Hispanics are a fast-growing group in the United States. According to the 2000 census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), there are 35.3 million Hispanics in the United States, representing 12.5 percent of the total population of the country. This is a 58 percent increase from the 1990 census. The actual number of Hispanics in the United States is much higher considering the number of illegal Hispanic immigrants. Statistics in California, provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, describe that approximately 1.6 million illegal immigrants reside in California and 125,000 more enter the state each year (Cowan, Martinez, & Mendiola, 1997). Considering the continuing legal and illegal migration of Hispanics, legalization of illegal immigrants, and population growth in general, the number and percentage of Hispanics in the United States is expected to be much higher in the twenty-first century. Projections of Hispanic growth in the United States have yielded estimates of 55 million Hispanics, or 17 percent of the population, by the year 2020 and 98 million Hispanics, or 24.3 percent of the population (one out of four United States residents), by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

A great number of Hispanics in the United States are involved in the legal system, particularly the criminal justice system. Consequently, competence in combined Hispanic psychology and forensic psychology will be in great demand in the twenty-first century. Despite such demand, books on forensic psychology published in the past few years have virtually ignored or given scant attention to the issue of race and ethnicity in the forensic arena. This chapter attempts to address issues of Hispanic psychology pertinent to the forensic psychologist.

COMPETENCE

SOURCES OF BIAS IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM

CULTURALLY COMPETENT FORENSIC ASSESSMENT

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

FORENSIC SPECIFIC MEASUREMENT

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

REFERENCES

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