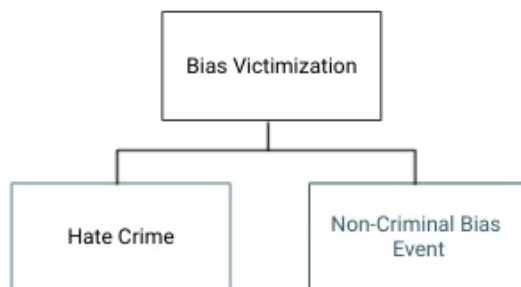# Understanding and Measuring Bias Against Latinos

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Hate crimes, or bias motivated crimes, have the power to significantly impact people and their communities. On one hand, these crimes are deeply personal, in that violence or harm is directed at a person due to their immutable (or perceived) characteristics. On the other hand, they are message crimes, aimed at striking fear in communities that share characteristics with the targeted victims. While research has reviewed hate crime more broadly, this phenomenon is rarely studied in a Latino community context. Additionally, there have been few empirical attempts to understand non-criminal bias events and how these may impact the Latino community. Given the rise in anti-immigrant and anti-Latino rhetoric, it is imperative to understand how bias victimization is affecting this community. A diagram of these bias events is presented below.



Bias victimization is the general term that captures a broad range of bias events

Hate Crime: criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against protected statuses such as: race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.

Non-Criminal Bias Event (NCBE): events that are motivated by bias but are not a crime (e.g., racial slur).

Data from the Uniform Crime Report (2018) shows a 30% increase in hate crime from 2014-2018, however during the same time period there has been a 62% increase in hate crime against Latinos. The disparity between the rise in general hate crime and the rise in Latino hate crime highlights the importance of addressing this issue among Latinos. To that aim, our primary research question asks: *what is the nature and pattern of bias motivated victimization among immigrant and non-immigrant populations residing in high Latino population communities?* To answer this question we conducted a community-based survey that was completed by participants in either English or Spanish.

## Study Locations & Participants

- Greater San Diego metro area
- Southern Texas (Galveston and Houston)
- Metro-Boston

This sample of 910 participants represents three diverse geographic regions of the U.S. which contain Latino populations from different countries of origin and with different types of immigration statuses.

Partnerships with community agencies were established in each study site and these agencies allowed the research team to recruit through the individuals connected to the agency. These agencies predominantly served the Latino community or had large percentage of Latinos that made use of their services. In addition to directly recruiting community members through community-based agencies, recruitment also took place through Latino-focused events in the community such as cultural festivals (e.g., Puerto Rican festival, Colombian festival, etc.).

# Findings and Implications

## Reported Rates of Bias Victimization Among Latinos

| Overall | Boston | San Diego | Houston |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26% / 53% | 31% / 57% | 24% / 53% | 22% / 49% |

☐ Past Year  ☐ Lifetime

## Hate Crime/ Victimization Overlap:

Overall, 63% of individuals who experience **bias victimization** also reported experiencing another form of lifetime victimization.

The rate is 73% when you look at those who experience **hate crime** events specifically.

**63%**

## US Resident & Immigrant Risk:

Non-immigrant Latinos were significantly more likely to report experiencing bias victimization than immigrants (58% vs. 49% respectively).
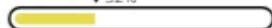
There were no significant differences between documented and undocumented Latino immigrants.
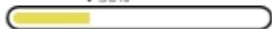
## Most Common Hate Crime/Non-Criminal Bias Event:

### NCBE:

Racial slur
▼32%

Threatening language based on immigrant status
▼30%

### Hate Crime:

Physical Harm
▼13%

Threatened with a weapon
▼11%

## Help Seeking Behavior:

Despite the severe consequences of bias victimization, of the Latinos who experienced bias crimes:

- 18% sought help from any formal authorities
- 8% specifically sought help from the police.

Latino victims of bias crime are most likely to seek help from informal sources such as friends or family members (68%) compared to formal authorities

## Policy Implications:

In 2017, the FBI reported 552 victims of anti-Latino hate crimes, representing a rate of .001% of the approximately 41 million Latino adults in the US reporting a hate crime victimization. However, the rate of hate crimes reported by Latino respondents in our sample was 9% in the past year alone, with 25% of our sample reporting experiencing a bias victimization. It is critical for law enforcement, policymakers, and community stakeholders to recognize, and act on, the extent of underreporting and impact of bias crimes in Latino communities.

### Community Intervention:

- Community leadership and government can help promote inclusiveness and challenge anti-Latino rhetoric
- Community agencies are critical to supporting victims and may facilitate formal help seeking and reporting to law enforcement and other agencies that serve these communities

### Law Enforcement:

- Increase police training about bias victimization
- Improve education and awareness about bias victimization among Latino population

### Education:

Educational efforts about the risk of bias victimization, including:
- The impact of such incidents on individuals
- Awareness within the community about who they can receive help from and their rights within the legal and criminal justice system

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