

Examining the Effect of Cultural Assimilation and Family Environments on Crime
A Comparison of Second Generation Mexican and Second Generation Cuban Immigrant
Young Adults.

by

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary criminological literature seldom studies important ethnic subgroup differences in crime and delinquency among Hispanic/Latino youth. Therefore, their risk for crime and delinquency is poorly understood in light of the enormous ethnic and generational mixture within the Hispanic/Latino population in the United States. Using social control theory and cultural evaluations of familism, this thesis examines dissimilarities in the risk for crime and delinquency, in addition to its relations with family unity, parental engagement, youth independence, and family structure among second generation Mexicans (n = 876) and second generation Cubans (n = 525) using data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) 1991-2006 (Portes and Rumbaut). The results for the first analysis concluded that second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans who obtained government assistance and who felt discriminated against were more likely to engage in crime. Consistent with social control theory, a major finding in this thesis is that presence of a family member who is involved in criminal activity increased crime within the sample of second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. Furthermore, in households less than five, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were more likely than second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement, while in households greater than five, second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member were more likely than second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement.

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Introduction

Hispanics/Latinos constitute the fastest growing group in the United States (US Census Bureau, 2010). Hispanics/Latinos also comprise the largest number of immigrants to the United States, with Mexican-origin immigrants alone accounting for 30% of all new arrivals (US Census Bureau, 2010). Compared to the entire population of the United States overall (mean age=38.3; 50% younger than 39 years old), Hispanics/Latinos are nearly a decade younger (mean age=29.1; 45% younger than 24 years old) (US Census Bureau 2010), which poses important implications for the study of immigration and its effect on youth crime and delinquency in the United States. According to Osius and Rosenthal (2009), Hispanics/Latinos between the ages of 10 and 17 years old are predicted to account for 30% of all youth in the United States by the year 2050.

Numerous studies have associated Hispanic/Latino ethnicity with crime, violent behavior, and other risky taking behaviors (Felson, Deane and Armstrong, 2008; Haynie and Payne, 2006; McNulty and Bellair, 2003). Violence is the second leading cause of death among this segment of the population, and domestic approximations have commonly found the risk for Hispanics/Latinos to fall between the risk of White and Black youth. In 2006, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention found that the homicide rate among Hispanic/Latino youth was 8.6 compared to 1.6 among non-Latino Whites and 21.2 among non-Latino Blacks (per 100,000; CDC). Furthermore, in 2007, 40% of Hispanic/Latino youth were involved in a physical assault or fight, compared to 32% of White and 45% of Black youth (CDC 2008).

It has long been thought that immigration increases crime and currently that sentiment has largely remained unchanged. Hagan, Levi and Dinovitzer (2008) sketched

an extensive history of relating immigrants with crime, starting in the early 1900s when such fears were aimed toward Southern and Eastern Europeans. Their historical analysis reveals that the immigrant and crime connection was fortified by the United States Senate in its Immigration Commission report in 1911, generally known as the Dillingham Commission. Advocated by Senator William P. Dillingham of Vermont, the report established that immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe posed a severe threat to American society and culture, would disturb the peace and cause crime, and should be greatly reduced in the future (Soto, 2010). Also, during the 1940s, the FBI's tabulation of crime in the United States represented the arrestees' nativity as either "native white" or "foreign-born white" (Gottfredson, 2004). Current attitudes largely remain unchanged. In fact, results from the General Social Survey point out that 73% of American respondents feel that increased immigration is "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to escalate the crime rate in this country (Davis, Smith, and Marsden, 2000). Empirical studies in this area generally hold that native born Hispanics/Latinos have higher levels of both violent and non-violent crime compared to immigrant Hispanics/Latinos (Rumbaut et al, 2006). Although the mainstream media regularly scrutinizes immigrants for not assimilating at the speed and to the degree certain segments of society expect, other evidence proposes that preserving a dual-culture may be valuable in a number of different ways. Studies have shown that fluent bilingualism leads to higher cognitive performance, higher self-esteem, better educational desires, and better relationships with parents when paralleled with either English speakers or Spanish speakers (Martinez, Jr, et al, 2008).

This thesis examines Hispanic/Latino criminality by focusing on second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans, using cultural assimilation and

family environment as a means to compare both subgroups. The two research questions are: (1) Do second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans differ from each other in their likelihood of criminal involvement? Based on the historical patterns of immigration into ethnic enclaves and the socioeconomic conditions of the groups, this thesis hypothesizes that second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans will differ in their participation in criminality. (2) Do different elements of the family environment serve as a protective factor against crime regardless of ethnic background? Consistent with social control theory, this thesis hypothesizes that greater family cohesion, parental engagement, and additional kin living in the home will reduce the risk for crime, while living with or having a strong attachment to a delinquent family member will increase the risk for crime.

In the hunt for answers to questions will begin to enlighten the methods and factors through which second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans differ in their criminality. Given that there is a lack of longitudinal examination on crime and delinquency with attention given to Hispanics/Latinos, this study will hopefully enhance this perspective to the present literature. Data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) 1991-2006 (Portes and Rumbaut), will be used to examine these questions, and includes a large number of Hispanic/Latino respondents.

Review of the Literature

Heterogeneity of Hispanic/Latinos in the United States

The literature on race/ethnicity and crime is mainly preoccupied with Black and White differences, with the segregation of Hispanics/Latinos or with Hispanic/Latinos being classified within the sphere of Whites because of their European lineage. Few studies to date have observed both nationality and generational status and there are also few longitudinal studies that have explored whether Hispanic/Latino, White and Black differences in crime stay on the same trajectory over time. There is also a similar lack of studies comparing Hispanic/Latino subgroups based on nationality and generational status.

Racial/ethnic disparities in crime have long been a focus of criminology. However, as Peterson and Krivo (2005) indicated, studies have primarily emphasized Black and White differences in offending. In recent times, though, scholars have progressively begun to focus on Hispanic/Latino youth and their trends of offending. For example, McNulty and Bellair (2003) studied dissimilarities in violent behavior among various groups, including Whites, Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians. They concluded that ethnic minorities, with the exclusion of Asians, demonstrated more involvement in crime and violent behavior than whites, once they controlled for the neighborhood context. In their discussion, they highlighted that it is common for minority groups to live in economically deprived neighborhoods compared to whites, and that this established an association with gang activity and criminal involvement.

Haynie and Payne (2006) piloted another key study in which they examined the role of peer networks on White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino adolescents' involvement in violent crime. Similar to the research conducted by McNulty and Bellair (2003), Haynie and Payne (2006) concluded that Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos, but not Asians, have greater rates of crime and delinquency than whites. They found, however, that these dissimilarities are essentially due to their peer networks; Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos are more likely to have close friends who are also involved in high rates of delinquent behavior.

Within Hispanic/Latino subgroups, a more recent study conducted by Felson et al. (2008), compared Hispanic/Latino subgroups (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans, and other Hispanics/Latinos) to Whites and Blacks in terms of criminality. They found that socioeconomic status fundamentally explained variations among the groups with regard to nonviolent crime. They further concluded that Mexican youth had higher risk for crime and delinquency compared to Cuban and Central American youth, while the crime rates for Cuban and Central American youth did not differ substantially from Whites. This study provides additional support for the argument that dissimilarities among Hispanic/Latino subgroups must be taken into account.

Another study conducted by Sampson et al. (2005) found that, in Chicago, Mexican youth had a lower risk of violent behaviors than did Whites, but Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic/Latino groups had a higher risk compared to Whites. These studies among others, suggest that aligning all Hispanic/Latino nationalities into one category may provide misleading findings regarding differences in crime and delinquency, and

evades a critical analysis of the differing frameworks for risks of violence for the ethnic subgroups.

Differences in risks may stem from variations in the social environments the different Hispanic/Latino ethnic subgroups experience. Hispanics/Latinos of Mexican ancestry make up 60% of the U.S. Hispanic/Latino population and are the most heterogeneous. Also, the geographic proximity between the United States and Mexico and constant migration of immigrants from Mexico has, to some extent, created immigration trends that cause temporary separations of families and force greater dependence on extended networks in cultural enclaves. This representation changes with later generations who are more established, tend to have higher socioeconomic status, and are less secluded from Whites (Rumbaut 2006; Rivera et al. 2008).

The political clash between the United States and Cuban governments has led to stable migration patterns for Cubans compared to their Mexican counterparts. Overall, Cubans have the highest gross income and education levels when compared to all Hispanic/Latino groups; while at the same time, they demonstrate higher isolation levels from Whites. This is partly due to an economically prosperous ethnic enclave in the Miami-Dade region of South Florida (Fischer and Tienda 2006). Such steadiness in migration trends and geographic movement has nurtured solid intergenerational connections and is likely to intensify the levels of loyalty and family harmony found amongst Cubans (Rivera et al. 2008).

The purpose of this thesis is to address gaps in the current literature by examining crime between second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. Additionally, this thesis examines the effects of assimilation and family environment characteristics on

crime across these two ethnic subgroups. This study uses social control theory (SCT) to inform the research and interpret the overall findings. The thesis intends to address some of the limitations of prior studies by exploring dissimilarities in criminality between second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans, and how they relate to the diverse scopes of the family setting. Even though there are numerous factors that are significantly associated with crime and violent behavior, such as deviant peers, gang affiliation, drug and substance use, studies contend that these are possibly the end result of participation in crime and violence rather than a precursor to it (Nofziger and Kurtz 2005, Rivera et al. 2008). Important research is beginning to find that the family framework has a stronger effect on the risk for violent behaviors and criminality more generally among Hispanic/Latinos than peer influences (Rodriguez and Weisburd 1991; Smith and Krohn 1995). Given the ethnic and cultural analysis and emphasis on sources of defense, this thesis examines family settings as a critical predictor in understanding ethnic subgroup differences between second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans.

Immigration and Acculturation

The primary theory that has been widely used to connect immigration and crime is social disorganization. Thomas and Znaniecki (1920) first contended that immigration unsettled the social networks of immigrants themselves, in addition to contributing to the social disorganization of the areas in which they settled in. A new language and new cultural norms formed an atmosphere in which it was problematic to appropriately socialize and attend to children, and normally deteriorated neighborhood unity and organization. Thomas and Znaniecki's (1920) theoretical foundation gave birth to Shaw and McKay's (1969) work, in which, they drew attention away from the immigrants themselves and onto the neighborhoods they settled in, which were branded by economic deficiency, residential volatility, and racial/ethnic heterogeneity. These elements all contributed to weakened social institutions and social disorganization, which then produced crime and delinquency.

Shaw and McKay's (1969) position, however, has failed to gain support among modern empirical work regarding immigration and crime. The relationship between immigrant concentration and crime, and above all violent crime, has been frequently revealed to be negative (Martinez, 2002; Ousey and Kubrin, 2009; Morenoff and Astor, 2006; Soto, 2010). Indeed, most of these studies have been cross-sectional, but recent research has studied immigration concentration and crime rates longitudinally (Ousey and Kubrin, 2009; Stowell, et al., 2009; Soto, 2010). These studies support the negative link between immigrant concentration and crime, particularly violent crime.

Although the present state of the theoretical research on immigration and crime may seem counter-intuitive, contemporary theoretical work by Portes and Zhou (1993)

may provide an answer. Accompanied by criminological theories, their research may construct an innovative base for existing and upcoming research on immigration and crime.

Segmented assimilation theory was introduced by Portes and Zhou (1993) and debunks the old view of assimilation which was first proposed by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918). Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918) theory of assimilation (straight-line assimilation) portrays the assimilation process that was experienced by European immigrants who immigrated to the United States early in the 20th Century. Learning English, adopting American values, traditions, and integrating smoothly into the American middle-class are some of the attributes that European immigrants acculturated. Portes and Zhou's (1993) theory of segmented assimilation is somewhat consistent in that non-European immigrants may experience the same "straight-line" assimilation patterns as Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) theorized; however, Portes and Zhou (1993) assume that non-European immigrants may follow different pathways of assimilation. Alongside "straight-line" assimilation, Portes and Zhou (1993) theorized that immigrants may sometimes experience the exact reversal of assimilation and acculturation in the direction of living in poverty and becoming mired in the American under-class instead of the middle class, or they may advance economically but conserve traditional roles and cohesion within their ethnic group.

Segmented assimilation also claims that the environment immigrants discover upon entering the United States will often define in what way and to what degree they acculturate. This framework includes the political relations between the sending and receiving nations, the economic conditions of the receiving country, and the organization

of current co-ethnic communities in the receiving nation. Co-ethnic communities are perceived as possible safeguards between immigrants in an often intimidating conventional society. If effective, co-ethnic communities can offer job opportunities, strong communal sustenance, and support of traditional ideals and principles, particularly parental control of children, these conditions may serve as protective factors against crime, delinquency, and other adverse consequences (Soto, 2010).

Research has shown that Hispanic/Latino immigrants have lower rates of criminal involvement than native-born Hispanics/Latinos. For instance, in a study conducted by Ousey and Kubrin (2009), in which they reviewed eleven studies regarding Hispanic/Latino immigrant generational status on crime and delinquency, only two failed to establish significant negative effects of immigrant status on crime and delinquency, and one reported no significant effects. The eleven studies reviewed used a multitude of methodologies, from individual data analyses to others relying on census tracts, zip codes, cities, and large metropolitan regions. Therefore, the research that does exist seems to find that crime increases with generation status, and normally, with acculturation. Also, recent longitudinal analyses seem to show that immigration acts as a protective factor against crime, even at the neighborhood level. Stowell et al. (2009), studied the influence of immigrant concentration in cities on crime rates, using longitudinal data to examine whether changes in immigration trends are adversely associated to changes in crime rates. They found that immigration is inversely correlated to crime rates, even after controlling for neighborhood, demographic, and other factors. Accordingly, they concluded that not only are immigrants themselves less likely to

commit crime compared to the native-born, but their habitation in cities seems to have a diminishing effect on crime for the entire neighborhood (Stowell et al, 2009).

Morenoff and Astor (2006) found that the majority of violent crime turned out to be more common with successive generations. In their study, they examined several factors, including exposure to American culture, cultural knowledge and ties to their country of origin, neighborhood levels, and after controlling for generational status they found that first generation and second generation immigrants did indeed commit less violent crime than their third generation immigrant counterparts. Similarly, scholars have also found that the length of stay in the United States is also positively related to violent crime. In a study conducted by Peguero (2008), respondents from the same birth cohort, but who immigrated to the United States later in life, exhibited significantly lower odds of violent behavior. Peguero (2008) concluded that assimilation is associated with crime.

Portes and Zhou (1993) found that new immigrants are at risk of downward assimilation for five reasons: Americanization, economic instability, skin color, social and geographic location, and the absence of prospects for increasing social mobility. If accurate, this may clarify the surge in criminal behavior among second and third generation youths. There is some evidence supporting this concept of increasing downward social mobility. For instance, Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller (2005) found that while the majority of respondents in their study are attaining better education and employment than their parents, a large number are not. Upward and downward mobility is not by chance, but is linked with the success of their immigrant parents, family style, and culture.

Acculturation may also be a factor in the occurrence of a cognitive motivating home environment, primarily from the complex connection between generational status and educational ambitions. Past research has revealed that new Hispanic/Latino immigrants have greater educational desires compared to Hispanic/Latinos born in the United States, including higher ambitions for upward mobility (Solis, 1995). Correspondingly, Mexican immigrant families have displayed greater expectations for the education system and less uncertainty and isolation compared to non-immigrant Mexican families (Rumberger and Larson, 1998).

Looking solely at second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans, Pedraza-Bailey (1985) has provided insight into these groups' immigration experiences. According to Pedraza-Bailey (1985), many Cubans are political refugees, whose decision to migrate to the United States was driven mainly by a lack of adaptation to a communist regime that restricted their socioeconomic liberty and personal freedoms (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). Mexicans, on the other hand, have been inspired largely by economic motives, and the aspiration for better employment opportunities and living conditions (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). Cuban immigrants to the United States have been more prosperous than their Mexican counterparts, fundamentally because the United States government has granted political and financial support for Cuban assimilation and economic achievement (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). On the other hand, United States policy has occasionally aided and controlled the obtainability of Mexican workers to United States, but has not made the same commitment to the well-being and assimilation of Mexican workers and immigrants in terms of policy (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). Consequently, legal and illegal Mexican immigrants provide a substantial work-force for the United States, but they have

normally remained restricted to businesses and occupations that offer low income and little upward mobility (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985).

Family Environments and Risk for Crime and Delinquency

The role of families in youth development has long been recognized in the social and behavioral sciences literature. Youth acquire norms, ideals, and manners from adult members in their family and wider networks through socialization developments that are adaptive to bigger settings (Estrada-Martinez et al. 2011). Family practices are largely affected by acculturation and this consecutively affects the adolescent, and his/her deviant behavior. Parents and the family are important to the research on criminality, not only because parental control can directly discourage deviant behavior (Demuth and Brown, 2004), but also because the quality of the parent-child emotional bond can also have an indirect effect on deviance (Demuth and Brown, 2004). Studies in this area commonly demonstrate that parenting style and practices are influenced by immigration itself, as well as being influenced by generational status.

Related research regarding family frameworks and processes impacted by acculturation can be characterized into two central areas: studies examining the effects of immigration and acculturation on parents and children as individuals, and research examining the effects of different levels of acculturation between parents and their children. For instance, Buriel (1993) concluded that Mexican-born parents are stricter and place more responsibilities on their children compared to American-born parents of Mexican ancestry. Driscoll, Russell, and Crockett (2008) revealed that the culture of the United States places more importance on individuality than do most Hispanic/Latino cultures, which have a tendency to stress familial commitments over individuality. Thus, traditional Hispanic/Latino parents may use a more dictatorial parenting style for the purpose of strengthening traditional values. Their study supports this assessment, and

validates the assertion that parenting styles do in fact change with generation status, with parents progressively emphasizing individualism and independence. They conclude that the majority of parents born in Hispanic/Latino countries have more authority over their children, while the majority of Hispanic/Latino U.S.-born parents follow a more “Americanized” trend of permitting their children greater independence and autonomy.

The fundamental assumption of social control theory is that individuals are naturally prone to deviance and that their attachment or connection to other individuals or peers makes them adapt to specific customs of suitable behavior (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Social control theory contends that the acquiring violent tendencies is more likely to transpire when social connections, primarily centered in the household, are fragile or broken (Hirschi 1969). This perspective is consistent with numerous cultural principles acknowledged in the works on Hispanic/Latino culture, such as familism, which argues that the family is at the epicenter of one’s life, openly affecting the interactions between persons within the household and their behaviors when relating with others outside of it (Mirabal-Colon and Velez 2006). Consistent with the concept of social control theory, most familism classifications highlight the significance of harmony within the family, adherence to individual roles in public circumstances, and admiration of authority figures (Ingoldsby 1991; Vega 1990).

Familism has been found to persevere through ethnic and generational Hispanic/Latino subgroups; however, rather than a stagnant attribute, familism may be accommodative, fluctuating to make room for different elements in social and political settings (Sabogal et al. 1987; Vasquez Garcia et al. 2000). As each Hispanic/Latino subgroup is implanted in their own way within the greater society, the level and

manifestation of familism may differ with other features of their social surroundings (Bronfenbrenner 1988; Cockerham 2005). For instance, immigration and educational guidelines affect Hispanic/Latino subgroups in diverse ways, and may alter the family dynamics by promoting intergenerational pressures and an idea of hostility that may add to youth violent behaviors (Boutakidis et al. 2006). Countless Hispanic/Latino immigrant families enter this country where their past efforts and educational achievements are not appreciated. For more recent Hispanic/Latino immigrants, bilingual education may alienate them from full cultural and societal involvement as a result of their lack of cultural and social conformity, which can lead to detachment from schools and other social institutions. In situations where youths are more English proficient than their parents, the position and power role may be reversed, upsetting parents' capability to regulate and observe their children, enhancing youth independence, and eventually leading to higher strain and bitterness within families (Estrada-Martinez et al. 2011). Financial stresses encountered by many parents employed in low-wage and low-security occupations inhibit their ability to communicate with and relate to teachers due to inconsistent job hours. Many parents must leave their children unsupervised after school (Schneider et al. 2006), this increasing the probability of participation in risky behaviors. Also, educational fulfillment has been found to vary among Hispanic/Latino subgroups, with Cubans being more likely to obtain a high school degree compared to Puerto Ricans and Mexicans (Therrien and Ramirez, 2000). Cubans are also less likely to drop out of high school or be hold back compared to Puerto Ricans and Mexicans (Solis, 1995). At best, part of these dissimilarities in educational fulfillment can be credited to the economic resources normally accessible to Cubans (Therrien and Ramirez, 2000).

Family unity, parental commitment, adolescent independence, parental control, family structure and household size have played key roles in the research on adolescent violence, which is consistent with social control theory and the idea of familism. Smith and Krohn (1995) stated that the parent–child connection protected against adolescent deviancy among Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and White male adolescents, while Rodriguez and Weisburd (1991) concluded that family association is a protective factor among Mexicans and Cubans, but not Puerto Ricans. A related study among Cuban youth established that the possibility for violent behaviors lessened as the parental-child connection was amplified (Vega et al. 1993). Another study among Cuban and Mexican adolescents found that the possibility for violent behaviors lessened more for Mexicans than for Cubans as parental connection and family unity increased (Estrada-Martinez et al. 2011). In a study of Hispanic/Latino youth and crime, Soto (2010) found interesting results regarding household size, family cohesion, acculturation, and criminal involvement. As household size and acculturation levels increased, the risk for criminal involvement grew, but when controlling for family cohesion, increases in household size and acculturation did not increase the risk for criminal involvement. Soto (2010), concluded that family cohesion and unity is a strong protective factor against crime and delinquency without any regards to household size and acculturation. Another study by Rumbaut (2006) found that criminal involvement can transpire if living with a family member who is involved in crime. Rumbaut (2006) argued that lack of family cohesion and lack of authority among parents were great predictors in crime among children, and if left unchanged criminal involvement could be learned by others in the family. Along with social control theory, Rumbaut (2006) found that criminal and delinquent children

learned their behaviors by being raised in households where crime was prevalent. After controlling for income and government assistance, Rumbaut (2006) found that recipients of government assistance was correlated with criminal involvement.

Alternatively, other studies demonstrate weak or no connection between family dynamics and youth violence. Pabon (1998) established no relationship between family unity and deviant behaviors among Puerto Ricans and Cubans. Arbona and Power (2003) concluded that, after accounting for household socioeconomic status, there were no racial/ethnic dissimilarities in the link between the degree of parental connection and anti-social behaviors among Whites, Blacks, Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans.

Research on the effects of family process on immigrant crime and delinquency is a new area of exploration and although it seems obvious that the parent-child conflict increases crime, delinquency, and other problem behaviors, other research appears contradictory. The majority of the research in this area views family cohesion and good parenting practices as the central premise for crime prevention in youth, and along with social control theory, youth learn positive norms, ideals, and manners from the members in their family and wider networks through socialization developments that are adaptive to bigger settings (Estrada-Martinez et al., 2011). Regarding acculturation and the family context, Rumbaut et al. (2006), explains that Hispanic/Latino parents who are not accustomed to American culture and society must essentially keep up with their children during their socialization development and learn about their peers, pastimes, and influences, in order to maintain their authoritarian position, and this in turn helps the parents acculturate, and prevents large acculturation gaps.

Methodology

Research Questions

This thesis aims to examine two questions. First, do second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans differ from each other in their likelihood of criminal involvement? Based on the historical patterns of immigration into ethnic enclaves and the socioeconomic conditions of the groups, this thesis hypothesizes that second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans will differ in their participation in criminality. Second, do different elements of the family environment serve as a protective factor against crime regardless of ethnic background? Consistent with social control theory, this thesis hypothesizes that greater family cohesion, parental engagement, and additional kin living in the home will reduce the risk for crime, while living with or having a strong attachment to a delinquent family member will increase the risk for crime.

Data

This thesis uses the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) 1991-2006 (Portes and Rumbaut) to examine disparities in crime rates between second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans. The CILS has a total sample size of 5,262 adolescents, and includes second generation immigrant children from seventy-seven different nationalities with at least one foreign-born parent. The first study (First Phase) was conducted in 1992 as an in-class survey questionnaire which was distributed to 8th and 9th graders from public and private schools in the Miami, Florida and San Diego, California Metropolitan Areas. Relevant variables in this study were examined in order to gain information on immigrant families, including children's demographic characteristics, language use, self-identities, and academic achievement.

A follow-up study (Second Phase) was conducted, consistent with the time to which respondents were about to graduate from high school. As in the first phase, in-class survey questionnaires were distributed. Its purpose was to examine the development of key adaptation outcomes, including language knowledge and preference, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and academic attainment over the adolescent years. The survey also sought to determine the proportion of second-generation youths who dropped out of school before graduation.

A final follow-up (Third Phase) was conducted when the research subjects averaged 24 years of age. Therefore, patterns of adaptation in early adulthood could be readily measured. Unlike the first two phases, the third phase was a survey questionnaire which was mailed to the respondents' current home address. Respondents who did not reply to the survey were dropped from the third phase. Respondents who responded to the

third and final phase were compensated \$20 US currency. Relevant adaptation outcomes measured in this survey include educational attainment, employment and occupational status, income, civil status and ethnicity of spouses/partners, political attitudes and participation, ethnic and racial identities, delinquency and incarceration, attitudes and levels of identification with American society, and plans for the future.

For the purpose of this thesis, only the Third Phase will be used to establish the crime disparity between second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans. All other nationalities are omitted; this thesis solely concentrates on those respondents who identify themselves as Mexican (n=876) and Cuban (n=525). Three separate analyses are conducted using STATA/IC 12.1, in order to examine the three hypotheses. All significance tests are conducted using logistic regression and odds ratios since the dependent variable in this thesis is a binary variable. The independent variables selected for this study relate to the theories in the literature, including socioeconomic and culture assimilation, segmented assimilation, and familial environment and culture. In the first analysis, a dummy variable is created in order to highlight the difference in criminality between second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans. In the second analysis, the variable for household size is transformed to evaluate the respondents with a household size less than five, and the third analysis, the variable for household size is transformed to evaluate the respondents with a household size greater than five. Although the third phase does not control for gender, analyses from the second phase of the study revealed that second generation Mexicans account for males (n=1,080) and females (n=1,044), and second generation Cubans account for males (n=964) and females (n=829).

Examining solely on the second generation immigrant group is crucial to the field of criminology. Researchers in the field of immigration continually find first generation immigrants to report less criminal involvement compared to second and third generation immigrants (Rumbaut, 2006; Morenoff and Astor, 2006; Peguero, 2008; Ousey and Kurbin, 2009). According to Martinez (2002) first generation immigrants in the United States arrive with the desire to work, not to commit crime. Martinez (2002) further states that children of immigrants or second generation immigrants will vary in their levels of criminal involvement, and these variations are due to familial factors. The onset of criminal involvement in immigrant children or second generation immigrants can be prevented with proper parental supervision and involvement in their child's life (Rumbaut, 2006).

The sample participants in the Third Phase average 24 years of age, so in essence it would be incorrect to refer them as youth, young adults, or adolescents. For the purpose of this thesis, the terms youth, young adults, and adolescents are used to explain the early life factors that are associated with and contribute to the development of a criminal or delinquent way of life among the sample. According to the age-crime curve, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) concluded that low self-control is obvious in early childhood through specific personality features, such as an inability to delay gratification, a low tolerance for frustration, and an inclination to participate in risk-taking behavior. Self-control improved through parental emotional support in the child, observing the child's behavior, identifying delinquency when it transpires, and disciplining the child. (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). According to Sampson and Laub (1993), social and life events may change some individuals while others remain offending. Sampson and Laub (1993)

argued that attachments or social connections in adulthood lead to an upsurge in some individuals' social assets, contributing to the discontinuance from most types of criminal behavior.

Measures

Dependent Variables:

Crime: I have been convicted of committing a crime, conspired in a criminal activity or violent offending. (0=No, 1=Yes)

Independent Variables:

Family Income: What was your total family income from all sources for the past year? (Interval)

Government Assistance: At any time in the past 12 months, have you received cash assistance from government programs such as TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) or SSI? (0=No, 1=Yes)

Bachelors Degree: I graduated college with a Bachelors Degree (0=No, 1=Yes)

English usage: How well do you speak, understand, read, and write English? (five-item likert scale, 1=Very Little, 5=Very Well)

Registered Voter: Are you a registered voter? (0=No, 1=Yes)

Discrimination: Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your race or ethnicity? (0=No, 1=Yes)

Household Size: How many people live with you? (Interval)

Family Member Criminal: I have a family member or have lived with a family member who has been convicted of committing a crime, conspired in a criminal activity or violent offending. (0=No, 1=Yes)

Visit Parent's Home County: How many times have you been back to visit your or your parents' home country? (Interval/Ratio)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Mean (SE)	Mexicans	Cubans	Full Sample
N	876	525	1401
Dependent Variables			
Crime	.054 (.22)	.041 (.19)	.049 (.21)
Independent Variables			
Socioeconomic Assimilation			
Family Income	35985.29 (18199.11)	39590.91 (18777.19)	37234.04 (18470.09)
Government Assistance	.037 (.19)	.028 (.16)	.034 (.18)
Bachelors Degree	.21 (.40)	.24 (.43)	.23 (.42)
Cultural Assimilation			
English usage	3.83 (.45)	3.92 (.28)	3.86 (.40)
Registered Voter	.63 (.48)	.69 (.46)	.66 (.47)
Segmented Assimilation			
Discrimination	.46 (.49)	.40 (.49)	.44 (.49)
Familial Environment and Culture			
Household Size	2.90 (1.75)	2.32 (1.54)	2.65 (1.67)
Family Member Criminal	.19 (.39)	.13 (.34)	.17 (.37)
Visit Parent's Home Country	4.22 (7.92)	.57 (2.26)	2.94 (6.79)

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of the focal variables for second generation Mexicans, second generation Cubans, and the full sample. Using descriptive statistics and comparing the means of both groups, second generation Mexicans report higher levels of engaging in criminal activity than second generation Cubans. Regarding the socioeconomic assimilation variables, second generation Cubans report higher gross income and are more likely to have a Bachelors degree than second generation Mexicans, while second generation Mexicans are more likely than second generation Cubans to be recipients of government assistance. Regarding the cultural assimilation variables, second generation Cubans report higher levels of English usage and are more likely to be registered voters than second generation Mexicans. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that Cubans can easily obtain U.S. citizenship and have the opportunity to register to vote, but that does not necessarily mean that they vote in every election. Regarding the only segmented assimilation variable, second generation Mexicans are more likely to report experiencing discrimination than their second generation Cubans counterparts. Regarding the familial environment and culture variables, there is no difference in household size between the two groups, but second generation Mexicans are more likely than second generation Cubans to report having a family member who has been convicted of committing a crime, conspired in a criminal activity or violent offense. Lastly, visiting parent's home country is an important variable to include because it exhibits the cultural and social ties that families retain with their country of origin. Second generation Mexicans visit their parent's country of origin, more often than second generation Cubans. This is possibly due to the political relationship between the United

States and Cuba. A strained political relationship, difficulty obtaining visas and a long lasting embargo has made it difficult for Cuban families to visit their country of origin.

Table 2: Full Model, Logistic Regression, Odds Ratios and Standard Errors for criminal involvement between 2nd Generation Mexicans and 2nd Generation Cubans

	Cuban		Mexican	
Independent Variables	β (SE)	Odds Ratios	β (SE)	Odds Ratios
Mexican vs. Cuban	.32 (.44)	1.37	-.30 (.44)	.73
Socioeconomic Assimilation				
Family Income	0.00000026 (0.0000038)	1.0	0.00000028 (0.0000038)	1
Government Assistance	2.40* (.61)	11.11*	2.40* (.61)	11.02*
Bachelors Degree	-.84 (.64)	.43	-.83 (.64)	.43
Cultural Assimilation				
English Usage	.21 (.74)	1.24	.22 (.74)	1.24
Registered Voter	-.56 (.42)	.56	-.56 (.42)	.56
Segmented Assimilation				
Discrimination	.87* (.42)	2.39*	.87* (.42)	2.39*
Familial Environment and Culture				
Household Size	-.084 (.13)	.91	-.086 (.13)	.91
Family Member Criminal	1.75* (.43)	5.76*	1.75* (.43)	5.77*
Visit Parent's Home Country	-.067 (.1002)	.93	-.069 (.1002)	.93

P ≤ .05

(*) Variables found significant with a 95% confidence interval / 2nd Generation Mexicans are used as the reference group.

Results

Looking at the full model in Table 2, it illustrates the logistic coefficients, odds ratios and standards errors for second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. The model is statistically significant, but only a few variables within both models are significant. Regarding differences in criminal involvement for second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans, second generation Cubans who identified themselves as Cuban were 0.32 times to more likely to report criminal involvement than those who did not identify themselves as Cuban, and second generation Mexicans who identified themselves as Mexican were 0.30 times less likely to report criminal involvement than those who did not identify themselves as Mexican. Some of the socioeconomic assimilation variables are associated with crime for both second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. According to the model, second generation Cubans who received some type of government assistance were 11.11 times more likely than second generation Cubans who did not received government assistance to report criminal involvement, and second generation Mexicans who received some type of government assistance were 11.02 times more likely than second generation Mexicans who did not received government assistance to report criminal involvement. Further examination of Table 2, finds that none of the cultural assimilation variables are associated with crime for either second generation Cubans or second generation Mexicans, but discrimination is significant for both groups. According to the model, second generation Cubans who have experienced discrimination were 2.39 times more likely than second generation Cubans who have not experienced discrimination to report criminal involvement, and second generation Mexicans who have experienced

discrimination were 2.39 times more likely than second generation Mexicans who have not experienced discrimination to report criminal involvement. As expected some of the familial environment and culture variables are associated with crime. Household size and visiting parent's home country is not associated with crime, but having a family member who has been convicted of committing a crime, conspired in a criminal activity or violent offense is strongly associated with crime for both second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. According to the model, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were 5.76 times more likely than second generation Cubans who do not have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement, and second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member were 5.77 times more likely than second generation Mexicans who do not have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement.

In second analysis, Table 3 illustrates the logistic coefficients, odds ratios and standards errors for second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans with a household size less than five. Like the first model, none of the socioeconomic assimilation variables are associated with crime for second generation Mexicans, but government assistance is associated with crime for second generation Cubans. According to the model, second generation Cubans who received some type of government assistance were 38.87 times more likely than those who did not receive government assistance to report criminal involvement. None of the cultural or segmented assimilation variables were associated with crime for second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans, but as expected, some of the familial environment and culture variables were associated with crime. Having a family member who has been convicted

of committing a crime, conspired in a criminal activity or violent offense is strongly associated with crime for both second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. According to the model, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were 5.78 times more likely than those who did not have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement, and second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member were 5.20 times more likely than those who did not have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement.. Compared to second generation Mexicans, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were 0.58 times more likely to report criminal involvement.

Table 3: Logistic Regression, Odds Ratios and Standard Errors for criminal involvement between 2nd Generation Mexicans and 2nd Generation Cubans with household size less than five

	Mexicans		Cubans	
Independent Variables	β (SE)	Odds Ratios	β (SE)	Odds Ratios
Socioeconomic Assimilation				
Family Income	-0.000005 (0.000009)	.99	0.000002 (0.000004)	1.000003
Government Assistance	1.65 (.95)	5.23	3.66* (.89)	38.87*
Bachelors Degree	-.85 (1.09)	.42	-.87 (.82)	.41
Cultural Assimilation				
English Usage	.34 (1.08)	1.41	-.074 (1.02)	.92
Registered Voter	-.51 (.65)	.60	-.59 (.62)	.55
Segmented Assimilation				
Discrimination	1.41 (.72)	4.13	.33 (.57)	1.39
Familial Environment and Culture				
Household Size	.95 (1.17)	2.60	-1.08 (.76)	.33
Family Member Criminal	1.64* (.63)	5.20* (3.32)	1.75* (.62)	5.78*
Visit Parent's Home Country	-.078 (.11)	.92 (.10)	-.031 (.21)	.96

P ≤ .05

(*) Variables found significant with a 95% confidence interval / 2nd Generation Mexicans are used as the reference group.

In the third analysis, Table 4 illustrates the logistic coefficients, odds ratios and standards for second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans with a household size greater than five. Like the first and second model, none of the socioeconomic assimilation variables are associated with crime for second generation Mexicans, but government assistance is associated with crime for second generation Cubans. According to the model, second generation Cubans who received some type of government assistance were 38.01 times more likely than those who did not receive government assistance to report criminal involvement. None of the cultural or segmented assimilation variables are associated with crime for both second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans, but as expected, some of the familial environment and culture variables are associated with crime for both second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans. Household size and visiting parent's home country was not associated with crime, but having a family member who has been convicted of committing a crime, conspired in a criminal activity or violent offense is strongly associated with crime for both second generation Mexicans and second generation Cubans. According to the model, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were 5.38 times more likely than those who did not have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement, and second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member were 5.70 times more likely than those who did not have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement. Compared to second generation Mexicans, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were 0.32 times less likely to report criminal involvement.

Table 4: Logistic Regression, Odds Ratios and Standard Errors for criminal involvement between 2nd Generation Mexicans and 2nd Generation Cubans with household size greater than five

	Mexicans		Cubans	
Independent Variables	β (SE)	Odds Ratios (SE)	β (SE)	Odds Ratios (SE)
Socioeconomic Assimilation				
Family Income	-0.0000057 (0.000009)	.99	0.000003 (0.000004)	1.000003
Government Assistance	1.94 (1.01)	6.99	3.63* (.89)	38.01*
Bachelors Degree	-.81 (1.09)	.44	-.91 (.82)	.40
Cultural Assimilation				
English Usage	.29 (1.09)	1.34	-.028 (1.01)	.97
Registered Voter	-.43 (.66)	.64	-.73 (.61)	.48
Segmented Assimilation				
Discrimination	1.54 (.74)	4.66	.28 (.57)	1.33
Familial Environment and Culture				
Household Size	.42 (1.13)	1.52	1.59 (.95)	4.90
Family Member Criminal	1.74* (.63)	5.70*	1.68* (.63)	5.38*
Visit Parent's Home Country	-.094 (.12)	.90	-.027 (.20)	.97

P ≤ .05

(*) Variables found significant with a 95% confidence interval / 2nd Generation Mexicans are used as the reference group.

Discussion

Much of the literature on crime and delinquency among Hispanic/Latinos has been unpredictable, with some studies finding higher risks of crime and others concluding that the risk is lower. One factor that may contribute to unpredictable conclusions is dissimilarities in the effect of features of the family environment on the risk for crime and delinquency among various Hispanic/Latino subgroups. The absence of material on within Hispanic/Latino dissimilarities with regard to family functioning and adolescent crime may have ultimately delayed the understanding of these matters. This thesis examined the difference in crime, as well as evaluated the influence of factors identified as critical between second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans using a diverse, nationwide sample. This thesis found some support for the hypotheses through a more unambiguous ethnic subgroup analysis. Counting for all the variables and risk factors this thesis found interesting results with wide variation within the two groups.

Overall, there were no significant differences in the levels of criminal involvement for both second generation Cubans and second Mexicans in the first analysis, but after adjusting for household size in later models significant differences between both groups were found. A previous study by Rumbaut (2006) found that after controlling for income and government assistance, being a recipient of government assistance was correlated with criminal involvement. In the first analysis of the thesis, second generation Cubans and second generation Mexicans who obtained government assistance were statistically significant to report criminal involvement. Discrimination was also statistically significant for both second generation Cubans and second

generation Mexicans, revealing that segmented assimilation may contribute to criminal involvement (Portes and Zhou, 1993).

Furthermore, results from the two groups when examining the effect of family environments proposes a more intricate depiction than classic social control theory would suggest. This thesis found that family characteristics showed intricate patterns of influence across the two groups. Therefore, results from this thesis submit that the theory in much of the crime and delinquency prevention literature that places the family as a basis of defense and resilience among Hispanic/Latinos moderately supports the results (Smith and Krohn 1995; Rodriguez and Weisburd 1991). Regarding household size, Soto (2010) found that as household size and acculturation levels increased, the risk for criminal involvement grew, but when controlling for family unity, increases in household size and acculturation did not increase the risk for criminal involvement. Soto (2010) concluded that family cohesion and unity is a strong protective factor against crime without any regards to household size and acculturation. In this thesis however, household size was not statistically associated with crime for either Second Generation Mexicans or Second Generation Cubans.

Rumbaut (2006) found that criminal involvement can transpire if living with a family member who is involved in crime and argued that lack of family cohesion and lack of authority among parents were great predictors in crime among children, and if left untreated criminal involvement could be learned by others in the family. Consistent with social control theory, a major finding in this thesis is that presence of a family member who is involved in criminal activity increased crime for both Second Generation Mexicans and Second Generation Cubans in both small and large households.

Furthermore, in households less than five, second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member were more likely than second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement, while in households greater than five, second generation Mexicans who have a delinquent family member were more likely than second generation Cubans who have a delinquent family member to report criminal involvement.

There are several study limitations worth mentioning that could pave the way for future research. First of all, the two subsequent phases of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study controlled for gender. The third phase did not include a gender variable therefore; the models in this study do not distinguish between gender. The effects of immigration and acculturation cannot be presumed to be the same among both males and females. Broidy and Agnew (1997) state that the types of strain and its effects may differ greatly by gender, and surely the same could be thought for the types of strain and its effects associated with immigration and acculturation. Also, since the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study collected additional data in subsequent waves, sample attrition significantly reduced the available data potentially leaving little power for subgroup analysis. Furthermore, questions regarding family cohesion, parental engagement, and adolescent autonomy were assessed to a greater extent in the first phases of data collection, allowing for only a minimal assessment of their effects beyond the second phase.

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