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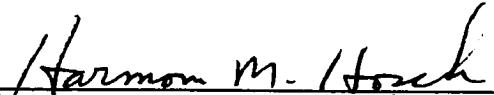
ETHNICITY AS A FACTOR IN VERDICT CHANGES

AND AMOUNT OF PARTICIPATION

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This project is dedicated to my parents, Julieta and Hector Chanez and to my husband, German L. Trejo. Thank you for your patience and guidance.

PREVIEW

ETHNICITY AS A FACTOR IN VERDICT CHANGES
AND AMOUNT OF PARTICIPATION

by

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Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze how much participation in the deliberation process would be expected from an Hispanic juror in an Anglo-dominant jury; how fluency in the English language affected this participation; and, which individuals would change their verdicts more often. Six-hundred subjects viewed a tape of a robbery trial. They were then separated into six-person juries where they deliberated to a unanimous decision. Hispanic jurors changed their verdict more often from the time the defendant entered his plea to when they were asked to cast their final ballot. Evidence seemed to be playing a major role in jurors' verdict changes although deliberation did have some impact on decisions. Hispanic majority juries changed their verdict more often than did Anglo majority juries from the time they heard the evidence to their final verdict. Fluency in the English language did not seem to have had an affect in nonfluent jurors' participation. Mean number of utterances, mean utterance length, total length of utterances, and total deliberation time for nonfluent and fluent target jurors did not differ.

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Review of Literature

During the past decade there has been a voluminous increase in the empirical literature on the judicial system. Many researchers are focusing their efforts on how jurors' demographic characteristics such as sex, religion, economic status and ethnicity/race may affect the outcome of a trial. Unfortunately, most of the research assessing ethnicity/race effects deals primarily with black jurors ignoring many of the other minorities that are part of the American melting pot. For instance, the Hispanic population is the most rapidly increasing minority group in the U.S.; yet, only one experimental study has been published focusing on the Hispanic juror.

This study (Lipton, 1983) attempted to investigate juridic racism by analyzing interactions between juror and defendant ethnicity on the decision-making process from an Hispanic perspective. Results indicated that sex differences emerged when final verdict, sentencing, and degree of guilt were analyzed. When men were on a predominately female jury they were most lenient with the Hispanic defendant. However, when females were on a predominately male jury they were harshest with the Hispanic defendant. Looking at deliberation effects, quantified as the difference between pre and post