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## Testing Social Bond Theory on Hispanic Youth

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TESTING SOCIAL BOND THEORY ON HISPANIC YOUTH

A Thesis

by

CARLA ALVAREZ

Submitted to Texas A&M International University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

December 2015

Major Subject: Criminal Justice

Testing Social Bond Theory on Hispanic Youth

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Approved as to style and content by:

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December 2015

Major Subject: Criminal Justice

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Guadalupe C. Alvarez. Without her continuous love and support this would have not been possible. Her dedication to family, her words of encouragement, and her continued belief in me is what kept me going.

## ABSTRACT

Testing Social Bond Theory on Hispanic Youth (December 2015)

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Chair of Committee: Dr. Claudia San Miguel

Hirschi's social bond theory plays a substantial role in the explanation of juvenile delinquency. While social bond theory appears to play an important role in explaining delinquency among Non- Hispanic Whites, research on Hispanic populations is limited. The purpose of this study is to test the validity of social bond theory within the context of delinquency among a sample of Hispanic youth. In this research, self-administered surveys were given to 169 middle school students at United Independent School District (UISD) in Laredo, Texas. Assault, school delinquency, and public disturbance were used as measures of delinquency. Multiple regression analyses were employed to determine the significance of social bond theory in regards to Hispanic youth.

Results indicated that for total delinquency, only attachment to parents demonstrated significance. For school delinquency, only school commitment was significant. However, delinquent friends, a control variable, demonstrated consistent statistical significance among all delinquency measures. Findings extend prior research on social bond theory and Hispanic delinquency but suggest that it is premature to conclude that social bond theory can account entirely for Hispanic delinquency. Further research should consider differential association and

social learning theories, in addition to assimilation and generational status when testing delinquency among Hispanics.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most influential and commonly researched theories is Travis Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory. Hirschi's (1969) theory argues that it is in human nature to be criminally inclined. According to the theory, individuals are born with the hedonistic drive to commit crime. However, there is something controlling this innate drive toward criminality. Hirschi argued that individuals restrain from criminal activity because there are bonds that inhibit these criminal behaviors. When an individual has strengthened attachments, commitment, involvement, and beliefs there is a lessened probability of committing crime. Hence, Hirschi's social bond theory, and its concepts, has been one of the most widely researched and supported theories regarding delinquency among youth (Bui, 2009; Crooks, Scott, Wolfe, Chlodo, & Killip, 2007; Lo, Kim, Allen, Minugh, & Lomuto, 2011; Vera & Moon, 2013).

Although it is a widely recognized and supported theoretical perspective, social bond theory lacks generalizability because of its emphasis has general been on one singular population—Non-Hispanic Whites with limited research on other races and ethnicities (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992; Chui & Chan, 2012; Diaz, 2005; Peterson, Daiwon, Henninger, & Cubellis, 2014). Limiting a theoretical perspective only to Non-Hispanic populations negates the arguments espoused by social bond theory. It is important for research to be adaptable enough to fit the context of racial and ethnic differences.

Cernkovich and Giordano (1992) understood that research regarding social bond theory failed to display the importance of race and sought to understand the important role it

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This thesis follows the style of *Crime and Delinquency*.

played. However, their research indicated that race was not a significant factor. Their findings demonstrated that attachment to school had similar levels for Non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992). Similarly, Peterson et al. (2014) found that lack of research with other ethnic populations limited the generalizability and validity of social bond theory. Their findings revealed support for social bond theory utilizing South Korean youth (Peterson et al., 2014).

Felson and Kreager (2014) found similarities in the levels of delinquency between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Whites. In contrast, Leiber, Mack, and Featherstone (2009) found that Hispanics were more likely to be involved in non-serious crime when compared to Non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks. Further research is necessary regarding the applicability of social bond theory with Hispanic youth given that the Hispanic population within the U.S. is burgeoning. Few studies have focused on Hispanics and those that do, do not utilize several of the elements of social bond theory. For instance, Diaz (2005) surveyed Hispanic youth in an effort to see whether attachment to school had an effect on violent behavior. Findings in this study, however, were limited to one element of social bond theory – attachment.

This study fills the void in research by surveying Hispanics and their involvement in delinquency. By doing so, measures for all the elements in social bond theory will be addressed. Using Ozbay and Ozcan's (2006) study of delinquent youth in Ankara, Turkey as basis for this research, this study included independent variables such as attachment to parents, attachment to teachers, conventionality of peers, family supervision, school commitment, school involvement, and belief. Using a sample of only middle school Hispanic youth (n = 146) in the border town of Laredo, Texas, this study will examine the relationship between social bond elements

(attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs) and some delinquent behaviors (assault, school delinquency, and public disturbance). This study will expand literature regarding the relevancy of social bond theory in regards to Hispanic youth.

The discussion in the subsequent chapters encompasses the following areas: social bond theory and its elements, literature supporting the social bond concepts and their ability to explain delinquency, the insufficient research on social bond theory, conducted with different racial and ethnic populations, the methodology used, including theoretical framework, sample data collection and variables, findings of the study, and lastly, limitations of the research and direction for future work.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Social Bond Theory

Much research involving juvenile delinquency has explained criminality by focusing on why individuals engage in crime. Approaching youth criminal behavior by focusing on why individuals commit crime may be the wrong approach. In actuality, the majority of youth do not engage in crime. Hence, it would be more appropriate to understand what inhibits youth from crime. Understanding this rationale, Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory tries to explain why youth abstain from criminal behaviors. It is argued by social bond theory that humans have innate criminal tendencies. According to social bond theory, individuals who feel a sense of attachment to family and social institutions are less likely to engage in criminal and criminal like behaviors. In other words, he sought to understand why humans went against human nature and restrained from engaging in crime and criminal behavior (Hirschi, 1969).

To better understand social bond theory, it becomes necessary to interpret the meaning of its concepts. For example, according to Hirschi's (1969) work, *Causes of Delinquency*, social bond theory is comprised of four elements which may promote or inhibit delinquency among youth. These four elements include: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. According to Hirschi (1969), these elements are necessary for understanding youth deviance. The stronger these elements are sustained in the lives of youth, the less they are inclined to commit delinquent acts. Whereas, the weaker these elements are the more likely youth will engage in criminal behavior. In order to have a much grounded understanding of these elements, they will be discussed.

### *Attachment*

The element of attachment deals with the relationships individuals maintain with others. It deals with attachments to parents, school, and peers. Research denotes how individuals who do not engage in delinquent activities are far more likely to be closely tied to their parents. In other words, before engaging in any delinquent behavior, adolescents close to parental figures would think about the expectations their parents have of them. Thus, delinquency is inhibited by the value an individual puts on another person's opinion of themselves. All attachments are important in inhibiting criminal behavior. For instance, attachment to school and peers is an important deciding factor toward the likelihood that an individual will become delinquent. When an individual is not concerned with the value of school, the less likely he or she will conform to societal expectations. Similar to parental attachment, an individual who is attached to prosocial peers is less likely to become delinquent (Hirschi, 1969). Thus, attachment to parental figures, attachment to peers, and attachment to school and other social institutions reduces the probability that youth will turn to crime and violence.

### *Commitment*

According to Hirschi (1969), the more an individual is committed to certain activities, the less likely that person will risk losing such investments by committing delinquent actions. When an individual is committed to their education and/or a high status occupation are less likely to become delinquent. As a result, when a person is engaged in non-delinquent and gratifying activities, that person is less likely to engage in delinquent actions for fear of losing these activities and anything that may derive from them. But, if a person is not committed to any activities or any line of action, they are deprived of that bond that makes them think twice before turning to crime. As Hirschi (1969) acknowledges, "adolescents whose prospects are bleak are to



that extent free to commit delinquent acts” (p. 185). That is to say, if a person is not engaged in any positive activity that he or she may fear losing, there is nothing stopping them from becoming delinquent. Thus, an individual who is commitment to a certain line of action is far less likely to jeopardize what they have already obtained for something that will not provide any benefit to them.

### *Involvement*

Time is an important indicator of deviant behavior among youth. Hirschi (1969) points out that engaging in deviant behavior does not demand a large portion of a youth’s time. Rather when youth engage in crime, they do so because of too much spare time. If a youth does not occupy their spare time with positive activities, such as extracurricular, family, and/or religious activities, the possibility of engaging in delinquent behavior arises. If youth cannot engage “leisure time in meaningful ways, they are likely to engage in delinquent activities...” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 192). Hence, it is important for youth to be able to have their time occupied with pro-social activities. Crime does not necessitate a vast amount of time; hence if this requirement is not met, it leaves an individual open to using their time on activities that may lend themselves to delinquency.

### *Belief*

According to Hirschi (1969), youth will be less likely to commit delinquent acts if they conform and believe in laws and regulations. If youth conform and believe in the rules imposed by society, school, and/or parental figures, they are less likely to commit acts of delinquency. However, if youth do not have a strong tie to the conventional system, they are more susceptible to delinquency. Hirschi (1969) states that definitions favoring delinquent behavior instead of definitions that follow the rules and norms, are rooted in the weakness of intimate relations.

Therefore, the lack of cohesion between a parental figure and the youth provides a breeding ground for lack of belief or concern over rules and social expectations imposed by conventional society. In other words, a youth who lacks attachment and commitment has a higher tendency to disregard conventionality because those individuals who are promoting those conventional values are not regarded with respect by the youth. Hence, a youth will disregard conventional views if they do not see these views as valuable or valid.

### **Research on Social Bond Theory**

Social bond theory has garnered support for its notable concepts. For instance, according to Alvarado (1999), various factors provide for the likelihood of juvenile delinquency, some of which consist of single parent families, economic and social deprivation, and school problems. Children coming from divorced or separated families are more likely to drop out of school. Additionally, youth are more likely to commit crime when they have a lower sense of attachment to parents, have negative views of the legal system, and have a low degree of attachment to school (Chui & Chan, 2012). Chui and Chan (2012) decided to test all the elements of social bond theory with Hong Kong adolescents. Utilizing an anonymous survey, their findings revealed that when females were less attached to their parents and were not committed to their studies, they had a higher tendency to commit minor property crime. More importantly, Chui and Chan (2012) found that both females and males that were less bonded to parents, had a weak belief in the legal system, and were less committed to their studies, had a greater chance of engaging in violent conduct.

According to research, there are various reasons as to why adolescents engage in criminal behavior. Family structure is an important factor that can help better understand the likelihood adolescents have in engaging in delinquent acts. Cherian (1991) distinguished two types of

family structures: broken and intact families. Broken families were defined as families where parents were divorced or separated and intact families were defined as those whose parents are neither separated nor divorced. Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, and Swicegood (2014) provided a more explicit definition of family structure. Broken families are those where parents are divorced, separated, or remarried and may include the reorganization of family roles to the extent that adapting to the new family environment may contribute to problem behavior in children. Vanassche et al. (2014) defined intact families as classical families where children are living with both biological parents. There was an association between alcohol use and family structure. That is, there was an association between broken families and more problematic behavior in children (Vanassche et al., 2014). Similarly, Vera and Moon (2013) found that youth from intact families (i.e., living with both biological parents) when compared to separated, divorced, or remarried families reported less involvement in deviant behaviors. De Kemp, Scholte, Overbeek, and Engels (2006) demonstrated that living in a traditional family (i.e., two biological parents) is related to the likelihood that an individual will engage in delinquent acts. Thus, the stronger the attachment that is maintained with parental figures and the stronger the family unit is, the less likely that an adolescent will engage in criminal behavior. Adolescents who reported high levels of support from parental figures reported less delinquent behavior (De Kemp et al., 2006). This, however, does not mean that a certain risk factor will make a youth delinquent. Rather, this means that they are more likely to develop delinquent tendencies when there is a combination of risk factors. Interestingly, Ryan, Testa, and Zhai (2008) tested attachment with a non-traditional family setting. In an effort to understand why African American children and youth in substitution care settings had a higher risk of delinquency, Ryan et al. (2008) tested two aspects of social bond theory, attachment and commitment. Findings

revealed that more positive relationships with foster parents were associated with a reduced risk of foster children engaging in delinquent behavior. In regards to commitment, Ryan et al. (2008) found that children who were involved with religious organizations were less likely to become delinquent. This further validates the notions of Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory.

Specifically, it indicated that higher levels of parental attachment and bonding decrease the likelihood of becoming or committing delinquent acts (Bui, 2009; De Kemp et al., 2006; Fagan, Van Horn, Antaramian, & Hawkins, 2011; Ingram, Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, & Bynum, 2007; Leiber et al., 2009; Lu, Yu, Ling, & Marshal, 2013).

Having the inability to maintain healthy emotional relationships, may lead to delinquent behavior. For instance, Crooks et al. (2007) sought to understand the relationship between child maltreatment and delinquency. They found that adolescents, who demonstrated experiencing more instances of child maltreatment, show increased levels of violent delinquency. On the other hand, individuals who did not experience child maltreatment were non-delinquent. Furthermore, verbal abuse and corporal punishment by parental figures can increase the likelihood of delinquency (Evans, Simons, & Simons, 2012). In addition, Evans's et al. (2012) findings reveal that for males, corporal punishment has a significant effect on delinquency. This means that experiencing negative circumstances within their family unit, such as child maltreatment, will facilitate their involvement in crime. Similarly, Herrera and McCloskey (2003) found that female youth who are exposed to victimization in the forms of marital violence, physical abuse, and sexual abuse were more likely to be involved in delinquent behavior. According to their findings, sexual abuse was a strong predictor of delinquency. Similar findings were demonstrated by Wright, Friedrich, Cinq-Mars, Cyr, and McDuff (2004), in which, self-destructive and delinquent behaviors increased in teenage girls who were victims of sexual abuse. Hence,

experiencing some types of negative family experiences during childhood or adolescence can increase the likelihood that youth will be involved in delinquent and/or violent behavior.

Attachment to school has also been shown to be a strong indicator of juvenile delinquency. The more involved an adolescent is in school, the less likely he or she will engage in delinquent activity (Lo et al., 2011; Weerman, 2010). The climate in school affects the way adolescents respond, which can either encourage or discourage criminal behavior. For instance, when the climate at schools promotes participation, there is reduced participation in delinquent behavior (Lo et al., 2011). Weerman's (2010) research demonstrates that engagement in school reduces criminal activities. According to his findings, individuals who continued high school or were working were less likely to maintain delinquent tendencies; whereas students who did not work nor continued their education had higher levels of delinquency. Similarly, Hirschfield and Gasper (2011) found that behavioral disengagement in school (i.e., low school participation, defiance, and indifference in school), demonstrated significant levels of general misconduct both inside the school setting and outside school. They found that students who did not seem to participate in school were more likely to misbehave. Henry, Knight, and Thornberry (2012) found that school risk indicators (i.e., low scores, attendance rates, failing subjects, suspension, and grade retention) were associated with higher risk of perpetrating violent crime. In other words, as youth are less involved with school they are more likely to follow a path of criminal behavior. Thus, the way youth see the school setting can have an effect on how they behave. Individuals who do not find a sense of belonging in school have an increased chance of turning to negative behavior.

Adolescents who are isolated and have a sense of disconnect from parents (i.e., low attachment) demonstrated higher levels of psychological stress, aggression, and delinquent

behaviors, as noted by Wampler and Downs (2010). Their findings argue that being connected to parents and peers who demonstrate higher levels of attachment inhibits their involvement in aggressive and delinquent behavior. However, it is important to note that youth are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior if their friends are involved in delinquent behavior (Laird, Criss, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2007). Although Laird's et al. (2007) findings argue that having antisocial and delinquent friends increases the chances that youth will be delinquent themselves. Their findings also demonstrate that parental monitoring and knowledge of the youth's whereabouts reduce the likelihood of having delinquent friends and their engagement in delinquent acts. Similar findings are noted by Deutsch, Crockett, Wolff, and Russell (2012) in which lower levels of maternal support and higher levels of parental control were associated with higher affiliations with delinquent peers. This in turn, increased levels of delinquency. Therefore, stronger parental involvement in the youth's life can decrease their chances of associating with delinquent peers and reduces their probability of getting involved in delinquency.

Focusing on the relationship between parental practices, low self-control, and deviant behaviors, Vera and Moon's (2013) results also demonstrated that youth from intact families reported less delinquency. In addition, parental monitoring was associated with less delinquent behavior in youth. One important aspect of Vera and Moon's (2013) research is the fact that they acknowledged the lack of research that exists regarding the Hispanic population in the United States. Considering Hispanic population growth within the U.S., they argue that the applicability of leading theories of crime should exceed cultural and national boundaries. Hence, Vera and Moon (2013) argue that failing to test a theory's applicability among other groups provides a gap in literature that must be reduced. However, their study's focus was on self – control which, once again, ignores one of the most supported theories regarding delinquency – social bond theory.

## **Ethnic and Racial Disparity in Research**

Social bond theory has been tested and supported various times. However, most of the research that studies the relationship between bonds and delinquent behavior has generally focused primarily on Non-Hispanic Whites (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Ingram et al., 2007; Lo et al., 2011; Weerman, 2010). Additionally, there is limited research outside of Western societies regarding the relationship between social bond theory and juvenile delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992; Chui & Chan, 2012; Peterson et al., 2014). As a result, there is a great need for research that encompasses groups outside of Non-Hispanic Whites.

Cernkovich and Giordano (1992) sought to explore and understand the role race played in social bond theory and delinquency. Their research denotes that the lack of study with other racial groups limits the applicability of a theory. That is to say, racial differences may play an important role arguing that results of criminal behavior may not be homogenous across race (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992). Nonetheless, their findings demonstrate that Whites and Blacks are similar in rates of delinquency. In their study, school attachment was a strong predictor in explaining delinquent involvement. Their findings do not demonstrate any significant differences across race. Although Cernkovich and Giordano (1992) demonstrate that White and Black youth have similarities when it comes to their school attachment, their research focused primarily on White and Black youth, without regards to other ethnic and racial groups within the U.S. Although their study dealt with finding the importance of race, they did not adequately address the issue of race because of emphasis on only two groups.

Utilizing a sample of Hispanic youth, Vera and Moon's (2013) results of their study argue that a theory must encompass different cultural and ethnic groups to become more resilient. Furthermore, results show that parental monitoring has a significant effect on

delinquent behaviors. Although they examined the applicability of the general theory of crime, Vera and Moon (2013) utilized variables that measured parental supervision and general deviance. Their findings argue that an adolescent's level of self-control and parental monitoring are not significantly related they did find that family structure and parental monitoring were significantly related to general deviant behavior. In other words, when family structure and parental monitoring increases, there is a decrease in the deviant behaviors exhibited by youth (Vera & Moon, 2013).

More recent research by Peterson et al., (2014), acknowledged that there is a gap in research with societies that exist outside of the western world. They sought to provide further support and test the generalizability of social bond theory. Peterson et al. (2014) utilized data from the Korean Youth Panel Survey of South Korean, a nationally representative sample of adolescents. Data were collected from 2003 to 2008. Their research provided a unique cultural context partly due to the strong collective values and emphasis on scholastic and academic achievement that is perceived by South Koreans. Using measures that encompassed all the elements of social bond theory, Peterson et al. (2014) found that parental supervision and GPA are part of the most important elements that lessen the likelihood of becoming delinquent for South Koreans. Their findings demonstrate that social bond theory is relevant in the understanding of South Korean youth delinquency and the importance of cross-cultural generalizability of social bond theory.

Similarly, Felson and Kreager (2014) sought to compare delinquent behaviors of adolescents from minority groups (i.e., African, Hispanic, Native and Asian Americans) to Non-Hispanic Whites. The goal of their research was to determine whether a theory of crime could account for group differences. Variables relating to race, parental attachment, socioeconomic



status, academic performance, religiosity and depression were included. Utilizing national longitudinal data and over 90,000 samples of youth, Felson and Kreager's (2014) findings reveal that Hispanic groups are generally similar to Non-Hispanic Whites in their rates of delinquency. Although their findings did not try to assume a theory of crime that accounts for group differences, it did reveal that among others, academic performance, religiosity and assimilation (for minority groups) had consistent effects on the likelihood of committing delinquent acts. Hence, contrary to Peterson et al. (2014) their findings demonstrated little to no support toward social bond theory.

Lieber's et al. (2009) findings indicate that Non-Hispanic and African American adolescents are less likely than Hispanics to be involved in non-serious delinquent activities. Participants in the sample were divided into intact (i.e., married) and non-intact (divorced, widowed, or never married) groups. Additionally, race as a construct was based on youth responses regarding racial origin. Measures such as maternal supervision and parental control were used. In addition, the study controlled for peer attachment, peer deviance, and risk taking. Findings indicated that Hispanics reported more involvement in non-serious delinquency. However, their findings also indicated that maternal attachment and supervision lessened their likelihood of involvement in non-serious delinquency. Therefore, parental attachment proved to be a significant factor in the likelihood of youth engaging in delinquent behavior. Given that Lieber's et al. (2009) findings indicate more Hispanic involvement in delinquency, it is important to test the validity of social bond theory on other ethnic groups. Hence, although there is differing literature regarding the important role race and ethnicity plays in explaining delinquency, research is needed to determine the role these factors play in explaining delinquency in groups other than Non-Hispanic Whites.

Given the lack of existing research, it becomes evident that Hispanics comprise a small segment of current research. Thus, Hispanic populations are the unexplored territory in research. As mentioned, social bond theory is a widely tested and supported theoretical approach and yet it has primarily focused on the experiences of Non-Hispanic Whites. Much research has focused on the experiences of Non-Hispanic Whites, and although there is limited research focusing on other ethnic experiences (i.e., Blacks) the Hispanic population is gradually becoming a larger sector of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2015). In addition, the Hispanic culture has been characterized as putting great importance on family values, respect, and the value of familism (Cruz-Santiago & Ramirez-Garcia, 2011; Knight et al., 2010) and when there is a decrease in such values, there is a stronger probability that Hispanic youth will engage in criminal behavior (Bui, 2009). Therefore, it becomes important to include the Hispanic experience in research, especially since research does not address the many elements of social bond theory and delinquency among Hispanic youth.

As an example of such research, Diaz (2005) studied attachment among Hispanic youth in rural Minnesota. He used a self-administered survey and included junior and senior high schools around the region and only students who identified as Latino were used. The survey included demographic questions, social practices, and questions relating to school involvement and attachment. However, only two questions were used as primary measures of school attachment in the study. Diaz (2005) concluded that Hispanic students with much lower levels of attachments to school demonstrated higher levels of violent encounters and arrests. Thus, his findings denote that lower levels of school attachment result in higher levels of risk behavior. Additionally, his research demonstrates that there is a weak but positive relationship between student who report higher levels of desire to change schools to higher levels of drinking alcohol,

violent encounters and skipping school. Although Diaz's (2005) research focused on attachment and risk behaviors in Hispanic youth, it utilized a small segment of the population in rural Minnesota, lacked focus on the other various elements of social bond theory, and lacked other delinquency measures.

Similarly, Telzer, Gonzales, and Fuligni (2013) examined the role of family obligation values (i.e., spending time with family, eating with the family, and helping with siblings) on Mexican American substance use. Measures included substance use, family obligation values, adolescent disclosure, parent-child conflict, economic strain, and family composition. According to the findings, the majority of adolescents reported helping their family (running errands, cooking, and cleaning). It revealed that family obligation values were protective factors against substance use in Mexican American adolescents. Although Telzer et al. (2013) provided useful empirical data regarding the importance of family values in protecting against deviant behavior among Hispanics, the study failed to take into consideration the elements of social bond theory. Hence, this research was limited in that it did not use social bond theory, one of the most supported control theories regarding adolescent deviant behavior.

Considering that social bond theory plays an important role in explaining delinquency, it becomes necessary to test its applicability on Hispanic populations such as Mexican Americans, more so because there is lack of research when it comes to Hispanics. To reduce the gap in research and to provide a starting basis, I conducted research among Hispanic youth in order to demonstrate the applicability of social bond theory. The aim of this research is to fill the void by surveying Hispanic middle school students in the Laredo area about the relationship between their social bonds and involvement in delinquency. Thus, this research will provide a starting

point and address the explanatory value of social bond theory with the Hispanic youth population.

## METHODOLOGY

Much research on juvenile delinquency demonstrated that violence among youth is in part due to the various risk factors that youth may encounter. That is to say, youth that engage in criminal activity and other negative behaviors do so because they come from dysfunctional families, lack attachments, come from broken home, and are lacking some sense of belonging. Research has demonstrated that the elements of social bond theory have been effective indicators of the occurrence of juvenile delinquency. Nonetheless, as was also stated, the bulk of research has focused primarily on Non-Hispanic Whites and lacks emphasis on other cultural and ethnic groups (Alvarado, 1999; Bui, 2009; Chui & Chan, 2012; Crooks et al., 2007; Demuth & Brown, 2004; Diaz, 2005; Ingram et al., 2007; Lu et al., 2013; Ozbay & Ozcan, 2006; Weerman, 2010). According to various research studies, Non-Hispanic White youth comprise the bulk of research that deals with social bond theory and juvenile delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992; Peterson et. al., 2014). Hence, there is a need to support the applicability of social bond theory with ethnic groups that have yet to be thoroughly studied. This study will provide the starting point in understanding the explanatory value of social bond theory utilizing a different racial group.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Research has demonstrated the influence social bond theory has toward youth delinquency. As mentioned, most studies focus on non-Hispanic Whites. But, a few have tested the cross-cultural generalizability of social bond theory in other cultures. For example, Ozbay and Ozcan (2006) sought to remedy the lack of research outside of western populations by examining juvenile delinquency in Ankara, Turkey. Turkey lies between Islamic and Western society. According to them in Turkish culture, families, friends, and peers, exercise stronger

levels of social control over youth. For instance, individualism isn't highly rooted in Turkey. The researchers affirm that Turkey is highly religious and promote conformist traditions which try to prevent delinquent behaviors among youth.

Ozbay and Ozcan (2006) suggested that these cultural differences could further support social bond theory. They argue that utilizing social bond theory outside of western countries, especially in a society like Ankara Turkey, could further validate its applicability. Their study was administered to high school youth of Ankara, Turkey, and on all elements of social bond theory. Prior to administering the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out to ensure that the questionnaire measured what it was supposed to. They employed a stratified sample and although the sample size needed for the study was calculated at 1,067, it was increased to 1,730 to reduce any likelihood of obtaining less than the necessary sample. In the end, data were gathered from 1,710 students in the high schools of Ankara, Turkey. A two-stage stratified cluster was employed to obtain the sample of high school students.

In addition, the survey utilized all the elements of social bond as independent variables. The independent variables consisted of questions relating to attachment to parents, attachment to teachers, conventionally of peers, family supervision, school commitment, normative beliefs, and school involvement. Furthermore, delinquency questionnaire items that reflected similar items to a questionnaire from the United States by Elliott and Ageton, (1980). Fifteen items were used, which contained items relating to assault, school delinquency, and public disturbance. In addition, control variables were employed. Some of these variables related to strain (monetary strain and blocked opportunity) and differential association theories (delinquent friends and definition). Although not discussed, Ozbay and Ozcan (2006) measured blocked opportunity with questions regarding whether they believed certain characteristics blocked chances of

success. Questions such as “I believe people like me are treated unfairly when it comes to getting a good job” or “Even with a good education, people like me will have to work harder to make a good living” were asked. In addition, age was categorized as an interval variable and monthly total family income was categorized as a continuous variable (as cited in Ozbay & Ozcan, 2006). The theoretical framework utilized by Ozbay and Ozcan (2006) manages to effectively address two of the most evident problems that are seen among studies about social bond theory.

According to their findings, attachment to teachers, conventionality of peers, family supervision, school commitment, belief, and school involvement reduced the likelihood of total delinquency. In addition, having higher levels of attachment to teachers, conventional friends, parental supervision, school commitment, conventional beliefs and engagement in school activity has a negative influence on assault. All social bonding variables, excluding conventional friends are statistically significant when it comes to school delinquency. In regards to public disturbance, attachment to parents and school involvement are not statistically significant. Furthermore, attachment to teachers, conventional peers, family supervision, school commitment, and belief are statistically significant.

Ozbay and Ozcan’s (2006) findings validate the argument that social bond theory should be tested among other groups to encompass a wider range of reliability. As such, it seems relevant to further test social bond theory on Hispanic youth; primarily because research on Hispanic groups is widely unexplored and utilizing a different ethnic group will further validate and support social bond theory. Hence, this research is a partial replication of Ozbay and Ozcan’s (2006) study.

### **Present Study**

The border town of Laredo, Texas provides an interesting class of cultures. In this

community, most of the residents are comprised of Hispanic Americans. The United States Census Bureau (2015), it is estimated that 95.6% of Laredo's population is Hispanic. Given that social bond theory has rarely been tested on populations outside of Non-Hispanic Whites, the applicability and validity of social bond theory was tested with the Hispanic residents, mainly Mexican Americans, of Laredo, Texas. Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory plays a substantial role in the explanation of juvenile delinquency, however research on Hispanic populations has been widely nonexistent; thus, this research intended to demonstrate the explanatory value of social bond theory in regards to Hispanic juvenile delinquency. Not only does the Hispanic community provide for a different ethnic group, but it is also true that it provides a blend of two cultures.

### **Sampling**

In an effort to explore the relevancy of social bond theory in regards to Hispanic youth, I replicated Ozbay and Ozcan's (2006) study using a different ethnic group. The social bond theory was tested with Hispanic youth at the local middle schools. Living in a community that resides in the border between the United States and Mexico, both countries provide a mixture of both the American culture and the Mexican culture. Laredo, Texas is mostly comprised of Hispanics. Only a small percentage of its residents are from other ethnic and racial backgrounds. According to Laredo Quickfacts from the U.S. Census (2015), in 2010, it is estimated that 95.6% of the residents in Laredo, Texas are Hispanic. Furthermore, keeping this in mind, most of school aged children come from Hispanic families; families who bring with them their culture and norms from the border country, Mexico. Given that most students are from Hispanic backgrounds, utilizing social bond theory with these youth becomes relevant.



## **Data Collection**

Approval was obtained from both the Institutional Review Board at TAMIU and at a local school district, United Independent School District (UISD). In UISD, there are nine middle schools. All of the schools were contacted in the form of an email regarding participation in the survey, however only three schools were able to participate. These schools were: Lamar Bruni Vergara Middle School, United South Middle School, and Salvador Garcia Middle School. Students from grades 6th to 8th were able to participate. However, participation varied by school and grade level.

Parental consent was obtained prior to administering the surveys (See Appendix B for parental consent form). Parental consent forms were distributed both in English and Spanish because some individuals have limited English proficiency. In addition, child assent forms were distributed to participating students. Hence, students were given the right to decide whether or not to participate. With the assent forms, students were told that the survey was completely voluntary, would not count against them, and they would receive no incentive for participation (See Appendix C for student assent form). They were instructed that the survey was not a test and that no grade would be given. Students who participated took about 20 minutes to answer the survey. Only surveys in which students identified as “Hispanic/Latino” were used. Hence, only 146 of the total 169 surveys were utilized.

## **Measurement**

In this research, Ozbay and Ozcan’s (2006) survey was utilized; however, to fit the context of the city of Laredo, Texas some of its questions were modified. The survey consisted of 55 questions (See Appendix A for survey used in present study).

### *Dependent Variables*

Similar to Ozbay and Ozcan (2006), this survey used variables relating to delinquency among youth. These delinquent acts corresponded to 15 items: using force on teachers, hitting other students, fist fights, attacking someone, carrying a weapon, using force on other students, sexual harassment, engaging in gang fights, being late for class, cheating on exams, skipping class, vandalism, throwing objects, and being unruly in public places. In addition, 4 questions were added regarding drug use. These consisted of: consuming alcohol, marijuana, consuming other drugs besides marijuana, and consuming prescription drugs.

The 15 items included in the survey were indexed into one of three categories: assault, school delinquency, or public disturbance. A fourth index, total delinquency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.871) was utilized to assess the relationship between all variables relating to delinquency. For each question students were asked to choose one answer that best described them. Similar to Ozbay and Ozcan (2006), categories ranged from "Never" coded as 1, "Rarely" coded as 2, "Sometimes" coded as 3, "Generally" coded as 4, and "Always" coded as 5. Higher scores indicated higher involvement in delinquent acts.

Assault (Cronbach's alpha = .797) was an index that included: 1.) Have you ever used force on teachers?, 2.) Have you ever hit other students?, 3.) Have you ever engaged in fist fights?, 5.) Have you ever attacked someone?, 6.) Have you ever carried a weapon (Knife or bat)?, 7.) Have you ever used force on other students? 8.) Have you ever sexually harassed another student?, and 9.) Have you ever engaged in gang fights?

School delinquency (Cronbach's alpha = .571) was an index that included: 1.) Have you ever been late for class?, 2.) Have you ever cheated on exams?, 3.) Have you ever skipped classes? However, it is important to note that the internal validity of school delinquency was

compromised because the Cronbach's alpha is lower than the accepted level of 0.7. As such, findings should be assessed cautiously.

Public disturbance (Cronbach's alpha = .751) was indexed to include the following: 1.) Have you ever vandalized trees and lawns?, 2.) Have you ever thrown objects out of moving cars?, 3.) Have you ever been unruly, rowdy and loud in public places? In addition, four survey questions were added to assess youth involvement in drugs, mainly because research can demonstrate that parent-child communication and parental sanctions reduce the likelihood of drug use (Kelly, Comello, & Hunn, 2002). These questions are: 1.) Have you ever consumed alcohol?, 2.) Have you ever consumed marijuana?, 3.) Have you ever consumed other illegal drugs besides marijuana?, 4.) Have you ever abused prescription drugs?

#### *Independent Variables*

The independent variables consisted of twenty seven questions that encompass all the elements of social bond theory. These questions consisted of: attachment to parents, attachment to teachers, conventionality of peers, family supervision, beliefs, and involvement in schools. For each question, students were asked to check a single answer choice that best described them. Categories ranged and were coded as follows, Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicate stronger bonds. For conventionality of peers responses were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated stronger bonds. In addition, the questions relating to involvement in school were modified from Ozbay and Ozcan's (2006) study to better suit the understanding and capacity of middle school students.

Attachment to parents (Cronbach's alpha = .845) was an index that included the following survey questions: 1.) I can share my thoughts and feelings with my parents, 2.) My parents explain why they feel the way they do., 3.) My parents explain why they feel the way

they do., 4.) My parents and I talk over my future plans., 5.) My parents want to help me when I have problems, 6.) When my parents make a rule I don't understand, they will explain the reason., 7.) My parents know what is best for me., and 8.) I would like to be the kind of person my parents are.

Attachment to teachers (Cronbach's alpha= .696) was indexed to include the following survey questions: 1.) My teachers want to help me when I have problems., 2.) I can share my thoughts and feelings with my teachers., 3.) My teachers know what is best for me., 4.) I would like to be the kind of person my teachers are., and 5.) My friends respect their teachers.. Because the Cronbach's alpha lies below the accepted level (i.e., 0.7) these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Conventionality of peers (Cronbach's alpha = .715) was an index that included the following questions: 1.) My friends tend to get in trouble with their parents., 2.) My friends tend to get in trouble at school., and 3.) My friends tend to get into trouble with the police.”.

Family supervision (Cronbach's alpha = .680) was an index that included the following: 1.) My parents know where I am when I am away from home. and 2.) My parents know who I am with when I am away from home. The results derived from this index have a compromised internal validity because Cronbach's alpha is below the accepted level (i.e., 0.7).

School commitment (Cronbach's alpha = .712) was an index that included the following questions: 1.) Getting good grades is important to me., 2.) School attendance is important to me., 3.) The things I do in school seem worthwhile and meaningful to me., 4.) I dislike school., and 5.) I try hard in school. When compared to the other survey question, higher scores in “I dislike school.” indicate weaker bonds. Therefore for higher scores to reflect stronger bonds, the survey

question was recoded as follows: 1 was recoded as 5, 2 was recoded as 4, 3 recoded as 3, 4 recoded as 2, and 5 recoded as 1.

Belief (Cronbach's alpha = .631) was an index that included the following questions: 1.) Pushovers deserve to be taken advantage of., 2.) To get ahead, you have to do some things that are not right., and 3.) It is alright to get around the law if you can get away with it. Given that the Cronbach's alpha was below 0.7, results from this index should be analyzed with carefulness.

School involvement (Cronbach's alpha = .379) was an index that included the following: 1.) I spend a lot of time on my homework when I'm at home and 2.) I spend a lot of time on my homework when I'm at school. Again, results derived from this index should be reviewed with caution because Cronbach's alpha was below the accepted level.

#### *Control Variables*

Ten questions on the survey related to sex, ethnicity, schooling, income level, monetary strain and blocked opportunity. Initially income level was to be utilized for analysis; however, the majority of respondents did not know their income level. Therefore, after careful consideration, income level was not utilized. Furthermore, monetary strain (Cronbach's alpha = 0.135) was to be used. However given its low score of Cronbach's alpha was below the necessary threshold, monetary strain was not utilized. After careful consideration, a new variable was derived from question 9 in the survey. Student school expectation was labeled as *College* and was dummy coded as follows: some high school (1) and high school graduation (2) were recoded as 0 indicating high school graduation or less and some college/vocational school (3) and college graduate (4) were recoded as 1 to indicate college/vocational school. Questions used by Ozbay and Ozcan (2006) relating to blocked opportunity and delinquent friends were used as written.

Multiple regression analysis (see Table 2) was used to evaluate the relationship between the dependent (Assault, school delinquency, and public disturbance) and independent variables (attachment to parents and teachers, conventionality of peers, family supervision, school commitment, belief, and school involvement).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

When the survey was administered, the majority of respondents were Hispanics. This is similar to data reported by the Texas Education Agency. For instance, 99.5% of the students in Lamar Bruni Vergara Middle, 100% of the student body in Salvador Garcia Middle, and 99.3% of the student body in United South Middle School are Hispanic (Texas Education Agency, 2012). Furthermore, because this study only pertains to the Hispanic population, only those that identified as “Hispanic/Latino” were included. Respondents in this survey were both female and male; however females comprised 59.3% of the total participants (See Table 1.1). Additionally, the majority of respondents did not know their income level (See Table 1.2). Although respondents did not know their income level further research showed that 82.7% of students in United South middle school, 94.1% of students in Lamar Bruni Vergara Middle, and 98.9% of the student body for Salvador Garcia Middle school were economically disadvantaged. This means that according to the Texas Education Agency (2012), more than 80% of the student body for any given school included in this survey was economically disadvantaged (i.e., qualified and received discounted or free school meals) during the 2011 to 2012 school year.

**Table 1.1: Sex**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	59	40.7
Female	86	59.3

**Table 1.2: Income Level**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 20,000	19	13.1
20,000 - 40,000	14	9.7
40,000 - 60,000	6	4.1
More than 60,000	5	3.4
Don't Know	101	69.7

Respondent's perception of blocked opportunity was for the most part, low (See Table 1.3). For most of the questions, respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with regards to their perception that they will have to work harder to obtain the same opportunities. Less than one third of respondents for each of the first three measures of blocked opportunity agreed to some extent that opportunities for them were limited. Interestingly in the last statement for blocked opportunity, "Even with a good education, people like me will have to work harder to make a good living." almost half of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to the statement.

Although monetary strain could not be measured because of its low Cronbach's alpha it is nevertheless discussed. In Table 1.3, one of the measures for monetary strain dealt with whether or not money is of importance for respondents. Most respondents strongly agreed (50%) and agreed (33.3%) that the amount of money they will make is something important. Table 1.4 pertains to the question, "How much schooling do you expect to get eventually?". The majority of respondents believe they will be college graduates (See Table 1.4). When asked, "Have any of your close friends ever been picked up by the police?", about two thirds (66.2%) of respondents did not have any close friends picked up by the police (See Table 1.5).



**Table 1.3: Frequencies and Percentages of Control Variables**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Blocked Opportunity</b>					
Q4. I believe people like me are treated unfairly when it comes to getting a good job.	6 (4.1%)	26 (17.9%)	47 (32.4%)	46 (31.7%)	20 (13.8%)
Q5. Laws are passed to keep people like me from succeeding.	7 (4.8%)	19 (13.1%)	31 (21.2%)	57 (39.3%)	31 (21.2%)
Q6. No matter how hard I work, I will never be given the same opportunities as others kids.	8 (5.6%)	24 (16.7%)	27 (18.8%)	47 (32.2%)	38 (26.4%)
Q7. Even with a good education, people like me will have to work harder to make a good living.	28 (19.3%)	43 (29.7%)	24 (16.6%)	32 (21.9%)	18 (12.4%)
<b>Monetary Strain</b>					
Q8. I want to make lots of money.	72 (50%)	48 (33.3%)	22 (15.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.4%)

*\*Parenthesis indicate valid percentages*

**Table 1.4: Schooling (Monetary Strain)**

	Frequency	Percent
Some High School	0	0
High School Graduation	9	6.2
Some college/vocational school	5	3.4
College Graduate	131	90.3

Table 1.6 below demonstrates the respondents' answers to social bond measures. In the questions regarding attachment to parents, most respondents strongly agreed (49.7%) or agreed (26.2%) that their parents know what is best for them. In other words, respondents who strongly agreed or agreed believe that their parents have the best intentions for them, demonstrating strong attachment to their parental figures. However also on Table 1.6 for attachment to teachers, not as many respondents had that same level of attachment. For instance, when asked if they can express their feelings with their teachers, less than 30% of respondents strongly agreed (12.3%)

**Table 1.5: Delinquent Friends**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	33.8
No	96	66.2

**Table 1.6: Frequencies and Percentages of Social Bond Measures**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Attachment to Parents</b>					
Q11. I can share my thoughts and feelings with my parents.	31 (21.2%)	51 (34.9%)	36 (24.7%)	18 (12.3%)	10 (6.8%)
Q12. My parents explain why the feel the way they do.	17 (11.7%)	53 (36.6%)	41 (28.3%)	25 (17.2%)	9 (6.2%)
Q13. My parents and I talk over my future plans.	49 (33.6%)	53 (36.6%)	25 (17.1%)	11 (7.5%)	8 (5.5%)
Q14. My parents want to help me when I have problems.	57 (39%)	55 (37.7%)	22 (15.1%)	9 (6.2%)	3 (2.1)
Q15. When my parents make a rule I don't understand, they will explain the reason.	34 (23.6%)	52 (36.1%)	35 (24.3%)	16 (11.1%)	7 (4.9%)
Q16. My parents know what is best for me.	72 (49.7%)	38 (26.2%)	24 (16.6%)	10 (6.9%)	1 (0.7%)
Q17. I would like to be the kind of person my parents are.	34 (23.3%)	35 (24 %)	47 (32.2%)	22 (15.1%)	8 (5.5%)
<b>Attachment to Teachers</b>					
Q18. My teachers want to help me when I have problems.	27 (18.5%)	54 (37%)	50 (34.2%)	12 (8.2%)	3 (2.1%)
Q19. I can share my thoughts and feelings with my teachers.	18 (12.3%)	23 (15.8%)	48 (32.9%)	39 (26.7%)	18 (12.3%)
Q20. My teachers know what is best for me.	27 (18.6%)	41 (28.3%)	48 (33.1%)	24 (16.6%)	5 (3.4%)
Q21. I would like to be the kind of person my teachers are.	8 (6.9%)	28 (20.7%)	69 (47.6%)	30 (20.7%)	10 (6.9%)
Q22. My friends respect their teachers.	18 (12.5%)	40 (27.8%)	54 (37.5%)	23 (16%)	9 (6.3%)
<b>Conventionality of Peers</b>					
Q23. My friends tend to get in trouble with their parents.	8 (5.5%)	24 (16.4%)	49 (33.6%)	46 (31.5%)	19 (13%)
Q24. My friends tend to get in trouble at school.	11 (7.7%)	26 (18.2%)	41 (28.7%)	43 (30.1%)	22 (15.4%)
Q25. My friends tend to get into trouble with the police.	6 (4.1%)	11 (7.5%)	24 (16.4%)	51 (34.9%)	54 (37%)

\* Parenthesis indicate valid percentages

Table 1.6, cont.: Frequencies and Percentages of Social Bond Measures

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Family Supervision</b>					
Q26. My parents know where I am when I am away from home.	61 (41.8)	57 (39%)	17 (11.6%)	9 (6.2%)	2 (1.4%)
Q27. My parents know who I am with when I am away from home.	64 (43.8%)	57 (39%)	18 (12.3%)	4 (2.7%)	3 (2.1%)
<b>School Commitment</b>					
Q28. Getting good grades is important to me.	99 (67.8%)	34 (23.3%)	11 (7.5%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)
Q29. School attendance is important to me.	68 (46.9%)	43 (29.7%)	27 (18.6%)	5 (3.4%)	2 (1.4%)
Q30. The things I do in school seem worthwhile and meaningful to me.	50 (34.2%)	40 (27.4%)	46 (31.5%)	7 (4.8%)	3 (2.1%)
Q31. I dislike school.	12 (8.3%)	13 (9%)	51 (35.2%)	24 (16.6%)	45 (31%)
Q32. I try hard in school.	71 (49.3%)	49 (34%)	16 (11.1%)	5 (3.5%)	3 (2.1%)
<b>Belief</b>					
Q33. Pushovers deserve to be taken advantage of.	6 (4.1%)	12 (8.2%)	50 (34.2%)	30 (20.5%)	46 (31.5%)
Q34. To get ahead, you have to do some things that are not right.	3 (2.1%)	12 (8.4%)	27 (18.9%)	37 (25.9%)	64 (44.8%)
Q35. It is alright to get around the law if you can get away with it.	2 (1.4%)	11 (7.6%)	23 (16%)	44 (30.6%)	64 (44.4%)
<b>Involvement in School</b>					
Q36. I spend a lot of time on my homework when I'm at home.	24 (16.4%)	32 (21.9%)	48 (32.9%)	29 (19.9%)	13 (8.9%)
Q37. I spend a lot of time on my homework when I'm at school.	29 (19.9%)	42 (28.8%)	43 (29.5%)	18 (12.3%)	14 (9.6%)

\*Parenthesis indicate valid percentages

and agreed (15.8%). Similar responses were noted from the remainder of the questions regarding attachment to teachers. Furthermore, on Table 1.6, cont. for family supervision, a large percentage of respondents strongly agreed (41.8%) or agreed (39%) that their parents knew where they were when not at home and strongly agreed (43.8%) or agreed (39%). Interestingly, although the majority of respondents did not feel that they could share thoughts and feelings with teachers, a small segment of respondents disagreed (4.8%) or strongly disagreed (2.1%) that the things they did in school were meaningful. Similar responses can be seen with the other questions pertaining to school commitment (See Table 1.6, cont.). A small percentage of respondents had beliefs that go against conventional norms. For instance, respondents disagreed (30.6%) or strongly disagreed (44.4%) that “It is alright to get around the law if you can get away with it” (See Table 1.6, cont.). For involvement in school, no notable distinction can be made from the respondent’s agreement or disagreement regarding their involvement in school. What can only be discerned from the responses is that when asked about the time they spent completing homework at home and at school, slightly more responded neutrality. Almost thirty three percent (32.9%) responded neutrality when asked about time spent at home with homework and 29.5% were neutral when asked about the time they spend at school doing homework. To measure delinquency among Hispanic youth, measures of assault, school delinquency, and public disturbance were used. In Table 1.7, the frequencies and percentages of student responses are given. According to Table 1.7 more than half of respondents for any given question measuring assault answered that they had never committed some form of assault. For school delinquency, however, for the question, “Have you ever been late for class?” there is almost an even distribution of respondents for never (30.1%), rarely (28.8%), and sometimes (30.1%). In addition, 70.5% of respondents answered “never” to cheating on exams and 87.6% answered

**Table 1.7: Frequencies and Percentages of Delinquency Measures**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Generally	Always
<b>Assault</b>					
Have you ever...					
Q38. used force on teachers?	130 (89.7%)	8 (5.5%)	6 (4.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)
Q39. Hit other students?	90 (61.6%)	37 (25.3%)	11 (7.5%)	5 (3.4%)	3 (2.1%)
Q40. Engaged in fist fights?	113 (77.9%)	16 (11%)	10 (6.9%)	3 (2.1%)	3 (2.1%)
Q41. Attacked someone?	125 (85.6%)	12 (8.2%)	6 (4.1%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (.7%)
Q42. Carried a weapon (knife or bat)?	133 (91.1%)	3 (2.1%)	7 (4.8%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)
Q43. Used force on other students?	116 (80%)	20 (13.8%)	6 (4.1%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)
Q44. Sexually harassed another student?	142 (97.3%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)
Q45. Engaged in gang fights?	141 (96.6%)	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>School Delinquency</b>					
Have you ever...					
Q46. Been late for class?	44 (30.1%)	42 (28.8%)	44 (30.1%)	11 (7.5%)	5 (3.4%)
Q47. Cheated on exams?	103 (70.5%)	23 (15.8%)	15 (10.3%)	4 (2.7%)	1 (0.7%)
Q48. Skipped class?	127 (87.6%)	12 (8.3%)	4 (2.7%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)
<b>Public Disturbance</b>					
Have you ever...					
Q49. Vandalized trees and lawns?	138 (82.9%)	5 (3.4%)	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q50. Thrown objects out of moving cars?	121 (82.9%)	15 (10.3%)	7 (4.8%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.4%)
Q51. Been unruly, rowdy and loud in public places?	72 (49.3%)	38 (26%)	22 (15.1%)	7 (4.8%)	7 (4.8%)
Q52. Consumed alcohol?	119 (82.1%)	16 (11%)	9 (6.2%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
Q53. Consumed marijuana?	137 (93.8%)	3 (2.1%)	6 (4.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q54. Consumed other illegal drugs besides marijuana?	141 (96.6%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q55. Abused prescription drugs?	140 (95.9%)	0 (0%)	4 (2.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.4%)

\*Parenthesis indicate valid percentages

“never” to skipping class. Above 80% of respondents for any given questions measuring public disturbance never committed such a delinquent act. However, for “Have you ever been unruly, rowdy and loud in public places?” about half of respondents answered that they had been unruly, rowdy, and loud in public places.

### Total Delinquency

For total delinquency, attachment to parents and conventionality of peers demonstrate statistical significance, meaning there is an actual relationship between the variables (See Table 1.8). With a beta coefficient of -0.216, attachment to parents demonstrates a negative relationship to total delinquency at the  $p < .05$  statistical value. This is to say that as attachment to

**Table 1.8: Multiple Regression on Total Delinquency, Assault, School Delinquency, and Public Disturbance**

Independent Variables	Total Delinquency $\alpha=0.871$		Assault $\alpha=0.797$		School Delinquency $\alpha=0.571$		Public Disturbance $\alpha=0.751$		
	(n=127)		(n=128)		(n=129)		(n=129)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	
Attachment to parents index	$\alpha=0.845$	-0.216 **	-0.220 **	-0.184	-0.191	-0.101	-0.122	-0.213 **	-0.188
Attachment to teachers index	$\alpha=0.696$	-0.045	-0.029	-0.012	0.024	-0.140	-0.140	0.034	0.039
Conventionality of peers index	$\alpha=0.715$	-0.282 *	-0.122	-0.138	0.006	-0.253 *	-0.163	-0.326 *	-0.199
Family supervision index	$\alpha=0.680$	0.042	0.005	0.020	-0.004	0.152	0.138	-0.055	-0.105
School commitment index	$\alpha=0.712$	-0.169	-0.159	-0.156	-0.131	-0.196	-0.207 **	-0.097	-0.073
Belief index	$\alpha=0.631$	0.063	0.045	0.156	0.087	-0.009	0.020	0.023	0.042
School involvement index	$\alpha=0.379$	-0.005	-0.020	0.109	0.091	-0.151	-0.145	-0.031	-0.065
<b>Control Variables</b>									
Sex		0.036		0.089			-0.028		-0.038
Blocked opportunity index		-0.006		0.088			-0.138		0.042
Delinquent friends		0.311 *		0.288 *			0.217 **		0.197 **
College		0.026		-0.060			0.027		0.108
$R^2$		0.292	0.372	0.169	0.254	0.287	0.335	0.272	0.320
Adjusted $R^2$		0.250	0.308	0.120	0.180	0.245	0.269	0.229	0.252

\*=  $p < .05$  & \*\*= $p < .01$

parents' increases, total delinquency decreases. Hence, as youth have a stronger sense of attachment to parents, there is a lesser chance of them engaging in delinquent behavior. For conventionality of peers there is significance at the  $p < .01$  value and there seems to be a negative influence on total delinquency with a beta coefficient of - 0.282. This means that as the conventionality of peers decreases, total delinquency increases. Nonetheless, once the control variables were incorporated, only attachment to parents was significant with a beta coefficient of 0.220 at the  $p < .01$  value. Between the control variables, only delinquent friends (beta = 0.311) demonstrates a positive influence at the  $p < .01$  significance level. This means that as there is an increase of delinquent friends, total delinquency increases. Attachment to parents - even when controlled for sex, blocked opportunity, delinquent friends, and college – demonstrates a stronger impact on total delinquency.

### **Assault**

For assault, none of the variables demonstrated statistical significance (See Table 1.8). After incorporating the control variables, only one control variable – delinquent friends – demonstrated statistical significance at the  $p < .05$  level with a beta score of 0.288. This demonstrates there is an actual relationship between the variables. There was a positive relationship between delinquent friends and assault. That is to say, as delinquent friends increases assault increases as well. In other words, if youth have delinquent friends it becomes more likely for them to engage in assault. None of the independent variables demonstrated statistical significance. However, one control variable - having delinquent friends - demonstrated significance.



### **School Delinquency**

For school delinquency, conventionality of peers demonstrated a statistical significance at the  $p < .01$  level with a beta score of - 0.253 (See Table 1.8). It demonstrates a negative relationship between school delinquency and conventionality of peers. These results demonstrate that as conventionality of peers increase, school delinquency decrease. This means that when a student's peers accept more conventional values, there is a decrease in the probability of engaging in school delinquency. When controlling for sex, blocked opportunity, delinquent friends, and college, conventionality of peers is no longer statistically significant. However, school commitment became statistically significant with a beta score of -0.207, giving it a negative influence on school delinquency. This means that when a student is more committed to school, there is a lower possibility of students to engage in delinquent acts in school. Again only the control variable, delinquent friends, with a beta score of .217 demonstrates a positive influence. This can be interpreted as acknowledging that school delinquency will increase with the increase of delinquent friends.

### **Public Disturbance**

For public disturbance, attachment to parents and conventionality of peers demonstrated statistical significance. With a beta score of -0.213 at the  $p < .05$  significance level, attachment to parents demonstrates a negative influence on public disturbance. This means that students who are more attached to parents will have a decreased likelihood of engaging in public disturbance (i.e., vandalism, throwing objects out of cars, being unruly in public places, and consuming illegal substances). In a similar manner, conventionality of peers (beta = -0.326) demonstrated statistical significance at the  $p < .01$  value. This means that as conventionality of peers increases, public disturbance decreases. In other words, youth are less likely to engage in public

disturbance situations when they have conventional friends. However, when the control variables were included, none of the independent variables had any significant influence on public disturbance. Once again, the control variable – delinquent peers – became statistically significant (beta = 0.197) at the  $p < .05$  level and had a positive influence on public disturbance. This means that as youth have more delinquent friends, there is a higher likelihood of public disturbance.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to expand and examine the generalizability of social bond theory with Hispanic youth – a growing population in the U.S. Although only some of the variables were statistically significant, the findings demonstrate that attachment to parents, conventionality of peers, and school commitment are able to explain - to some extent - Hispanic youth delinquency within the context of Laredo, Texas. The measure of attachment to parents was statistically significant after controlling for sex, blocked opportunity, delinquent friends, and college. Nevertheless, none of social bond variables demonstrated a consistent relationship with assault, school delinquency, public disturbance, and total delinquency. As such, these findings must be interpreted with caution and generalizability cannot be made with certainty. The measure of delinquent friends demonstrated more statistical significance among all social bond measures of delinquency. This is to say that among the measures of delinquency – assault, school delinquency, public disturbance, and total delinquency, delinquent friends maintained a consistent relationship. Hence, the measure of delinquent friends demonstrated a stronger importance in this research. Although the findings in this study can only be generalized with caution, they provide a starting point toward the representation of ethnic and cultural diversity among research regarding delinquency and social bonds. Additional research is necessary to better understand and further support social bond theory and more research must be done to include the importance of delinquent friends and racial groups to provide a more conclusive view to that can allow for generalizability.

## Limitations

This research focused primarily on the influence of bonds toward the delinquent behaviors of Hispanic youth. However within the control variables, delinquent friends, was consistently significant among all dependent variables. It demonstrated the most significance than any measure of social bonds. According to these findings, having delinquent friends has a positive impact on the likelihood of committing delinquent acts. This means that assault, school delinquency, public disturbance and total delinquency increases when students have delinquent friends. The remainder of the control variables – sex, blocked opportunity, and college – had mostly a positive influence on social bond variables. However, they cannot be interpreted because of their lack of statistical significance. According to the present study, delinquent friends played a more important role in explaining delinquency than did the elements of social bond theory. Like mentioned, results in this sample demonstrated the consistent and positive relationship between delinquent peers and delinquency. These findings echo those of Hwang and Akers (2006) who found that peers had a much stronger influence on youth deviant behavior than did parents. This is to say that the Hispanic sample utilized demonstrated that the influence of delinquent peers is important in understanding delinquency. Hence, when understanding delinquency studies have noted how delinquent friends influence youth in their criminal behaviors.

Ventura-Miller, Jennings, Alvarez-Rivera, and Miller (2008) found that having delinquent friends has an effect on substance use among high school students in Puerto Rico. Utilizing the social learning theory, their findings demonstrated that when Puerto Rican high school students had friends who approved of substance use were more likely to report more use of alcohol and marijuana. Similarly, Lonardo, Giordano, Longmore, and Manning (2009) found

that friends' delinquency was significantly associated with male and female delinquency. In other words, youth who had friends with delinquent tendencies were more likely to be delinquent themselves. Thus, theories that encompass the influence of peer groups in youth involvement in delinquency, such as social learning theories and/or differential learning theories, would contribute to this research.

For some of the independent variables (i.e., attachment to teachers, family supervision, belief, and school involvement) the Cronbach's alpha was below the accepted value of 0.7. Similarly for the dependent variable – school delinquency – the accepted Cronbach's alpha was below 0.7. Because Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency a level below 0.7 may not be measuring the same construct. Furthermore, another limitation of this study is that an element of social bond theory - involvement - only included activities in school. Furthermore, the control variable - income - was not utilized in the final results. The final selection for survey participation was not done randomly and included only three middle schools within one of the two school districts in Laredo, Texas.

#### *The Hispanic Paradox: Assimilation and Generational Status*

There are some important factors regarding the Hispanic experience, such as assimilation and generational status, which were not included because this study sought to test the explanatory value of social bond theory. Given their importance for Hispanic youth, assimilation and generational status will be discussed as a foundation for future directions for investigation. Research regarding Hispanic youth delinquency within the U.S. has noted that assimilation is an important factor. However, no measure of assimilation was included in the survey. Additionally, no measure regarding immigration generation was included and according to substantial research, which will be discussed below, immigration generation is important in understanding

Hispanic juvenile delinquency. The Hispanic paradox is a concept that must be taken into account. According to Sampson (2008) the Hispanic experience is very different than any other racial or ethnic culture. In an effort to find whether immigration provided for an increase in crime, Sampson (2008) analyzed violent acts committed by females and males including Whites, Blacks and Hispanics. Utilizing police records, U.S. Census, and surveys of 8,000 Chicago residents, he found that Mexican Americans had lower rates of crime. In addition, first generation immigrants were less likely to commit crime than third generation residents. In essence, Sampson (2008) found that living in a neighborhood with concentrated immigration is directly associated with lower violence to the extent in which immigration is a protective factor against violence.

Similar findings were noted by Vaughn, Salas-Wright, Delisi, and Maynard (2014) in which immigrants demonstrate less antisocial behaviors than those who were native born. Using the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions with measures that included immigration status, violent and non-violent antisocial behavior, and mental and behavioral health, findings revealed that immigration is important in understanding crime. Similarly, Cruz-Santiago and Ramirez-Garcia (2011) provided qualitative research demonstrating that protecting adolescents from neighborhood violence, building strong relationships with their children, and addressing cultural divides were the main concern of parents living in low-income neighborhoods. Although immigrants are more socially disadvantaged and thus would account for an increase in deviant behavior, Vaughn et al. (2014) revealed that immigrants, including European, Latin American, Asian, and African American had reported lower levels of violent and non-violent antisocial behavior than those born in the U.S. Hispanic immigration is important in understanding crime rates. Hence, it is important to

note that although research has demonstrated that immigrant individuals are less likely to commit crime (Sampson, 2008; Vaughn et al., 2014), it has, however, demonstrated that assimilation and the length of residence within the United States may increase crime and delinquency (Alvarez-Rivera, Nobles, & Lersch, 2014).

Hispanic Americans are a sector of the United States that brings with them their unique culture, while having to adapt to the cultural norms that exist in the United States. According to DiPietro and Cwick (2014), generational status is an important factor to take into consideration when trying to understand delinquency among immigrant families in the United States. Knight et al., (2010) acknowledges that individuals born in Mexico hold stronger cultural values (i.e., traditional gender roles, familism, and overall Mexican values) than Mexican Americans born in the U.S. Thus, family unity and cohesion is reduced by assimilation. For instance, second and third generation immigrants are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Similar findings were noted by Ventura-Miller (2012). The study reveals that foreign-born Hispanics are less likely to become victims of violent crime and are less likely to become delinquent themselves. What can be noted from Ventura – Miller (2012) is that Hispanic youth that are born within the U.S. but have foreign born parents are at a higher risk of engaging in delinquent behaviors.

Similarly, according to Bui (2009), first generation immigrants are less likely to engage in criminal behaviors than are second and third generation immigrants. Children of undocumented Hispanic immigrants tend to work in menial jobs, and as such, second generation immigrants tends to go through the path of downward assimilation, such as lower economic and educational success (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2009). Comparable findings denote that mental health may also be affected by immigrant generation. For instance, some findings

demonstrate that depression was higher for third generation teens than first or second generation teens (Driscoll, Russell, & Crockett, 2008).

Given that the majority of Hispanics who reside in the U.S. may be first, second, or further generation immigrants, it becomes necessary to understand the importance assimilation plays into youth delinquency. Generation has proven to be a contributing factor toward the likelihood of youth committing crime. A vast amount of relevant research has found that assimilation to the United States culture does not necessarily equate with less delinquent Hispanic youth. In fact, Hispanic youth are more likely to engage in deviant behavior when they are assimilating to U.S. culture (Peguero, Popp, Latimore, Shekarkhar, & Koo, 2011). For instance, Bui (2013) found that assimilation and parent - child conflict increased the likelihood of using illicit substances in adolescents. According to various studies, acculturation to the U.S. culture has brought an abundance of problems for Hispanic youth. This is to say, that the more assimilated youth are to the U.S. culture, the more likely it is for them to promote negative behaviors, such as delinquency and substance use.

The composition of families also influences assimilation. For instance, separated families have the opposite and detrimental effect that united and extended families have on upward or downward assimilation of the second generation. This means that broken homes, as research has demonstrated, can increase the likelihood that adolescents will engage in crime. For instance, Bui (2009) has found that with assimilated Hispanics there is a reduction in family cohesion and familism.

### **Future Directions**

It is revealed that Hispanic delinquency can be explained, in part, by the extent of assimilation and generational status. Thus, a limitation of the research noted above is the lack of



utilizing measures of assimilation and generational status. The present study sought to fill the scarcity of research regarding social bond theory within the context of Hispanic delinquency in the border-town of Laredo, Texas. Similar to Hwang and Akers (2006), the findings in this research revealed that delinquent friends held more significance than did measures of social bonds. While this research lends support in the understanding of race in regards to social bond theory, it was not without limitations. The Hispanic experience differs than that of other racial groups. The *Hispanic Paradox* (Sampson, 2008; Vaughn et al., 2014), assimilation (Bui, 2013; Peguero et al., 2011; Portes et al., 2009) and generational status (DiPietro & Cwick, 2014; Bui, 2009; Ventura-Miller, 2012) provide a different view on the rates of crime and delinquency with the Hispanic population.

Given the findings, new questions arise and new directions of this research would be helpful in understanding Hispanic youth delinquency. Perhaps the addition of differential association or social learning theories that incorporate the influence of peer groups in youth delinquency would contribute to this research. Additionally, addressing assimilation and generational status will help provide a more conclusive view on the importance of social bond theory in understanding Hispanic delinquency.

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## APPENDIX A

### Testing Social Bond Theory with Hispanic Youth Survey

	White	Hispanic /Latino	Black/ African American	Native American/American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other
<b>Background information: Check the one that best describes you.</b>						
1	What is your ethnicity?					

	Female	Male
<b>Background information: Check the one that best describes you.</b>		
2	What is your gender?	

	Less than 20,000	20,000 – 40,000	40,000-60,000	More than 60,000	Don't Know
<b>Background information: Check the one that best describes you.</b>					
3	What is your parent's income level?				

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Background information: For each question, check the one that best describes you</b>					
4	I believe people like me are treated unfairly when it comes to getting a good job.				
5	Laws are passed to keep people like me from succeeding.				
6	No matter how hard I work, I will never be given the same opportunities as other kids.				
7	Even with a good education, people like me will have to work harder to make a good living.				
8	I want to make lots of money.				



Statement	Some high school	High school graduation	Some college/ vocational school	College graduate
<b>Background information: Check the one that best describes you.</b>				
9   How much schooling do you expect to get eventually?				

Statement	Yes	No
<b>Background information: Check the one that best describes you.</b>		
10   Have any of your close friends ever been picked up by the police?		

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Social Bond Questions: For each question, check the one that best describes you</b>					
11   I can share my thoughts and feelings with my parents.					
12   My parents explain why they feel the way they do.					
13   My parents and I talk over my future plans.					
14   My parents want to help me when I have problems					
15   When my parents make a rule I don't understand, they will explain the reason.					
16   My parents know what is best for me.					
17   I would like to be the kind of person my parents are.					
18   My teachers want to help me when I have problems.					
19   I can share my thoughts and feelings with my teachers.					
20   My teachers know what is best for me.					
21   I would like to be the kind of person my teachers are.					

22	My friends respect their teachers.					
23	My friends tend to get in trouble with their parents.					
24	My friends tend to get into trouble at school.					
25	My friends tend to get into trouble with the police.					
26	My parents know where I am when I am away from home.					
27	My parents know who I am with when I am away from home.					
28	Getting good grades is important to me.					
29	School attendance is important to me.					
30	The things I do in school seem worthwhile and meaningful to me.					
31	I dislike school.					
32	I try hard in school					
33	Pushovers deserve to be taken advantage of.					
34	To get ahead, you have to do some things that are not right.					
35	It is alright to get around the law if you can get away with it.					
36	I spend a lot of time on my homework when I'm at home					
37	I spend a lot of time on my homework when I'm at school.					

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Generally	Always
<b>Delinquency Questions: For each question, check the one that best describes you</b>					
38	Have you ever used force on teachers?				
39	Have you ever hit other students?				
40	Have you ever engaged in fist fights?				
41	Have you ever attacked someone?				
42	Have you ever carried a weapon (Knife or bat)?				
43	Have you ever used force on other students?				
44	Have you ever sexually harassed				

	another student?					
45	Have you ever engaged in gang fights?					
46	Have you ever been late for class?					
47	Have you ever cheated on exams?					
48	Have you ever skipped classes?					
49	Have you ever vandalized trees and lawns?					
50	Have you ever thrown objects out of moving cars?					
51	Have you ever been unruly, rowdy and loud in public places?					
52	Have you ever consumed alcohol?					
53	Have you ever consumed marijuana?					
54	Have you ever consumed other illegal drugs besides marijuana?					
55	Have you ever abused prescription drugs?					

## APPENDIX B



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

**PARENTS' INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Your son/daughter has been invited to participate in a short survey by a Texas A&M International University master's program student. The purpose of this anonymous survey is to learn about middle school students' social bonds and involvement in delinquency. Information from this survey will help reveal the influence of bonds on delinquency among adolescents. Your child's participation in this survey will last for approximately 20 minutes and there will be no identifying information in the survey.

I understand that \_\_\_\_\_ (student name) has been selected to participate in the *Testing Social Bond Theory with Hispanic Youth Survey*. I understand that there will be no cost incurred by me for participation in this survey, and there are no anticipated risks associated with my child's participation in this activity.

The information collected in this activity will remain anonymous. This means that your son/daughter's identity as a participant cannot be connected to his/her responses on the survey. All materials will be kept in a locked office at Texas A&M International University.

\_\_\_ I hereby give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the survey.

\_\_\_ I do not give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the survey.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name) Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

**Forma de consentimiento informado**

Su hijo/hija ha sido invitado a participar en una breve encuesta proveída por Texas A&M International University. El propósito de esta encuesta anónima es aprender acerca de los vínculos sociales y la participación de los estudiantes de secundaria en la delincuencia. La información de esta encuesta ayudará a saber de la delincuencia juvenil hispana. Participación de su hijo/hija en este estudio tendrá una duración de aproximadamente 20 minutos y no habrá ninguna información de identificación en la encuesta.

Entiendo que \_\_\_\_\_ (nombre del estudiante) ha sido seleccionado para participar en el estudio, "Probando la teoría de vínculos sociales". Entiendo que no habrá ningún costo incurrido por mí para este estudio, y no hay riesgos previstos asociados en la participación de mi hijo/hija en esta actividad.

La información recogida en esta actividad se mantendrá anónima. Esto significa que la identidad de su hijo/hija como participante no será revelado. Los materiales se mantendrán en una oficina cerrada en Texas A&M International University.

\_\_\_ Yo le doy autorización a mi hijo/hijo de participar en esta encuesta.

\_\_\_ Yo no le doy autorización a mi hijo/hija de participar en esta encuesta.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nombre) Padre/Tutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Firma) Padre/Tutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

## APPENDIX D



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

## CHILD ASSENT FORM

We are doing a study to learn about people's relationships and their behavior. We are asking you to help because we don't know very much about whether the relationships that kids your age have affect behavior.

If you agree to be in our study, we are going to ask you some questions about relationships you have and some of your behaviors. We want to know how those relationships affect your behaviors. For example, we will ask about your relationships with family, teachers and friends and about some of your behaviors.

You can ask questions about this study at any time. If you decide at any time not to finish, you are allowed to stop.

The questions we will ask are only about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers because this is not a test.

If you sign this paper, it means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign this paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don't sign this paper or if you change your mind later.

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your printed name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## VITA

### **Carla Alvarez**

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 Laredo, TX 78046  
 Phone: (956) 326-0410  
 E-mail: carla\_alvarez@dusty.tamtu.edu  
 Alternative e-mail: calvarez1015@gmail.com

### **Education**

Bachelor of Science, Texas A&M International University, May 2013

Major: Criminal Justice

Minor: Sociology

Graduated Cum Laude

Associate in Science, Laredo Community College, May 2012

Major: Criminal Justice

Graduated Magna Cum Laude

### **Work Experience**

- November 2015-Present, Reading Teacher, United Independent School District
- May 2014-May 2015, Advocate Coordinator/Prevention Specialist, SCAN, Inc.
- August 2013-May 2014, Substitute Teacher, United Independent School District
- June 2010-July 2013, Student Support Services Tutor, Laredo Community College

### **Volunteer Experience**

- August 2008- May 2008, Mathematics Volunteer Tutor, Lyndon B. Johnson High School
- August 2008-May 2009, Library Assistant, Lyndon B. Johnson High School

### **Awards and Recognition**

- Member, The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, TAMTU
- Member, The National Criminal Justice Honor Society of Alpha Phi Sigma, TAMTU
- 2013 Lamar Bruni Vergara Graduate Scholarship Recipient (\$3,000)
- 2009 - 2013 Lamar Bruni Vergara Scholarship Recipient (\$16,000)
- Early High School Graduation Scholarship Recipient (\$2,000)
- 2006 - 2009 Advanced Placement Scholar
- Member, UIL Lincoln Douglas Debate