

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Exploring the Effect of Childhood Circumstances and Turning Point Events on Behavioral Outcomes in Early Adulthood: Predictors of Arrest in a Sample of Latino Immigrants in the United States

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Abstract. Using as a data source the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), this paper examines the effects of childhood/adolescence circumstances and adulthood life transitions, such as marriage, parenthood, and employment, on contact with the criminal justice system (i.e., arrest) in early adulthood across a sample of first- and second-generation Latino immigrants in the United States. Results show that while good academic performance in teenage years decreases the risk of arrest later in life for both young men and women, problematic behavior in adolescence (i.e., getting into fights) increases significantly the risk of arrest in early adulthood solely for women. Conversely, one's immigrant status is a significant predictor of arrest only for males. First-generation male immigrants report being arrested significantly less than US-born, second-generation Latino male immigrants. While motherhood and job stability significantly reduce the probability of arrest for women, marriage appears to have a crime-protective effect for males. Yet both men and women included in this analysis have an increased risk of arrest when one or more family members experienced arrest as well.

Keywords: *Latino immigrants, immigrants and crime, arrest, gender differences in arrest, life-course theory*

Introduction

According to the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS), immigrants and their US-born children (85.7 million people) represent about 26% of the US population and recent projections anticipate that by 2065, first- and second-generation immigrants will account for 36% of the US population (Batalova et al., 2021). While in 1910, over 80% of the immigrants in the United States came from Europe,

nowadays, 80% of the immigrants come from Asia or Latin America (Nunn et al., 2018). In 2019, more than four out of ten foreign-born people (44% or 19.8 million persons) residing in the United States reported having Hispanic or Latino origins. These immigrants represent 33% of the 60.5 million people who in 2019 self-identified as Hispanic or Latino (Batalova et al., 2021). Although the debate over who is Hispanic¹ and who is not continues in the United States, data provided by the US Census, which counts as Hispanic persons of any race who select Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish as their ethnicity, show that over the last five decades this population subgroup increased by 547%, from 9.6 million in 1970 to 62.1 million in 2020, representing 19% of the country's population. (Lopez et al., 2021).

As it happened in any immigrant-receiving country, the impact of immigration on society has been scrutinized frequently in the United States as well. One of the issues frequently addressed by the media, politicians, policy makers, and researchers refers to the impact of immigration on crime. And, as Martinez (2015) noted, in the United States, generations of immigrants of Latino/Hispanic origin, appear to be at the center of this debate.

In general, research conducted in the United States on the immigration – crime nexus sought to determine if compared to their native counterparts, immigrants commit crimes more often (Ewing et al., 2015; Lopez & Miller 2011; Miller, 2012; Rumbaut et al. 2006; Sorenson & Lew, 2000), if there are significant differences in criminal offending and/or incarceration when the foreign-born are compared to second-generation immigrants or to natives who do not have an immediate immigrant background (Bersani, 2014; Bui & Thingniramol, 2005; Morenoff & Astor, 2006; Nielsen & Ramirez, 2011; Rumbaut & Portes, 2006; Sampson et al., 2005). Researchers also wanted to see if illegal immigrants get more involved in criminal activities than legal immigrants or natives do (Light et al., 2020), if undocumented immigration contributes to higher violent crime rates (Green, 2016; Light & Miller, 2018), or if immigration in general is significantly associated with higher crime rates.

Although exceptions exist (e. g., Cuevas et al., 2021; Sorenson & Lew, 2000), most of the micro-level empirical studies indicate that first-generation immigrants

¹ Often used interchangeably, the pan-ethnic terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” refer to ethnicity, culture, and identity. The term Latino is generally used to describe a person who is from or has ancestry in a Latin American country (i.e., a country in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean), while the term Hispanic is used when referring to people from Spain or from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America (see Lopez et al., 2021).

have lower criminal offending rates and are less likely to be incarcerated than second-generation immigrants and natives without immediate immigrant ancestry. Regarding macro-level research, Light and Miller (2018) found a negative association between undocumented immigration and violent crime at the state level. The relationship, however, was not significant. And the authors of a recent narrative review and meta-analysis based on 51 quantitative studies published between 1994 and 2014, which explored the effect of immigration on crime in the United States also noted that most of these studies did not identify significant relationships between immigration and crime rates. Yet, when further meta-analyses were conducted, results showed a significant, but very weak negative relationship between immigration and crime (Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). While based on these findings and the critical data limitations identified by Ousey and Kubrin (2018) it is difficult to state with certainty that immigration clearly contributes to significant decreases in crime rates, one can confidently conclude that immigration, including undocumented immigration, does not increase crime in the United States (see Light & Miller, 2018; Nunn et al., 2018).

Nonetheless, like in any population subgroup that does not have immediate immigrant ancestry, among immigrants and US-born children of immigrants there are individuals who break the law, get arrested, and get convicted of a crime. Yet only a small number of studies examined the factors more likely to predict the immigrants' involvement in delinquency and crime, beside one's immigrant generational status. And research that explored delinquent behavior and/or violent offending among Latinos generally used samples of adolescents (e.g., Cuevas et al., 2021; Lopez & Miller, 2011; Miller, 2012).

Trager and Kubrin (2014) contended that "research about gender and gendered behavior is likely to yield new insights into the complex relationship between immigration and crime" (p. 528). However, even though more than half of the immigrants (53% in 1980; 51% in 1990 and 2010; 52% in 2019) in the United States are females (Batalova et al., 2021), "sex and gender are, at best, peripheral to the study of crime and immigration" (Trager & Kubrin, 2014, p. 528). And the number of studies that attempted to identify the factors that increase significantly the female immigrants' offending rates or predict their contact with the criminal justice system is low (Andreescu, 2019). Moreover, even if data show that compared to white women, Latinas are 1.2 times more likely to be incarcerated, the literature on Hispanic/Latino women involved in the criminal justice system is equally scant (Ibañez, et al., 2019, p. 340).

By examining the correlates of arrest in two subsamples of Latino young adults differentiated by gender, the current study intends to address this oversight in the literature. Additionally, by identifying the life-course predictors of arrest in two subgroups differentiated by gender, the current study will contribute to the limited literature that sought to determine if the life-course theoretical tenets are gender specific or not. To summarize, the current study has two main objectives: 1. To determine if childhood and adolescence circumstances, including one's immigrant background, have similar long-term effects on behavioral outcomes in early adulthood when male and female Latino immigrants are compared. 2. To decide if turning points events in early adulthood, such as marriage, parenthood, and employment impact differentially Latino men's and women's risk of arrest.

Theoretical background and review of the literature

The current study will use as a theoretical framework the life-course perspective. Specifically, the analysis is informed by Sampson and Laub's (1990, 1993) age-graded theory of informal social control. Sampson and Laub (1993) proposed an explanation of criminal behavior and made a conscious attempt to revitalize Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, also known as social bond theory. While Hirschi (1969) explored the effects of social bonds to family, school, and "conventional others" on children's and adolescents' delinquent behavior, Sampson and Laub (1993) indicated that social bond theory can be used to understand the continuity and change in offending across the life course, from childhood, to adolescence, and into adulthood (Lilly et al., 2019, p. 442). This dynamic developmental theory assumes that even if problematic behavior in childhood and adolescence could have long-term negative consequences on behavioral outcomes, changes in life circumstances in early adulthood may generate turning points, which could deviate one's life trajectory.

Like Hirschi (1969), Sampson and Laub (1990, 1993) also contend that delinquent behavior is inhibited during childhood and adolescence by strong bonds to parents and the school. Yet the authors argue that while in childhood and adolescence informal social control is exercised mainly by the family and the school, one's ties to these socializing institutions would diminish in late adolescence and early adulthood, when other social institutions (e.g., marriage, parenthood, work) may become more important agents of informal social control. In summary, Sampson and Laub (1993) incorporated in their "sociogenic" model both stability and

change over the life course and contended that “social interaction with both juvenile and adult institutions of informal social control has important effects on crime and deviance” (p. 7). In the authors’ view, “childhood pathways to crime and conformity over the life course are significantly influenced by adult social bonds” (Sampson & Laub, 1993, p. 243).

Childhood circumstances and their impact on behavioral outcomes in adulthood

The first proposition of Sampson and Laub’s (1993) theory states that the “structural context mediated by informal family and school social control explains delinquency in childhood and adolescence” (p. 7). According to the authors, in the first stages of life, the most salient social control process can be found in the family. Through monitoring, parents can be direct sources of social control, while through attachment, they can indirectly control their children’s behavior. Yet, as previously noted, Sampson and Laub (1994) acknowledged that family dynamics are influenced by structural factors, such as poverty, residential mobility, employment, family size, and immigration status. The authors also recognized that the parents’ capacity to exert social control can be affected by the child’s personality traits (e.g., difficult temperaments, early conduct disorders) (Lilly et al., 2019, p. 442).

Sampson and Laub’s (1993) findings based on a panel study of 500 delinquent boys and 500 non-delinquent boys (see Glueck & Glueck, 1950, 1968), as well as the results of Hoeve et al.’s (2012) meta-analysis of 74 published and unpublished studies, show that low attachment to parents is a significant predictor of juvenile delinquency. Yet, when Sampson and Laub (1993) assessed the long-term effects of various family constructs (e.g., parental monitoring, parenting style, parental attachment in adolescence) no significant effects on the rate of arrest in adulthood were found. Similarly, Giordano and her colleagues (2002) concluded that parental supervision and attachment to the family of origin did not have significant effects on adult crime in a group of serious adolescent offenders. Other studies, however, found that poor parental supervision in adolescence was a significant predictor of criminal convictions in adulthood (Farrington et al., 2009; Theobald et al., 2013). Moreover, research that explored the long-term impact of the family structure found that those who did not grow up with both parents had an elevated risk of violent offending in adulthood (Mok et al., 2018; Theobald et al. 2013). Additionally, several studies based on longitudinal data from the Cambridge Study found that 60% of the boys who were separated from a parent by age 10 were

convicted of a crime by age 50 (see Theobald et al., 2013, for a review). The results of a longitudinal study that identified the predictors of arrest in a sample of immigrants of Cuban descent found that men who grew up in intact families (i.e., both biological parents were present) were less likely to report being arrested in early adulthood. The structure of the family of origin, however, did not impact significantly the females' risk of arrest in adulthood (Andreescu, 2019).

In addition to family, control theorists (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993) argued that attachment to school in adolescence would act as a delinquency deterrent. And Sampson and Laub (1993), as well as other researchers found support for this assertion (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992; Hart & Mueller, 2013; Kalu et al., 2020; Stewart, 2003). Although Sampson and Laub (1993) did not explore the effect of the adolescents' bonds to school on behavioral outcomes in adulthood, other researchers did. Yet longitudinal studies that examined the long-term effect of school attachment produced inconsistent results. While some researchers found that low school attachment was a significant predictor of criminal behavior in adulthood (Farrington et al., 2009), other researchers concluded that academic achievement and/or school attachment in adolescence did not impact significantly one's involvement in crime later in life (Giordano et al., 2002; Theobald et al., 2013).

A second thesis of Sampson and Laub's (1993) theoretical model states that "there is continuity in antisocial behavior from childhood through adulthood in a variety of life domains" (p. 7). When this hypothesis was tested, the authors found that 76% of those officially declared juvenile delinquents were arrested by age 25. Moreover, when controlling for several factors, such as parental monitoring, parental attachment, parental rejection, and the child's personality traits and childhood behavior (i.e., early onset of problematic behavior and conduct problems in childhood and adolescence), the authors found that unofficial delinquency was a significant predictor of arrest in adulthood, at three different stages of the respondent's life (i.e., ages 17 – 25; ages 25-32; ages 32-45) (Sampson & Laub, 1993, pp. 128 -134). Other longitudinal studies documented a positive and significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and deviance and/or criminal involvement in adulthood as well (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Giordano et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2010; Odgers et al., 2008). And a panel study based on a sample of first- and second-generation Cuban immigrants in the United States also found that problematic behavior in adolescence (getting into fights) was significantly and positively related to arrests in early adulthood. However, the effect was significant only before controlling for adulthood transitions such as job stability, marriage, and parenthood (Andreescu, 2019).

Life-course transitions and adult social bonds

The third proposition of Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory states that "informal social bonds in adulthood to family and employment explain changes in criminality over the life span despite early childhood propensities" (p.7). This proposition reflects the principle of linked lives (Elder, 1994), which is central to the life course perspective. Yet empirical tests of the hypotheses derived from Sampson and Laub's theoretical model produced mixed results. Although some researchers did not find that one's marital status impacts significantly variations in criminal behavior in adulthood (Blokland & Nieuwbeerta, 2005), a multitude of studies documented the crime-protective effect of marriage. For instance, a systematic review of 58 longitudinal studies published between 1990 and 2014 shows that more than half (55%) of the reviewed studies concluded that marriage has a significant crime deterrent effect, especially for males (Skardhamar et al., 2015). Andreescu (2019) also found that while being married did not affect significantly the women's risk of arrest in early adulthood, marriage decreased significantly the arrest risk of the male immigrants of Cuban descent included in the study.

In addition to marriage, parenthood is another important transition in one's life. Based on the examination of the life history narratives of the delinquent males included in their study, Laub and Sampson (2003) observed that criminal involvement decreased noticeably for men after they became fathers. Yet, while some empirical studies documented a negative relationship between parenthood and criminal behavior (Kerr et al., 2011; Kreager et al., 2010; Savolainen, 2009), other researchers could not conclude that parenthood had a prosocial effect or played an important role in desistance from crime (Blokland & Nieuwbeerta, 2005; Giordano et al., 2002; Varriale, 2008)). Moreover, Thompson and Petrovic (2009) found that motherhood had a significant crime deterrent effect for women, but fatherhood was associated with a significant increase in illicit substance use for men.

While during adulthood people establish new ties to intimate partners that could affect their behavior, individuals continue to be linked to their family of origin and may become part of an extended family when they marry and/or have children. Several studies showed that a criminogenic family environment is a significant predictor of official and unofficial delinquency in adolescence as well as a significant predictor of deviant and/or criminal behavior in adulthood (Andersen, 2017; Andreescu, 2019; Besemer & Farrington, 2012; Blokland & Nieuwbeerta, 2010; Case

& Katz, 1991; Farrington, 1998, 2011; Farrington et al., 2001; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Moreover, in early adulthood as well as later, most individuals have jobs and stable and legal employment is expected to generate additional ties to the conventional society. Although the relationship between work and crime is complex and findings are often inconsistent (see Andreescu, 2019 for a review), several studies based on male samples identified a significant negative relationship between job stability and criminal/delinquent behavior in adulthood (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Verbruggen et al., 2012). Similarly, using a longitudinal dataset from Sweden, Estrada and Nilsson (2012) found that when compared to nonoffenders, male and female persistent offenders were significantly more likely to have no labor market attachment and to be welfare benefit recipients.

In summary, in accordance with the theoretical predictions several hypotheses are formulated. It is anticipated that problematic behavior in adolescence (i.e., getting into fights) will increase the risk of arrest in adulthood, while attachment to school (i.e., good school performance) in adolescence will decrease the risk of arrest later in life. It is hypothesized that marriage, parenthood, and job stability will lower the risk of arrest in early adulthood. Conversely, a criminogenic family environment (i.e., having family members arrested) is expected to increase one's risk of arrest.

Method

Data source and sample

The present study uses as a data source a panel study (*Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS)*, San Diego, California, Ft. Lauderdale and Miami, Florida, 1991-2006) that surveyed for more than one decade a sample of first- and second-generation immigrants. The study participants were residents of California or Florida when they were first surveyed (Portes & Rumbaut, 2018). The dataset has been made available by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan.

While the original sample includes immigrants or children of immigrants belonging to 77 nationalities, the current analysis is based on a subsample of respondents (N = 1,087) who declared their nationality as Mexican (39%),

Nicaraguan (21%), Columbian (14%), or other South American (26%).² When first interviewed in 1992, more than half of these respondents (59.5%) were residents of Florida and approximately 40.5% of the respondents resided in San Diego, California. In 1992, the interviewees ranged in age from 13 to 17. Most of the study participants (53%) were born in a foreign country and most of them immigrated to the United States when they were very young. For instance, 43% of the foreign-born respondents were seven years old or younger when they relocated to the United States and only 7.3% of them were older than 12 when they immigrated. Included in the analysis are only respondents who participated to all three waves of the study. For the most part, the study replicates prior research (Andreescu, 2019) based on a sample of first- and second-generation Cuban immigrants in the United States.

Measures

Arrest status. The dependent variable is a dichotomous measure coded 1 if the respondent reported being arrested during the five-year period that preceded the interview conducted during the third wave of the study. Respondents who did not report any arrest have been coded zero.

The following measures will be used as predictors of arrest:

Problem behavior in adolescence. The measure is based on one question (“How many times during the current academic year did you get into a physical fight at school?”), which has been asked at the second wave of the study. The original answers have been recoded and those who answered, “once or twice” or “more than twice” have been coded 1, while those who answered “never” have been coded zero. The publicly available data set did not include other questions that could have been used to assess one’s level of juvenile delinquency. Although the limitation of the measure as a proxy of juvenile delinquency should be acknowledged, it should be also noted that physical aggression is recognized in the literature as an indicator of problematic behavior in adolescence (Jessor, 1982, p. 295). Additionally, Djerboua, Chen, and Davison (2016) noted that physical fighting is one of the earliest markers of adolescents’ multiple risk behaviors such as substance misuse and truancy. Moreover, one’s involvement in physical fights on school property is also used as a proxy of unofficial delinquency in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS),

² The countries of origin for respondents labeled in the original dataset “other South American” are Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.

administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Academic performance. Academic achievement is frequently used in the literature as an indicator of social bonds to school and several studies found that performance in school is significantly and negatively related to delinquent and deviant behavior in adolescence (Hoffman et al., 2013; see Maguin & Loeber, 1996 for a review). The variable is a continuous measure calculated as a mean of the transcript grade point average (GPA) scores included in the data set at wave 1 and wave 2. The two GPA scores were highly correlated ($r = .809$).

Family structure. Respondents who reported living with both biological parents when first interviewed were coded 1. Those in other family arrangements (e.g., living with one biological parent and a stepparent, living only with a single parent, living with relatives, etc.) were coded zero. The data file did not include variables that would measure perceptions of parental rearing practices or one's attachment to the family of origin.

Immigrant status. This dichotomous variable is coded 1 if the respondent was born in a foreign country and zero if the respondent was born in the United States. As previously noted, included in the analysis are first- and second-generation immigrants from countries in Central and South America. Most respondents included in the analysis (73.8%) reported their nationality as being Mexican (39%), Nicaraguan (20.9%), and Columbian (13.9%).

Job stability. This variable has been created based on the respondents' answers to a question asking them how many full-time jobs they had since finishing high school. The original variable, which takes values from zero to 15, has been dichotomized. The dummy variable was coded 1 if at the third wave of the study the respondent declared that he/she had less than four full-time jobs since high school. Respondents who changed jobs four times or more have been coded zero. Respondents who changed jobs four times or more were more than one standard deviation above the mean. It should be also noted that most respondents (81.4% of the males and 64.1% of the females) who were never fully employed were still in school at the second follow-up interview.

Marital status. The original categorical variable has been recoded and respondents who were married or engaged to be married were coded 1. Respondents who were never married, were living with a partner, or were divorced, or separated have been coded zero. *Parental status* is also a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if at the third wave of the study the respondent reported having children. Those who did not have children were coded zero. *Family member arrested.*

Respondents who declared that during the five-year period preceding the third wave of the study a family member has been arrested were coded 1, while those whose family members have not been arrested during the period under observation have been coded zero.

Analytical procedures

As previously noted, the main objective of this analysis is to identify the factors more likely to predict the study participants' contact with the criminal justice system via arrest and to determine if the predictors of arrest are gender invariant. To accomplish this objective, univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses have been conducted. Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, binomial logistic regression has been used in multivariate analyses.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the two subsamples differentiated by gender. It can be noticed that the arrest rate corresponding to male respondents was more than three times higher than the females' arrest rate. Additional bivariate analyses (Chi-square test of independence) confirmed that being arrested is not independent of gender ($\chi^2 = 64.513$; $p < .001$). Compared to Latinas, Latino men were significantly more likely to report being arrested in early adulthood. Although the association between gender and arrest is significant, it is moderate in intensity (Cramer's $V = .244$; $p < .001$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Males (N = 481)				Females (N = 606)		
	Range	(%)	Mean	SD	(%)	Mean	SD
Arrest	0 - 1	25.57			7.76		
Problem behavior	0 - 1	34.10			17.82		
Academic performance (GPA)	0 - 5		2.21	.87		2.55	.77
Intact family of origin	0 - 1	66.74			65.68		
Immigrant status (1 st gen.)	0 - 1	52.60			52.15		
Job stability	0 - 1	90.02			94.22		
Marital status (married/engaged)	0 - 1	23.70			47.24		
Parental status	0 - 1	22.04			31.19		
Family member arrested	0 - 1	29.09			27.20		

The percentage of males who reported getting into fights in adolescence was almost twice higher than the percentage of females who reported aggressive behavior at the second wave of the study (34.10% vs. 17.82%). Additional analyses show that during adolescents, males were significantly more likely to get into fights than females did ($\chi^2 = 37.853$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .187$; $p < .001$). In both subsamples, most respondents (approximately 66%) were living with both biological parents when they were first interviewed and more than half (about 52%) were born in a foreign country.

On average, the female respondents had a higher average GPA while in school than their male counterparts (2.55 vs. 2.21) and independent samples t-tests show that the inter-group difference in academic performance is significant ($t = 6.690$; $p < .001$). In both subsamples, approximately nine out of ten respondents did not have more than three full-time jobs in the post-high school period. Additional analyses show that on average, men (Mean = 2.35; SD = 1.76) changed full-time jobs significantly more often than women (Mean = 1.95; SD = 1.52) did ($t = 3.949$; $p < .001$). While almost half of the female respondents (47.27%) were married or engaged to be married at the second follow-up interview, only one in four male respondents (23.70%) were married or engaged at the time. The percentage of women who had children (31.19%) was also higher than the percentage of males who were parents (22%) at the third wave of the study. When compared to men, women were significantly more likely to be in a committed relationship ($\chi^2 = 12.461^{***}$; Cramer's $V = .107^{***}$) and to be parents ($\chi^2 = 11.356^{***}$; Cramer's $V = .102^{***}$). About 29% of the male respondents and 27% of the female respondents reported having a family member arrested. There were no significant inter-group differences in terms of arrests in the family ($\chi^2 = .968$; NS).

Table 2 presents the bivariate correlations among the variables included in the analysis in each subsample. It can be noticed that in the male subsample most of the selected predictors are significantly related to the dependent variable. While job stability does not have a significant relationship with the dependent variable in the male subsample, it is significantly and negatively related to the dependent variable in the female subsample. In both subsamples, those who manifested violent behavior in adolescence were more likely to report being arrested in early adulthood. Conversely, in both subsamples, the probability of arrest later in life decreased significantly for those who performed better in school during adolescence. In both subsamples, having a family member arrested had the largest correlation with the dependent variable ($r = .42$, $p < .01$, for males; $r = .31$, $p < .01$, for females).

Table 2. Bivariate correlations by gender

	Males								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Arrest	-	.111*	-.149**	-.072	-.121**	-.103*	.092*	-.027	.418**
2. Problem behavior	.107**	-	-.159**	-.097*	.042	.043	.139**	-.112*	.124**
3. Academic performance	-.097*	-.245**	-	.159**	.049	-.038	-.202**	.069	-.103*
4. Intact family	-.050	-.136**	.115**	-	-.016	-.001	-.081	-.029	-.049
5. Immigrant (1 st gen.)	-.043	.049	.069	-.080*	-	-.039	-.002	.059	-.043
6. Marital status	-.062	.062	-.109**	-.024	.029	-	.455**	-.026	.020
7. Parental status	-.035	.273**	-.202**	-.083*	-.018	.360**	-	-.037	.113*
8. Job stability	-.140**	-.033	.071	.015	.046	-.064	-.093*	-	-.085
9. Family member arrested	.308**	.093*	-.007	-.026	-.119**	.045	.140**	-.039	-
	Females								

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, 2-tail test.

Multivariate analyses

Table 3 presents the results of the binomial logistic regression for each subsample differentiated by gender. As anticipated by the bivariate analyses, multicollinearity is not an issue. Collinearity diagnostics indicate that the lowest tolerance values are .745 (for the male subsample) and .779 (for the female subsample). Model 1 includes only the background predictors based on the information reported at the first two waves of the study. As anticipated, males as well as females who were involved in fights at school were more likely to be arrested in early adulthood. With each unit increase in one's GPA, the likelihood of arrest decreased significantly in early adulthood for males but did not impact significantly the females' risk of arrest. Compared to those born in the United States, male immigrants were significantly less likely to report an arrest at the second follow-up interview. Being foreign-born does not appear to decrease significantly the women's risk of arrest. Additionally, in both subsamples, the structure of the family of origin does not have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Model 2 includes in the analysis additional predictors based on the information collected at the third wave of the study. When these predictors entered the equation, the error in predicting who is more likely to be arrested is reduced by approximately 29% in each subsample. While for males, problematic behavior in adolescence does not appear to have a lasting negative effect, the odds of being arrested increase more than twice ($OR = 2.337$; $p < .05$) for females who reported getting into fights during adolescence. Good academic performance during teenage

years appears to have a lasting positive effect in both subsamples. Those who received good grades in school were less likely to be arrested in early adulthood. First generation immigrant males were significantly less likely to report an arrest than their second-generation counterparts. As in the previous model, one's immigrant status did not differentiate females who reported an arrest from females who did not. Moreover, although the risk of arrest seems to be lower for both men and women who grew up with both biological parents, family structure is not a significant predictor of arrest in early adulthood.

Table 3. Logit estimates for Latino immigrants' risk of arrest by gender

	Model 1			Model 2		
<i>Males</i>	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR
Problem behavior (W2)	.448*	.222	1.566	.333	.251	1.396
Academic performance (W1 & W2)	-.343**	.130	.710	-.259 [†]	.146	.772
Intact family of origin (W1)	-.222	.225	.801	-.140	.254	.870
Immigrant (1 st generation)	-.576**	.216	.562	-.670**	.242	.512
Marital status (W3)				-	.358	.305
				1.189***		
Parental status (W3)				.595 [†]	.328	1.813
Job stability (W3)				.166	.386	1.181
Family member arrested (W3)				1.992***	.243	7.330
Constant	-.074	.343	.929	-1.040 [†]	.548	.353
Model Chi-Square			22.600***			106.625***
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)			.068			.293
N = 481						
<i>Females</i>						
Problem behavior (W2)	.680 [†]	.353	1.974	.849*	.441	2.337
Academic performance (W1 & W2)	-.333	.205	.717	-.590*	.239	.554
Intact family of origin (W1)	-.267	.319	.766	-.395	.349	.674
Immigrant (1 st generation)	-.371	.313	.690	.093	.345	1.098
Marital status (W3)				-.670	.413	.512
Parental status (W3)				-1.207**	.446	.299
Job stability (W3)				-	.514	.153
				1.876***		
Family member arrested (W3)				2.561***	.383	12.944
Constant	-	.569	.227	-.107	.809	.898
	1.482**					
Model Chi-Square			11.103*			80.726***
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)			.043			.297
N = 606						

[†]p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001, 2-tail test. B = logistic regression coefficient; SE = standard error; OR = odds ratio.

In accordance with Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control, it has been anticipated that respondents who were married or engaged to be married when interviewed at the third wave of the study would be less likely to report an arrest. Yet the crime-protective effect of marriage is observed only for males.

Compared to males who were single, separated, divorced, or living with a partner without being married or engaged, the odds of arrest were almost 70% lower ($OR = .305$; $p < .001$) for men who were in a committed relationship. While motherhood significantly decreases the risk of arrest for women ($OR = .299$; $p < .01$), males who were parents had a slightly higher risk of arrest than males who did not have children ($OR = 1.813$; $p < .10$).

Job stability appears to have a crime protective effect only for the women included in this analysis. Although job stability does not significantly reduce the risk of arrest for males, the odds of arrest are almost 85% lower for women who did not change jobs too often, when they are compared to women who reported four or more full-time jobs since graduating high school. Nonetheless, in both subsamples, the variable that increased the most one's risk of arrest was having a family member arrested in the five-year period that preceded the last interview. Specifically, the odds of being arrested increase more than seven times for males ($OR = 7.330$; $p < .001$) and almost thirteen times for females ($OR = 12.944$; $p < .001$) who reported having an arrest in the family.

Discussion and conclusion

The study assessed the incidence of arrest in a sample of Latino young adults and sought to identify the factors more likely to predict contact with the criminal justice system using as a theoretical framework the life course perspective. Additionally, the study examined the potential gender invariant effect of the life course predictors of arrest in early adulthood. Analyses of arrest data consistently showed that women have a significantly lower involvement in delinquency and crime than men do (Lauritsen et al., 2009; Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996) and the findings of this study are no different. Although the dataset used in this analysis did not offer details about the nature of the arrest or the frequency of arrests, it is possible that the gender gap in arrest identified in this study might be caused not only by the women's lower involvement in illegal activities, but also by the law enforcement's biased response to persons suspected of a crime. A review of the sentencing

literature, for instance, found that for comparable offenses, Hispanic females are sentenced more leniently than their male counterparts (Steffensmeier et al., 2017).

Consistent with prior research (Bersani, 2014; Bui & Thingniramol, 2005; Morenoff & Astor, 2006; Nielsen & Martinez, 2011; Sampson et al., 2005), results show that foreign-born male respondents were significantly less likely to report being arrested in early adulthood than native males. Although one's immigrant status did not appear to influence significantly the risk of arrest in the female subsample, additional analyses showed that foreign-born females experienced an arrest less frequently (6.6%) than their US-born female counterparts (9.0%).

As prior research also found (Giordano et al., 2002; Sampson & Laub, 1990; Zoutewelle-Terovan et al., 2014), problematic behavior in adolescence (i.e., getting into physical fights at school) had long term negative effects for both males and females. It should be noted, however, that when controlling for early-adulthood predictors, the risk of arrest increased significantly only for the young Latinas who reported getting into physical fights during adolescence. In the United States, African American and Latino youth tend to get into fights more often than white adolescents do (Kann et al., 2014). And the results of this study show that the percentage of female adolescents (18%) who got into fights is almost twice lower than the percentage of Latino male adolescents (34%) who got involved in fights. A study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2009) also showed that young Hispanic males are significantly more likely than young Hispanic females to have engaged in risky behaviors such as fighting (19% versus 7%) or carrying a weapon (9% versus 3%). Nevertheless, while physical violence among female adolescents is less common, when it exists it might reflect cultural norms (e.g., one's response to provocations), which consider retaliatory violence acceptable not only for boys, but also for girls (see Jaycox et al., 2006). And Latinas who share this view might have a higher level of aggression and a lower ability to resolve conflicts through negotiation, which could explain the long-term negative effects of violent behavior in adolescence for the females included in this study. However, additional research is needed to better understand how the social context affects the consequences of violent behavior in both gender groups.

As other researchers also found (Farrington et al., 2009), attachment to school in adolescence appears to have long-term crime protective effects in both subsamples differentiated by gender. Although respondents who grew up with both biological parents appear to have a lower risk of arrest in early adulthood, the structure of the family of origin is one of the background characteristics that does

not decrease or increase significantly the male and female respondents' risk of arrest in early adulthood. Results, however, might have been impacted by data limitations. Specifically, the analysis could not account for the potential changes in the structure of the family of origin (e.g., parental divorce) that could have occurred between the first and subsequent waves of the study because the dataset did not include this information.

Even though the structure of the family of origin did not predict variations in one's risk of arrest, a criminogenic family environment did. In both subsamples differentiated by gender, the risk of being arrested increased significantly if a family member has been arrested as well during the five years preceding the last wave of the study. This finding is consistent with the results of several other studies (Andersen, 2017; Andreescu, 2019; Besemer & Farrington, 2012; Case & Katz, 1991; Farrington, 2011; Farrington et al., 2001, suggesting that offending appears to run in the family, as Farrington (1998) contended decades ago.

As previously noted, life-course scholars explored the crime-deterrent effects of adult institutions of informal social control, such as marriage, parenthood, and employment (Giordano et al., 2006; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Sampson & Laub, 1990, 1993). Consistent with the theoretical predictions job stability was negatively related to arrest. However, the effect was significant only in the subsample of women. This finding differs from the results of a previous study showing that in a sample of first and second-generation immigrants of Cuban ancestry, job instability predicted the males' arrest, but had no significant effect in the female subsample (Andreescu, 2019). Although future research should examine the stability of the finding, differences in coding procedures might explain differences in results.

In accordance with the theoretical predictions and prior research (Sampson et al., 2006), the likelihood of arrest was significantly lower among Hispanic males who were married. One's marital status, however, did not differentiate Hispanic women who reported being arrested from those who did not report contact with the criminal justice system. This finding is congruent with the results of other studies that also identified the crime-deterrent effect of marriage for men, but not for women (Andreescu, 2019; Duncan et al., 2006; Kerr et al., 2011; King et al., 2007; Thompson & Petrovic, 2009; Zoutewelle-Terovan et al., 2014). Conversely, this analysis indicates that parenthood appears to have a crime-protective effect for women, but not for men, as other researchers also found (Chen & Kandel, 1998). In sum, consistent with Kreager et al.'s (2010) findings, it appears that for Latinas, the transition to motherhood and not marriage had a crime protective effect. Even if the

effect is relatively weak, for the Latino men included in this study, parenthood, is positively related to arrest. Although this finding is not consistent with the theoretical expectations (Laub & Sampson, 2003) and prior research that found a significant decrease in men's crime trajectories following the birth of their first biological child (Kerr et al., 2011), data limitations might have impacted the results. For instance, the original study did not ask respondents if arrests occurred before or after the respondent became a parent. Nonetheless, results similar to those reported here were presented in other studies as well. When controlling for marriage, Blokland and Nieuwbeerta, for instance, did not find trajectories of crime to decrease post parenthood. Additionally, the authors noted that fatherhood increased the sporadic offenders' involvement in crime (Blokland & Nieuwbeerta, 2005). Moreover, Thompson and Petrovic (2009) found that while motherhood had a significant crime deterrent effect for women, fatherhood was associated with a significant increase in offending (illegal drug use) for men.

In summary, even if most effects are gender specific, for the most part, Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control was supported by empirical evidence. Results show that there is continuity and change in behavior and that certain important transitions in adulthood, such as marriage (for men) and motherhood and stable employment (for women), appear to have crime protective effects for Latino young adults. On the other hand, ties to delinquent families significantly increase one's risk of contact with the criminal justice system. Yet, before discussing the implications of these findings, the study limitations should be mentioned.

The analysis was based on a sample of men and women with immediate ancestry in 14 different countries from Central and South America. However, by using the Latino/Hispanic pan-ethnic identifier, this study could not uncover potential inter-group differences in cultural norms, structural and political factors, immigration experiences or acculturation practices (see Bursik, 2006; Portes et al., 2009), which might have affected the results. Additionally, the study relied on self-reports and intentional and non-intentional errors might be present. Moreover, this is a secondary analysis and potentially important indicators (e.g., precise measures of juvenile delinquency; quality of marital relationships; quality of ties to school and the family of origin) could not be used because they were not available. As previously noted, even if the structure of the data allowed for causal inferences to be made, the study did not ask respondents to report when and how many times they have been arrested. Therefore, it is not known if job stability, marriage, or parenthood

preceded or followed one's contacts with the criminal justice system. Future research should try to overcome these limitations and should also consider the effect of recent societal changes affecting contemporary institutions of informal social control (e.g., marriage, parenthood, employment, educational institutions) on the life trajectories of Latino men and women in the United States. Additionally, to better understand the current challenges many Latinos are facing and to obtain a more detailed picture of the life circumstances that increase one's risk of arrest and incarceration, a multi-method approach that would include ethnographic research should be used and recent information should be collected. Moreover, in order to provide culturally competent services meant to prevent the involvement of the Hispanic/Latino subpopulations in the criminal justice system, future research should consider the heterogeneity of this ethnic group and should use an intersectional approach, which would examine the multiplicative effect of an individual's social identities, framed not only by gender, but also by race, age, and socioeconomic status (Ibañez et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, despite its limitations, this analysis has several implications for research, theory, and practice. The study adds to the limited literature that tested empirically the age-graded theory of delinquency and crime using subsamples of men and women. Results indicate that there is heterogeneity in the effects of life course transitions on behavioral outcomes. Specifically, the study shows that certain turning point events in adulthood impact differentially the gender groups.

This analysis also expanded the theory by considering the long-term crime-protective effect of a transition that occurred in childhood as a result of relocating from one country to another. Although not examined here, future research could add international migration occurring in early adulthood to the list of major transitions that can change one's life trajectories. Several studies showed that US-born Latinos have different life experiences than first-generation Latino immigrants do (Cleary et al., 2018). Therefore, when examining behavioral outcomes, future research should also explore the potential impact of traumatic events that may have affected foreign-born Latinos before (e.g., exposure to war- and drug-related violence), during (especially when fleeing the country as an undocumented migrant), and after they migrated to the United States (e.g., extended stays in detention centers; separation from family; unstable living situations; acculturation challenges) (see Cleary et al., 2018).

Moreover, findings suggest that for both Latino males and females, childhood experiences can influence life trajectories. Given the long-term positive

effect of school performance this study documents, the implementation in schools of programs meant to stimulate achievement and increase the Latino students access to higher education is imperative. Even though the Hispanic high-school dropout rate declined dramatically over the past decade and college enrolment increased, Latino youth are still behind other racial/ethnic groups in terms of educational attainment. As of 2014, among persons ages 25 to 29, 63% of ethnic Asians, 41% of non-Hispanic whites, 22% of African Americans, and 15% of Hispanics had a bachelor's degree or higher. The results of a public opinion poll conducted in 2014, showed that 66% of Hispanics who got a job or entered the military directly after high school cited the need to help support their family as a reason for not enrolling in college. Comparatively, 39% of whites listed economic reasons as an obstacle to continue their education (Krogstad, 2016). Although 26% of recent immigrants from Central and South America have at least a college degree, while in the 1990s only 10% of the Hispanic immigrants were college graduates, there is still a gap in educational attainment between this group and the overall US population. For instance, in 2018, 33% of US adults ages 25 and older and 58% of recently arrived non-Hispanic immigrants had at least a bachelor's degree (Noe-Bustamante, 2020).

Results also showed that significant negative correlations exist in both gender groups between academic achievement and problem behavior in adolescence. For young Latinas, violent behavior in school was a significant predictor of arrest later in life. While the original dataset did not include details regarding the circumstances and/or causes of physical fights, other studies indicate that many Latino youth (especially first-generation immigrants) live in communities plagued by violence (Violence Policy Center, 2021) and socioeconomic disadvantage (Kayitsinga, 2015). In 2019, the homicide victimization rate for Hispanics in the United States (5.15 per 100,000) was almost twice higher than the homicide victimization rate for non-Hispanic whites (2.62 per 100,000). Homicide is the third leading cause of death for Hispanics aged 15 to 24 (Violence Policy Center, 2021). The findings of the current study also show that Latino boys and girls who manifested problematic behavior in adolescence were more like to have justice-involved family members, which in both gender groups was the strongest predictor of arrest in early adulthood. Even if the current analysis was based on data collected more than a decade ago, more recent official data show an increase in incarceration rates for Hispanic/Latino men and women, which are also overrepresented in the criminal justice system (Ibañez et al., 2019).

Programs meant to prevent the Latino youth from having a criminal record should involve not only the school, but also the parents and the Latino communities. One such program that showed promising results is the *Seguridad, Apoyo, Familia, Educacion, y Recursos* (SAFER) Latinos project. The main objective of the SAFER Latinos pilot project was to reduce Latino youth's violent victimization and offending rates. The program followed a community-based model and targeted four areas: family cohesion issues, such as those caused by sequential immigration (e. g., children arriving without parents; parents arriving in US without children and bringing them years later), school-related barriers (e.g., school performance and dropout rates), community cohesion, efficacy, and alienation, and gang presence and the integration of violence norms (Edberg et al., 2010). A review of family-based violence prevention programs implemented in Hispanic/Latino communities identified six programs [i.e., *Schools and Homes in Partnership* (SHIP), *Bridges to High School*, *Parent Management Training* (PMT), *Families and Schools Together* (FAST), *Brief Strategic Family Therapy* (BSFT), and *Structural Family Therapy* (SFT)] that demonstrated "at least some significant preventive effects for youth violence and behavior problems" (Leidy et al., 2010, p. 12).

In sum, even though for the Latinos examined in this study certain life transitions, such as marriage (especially for men) and parenthood and job stability (for women) appear to have crime protective effects, a criminogenic family environment constitutes a risk factor of arrest in early adulthood. Although public policies and social programs cannot limit one's ties to delinquent family members, culturally appropriate programming can help Latino youth to build resilience in the face of adversity and reduce their acceptance of norms that tolerate violence and illegal behavior. Therefore, efforts to prevent one's involvement in the criminal justice system should start in childhood and adolescence. As prior outcome evaluation studies indicate (Cervantes et al., 2004; see also Leidy et al., 2010 for a review), crime prevention programs that focused on Latino youth were more likely to be successful when they were comprehensive, demonstrated cultural sensitivity (e.g., addressed the deep cultural characteristics relevant to the Latino families), considered the specific needs of the community, employed bilingual facilitators, and were planned in partnership with members of the ethnic minority targeted by the intervention.

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