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Economic Disadvantage, Nativity, and Academic Performance and School Punishment Among Latino/a Children

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Economic Disadvantage, Nativity, and Academic Performance and School Punishment Among
Latino/a Children

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts in Sociology

by

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Abstract

Cultural explanations of how familial resource inequality negatively impacts the academic well-being of a Latino/a child saturate the literature. This study examines the relationship between economic disadvantage and academic performance and school punishment through Family Stress Process Theory, providing a contextual analysis of resource instability. The additional myriad of legal and social constraints that parental nativity provides for family members can moderate this relationship. Data was drawn from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal measure of U.S. couples and their children in 20 large U.S. cities. Regression models indicate the relationship between economic disadvantage and academic performance and school punishment of Latino/a youth to be significant in suspension rates when interacted with poverty status.

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Economic Disadvantage, Nativity, and Academic Performance and School Punishment Among Latino/a Children

According to early Census 2020 findings on race and ethnicity, the Latino/a population in the U.S. grew 23% in the last decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Reflecting this trend, as of 2016, 22.7% of all students enrolled in school were Latino/a (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). At the elementary and high school level, Latinos/as constituted 25% and 23.7% of students, respectively. Comparatively, Latino/a children now represent one in four kindergarteners nationwide while states like California and New Mexico represent the numerical majority (Murphey et al., 2017). The Latino/a youth population may have a substantial presence in U.S. public schools, but these children remain disproportionately behind on indicators of academic performance and ahead on measures of school punishment (Crosnoe, 2005; Eamon, 2005; Reardon & Galindo, 2007; Guttmannova, 2016). National trends suggest that while Latino/a students have made modest gains in academic performance, such as increasing mean scores in reading and mathematics (Rampey et al., 2009), a wide gap remains when compared their White peers (Madrid, 2011).

Commonly approached as a cultural phenomenon, Latino/a educational underperformance is understood to lie in the disconnect between cultural capital and American mainstream institutions (Williams & Dawson, 2011). More specifically, academic performance among Latinos/as is often examined through a lens of assimilation paradigms. For example, when examining academic indicators within K-12, scholars often focus on generational and/or cultural differences (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). More specifically, scholars often argue academic performance is dependent on different acculturative beliefs, behaviors, and statuses. Studies examining academic performance among Latino/a students suggest

accommodating for cultural and linguistic differences, such as bilingual instruction (Lopez et al., 2015), understanding parental expectations (Hayes et al., 2015; Marrero, 2016), acknowledging shared group identity values and practices (Makarova & Birman, 2015; Warikoo & Carter, 2009), identifying generational differences (Duong et al., 2016), or counteracting demographic and sociocultural disparities by helping students build social capital (Taggart, 2018).

While the extant body of literature has provided interesting insights into mainly cultural explanations of academic performance and school punishment among Latino/a children, less is understood about how other structural forces may shape academic patterning among this ever-growing group. For instance, given that historically marginalized groups face uneven amounts of structural-related stressors than White families (Holtzer & Stoll; 2000; Lee & Burkham, 2002; Murry et al., 2000), Latino/a children are often economically and socially disadvantaged. Frequent and periodic disadvantages for Latinos/as include having the second highest unemployment rate (Adjeiwaa-Manu, 2017) and 38% of families having experienced food, bill, medical, and/or housing hardships (Sherman, 2006).

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the vulnerabilities of financial stress for Latino families. Blanco et al. (2021) depict how the increased risk of having an essential job predisposes families of color to health conditions. Likewise, the authors suggest that this caused a shortage in participation in the labor market, thus leading to decreased household income. Similarly, Padilla & Thomson (2021) demonstrate how the health and financial disparities of low-income Latino families became apparent through the lack of economic buffers families had to rely on in the early stages of the pandemic. As such, patterns of financial stress were primarily realized through high unemployment rates for Latino families (Stone, 2020). As a result, Latino/a children have become receptive to the negative impact of economic disadvantage, ultimately

furthering structural consequences of resource inequality.

Accumulating evidence suggests that stressors, such as economic deprivation, can negatively shape academic outcomes. More specifically, scholars find low family income to be a prevalent indicator of low academic performance and increased school punishment (Eamon, 2005; Lacour & Tissington, 2011; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012). Accordingly, persistent exposure to financial deprivation leads to poverty, of which material resources become scarce. Subsequently, families may require welfare assistance during this time. Studies suggest that impoverished conditions can disrupt academic performance through discipline problems (Lacour & Tissington, 2011), lower standardized test scores (Hair et al., 2015), and poor social skills (McKenzie, 2019). Interpreted as common challenges in the classroom, the intersection of low socioeconomic status and academic performance can be detrimental to increased life chances and upward mobility (Catterall, 1998). Ultimately, students raised in poverty create their academic reality around economic disadvantage.

While there is a sizable body of literature documenting the deleterious academic outcomes tied to economic deprivation among the White population, few have attempted to understand whether and how economic deprivation is tied to academic performance and school punishment among Latino/as. In order to address this limitation, the main goal of the present study is to examine whether various indicators of economic deprivation shape academic performance and punishment patterns among Latino/a children in public K-12 institutions. Drawing from family stress process theory (Conger et al., 1990), I argue that exposure to different forms of economic disadvantage may inhibit a child's academic performance and boost school punishment. Primarily, this theoretical framework recognizes the role of economic disadvantage on academic performance and punishment as a stressor, rather than a barrier.

Additionally, family stress process theory posits nativity status as a secondary stressor, a proliferation of a primary stressor (i.e. economic disadvantage) (Pearlin, 1989). Ultimately, resource scarcity, as determined by economic disadvantage, can create a fragile environment for the Latino/a family in the home while consequentially impacting the academic well-being of the child.

Given that immigrant generations, as a proxy for acculturation, has often been one of the dominant paradigms for understanding academic patterning, scholars have often overlooked other structural mechanisms tied to the U.S. immigration system, in particular, how nativity status within Latino/a families may also pose challenges to academic performance and punishment. Since nativity is deterministic of the accessibility to goods and services that families residing in the U.S. are offered (Altman et al., 2021; Gassoumis et al., 2009), non-U.S. citizens struggle to secure access to benefits and assistance programs (e.g. assets, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, TANF). Accordingly, nearly half of families headed by a Latino non-citizen experienced one or more hardships of food insecurity, overcrowded homes, or lack of medical care (Sherman, 2006). Again, a cultural analysis would suggest that subsequent generations of immigrants would subdue the structural barriers of being a non-citizen, yet pertaining to an immigrant generation becomes an adversity that invites a host of other difficulties (Pearlin et al., 2005). Since children become receptive to parents' stressors (Pearlin, 1989; Turney, 2014a), familial problems can diffuse into disruptions for a child's academic well-being. In order to test this assertion, I assess whether nativity plays a role in economic disadvantage-academic performance and punishment relationships for Latino/a children.

Background

Family Stress Process Theory

Family stress process theory provides a paradigmatic theoretical framework for the conceptualization of stress within a family unit (Conger et al., 1990). According to this theoretical model, the effects of economic strain yield emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions that suggest family members are having a difficult time adapting to hardship. As per the tenets of stress process theory (Pearlin et al., 1981; Pearlin, 1999), the extension to familial analysis considers the sources, mediators, and manifestations of stress. These domains, however, are concerned with the systematic assessment of stress in individuals, whereas family stress process theory extends the understanding to family systems (Turney, 2014b).

As such, stressors operating at the family-level can be captured as either social-ecological stressors or stress transfers (Wheaton, 1999). While social ecological stressors are relevant to situations of external threat, the process of stress transfer allows for an in-depth assessment of how adverse conditions and circumstances, such as economic hardship, disseminate from individual to family. “Transfers” can impact the family in three ways: the changing of roles, change in the quality of relationships, or through internalization of others’ problems (Milkie, 2009). I argue that a suitable application of stress transfers for the Latino/a family can consist of all three processes, given the collectivist culture underpinning familial relations. Essentially, cultural dynamics produced by Latino/a collectivism can transform into structural stressors. Moreover, research on historically marginalized racial and ethnic families suggests that collectivist dynamics are primarily formed, maintained, and exhibited within familial networks (Guo et al., 2015; Lanuza & Bandelj, 2015; Saad-lesser & Richman, 2014; Raeff et al., 2000). Since group objectives are prioritized, it is easy to understand how stress transfers can embody multiple processes in a Latino/a collectivist family.

While collectivism can be an attribute of a family, it is important to define what

constitutes a familial unit, especially within a Latino/a context. Considering the circumstantial context of economic hardship, family development scholars, as well as our legal system, broadly recognize a family as members living in the same household who share emotional ties through blood, marriage, or adoption (Treuthart, 1990) . Since there is no universal model for a family unit, it is important to remember that definitions may vary by the inclusion of non-blood relatives, fictive kin, or household pets that require resources (Mitrani et al., 2006). Likewise, within the context of a Latino/a family, extended relatives may also be residing in the household, a concept understood as “familismo” (Blank & Torrecilha, 1998; Ruiz, 2007; Ruiz & Ransford, 2012). Lastly, as sociological research posits the family as a primary institution, members and their relations can be assessed at both micro and macro levels.

Accordingly, family stress process theory analysis involves the instrumental position of children in the family. However, youth remain undertheorized within the model (Milkie, 2009). As a result, age is approached as static in both stress and family stress literature (Miech & Shanahan, 2000). As mentioned above, stress can follow a transfer process, most likely from adult to child, so it is pertinent to allot children the agency to navigate a system of aversion.

Similarly, race and ethnicity are additional critical aspects of family stress process theory that remain unfounded in family stress theory. Although considered a social status, race and ethnicity are often only thought of in tangent with socio-economic status (Barnett, 2008; Pearlin, 1999). As such, analysis of stressors and their consequences reflect financial conditions, whereas an assessment of economic hardship can differentiate between the two.

Stress and Economic Disadvantage

As mentioned above, familial stress process theory considers sources, mediators, and manifestations of stress. The process begins with an eventful experience that creates life strains,

thus impacting concepts of self and the family (Pearlin et al., 1981). Indeed, economic insecurity can generate stress in families, causing negative influences on functioning (Conger et al., 1990; Pearlin, 1987). Conceptually, sources of stress can be outlined as either discrete events or continuous problems (Pearlin et al., 1981). As such, the continuity of economic disadvantage results in material hardship, which ultimately reflects poverty. Given this understanding, material hardship, as a source, becomes a suitable tool for measuring resource inequality through food insecurity, bill hardship, housing disparity, and medical care hardship (Mayer & Jencks, 1989).

Previous literature has explored different dimensions of material hardship experience among historically marginalized groups. Numerous studies suggest that ethnic minority families face uneven structural-related stressors and have less access to support systems than White families (Duncan & Aber, 1997; Holtzer & Stoll, 2000; Lee & Burkham, 2002; Murry et al., 2001; Padilla & Thomson, 2021; Phelan & Link, 2015; Raver et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 1995). In recent years, researchers have recognized that a more adequate measure of these poverty-related stressors is material hardship, rather than outdated income thresholds (Beverly, 2000; Carle et al., 2009; Gershoff et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2018). Whereas income measures of poverty can be used as a proxy for material hardship (Sullivan et al., 2008), directly analyzing the four sources of hardship reveals whether adequate material conditions are being met. In doing so, material hardship depicts inequality by allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's living conditions in which basic goods and services are difficult to obtain (Nelson, 2011).

More importantly, Mayer & Jencks (1989) find that families with children are more likely to experience material hardship. Scholars in the field of family and child development theorize material hardship to be linked to deficits for the child's social, cognitive, and behavioral

development (Mistry et al., 2002; Sektan et al., 2010; Yeung et al., 2002). Most notably, several studies explore how the home environment regulates socioemotional functioning of young children of minority communities (Farver et al., 2006; Raver & Knitzer, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Stipek & Ryan, 1997). It is important to consider both social and academic skill development of Latino/a children since the Latino/a community determines a child's socio-cognitive competency through "educacion", a singular term that reflects a child's rearing outcomes (Reese, 2002). As such, the Latino/a family places important emphasis on how household beliefs and practices manifest themselves in social spheres. Given this understanding, the Latino/a child is expected to integrate academics into their development of "educacion". Thus, having lack of "educacion" is not seen as favorable by either child, family, or culture.

Stress and Academic Performance and School Punishment

As per family stress process theory, stress elicits its devastating effects when it is manifested (Pearlin et al., 1981). Considering economic disadvantage as the source of stress for a family, children become receptive to its interferences on everyday life (Conger et al., 1990, Milkie, 2009). As a result, children enduring and coping with adverse circumstances are doing so while also navigating school experiences. As such, stress can be primarily manifested through its impact on a child's academic performance and punishment (Eamon, 2002; Eamon, 2005; Guo, 1998; Roscigno, 2000; Smith et al. 1997; Korenman et al., 1995).

Academic performance is a broad assessment of competency in traditional content areas, such as communications (i.e. reading skills) or mathematics (Ainsworth, 2002; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006) whereas school punishment is a disruption to these areas (Hinze-Pifer & Sartain, 2018; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Schools and educators rely on achievement measures as indicators of academic standing. Unfortunately, Latino/a students begin exhibiting low academic

performance early on in elementary school (Eamon, 2002; West et al., 2000). As such, adverse situations occurring in early childhood and adolescence can negatively influence youth academic achievement, a proxy for increased life chances and upward mobility.

To explore whether it is either the school or home environment disrupting academic performance and school punishment, scholars approach the problem as being interconnected (Barth & Parke, 1993; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Eamon, 2005; Farver et al., 2006; Howes et al., 1994; Pianta et al., 1991; Raver & Knitzer, 2002). As the child spends a considerable amount of their childhood in both social spheres, issues affecting their well-being transmit across contexts. However, scholars do consent that adverse situations in the home, such as material hardship, provide the framework for studying socioemotional, socio-cognitive, health, and mental health outcomes of inequalities on a child (Aber et al., 2000; Niño, 2021; Yang et al., 2018; Raver, 2002; Raver & Zigler, 1997; Raver et al., 2007). Altogether, these negative influences of economic hardship have the ability to hinder academic performance and escalate punishment.

As a result of cumulative stressors, a gap in academic performance and prevalence of punishment can yield a variety of outcomes for students. High achieving students are rewarded with cognitive skills in content areas, capacities for emotion regulation, motivation, engagement, and goal achievement (McCoy et al., 2017). For Latino/a youth, the benefits of high achievement reward the student with social status in the K-12 pipeline (Gonzalez, 2013; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Having been recognized for high achievement, the student follows a college-focused tracking curriculum of which resources, such as teachers and guidance, are expedited (Epple et al., 2002; Hallinan, 1994). Consequently, for low achieving students, particularly for Latino/a youth, educational outcomes lead to poor grade retention (Willson & Hughes, 2006), high drop-out rates (Catterall, 1998; Fernandez & Paulsen, 1989), and low educational and economic

attainment (Gaydosch & McLanahan, 2021; Jencks & Phillips, 1999). These negative outcomes reflect the exclusivity of low-achieving students which results in less support from the school (Modica, 2015). Since educational inequalities tend to reward those of high achievement, Latino/a students experiencing the disrupting effects of economic hardship are not positioned for academic success.

As mentioned above, academic performance and school punishment, having been exposed to and having to cope with economic disadvantage, become the byproduct of a familial stressor (Conger et. al.,1990). As the recipients, children in the family live in high-risk socio-demographic homes that allow for a decline in academic performance (Eamon, 2005). Economic disadvantage can thus induce a series of unfavorable habits, such as weak parental school involvement, familial conflicts, or cognitively unstimulating home environments (Conger et al., 1990; Eamon, 2002; Guo & Harris, 2000). This form of inequality predisposes the young Latino/a child to be inversely prepared to receive the intended benefits of the educational experience in terms of reading skills, academic achievement, and socio-emotional functioning (Raver & Knitzer, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2002; Stipek & Ryan, 1997). All arising in the home, family stress process theory suggests that consequences of impoverished environments first decrease youth motivation and opportunity, thus lowering academic performance and increasing punishment (Guo, 1998). Additionally, stressors may take the form of inadequate study spaces, unreliable school-related transportation, or lack of access to school supplies and materials (Yang et al., 2018). As the child continues down the K-12 educational pipeline, the chronic exposure to economic hardship can have a cumulative adverse effect on the child's academic well-being. Latino/a children may already face cultural disconnects with school through generational status, language, or acculturation (Becerra, 2012), so added familial

stressors can be indicative of educational development outcomes.

Nativity as a Stressor

Nativity can act as a secondary stressor to economic disadvantage, further impacting its manifestation of academic performance and school punishment. Known as stress proliferation (Pearlin, 1989; Pearlin et al., 2005), a primary stressor (e.g. economic hardship) can lead to the accumulation of stressors in other domains (e.g. nativity). Additionally, stress proliferation and its power of multiplicity can chronically affect life course events across generations (Turney, 2014a). As such, while previous studies have demonstrated the barriers of immigrant parents and children lacking familiarity with the school system and thus struggling to integrate into the host society (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001; Yiu, 2011; Zhou, 1997), the question of how U.S. born children with parents of citizen, non-citizen, or mixed-citizenship status contribute stress to their child's academic standing remains. However, given the complexities of immigrant generational status, it is important to acknowledge that I seek a limited assessment of the variable as a potential moderator between economic disadvantage and academic performance and school punishment.

Differences in nativity are deterministic of the accessibility to goods and services that families residing in the U.S. are offered. Most importantly, restricted access to social and economic resources becomes the gateway to developing economic hardships (Altman et al., 2021; Gassoumis et al., 2009). For instance, Altman et al. (2021) found that being unauthorized or having a non-citizenship status was associated with significantly increased odds of material hardship, compared to citizens. The variation in nativity can ultimately help both sociologists and policy makers understand the structural role that familial hardship has on academic institutions and the educational well-being of the child enduring the adverse effects.

Present Study

Given the limitations of previous studies, the present study examines the role of economic disadvantage on academic performance and school punishment in Latino/a youth. More specifically, I examine whether poverty status and material hardships significantly shape school performance and punishment outcomes. I also determine whether economic disadvantage-academic performance and punishment relations vary by parental nativity.

Methods

Data

This study used data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS), a longitudinal, multistage probability sample of 4,898 children born between 1998 and 2000 in 20 large U.S. cities (see Reichman et al., 2001). These data systemically include an oversample of children born to unmarried parents, resulting in a representative sample of low-income U.S. families. Baseline interviews were conducted with mothers and most fathers in the hospital shortly after the birth of the child. Follow-up phone interviews were conducted with both parents when the child was 1, 3, 5, and 15 years old. At age 15, children were interviewed on their home and school experiences.

The present study uses a sub-sample of 592 self-identified Latino/a children. Data from five out of the six waves (years baseline, 1, 3, 5, and 15) were used to determine the longitudinal effects of economic disadvantage on the focal child's academic performance and school punishment, within the context of their respective families.

Outcome Measures

Academic Performance and School Punishment

Adolescent Suspension, Summer School, and Grade Point Average

Our first outcome variable is a binary indicator of whether the Latino/a child had been suspended or expelled in the last two years at around 15 years of age. This measure largely captures school suspension rates as the national sample represents 4.5 percent Latino/a students out of 0.2 percent of public school students having received this form of disciplinary action (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Latino/a students are also the third largest racial group to occupy both in and out-of-school suspension rates in public school enrollment (U.S. Education Department, Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

The second outcome variable is a binary indicator derived from asking the child at around age 15 if they had ever been required to attend a summer school program. Participation in summer school serves as remedial instruction to make up credits for absence or failure. While summer school programs can also be attended for accelerated credit attainment, this study identifies attendees as students who did not master the skills needed to advance to the next grade.

High school grade point average was derived from the most-recent letter grade on four subjects: English or language arts, math, history or social studies, and science. Each letter grade was transformed into its numerical equivalent (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D or lower = 1). GPA was calculated as the sum of all subjects, then divided by four. Although not an entirely encompassing measure of academic performance, the 0 to 4.0 grade point average scale is a reliable predictor of U.S. educational systems that are used to determine college-readiness abilities.

Independent Variables

Economic Disadvantage

Material Hardship

Material hardship measured the ability to meet basic needs, as per four domains: food

insecurity, bill hardship, housing hardship, and medical hardship. The chronic nature of these measures was captured in years 1, 3, and 5 of the FFCWS. In preliminary analyses, discrete categories of hardship did not demonstrate meaningful differences among hardship types. Prevalence rates were determined by the cumulative exposure to all areas of hardship with final measures ranging from 0 to 12.

Poverty Status

Poverty status was captured using household income-to-needs ratio, which is based on U.S. poverty thresholds at each wave year. Ratios were adjusted for family composition and year. A score of one or more indicates living in poverty. Final count measures are represented by number of times a Latino/a child experienced poverty from baseline, year 1, 3, and 5. Final poverty status measures ranged from 0 to 4 times.

Nativity

Parents' nativity was defined using the respondent's country of birth. Respondents are classified as foreign-born if they indicated having been born outside of the United States. For the purposes of this study, children are considered to have foreign-born parents if at least one parent was born outside of the United States.

Covariates

To test relationships between measures of economic disadvantage and academic performance and punishment for Latino/a children, the present study also included covariates drawn from both maternal and paternal surveys at baseline, year 1, and 5. These confounding variables include the child's gender, maternal and paternal age and level of education, familial living arrangements, language use and parental stress. All controls were derived from baseline and year 1 interviews with the exception of living arrangements being captured at year 5.

Maternal and paternal age ranged from 16 to 53 years of age. Maternal and parental education was measured using four dummy variables: less than high school, high school or equivalent, some college, and college graduate. Living arrangements indicated whether the mother and father were cohabitating at age 5 of their child. Language use assessed whether either parent indicated a preference to be interviewed in Spanish at baseline. Mothers self-reported their stress levels to the following statement at year 1: “How much do you agree/disagree being a parent is harder than I thought?”. This measure ranged from (1) *strongly agree* to (4) *strongly disagree*.

Analytic Strategy

This study is interested in asking if economic disadvantage negatively impacts the academic performance and school punishment of Latino/a children. I assessed whether two predictors of economic disadvantage (poverty and material hardship) were correlated with academic performance measures and school punishment (suspension, summer school attendance, and GPA) using a series of regression models. Logistic regression was used for the binary variables of school suspension and summer school attendance while the most appropriate regression technique for the interval/ratio variable of GPA was OLS regression. Finally, I interacted parent nativity with each economic disadvantage measure to test whether parent nativity moderated relationships between economic disadvantage and academic performance and school punishment.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents weighted descriptive statistics for the overall sample and by parent’s nativity. The majority of the analytic sample was male (52%) and had U.S. born parents (57%). Approximately half of Latino/a children had mothers (51%) and fathers (45%) with less than a

high school education, and the majority of parents (59%) were cohabitating at year 5. Mothers and fathers, on average, were in their mid-to-late 20s at baseline. In analyzing poverty status, Latino/a children lived below the poverty line, on average, 2.36 times. In other words, Latino/a children lived below the poverty line for approximately 2 out of 4 years poverty status was assessed. In regard to the number of accumulated material hardships, Latino/a children experienced an average of 2 hardships before the age of 5.

Shifting to parent nativity, results indicate that there are no meaningful differences across parent nativity with respect to poverty. However, with respect to material hardship, the number of exposure to material hardship was substantially higher for Latino/a children with U.S. born parents (2.33) when compared to Latino/a children with at least one foreign-born parent (1.65). Families with at least one foreign-born parent also were more likely to have mothers (59%) and fathers (58%) who had less than a high school education, compared to 44% and 35% of their respective U.S. born counterparts. Most notably, families with at least one foreign-born parent were more likely to be cohabitating (72%) than U.S. born parents (49%).

Finally, with respect to school suspension, results show a notable difference between children born to U.S. born parents (19%) and those having at least one foreign-born parent (12%). In other words, almost one-fifth of U.S. born families had a child that received school punishment. Results also indicate no notable differences between parent nativity for attending summer school and grade point average.

Table 1. Weighted descriptive statistics for overall sample and by parent nativity

	Overall Sample		U.S. Born Parents		Foreign-Born Parent	
	N	Mean(SD)	N	Mean(SD)	N	Mean(SD)
School suspension	588	0.16(.37)	338	0.19(.39)	250	0.12(.33)
Summer school	588	0.27(.44)	338	0.27(.44)	250	0.26(.44)
Grade point average (GPA)	587	2.78(.78)	338	2.79(.76)	249	2.76(.81)
<i>Parent Nativity</i>						
Foreign born parent	592	.43(.49)				
Poverty status	592	2.36(1.41)	340	2.44(1.46)	252	2.27(1.33)
Cumulative material hardships	592	2.04(2.01)	340	2.33(2.20)	252	1.65(1.64)
<i>Focal child's gender</i>						
Female	592	0.48(.50)	340	0.46(.50)	252	0.49(.50)
<i>Mother's education</i>						
<high school	592	0.51(.50)	340	0.44(.50)	252	0.59(.49)
High school or equivalent	592	0.23(.42)	340	0.24(.43)	252	0.21(.41)
Some college	592	0.23(.42)	340	0.28(.45)	252	0.16(.37)
College graduate	592	0.04(.19)	340	0.04(.20)	252	0.04(.19)
<i>Father's education</i>						
<high school	592	0.45(.50)	340	0.35(.48)	252	0.58(.49)
High school or equivalent	592	0.33(.47)	340	0.41(.49)	252	0.23(.42)
Some college	592	0.17(.38)	340	0.20(.40)	252	0.14(.35)
College graduate	592	0.05(.22)	340	0.05(.21)	252	0.05(.22)
Mother's age	592	24.63(5.70)	340	23.60(5.36)	252	26.02(5.86)
Father's age	592	26.80(6.46)	340	25.64(6.04)	252	28.36(6.69)
Cohabiting year 5	592	0.59(.49)	340	0.49(.50)	252	0.72(.45)
Mother's parenting stress	592	4.67(2.78)	340	4.48(2.71)	252	4.92(2.86)

Main Effects

Table 2 provides regression estimates for associations between poverty status, cumulative material hardships, and school suspension and performance measures. Results demonstrate no significant differences between the outcomes and predictor variables. Poverty status was not significantly associated with school suspension (OR = .77, $p = .144$), summer school (OR = .92, $p = .423$), nor GPA ($\beta = .03$, $p = .344$). Cumulative material hardships results also indicate no significant association with school suspension (OR = .89, $p = .492$), summer school (OR = 1.04,

$p = .816$), nor GPA ($\beta = .04, p = .097$).

Although not central to the study, various covariate measures were significantly associated with the outcome variables. In the case of school suspension, if parents were cohabitating at year 5, Latino/a children were more likely to be suspended from school (OR = 2.18, $p = .020$). Similarly, results did show that gender (OR = .44, $p = .055$) and mother's education (OR = .89, $p = .021$; OR = .19, $p = .002$) did significantly shape the likelihood of attending summer schools at age 15. More specifically, Latina children were less likely to attend summer school. Additionally, when compared to mothers that had less than a high school diploma, children with mothers that had a high school diploma or some college were less likely to attend summer school at age 15. Finally, findings indicate gender ($\beta = .23, p = .003$) and maternal stress at year 1 ($\beta = -.06, p = .018$) were significantly associated with GPA. Specifically, Latina children has a significantly higher GPA than Latino boys. With respect to parenting stress, an increase in maternal parenting stress significantly decreased GPA scores.

Table 2. Regression estimates predicting academic performance and school punishment

	<u>School Suspension</u>	<u>Summer School</u>	<u>Grade Point Average (GPA)</u>
	OR(SE)	OR(SE)	β (SE)
Poverty status	.77(.13)	.92(.10)	.03(.03)
Cumulative material hardships	.89(.15)	1.04(.17)	.04(.02)
<i>Parent nativity</i>			
Foreign born parent	.46(.27)	.68(.24)	.26(.14)
<i>Focal child's gender</i>			
Female	.36(.20)	.44(.18)*	.23(.07)**
<i>Mother's education</i>			
(Reference <high school)			
High school or equivalent	.86(.61)	.32(.15)*	.19(.17)
Some college	1.80(1.62)	.19(.10)**	.24(.22)
College graduate	.81(1.20)	1.13(.94)	.09(.28)
<i>Father's education</i>			
(Reference <high school)			
High school or equivalent	1.08(.59)	1.51(.64)	-.05(.15)
Some college	.45(.34)	.40(.21)	-.07(.23)
College graduate	.26(.33)	2.60(1.62)	-.12(.25)
Mother's age	1.00(.08)	.95(.04)	.00(.01)
Father's age	.94(.07)	1.02(.05)	-.00(.01)
Cohabiting year 5	2.18(.71)*	1.27(.45)	-.03(.09)
Mother's parenting stress	1.00(.07)	1.04(.09)	-.06(.02)*
Constant	2.90(3.49)	1.21(1.13)	2.72(.29)***
<i>N</i>	588	588	583

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Interactions

The results in table 3 address the possibility that relationships between economic disadvantage measures and school punishment and performance depend on parent nativity. With respect to school suspension, results indicate a significant interaction between parent nativity and poverty status (see figure 1). More specifically, an increase in the number of exposures to poverty from baseline to year 5 increased the likelihood of school suspension for Latino/a children with at least one foreign-born parent ($-.55 + .74 = .19$). For children with two U.S. born parents, we find an increase in number of exposures decreased ($\beta = -.55, p = .011$) the likelihood of school suspension. Conversely, the interaction between the number of hardships and nativity was not significant (see figure 2). Finally, relationships between economic disadvantage measures and attending summer school or GPA scores were not dependent on parent nativity.

Table 3. Regression estimates determining whether economic disadvantage-school performance and punishment relationships depend on parent nativity

	<u>School suspension</u>		<u>Summer school</u>		<u>Grade point average (GPA)</u>	
	OR(SE)	OR(SE)	OR(SE)	OR(SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
Poverty status	-.55(.21)**	-.27(.17)	-.25(.17)	-.10(.12)	.06(.06)	.03(.03)
<i>Parent Nativity</i>						
-						
FB parent	2.48(.82)**	.69(.66)	-1.16(.80)	.27(.60)	.39(.24)	.03(.21)
C. material hardships	-.11(.18)	.22(.12)	.04(.16)	.22(.14)	.04(.02)	-.03(.04)
FB parent x Poverty status	.74(.25)**		.33(.26)		-.05(.07)	
FB parent x C. material hardships		-.82(.26)**		-.30(.28)		.11(.06)
<i>Child's gender</i>						
Female	-1.03(.53)	-.10(.51)	-.83(.43)	-.79(.44)	.22(.07)**	.20(.07)**
<i>Mother's education</i>						
(Ref. <HS)						
HS or eq.	-.46(.70)	-.08(.62)	-1.25(.47)*	-1.09(.45)*	.22(.16)	.18(.16)
Some college	.32(.81)	.71(.88)	-1.78(.53)***	-1.66(.53)**	.26(.22)	.22(.21)
College graduate	-.37(1.28)	.29(1.68)	.04(.80)	.30(.85)	.10(.28)	.03(.28)
<i>Father's education</i>						
(Ref. <HS)						
HS or eq.	.30(.50)	-.10(.63)	.46(.40)	.36(.43)	-.06(.15)	-.04(.14)
Some college	-.53(.64)	-.97(.83)	-.82(.50)	-.92(.47)	-.08(.23)	-.05(.23)
College graduate	-1.20(1.12)	-1.37(1.36)	1.01(.58)	1.02(.63)	-.13(.25)	-.15(.23)
Mother's age	.04(.08)	-.01(.07)	-.03(.05)	-.04(.05)	.00(.01)	.00(.01)
Father's age	-.08(.08)	-.04(.06)	.01(.05)	.02(.05)	-.00(.01)	-.00(.01)
Cohabiting year 5	.93(.33)**	.86(.40)*	.29(.35)	.27(.35)	-.03(.09)	-.04(.08)
Mother's parenting stress	-.04(.07)	-.10(.06)	.05(.08)	.03(.08)	-.06(.02)*	-.05(.02)*
Constant	1.28(1.25)	.37(1.10)	.32(1.00)	-.22(1.03)	2.67(.31)***	2.86(.30)***
	N=588	N=588	N=588	N=588	N=583	N=583

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

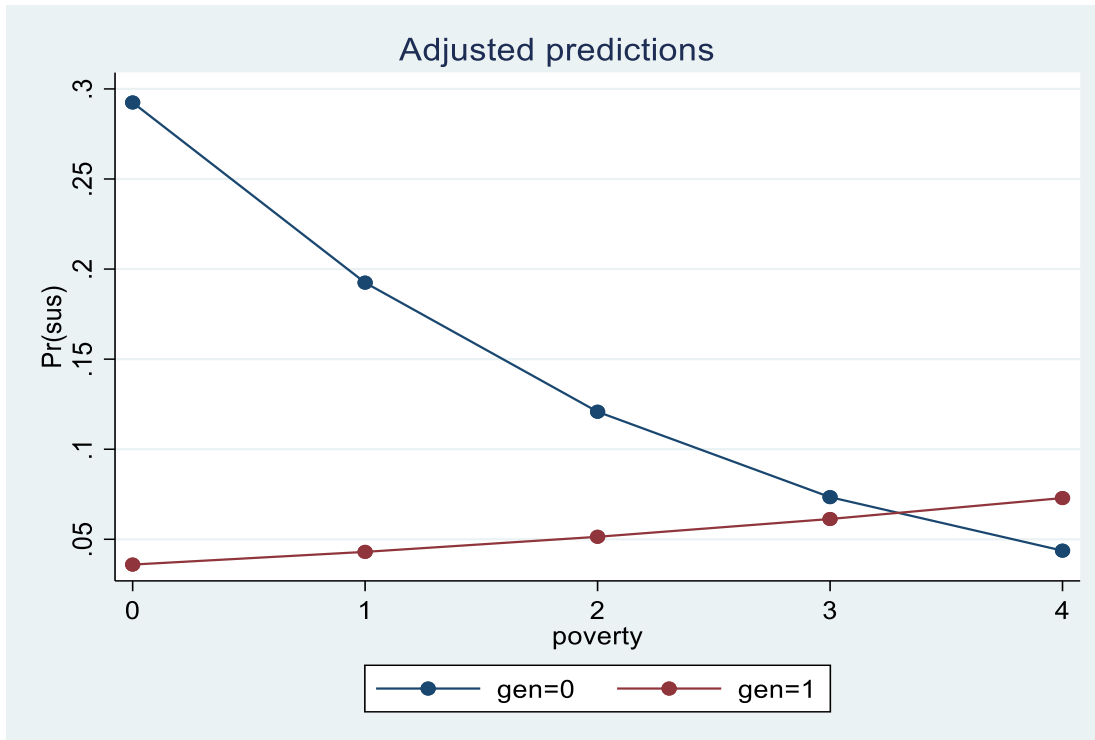


Figure 1. Interaction between poverty status, school suspension, and parent nativity.

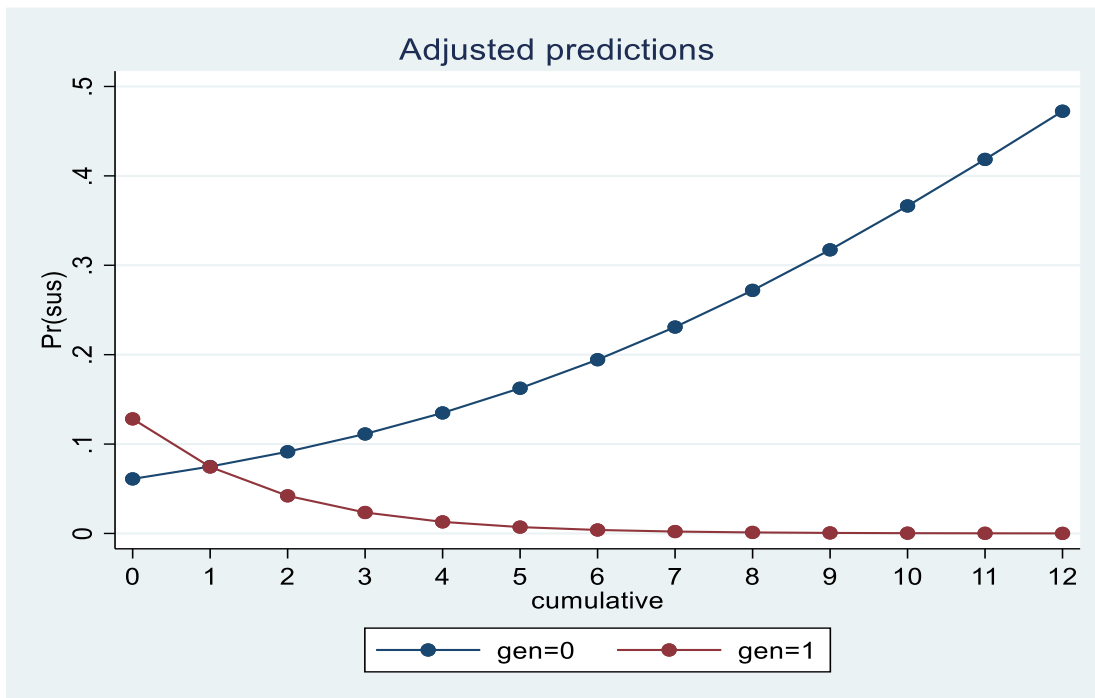


Figure 2. Interaction between cumulative material hardships, school suspension, and parent nativity.

Discussion

Family resource inequality can influence the relative success or failure of a Latino/a student's academic outcomes. My focus on Latino/a children is designed to provide analysis on the role of economic instability and school outcomes. Most other studies rely heavily on cultural explanations for inequalities, whereas this paper addresses structural mechanisms. Taking advantage of longitudinal survey data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, this paper had two aims. First, this study is concerned with the deleterious effects that being economically disadvantaged, as measured by poverty status and material hardships, exerts on academic performance and school punishment. Second, I also assessed whether relationships between economic disadvantage and academic performance and school punishment were moderated by parents' nativity.

Results indicate economic disadvantage did not play a significant role in academic performance and punishment outcomes for Latino/a children. More specifically, results indicated that poverty status and material hardships were not significantly related to school suspension, summer school attendance, or decreased grade point average. Findings from this study suggest that there may be other economic disadvantage measures that are more indicative of academic performance and punishment. While these relationships are not significant, these findings are consistent with a growing body of scholarship that suggests that traditional measures of economic disadvantage, such as poverty status, may not adequately capture stressors tied to economic deprivation (Beverly, 2000; Carle et al., 2009; Gershoff et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2018). While more updated measures, such as material hardship, do allow for a comprehensive evaluation of living conditions (Nelson, 2011), isolated exposures to hardship may be unable to depict chronic stressors associated with economic deprivation.

The results pertaining to my second objective do, however, suggest that poverty status was significantly related to school suspension rates among Latino/a children when they had at least one foreign-born parent. These findings align with literature that show that economic deprivation, specifically low family income, can be a prevalent indicator of low academic performance or increased suspension rates (Eamon, 2005; Lacour & Tissington, 2011; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012). Moreover, today, one in five children in the K-12 pipeline have at least one foreign-born parent (Jamieson et al., 2001), so nativity may moderate the difficulties in gaining access to economic resources. Prior research also suggests that the family and school serve as complementary, primary social environments for children, so academic outcomes are oriented around the interactions of both sources (Glick & Hohmann-Marriot, 2007). In other words, academic success is achieved when family promotes or buffers academic attitudes and conditions. Conversely, academic failure can result from having lack thereof. Accordingly, school suspensions can decrease the likelihood of school engagement and exacerbate existing behavioral difficulties for economically disadvantaged students (Noltemeyer et al., 2015; Sullivan et al., 2013). Thus, school performance is likely to be inversely related to students with heightened suspension risks. As a result, patterns of instability among home and school are consistent with family stress process theory that demonstrates how reoccurring familial stressors are proliferated into a child's day-to-day life.

The present study has several limitations. First, the FFCWS includes a small subsample of Latinos/as. As such, country-of-origin is unavailable for the analyses on parent nativity. This would suggest that the Latino pan ethnicity is representative of monolithic backgrounds and experiences, yet differences in national origins may be more indicative of the effects nativity has on academic performance and punishment. Additionally, the Fragile Families and Child

Wellbeing Study does not account for citizenship status. Therefore, this data precludes undocumented children and parents and how their experiences with securing economic resources may be associated with additional legal stressors. As such, in terms of economic disadvantage measures, the reliance on parent's self-reported measures may have led to underreporting of poverty status and number of hardships. Families with at least one foreign-born parent may have felt reluctant to disclose their financial information. Additionally, the present study could not capture the duration and magnitude of hardships, which could potentially indicate to what degree primary and secondary stressors impact academic performance and punishment. Future analyses including other contextual variables and between-racial group comparisons will be better able to assess the importance that economic stressors have on academic outcomes.

Overall, findings from this study contribute to the growing body of literature dedicated to understanding the academic consequences associated with the economic and resource deprivation of Latino/a children. Most notably, findings from this study suggest that chronic exposure to poverty status and material hardships decrease academic performance by increasing the likelihood of receiving school suspension if the Latino/a child has at least one foreign-born parent. This is of particular concern when academic wellbeing is a proxy for increased life chances and upward mobility. Should structural barriers and stressors occur, academic performance may be disrupted and create a trajectory of negative punishment outcomes. Results from this study ultimately demonstrate that chronic exposures to poverty and material hardships allow us to observe an unfavorable impact on school performance and punishment, particularly for Latino/a children.

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