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Parental Incarceration and Social Status Attainment of Hispanic Young Adults

Abstract

The fact that parental incarceration has become a common event in the life course of many children is troubling. Using structural equation modeling, the present study investigates how immigrant generational status, family socio-economic background interact with parental incarceration to influence status attainment for Hispanic young adults. Three indicators of status attainment in young adulthood are used as outcome variables — educational attainment, wage and job quality. Results indicate that parental incarceration has a strong and negative influence on all three indicators of attained status. Most importantly, we found that parental incarceration mediates influence of immigrant generational status and family socio-economic background on status attainment of Hispanic young adults.

Introduction

More generally, since the 1980s, the United States has witnessed consistently increasing levels of immigration (Passel & Cohn, 2008). It is also worth noting that the new wave of mass immigration in the U.S. has coincided with the steep rise of incarceration rate, an era of mass imprisonment (Ewig et al., 2015; Rumbaut, 2005). The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, and the number of adults incarcerated in state and federal prisons more than tripled between 1980 and 2000 (Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). Since the majority of adults confined to jails and prisons are parents, the number of children who experienced parental incarceration has grown, too (Menjívar, 2016; Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). Having their parent incarcerated can have profound implications for the life course of many children. Thus, the influence of parental incarceration on children has emerged as an important area of research.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines the impact of parental incarceration on status attainment of Hispanic young adults with a specific focus on immigrant generational status and SES. We examine status attainment as three different outcomes: hourly wage, educational attainment and job quality. This is done because Hispanics experience status inconsistency, meaning that their educational attainment does not correspond with the occupations they occupy or the income they earn (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2014). Although a substantial literature (Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Murray et al., 2009; Turney & Wildeman, 2013; Wildeman, 2010) have examined the implications of paternal incarceration on children's outcomes, the effect of parental incarceration across immigrant generation groups remains to be elucidated. Specifically, we use the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), to

examine the following questions: 1) Does parental incarceration in adolescence have an effect on attained status in young adulthood for Hispanics? 2) Does parental incarceration mediate the relationship between immigrant generational status and Hispanic status attainment in young adulthood, and, if so, how? 3) Does parental incarceration mediate the relationship between family SES and status attainment, and, if so, how?

This paper adds to the literature by using longitudinal data from Add Health to examine the effects of parental incarceration on young adult status attainment. Our study bridges literatures on intergenerational effects of incarceration, immigration and social stratification to explore different scenarios that could potentially cause spurious associations between immigrant generational status and status attainment in young adulthood. It is also important to note that no prior studies have investigated the relationship between immigrant generational status and attained status for Hispanics, while controlling for parental incarceration.

Intergenerational Implications of Mass Incarceration

With the dramatic and historically unprecedented increase of the U.S. prison population at the turn of the millennium, there emerged a large literature on the implications of the prison boom. One strand of work highlights the consequences of mass incarceration for the lives of prisoners' children. Collectively, the studies indicate that parental incarceration may adversely affect children along multiple outcomes (Geller et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2009; Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011). When diminished household resources are coupled with the trauma of parental absence and detrimental parenting behaviors as a result, the intragenerational effects of parental incarceration on children may be dire and long-lasting. However, there is also evidence showing that parental

incarceration may exert a limited effect, if any, on children (e.g., Cho, 2009; Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Porter & King, 2015; Turney & Wildeman, 2013). Specifically, the weak intergenerational effect of parental incarceration can be attributed to the fact that the removal of a negligent, abusive and/or violent parent from the household may benefit children (e.g., Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Murray et al., 2009; Turney & Wildeman, 2013).

One possible reason for the inconclusive findings concerning the intergenerational effects of parental imprisonment is that understanding these effects can be problematic from a methodological point of view. Specifically, it is difficult to isolate the causal effects of parental incarceration from the confounding effects of family disadvantage. Little evidence is available to determine whether the poor outcomes observed among children who experience parental incarceration are due to the parent's incarceration or to other factors, such as a child's disadvantaged background, problems with family or others. Children whose parents are imprisoned may have suffered from negligence and abuse, poverty or other adversities (Cho, 2009; Barnard & McKeganey, 2004; Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002). Each of these conditions may either partially or fully explain the negative outcomes in young adulthood occurring to individuals whose parents have been incarcerated (Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Porter & King, 2015).

Immigrant Generation Status and Parental Incarceration

A sizable body of literature has shown that immigrant generation plays an important role in academic achievement and professional attainment (Haller et al., 2011; Jiménez, 2018; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2014; Tran & Valdez, 2017). However, neither theoretical nor empirical research has ever addressed the issue of whether and to what

extent parental incarceration may impact children of different generations differently. Unfortunately, assimilation theory is silent on this problem.

Since the 1920s, the leading paradigm has been that of classical assimilation theory (e.g., Gordon, 1964; Park, 1950). This theory viewed assimilation as a gradual process of upward social mobility that unfolds over generations. This theory is built upon the assumption that all immigrants and their descendants will eventually assimilate into the middle class (Alba & Nee, 2009; Jiménez, 2018). However, since the time classical assimilation theory became customary framework in the field of migration studies, the demographic profile of immigrants has changed. Prior to the 1965 Immigration Act, migrants were almost exclusively of European origin and arrived in a period of strong economic growth. In contrast, the post-1965 immigrants, in their vast majority, were of Asian and Latin American descent, while the economic growth was uneven, and income inequality widened (South et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

Given this caveat, Portes and Zhou (1993) introduced an alternative theory, segmented assimilation, which attempts to advance our understanding of the acculturation process of the new second generation — the children of contemporary immigrants. Specifically, segmented assimilation predicts downward assimilation for many Hispanics because they, more than other immigrant groups, are likely to face negative public attitudes towards immigrants, in general, and racial/ethnic discrimination in the labor market, in particular (South et al., 2005; Valdez, 2006; Waldinger and Feliciano, 2004). Recent empirical research tends to support segmented assimilation model, suggesting that, overall, native Hispanics fare worse economically than their immigrant counterparts (South et al., 2005; Valdez, 2006; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004).

Family Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Parental Incarceration

Research on social mobility and status attainment unequivocally indicates that parents pass their socioeconomic status onto their children, and, therefore, socio-economic background of parents predicts one's attained status (Nielsen et al., 2015; Rauscher, 2016; Sirin, 2005; Sykes & Maroto, 2016). Thus, adolescents from socio-economically disadvantaged families may face unique challenges in their transition to adulthood due to fewer family resources that would facilitate access to higher education (Carvalho, 2012; Faas et al., 2013; Pfeffer, 2018).

At the same time, criminal justice research also shows that incarceration can worsen the financial situation of families through the loss of income, attorney fees and other costs associated with the incarceration (Geller et al., 2011; Western, 2002; Western et al., 2001). Moreover, family's financial difficulties are likely to continue after the inmate parent's release from prison because of the declining employment possibilities for the returning parent (Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011; Pettit & Western, 2004; Western, 2002). What is not clear is if low SES increases the likelihood of parental incarceration, or if low SES is a result of the parent's incarceration. On the one hand, research has identified low SES as a risk factor for incarceration (Pettit & Western, 2004; Turney, 2015; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). On the other hand, parental incarceration can exacerbate an existing socioeconomic disadvantage of children (Western, 2002; Western et al., 2015; Western et al., 2001). There is evidence to support both points of view (Pattillo et al., 2003; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). Only if parental incarceration occurs after family SES is measured, one can look into a causal relationship between family SES and parental incarceration.

Present Study

We know that the risk of experiencing parental incarceration is not uniformly distributed across racial/ethnic groups (Pettit & Western, 2004; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010; Western & Wildeman, 2009). Because imprisonment disproportionately affects U.S.-born minority men, children whose parents have been incarcerated are significantly more likely to be racial and ethnic minorities (although less likely to have immigrant parents). African American children are most likely to have a parent in prison, followed by Hispanic children (Pattillo et al., 2003). Our focus on Hispanic children is warranted because they are twice as likely to experience parental incarceration than non-Hispanic white children.

Literature suggests that children with incarcerated parents often struggle with mental health and behavioral issues (Foster & Hagan, 2007; Giordano & Copp, 2015; Murray et al., 2009; Wildeman, 2010). However, there is less agreement on socio-economic effects of parental incarceration for the wellbeing of children (Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Wildeman et al., 2013). Numerous studies have studied variation in the effects of parental imprisonment on children's development and well-being but our analysis departs from earlier research in two ways: (1) we focus on Hispanics, an ethnic group which is overrepresented among recent immigrants, while being simultaneously disadvantaged in the criminal justice system (Pattillo et al., 2003); 2) and we estimate indirect effects of immigrant generation and SES in childhood on status attainment in young adulthood through parental imprisonment. In doing so, we advance the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Given that parental incarceration is a negative event in the lives of children and often leads to negative youth outcomes (Giordano & Copp, 2015; Johnson &

Waldfogel, 2002; Murray et al., 2009), we believe that parental incarceration will have a negative effect on Hispanic status attainment in young adulthood. Put differently, those Hispanics who experienced parental incarceration in childhood will have lower educational attainment, wages and quality jobs than their counterparts who did not.

Hypothesis 2: We expect to find a direct effect of immigrant generation on status attainment in young adulthood. However, the predictions of classical and segmented assimilation theories concerning the direction of this effect in the case of Hispanics diverge: classical assimilation theory foresees a gradual increase in status attainment over generations, while segmented assimilation theory predicts a decline. Therefore, we propose two alternative hypotheses. *Hypothesis 2a:* Congruent with classical assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964), which claims that immigrant groups improve their overall social standing with each successive generation, educational attainment, wage and job quality of the first- and second-generation Hispanic immigrants will be lower than those of the U.S.-born Hispanics (reference). *Hypothesis 2b:* In line with segmented assimilation theory, we expect a steady decline from the first generation to higher generations of Hispanic young adults in educational attainment, wages and employment (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Portes & Rivas, 2011). In other words, the first-generation Hispanic young adults are predicted to hold the highest levels of educational attainment, wages and job quality, while the lowest educational attainment, wages and job quality will characterize the native-born Hispanics.

Hypothesis 3: We expect to find an indirect effect of immigrant generational status on status attainment through parental incarceration among Hispanic young adults, net of family SES and other controls. Thus, we consider parental incarceration as a potential mediator of the relationship between immigrant generational status and three indicators of

attained status in young adulthood (educational attainment, hourly wage and job quality). As this has not been tested previously, we do not make specific directional hypotheses regarding the mediation effect. However, it is not difficult to see that the direction of this effect will depend on whether our general (*Hypotheses 1* and *2*) and particular (*Hypotheses 2a* and *2b*) suppositions are correct.

Hypothesis 4. We consider parental incarceration as a mediator of the relationship between family SES and status attainment and examine the extent to which parental incarceration amplifies the effect of SES on status attainment for Hispanic young adults. Hence, the strength of the relationships between family SES and status attainment in young adulthood is likely to vary as a function of parental incarceration.

Method

A detailed description of all study variables is presented in Table 1. The dependent variables are three indicators of social status: (1) educational attainment; (2) hourly wages; and (3) job quality. They were all recorded at Wave 4. Educational attainment has five categories ranging from “less than high school” to “more than a 4-year degree”. As our descriptive analyses show (see Table 2), the mean for educational attainment is 2.27 and the standard deviation is 0.66. Hourly wages were constructed using information on the rate of pay and weekly hours of work. In order to account for skewness, hourly wage was transformed using the Box-Cox family of log-linear transformations (for more information see Osborn 2010), carried out according to the following formula:

$$New\ Hourly\ Wage = \frac{(Hourly\ Wage + 1)^{-0.6} - 1}{-0.6}.$$

[Table 1 is about here]

The measure of job quality was adapted from Wickrama et al. (2012). It was constructed by averaging responses to three items: decision-making autonomy, repetitiveness of tasks and supervisory responsibilities. For detailed description of this indicator, see Table 1. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.71. The mean for this variable is 1.30 and the standard deviation is 0.45 (see Table 2).

[Table 2 is about here]

Our primary independent variable is parental incarceration. At Wave 4, the respondents were asked whether either of their parents had spent time in a jail or prison and how old they were when that first occurred. If parental incarceration occurred prior to Wave 4 data collection period, we coded these cases as 1="parental incarceration," else="no parental incarceration". Thus, only those respondents who had a parent incarcerated before Wave 4 were coded as having experienced parental incarceration. This approach allowed us to determine the causal order of the relationship between parental incarceration and status attainment in adulthood, while controlling for confounding effects of individual socio-demographic characteristics.

Children's immigrant generational status has usually been conceptualized based on the child's and parents' nativity in a three-group generational framework (Portes & Rumbaut. 2001, 2014). Following the commonly accepted conceptualization, we distinguish three generational statuses. Foreign-born Hispanic young adults are coded as immigrant generation one. U.S.-born children of at least one foreign-born parent are distinguished as generation two, and generation three plus is composed of the native born Hispanics. For all of our analysis, the third immigrant generation is the reference group.

This study also employs the composite measure of family SES which was created by combining three parental characteristics. Specifically, family SES was calculated as the mean of standardized scores of parental income, education and occupational prestige, with higher values representing higher levels of SES (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.69$). Control variables also include ethnic origin (Mexican-American, Puerto-Rican and other Hispanic), family structure (being raised in a two-parent household=0; else=1), gender (male=0; female=1), age (as of Wave 4).

Analytic Strategy

We use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to estimate the strength of relationships between immigrant generational status, SES, parental incarceration and status attainment, while controlling for a range of demographic variables (ethnic origin, family structure, age and gender). In contrast to multiple regression, SEM is not limited to a single outcome and can be used to evaluate relations among multiple dependent variables and. Moreover, whereas regression may be prone to errors of misspecification, SEM directly accounts for measurement errors by putting the error terms in the structural equation. Even more importantly, SEM is an ideal technique to model mediating and moderating effects.

The descriptive statistics were obtained using STATA, while MPlus was utilized for SEM. Models with robust standard errors were used to account for clustering of participants within schools. The final model is compared to the alternative model in which the hypothesized effect is set to zero. The alternative model provides a baseline against which to compare the final model. We report three indices to determine the goodness-of-fit of the final model: the chi-square χ^2 (large and significant values indicate a poor fit, while small and insignificant values indicate a good fit); the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; with

values exceeding .90 indicating that the model fits the data well); and the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA, where values above .05 indicate good fit) (for more detail see Schermelleh-Engel et al. 2003). Path diagrams are used to visualize structural equation models. Below we present the path diagrams per each outcome.

Results

The path model predicting educational attainment is shown as Figure 1. Here, the analysis validates the all the hypotheses and, as expected, all path coefficients are significant ($p < .05$) and are in predicted directions. In line with *Hypothesis 1*, parental effect has a negative impact on educational attainment ($\beta = -.42$; $p < .01$), meaning that Hispanics who has experienced parental incarceration as children or adolescents attain a lower educational level in young adulthood than those who had not. Likewise, *Hypothesis 2* seems to be supported by the data. The relationship between immigrant generation and educational attainment is mediated by parental incarceration. The path coefficients from first and second generations to educational attainment are both negative and significant ($p < .01$), thus indicating that first and second generation immigrants attain lower academic levels than native-parentage Hispanics (reference). This finding lends substantial support to classical assimilation theory (see *Hypothesis 2a*).

As Figure 1 illustrates, the path coefficient from first immigrant generation to parental incarceration is negative ($\beta = -.20$) and statistically significant ($p < .05$), as is the path coefficient between parental incarceration and educational attainment ($\beta = -.42$; $p < .01$). The standardized indirect effect is $(-.20)(-.42) = .08$. Likewise, the indirect effect of second generation through parental incarceration to educational attainment is $(-.24)(-.42) = .10$. Accordingly, the direct and indirect effects of first and second immigrant generations on

educational attainment are in the opposite directions. That is, the indirect effect attenuates the disadvantage of first and second generations in educational attainment.

Family SES appears to have a strong and positive effect on educational attainment. This is not a surprising finding, given that contemporary society displays a high level of intergenerational transmission of social status from parents to their children (Carvalho, 2012; Rauscher, 2016; Sirin, 2005). The interaction effect of SES and parental incarceration on educational attainment is consistent with our *Hypothesis 4*. The negative path coefficient from SES to parental incarceration ($\beta = -.53$; $p < .01$) indicates that Hispanics who were raised in low-SES families are more likely to experience parental incarceration than those who were not. The final model explains 28% of the variance in parental incarceration and 36% of educational attainment.

[Figure 1 is about here]

In Figure 2, we present the SEM results predicting hourly wage. Before turning to a discussion of results, we note the model fit statistics indicate an excellent fit to the data. Specifically, in accordance with empirical standards the chi-square test statistic is non-significant ($\chi^2 = 725$); the value of CFI (.98) exceeds .95; and RMSEA value (.04) is below the threshold of .5. The main effect of second immigrant generation on wages is negative ($\beta = -.19$; $p < .01$), while that of second generation is nonsignificant. This indicates that, net of family SES and other controls, wages of native Hispanics are predicted to be 19% higher than those of first-generation immigrants. Consequently, our results point to a similarity between the educational assimilation and wage assimilation models — immigrant Hispanics tend to perform worse educationally and their wages are lower than those of

their native co-ethnics. This is consistent with the classical assimilation path predicted by *Hypothesis 2a*.

Although the path linking the second generation and parental incarceration is nonsignificant, the path from the first generation to parental incarceration is significant and negative ($\beta = -.19$; $p < .01$). This implies that immigrant Hispanics are less likely to experience parental incarceration than their native counterparts, a result corroborating earlier studies (Bersani, 2014a, 2014b; Peguero, 2013; Peguero & Jiang, 2014). Moreover, the path from first immigrant generation to hourly wage is mediated by parental incarceration. The indirect effect of the first generation on wage through parental incarceration is $(-.28)(-.44) = .12$. Observe that the direct and indirect effects of the first generation on wage are in the opposite directions, canceling each other out.

The results from the path analysis also suggest a strong and positive association between family SES and wage, given that the direct path from SES to wage is positive ($\beta = .49$; $p < .01$). In contrast, the direct effect of family SES on parental incarceration is negative ($\beta = -.46$; $p < .01$), a finding which is hardly surprising given that children from low-SES families are more likely to experience parental incarceration (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010; Turney, 2015). The indirect path from SES to wage via parental attractiveness is also significant ($p < .01$) and equals $(-.46)(-.44) = .20$. Consequently, the results confirm the mediating effect of parental incarceration on the relationship between family SES and wage (*Hypothesis 4*). Specifically, parental incarceration amplifies the impact of family SES on wage, meaning that Hispanic adolescents from lower-SES families are expected to earn as young adults even less than their counterparts from more affluent families if they experienced parental incarceration.

[Figure 2 is about here]

Figure 3 depicts the final structural model of job quality with standardized coefficients shown for each path. This followed the same analytical logic as Figures 1 and 2 above. In judging the hypothesized relationships between the key study variables, it is worth noting that the direct paths from first and second immigrant generations to job quality are statistically significant ($p < .05$) and negative. That is, the first- and second-generation Hispanics tend to be employed in lower quality jobs than their native co-ethnics. This is, again, in line with the hypothesized relationship based on classical assimilation theory (*Hypothesis 2a*). Further, the relationship between being a first- or second-generation immigrant and parental incarceration is negative and significant ($p < .05$). This finding corroborated our earlier results (see Figures 1 and 2), showing that Hispanic adolescents belonging to first and second immigrant generations are less likely to experience parental incarceration. As expected (*Hypothesis 3*), parental incarceration mediates the relationship between generational status and job quality. The indirect path (through parental incarceration) from first and second immigrant generations to job quality are, respectively, $(-.17)(-.38) = .06$, and $(-.17)(-.38) = .08$. Observe that the direct and indirect effects of immigrant generations on job quality are in the opposite directions.

Finally, our data support the view, which is consistent with our prediction (*Hypothesis 4*), that parental incarceration amplifies the effect of SES on Hispanic status attainment. The indirect effect of SES via parental incarceration on job quality is $(-.54)(-.38) = .21$. Overall, approximately 26 and 34% of the variance in parental incarceration and job quality, respectively, is explained by the predictors in the final model.

[Figure 3 is about here]

Discussion

Much of the existing empirical literature points to a complex relationship between Hispanic children's immigrant generational status and their social mobility as adults (Haller, Portes, & Lynch, 2011; Jiménez, 2018; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Rumbaut, 2005; Tran & Valdez, 2017). Moreover, little is known whether imprisonment of one or both parents has any effect on the relationship between generational status and status attainment. Although it has been shown that children of immigrant parents are less likely to experience parental incarceration (Bersani, 2014a, 2014b; Peguero, 2013), we need to have a deeper understanding of the way in which immigration status interacts with parental incarceration. This study extends our knowledge base on the relationship between immigrant generational status and three indicators of attained status (educational attainment, wage and job quality) for Hispanic young adults by illustrating how parental imprisonment mediates this relationship.

This study is also motivated by the fact that, despite an impressive research base, the evidence concerning the intergenerational effects of parental incarceration is mixed (Cho, 2009; Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002). That is, it remains unclear whether parental incarceration has negative or null effects on the well-being of Hispanic children. This is due in part to inability of prior research to disentangle causal order of family SES and parental incarceration. The present study attempts to correct this bias by treating family SES as an antecedent with parental incarceration mediating the relationship between SES in adolescence and status attainment in young adulthood.

Using the longitudinal data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (the Add Health), the current study bridges literatures on criminal justice, social

stratification and immigrant incorporation and examines the roles of immigrant generational status, family SES and parental incarceration on three indicators of attained social status for Hispanic young adults, while controlling for ethnic origin and other factors. The purpose of this study was to test: (1) the strength of the relationship between parental incarceration and social status attainment among Hispanic young adults; (2) whether parental incarceration mediates the relationship between generational status and status attainment; and (3) whether parental incarceration mediates the relationship between family SES and measures of the attained status (educational attainment, hourly wage and job quality).

All in all, we found that parental imprisonment, net of immigrant generational status, family SES, ethnicity and other controls, hinders social mobility of Hispanic young adults. Particularly, Hispanics who experienced parental incarceration as children or adolescents are predicted to have lower educational attainment, lower wages and lower-quality jobs than their peers who did not. Furthermore, the results of this study do not support the minority view (e.g., Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Porter & King, 2015) that parental incarceration does not have a significant effect on well-being of children. On the contrary, the Add Health data strongly support the dominant view that parental incarceration remains a significant determinant of status attainment among Hispanic young adults (e.g., Geller et al., 2011; Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011; Turney & Wildeman, 2013).

At the outset we outlined two pathways – one of upward and the other one of downward assimilation – that can explain differences between immigrant generations in status attainment. Each of the pathways, which are linked to a specific paradigm (classical and segmented assimilation theories), has found some support in the empirical research.

However, prior research did not control for parental incarceration and its interaction effect with immigrant generational status. Using the SEM, we tested classical against segmented assimilation theories and found considerable support for classical assimilation pathway. Overall, first and second generations of Hispanics attain lower social status in young adulthood than their native-born co-ethnics. It is important to note that the main effects of first and second immigrant generations and their interaction effects with parental incarceration vary only slightly from one outcome to another.

In comparison to the third and higher generation co-ethnics, the first two generations of Hispanic adults tend to have a significantly lower educational attainment. Moreover, parental incarceration mediates the negative relationship between being a child of immigrants (generations 1 and 2) and educational attainment so that this relationship is weaker for those Hispanic youths who experienced parental incarceration. Similarly, first-generation Hispanics are disadvantaged in terms of wage. The first generation is expected to earn less than the third and higher generation. However, the interaction effect between first immigrant generation and parental incarceration cancels out the negative main effect of first generation on wages. In terms of job quality, the SEM results show that native Hispanics tend to hold better quality jobs than their first- and second-generation co-ethnics. Still, the interaction of immigrant generation and parental incarceration is in the opposite direction to that of the main effect of immigrant generations. That is, the interaction effect attenuates the main effect of immigrant generation on job quality. Nevertheless, the interaction effects are small when compared to the main effects. In other words, first and second immigrant generations appear outsized in their effects on status attainment—relative to their interactions with parental incarceration.

Finally, we found that parental incarceration acts as the mediator of the relationship between family SES and Hispanic adults' status attainment. It is important to mention that, regardless of what outcome is used (educational attainment, wage or job quality), an indirect effect of family SES on status attainment through parental incarceration is positive and significant. Thus, family SES is a stronger predictor of status attainment for those Hispanic young adults who experienced parental incarceration. This illustrates that family SES has more bearing on the advancement of those Hispanic adolescents who experienced parental incarceration than for those who did not.

All in all, parental incarceration serves as a mediator of the relationships between immigrant generational status and family SES, on the one hand, and attained status for Hispanic young adults. This is a novel contribution because it links scholarship rooted in criminal justice (e.g., Comfort, 2007; Foster & Hagan, 2007; Giordano & Copp, 2015), social work (e.g., Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002; Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011) and immigration studies (e.g., Haller et al., 2011; Jiménez, 2018; Tran & Valdez, 2017). Unpacking the processes behind these findings is beyond the scope of this work. Future research, especially qualitative in nature, should investigate the mechanisms through which immigrant generation, family socio-economic background and parental incarceration interact to shape educational and professional opportunities for young Hispanics.

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Table 1. Description of Study Variables

Variable Name	Description
Outcome Measures (Wave 4)	
Educational Attainment	Educational attainment in young adulthood (Range: 1-5).
Hourly Wages	The worker's earnings divided by the reported working hours
Job Quality	Average of three items: decision-making autonomy, repetitiveness of tasks and supervisory responsibilities (Range: 1-3)
Explanatory Measures	
Parental Incarceration	1=a biological parent (father or mother) having been incarcerated; 0=else.
Immigrant Generation Status	
Generation 1	Foreign-born children of foreign-born parents
Generation 2	U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents
Generation 3+	U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents
Ethnic Groups	Series of dummy variables distinguishing Mexicans, Puerto-Ricans and Other Hispanics.
Family SES (Wave 1)	Average of the standardized scores of three items: parental income, educational attainment and occupational prestige.
Other Individual-Level Controls	
Two-Parent Household	1=having been raised in two-parent families; 0=else.
Gender	1=male; 0=female.
Age (Wave 4)	Age in years.

Table 2. Weighted Means and Standard Deviations of Independent Variables
(N=3,751).

	Weighted Mean	St. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Outcome Measures (Wave 4)				
Educational Attainment	2.28	0.66	1.00	5.00
Hourly Wages	2.41	0.78	0.00	6.48
Job Quality	1.30	0.45	0.00	3.00
Individual-Level Variables				
<i>Parental Incarceration</i>	0.05	0.36	0.00	1.00
<i>Immigrant Generational Status</i>				
Generation 1	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Generation 2	0.11	0.30	0.00	1.00
Generation 3	0.84	0.36	0.00	1.00
<i>Family SES</i>	0.07	0.09	0.00	1.00
<i>Ethnicity</i>				
Mexican	0.52	0.39	0.00	1.00
Puerto-Rican	0.15	0.33	0.00	1.00
Other Hispanic	0.33	0.35	0.00	1.00
<i>Other Individual-Level Controls</i>				
Two-Parent Household	0.51	0.47	0.00	1.00
Gender (Male)	0.48	0.41	0.00	1.00
Age (Wave 4)	28.08	0.47	24.00	32.00

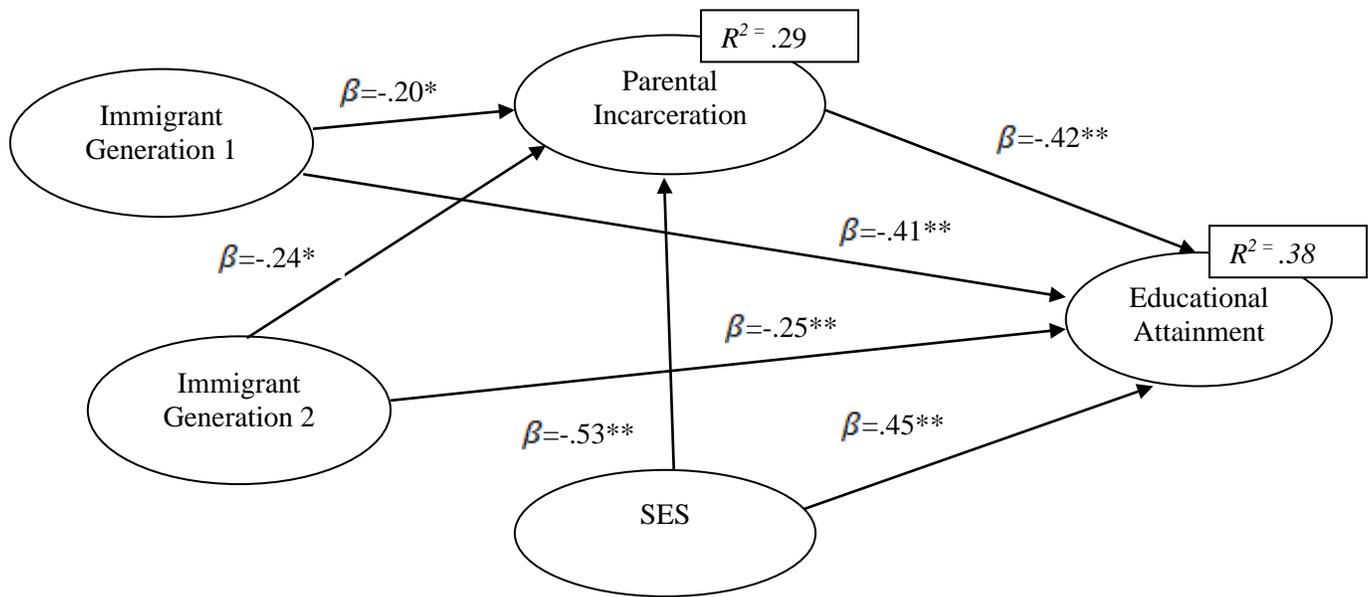


Figure 1. Structural Model Predicting Educational Attainment among Hispanic Young Adults. Note: The Estimation Results for the Control Variables and Errors Are Not Shown for Reasons of Space. $\chi^2 = 694.32$; CFI = .98, RMSEA=0.03; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

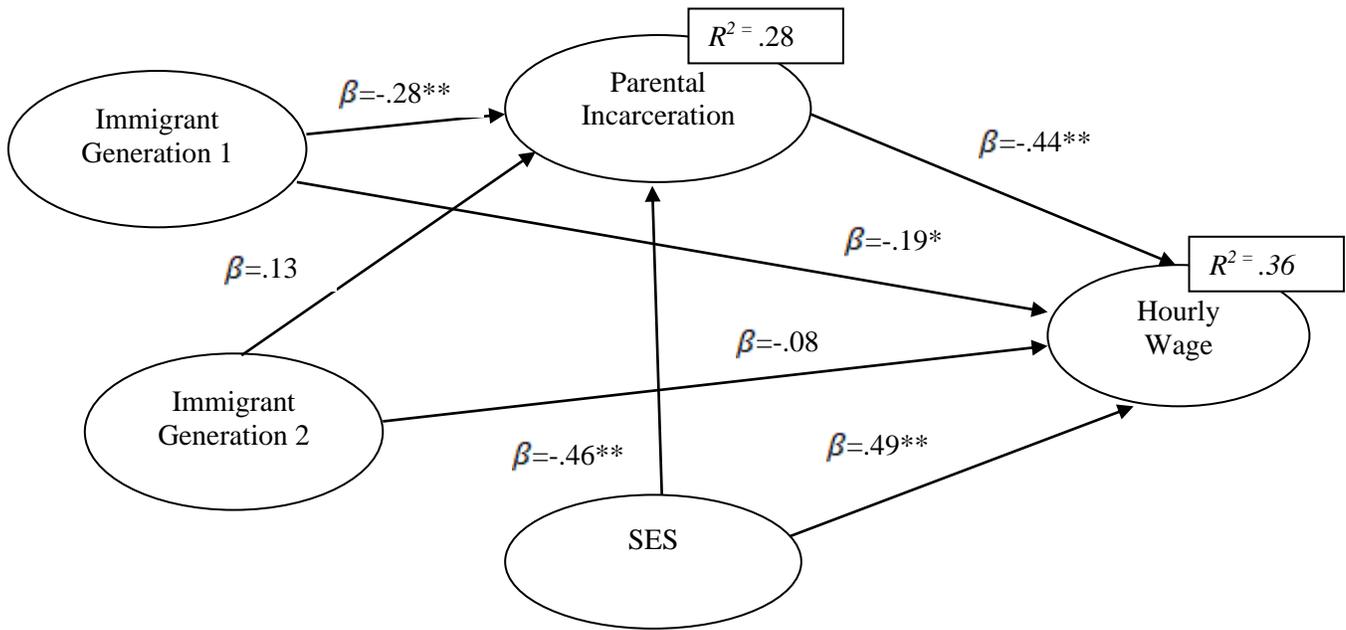


Figure 2. Structural Model Predicting Hourly Wage among Hispanic Young Adults. The Note: The Estimation Results for the Control Variables and Errors Are Not Shown for Reasons of Space. $\chi^2 = 725.29$; CFI = .98, RMSEA=.04; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

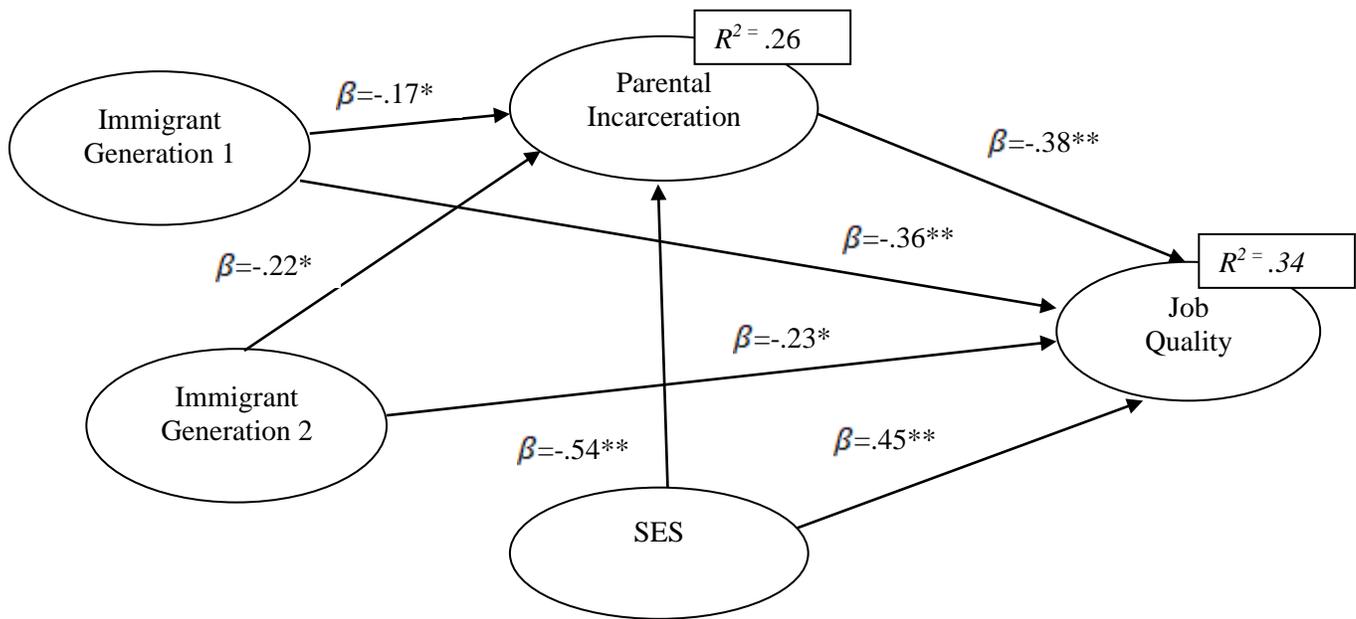


Figure 3. Structural Model Predicting Job Quality among Hispanic Young Adults. The Note: The Estimation Results for the Control Variables and Errors Are Not Shown for Reasons of Space. $\chi^2 = 735.06$; CFI = .96, RMSEA=.04; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.