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U.S. HISPANICS AND THEIR FAMILIES: A SOCIOCULTURAL PORTRAIT

by

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Introduction

The presence of Hispanic people in the U.S. goes back in time to well before the arrival of Europeans on the eastern coast of North America. A long standing holiday in the U.S. is Columbus Day commemorating Christopher Columbus's "discovery of America." This commonly accepted tenet is paradoxical in light of North America's long historical presence of indigenous tribes and groups of people, many of whom greeted the European pilgrims in Plymouth Rock. Yet this tenet is representative of the Anglo preference for historical attention to the achievements of European Whites.

Historically, it has only been recent that the U.S. has paid attention and recognized the presence and contributions of other peoples in the land making up the U.S. Although numerically significant, Hispanics have been very much overlooked in U.S. history. Currently, Hispanics in the U.S. make up about 22 million people or over eight percent of the U.S. population, but by the year 2010 they are expected to become the largest ethnic population in the U.S., surpassing in size the African American population, which currently stands at about 13 percent.² Much of the early literature on Hispanics was very unflattering and critical of Hispanic culture. More recently, the Hispanic culture has been referred to as the "sleepy culture" or the "awakening minority".³ These evaluative terms suggest two things. First, a continued pejorative view of Hispanics as being backward and slow to change. But also, they reflect an emerging recognition of the growing importance of this population. It is

as if the U.S. is discovering Hispanics for the first time. This discovery of Latinos is surprising, since for years they have played a critical role in sectors of the U.S. labor market. More than any other immigrant group in the U.S., Hispanics have occupied many of the arduous manual and service related jobs. In the state of California, for example, Hispanics have historically been the inexpensive labor force responsible for gathering much of the agricultural products consumed in the U.S. and abroad. They have been so important agriculturally that farmers have successfully lobbied for years against every form of restriction to limit Hispanic immigration into the U.S.

However, even with the long standing history of Hispanics in the U.S., and even with the important role they continue to play in the economy, very little attention is still being given to this population. Historically, the U.S. has failed to fully understand and appreciate Hispanics in society and to recognize their cultural strengths, but also their social and economic needs. The fact that Hispanics have done so well in society in spite of their neglect, has been attributed to their strong family orientation⁴, but this same orientation has also been the target of blame for their poor socioeconomic standing.

The purpose of this paper is to offer a sociocultural and a demographic description of Hispanics and their families using extant literature. A discussion on Hispanic cultural characteristics will precede an overview of description of the current socioeconomic status of Hispanics and their families. This paper will conclude with a discussion of the future for

Hispanics and their families in light of their past treatment, cultural strengths and their current socioeconomic challenges facing them. Recommendations are offered that address the societal challenges facing Hispanics and their families and that tap into the many cultural strengths of this population.

Historical Background of Dominant Hispanic Groups

The terms, Hispanic or Latino, refer to individuals who have origins in North America, Central America, South America and Cuba. Although arguments have been presented endorsing the use of one term over the other, at present there is no unanimity in opinion among social scientists.⁵ Numerically, the three largest groups of Hispanics in the U.S. are of Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban origin. These three dominant Hispanic subgroups differ in many ways, including palate, customs and use of language. However, all of these subgroups share in the experience of being colonized and subjugated by Spain. Hence, they were all heavily influenced by Spanish culture. This is why most have adopted the Spanish language, Catholic faith and many Spanish customs. A short historical description of each of the numerically significant Hispanic groups is offered to better acquaint the reader to these ethnic groups.

Chicanos

The Mexican American or Chicano⁶ population is indigenous to the southwestern part of the U.S. In 1817, when Mexico declared its independence from Spain, Mexico's boundaries included most, if not all, of the U.S. states of California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Colorado. It was in 1846, thru

the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo following the war with Mexico, that the U.S. gained possession of this large part Mexico. The contiguous presence of present day Mexico has served to maintain the adherence to Mexican cultural values and the use of Spanish. Sharing a border with Mexico has also facilitated the continued immigration of Mexicans into the U.S. because of a weaker economy in Mexico. More recently, serious economic and political problems in other Central and South American countries, such as in Nicaragua and El Salvador, have likewise led to a steady increase in the number of other non-Mexican Hispanics entering the U.S. Currently, Mexican Americans or Chicanos number about 12,600,000 and account for approximately 62.6 percent of the total Hispanic population in the U.S.⁷

Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans have had their own unique history, which has shaped their current social and economic status in the U.S. Soon after gaining control of the island in 1889, the U.S. established a successful capitalistic system that benefitted mostly American investors. Though economically successful to mainland Americans, this involvement by American investors restricted the employment opportunities of its inhabitants. The diminishing economic and employment opportunities on the island led to the mass exodus of Puerto Ricans during the 1940s and 1950s. Most of those leaving arrived in New York in search of employment. However, due to limited opportunities and discrimination on the mainland, most Puerto Ricans were restricted to low paying jobs and government subsidies. This has resulted in Puerto Ricans lagging

economically behind other Hispanic subgroups. Puerto Ricans are the second largest Hispanic group in the U.S. Currently, they number over 2.3 million and make up about 11.6 percent of the total U.S. Hispanic population.⁸

Cubans

The largest entry of Cubans into the U.S. came after the Cuban Revolution of 1959. At that time many Cubans fled Cuba and settled in nearby Florida. This initial wave of refugees was, for the most part, made up of well educated professionals. This is one reason why Cubans as a population, stand out as one of the most educated and economically successful Hispanic groups in the U.S. Then, in 1980 Castro allowed the departure of 118,000 Cubans seeking asylum in the U.S. These more recent refugees were called "Marielitos," because they came from the Cuban port of Mariel. Unlike past refugees, Marielitos were poorer, younger and more racially diverse. Marielitos came with many special social and psychological needs and are currently among the most poorly adjusted Hispanic subgroups in the U.S. At present Cubans number just over one million and represent about 5.3 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population.⁹

These brief historical and background accounts point to the diverse experiences and background to the three major Hispanic groups in the U.S. Yet, even with their diverse backgrounds, Hispanics share many cultural traits and values. Unfortunately, instead of viewing these shared cultural values as positive, they have historically been viewed as a liability and as responsible for many of the social problems challenging Hispanics. A

discussion follows, which provides an overview of past and present literature on Hispanics and their families.

Part I: Hispanic Families and the Hispanic Culture
Social Science Literature on Hispanic Families

The literature on the Hispanic family can be divided into three types that follow each other chronologically. These are the traditional, sympathetic and empirical views.

Pejorative View of Hispanics. Due to their numerical dominance and long historical presence, most early literature focused mainly on Chicanos to the exclusion of other Hispanic subgroups. The social science literature on Chicanos and Hispanics before 1965 was by and large very critical of Hispanics and of their families. Concerning Chicanos, this early view held that the Chicano family and its cultural values were responsible for the social problems facing this cultural group. In his seminal review article, Mirande referred to this view as the pejorative or traditional view.¹⁰

One of the most persistent beliefs perpetuated by social scientists was that Chicanos are controlled by their traditional culture. This culture was conceptualized as shaping and creating their destiny. That is, Chicanos were considered passive receptors of their culture. Many of the problems encountered by Chicanos were said to result from bondage to their traditional culture, which made assimilation into the mainstream society difficult, if not impossible. Celia Heller represented the

pejorative view of Chicanos when she observed:

The kind of socialization that Mexican-American children generally receive at home is not conducive to the development of the capacities needed for advancement...by stressing values that hinder mobility--family ties, honor, masculinity, and living in the present--and by neglecting the values that are conducive to it--achievement, independence, and deferred gratification.¹¹

It was thought that Chicanos were victimized by a deficient and maladaptive culture. According to this view, Chicanos were thought to adjust or adapt to their surroundings, even if negative, rather than to control or shape their environment.

A related belief held by those espousing the pejorative view is that Chicanos are docile and passive. The Anglo was believed to be rational, future oriented, and have a drive to excel, whereas the Chicano was thought to be irrational, present oriented, and lacking in achievement motivation. Typical of this view were Samora and Lamanna who proposed the following view of Chicanos:

The very nature of some of the value orientations of the Mexican-Americans presents a barrier to their rapid assimilation. There is a note of fatalism and resignation in the attitudes and behavior of the residents and an orientation to the present...that would have to change somewhat before they could be expected to achieve significant changes in their social situation.¹²

During the civil rights movement, Vaca reviewed much of the literature on Chicanos and came out with two different lists of specific values attributed to Anglos and Chicanos based on the extant literature at that time.¹³ These two lists of value orientations are shown in the table below.

ASCRIBED OR INFERRED VALUE-ORIENTATION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANGLO AMERICAN AND MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURES

Mexican American	Anglo American
Subjugation to nature	Mastery over nature
Present oriented	Future oriented
Immediate gratification	Deferred gratification
Complacent	Aggressive
Non-Intellectual	
Fatalistic	Non-fatalistic
Non-goal oriented	Goal oriented
Non-success oriented	Success oriented
Emotional	Rational
Dependent	Individualistic
Superstitious	Non-superstitious
Machismo	Effeminacy
Traditional	Progressive

Source: El Grito (Fall 1970)¹⁴

The list of values offered by Vaca summarize the popular views held by social scientists holding a traditional pejorative view of Hispanics. Studies used to support these depictions were typically very subjective, mostly anthropological and based on very small samples of Chicanos from small rural towns or villages.

Sympathetic View of Hispanics. From around 1965 to 1975, a different view of Hispanics made its way into the literature. This view, referred to as the sympathetic view, proposed a more favorable view of Hispanics.¹⁵ It was largely tied to the emergence of Hispanic social scientists graduating from colleges and universities previously closed to them because of discriminatory admission policies.

Representative of these new minority social scientists was Miguel Montiel. In a published seminal paper Montiel offered a cogent and incisive critique of past research on Chicanos.¹⁶ He

argued that much of the past literature perpetuated many erroneous stereotypes because of their unquestioned reliance on the psychoanalytic model and view that sees "machismo" as the root of all problems encountered by Chicanos. Of this view he said it was, "...inherently incapable of defining normal behavior and this automatically labels all Mexican and Mexican American people as sick--only in degree of sickness do they vary".¹⁷

Similarly, Octavio Romano¹⁸ criticized the social science's portrayal of Chicanos and their culture. After reviewing works of Tuck, Heller, Samora and Lamanna, he concluded that these published studies are clear distortions of Chicanos. These studies portrayed Chicanos as passive, masochistic, and as controlled by their traditional culture.

In addition to criticizing many of the stereotypes held by past social scientists, Chicano scholars like Montiel offered an alternative view of Chicanos and their families. They argued that the Chicano culture is not unstable and pathological, but rather one that provides its members with a sense of security and love, often thought to be lacking in the dominant U.S. culture.

Although both the traditional and the sympathetic views differed in their positive or negative assessment of Hispanic cultural traits, they did not differ in acknowledging the strong presence of such cultural values as a strong familistic orientation, rigid sex-age roles, and male dominance. However, instead of seeing these characteristics as pathological, those holding the sympathetic view of Chicanos saw these cultural traits as positive.

For example, the Chicano family was not seen as being unstable and cold, but as a warm and nurturing institution. Alvarez and Bean said of the Chicano family: "Only a person who has never experienced the warmth of the Mexican American family would tend to see it from a negative perspective."¹⁹ The family, according to this perspective, is most important to the Chicano. As a result, family needs are usually put above individual needs.²⁰

The concept of machismo is important to the Chicano, but according to the sympathetic view it was defined in terms of family pride and respect rather than in terms of male dominance. The authority of the father was seen as important, but this authority was not thought to be abused, as commonly assumed. Of machismo, Murillo said: "An important part of his concept of machismo or maleness, however, is that of using his authority within the family in a just and fair manner. Should he misuse his authority, he will lose respect..."²¹

This view sees roles and expectations as being determined by one's age and gender. While in the early literature the culture was described as rigid and authoritarian, under the sympathetic view it was re-defined as a stable culture where the individual's place is more clearly established and secure. Thus, these Chicano early social scientists saw the Chicano culture as not pathological, but as nurturing and stable.

Although this sympathetic view of Chicanos was flattering to Chicanos, it nevertheless made two significant erroneous assumptions about Chicanos. First, this view assumed, like the

traditional view, that Chicanos are Mexican transplants and are exactly like Mexicans from Mexico. Secondly, it assumed Chicanos are homogeneous and that there is one monolithic Chicano family. Regarding the first assumption, Nall found Chicanos to be different from both Mexicans and Anglos.²² Chicanos expressed values with a distinct cultural dimension. Ramirez and Castaneda have seen the need to separate Chicano identity from Mexican or Anglo values and attitudes, and to think of Chicanos as bicultural or multicultural.^{23,24} Finally, like adherents of the pejorative view, sympathizers lacked empirical backing for their views, as well.

Empirical Focus. More recently social scientists have been critical of both the traditional and sympathetic views and have called for more objective and empirically based studies on Hispanics and on the Hispanic family.^{25,26} These researchers have also pointed to the error of previous researchers of assuming that Hispanics and their families are homogeneous. They argue that Hispanics are a diverse population being made up of many ethnic subgroups.^{27,28} Among Chicanos there is great diversity, in such characteristics as language usage, food, and customs and celebrations. One important way of pointing to the cultural diversity of Hispanics has been to show how they vary on their levels of acculturation and assimilation to the dominant Anglo culture.²⁹

Acculturation refers to the functional adoption of non-Hispanic cultural values, while keeping many traditional cultural values. On the other hand, **assimilation** refers to the rejection

of most Hispanic cultural values in favor of Anglo cultural values. Ethnic identify is closely tied the concepts of acculturation and assimilation. Being even moderately acculturated means an Hispanic is more likely to identify culturally with their ethnic group (e.g., Chicano, Puerto Rican or Cuban), while adopting some of the values of the prevalent Anglo culture. On the other hand, assimilated Hispanics will more likely identify with mainstream Anglo values and culture to the exclusion of those in the Hispanic culture.

Hispanics differ in not only their ethnic group of origin, but in their levels of acculturation and assimilation. Moreover, each Hispanic cultural subgroup has a unique set of cultural values and customs that differ from other Hispanic subgroups. Not barring this fact, recent research has suggested that most Hispanic cultural groups share a set of salient cultural values that transcend differences between subgroups. One such cultural value is a strong family orientation, referred to as familism.³⁰ The ensuing discussion points to familism and other cultural characteristics, which are thought to be shared among most Hispanics, regardless of ethnicity.

Dominant Hispanic Cultural Traits

As pointed out earlier, a tendency has existed in the social science literature to develop an Hispanic family prototype or icon that can be studied and used to represent all Hispanic families.³¹ This has resulted in the literature lacking unity, generality and empirical verification.³² However, more recent research on Hispanics is beginning to reveal common cultural

values that relate to the family and bear on socialization. Much of this research is being conducted by Gerardo and Barbara Marin, along with their colleagues in San Francisco. Through their research a set of cultural values and cultural scripts is emerging that transcend educational and economic or acculturational differences among Hispanic subgroups.

Two salient cultural values widely acknowledged in the literature as being linked to most Hispanics are familism and collectivism. What follows is a brief discussion on these two cultural values and on how they can be used to develop intervention efforts aimed at ameliorating many of the social problems facing Hispanics.

Familism. The literature on Hispanic and Chicano culture is to a great extent unanimous in its view of Hispanics as being family centered or oriented.^{33,34,35} Although there is general consensus on this notion, very little empirical research has been conducted to demonstrate the impact that the family has on the many issues of importance to Chicanos, e.g., drug abuse, delinquency, gang membership, etc.³⁶ Part of the problem in studying the effect of the family on any behavior is the lack of conceptual and empirical clarity on the specific family variable(s) that are said to measure familism.

According to Marin, familism refers to "...the significance of the family to the individual...a value which includes a sense of obligation to provide emotional and material support to the members of the extended family, as well as a perception that relatives are both reliable providers of help and attitudinal and

behavioral referents" (p.414).³⁷ Although this value is shared by other cultural groups, it is particularly strong among Hispanics and manifests itself in many behavioral patterns. With strong familism, individual needs always come second to the needs of the family.³⁸

Familism for Hispanics places main emphasis or focus on the family as the primary social unit and source of support.³⁹ Under familism, children and the aged are particularly valued and protected. Hispanics consult with one another before making important decisions. There is a strong sense of obligation to helping others within the family, both economically and emotionally. This commitment to the family is largely unconditional, which serves as a buffer for stress and anxiety.⁴⁰

In a study by Sabogal et al. familism was measured in several Hispanic cultural subgroups and in a sample of non-Hispanics.⁴¹ Behavioral and attitudinal aspects of familism were measured, as was acculturation. The intent of the study was to investigate the salience of familism across Hispanic cultural groups and to see if acculturation was related to the strength of familism. Although three familism scales were derived using principal component analysis, only one attitudinal scale called "Support from the Family" was believed to be a central measure of familism.

The findings of this study showed that across the three Hispanic subgroups, (Chicano, Cuban or Puerto Rican) familism was equally important, and all Hispanic subgroups differed significantly from the non-Hispanic sample on this dimension.

The high ratings on the "Support from the Family" dimension stayed the same regardless of level of acculturation. Based on the results of the study, the authors concluded that high familism is indeed a distinct and salient cultural value of all Hispanics regardless of acculturation levels.⁴²

Familism among Hispanics has been shown to have implications for health related interventions. For example, B. Marin suggested that the use of this cultural value in designing AIDS related educational material can appreciably facilitate educating Hispanics about AIDS and HIV infection.⁴³ For example, using Hispanics to educate and inform their own family members about AIDS and HIV infection has been proven very successful. Jimenez⁴⁴ has also found that Hispanic drug addicts are more likely to access their own families for support, and are less likely to seek solutions by participating in small groups, which makes many existing drug intervention programs culturally inappropriate.

Collectivism. According to G. Marin, collectivism is the other important Hispanic cultural value that transcends subcultural differences.⁴⁵ Collectivism refers to the concern for the needs of others.^{46,47} This people-centered orientation assigns importance to family, friends and to members of the extended family--to all those who provide companionship and help to solve personal problems.

Among Hispanics, collectivism is said to translate into several "cultural scripts" or behavioral patterns.⁴⁸ According to Triandis, et al., a cultural script is "...a pattern of social

interaction that is characteristic..." or is salient.⁴⁹ G. Marin has identified four cultural scripts associated with all Hispanics. One is Simpatia. It refers to "...the need for positive, smooth, interpersonal relations".⁵⁰ Simpatia suggests respect and politeness, and against assertiveness, criticism and confrontation. Personalismo is another cultural script, which refers to the Hispanic preference for relationships with those one identifies with (e.g., Chicanos, Cubans, etc.). A third cultural script is Respeto. It refers to "the need to maintain and defend one's personal integrity and that of others, and to allow for face-saving strategies whenever conflict or disagreements evolve".⁵¹ Respeto also suggests deferring respect to authority figures, such as elders, teachers and to those with social power.

B. Marin suggests that for Hispanics collectivism, and associated cultural scripts, have implications for developing successful social and health related intervention efforts, such as those related to AIDS.⁵² For example, Hispanic women often find it difficult insisting on their partner's use of condoms because the cultural script simpatia is incongruent with the use of confrontation. Simpatia also requires Hispanics to appear to be in agreement with a message being conveyed, regardless of true internal feelings. This makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of conveying informative messages designed to bring about positive behavioral change.

Personalismo refers to the preference for Hispanics to develop relationships with others in their social groups. This important cultural script results in a preference to working with those who Hispanics have developed a relationship with. This makes it imperative for those who want to implement Hispanic community intervention efforts to first develop a relationship and rapport with those they wish to impact.⁵³

Respeto calls for deference and respect of authority figures, which for Hispanics includes elders and those social influence or power positions. This script suggests that for Hispanics in treatment it is important for them to feel they are respected and valued. Respeto can also lead to a lack of involvement in schools by Hispanic parents, since by participating in the schools Hispanic parents may fear appearing to question the authority and invade the domain of teachers.

Regardless of their application, research is continuing to point to the existence of these salient cultural traits that are shared among most Hispanics. However, research is likewise making it clear that Hispanics should not be treated as a homogeneous population. To a Puerto Ricans, Cubans or even to Mexicans from Mexico, Cinco de Mayo does not have the special significance that it has for Chicanos. For Chicanos this holiday takes on special cultural meaning beyond its historical origin as a day of victory for Mexico against the French. Although Spanish is used by most Hispanic subgroups, the words spoken to refer to such objects as vehicles, tie clips, and foods differ among them.

This section reviewed the historical background of Hispanics

and offered a review of the literature Hispanic culture and their families. While it is important to recognize the diversity of Hispanics, their common cultural values can be used to develop effective intervention efforts to address the many social problems they face as an ethnic group. A review of the demographic, social, health and economic condition of Hispanics follows, which is reflective of the well-being of this population and points to the strain placed on Hispanic families confronting these challenges.

**Part II: Social, Health and Economic Challenges
Facing Hispanic Families**

Enumerating Hispanics

In order to count and describe the social condition of Hispanics one has to know how to identify and count them. Though seemingly simple, over the years the U.S. has had great difficulty in deciding how to categorize and label Hispanics. For example, in 1930 the U.S. Census Bureau lumped mostly Mexicans into an "other nonwhite" category. In 1940, the Bureau broadened its enumeration of Hispanics to include all "persons of Spanish mother tongue." In 1950 and 1960, the Bureau used a more complicated category "white persons of Spanish surname," but it did so for only the "Mexican" southwestern states. In 1970, the newly adopted classification for Hispanics was, "persons of both Spanish surname and Spanish mother tongue." Finally, and for the first time, in 1980 Hispanics were able to choose for themselves the label Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban or "other Hispanic."

For the 1990 census, all individuals were first asked whether they were Hispanic or not and, if so, they indicated if they were members of the Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or an "other" Hispanic group. If a person indicated being an "other Hispanic," they were permitted to write down their origin, such as Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, etc.

Even with increased efforts to count Hispanics, enumerators have faced many barriers in obtaining accurate census counts. Two major barriers have been fear and distrust of the government including fear of the U.S. Census Bureau. During official census enumerations undocumented persons with no permission to be in the U.S. have feared deportation outside of the country due to their illegal stay in the U.S., while legal residents fear government intrusion, discrimination and loss of civil rights. Another barrier has been a basic misunderstanding of the questions being asked about their ethnic identity because of the confusing nature of the questions used. As a result, census counts continue to undercount Hispanics significantly.

All of these historical census classifications reflect not only confusion, but an ambivalent regard and treatment of Hispanics over the years. As the Hispanic population increases and the non-Hispanic population decreases, the need to enumerate Hispanics and to identify their unique strengths and needs will become that much more important.

A Demographic Profile of Hispanics

Using current enumeration criteria, Hispanics at the present represent approximately 8.2 percent of the total U.S. population

or 20,076,000.⁵⁴ By far the largest Hispanic subgroup is the Mexican origin subgroup at 62.6 percent of the Hispanic population. The second largest group is the Puerto Rican group, which make up 11.6 percent of the Hispanic population. The next largest Hispanic group is the Cuban group representing 5.3 percent of the Hispanic population. Over the years there has been a steady increase in the number of Hispanics entering the U.S. from Central and South American countries. Altogether these "other" Hispanics make up approximately 12.7 percent of the Hispanic population. These include Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, Puruvians and other Hispanics from Central and South America.

Due to the difficulties in enumerating Hispanics, accurate projections of their current size and projections for their future growth are difficult to make. However, even with inadequate data and undercounting, projections have been made of their anticipated growth. Based on available information and data, Hispanics are projected to surpass the African American population in absolute numbers by the year 2010. Conservative future estimates of the Hispanic population range from between 18.1 to 26.5 percent of the total U.S. population by the year 2080. That is, it is possible that by the year 2080, about one out of five persons in the U.S. will be Hispanic.⁵⁵

In is true that part of the expected growth is due to increased accuracy in counting Hispanics, but other reasons are higher fertility rates, a lower median age, a higher percent of women of child-bearing age compared to non-Hispanics and the continued immigration of Hispanics into the U.S. One of the

largest increases of Hispanics occurred between 1970 and 1980. This represented an increase of sixty percent--from 9.1 to 14.6 million.⁵⁶ From 1980 to 1989 the Hispanic population increased 37 percent (from 14.6 to 20.1 million persons). According to the Bureau of the Census, the Hispanic population, totalling 20.1 million in March 1989, has been growing five times as fast as the non-Hispanic population.⁵⁷

Puerto Ricans grew by 45 percent over the past decade. They were followed in growth rate by Hispanics of Mexican origin, which grew by 38.9 percent over the same period. The group showing the least growth was the Cuban population, which grew by only 17.5 percent. The growth rate of each Hispanic subgroup surpassed the 7.5 percent population growth for non-Hispanics.⁵⁸

Regarding geographic placement, Hispanics are concentrated primarily in the Southwest, Northeast and Southeast. Texas and California have over fifty-five percent of the total Hispanic population and most are of Mexican descent. New York holds about 10 percent of the Hispanic population. Puerto Ricans make up the largest Hispanic population in New York. Florida is home to much of the U.S. Cuban population and currently holds about 8 percent of the Hispanic population.⁵⁹

In age, the Hispanic population is a young population. The median age for Hispanics is 25.9, compared to 33.2 years for non-Hispanics. About 21 percent of the total Hispanic population is under the age of 9 compared to 15 percent of non-Hispanics. However, the youngest Hispanic subgroup is the Chicano subgroup, which has a median age of 23.6 years. The median age for Puerto

Ricans is 26.8, while that of Cubans is quite older at 41.4 years.⁶⁰

Hispanics have larger households than non-Hispanics. In 1989, the average number of persons in Hispanic households was 3.39 compared to 2.57 for non-Hispanics. This larger household size for Hispanics is a reflection of the higher fertility rates among Hispanics. In 1986 Hispanic women of childbearing age (18-44) experienced 105.6 births per 1000 women compared to only 68.2 for whites.⁶¹ In 1982 Hispanic women had an average of 1.6 children compared to 1.3 of non-Hispanic women.⁶²

Hispanics are not only important to the U.S. because of their numbers, but also because they are challenged by many social problems of concern that limit their full participation in society. They lag behind non-Hispanics in education, in employment, income, and in many other indicators of success. The social and economic problems facing Hispanics are not only a threat to the stability and well-being of Hispanic families, but to all of the U.S. A discussion follows on some of the most pressing social and health problems challenging Hispanics and their families.

As mentioned earlier, information about Hispanics has been lacking due to inaccurate counts and because of the traditional lack of interest in acknowledging this population. The little information that is available has focused mainly on the Mexican origin population, since it is the largest. Hence, much of the information in this section focuses primarily on Hispanics of Mexican origin, but when available, information on the other

subgroups will be presented, as well.

Socioeconomic Challenges Facing Hispanic Families

Education. There has been some educational gains made since 1970, however, Hispanics still are more likely than non-Hispanics to have completed less than five years of schooling and to be functionally illiterate.⁶³ In 1988, forty-nine percent of Hispanic adults 25 years and older had less than four years of high school, compared to only twenty-two percent of non-Hispanics.⁶⁴

Educational differences also exist among Hispanic subgroups, with Chicanos lagging behind other Hispanic subgroups. In 1989, fifty percent of Chicanos, 25 to 34 years of age, completed four or more years of high school, compared to seventy-six percent of Puerto Ricans and eighty-four percent of Cubans.⁶⁵ In 1987, when considering high school graduates who are 25 years or older, only 50.9 percent of Hispanics graduated, compared to 63.4 percent of African Americans and seventy-seven percent of Whites. Again, differences existed between Hispanic subgroups. Only 44.8 percent of Chicanos graduated compared to 53.8 percent of Puerto Ricans and 61.6 percent of Cubans.⁶⁶

Having less than five years of formal education has traditionally been a measure of illiteracy. Among non-Hispanics in 1987 who were 25 years or older, only 1.8 had less than four years of education, compared to 11.9 percent of Hispanics. When considering subgroup differences, Chicanos again showed higher representation among illiterates at 15.4 percent, compared to 10.3 percent of Puerto Ricans or six percent of Cubans.⁶⁷

In 1988 only ten percent of Hispanics, twenty-five years and older, had four or more years of college, compared to twenty-one percent of comparable non-Hispanics.⁶⁸ Data reported by McKay from the American Council on Education suggested that the college participation among Hispanics, 18 to 24 years of age, has declined since 1976 when it reached an all time high of 35.8 percent.⁶⁹ College enrollment for Hispanics decreased to about 26.9 percent in 1985, virtually the same rate as in 1971.⁷⁰ Once Hispanics do enroll in college, they are more likely to enroll in community colleges. More than half are likely to attend two-year institutions. Only 2.7 percent of baccalaureate degrees awarded in 1985 went to Hispanics.⁷¹ Education and training are directly related to employment opportunities and income levels. Hence, with the lower education of Hispanics, it is not surprising to see that Hispanics also lag behind in employment and income.

Employment. The relatively low family income of most Hispanic families is another serious problem. The low income of Hispanics is a function of several factors. The most important of these are education, training and employment opportunities. Hispanics have higher levels of unemployment compared to Whites. About 7.8 percent of Hispanic males and females were unemployed in 1989, compared to 5.5 and 4.9 for non-Hispanics, respectively. Among the different subgroups, Puerto Rican males had the highest unemployment rate--twelve percent.⁷²

While Hispanics have higher unemployment rates, their labor force participation rates are higher than non-Hispanics. That is, Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to be either

employed or be looking for work. In March 1987, sixty-five percent of Hispanics sixteen years and over were in the civilian labor force compared to 64.5 percent of non-Hispanics. For women, 50.9 percent of Hispanic women participated in the labor force compared to 55.7 percent of non-Hispanic women.⁷³ Labor force participation was highest among Chicano males 16 years and older (80.6%), followed by Puerto Rican (71.7%) and Cuban (71.4%) males. For women, Cubans had the highest participation rate (54.9%), followed by Chicanas (50.9%), then Puerto Rican women (40.1%).⁷⁴

However, even with their higher labor force participation rates, Hispanics are more likely to hold jobs that pay less and are more marginal compared to non-Hispanics. Forty-six percent of employed male Hispanics work as operators, fabricators, laborers or in service related occupations compared to 29.3 percent of non-Hispanics. Only 12.1 percent of Hispanics are employed in higher earning managerial or professional specialties compared to 27.6 percent of non-Hispanics. Forty-two percent of Hispanic women work in service or labor intensive occupations compared to 25.4 percent of non-Hispanic women. A slightly higher percent of Hispanic women (14.9%) than Hispanic men (12.1%) work in managerial or professional occupations, but still a lower proportion compared to non-Hispanic women (27%) or men (27.6%) in these same occupations.⁷⁵

Both Chicano and Puerto Rican males appear to hold similar types of occupations, but Cuban men are more similar to non-Hispanic males than to Hispanic males. Among women, Chicanas are

the most likely to participate in labor and service intensive jobs (45.5%) and least likely to be in professional jobs (12.8%) than either Puerto Rican (33.3%, 20%) or Cuban women (31.4%, 32.7%), respectively.⁷⁶

In general, although Hispanics have high labor force participation rates, the types of occupations Hispanics hold tend to be unstable and are associated with lower median earnings.⁷⁷ This leads to higher financial insecurity and, in turn, higher family stress.

Family Income. During the 1960s the U.S. declared a war on poverty and instituted programs to address this problem. However, U.S. policy changed during the following decade and many of the poverty programs instituted during the sixties were abolished in the seventies. Currently, poverty is disproportionately affecting Hispanics. For example, in the Southwest, while there was a five percent decrease in the number of Whites in poverty between 1970 and 1980, there was a six percent increase in poverty among Hispanics.⁷⁸

In 1986, 27 percent of Hispanics were below the poverty level compared to 11 percent of Whites. For the same year, the per capita income in dollars was \$7,000 for Hispanics compared to \$12,352 for Whites. Seventeen percent of Hispanic married couples were poor, compared to only 6.1 percent of White couples. The percentage of Hispanic female-headed households that were poor in 1986 was 55.7 percent compared to 29.8 percent of White female-headed households. About fifty percent of Hispanic children under 18 were poor compared to 36.1 percent of White

children. Sixty-four percent of Hispanic female-headed households with children under 18 were poor compared to 38.7 percent of comparable White households. About 72.4 percent of poor Hispanic children lived in female-headed households, compared to 45.2 percent of White children.

Income comparisons among Hispanic subgroups are important since they are pronounced. In 1988, Puerto Ricans showed the lowest income compared to the other Hispanic subgroups. The median income for Puerto Rican families in 1988 was \$18,932, compared to \$21,025 for Chicano families, while Cuban families at \$26,858 had the largest income. These incomes can be compared to the median income of \$33,142 for non-Hispanics. About twenty-five percent of Chicano families were considered in poverty (24.9%), compared to 30.8 percent of Puerto Rican families and 16.9 percent of Cuban families, while only 9.4 percent of non-Hispanics were under poverty.⁷⁹ As with employment, lower family income places undue strain and stress on Hispanic families and their members. This strain is believed to manifest itself in several ways, such as in raising substance abuse rates.

Health Challenges to Hispanics

Drug Abuse. Currently, the U.S. is waging an intense battle with drug abuse. Drug use has been concentrated in urban areas and, although not exclusively, it has disproportionately and adversely affected minority communities. According to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report, illicit drugs are among the most serious social and health problems facing Hispanics.⁸⁰ The 1985 National Household Survey (NHSDA)

indicated that Hispanic males between 12 to 17 years of age were more likely than Whites to use cocaine, and as likely to abuse any of the prescription type of psychotherapeutic drugs in the past month, but also throughout their life.⁸¹

Kandel found that Hispanics were twice as likely as Whites to have ever used heroin.⁸² The results from the 1985 Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey suggested that the use of illicit drugs varied widely among and within the three major Hispanic groups--Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Cubans. For example, Puerto Ricans were twice as likely to have ever used cocaine as Chicanos or Cubans. Both Puerto Ricans and Chicanos were twice as likely as Cubans to have ever used marijuana. Chicanos were also more likely to have ever used inhalants than Puerto Ricans. The use of cocaine and marijuana was highest among Chicanos and Puerto Ricans between eighteen to twenty-four years of age.

Illicit drug use was a major cause of death among young Hispanic males and also contributed significantly to the high infant mortality and low birthweight experienced by Puerto Ricans.⁸³ In a study by the Pan American Health Organization, as reported by De La Rosa, et al., Puerto Ricans were also found to have the highest prevalence of illegal drug use, with the exception of inhalants.⁸⁴

It is clear that illicit drug use is a serious problem for all Hispanics regardless of ethnic background. Among Chicanos, the narcotic of choice for abuse has traditionally been heroin. The fact that heroin is taken intravenously has increased the

transmission of the HIV virus among Hispanics leading to AIDS, which is another growing concern for Hispanics.

AIDS. Hispanics are currently facing many health concerns. One of the most serious is AIDS. Sosa and Associates reported that one Hispanic dies every four hours from AIDS-related illnesses.⁸⁵ According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), in 1989 there were 83,231 cases of AIDS.^{86,87} Of these fifteen percent (12,487) were Hispanic, which was nearly twice their representation in the general population (8.1%--1988 Census estimate).⁸⁸ This same report indicated fifty-three percent of Hispanic men with AIDS were homosexuals or bisexuals who are not intravenous (IV) drug users, whereas eighty-three percent of non-Hispanic Whites were in this category. The second largest category of Hispanic men with AIDS includes heterosexuals who are IV drug users. In this heterosexual category, thirty-four percent were Hispanic compared to four percent of Whites. For Hispanics the majority of heterosexual men with AIDS, or eighty-seven percent, are IV drug users compared to eighty-three percent of African Americans and forty-five percent of Whites.

According to Amaro, as reported by G. Marin, the patterns of HIV antibody prevalence among Hispanics are different from those of non-Hispanic Whites.^{89,90} Amaro indicated that an analysis of armed service applicants between October 1985 and March 1986 showed Hispanics had a HIV prevalence of 1.07% compared to .88 for Whites. Analyses of the Department of Defense (DOD) data showed that a higher proportion of Hispanics tested HIV positive compared to Whites. Testing in 1986 and 1987 by DOD of active

duty service members showed .3 percent Hispanics tested positive compared to .1 percent of Whites. This study suggested that Hispanics were HIV infected as a result of higher participation rates in risky behavior and that the number of infected is greater for Hispanics than for other ethnic groups in proportion to the total population.⁹¹

Amaro reported that Hispanic women, men and children are overrepresented among those diagnosed with AIDS.⁹² Among women diagnosed with AIDS, 21 percent are Hispanic. Hispanic children makeup about nine percent of the U.S. population, yet they represent twenty-five percent of all pediatric AIDS cases.⁹³

These statistics regarding AIDS points to the serious problem AIDS and HIV infection facing Hispanics. Lacking knowledge and information about HIV transmission is a central problem. Reaching Hispanic families to inform them of AIDS and other health related problems challenging Hispanics is critical to abating health problems, like AIDS, that are disproportionately affecting Hispanics. Intervention effort to address the health problems of Hispanics will need to take into account the cultural heterogeneity and homogeneity among Hispanics. That is, cultural values of Hispanics will need to be better understood and be used in intervention efforts.

Substance abuse and AIDS can be considered symptoms of the high stress and strain placed on Hispanics and their families. The same stress and strain can also manifest itself in higher family instability. Divorce, single-parenthood and teenage pregnancies can be seen as indicators of family instability.

Indicators of Family Stability

Divorce. In spite of the social and economic challenges facing Hispanics, the Hispanic family has shown strong resilience and stability. For example, divorce rates in the past have been below the national average. In 1954, Burma reported that Chicano family ties tend to be usually resilient and "divorce and separation are more rare among Chicanos than among Anglo families" (p.54).⁹⁴ Fortunately, this statement continues to be true even today. In 1986 Frisbie indicated 10 percent of Chicano and Anglo women were currently divorced, followed by about 13 percent of Cuban women.⁹⁵ In this same study Puerto Ricans had the largest percent of divorced women (about fifteen percent). Combining all Hispanic groups, Mindel and Habenstein showed that thirty-nine out of every thousand Anglo men were divorced compared to only sixteen out of every thousand Hispanic men.⁹⁶ A less discrepant picture is shown when comparing Hispanic and non-Hispanic women, however. Fifty-seven out of a thousand Anglo women were divorced compared to 50 Hispanic women.

McKay reported that in 1985 11.3 percent of all heads of households in the U.S. were divorced as were 14.3 percent of African Americans, but only 10.2 percent of Hispanic heads were.⁹⁷ McKay found that Central and South Americans, but also Chicanos were far less likely to be divorced compared to Puerto Ricans or Cubans.

McKay warned that although Hispanics remained less likely than the general population to be divorced, the Hispanic divorce rate is steadily increasing.⁹⁸ In 1982, 6.3 percent of Hispanics

15 years and older were divorced compared to 6.9 percent in 1986 (6.5 and 7.4 percent for non-Hispanics, respectively). The group with the largest increase in divorces was the Puerto Rican group, which increased from 7.4 percent divorced in 1982 to 9.1 percent in 1986. This represented an increase of 23 percent over this four year time period. In both 1982 and in 1986, Cubans had the largest percent of divorced compared to all Hispanic subgroups, including non-Hispanics. In 1982, 8.9 percent of Cubans 15 years and older were divorced, which increased to 9.9 percent in 1986. Compared to Puerto Ricans or Cubans, Chicanos had the lowest percent of divorced, yet from 1982 to 1986 Chicanos showed similar gains in the number of divorced as that of Cubans. In 1982, 5.5 percent of Chicanos 15 years and older were divorced compared to 6.1 percent in 1986. This represented an increase of 11 percent divorced over this time period.^{99,100}

Single Parenthood. Divorce rates are a reflection of family stability, but so are rates of single-parenthood. Unfortunately, by looking at this characteristic, Hispanic families do not appear as stable as they did when considering divorce rates. In 1980 there were 3.3 million single-parent Hispanics. Also in 1980, nineteen percent of all Hispanic families were maintained by a woman with no husband present compared to 14 percent of all families in the U.S. From 1982 to 1988 the proportion of Hispanic families maintained by a woman or a man without a spouse present increased from 26 to 30 percent. However, Puerto Ricans stood out as having the highest proportion of single-parent women. In 1988, forty-four percent of Puerto Rican households

were headed by a woman compared to 18.5 of Chicano and 16 percent of Cuban households; this contrasts with 15.8 percent of Anglo households.¹⁰¹

Overall, in 1987 Hispanic families were twice as likely as Non-Hispanic families to be headed by a female, but half as likely as African American families.¹⁰² Because of the increase in female-headed households, the percent of Hispanic children under 18 living with one rather than both parents is increasing. In 1980, about 1 in 5 children (21.2 %) lived with one parent. This increased in 1987 for Hispanics to 28.9 percent, while the proportion of White children in single-parent families remained much lower and grew at a lower rate. In 1987, 18.5 percent of White children lived with one parent.¹⁰³

Teenage Parenthood. Although teenage pregnancy is increasing among Hispanics, most teenage parents are married. In 1980, 7.3 percent of Hispanics 15-19 years of age had babies compared to 10.2 percent of African Americans and 4.5 percent of Whites. Comparing the different Hispanic subgroups, Chicano teens had the largest percent with 8.9, compared to 6.8 percent of Puerto Ricans and 2.2 percent of Cubans. Among teen mothers, 52.4 percent of Chicano mothers were married, compared to 50 percent of Puerto Rican and 68.1 percent of Cuban mothers, which were all lower than the 69 percent of White mothers.¹⁰⁴ These increases in Hispanic teenage pregnancies and higher divorce rates are likely to mean a continuing future increase in the number of female headed households, representing the Hispanic version of the "feminization of poverty".¹⁰⁵

L. G. Soria

**Part III: The Future for Hispanics and Hispanic
Families in the U.S.**

The U.S. Can Go Either Way

It is clear from the preceding discussion that Hispanics and their families have demonstrated resilience, but also strain and deterioration. It is also clear that Hispanics have historically not been regarded well, which has led to disparate and adverse treatment. However, due to their sheer numbers and the important role they will play in the ever shrinking labor market, the U.S. will have to pay more attention to this increasing subpopulation. Furthermore, the common cultural values shared across Hispanic groups, such as familism, will become increasingly important for Hispanics to shield them from the affect coming from the negative socioeconomic characteristics, but will become increasingly important for the U.S. to adopt and promote among non-Hispanics due to their global importance.

In the past U.S. commerce and manufacturing dominated the world economy. U.S. products were considered of better quality, compared to products from nations, even Japan. Oddly enough, Japanese products were not highly valued in the past and were invariably considered of poorer quality. This dominance in the world economy resulted in the dominance of English as a language throughout the world, as well as in the acceptance of American personal and interpersonal modes of relating. However, over the past two decades the U.S.'s dominance has quickly eroded. With many products, such as cars and electronic goods, Japanese products are now preferred over U.S. products. Moreover,

countries no longer look exclusively to the U.S. nor to only English as a language to meet their consumer and information needs. This is resulting in the U.S. having to become a student of other cultures, languages and business and interpersonal styles.

To many non-U.S. cultures, placing the family needs above individual needs (familism) is also highly valued, as it is among Hispanics: so too, in placing great importance on interpersonal relationships (personalismo). Bilingualism or multilingualism has always been much more the rule and expectation among students from other countries. With the increase in technology produced outside of the U.S., Americans will need to learn other languages, such as Japanese, German and Spanish to keep abreast of technological developments.

Hispanics possess many of these traits that are important for the U.S. to remain dominant in world commerce. However, to do so the U.S. will have to change long standing pejorative images and attitudes towards many of its ethnic minority groups, including Hispanics. Rather than to promote English only, educators and legislators will need to promote multilingualism, which many Hispanics and other minorities are already.

The economic pressure bearing on the U.S. from the growing European Common Market is forcing the U.S. to develop a similar hemispheric market in the Americas (i.e., North, Central and South America). In recognition of this need, President George Bush has recently been promoting a free-trade agreement with both Canada and Mexico. Hispanics in the U.S. will undoubtedly play

an important role in facilitating communication and understanding between the U.S. and Mexico. But again, the U.S. will need to change its attitudes towards its Hispanic residents and fully include them in this process. It is clear that Hispanic cultural traits, such as personalismo, will undoubtedly play an important role in enhancing international relations.

It is interesting to note that acculturated Hispanics in the U.S. will prove particularly valuable in facilitating global relations, since they are largely bicultural and are able to relate to two or more cultures.¹⁰⁶ However, acculturated Hispanics are associated with more social and health problems than more recent immigrants.¹⁰⁷ According to Hays-Bautista et al., the general nonacceptance of Hispanic culture is the blame for the higher prevalence of Hispanics in many social and economic problems.¹⁰⁸ Only the acceptance and appreciation of Hispanics can lead to a disinhibition and a release of the talents and abilities residing in this major subpopulation of the U.S.

Therefore, the U.S. is in a position of going either way. It can continue to criticize and convey low expectations to Hispanics and be burdened by their affect on this subpopulation or it can recognize the wealth of talents and abilities Hispanics already possess, which it can use them to continue to compete successfully in world commerce. The choice lies in U.S. society, but the few, yet growing educated and successful Hispanics in the U.S. can also play a role in the upward mobility of Hispanics in the U.S. These Hispanics also have a serious choice to make.

They can either ignore their ethnicity and attempt to blend in the majority population or they can help to promote a better appreciation and understanding of Hispanics. These Hispanics can play a central role in bringing about a change in the negative attitudes towards Hispanics manifesting themselves in different fields. Just as the image of Japanese people and products have changed over the last half of century, so can the attitudes and image change of Hispanics in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Conclusion

As a single population, Hispanic families have shown signs of deterioration, but not to the same extent as non-Hispanics (e.g., divorce rates). According to many social scientists, the Hispanic family, along with other specific cultural values, is responsible for the resiliency of Hispanics.^{109,110,111} Recent research has pointed out specific cultural traits of Hispanics that need to be better understood and utilized in addressing the many social problems faced by Hispanics. Examples of the effective use of Hispanic cultural traits in intervention efforts have been offered.

A significant part of this paper was devoted to presenting various demographic characteristics of Hispanics in the U.S. It was shown that on some characteristics Hispanics differed from non-Hispanics, but not on many others. The fact that the family plays such an important role in Hispanic culture makes it imperative that more research be conducted on Hispanic families and on their role in abating or exacerbating the many social problems facing Hispanics.

For too long Hispanics have been a "forgotten minority." However, the ever increasing numbers of Hispanics require that their importance in the U.S. economy be closely studied. In particular, the U.S. will have to give increasing attention to the education needs of Hispanics. The need exists for intervention efforts to break the pattern of participation of Hispanics in mainly labor and service related occupations.

The decade of the eighties was hailed as "the decade of Hispanics." However, rather than resulting in social and economic upward mobility, this decade saw a stagnation, if not deterioration, in the quality of life for most Hispanics, as measured by higher unemployment and low wages. As mentioned earlier, differences in the improvement or deterioration of socioeconomic characteristics among Hispanic subgroups have been pointed out. While there are indeed similarities across subgroups, there is a need to recognize the unique cultural and demographic patterns of each dominant Hispanic subgroups.

According to Zimmerman, the demise of nations and empires in world history has consistently followed the demise of functional and structural properties of families within them.¹¹² To Hispanics, who place great importance on the family, the weakening of the Hispanic family will surely lead to the inability of Hispanics to contribute significantly to the well-being of the U.S.

The Hispanic cultural traits mentioned should not only be taken into account when designing and implementing social intervention efforts on behalf of Hispanics, but should also be

seen as a natural resources available to be used to build better global relations. For example, the bilingual skills of Hispanics need to be seen as an asset instead of a liability in light of the increased dependence of the U.S. in developing effective relationships with Latin American countries.

The cultural values and scripts should be likewise thought of as skills and abilities that lead to effective relationship building and increased commitments, which are important in most effective commercial transactions. The U.S. needs to institute public policy that is geared towards improving public outlook towards Hispanics. This public policy can start its manifestation in the schools by offering Hispanic cultural sensitivity training to faculty, staff and administrators who play such an important formative role in the health psychosocial development of children.

Like no other country in the world, the U.S. is gifted with having a very culturally diverse population. Historically, it has not been tolerant of this diversity. However, the need for increased global contact and communication with other countries will hopefully lead to better appreciation of not only Hispanics, but of people from all cultures.

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