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**Research on Crime and Justice  
in a Multicultural Society**

Address by Jeremy Travis  
Director, National Institute of Justice  
U. S. Department of Justice

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Thank you, Lieutenant Barron, for your gracious introduction. I want also to thank President Venegas for giving me the opportunity to address HAPCOA today. On a personal note, I want to express regret that Director Gallegos cannot be with us today. My thoughts are with him as he attends to his family.

Because we have just passed the first-year milestone of enactment of the largest anti-crime bill in our Nation's history, I'd like to share my thoughts with you about NIJ's role in conducting research to support the aims of the Crime Act, and how in playing that role NIJ can support HAPCOA's mission—improving law enforcement services to and relations with the Hispanic community.

The Crime Act provides singular and unprecedented opportunities for learning more about effective responses to crime, with the initiatives for research and evaluation in policing alone representing perhaps the largest single infusion of resources for this purpose in our country's history. Most Americans are aware of the Crime Act's commitment to hiring 100,000 additional police officers—a nearly 20 percent increase in the level of policing at the local level. Joe Brann, who heads the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, will report to you tomorrow on his office's achievements in this regard—providing funding for about 25,000 more officers in the first year. What most people do not realize—but which I know you realize—and what has been a critical reason for HAPCOA's support for the Crime Act—is the commitment to community policing, to changing the fundamental orientation to providing police services. This is made possible by the training and

technical assistance functions of the COPS Office—which NIJ will be assessing—and by the support for innovations in police response to juvenile handgun violence, domestic violence, and to community involvement. Through the 1994 Crime Act this Nation is embarked on the fundamentally important mission of making the police more effective in responding to crime.

NIJ has a role to play in this transformation. We have just awarded some 14 million dollars in grants—the largest in the agency’s history—for community policing research—the funds having been transferred to NIJ from the COPS Office. I encourage you to learn more about these research projects by reading the NIJ material that will be available tomorrow. In the past year we have reshaped and redirected our research agenda to reflect the policing area of emphasis in the Crime Act, and we have also expanded our initiatives in the areas of violence against women, drug courts, and boot camps, which the Act also addresses.

First, I want to note, with an expression of thanks, the part that HAPCOA has had in shaping NIJ’s implementation of the Crime Act. You’ll recall that when NIJ was engaged in strategic planning for that role, just after the Crime Act was signed, we depended on input from police organizations—HAPCOA prominent among them—to identify relevant research issues.

HAPCOA is among the police organizations that have lent their expertise to NIJ over the years in shaping the direction of our research agenda. We depend on you in policing, as well as organizations in other sectors of criminal justice, as our link to the professional and practitioner communities. For example, HAPCOA and other police organization helped NIJ

identify the issues that would be in the forefront of policing in the next century. We turn to members of HAPCOA and other police organizations on a regular basis when researchers submit their proposals to NIJ to conduct studies in policing, to help us assess whether they look like they would benefit law enforcement. At the other end of the process—when the studies are completed and the reports submitted—we again ask HAPCOA members to be part of the peer review panels to review the research results for their relevance for police policy and operations.

If this sounds like we at NIJ are getting the better end of the bargain—continually tapping your expertise—I should add that police organizations often are the recipients of grants for research under NIJ sponsorship. I'll cite as an example the "locally initiated research" that we designed as part of our Crime Act initiatives. One aim of this type of research is to promote collaboration between police and researchers. Police departments in jurisdictions large and small, and in rural and urban areas throughout the country received these awards. For the police the advantage is the opportunity to exploit the skills and expertise of academic researchers, typically those who are based in the same community as the police department. The partnership of police and researchers is not an end in itself, of course. The end—the goal—is solving problems identified through the partnership.

I think that among police organizations HAPCOA is one that will grow, and grow in importance. That is because HAPCOA reflects and is responding to one of the major changes taking place in our country—the demographic shift that is transforming our country into one

in which no group will be able to claim for itself the role of "the majority." The figures are familiar: By the end of this decade the people who once were the majority—I am referring, of course, to Anglo men—may constitute less than 10 percent of our country's workforce, with the other 92 percent drawn from women, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans.<sup>1</sup> We know that the Latino/Hispanic American population is growing the fastest, having increased 50 percent in the decade 1980 to 1990.<sup>2</sup>

I think there is a convergence that offers singular opportunities for the Hispanic-American community and the police officers who serve that community: that is the convergence of growing diversity in the American population, with Hispanics in the vanguard, with the changes that have been taking place in policing and have received a major impetus from the Crime Act. I am inclined to believe this convergence did not happen by chance. To be sure, many of the innovative approaches to crime reduction adopted in recent years, including those in the Crime Act itself, were intended to respond to the urgency and the extent of crime in this country, particularly violent crime, and to the public's demand for safety. But arguably, many of these innovations were shaped consciously or unconsciously to respond to our country's changing population. Just as surely as the Violence Against Women Act, Title IV of the Crime Act, was partly an outgrowth of and response to women's political consciousness and power, so too innovations in policing—such as we see in the provisions of the Crime Act—are being shaped by the growing visibility and influence of minority communities, often hardest hit by crime and disorder. Under community policing, law enforcement institutions will fundamentally modify their structure, management, and philosophy to be more responsive

to communities in all their richness and complexity and uniqueness. They must do so if they are to understand the problems of these communities and involve residents in reducing and preventing crime.<sup>3</sup>

NIJ is sponsoring evaluative research to find out whether programs carried out under the aegis of the Crime Act in such areas as community policing are effective—which strategies work and which may require some course correction. We are also sponsoring allied research that will support the programs and build understanding of the issues the programs address. I'd like to indicate to you how this research can help promote HAPCOA's mission of supporting Hispanic police officers and Hispanic communities.

Probably more than most other police organizations, you are aware of the challenge looming in law enforcement recruitment as we approach the twenty-first century—the challenge of increasing minority representation in the policing profession. That challenge has been called a "crisis" by some commentators,<sup>4</sup> but for HAPCOA I believe—and I think you'll agree—it offers an opportunity. We know that growth in the number of police officers among the ranks of Hispanics has not kept pace with their overall demographic growth. In fact there is a significant *under-representation* of Hispanics in Federal, State, and local law enforcement positions,<sup>5</sup> although the past few years have seen some improvement.<sup>6</sup> If you take the recruitment challenge in policing, add to it the evident need for greater Hispanic representation in law enforcement, mix in the fact of the shrinking population of young people who can be tapped for entry-level positions,<sup>7</sup> then combine with it the relative youth

of the Hispanic population, the obvious result is a growing pool of recruit potential. So the candidates are there; how to ensure we can attract them to the policing profession is the question. But quantity—simply multiplying the number of Hispanic officers—is not enough. The qualitative aspect is the more important. When officers are recruited—be they Hispanic or non-Hispanic—the overriding need is responsiveness to the needs of the communities they serve.

In citing the importance of this challenge of recruiting, retaining, and promoting more Hispanic police officers, I am aware that the Hispanic Institute for Law Enforcement submitted a grant proposal to NIJ—one that was not funded in our last round of awards because it did not meet the standards of the peer review process. The challenge we are talking about today is so important that we should work together to develop an approach that will meet these standards. So I would like to invite representatives of HILE, HAPCOA, and other appropriate organizations to meet with us at NIJ, at your convenience, to discuss these issues and find a way to move the dialog forward.

Allied with the imperative to recruit and retain Hispanic officers is the situation faced by Hispanic communities with respect to crime. We know that Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to be victimized by crime, including violent crime.<sup>8</sup> Yet they are also less likely than non-Hispanics to report crimes to the police.<sup>9</sup> In NIJ's most recently published research plan we asked for studies that would illuminate some of these issues as they affect *immigrants*—recent arrivals to our country. We wanted to know what are the experiences of

immigrant victims in the criminal justice system. A study we are now sponsoring looked at this issue and found that recent immigrants to our country underutilize the criminal justice system or even avoid it altogether.<sup>10</sup> Underreporting of crime was found most common among Asians and Latinos.

Why are rates of reporting so important? Underreported crime leads to undercounting of crime, and can lead in turn to allocation of fewer resources for law enforcement to that community, and hence reduced access to the police for response to crime and more crime victimization. What problems do immigrants face in reporting crime? If they are undocumented, they fear for their status, the researchers found, so they fear the authorities. But language barriers were also found to be a problem, as were cultural differences and lack of knowledge of how the American justice system works. Negative perceptions of the police also play a role. Recent immigrants may bring with them to this country memories of police in their country of origin as part of a structure of political repression.<sup>11</sup>

These situations are precisely those that the community policing philosophy can address. I'll take as an example one of the "locally initiated" research projects I noted above as part of NIJ's Crime Act initiatives. In this study, just begun, the police in El Centro, California are teaming up with researchers from San Diego State University.<sup>12</sup> The residents of El Centro, 70 percent of whom are Hispanic, will be involved in identifying crime and disorder problems in their community and tailoring the police response. To do this requires building and strengthening citizen-police cooperation, and this is a central aim of the project. Here is a

community many of whose residents are recent emigrants from Mexico or are in the U. S. on work visas, and whose perceptions of the police may have been shaped by negative experiences with immigration authorities. Through this study we hope to find ways to better implement community policing in bilingual and multicultural environments.

The links created between El Centro residents and the local police in the context of community policing may help to dispel fear and distrust of the police. I use the El Centro study because it focuses specifically on Hispanics, but the concept of police-community collaboration and involving the community is central to the community policing philosophy, whether a community's residents are Hispanic, Korean, or Vietnamese, whether they are U. S. citizens, recent immigrants, or workers on visas. As Susan Sadd reported earlier today in presenting her study of Innovative Neighborhood Oriented Policing, achieving community cooperation with the police is no easy task, in part because of a long-standing history of tension—or worse—between the two. For people who may have recently come from a country where the police support a repressive political regime, cooperation may be even more difficult, and allaying their fears becomes all the more important.

Once people begin to work with the police within the context of community policing, trust builds and that in turn may encourage them to report crime victimization. I would also like to suggest that community policing may promote recruitment in a similar way. Recruitment is so much of an imperative that every police officer needs to become a recruiter. Working closely with the police in identifying and solving community problems, with a police organization

structured less hierarchically, with officers who are given greater latitude and responsibility by their department, may help convince young people that policing is a respected profession and may encourage them to want to become a member of that profession.

An anthropologist once wrote that culture hides more than it reveals, and what it hides it hides most effectively from those who belong to it.<sup>13</sup> Police officers, like everyone else, do not see their own blindspots with regard to culture. Community policing's promotion of police-citizen cooperation can provide the means for police to see what is hidden—cultural norms and values they may not be familiar with. It can lead to their appreciation of the diversity *within* Latino/Hispanic culture, a diversity now heightened by the arrival of the newest immigrants—those from Central America, South American, and the Caribbean.

I do not want to leave the impression that community policing or the Crime Act is a panacea. Again, Susan Sadd's and Randolph Grinc's study of Innovative Neighborhood Oriented Policing is instructive in this regard. They have demonstrated that in the eight sites they studied convincing police of the value of community policing—creating police "ownership" of the concept—can be a daunting task.

Before turning to other topics, I would like to offer a glimpse of future activity in NIJ and to encourage your participation and support. Our technology portfolio is growing, with new regional centers linked to NIJ's National Law Enforcement, Corrections and Technology Center, which provides information about new equipment and technologies to local, State, and

Federal law enforcement and corrections officials. We are examining the topic of "policing in emerging democracies"; we are funding research on police officers' job-related stress and conducting research in police ethics; we are developing an agenda for measuring police performance and its impact on crime. In each of these areas we value and need your input.

Turning for the moment away from policing, I would like to call your attention to another area in which the Crime Act and by extension NIJ, is responding to the needs of the Hispanic community, and that is as victims of crime. As I noted earlier, for Hispanics the rate of crime victimization is higher than for non-Hispanics. One way the Crime Act is responding is through initiatives to reduce violence against women. The Violence Against Women Act calls for strengthening law enforcement and prosecution, and also for improving delivery of victim services. Improving victim services to women in racial, cultural, ethnic, and language minorities is one of several "purpose areas" for which resources can be obtained through the Act.<sup>14</sup>

As with the community policing provisions of the Crime Act, NIJ will be conducting evaluative studies of programs supported by Violence Against Women Act funding and we will conduct associated research. The six grants, which have already been awarded for 1995, fund a range of studies, among them an examination of patterns of stalking behavior and the effects of this crime on victims, an assessment of the effectiveness of mandatory arrest and a no-drop prosecution strategy for domestic violence, and an analysis of how criminal justice and other organizations that aid domestic violence victims combine their responses. We also

have under way several studies mandated explicitly by VAWA: on stalking, on development of a research agenda to increase understanding and prevention of violence against women (conducted by the National Academy of Sciences), on creating State data bases on violence against women, and on the confidentiality of addresses of estranged spouses. These reports are now being prepared, with the data bases study nearing completion.

NIJ's research and evaluation agenda has been measurably expanded by the Crime Act, but our agenda also extends in other directions. I spoke earlier about the greater tendency of Hispanics to be victimized by crime, but we also know that the issue of Hispanics as offenders is also a concern of the community. Since 1980, the Hispanic incarceration rate more than tripled.<sup>15</sup> In the nation's prisons Hispanics are represented in numbers disproportionate to their 9 percent overall representation in the population<sup>16</sup> and the same is true for jails.<sup>17</sup> These sad figures can of course be explained in part by what criminologists call the "age-crime curve"—the tendency of offending to peak during a person's younger years, and we know that the Hispanic population has a relatively large concentration of young people.

NIJ has sponsored a considerable amount of research illuminating these issues of concern to the Hispanic-American community. I would call your attention particularly to recent work by David Curry and Cheryl Maxson, who are studying gang behavior.<sup>18</sup>

It is just as important for NIJ-sponsored researchers and other researchers as it is for you as police professionals to focus on particular types of communities and cultures. So, for example, in our long-term study of the factors producing pro-social and criminal or anti-social behavior, we are looking at Hispanics as a subgroup, among other subgroups in Chicago's neighborhoods. Our aim in this study and other is to transform the findings into action; that is, to get them into the hands of the people who can use them to affect the way policing is carried out.

Finally, as I noted, one of NIJ's major interests is seeing to it that the results of research studies be put to work to improve criminal justice service—making sure the research results are seen by and prove useful to police chiefs, prosecutors, courts administrators, corrections officials, local government officials, and others who can use them. This year we created a new category of projects—"research in action partnerships"—to help advance this aim. We proposed assisting national professional and membership organizations representing professional groups, police among them, in developing innovative ways to disseminate the findings of research studies. Our reasoning was that these organizations are best equipped to know the information needs of their members and best equipped to motivate and encourage their members to make practical use of research findings. We are considering soliciting another round of proposals in this category. That may be sometime in the middle of next year, and we would urge HAPCOA to apply.

There is a great deal of important research related to the Hispanic community, conducted by NIJ researchers and others, that could benefit from this type of dissemination mechanism. From the research being conducted by Orlando Rodriguez of Fordham's Hispanic Research Center we are learning that there may be a gap in theoretical models of delinquent behavior and substance abuse. Dr. Rodriguez, who spoke at a recent NIJ Research in Progress seminar, indicated in his studies of Puerto Rican adolescents that researchers may need a new conceptualization not based on mainstream culture but one that takes into account the specific social and cultural values in which social-psychological processes occur.<sup>19</sup>

Research is also revealing the way family bonds among Hispanics can serve as a *constraint* on delinquency and deviance, including substance abuse. It is revealing some counter-intuitive findings about the process of acculturation, indicating that young Hispanics who are absorbed into mainstream culture are *more* likely to become involved with deviant peers.<sup>20</sup> It is also indicating that being born in the United States *increases* rather than decreases the tendency for men of Mexican or Puerto Rican ancestry to assault their wives.<sup>21</sup> These findings reinforce the importance of viewing the issue of crime in context—of understanding the complex interaction of culture and behavior.

The future of the Crime Act is still uncertain. As we speak, the Congress is considering abandoning last year's commitment to adding 100,000 police officers to our country's police departments. But no matter the fate of the Crime Act, I am confident that the knowledge base NIJ is building now, through the efforts of researchers whom we are supporting, will

considerably enhance our understanding of ways to make our communities safer. I am also confident that with the advent of community policing, we have the means to fully engage communities with the police in reducing and preventing crime. We do so by fully appreciating their varied cultures, which are one of the great strengths of our Nation.

## Notes

1. Martin, Deirdre, and Mark Levine, "The Changing Workforce: In the 1990's and Beyond," *Law Enforcement Technology* (March 1991):36.
2. Shusta, Robert M., et al, *Multicultural Law Enforcement: Strategies for Peacekeeping in a Diverse Society*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995:197. *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1992*, p. 17. The Hispanic population grew from 14,609,000 to 22,354,000 between 1980 and 1990.
3. Willie L. Wilson has called community policing a factor encouraging changes that are making law enforcement more multicultural in its makeup, and more open and pluralistic in its outlook, and that are better preparing officers to cope with cultural differences and acquire cross-cultural skills. In Shusta, et al, *Multicultural Law Enforcement*:xiv.
4. Shusta, et al, *Multicultural Law Enforcement*: 67. The California POST Commission has said that police recruitment is likely to be *the* law enforcement issue of the year 2000. Cited in Osborn, Ralph S., "Police Recruitment: Today's Standard-Tomorrow's Challenge," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, June 1992:25.
5. Shusta, et al, *Multicultural Law Enforcement*:210; and Maguire, Kathleen, and Ann L. Pastore, eds., *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics-1994*, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995:50.
6. A survey conducted among 90 city and county police departments in 1990 and readministered in 1994 revealed that the proportion of Hispanic police officers had risen from 7.6 to 9.3 percent in that period. Sanders, Beth, Thomas Hughes, and Robert Langworthy, "Police Officer Recruitment and Selection: A Survey of Major Police Departments in the U. S.," *Police Forum* (Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Police Section) 5, 4 (October 1995):1-4.
7. The proportion of the population between ages 16 and 24 will shrink from 30 percent in 1985 to 16 percent in the year 2000, according to Marvin J. Cetron, Wanda Rocha, and Rebecca Luckins, in *The Futurist*, July-August 1988, cited in Osborn, "Police Recruitment": 22.
8. *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992*, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, March 1994: 26. The victimization rate is 100.1 per 1,000 people for Hispanics and 91.2 for non-Hispanics for crime

overall. See also, Bastian, Lisa D., *Hispanic Victims*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 1990:1.

9. *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992*: 103. For crimes in which Hispanics were victims, 28.9 percent reported the crime to the police; for non-Hispanics the rate is 37.4. There is a similar disparity for crimes of violence.

10. NIJ award 93-IJ-CX-0024, to Victim Services, New York, New York.

11. Shusta, et al, *Multicultural Law Enforcement*:208; and Hinkle, Douglas P., "The Police and the Hispanic Community: Creating Mutual Understanding," *Law Enforcement Technology*, September 1991:54.

12. NIJ Grant 95-IJ-CX-0049.

13. In Shusta et al, *Multicultural Law Enforcement*: 17.

14. Section 2001.

15. The proportion of Hispanics among State and Federal prisoners rose from 7.7% in 1980 to 14.3% in 1993. In Beck, Allen J., *Prisoners in 1994*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 1995: 9.

16. Hispanics constituted 28.0% of Federal and 16.6% of State sentenced prison inmates in 1991. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Comparing Federal and State Prison Inmates, 1991*, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics:2.

17. In 1993 Hispanics constituted 15.5% of all jail inmates. Snell, Tracy L., *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1993*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, October 1995:17.

18. Curry, David, Ball, Richard A., and Fox, Robert J., *Gang Crime and Law Enforcement Recordkeeping*, Research in Brief, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, August 1994; and Maxson, Cheryl L., *Street Gangs and Drug Sales in Two Suburban Cities*, Research in Brief, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, September 1995.

19. Rodriguez, Orlando, and Zayas, Luis H., "Hispanic Adolescents and Anti-Social Behavior: Socio-Cultural Factors and Treatment Implications," in *Ethnic Issues in Adolescent Mental*

Health, ed. Arlene Rubin Stiffman and Larry E. Davis, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990:147-71; and Rodriguez, Orlando, "The New Immigrant Hispanics: Implications for Crime in the Next Decade," presentation at the National Institute of Justice, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, September 14, 1995.

20. Smith, C., and M. D. Krohn, "Delinquency and Family Life among Male Adolescents: the Role of Ethnicity," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 24, 1 (February 1995):69-93; Sommers, Ira, Fagan, Jeffrey, and Baskin, Deborah, "Sociocultural Influences on the Explanation of Delinquency for Puerto Rican Youths," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 1 (February 1993):36-62; Lyon, Jean-Marie, Henggeler, Scott, and Hall, James A., "The Family Relations, Peer Relations, and Criminal Activities of Caucasian and Hispanic-American Gang Members," *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 20, 5 (October 1992):439-49.; Rodriguez, Orlando, Riccio, J. L., and De La Rosa, M., "Integrating Mainstream and Subcultural Explanations of Drug Use among Puerto Ricans," chapter prepared for *Epidemiologic Research on Minority Youth: Methodology, Issues, and Recent Research Advances*, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1992.

21. Cantor, G. K., Jasinski, J. L., and Aldarondo, E., "Sociocultural Status and Marital Violence in Hispanic Families," *Violence and Victims*, 9 3 (Fall 1994):207-222.