focus in research. It is possible that they are experiencing similar circumstances, and due to their growth in the United States, research of this minority group will give us important insight as to what they are experiencing.

Figure 1 below is the theoretical model that I plan to use for the purposes of this study. The control variables are vacant households and the natural log of the Hispanic population. The independent variables are Hispanic high school dropouts, Hispanic renters, resource deprivation, and unevenness (D). I plan to look at the direct effects of these variables on the dependent variable, which is Hispanic homicide rates.

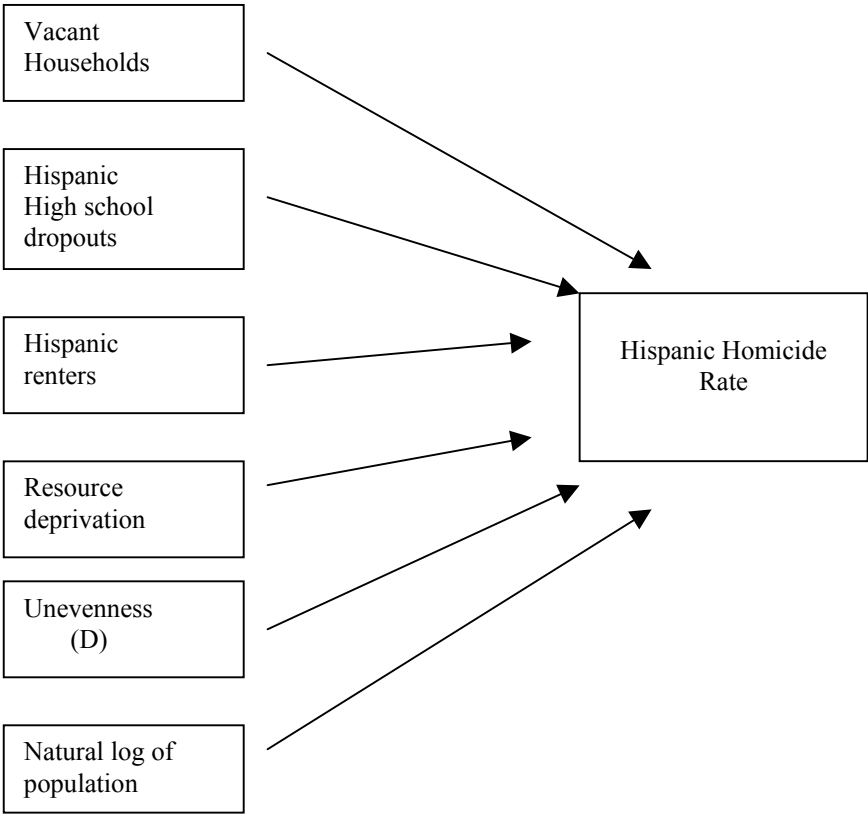


Figure 1: Theoretical Model

## METHODS

The units of analysis in this study are 95 cities with populations of 100,000 or more that contain 5000 or more Hispanics. (See Appendix 1.) Socioeconomic data for these cities will be taken from Summary Tape file 3C from the 1990 Census. The number of Hispanic homicides will be taken from the 1990 Mortality Detail File, which contains information obtained from Vital Statistics. Vital Statistics data are composed of death certificates, indicating the cause of death for each individual that died in a given year. These data provide the race, age, place of death, place of residence, and cause of death of the individual. In this particular data set, it is documented whether or not the victim was of Hispanic origin. I will derive Hispanic homicide rates by sorting out the cases in which the cause of death was homicide. It is from these cases that I will select the victims who were of Hispanic origin. The numbers will probably be the best indicator of the Hispanic homicides in each of the 95 sample cities. The Uniform Crime Reports are also commonly analyzed to obtain the number of homicides; however, these reports include no indicator of Hispanic origin, and therefore would be of no use to this particular study.

A possible shortcoming of the Vital Statistics data is the fact that city level information is solely included for place of residence, not place of occurrence. However, in viewing the data, I found that there are only a minute number of homicides that occurred in a location different from where the victim lived. The vast majority of these homicides occurred in the same place where the individual resided.

It is through my study that I plan to discover if Hispanic unevenness (D), “which refers to the difference between two groups in their geographical distribution across areal units” (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996), has a positive effect on the rate of Hispanic violent crime. At this point, I can

only predict that Hispanics are experiencing segregation from whites just as blacks are, and thus are suffering from similar social disadvantage (e.g., poverty, unemployment, family disruption)

#### Segregation: Hispanic Unevenness

In order to measure unevenness (D), I will use the Index of Dissimilarity, which defines unevenness as:

$$D = [(1/2) [\text{absolute value of } [B.\text{sub}.i] - \{W.\text{sub}.i\}]] * 100$$

Where [B.sub.i] is the proportion of all blacks in the city who live in tract i, and [W.sub.i] is the proportion of whites who live in tract i. “D varies from 0 to 100 and is interpreted as the proportion of minority residents that would have to change tracts to produce a uniform race distribution across the city.” (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996)

In my analysis, I plan to simply replace the black numbers with Hispanic numbers. I will use the Index of Dissimilarity, and I will make substitutions in the equation as follows:

$$D = [(1/2) [\text{absolute value of } [H.\text{sub}.i] - \{W.\text{sub}.i\}]] * 100$$

Where [H.sub.i] is the proportion of all Hispanics in the city who live in tract i. The rest of the equation remains the same.

#### Measurement of Dependent Variables

The dependent variable will be Hispanic homicide rates. This measure will be calculated by dividing the number of Hispanic homicides by the number of Hispanics in a given city, and then multiplying this number by 100,000. In order to account for variations in the Hispanic homicide rate, the natural log will be used for analysis purposes.

#### Measurement of Independent Variables

I plan to incorporate several independent variables into my models. I plan to analyze both economic and cultural factors. I will be utilizing economic factors, the first of which is **Hispanic**

**unemployment.** This is the proportion of all working age Hispanics (16-64 years of age) who are unemployed or not in the labor force. I will also include **Hispanic poverty**, the proportion of Hispanics in the city whose income in 1989 fell below the poverty line. The third predictor is **Hispanic renters**, the proportion of Hispanics who rent rather than own their residence. The final economic predictor is **Hispanic high school dropouts**, which is the proportion of Hispanics 25 years old and older who have no high school diploma. For cultural processes, I plan to utilize **Hispanic female-headed households.** This is the proportion of Hispanic households in the city that are headed by a female.

Control variables include **population size** (natural log transformed in order to account for the variation in the size of the cities), and **vacant households**, the proportion of households in the city that are vacant. In order to control for multicollinearity, it was necessary to group some of the independent variables using factor analysis. The independent variables **Hispanic poverty**, **Hispanic unemployment**, and **Hispanic female headed households** have been combined, resulting in an independent variable **resource deprivation.**

## RESULTS

In Table 1, I provide the descriptive statistics for the variables employed in the models. The average rate of Hispanic homicide is 19.6 incidents for a population of 100,000 or greater. The mean index of dissimilarity for Hispanics is 24.19, suggesting that on average almost a quarter of Hispanic residents in cities would have to relocate in order to create an even distribution of Hispanics and whites. Massey and Denton (1988) find that the mean index of dissimilarity for Hispanics is 45.0. Although they find a higher measure, their results indicate that Hispanics are considerably less segregated in central cities than blacks. In looking at resource deprivation, results indicate that 36.5% of Hispanics in major cities are experiencing negative social consequences, specifically unemployment, female headed households (family disruption), and poverty. The results indicate that on average, 16.9% of Hispanics rent their homes. Also, on average, 46.8% of Hispanics in major cities are high school dropouts.

Table 3 provides the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates for two models; the first model does not contain unevenness (D). Model 1 is consistent with previous research. It indicates that resource deprivation, high school dropouts, renters, vacant households, and population size do have a positive effect on Hispanic homicide rates. However, these relationships are not significant. Model 2, which includes unevenness (D), also shows a positive relationship with regard to these variables, but again these relationships are not significant. Some of these predictors are significant when analyzed alone. Results indicate that Hispanic high school dropouts has a significant positive relationship ( $b = .236$ ) with Hispanic homicide rates. Thus, the more Hispanic high school dropouts, the higher the rate of Hispanic homicide. Also, when the natural log of the Hispanic population is analyzed alone, results show a positive significant relationship ( $b = .226$ ) with Hispanic homicide rates. Thus, the larger the population, the higher the rate of Hispanic homicide.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of City-Level Structural Variables for Hispanics in U.S. Major Cities in 1990

	Mean	S.D.
Hispanic homicide rate (per 100,000)	19.60	13.23
D – Hispanic-White Unevenness	24.19	11.32
Population size *	97,953	238,266
Vacant households	.084	.033
Resource Deprivation	.365	.136
Hispanic unemployment	.647	.254
Female headed households	.197	.086
Hispanic poverty	.251	.091
Hispanic renters	.169	.155
High school dropouts	.468	.120

\*Original metric shown-the natural log is utilized in the analysis.

Table 2: Correlations of City-Level Structural Variables for Hispanics in U.S. Major Cities in 1990

	Hispanic homicide rate (per 100,000)	D – Hispanic-White Unevenness	Natural log of population size *	Vacant households	Resource Deprivation	Hispanic renters	High school dropouts
Hispanic homicide rate (per 100,000)	1.00	-.260*	.226*	.127	.143	.047	.236*
D – Hispanic-White Unevenness		1.00	-.609*	.092	-.200	-.063	-.544**
Natural log of population size			1.00	-.037	.119	.016	.506**
Vacant households				1.00	.005	-.143	.025
Resource Deprivation					1.00	.279**	.418**
Hispanic renters						1.00	.215*
High school dropouts							1.00

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.



Table 3: Parameter Estimates Predicting Hispanic Homicide in U.S. Cities in 1990

	1 Homicide		2 Homicide	
	B (B)	(SE)	b (B)	(SE)
D – Hispanic- White Unevenness			-.149 (-.009)	(.009)
Resource Deprivation	.061 (.322)	(.601)	.058 (.303)	(.601)
Hispanic renters	.047 (.259)	(.592)	.052 (.285)	(.591)
Hispanic High school dropouts	.144 (.859)	(.780)	.097 (.576)	(.822)
Population size	.128 (.007)	(.068)	.062 (.035)	(.077)
Vacant households	.106 (2.27)	(2.204)	.119 (2.55)	(2.22)
R square	.098		.086	

+P < 0.1, ++P < 0.05

When these variables are analyzed together, the association of high school dropouts and natural log of population disappears. This is probably due to the fact that some of these independent variables are correlated (see Table 2). The natural log of the population and high school dropouts have a correlation of .506. Therefore, 50.6% of the natural log of the population can be explained by high school dropouts. Resource deprivation and high school dropouts have a correlation of .418. It is probable that these correlations “wash out” the relationship of these variables with Hispanic homicide rates.

A major point of interest involves unevenness (D). When unevenness (D) is analyzed alone, it shows to be a significant predictor of Hispanic homicide rates. Previous research (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996) has shown that segregation has a positive effect on homicide rates. In this case, unevenness (D) is shown to have a negative effect on homicide rates. Thus, the more Hispanics are segregated, the lower the Hispanic homicide rate. This is contrary to what has been previously found. In Model 2, unevenness (D) is analyzed along with the other variables. Results show a negative relationship between unevenness (D) and Hispanic homicide, but this relationship is not significant. It is interesting to note that when unevenness (D) is controlled, the association disappears. Again, this is probably due to the fact that some of the independent variables are correlated with each other (see Table 2). Unevenness (D) and high school dropouts have a correlation of -.544. Thus 54.4% of unevenness (D) can be explained by high school dropouts. Unevenness (D) and the natural log of the population have a correlation of -.609. Unevenness (D) and resource deprivation have a correlation of .418. It is probable that these correlations are having an effect on the relationship of the independent variables with the Hispanic homicide rate.

Overall, the results show some important findings. First, negative social consequences (resource deprivation, high school dropouts, renters) do have a positive, though not significant,

effect on Hispanic homicide rates. Second, the segregation measure of unevenness (D) has a negative, though not significant, effect on Hispanic homicide rates. This finding is very important, due to the fact that this is contrary to what previous research has indicated (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Previous studies have indicated that segregation as well as other economic and cultural factors have an effect on the rate of black violent crime. (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996; Shihadeh and Maume, 1997; Peterson and Krivo, 1993) The purpose of this study was to find models that would predict high rates of Hispanic homicide. Due to the fact that Hispanics are becoming the largest minority in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, (<http://www.census.gov/>), it is certainly plausible that the same phenomenon could be occurring with the Hispanic population.

The results reveal some important findings. Negative social consequences do have a positive effect on Hispanic homicide rates, while segregation has a negative effect on Hispanic homicide rates.

First, the results indicate that negative social consequences (in this study, high school dropouts and resource deprivation) do have positive, though not significant, effects on the Hispanic homicide rate. This is consistent with the findings of previous research that analyzed black homicide rates (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996; Krivo and Peterson, 1996). It has been shown that blacks in central cities living in social disadvantage have higher rates of homicide. The results of this study show that this is also the case for Hispanics. These results show evidence that inequality does have an effect on violent crime. These results show that the Hispanic population is experiencing social disadvantage similar to blacks, and therefore, they are experiencing similar repercussions.

Another major finding of this study is not predicted by previous studies. Earlier studies have shown that segregation of blacks from whites has a significant positive effect on the rates of black homicide. However, in this particular study, results show that segregation, specifically unevenness (D), has a negative, though not significant, effect on the rate of Hispanic homicide.

This is a rather surprising finding, especially due to the fact that studies involving black-white segregation show opposite results. (Shihadeh and Flynn, 1996; Peterson and Krivo, 1993) An argument as to why this is the case is that of community cohesion. It is a possibility that stronger social ties exist in areas of Hispanic concentration. Lee (2000) explains that community cohesion reduces the risk of violent victimization. According to Lee, communities with strong ties “have more informal guardianship, and members are more active in intervening in criminal activities.” (page 683) If stronger ties are present in these areas where Hispanics are segregated, then it is plausible that the homicide rate would be lower in these areas. It is also important to note that the characteristics of the population in these areas may be different from what has been previously discovered with regard to the black population. If these areas where Hispanics are segregated have different characteristics, such as stronger community cohesion and social bonds, then it is possible that the effect of segregation on Hispanic homicide could be different from what has previously been found with blacks.

Overall, this study of the Hispanic population has shed light on some very important issues. First, it seems that Hispanics are experiencing negative social conditions as blacks do. These conditions have affected Hispanic homicide. Second, Hispanics are not experiencing segregation as blacks have. For blacks, segregation has been a positive predictor in homicide rates. Results indicate that for Hispanics, segregation is a negative predictor of homicide rates. It is important to note that the Hispanic population is rather diverse. There are several subgroups of Hispanics, mainly Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Mexicans. A limitation to this research is the fact that Hispanics are analyzed as a whole. It is possible that these different groups within Hispanics are having different experiences with regard to violent crime, and further study of these subgroups is necessary in order to see if this is the case. Also, it is important to note that there are

differences in the cities used for analysis. The segregation trends do vary among the cities, and this could have an effect on the relationship between Hispanic segregation and Hispanic violent crime.

It will take more study in order to discover why Hispanic segregation does not have the same effect as black segregation. Suggestions for future research include analyzing community cohesion with regard to Hispanics in order to see if social bonds are stronger in areas where Hispanics are concentrated. It is possible that stronger social bonds are present in areas that are segregated, and this may lead to lower rates of homicide among Hispanics in these areas. Another suggestion for future research would involve disaggregating the Hispanic population in order to further analyze it. It is quite possible that Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Cubans are experiencing different levels of segregation and social disadvantage, thus they may be experiencing differences in homicide rates. More research would shed light on this issue. A final suggestion for future research would involve analyzing the longitudinal change in the ethnic compositions of cities in order to see if these changes have an effect on the rates of homicide. Overall, future research on Hispanics and crime in the United States will enable us to better understand their experiences and their impact on society as a whole.

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## APPENDIX

### Sample of Cities Used in the Analyses.

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Albuquerque, NM	Hollywood, CA	Santa Ana, CA
Alexandria, VA	Honolulu, HI	Seattle, WA
Allentown, PA	Houston, TX	Springfield, MA
Anaheim, CA	Irving, TX	St. Paul, MN
Arlington, VA	Jackson, MS	Stamford, CT
Atlanta, GA	Jacksonville, FL	Stockton, CA
Aurora, CO	Kansas City, MO	Sunnyvale, CA
Austin, TX	Lansing, MI	Tacoma, WA
Bakersfield, CA	Las Vegas, NV	Tampa, FL
Baltimore, MD	Long Beach, CA	Tempe, AZ
Baton Rouge, LA	Los Angeles, CA	Toledo, OH
Beaumont, TX	Lubbock, TX	Topeka, KS
Boston, MA	Mesa, AZ	Torrance, CA
Bridgeport, CT	Miami, FL	Tucson, AZ
Buffalo, NY	Milwaukee, WI	Waco, TX
Charlotte, NC	Minneapolis, MN	Washington, DC
Chicago, IL	Modesto, CA	Waterbury, CT
Cleveland, OH	New Haven, CT	Wichita, KS
Colorado Springs, CO	New York, NY	Worcester, MA
Columbus, OH	Newark, NJ	Yonkers, NY
Columbus, GA	Oakland, CA	
Concord, NH	Oxnard, CA	
Corpus Christi, TX	Pasadena, CA	
Dallas, TX	Paterson, NJ	
Denver, CO	Philadelphia, PA	
Detroit, MI	Phoenix, AZ	
El Paso, TX	Portland, OR	
Elizabeth, NJ	Providence, RI	
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Reno, NV	
Fort Worth, TX	Richmond, VA	
Fresno, CA	Rochester, NY	
Garden Grove, CA	Sacramento, CA	
Garland, TX	Salt Lake City, UT	
Gary, IN	San Antonio, TX	
Glendale, CA	San Bernardino, CA	
Grand Rapids, MI	San Diego, CA	
Hartford, CT	San Francisco, CA	
Hialeah, FL	San Jose, CA	

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N=95

## VITA

The author was born in Jonesboro, Arkansas in 1971. She moved to Baton Rouge two weeks later, and remained there. She attended St. Thomas More elementary school from 1976-1977, St. Alphonsus elementary school from 1977-1980, and St. Thomas More elementary school from 1980-1986. She attended St. Joseph's Academy from 1986-1989. She obtained her cosmetology license in 1991, and she worked in hair salons until 1994. She came to Louisiana State University at this time, and she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1997. She will obtain a Master of Science in August 2002.