

Father Involvement and Youth Transition into Risky Behaviors in Immigrant and Native Born Families: Preliminary Evidence

Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, Ph.D.

Kristin A. Moore, Ph.D.

Jonathan Zaff, Ph.D.

Population Association of America

May 2, 2003



Research Objectives

- To examine the effects of father involvement on adolescent's transition to risky behaviors in immigrant and native born families
- To examine whether the effects of father involvement on youth transition to risky behaviors vary with generational status
- To examine whether the effects of father involvement *interacts* with generational status to predict risky behaviors

Why do Fathers Matter?

■ The Father-Child Relationship:

- Various dimensions of paternal behavior important:
 - Spending time with children
 - Providing emotional support
 - Giving everyday assistance
 - Non-coercive discipline
- Associated with higher self-esteem, life satisfaction, academic success, reduced delinquency, fewer behavioral problems at school, social integration, positive social behaviors, and decreases in internalizing problems

Father Involvement and Outcomes for Immigrant Youth

- Father involvement and outcomes for immigrant youth ignored in previous research
- Present study will explore how father involvement is related to adolescent risk behaviors among a wider classification of youth than previously examined
- Previous studies focus exclusively on father involvement and outcomes for U.S born adolescents from white middle class populations

Adolescents in Immigrant Families

- **At risk of both negative and positive outcomes as a result of both *risk* and *protective* factors in their environments:**

- ***Protective Factors:***
 - Generation (First-generation protected from negative risk taking; advantage declines over time)
 - Two-parent families-Fathers present
 - Ingrained sense of being rooted in families
 - Extended family- provides familial support

- ***Risk Factors:***
 - Poverty
 - Large family size
 - Racial and ethnic minority (peer networks)
 - Language and cultural barriers
 - Acculturative stress; fitting in between a dominant culture and a foreign culture
 - Physical and social changes during adolescence; making decisions about high-risk behaviors

Research Questions

■ Question 1:

- Net of other individual and contextual factors, does father involvement predict delinquency and substance use among adolescents?

■ Question 2:

- Net of other individual and contextual factors, is youth immigration status associated with delinquency and substance use among adolescents?

■ Question 3:

- Net of other individual and contextual factors, does father involvement interact with adolescent generational differences to predict delinquent activity and substance use among adolescents?

Hypotheses

■ Hypothesis 1:

- High levels of father involvement will be associated with a reduced likelihood of risk behaviors among youth

■ Hypothesis 2:

- Being a 1st generation or 2nd generation youth will be associated with a reduced likelihood of involvement in risky behaviors

■ Hypothesis 3:

- At different levels of father involvement, delinquency, and substance use outcomes for 1st and 2nd generation adolescents will differ

Data

■ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997(NLSY97)

- Rounds One through Three (1997-1999)
- Nationally representative survey
- Documents the transition of youth into adulthood
- Large samples of adolescents
- Longitudinal design

■ Analytical Sample:

- Youth age 12-14 in Round One
- Youth who live continuously with both parents during all three waves
- Sample Size = 5,345

Event Histories

■ Life Histories:

- Created for 5,345 adolescents
- One record for each year that child observed
- Time intervals measured in years
- Censoring occurs with attrition from sample or end of period of observation in 1999

Dependent Variables

■ First Substance Use:

- Substance use index (10 items)
 - (e.g., smoked cigarette; drink alcohol; used marijuana)
- Range:0-10
- Dummy coded 0 or 1

■ First Delinquent Activity:

- Delinquency index (3 items)
 - (e.g., run away, carried gun, belonged to gang, stole from store)
- Range: 0-3
- Dummy coded 0 or 1

Independent Variables

■ Father Involvement:

- Six-item scale
 - (e.g. think highly of him; person I want to be like; enjoy spending time with him; helps do important things, praises for doing well)
- Range: 0-30
- Alpha coefficient= .82
- Time-varying covariate
- Higher scores indicate higher levels of father involvement

■ Immigration and Citizenship Status:

- **First Generation:** Foreign born and emigrated from country of birth to US
- **Second Generation:** U.S. born children who have at least one foreign born parent
- **Native-Born:** U.S. born of U.S parents

Control Variables

- **Parenting Styles (for fathers and mothers):**
 - Permissive, uninvolved, authoritarian, authoritative

- **Parental Monitoring (for fathers and mothers):**
 - Four-item scale; Range: 0-16; Alpha coefficient =.71 for mothers and .81 for fathers

- **Father's-Individual Characteristics:**
 - Employment status, educational attainment

- **Mother's Individual Characteristics:**
 - Mother-involvement, maternal education

- **Mother- Father Relationship:**
 - Six-item scale; Range:0-24; Alpha coefficient=.83

- **Household-Level Covariates:**
 - Poverty level (received AFDC), household composition (co-resident children)

- **Child-Level Covariates:**
 - Age, ethnic origin, sex

Analyses

■ Event History Analysis:

- Discrete-Time Logistic Regression models
- Hierarchical regression for main effect models
- Huber correction for clustering

■ Interaction Effect Models:

- 2-way interaction terms
- Log-likelihood tests between models of direct effect and interaction effect models

Sample Description

- **Immigration/Citizenship Status:**
 - Native-Born (77.4%);
 - First-Generation (12.8%)
 - Second Generation (8.8%)
- **Mean Age: 15.25**
- **Delinquent Activity= 37% of youth**
- **Substance Use= 50 % of youth**

Figure 1: Substance Use and Delinquency Outcomes by Generational Status, NLSY97-99

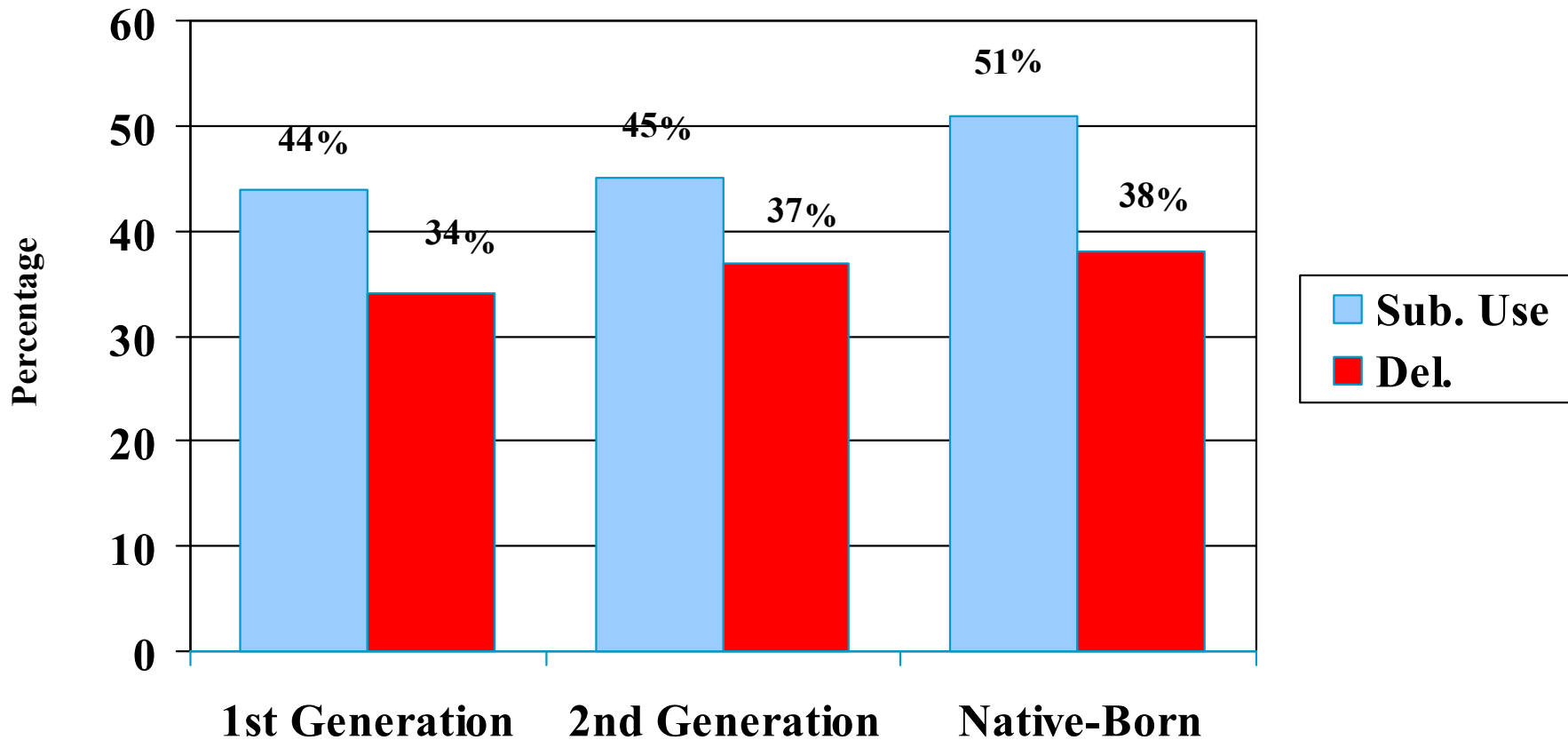
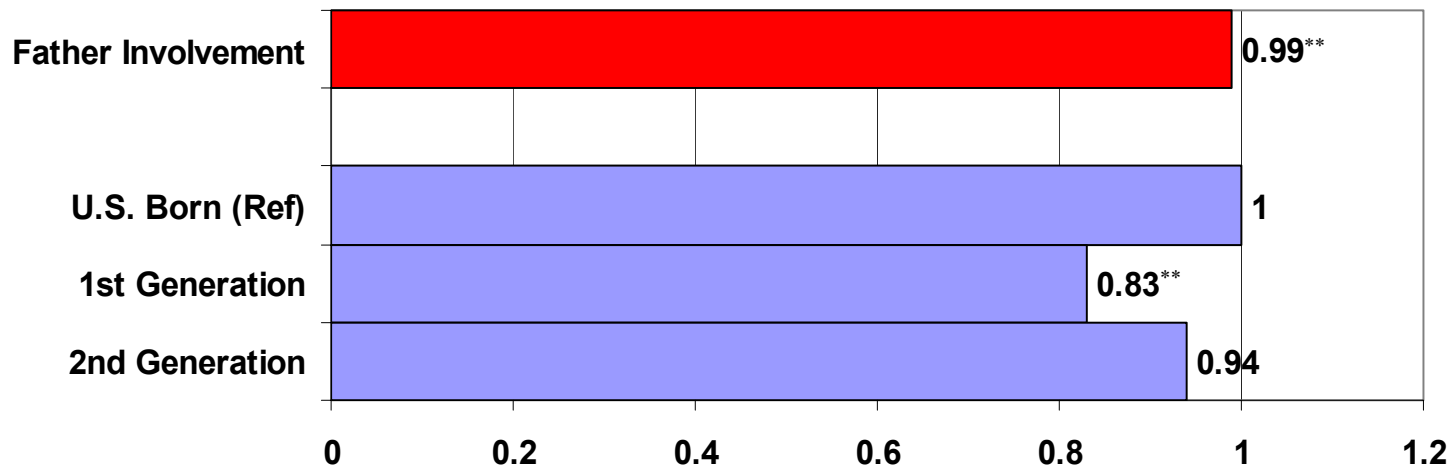
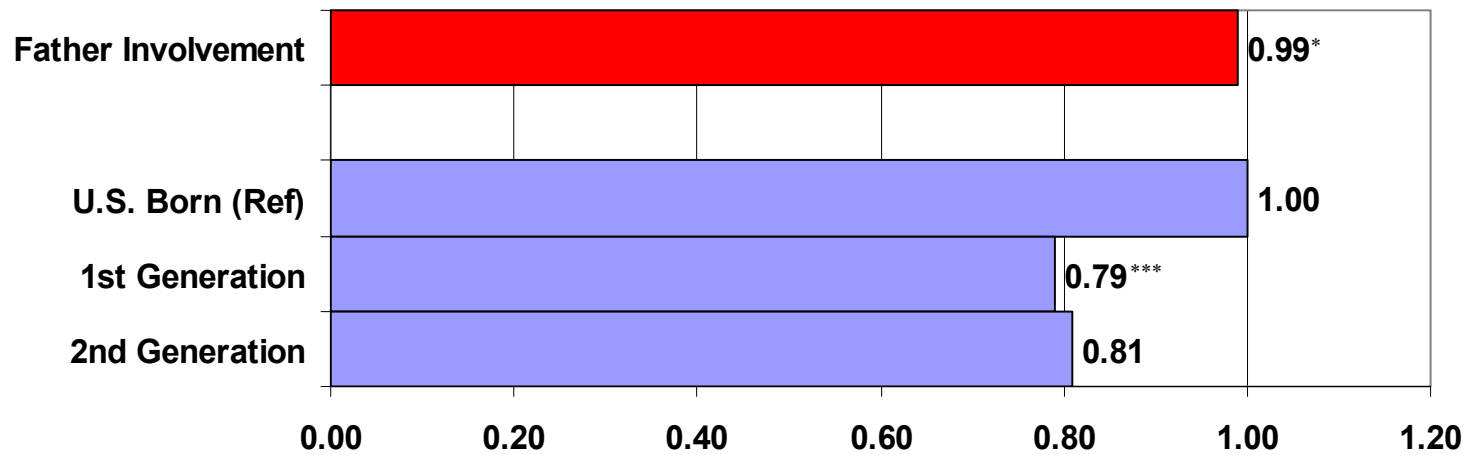


Figure 2: Odds Ratios for Baseline Discrete Time Logistic Regression Analysis of the Effects of Father Involvement on Youth First Delinquent Activity



*** $P < .001$; ** $P < .01$; * $P < .05$

Figure 3: Odds Ratios for Baseline Discrete Time Logistic Regression Analysis of the Effects of Father Involvement on Youth First Substance Use



*** $P < .001$; ** $P < .01$; * $P < .05$

Results

- **Does father involvement predict youth transition into substance use and delinquent activity ?**
 - Higher levels of father involvement associated with reduced likelihood of substance use and delinquent activity for adolescents controlling for other covariates.
 - Effects accord with hypotheses derived from prior research

- **Is youth immigration status associated with delinquency and substance use among adolescents?**
 - Being a 1st generation youth associated with a decreased likelihood of both substance use and delinquent activity.
 - Effects not significant for second generation youth
 - Effects accord with hypotheses derived from prior research

- **Does father involvement interact with adolescent generational differences to predict involvement in substance use and delinquent activity ?**
 - Interaction terms not significant

Study Limitations

- Sample size limitations (sub-group analysis)
- Rudimentary measures of immigration status; county of origin data may capture variations in outcomes
- Measurement of father involvement-may not capture all components of father involvement for all cultural groups
- Sample selective of intact families; youth may not be representative of sample likely to engage in risky behaviors
- Sample restrictive to those with co-resident fathers, generational differences in behaviors may be minimized because single parenthood strongly associated with risk behaviors and generation
- Under-reporting of substance use and delinquent activity

Future Directions

- Improving the measurement and conceptualization of father involvement
- Collection of data on diverse group of fathers (e.g immigrant fathers)
- Larger sample sizes of immigrants fathers would allow us to explore relationships in more detail



4301 Connecticut Ave, NW

Suite 100

Washington DC, 20008

Phone: (202) 572-6000

Fax: (202) 362-5533

www.childtrends.org