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Looking at Latino Communities: Legal Cynicism, Acculturation, and their Willingness to Cooperate with Police

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LOOKING AT LATINO COMMUNITIES: LEGAL CYNICISM, ACCULTURATION, AND
THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH POLICE

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LOOKING AT LATINO COMMUNITIES: LEGAL CYNICISM, ACCULTURATION, AND
THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH POLICE

by

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Abstract

Numerous studies have examined how acculturation affects Latino neighborhoods and how legal cynicism affects Latino neighborhoods. Acculturation has been linked with low crime levels, meanwhile legal cynicism is attributed to high crime levels. This study aims to address this contradiction in the literature. Based on 1059 surveys, 46 neighborhood clusters were used to examine how legal cynicism and acculturation to Mexico impact a neighborhoods willingness to cooperate with police. A multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression found that acculturation to Mexico results in higher levels of legal cynicism and less willingness to cooperate with police. The OLS regression also found that acculturation to the U.S. resulted in lower levels of legal cynicism and higher levels of willingness to cooperate with police, regardless of their legal cynicism. This study's limitations and future research are discussed.

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Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

This research looks into Latino communities and how acculturation could influence their willingness to cooperate with police. It is important to research this relationship because society associates Latinos with high crime rates (Sampson, 2008). Another factor that has been commonly associated with high crime rates is legal cynicism (Wilcox et al., 2018). When there are high levels of legal cynicism, the community tends to not report crimes to the police (Wilcox et al., 2018). Legal cynicism refers to a view among citizens or communities that the police are illegitimate, nonresponsive to residents' needs and calls for assistance, and unable to adequately provide public safety (Wilcox et al., 2018). Communities that have higher levels of legal cynicism are less likely to report crime, cooperate with the police, and more likely to respond to victimization via retaliation (Wilcox et al., 2018). This typically results in higher levels of crime due to the community's lack of willingness to report criminal behavior, lack of cooperation with the police, and greater use of retaliation when victimization occurs (Wilcox et al., 2018). Legal cynicism may also increase crime because the community does not cooperate with the police thereby hindering their ability to respond to instances of crime and make arrests and the community not calling the police when a crime takes place thus letting criminals know they can get away with crime in these areas (Boehme et al., 2020). There is reason to believe that Latino immigrant communities do not trust the police due to the implementation of policies, such as Arizona's SB1070, that negatively affect them, leading to less trust and higher legal cynicism (Dhingra et al., 2021).

Despite perceptions to the contrary, previous research shows that Latino ethnic enclaves tend to have lower than expected crime rates within their communities (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 2014; Chavez, 2018; Chouhy, 2018; Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Feldmeyer et al., 2019; Kubrin

& Mioduszewski, 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Sampson, 2008; Shihadeh & Barranco, 2010; Ulmer & Harris, 2013). This phenomenon is often referred to as the immigrant or Latino paradox. In the past it was believed that immigrants had to fully assimilate into American culture to be successful (Feldmeyer, 2018). This is called the straight-line assimilation model, which was developed in the early 20th century to describe the experiences of white ethnic immigrants. However, recent research on immigrants and second and third generation Americans shows that increasing levels of assimilation tend to be associated with higher levels of criminal behavior and other adverse outcomes (Chouhy, 2018; Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018). As a result, scholars of immigration began reconsidering the process of assimilation, and the straight-line model. Chouhy (2018) challenges the straight-line assimilation model by discussing segmented assimilation which is made of three paths: upward mobility, downward mobility and selective acculturation. The different paths of segmented assimilation show not only that assimilation to American culture does not always lead to economic or social success but also that immigrants do not need to seek to fully assimilate to be successful. Studies show that the more assimilated immigrants are the more likely they are to be involved in crime, giving evidence contrary to the arguments in the straight line and upward mobility assimilation paths. In ethnic enclaves, where the community is largely made of immigrants of similar backgrounds, assimilation could actually increase their crime rates at the neighborhood level.

In contrast, selective acculturation allows immigrant communities, particularly enclaves, to keep some of their cultural values that may protect them from criminal behavior while still benefitting from the larger society in terms of educational and occupational attainment and income. Prior research (Feldmeyer et al.,2019; Martinez, 2010; Rojas-Gaina & Madero-Hernandez, 2018) has attributed low levels of crime in Latino immigrant communities, in part, to

certain cultural values, suggesting that selective acculturation may be at play. These cultural values include retention of their native language, promoting strong familial ties, and high levels of involvement in religion. Especially when Latinos settle in enclaves, they are able to speak their native language with the members of the community, reducing the stress of having to learn a new language and allowing them to create social bonds and attain employment with more ease (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

Although much of the research focuses on how segmented assimilation affects crime rates at the neighborhood level (Chavez, 2018; Feldmeyer et al., 2019; Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Sampson, 2008;) there is a lack of research on how Latino communities' legal cynicism affects crime rates. It is important to research this relationship because it is currently unknown if the generally low crime rates in these communities is due to people simply not reporting the crimes that are taking place due to legal cynicism. There is also the possibility that Latino communities have developed high levels of legal cynicism and are experiencing downward mobility by adopting the code of the street to combat the crime in their area. However, this may be unlikely since the code typically results in an increase in crime (Anderson, 1999) but Latino communities typically have low crime.

Although their cultural values play a major role in their behavior, Latinos are also impacted by their country of origin which may influence perceptions of police and levels of legal cynicism and crime reporting. Being an immigrant or the descendant of someone who is an immigrant also impacts one's behavior. Behavior of the individual will ultimately impact the behavior of a community if they are all of similar backgrounds. The criminalization of immigration (Macias-Rojas, 2018), alongside the media making it seem as if Latino and immigrant are synonymous with crime, has greatly impacted the lives of the Latino community

in America. Laws such as the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 expanded the criminal grounds for deportation for legal immigrants by reclassifying misdemeanors as felonies. This partnered with the misconception that immigrants are criminals (Chouhy, 2018; Rivera, 1994; Sampson, 2008; Solis et al., 2009; Ventura Miller, 2018) has led to Latinos having high levels of legal cynicism (Boehme et al., 2020; Ramey, 2013; Rivera, 1994). This could possibly be further exacerbated by fears of deportation resulting from reporting crime. Combined, these factors could lead to a substantial drop in crime reporting by Latinos in an effort to avoid involvement with law enforcement, rather than being solely the result of actual low levels of crime.

With Latino immigrants making up such a large portion of the U.S. and given perceptions of high crime in these communities compared to actual low levels of crime it is important to assess the factors that influence their reporting of crime at the community level. This study will focus on how levels of immigration, segmented assimilation, legal cynicism, and adoption of the code of the street may be related to crime reporting. On one hand, Latino communities may be able to avoid criminal activity by maintaining their cultural values and using them as protective factors against the negative aspects of American society. In other words, they are selectively acculturating into society instead of following a straight-line assimilation path. However, on the other hand, the implications of policies that target immigrants resulting in high levels of legal cynicism may suppress their willingness to report crime. This research will empirically assess these different possibilities in the aim of digging more deeply into the cultural issues that may affect crime reporting. This study will be using data gathered by the El Paso Neighborhood Survey (EPNS). Through the use of this survey and previous literature this study aims to look at how acculturation has impacted Latino neighborhoods and their relationships with the police in

their communities as well as their willingness to report crime. The literature review is structured in a way to show how nativism and immigration policies in the United States has impacted Latino communities. This serves as the background as to why there is legal cynicism amongst these communities. Lastly, the literature review will focus on acculturation to demonstrate why there is a gap in the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment are not a new phenomenon in the United States. Ventura Miller (2018) defines nativism as the intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its purported un-American or foreign connections. Nativists often believe that certain races and immigrant groups are intellectually and culturally inferior, and that immigrants also represent an economic threat to native born Americans (Ventura-Miller, 2018). Nativists also believe that immigrants would bring “social-ills,” particularly crime, to the United States (Ventura Miller, 2018). In the mid 1800’s, this sentiment was originally directed toward white ethnic immigrants from Europe (Ventura Miller, 2018); however, nativist attention shifted toward immigrants from Latin America during World War II (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018) as immigration from these areas increased. During World War II many Americans left the domestic labor force to fight in the war resulting in a labor shortage in the United States. To address this shortage, the U.S. created the Bracero Program which led to an influx of Mexican migrant workers with temporary work visas in the United States (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

Anti-immigrant sentiments towards Latin immigrants are still seen today. This is primarily noticed within the rhetoric of many conservative U.S politicians and pundits. This negative rhetoric was most recently seen during the 2016 presidential election as well as all throughout former President Donald J. Trump’s presidency. Trump’s 2016 campaign promulgated the idea that Latin immigrants were criminals that go against American values (Chouhy, 2018). Despite this statement being false, Trump is seen as a credible source due to his

political status. Politicians could be perceived as knowledgeable sources for immigration issues since they are the ones who create immigration policies.

Such immigration policies have impacted the way immigrants are treated in American society. Recent immigration policies are often explicitly xenophobic and are shifting enforcement of immigration law toward partnerships with state and local law enforcement in a process called “crimmigration” (Macias-Rojas, 2018). Especially policies such as Arizona’s SB 1070 and Texas’ SB4 (Dhingra et al., 2021), allowed for immigrants to be racially profiled, stopped, and deported (Light & Miller, 2018), regardless of whether they had committed a crime or not.

Although some portions of these types of policies were later found to be unconstitutional, their enactment and enforcement, although only temporary, may have led to higher levels of legal cynicism among Latino immigrant communities. Widespread legal cynicism may spawn distrust in the police at the neighborhood level and result in low levels of reporting crime. Previous research has found an association between high levels of legal cynicism and high crime rates at the neighborhood level (Wilcox et al., 2018). This could be possible in Latino neighborhoods due to several reasons. The first being that a Latino individual may not want to call the police if they or their neighbors were the victim of a crime out of fear that they might end up being deported as specified by laws such as Arizona’s SB1070. This policy alongside many others has contributed to the fear that Latino communities have towards the police (Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004; Rivera 1994, Ryo, 2017). Another reason that legal cynicism would affect Latino neighborhoods is because Latinos tend to settle in established enclaves (Ramey, 2013). Since they tend to build strong social ties with the members of their community (Rojas-Gaona &

Madero-Hernandez, 2018) even if they are citizens, they could be hesitant to call the police out of concern for their neighbors who could be at risk of deportation.

However, despite Latino immigrant neighborhoods typically having high levels of legal cynicism, crime rates do not go up in their communities—there is actually a negative association between Latino immigrants and crime (Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Stowell & Gostjev, 2018). Currently there is a gap in research looking into Latino immigrant neighborhoods views of police, levels of reporting of crime, and crime behavior at the neighborhood level. Previous studies have only looked at these relationships separately but never together. This chapter will next discuss nativistic policies that were implemented in the U.S., legal cynicism, acculturation, and how these factors have affected Latino neighborhoods willingness to report crime.

Immigration Policies

Nativist sentiment led to the creation of xenophobic immigration policies. It is important to look into these policies because it demonstrates how immigrants have been treated in America which has affected their behavior, especially in regard to the police. Aside from the Chinese Exclusion Act, prior to 1910 the United States had an “open doors” policy with very few restrictions for immigrants (Rojas- Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018). At this time, Latinos made up a small portion of the immigrant population (Rojas- Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018) while the majority of immigrants were comprised of people from eastern Europe (Ventura Miller, 2018). However, the open doors policy came to an end when nativist sentiments began to grow. These beliefs lead to the creation of discriminatory policies (Menjivar et al., 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Ventura Miller, 2018) and laws that, in some cases, limited immigration from countries believed to be culturally dissimilar and unlikely to assimilate into

American culture while, in other cases, focused on the criminalization of immigrants by, for example, reclassifying certain misdemeanor offenses to aggravated felonies, which represent grounds for deportation for an immigrant while a misdemeanor does not.

Negative feelings towards Latinos began to grow during World War II. Prior to World War II Latinos were not paid much attention by society since the focus was primarily on white European immigrants. But the Bracero Program created with the Mexican Government during WWII, allowed for large numbers of Latino immigrants, primarily men, to legally work in the United States. The program was in effect from 1942 and 1964 and during this time, it is estimated that over 4 million Mexican immigrants entered the U.S. both legally and illegally (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018). The program ended after the labor demand dropped, conflict between the employers and employees emerged, and nativist concerns regarding immigration rose (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

While the Bracero Program did not last long, immigration to the U.S. nonetheless continued at high levels, through both legal and illegal channels. In response, the United States implemented the despicably named Operation Wetback. This explicitly racist policy began in the summer of 1954 as a way to reduce illegal crossings from the Mexican border through the use of detention and deportation (Boehm, 2009; Garcia, 1981; Hernandez, 2008; Ventura Miller, 2018). During the first year that Operation Wetback took place, the INS detained and deported over a million people (Hernandez, 2008). Although a majority of the people that were deported through Operation Wetback were immigrants, some U.S. citizens of Mexican descent were deported as well (Garcia, 1981). This indicates that the purpose of Operation Wetback was not merely to diminish illegal crossings, but to target the Mexican/Mexican-American community for

deportation. The policy resulted in outrage from the Mexican-American communities and organizations (Hernandez, 2008).

By the late 1950's there was pressure on congress to change these harsh immigration policies. In response, the United States witnessed a major change with the passage of the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, which put an end to the quota system (Golash-Boza, 2015; Ventura-Miller, 2018), instead allowing each country up to 20,000 visas per year given on a first come, first serve basis (Ventura Miller, 2018). This resulted in an increase of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean as well as an increase in undocumented immigration from Mexico (Golash-Boza, 2015). The country also had a more welcoming approach for immigrants with their Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) (Armenta, 2018; Calavita, 1989; Rojas- Gaona & Madero Hernandez, 2018; Ventura Miller, 2018) which offered amnesty to any undocumented immigrant that had continuously lived in the United States since 1982 and had no criminal record (Armenta, 2018; Calavita, 1989; Rojas- Gaona & Madero Hernandez, 2018; Ventura Miller, 2018). The IRCA, signed by President Ronald Raegan, granted amnesty to nearly 2.7 million immigrants (Armenta, 2018). However, the granting of amnesty to these immigrants also paved the way for the government to militarize the border and further restrict migration as part of this law (Armenta, 2018; Calavita, 1989; Matos, 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Ventura Miller, 2018). The IRCA enhanced the border patrol by increasing the number of its agents by 50% in areas like El Paso and San Diego as well as by hiring more agents (Longo, 2016; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018). It also made it more difficult for future undocumented immigrants to find a job since employers who knowingly hired unauthorized workers would now be penalized (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

Importantly, the IRCA also made the deportation of undocumented immigrants a priority for the first time since Operation Wetback (Armenta, 2018).

Typically, in order for an immigrant to be deported, they would have to come in contact with federal law enforcement. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRAIRA) represented a new effort to criminalize immigrants (Macias-Rojas, 2018) since, under this new law, undocumented immigrants can be deported simply by being detected by federal law enforcement. Because of this there may be a concerted effort by such individuals to avoid all criminal activity as well as contact with law enforcement. In addition, while legal immigrants could only be deported if they are found guilty of an aggravated felony, the IIRAIRA expanded the criminal grounds for deportation by re-classifying certain misdemeanors as aggravated felonies (Macias-Rojas, 2018; Menjívar et al., 2018). Some of the reclassified crimes include driving under the influence and shoplifting (Menjívar et al., 2018). Furthermore, immigrants were now denied the right to plead their case to an immigration judge (Macias-Rojas, 2018). In the years since IIRAIRA went into effect, the United States saw a rapid rise in deportations. This situation could lead nativists to believe that immigrants were highly involved in crime since the requirement for deportation is to be found guilty of a crime. However, with misdemeanors being reclassified as aggravated felonies and undocumented immigrants not being allowed to plead their case to an immigration judge, those deportation rates could be misrepresenting crime rates among immigrants.

Legal Cynicism

A major component of nativist arguments against immigration focuses on crime, claiming that immigrants in general, but especially those who are not assimilated, who possess different cultural values, or do not speak English, will engage in more crime (Feldmeyer, 2018). However,

one aspect of this issue that is commonly ignored is legal cynicism, which tends to increase crime (Boehme et al., 2020).

Legal cynicism may develop when members of a community experience over-policing or under-policing (Solis et al., 2009). A community will feel over-policed if the police are perceived as constantly monitoring them for minor offenses or even when a crime is not taking place, such as racial profiling (Boehme et al., 2020). This usually happens in lower-income communities where the residents are typically people of color. Communities that are over-policed may attribute this to systemic racism from the police (Boehme et al., 2020; Solis et al., 2009), feeling that their community is being scrutinized unnecessarily because of the color of their skin or their heritage instead of the crimes that are taking place (Boehme et al., 2020). Instances of abuse and violence used against Latinos by the police have further weakened trust (Rivera, 1994).

Under-policing occurs when the police withhold their services and protection from certain areas (Boehme et al., 2020). This happens when the police take longer than usual when answering a call, do not respond at all, or do not follow through with investigations and closing cases. This may lead to higher crime rates for multiple reasons. First, the community may begin responding to crime into their own hands since they will feel the police will not do anything (Boehme et al., 2020). Second, they will no longer call the police since they are not doing their job. Offenders then perceive that they can get away with criminal behavior since the police will not be notified (Boehme et al., 2020).

Thus, some scholars attribute legal cynicism in Latino communities to over- and under-policing (Solis et al., 2009). Others argue that Latino communities develop high levels of legal cynicism out of fear of deportation (Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004; Rivera 1994, Ryo, 2017). In

addition, Latino immigrants may be unfamiliar with the legal system in the United States and fear it (Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004). Because of this, immigrants may believe that any type of involvement in a crime, even being the victim themselves, will result in their deportation (Rivera, 1994; Ryo, 2017). Another reason Latino immigrants may lack trust may be due to the police from their country of origin. Mexico for example, is infamous for its corrupt police force (Brown et al., 2006). Brown et al. (2006) found that Mexicans believe that police officers will provide favorable treatment to the person who provides the largest bribe. Such beliefs could influence Mexican immigrants to believe that all police officers are corrupt and will only provide help to the person who gives them more money, even if that person is the offender.

On the opposite end of the spectrum there are communities who feel under-policed when law enforcement officers do not arrive promptly or fail to close criminal cases in the community (Solis et al., 2009). The community loses trust in the police because they see the officers as incompetent. Rivera (1994) discusses how Latinas who experience domestic abuse are already hesitant to report their abuse because of their legal status and lose even more trust in the police because they are treated differently by law enforcement officials or denied access to domestic violence shelters because of language barriers or cultural differences.

Furthermore, Latinos in America experience citizenship profiling. Citizenship profiling is when someone is stopped and questioned by law enforcement due to the suspicion that they are an undocumented immigrant (Morales & Curry, 2021). Policies such as Arizona's SB 1070, allow police officers to stop any person they believe might be an undocumented immigrant (Chalfin & Deza, 2020; Light & Miller 2018; Lyons et al., 2013; Thompson & Wilson, 2021). This resulted in racial profiling by the police by primarily targeting people who "look" Latino. Citizenship profiling contributes to legal cynicism among the immigrant community by instilling

the fear of detection and deportation (Morales & Curry, 2021). Regardless of the reason Latinos typically do not trust the police.

Taken together, evidence shows that Latino immigrant communities typically do not trust the police, whether out of fear of deportation or legal cynicism. This distrust in police could have resulted in Latino immigrant communities taking a downward assimilation path and adopting the code of the street. For the code of the street to be present in a community, Anderson (2002) theorizes that legal cynicism will be at the foundation of it.

Acculturation

Americans tend to believe that for immigrants to be successful and avoid criminal behavior they must fully assimilate into American culture and that crime would increase due to their lack of success in American society (Feldmeyer, 2018). In order for immigrants to fully assimilate there would have to be a decline in their ethnic distinctions, particularly language usage, and social differences and gain similar socioeconomic standing, speak English, and intermarriage with members of the host country (Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018). These beliefs follow the straight-line assimilation model. However, there is little evidence supporting this model (Feldmeyer, 2018). Instead, there is a vast amount of research that has found that the more an immigrant assimilates to American culture the more likely they are to get involved in crime (Chavez, 2018; Chouhy, 2018; Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018). This can be explained by segmented assimilation theory.

Typically, in American culture, a neighborhood with low socioeconomic status and high residential mobility tends to have high crime levels (Wilcox et al., 2018). However, this is not seen among Latino immigrant communities. This is commonly referred to as the Latino paradox. Despite having the characteristics of a community that should have high crime rates, research has

found, that on a macro level, neighborhoods with a high percentage of immigrants not only have low crime rates, but they may also revitalize the community which helps lower crime rates further (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 2014; Chouhy, 2018; Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018; Ramey, 2013; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018). Immigrant revitalization theory states that when an ethnic enclave is settled, immigrants will positively transform a community's economic and cultural institutions (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

Latino immigrants have one advantage that most immigrants do not: their population size. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019 over 15% of the population is Hispanic or Latino. This makes it easier for Latino immigrants to find and settle into an established enclave. Most immigrants will seek to settle in enclaves (Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Feldmeyer et al., 2019; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Sampson, 2008; Shihadeh & Barranco, 2010). found in traditional destinations such as California, New York, Texas, and Florida (Ventura Miller, 2018).

Immigrants tend to settle in areas that are affordable to them. This would typically mean that the community is low income and high crime (Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Solis et al., 2009). However, once an enclave develops in these areas, selective acculturation will occur and likely result in the community being revitalized the area gets revitalized. This is because once an enclave is developed immigrants who do not speak English can start generating income. Once they have social capital, they will create new economic opportunities for other people living in the community, who theoretically, in the future will gain social capital themselves and further create more economic opportunities (Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018; Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004; Sampson, 2008). One reason that this could be happening in Latino communities is because of their cultural values. Since they hold strong

kinships with the members of their communities, they do not leave the area even after they start making money that could allow them to live comfortably in middle-class America. Instead, their kinships encourage them to stay within the community and invest their money in it to uplift the rest of the area. It is also important to note that the jobs created in these areas do not only benefit Latino immigrants but also native born and people of other races/ethnicities (Sampson, 2008). For many years, Americans have been arguing that immigrants are stealing jobs but in reality, they are creating more. The employments availability as well as the economic developments help reduce crime rates because the residents no longer have to resort to alternative methods to make ends meet (Sampson, 2008).

Furthermore, enclaves allow for Latino immigrants settle in a neighborhood that allows them to retain their native language, a cultural feature that they hold in high regard (Kubrin & Desmond, 2015). Use of the native language serves as a protective factor against involvement in crime, because, unlike other immigrants who struggle with a language barrier when immigrating to United States (Shihadeh & Barranco, 2010), living in enclaves reduces one of the major stressors associated with immigration, having to learn a new language. With the majority of their community being able to communicate efficiently with one another in a common language, Latino immigrants are better able to build social bonds and attain employment (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

Latino immigrants also strongly value familism and hold their families to high regard. They emphasize familial unity, obligations, and support toward the family members (Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018). Latino immigrant families tend to have higher marriage rates and lower rates of divorce when compared to U.S. citizens (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018). This is commonly associated with low rates of crime not only for the parents but the children as

well. When there is a traditional family setting the parents may be able to better look after their children to assure that they are not getting involved in delinquent behavior. Having two parents also allows for more annual home income since both parents can work or if only one parent works, they can work more hours than usual without having to worry about the children's supervision. However, Latino immigrants do not only form strong familial bonds within their own family. Latino enclaves tend to have strong kinship and friendship networks with other members of the community such as neighbors (Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004). This also allows them to create strong social bonds as well as enforce informal social control. It has been found that in an immigrant enclave, parents will "call on co-ethnics" to supervise their children while they are away to ensure they are behaving (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018).

This confluence of processes may strengthen collective efficacy which is defined as the ability of members of the community to come together to address problems in the community (Burchfield & Silver, 2013; Feldmeyer et al., 2019). Social bonds are created in Latino communities through the use of their native language, familial bonds, and strong kinship networks. These social bonds allow for different members of the community to impose social control and assure that others are not partaking in criminal behavior. They are coming together to stop crime from happening in their community, thus enacting collective efficacy. Religion also works as a form of collective efficacy since it has strict rules that members of the church are expected to follow. With the community primarily being Latino and catholic they follow the same rules that the church implements. This results in a reduction of crime. Finally, familial values enforce collective efficacy because having traditional family values means caring for the members of the family and their wellbeing. This, in turn, means that the family will come together to assure that they are all safe and out of trouble. Even when the parents cannot be there,

they will reach out to their social bonds to ensure that their children are still taken care, thus using collective efficacy once again.

Chapter 3: Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses will be examined.

H1: A positive association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to Mexico and legal cynicism.

H2: A negative association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to Mexico and willingness to cooperate with police, and this association will be mediated by legal cynicism.

H3: A negative association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to the U.S and legal cynicism

H4: A positive association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to the U.S. and willingness to cooperate with police, and this association will be mediated by legal cynicism.

Chapter 4: Method

Sample

This study uses the El Paso Neighborhood Survey (EPNS) that was conducted between March and August of 2014 in El Paso, Texas. One thousand fifty-nine individual surveys were conducted to represent 46 neighborhood clusters. This sampling design follows Sampson's and associates (1998) Community Survey Component of the Project on Human Development for Chicago Neighborhoods dataset. Neighborhood clusters in El Paso were determined by aggregating 1-3 census tracts that were similar in demographic and economic indicators (poverty rate, percent foreign-born, and language spoken in the home) as determined the American Community Survey (ACS) (2015) census tract data. Geographic boundaries such as interstates, roads, and other landmarks were taken into consideration when determining neighborhood clusters. From the total of 100 neighborhood clusters created, they were stratified into groups with high, medium, and low levels of immigration, and 14-15 clusters were randomly selected from each stratum yielding a total of 46 clusters. From each neighborhood cluster, 30 households were randomly selected using residential addresses provided by a marketing company that removed business addresses from the list. Each household was mailed a letter informing them they had been selected to participate in the survey and asked them if they were willing to volunteer. Respondents had the option of calling and scheduling an interview. If they did not call to schedule an interview a research assistant would visit their home within three days and ask if they were willing to participate. This follows the Tailored Design Method developed by Dillman (Dillman et al., 2014). For households that agreed to participate, the adult with the most recent birthday was the person selected to participate in the survey and was compensated \$20.00 for their time. Interviews were conducted in the interviewee's preferred language (English or

Spanish) and lasted on average 45 minutes. The EPNS resulted in a response rate of 74.9%, meaning that approximately three of every four households that were contacted resulted in having a respondent agree to participate. 26.48% of the respondents identified as immigrants which compares favorably to the El Paso County U.S. census data which estimates in 2019 that 24.1% of the population is foreign born. 82.83% of participants identified as Hispanic or Latino which is almost identical to the El Paso County U.S. census data which estimates in 2019 that 82.9% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino. Interviews were conducted by 50 trained graduate and undergraduate research assistant students from the University of Texas at El Paso, who were CITI certified and completed a two-semester long research methods course that trained them for data collection.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Willingness to cooperate with police is when a community member would call the police when a crime occurs in their neighborhood. Willingness to report was measured using the “willingness to cooperate with police” scale (Jackson et al., 2012) that included four Likert-scale items with (1) being strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The items are “if the situation arose, people in your neighborhood would be very likely to call the police/sheriff to report suspicious activity near their house,” “if the situation arose, people in your neighborhood would be very likely to call the police/sheriff to provide information to help them find a suspected criminal,” “they... would be very likely to call the police/sheriff to report a crime they had witnessed,” and “they... would be very likely the police/sheriff if they or a member of their household were the victim of a crime.” A higher score indicated they were more willing to report, and lower scores indicate they are less willing to

report. Cronbach’s alpha for willingness to report scale was 0.87. A principal components analysis yielded a single component solution where the lowest component loading was 0.74.

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and components loading for these items. Scores on these items were summed for each respondent. To generate the score for each neighborhood cluster, the scores for the respondents in the cluster were averaged.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Component Loading for Items Measuring Willingness to Cooperate with Police (n=1059)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Component Loading
call the police/sheriff to report suspicious activity near their house	4.26	0.83	.86
call the police/sheriff to provide information to help them find a suspected criminal	4.22	0.83	.89
call the police/sheriff to report a crime they had witnessed	4.27	0.79	.90
call the police/sheriff if they or a member of their household were the victim of a crime	4.37	0.71	.74

Legal cynicism is defined as distrust in police and adherence to deviance and a lack of social norms as well as community members’ view that the police are illegitimate, unable to properly provide public safety, and nonresponsive to residents’ calls. (Sampson and Bartusch, 1998; Wilcox et al., 2018). Legal cynicism was measured using five Likert-scale items taken from the Project of Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) with (1) being strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The items are “laws are made to be broken,” “it’s okay to do anything you want as long as you don’t hurt anyone,” “to make money, there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy

ways and hard ways,” “fighting between friends or within families is nobody else’s business,” “nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself,” “excessive use of force by the police is a problem in your neighborhood,” and “police harassing people is a problem in your neighborhood.” The higher the scores on these items, the higher the levels of legal cynicism. Cronbach’s alpha for legal cynicism measures was 0.72. A principal component analysis showed a single component solution where the lowest loading is 0.60. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and components loading for these items. Scores on these items were summed for each respondent, and then averaged for the participants in each neighborhood cluster to generate the neighborhood scores.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Component Loading for Items Measuring Legal Cynicism (n=1059)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Component Loading
Laws are made to be broken	2.12	1.01	.67
It’s ok to do anything you want as you don’t hurt anyone	2.47	1.15	.74
To make money, there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy ways and hard ways.	2.16	1.07	.77
Fighting between friends or within families is nobody else's business	3.02	1.22	.60
Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.	2.71	1.23	.67

Independent Variables

Acculturation was measured using the scales “acculturation to Mexico,” and “acculturation to US.” Both scales use Likert-scale items with (1) being not at all, (2) very little or not very often, (3) moderately, (4) much or very often, (5) extremely often or almost always. The items for acculturation to Mexico are “I speak Spanish,” “I enjoy speaking Spanish,” “I associate with Mexicans and/or Mexican Americans,” “I enjoy listening to Spanish language music,” “I enjoy Spanish language TV,” “I enjoy Spanish language movies,” “I enjoy reading in Spanish,” “I write in Spanish,” “my thinking is done in the Spanish language,” “my contact with people in Mexico has been...,” “my father identifies or identified himself as ‘Mexicano’,” “my mother identifies or identified herself as ‘Mexicana’,” “my friends, while I was growing up, were of Mexican origin,” “my family cooks Mexican foods,” “my friends now are of Mexican origin,” and “I like to identify myself as Mexican.” The items for acculturation to US are “I speak English,” “I associate with Anglos,” “I enjoy listening to English language music,” “I enjoy English language TV,” “I enjoy English language movies,” “I enjoy reading in English,” “I write in English,” “my thinking is done in the English language,” “my contact with people in the USA has been...,” “my friends, while growing up, were of Anglo origin,” “my friends now are of Anglo origin,” “I like to identify myself as an Anglo American,” and “I like to identify myself as an American.” Cronbach’s alpha for the 16 items in the acculturation to Mexico scale was 0.95. The principal components analysis showed a two-component solution with Eigenvalues of 9.22 and 1.45. However, results from a scree plot shows a prominent elbow (see figure 1), suggesting a single-component solution, where the lowest loading is 0.47. Cronbach’s alpha for the 13 items in the acculturation to US scale was 0.91. Principal components analysis showed a two-component solution with Eigenvalues of 6.55 and 1.71. However, results from a scree plot shows

a prominent elbow (see figure 2), suggesting a single-component solution, where the lowest loading is 0.38. Tables 3 and 4 show the means, standard deviations, and components loading for these measures. Scores on the items for each scale were summed for each respondent. To generate the score for each neighborhood cluster, the scores for the respondents in the cluster were averaged.

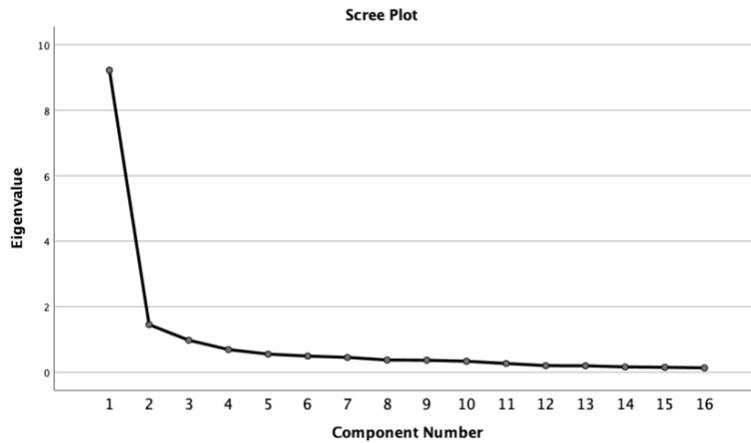


Figure 1: Scree Plot for Acculturation to Mexico

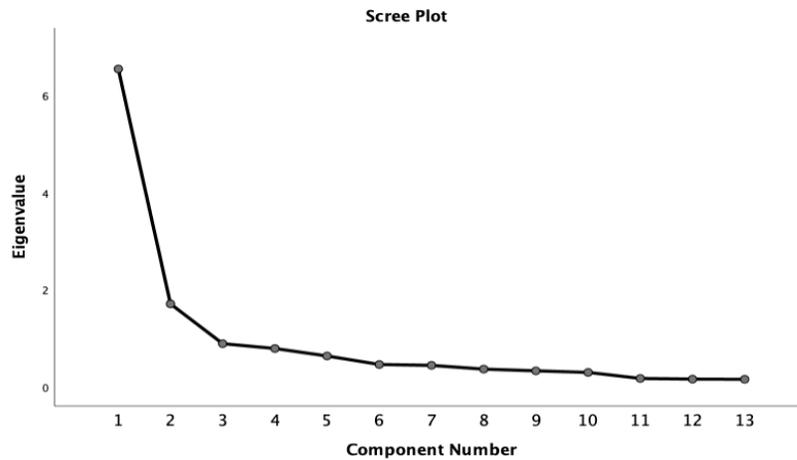


Figure 2: Scree Plot for Acculturation to U.S.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations and Component Loading for Items Measuring Acculturation to Mexico (n=1059)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Component Loading
I speak Spanish	3.61	1.30	0.87
I enjoy speaking Spanish	3.64	1.35	0.86
I associate with Mexicans and/or Mexican Americans	4.27	.87	0.47
I enjoy listening to Spanish language music	3.54	1.38	0.80
I enjoy Spanish language TV	3.11	1.50	0.84
I enjoy Spanish language movies	3.04	1.49	0.82
I enjoy reading in Spanish	2.87	1.50	0.84
I write in Spanish	2.97	1.54	0.86
My thinking is done in the Spanish language	3.02	1.55	0.88
My contact with people in Mexico has been...	2.60	1.43	0.58
My father identifies or identified himself as "Mexicano"	3.64	1.70	0.76
My mother identifies or identified herself as "Mexicana"	3.74	1.62	0.77
My friends, while I was growing up, were of Mexican origin	3.93	1.25	0.70
My family cooks Mexican foods	4.26	1.06	0.68
My friends now are of Mexican origin	4.02	.97	0.57
I like to identify myself as a Mexican	3.13	1.64	0.73

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations and Component Loading for Items Measuring Acculturation to U.S. (n=1059)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Component Loading
I speak English	4.04	1.26	0.88
I associate with Anglos	3.16	1.29	0.58
I enjoy listening to English language music	4.15	1.04	0.75
I enjoy listening to English language TV	4.15	1.08	0.77
I enjoy English language movies	4.27	1.03	0.80
I enjoy reading in English	3.91	1.30	0.84
I write in English	4.06	1.32	0.87
My thinking is done in the English language	3.85	1.43	0.86
My contact with people in the USA has been	4.55	0.78	0.44
My friends, while I was growing up, were of Anglo origin	2.68	1.34	0.59
My friends now are of Anglo origin	2.84	1.18	0.55
I like to identify myself as an Anglo American	2.00	1.39	0.38
I like to identify myself as an American	3.76	1.51	0.69

Although acculturation to Mexico and acculturation to U.S. might seem to be inverse measures they are actually separate and distinct measures. Participants as well as neighborhoods have the possibility of scoring inversely on the measures or getting high/low scores on both measures. This means that a person as well as a neighborhood can have both high/low

acculturation to both the U.S. and Mexico. Not surprisingly, in these data, neighborhood levels of acculturation to Mexico have a strong negative relationship with acculturation to the U.S. ($r = -.802$).

Control Variables

The control variables for subsequent analysis are neighborhood cluster-level measures derived from the American Community Survey and include concentrated poverty, residential stability, and family stability. Concentrated poverty, residential stability, and family stability were measured using data attained from the year ACS and were derived using an exploratory principal component analysis that included a wide variety of demographic measures. Results show three main components representing the following indices. Concentrated poverty was determined using the percentages of people with a high school education or above, people who are unemployed, people over the age of 16 who are employed, households that earn less than \$10,000, people receiving public assistance, people without health insurance, families and people below poverty level, and occupied units with one person or less. Residential stability includes the percentages of people who remained in the same house as the previous year, housing units occupied, detached units, owner housing units, and whether they moved into their unit in 2010 or later. Family stability includes the percentages of married couples with children under the age of 18, married, divorced, and unmarried women who recently gave birth. For each index, component parts were converted into z-scores to put them on the same measurement scale and make them comparable, and then summed and averaged for each neighborhood cluster to create separate measures for residential stability and family stability.

Analytic Strategy

Analyses for this research proceeded in three steps. First, descriptive statistics for all variables are presented. Second, bivariate correlations for all the variables for all presented to assess preliminary support for hypotheses and to identify potential problems with multicollinearity. If any of the correlations are above 0.7 or below -0.7 then this may potential problems with multicollinearity if such variables are included together in multivariate analyses. Third, a multivariate analysis in the form of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression will be used to assess the hypotheses. The reason the OLS regression will be multivariate is because of the use of the control variables, which enables are more accurate assessment of hypothesized associations than bivariate correlations. If multicollinearity was found within the variables during the bivariate correlation, then one or more of the variables will be excluded from the OLS regression to avoid undermining the accuracy and reliability of the results. Significance levels of .05 and .10 will be used to determine if the equations and associations were significant due to the low sample size (n=46). The Beta will be used to interpret the associations between each independent variables and the dependent variable in each equation since it represents the standardized regression coefficient. The standardized regression coefficient will be used instead of the unstandardized because the strength of associations can be compared across independent variables when using the standardized regression coefficient. Only statistically significant findings will be discussed. For hypothesis 3 and 4, I will be testing for mediating relationships. This will be done by running an OLS regression equation without the mediating factor and then rerunning the equation with the mediating factor (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Chapter 5: Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics (see table 5) showed the neighborhood average for willingness to cooperate with police was 17.3. The minimum score a neighborhood got was 15.68 and the maximum was 18.52. Since the highest possible score was 20 and higher scores mean more willingness to cooperate with police, it can be said that the neighborhood average for willingness to cooperate with police is high. The neighborhood average for legal cynicism was 12.46 with a minimum score of 9.20 and a maximum of 14.89. The highest possible score was 35 and the lowest was 7, with higher scores indicating more legal cynicism in the neighborhoods. The descriptive statistics indicate that neighborhoods in the El Paso area have low to moderate levels of legal cynicism. The neighborhood average for acculturation to Mexico was 59.01 with a minimum score of 42.90 and a maximum of 72.31. The highest possible score was 80 with the lowest being 16, with higher scores indicating more acculturation to Mexico. The descriptive statistics indicate moderate to high levels of acculturation to Mexico. The neighborhood average for acculturation to the U.S. was 47.20 with a minimum score of 33.90 and a maximum of 54.60. The highest possible score was 65 with the lowest being 13, with higher scores indicating more acculturation to the U.S. The descriptive statistics indicate moderate to high levels of acculturation to the United States.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics (n=46)

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Willingness to Cooperate with Police	17.13	0.75	15.68	18.52
Legal Cynicism	12.46	1.41	9.20	14.89
Acculturation to Mexico	59.01	8.06	42.90	72.31
Acculturation to U.S.	47.20	4.96	33.90	54.60

Bivariate Correlations

Table 6 shows the bivariate correlations among all the variable that are used for this study. Except where mentioned, all associations discussed are statistically significant. The correlations with neighborhood legal cynicism show that it is related with willingness to cooperate with police ($r=-.258$), acculturation to Mexico ($r=.475$), acculturation to U.S. ($r=-.336$), concentrated poverty ($r=.457$), and family stability ($r=-.325$). The positive relationship between acculturation to Mexico and legal cynicism indicates that, at the neighborhood level, as acculturation to Mexico increases, legal cynicism also increases providing preliminary support for hypothesis 1. The negative relationship between acculturation to the U.S. and legal cynicism indicates that at the neighborhood level as acculturation to the U.S. goes up legal cynicism goes down, supporting hypothesis 3.

In addition, willingness to cooperate is related with acculturation to Mexico ($r=-.317$), acculturation to U.S. ($r=.380$), concentrated poverty ($r=-.556$), residential stability ($r=.303$), and

Table 6: Bivariate Correlations Among All Variables (n=46)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(1) Willingness to cooperate with police	1						
(2) Legal cynicism	-.258**	1					
(3) Acculturation to Mexico	-.317**	.475**	1				
(4) Acculturation to US	.380**	-.336**	-.802**	1			
(5) Concentrated poverty	-.556**	.457**	.800**	-.754**	1		
(6) Residential stability	.303**	.052	.001	.034	-.338**	1	
(7) Family stability	.227*	-.325**	-.171	.004	-.438**	.548**	1

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$

family stability ($r=.227$). Lending initial support to hypothesis two, acculturation to Mexico is inversely related to willingness to cooperate with police, as is legal cynicism. Initial support is also found for hypothesis four in that acculturation to the US is positively associated with willingness to cooperate with police and, as mentioned above legal cynicism is negatively associated with this variable.

Furthermore, concentrated poverty is related with residential stability ($r=-.338$) and family stability ($r=-.438$). Concentrated poverty has a strong positive correlation with acculturation to Mexico ($r=.800$) and a strong negative correlation with acculturation to U.S. ($r=-.754$). Lastly, residential stability is related with family stability ($r=.548$).

Multivariate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression

Again, except where mentioned, all associations discussed are statistically significant. Concentrated poverty was excluded from all equations due to its high correlation to both acculturation to Mexico and acculturation to U.S., its high correlation could lead to multicollinearity. Hypothesis 1 stated that a positive association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to Mexico and legal cynicism. Hypothesis 3 stated that a negative association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to the U.S. and legal cynicism. Previous research found that assimilating to the U.S. would lead to downward assimilation meanwhile retaining cultural values would result in segmented acculturation. It is because of these that inverse effects are expected from the analysis (Chouhy, 2018). The association of the independent variables (acculturation to Mexico and acculturation to U.S.) while controlling for residential stability and family stability, with legal cynicism are presented in table 7. Regarding the association of acculturation to Mexico and legal cynicism, when there is an increase in one standard deviation in acculturation to Mexico, in legal cynicism there is an

increase of .405 standard deviations. This finding supports hypothesis 1. The variance in legal cynicism that is explained by acculturation to Mexico and the control variables is indicated by $R^2 = .339$. Not surprisingly, acculturation to the U.S. had an inverse association demonstrating that when there is an increase in one standard deviation in acculturation to the U.S. there is a .350 decrease in standard deviations in legal cynicism. This finding supports hypothesis 3. The variance in legal cynicism that is explained by acculturation to the U.S. and the control variables is indicated by $R^2 = .304$.

Table 7: OLS Regression of Acculturation to Mexico, Acculturation to US and Control Variables on Legal Cynicism (n=46)

Independent Variables	Equation I			Equation II		
	b	SE	Beta	b	SE	Beta
Acculturation to Mexico	.071	.022	.405**			
Acculturation to US				-.099	.037	-.350**
Residential Stability	.488	.268	.275*	.619	.274	.348**
Family Stability	-.724	.273	-.407**	-.921	.274.	-.517**
F Score		7.166**			6.115**	
R^2		.339			.304	

** $p \leq .05$, * $p \leq .10$

Hypothesis 2 stated that a negative association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to Mexico and willingness to cooperate with police and will be mediated by legal cynicism. Hypothesis 4 stated that a positive association is predicted between neighborhood levels of acculturation to the U.S. and willingness to cooperate with police and will be mediated

by legal cynicism. The association of the independent variables (acculturation to Mexico and acculturation to U.S.) and the mediator of legal cynicism while controlling for residential stability and family stability on willingness to report crime are presented in table 8. Regarding the association between acculturation to Mexico and willingness to report crime, when there is an increase in one standard deviation in acculturation to Mexico there is a .316 decrease in standard deviations in willingness to cooperate with police. The variance in willingness to cooperate with police that is explained by acculturation to Mexico and the control variables is indicated by $R^2 = .192$. Importantly, there is complete mediation in this relationship as shown by equation II (Baron & Kenny 1986). Specifically, when legal cynicism is added to the equation, the association between acculturation to Mexico and willingness to cooperate with police is no longer significant. This means that legal cynicism serves, as predicted, as an intervening variable that explains part of the relationship between acculturation to Mexico and willingness to cooperate with police. The variance in willingness to cooperate with police that is explained by acculturation to Mexico, legal cynicism, and the control variables is indicated by $R^2 = .215$. These findings support hypothesis 2 that acculturation to Mexico leads to legal cynicism which results in lower levels of willingness to cooperate with police.

The relationship between acculturation to U.S. and willingness to cooperate with police demonstrated that when there is an increase in one standard deviation in acculturation to the U.S. there is a .372 increase in standard deviations in willingness to cooperate with police (see table 8 equation III). The variance of willingness to cooperate with police that is explained by acculturation to the U.S. and the control variables I explained by $R^2 = .235$. There is partial mediation when legal cynicism is added to the equation as shown by equation IV where the Beta for acculturation to the US drops in value to .315, a decrease of about 15 percent. This indicates

Table 8: OLS Regression of Acculturation to Mexico, Acculturation to US, Legal cynicism, and Control Variables on Willingness to Cooperate with Police (n=46)

Independent Variables	Equation I			Equation II			Equation III			Equation IV		
	b	SE	Beta	b	SE	Beta	b	SE	Beta	b	SE	Beta
Acculturation to Mexico	-.029	.013	-.316**	-.022	.015	-.242						
Acculturation to US							.056	.020	.372**	.047	.022	.315**
Legal Cynicism				-.097	.090	-.183				-.087	.086	-.163
Residential Stability	.281	.157	.298*	.328	.163	.348*	.222	.152	.236	.276	.161	.292*
Family Stability	.009	.160	.009	.014	.172	.014	.093	.153	.099.	.014	.172	.014
F Score		3.334**			2.799**			4.299**			3.480**	
R ²		.192			.215			.235			.253	

** p<.05, *p<.10

that legal cynicism serves as an intervening variable in the association between acculturation to the U.S. and willingness to cooperate with police. The variance in willingness to cooperate with police that is explained by acculturation to U.S., legal cynicism, and the control variables is indicated by $R^2=.253$. These findings support hypothesis 4 that acculturation to the U.S. partially leads to legal cynicism, which results in higher levels of willingness to cooperate with police.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This study examined how legal cynicism and acculturation impacted neighborhood levels of willingness to report crime in El Paso communities. I predicted that acculturation to Mexico would lower a neighborhood's willingness to report crime and that acculturation to the U.S. would raise a neighborhood's willingness to report crime. Acculturation to Mexico and acculturation to the U.S. were used to differentiate between neighborhoods that had Latino cultural values versus neighborhoods that have American cultural values. This was done by analyzing data from 46 El Paso neighborhood clusters. Despite previous research finding that Latino immigrant communities have lower than expected crime rates (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 2014; Chavez, 2018; Chouhy, 2018; Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Feldmeyer et al., 2019; Kubrin & Mioduszewski, 2018; Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018; Sampson, 2008; Shihadeh & Barranco, 2010; Ulmer & Harris, 2013), many right-wing politicians continue to criminalize these communities. This study aims to fill a gap in literature by looking at how certain factors that are commonly associated with high crime impact these communities' willingness to report crime.

Using neighborhood level data pertaining to a sample of neighborhoods in El Paso County, Texas, four hypotheses were constructed, and regression analyses performed to test these predictions. The first hypothesis proposed that acculturation to Mexico would have a positive association with legal cynicism. A multivariate OLS regression found that acculturation to Mexico does have a strong positive association with legal cynicism at the neighborhood level. These findings are consistent with what previous research has found (Rivera 1994). The rise in legal cynicism among neighborhoods with high levels of acculturation to Mexico, could be attributed to how police are viewed in Mexico. Another possibility is that the police in these

neighborhoods are mistreating the members of the community through the use of excessive force or harassment. These possibilities as to why there is a rise in legal cynicism among neighborhoods with high levels of acculturation to Mexico align with the findings discussed by Boehme and colleagues (2020). As mentioned in the literature review, Boehme and colleagues believe that over policing in lower income neighborhoods can lead to legal cynicism. Since over policing typically occurs in communities of color (Boehme et al., 2020) this could possibly bring Latinos together. They could feel like that the reason they are being over policed is not because they engage in more crime but instead because they are Latinos. This could in turn increase their acculturation to Mexico because it brings a sense of unity among the community. Although their neighbors are not family, as mentioned in the literature review Latinos tend to make familial bonds with the people they are close with (Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004). Over policing could lead to stronger familial bonds within Latino communities. This could be due to the fact that since the community does not trust the police, they will instead lean on each other when in need.

The second hypothesis proposed that acculturation to Mexico would have a negative association with willingness to report crime. A multivariate OLS regression found that acculturation to Mexico and willingness to cooperate with police have a negative association. However, when legal cynicism was added to the equation this relationship is no longer significant, indicating that legal cynicism mediated or explained this relationship. This means that the association between acculturation to Mexico and willingness to cooperate with police is indirect, operating with legal cynicism as an intervening variable. This analysis shows that neighborhood levels of acculturation to Mexico is inversely associated with willingness to report crime because of high levels of legal cynicism. As mentioned earlier, the reason legal cynicism is present in these neighborhoods could be impacted by how they had previously viewed the police

in their home countries or due to how the U.S. police are treating members of the community. Because of these reasons, the community is apprehensive in calling the police when a crime occurs and when the police are notified of a crime, members of the community are less willing to provide information. The communities' unwillingness to cooperate with the police could be due to their lack of understanding of immigration policies in the United States. As previous research stated, there are some immigration policies that resulted in the deportation of immigrants even in the cases where they were the victims. If the neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico are made up of immigrants then they could be scared of getting deported when the police are present in their neighborhoods. Overall, neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico would rather a crime go unreported or without evidence than cooperate with the police.

The third hypothesis proposed that acculturation to the U.S. would have a negative association to legal cynicism. The analysis found that acculturation to the U.S. and legal cynicism have a strong negative association. These findings are indicative of neighborhoods with high levels of acculturation to the U.S. having higher levels of trust in the police. Due to the inverse results between the neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico and those with acculturation to the U.S., it brings to question how police presence differentiates between the two types of communities to cause such opposing views on legal cynicism. Boehme and colleagues (2020) mentioned that police presence is higher in communities with people of color.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that acculturation to the U.S. would have a positive association with willingness to report crime. The analysis found that as acculturation to U.S. went up willingness to cooperate with police went up. There was partial mediation, in which legal cynicism served as an intervening variable between acculturation to the U.S. and willingness to cooperate with police and explained approximately 15% of the decrease. Overall, neighborhoods

that had high levels of acculturation to the U.S. were more willing to cooperate with the police and increasing levels of legal cynicism only partially weakened this relationship. This could be because the police are seen as more trustworthy and competent to handle crime when acculturation to the US is high.

Overall, this study found that having high acculturation to the U.S has a different impact on willingness to cooperate with police when mediated through legal cynicism when compared to neighborhoods with high acculturation to Mexico. Legal cynicism may not be as important as willingness to cooperate with police in neighborhoods with high levels of acculturation to the U.S. because they could still expect police officers to do their job when they are contacted. Meanwhile, neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico are less willing to cooperate with police when legal cynicism is present due to their fear of deportation. Another reason could be due their cultural value of familism.

Even if the neighborhood doesn't have a fear of deportation, they may not feel the need to involve or cooperate the police since they can rely on each other and their community to resolve the issue. This can be achieved through the use of informal social control (Wilcox et al., 2018). By using informal social control, neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico can be vigilante of their children and neighbors preventing them from committing future crime, thus the lack of need for the police to be involved. The reason neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico are able to do this is because since they have familial ties to their neighbors, they are able to trust each other and rely on each other to watch their kids and their belongings when they are unable to do so (Rojas-Gaona & Madero-Hernandez, 2018). It is because of this that would be offenders would be deterred from committing future crime in these communities since they know someone would be watching. Another reason is that since these communities tend to be

tightly knit an offender from outside of the community would be easily detected as not belonging. If the offender was member of the community, then they would be easily identified by the other community members. These are the reasons as to why neighborhoods with acculturation to the Mexico may be less willing to cooperate with the police. Since they could handle the crime themselves and already don't trust the police then why risk cooperating with them.

Furthermore, the bivariate correlations found that concentrated poverty had a strong positive relationship with acculturation to the U.S. and a strong negative correlation with acculturation to Mexico. This means that concentrated poverty is present among neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico and not as present in neighborhoods with acculturation to the United States. This could be due to the fact that Latino immigrants are more likely to settle into a lower income community due to their socioeconomic status when immigrating to the United States.

This study found that neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico are positively associated with legal cynicism. This association negatively impacts the communities' willingness to report crime. Future research should look into how this decrease in willingness to report crime affects Latino neighborhoods crime rates. This information would be telling off whether or not selective acculturation is causing the low crime rates that have been found in previous studies or if they are simply going unreported due to the communities' legal cynicism.

Due to its small sample size an important limitation of the study is its power. Since all the regressions analyses had the same sample size ($n=46$), the possibility of a type 1 error exists for all hypotheses. A type 1 error is when there is a false positive. This means that although the

results show that the hypotheses are statistically significant, the possibility that they are not exists.

Another limitation of the study is the time at which the survey was conducted. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement first gained notoriety in August of 2014 (Reny & Newman, 2021). Which is when the survey stopped being administered. The BLM movement focuses on bringing awareness, through the use of protests, to the excessive force that is being used on the black community by the police (Reny & Newman, 2021). More importantly this movement focuses on instances when the use of excessive force results in death. Recently there was a rise in BLM protests after the death of George Floyd in May 2020. These protests resulted in the public having a negative sentiment towards the police (Reny & Newman, 2021). Since the negative sentiment amongst the public increased during the BLM protests in 2020 the possibility that the results for legal cynicism and willingness to cooperate with police are outdated exist.

Another limitation of the study is that El Paso's population is primarily made of Latino immigrants and descendants of Latino immigrants. This could impact the way that neighborhoods view the police since the police officers are Latino's just like them. The fact that the majority of the community is Latino may also impact acculturation and crime in these neighborhoods. The Latino cultural values may be retained and present, but they may not be serving their purpose of protecting if the criminogenic American lower-class values aren't present or present often enough to protect from.

Although El Paso's population is a limitation it also demonstrates an interesting factor that hasn't been previously analyzed. In the past El Paso, Texas has been ranked the safest city with a population of over 500,000 people (Castañeda & Chiappetta, 2020). This study found that neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico have high levels of legal cynicism and are less

willing to cooperate with police. The vast majority of the population is Latino, Latino neighborhoods are less willing to cooperate with police, yet the city is still considered to be a safe city. This can be due to Latinos cultural values that protect them from engaging in criminogenic behavior.

Future research should look into how crime rates differ in neighborhoods with acculturation the US from that of neighborhoods with acculturation to Mexico. Furthermore, looking into how racism among the police force can affect Latino communities could also be proven useful to see how it affects willingness to report crime. Looking at less homogenous cities may also be necessary to see if these findings are applicable to all Latino communities. Future research should also look into segmented assimilation and how the code of the street could be a form of downward assimilation in these communities and its association with crime.

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Vita

Shayla Salais was born in El Paso, Texas where she has lived the majority of her life. She graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice. Shortly after graduating she began her Master of Science degree in Criminology and Criminal justice at the same university. She pursued the thesis track and achieved a 4.0 GPA. During her time there she worked as a graduate assistant to Dr. Theodore Curry and Dr. Caitlyn Muniz from December 2020 to May 2021. Her responsibilities included basic office function in an academic department, organizing and creating content for undergraduate level courses, grading homework and exams through the university's educational technology service, and managing the department of criminal justice's first research lab. She was also given the opportunity to join Georgia State University's (GSU) Evidence Based Cybersecurity Research Group. Her duties include gathering and sorting sensitive information. She began working with them in May 2021 and continues to work alongside Dr. Jordan Howell (UTEP), Dr. Caitlyn Muniz (UTEP), Dr. Destan Kirimhan (UTEP), Dr. Anu Bourgeois (GSU), and other graduate/undergraduate students. She intends to continue her education with aspirations in attaining a Ph.D. in criminology.