

General Strain Theory, Religiosity, and Delinquency among Young Latino Americans

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing general strain theory and drawing from contemporary racial stratification literature and the sociology of religion, I contend general strain theory is salient among young Latinos. Additionally, I hypothesize religiosity is negatively correlated with delinquency, and attenuates the effects of strain on negative emotions and those of negative emotions on delinquency. Moreover, I hypothesize the impact of religiosity is more salient for foreign born than native born Latino youth. I test these hypotheses using data from the first two waves of Add Health. Results generally provide support for my hypotheses. The implications of these results and directions for future studies are discussed.

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Latino Americans are the largest racial or ethnic minority group in America, and they accounted for over half of the nation's population growth from 2000 to 2010. Latinos account for 16.4% of the total population, but they experience a disproportionate amount of criminal sentencing in America. In 2007 Latinos accounted for 40% of all sentenced federal offenders, which at the time was more than triple their share (13% in 2007) of the U.S. adult population (Lopez and Light 2009). Despite these facts, Latino Americans remain a relatively understudied group in criminology.

Utilizing general strain theory to understand Latino participation in deviant behavior, I propose that religion reduces deviance and buffers the effects of strain and negative emotions for Latino youth. The negative group positioning of Latinos in the American racial hierarchy fosters high levels of strain for Latinos. These high levels of strain experienced by Latinos increase the likelihood that they would experience negative emotions and turn to crime and deviance in order to cope with these emotions. However, Latinos maintain a distinct religiosity that could serve as a viable means of coping with both strain and negative emotions, which would serve to attenuate the propensity to turn to crime.

General strain theory

Agnew's (1992, 2005) introduction of general strain theory (GST) created a resurgence in strain theory throughout the field of criminology. There are several ways GST expands on traditional strain theories (Cohen 1956; Merton 1938). The first major way is by redefining the concept of strain. Agnew broadly defines strain as "events or conditions that are disliked by individuals," and he notes that these strains can be experienced either objectively (a strain disliked by a number of people or a group) or subjectively (a strain disliked by a particular person) (2005:4).

GST also posits the motivation for deviance is a coping strategy derived from strain-generated negative emotions. According to Agnew, negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety, and anger, are borne out of individuals experiencing strain. These negative emotions provide the motivation for committing acts of deviance unless an alternative, legitimate, and viable means of

coping with these negative emotions exist. The extent to which negative emotions mediate the effect of strain on deviant behavior is critical to GST because the causal processes of social control and social learning could stem from the unmediated effects of strain (Agnew 1995; Jang and Johnson 2005). The final major addition of GST to traditional strain theories is that it accounts for individual differences in responses to strain by incorporating conditioning factors into the theory. Agnew notes there are both internal and external factors ranging from individual problem-solving skills to social support groups and access to economic resources that condition the effects of strain on negative emotions and consequently impact deviant coping. These conditioning factors decrease the probability of one responding to strain with negative emotions, and they increase one's ability to cope with both strain and negative emotions in a legal manner (Agnew 1992, 2005).

Latinos and strain

A number of studies have provided empirical and theoretical support for GST (Agnew 1992, 2005, 2013; Brezina 1996; Broidy 2001; Button 2016; Jang and Johnson 2005; Johnson and Kercher 2007; Peck 2013). While GST is a general theory that is not limited to any particular racial or ethnic group, it may be especially salient for Latino Americans who often report experiencing high levels of internal and external stressors and strain. Yet, Latinos have received little empirical attention within GST literature. According to contemporary racial stratification literature, the symbolic group placement of Latinos in America is toward the bottom of the American racial hierarchy where they encounter disproportionately lower access to economic resources and opportunities compared to those positioned toward the top of the hierarchy (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Fiske et al. 2002; Lee and Fiske 2006; Massey 2007; Park et al. 2015). Bonilla-Silva (2004) contends America is no longer comprised of a bi-racial order, and instead he argues that a tri-racial stratification system exists based largely on skin pigmentation, similar to the Caribbean-like racial order. This framework moves beyond the classical "black-white" ideology by articulating multiple group positions that account for other racial minorities. Bonilla-Silva's conceptualization of racial groups falls along a continuum with social inferiority on one end and social superiority on the other. Those at the top of the racial hierarchy experience greater access to society's structural resources, while those at the bottom lack quality access to them. Latinos are a unique ethnic group in America because they are comprised of several different ethnicities and nationalities. Consequently, Bonilla-Silva notes their positioning on the American racial continuum contains much variation, and he distinguishes Latinos based on their skin tone. While some Latinos enjoy a favorable group positioning, he convincingly argues the majority of Latinos are positioned near or at the bottom of the continuum that makes up the American racial hierarchy.

Latinos frequently experience interpersonal racism as well as structural inequalities and economic disadvantages that manifest themselves in several ways. Economically, Latinos earn on average the lowest wages of the four largest American racial and ethnic groups (United States Census Bureau 2011), and about one quarter of the Latino population lives below the poverty line (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2014). Compounding this issue, certain regulations hinder Latino enrollment in public assisted programs. Some immigrants are barred from program participation, and these regulations tend to result in an underutilization of public assisted programs by eligible foreign and native born Latinos (Brown 2013; Enchautegui 1995). Thus, Latinos not only experience disproportionately high rates of economic strain from low wages and high poverty rates, but they also encounter distinct barriers when trying to utilize one of the most legitimate forms of economic coping, public assisted programs, when compared to Anglos and African Americans.

Moreover, approximately half of the Latino population views their current situation in America as deteriorating, as they report being worse off this year than the previous one (Lopez and Minushkin 2008). Latinos frequently report experiencing difficulty finding and maintaining a job, being questioned about their immigration status, worried about deportation (either for themselves or a friend), and expressed low levels of confidence in the criminal justice system.

While the societal landscape of America is perceived as difficult for Latinos, these difficulties are heightened for Latino immigrants. The nation has experienced a growing concern over immigration in national opinion polls, which has consequently resulted in a large increase in state and local level legislation targeting immigrants and penalizing immigrant violators (Chavez and Provine 2009). Foreign born Latinos are seemingly cognizant of the effects of these structural inequalities, as they consistently are more likely to report encountering occupational difficulties, official questioning about their immigrant status, feeling worried about deportation, and expressing low levels of confidence in the criminal justice system than native born Latinos (Lopez and Light 2009; Lopez and Minushkin 2008).

Consequently, the current social environment that Latino Americans, especially immigrants, find themselves in is full of stressors that result in experiencing negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety, or anger. According to GST, these negative emotions increase the likelihood that Latinos would turn towards acts of crime or deviance as a coping mechanism.¹ However, the presence of legal and viable means of coping with these strains and negative emotions for Latinos should reduce the probability of coping through deviant behavior. As mentioned earlier, there are a variety of legal internal and external forms of coping that are effective. This study seeks to test the impact of an understudied form of coping with strain and negative emotions that is both internal and external: religion.

Religion and coping

Religion has received little attention as a coping mechanism within GST research, perhaps because Agnew (1992) did not include it in his list of proposed conditioning factors. However, religion has the potential to serve as a unique and effective means of both internal and external coping. Religion can serve as an internal means of coping through acts of personal devotion. Religious individuals oftentimes turn to their sacred texts, prayer, and meditation for guidance, direction, and comfort (Stark and Bainbridge 1996; Stark and Finke 2000). These internalized religious practices would prove especially useful in highly stressful times or during crises as they can alleviate the negative emotions associated with them. Pargament and his colleagues (Pargament 2001; Pargament et al. 1998; Pargament, Koenig, and Perez 2000) demonstrated religion's ability to internally cope with stressful situations such as plane crashes, the Oklahoma City bombing, major life stressors for college students, and elderly hospitalized patients dealing with serious medical illnesses. Religion also provides an external means of coping. Religious institutions and congregations provide communal forms of coping, as individuals are afforded access to social networks of people with a shared commonality. The social networks found within religious congregations foster real friendships and provide community networks, educational resources, and economic opportunities, which can alleviate the structural obstacles individuals face, especially racial minorities (Emerson 2006; Martinez and Dougherty 2013; Stark and Finke 2000).

Religious cultural contexts are associated with lower county-level violent crimes, and they moderate violence stemming from disadvantages within African American communities (Ulmer and Harris 2013) and lower levels of marijuana use among adolescents (Ulmer et al. 2012). Previous studies also have used religion as a viable means of coping with a number of stressful situations ranging from dementia caregiving (Connell and Gibson 1997) to negative life events and dysphoria (Hettler and Cohen 1998). Jang and Johnson (2003, 2005) utilized GST and found religion to be a viable means of coping with strain and negative emotions for African Americans. They found religiosity significantly buffered the effects of negative emotions on deviance, and this buffering effect was more salient among women than men. The distinct religiosity of Latinos should produce a similar buffering effect for both strain and negative emotions.

¹While GST is primarily a micro-level theory and focuses on the individual level mechanisms that lead to crime and deviance (such as negative emotions and personalized forms of strain), it does not overlook the structural mechanisms that contribute to crime and deviance. Traditional strain theory (see Merton 1938) attributed crime and deviance to structural issues. GST (see Agnew 1992, 2005) argued that the structural disadvantages and strain create negative emotions, which individuals try to cope with on a personal level. One method of coping is through crime and deviance.

Latino religiosity

Latino Americans exhibit high levels of religiosity, which can function as a viable and legitimate means of coping with stressors. While various religious faith traditions contain Latinos, most American Latinos identify as either Catholic or Protestant, with the vast majority identifying as Catholic (D'Antonio, Davidson, and Hoge 2007). Latinos report high levels of personal piety, such as prayer, church attendance, and religious salience, and among Catholics, they tend to be more devout than their Anglo counterparts (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Latino religion in the United States is also heavily influenced through the charismatic movement, as over half of Latino Catholics and Protestants identify their religion as being spirit-filled. This continually growing charismatic influence stresses the importance of God's ongoing daily interactions with individuals, and depicts an image of God who is active in daily activities (Suro et al. 2007). The depiction of an active God coupled with high levels of personal religious devotion would foster a practical means of internal coping.

In addition to high levels of personal religiosity, Latino congregations, especially Catholic parishes, play a distinct role in the lives of their members. Predominantly Latino Catholic parishes differ from their Anglo counterparts, as they are more likely to be inwardly focused. Latino congregations focus more on providing for the needs of its members than those of the broader community, which is more common within Anglo parishes. Latino parishes tend to cater to the cultural needs of Latinos and are especially sensitive to single parent families, and congregational members tend to be more involved in parish activities beyond weekly service attendance than Anglos (Espinosa 2007; Palmer-Boyes 2010).

These congregations play a vital role in the lives of Latinos in the United States and provide a number of social benefits to their members. Latino congregations impact family and civic life, as greater church attendance is correlated with healthy and happier parental relationships as well as higher rates of marriage (Espinosa 2008; Wilcox and Hernández 2007). Moreover, many Latino churches provide a setting for their congregants to develop ties that lead to increased job opportunities and social advancement. These congregations play a vital role in combating the effects of poverty for Latinos by providing venues for community organizing as well as a sense of empowerment (Stevens-Arroyo 1998). The unique focus of these congregations on the specific needs of its members would serve to reduce the amount of strain and negative emotions experienced by Latinos because they would have a reliable and accessible means of coping with the difficult situations they experience. Therefore, I propose that religion will have a direct effect on reducing deviance for Latinos, buffer the effects of strain on negative emotions and deviance, and mediate the effects of negative emotions on deviance, which leads to my next four hypotheses. These hypotheses are listed below and Figure 1 provides a causal diagram of them.

H1: Following GST, strain is positively correlated with negative emotions for Latino Americans.

H2: Following GST, both strain and negative emotions are positively correlated with deviance for Latino Americans.

H3: Among Latino Americans, religiosity is negatively correlated with negative emotions.

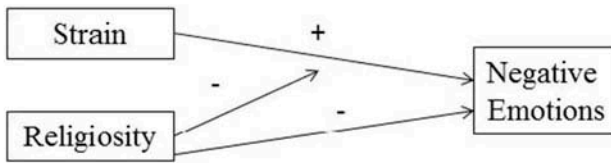
H4: Among Latino Americans religiosity is negatively correlated with deviance.

H5: Religiosity buffers the effects of strain on negative emotions for Latinos Americans.

H6: Religiosity buffers the effects of both strain and negative emotions on deviance for Latino Americans.

While religious congregations play an important role in the lives of American Latinos, they are especially vital for Latino immigrants. A number of studies reveal the importance of religious congregations for immigrants because they provide a means of maintaining their group identity, promoting group

Causal Diagram of the Effects of Strain and Religiosity on Negative Emotions for Latino Youth



Causal Diagram of the Effects of Strain, Negative Emotions, and Religiosity for Latino Youth

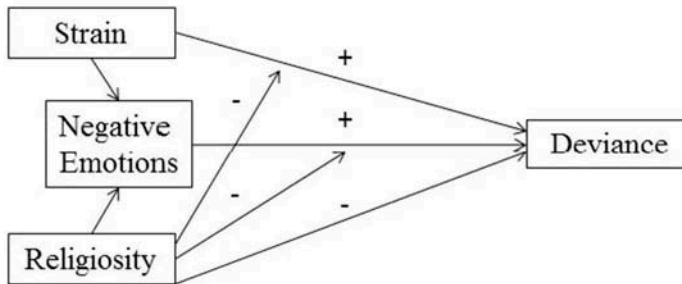


Figure 1. Causal diagram of Hypotheses 1–6.

solidarity, and preserving cultural and ethnic traditions. Religious congregations also help support first-generation immigrants adjust to a new environment, and provide a source of identity to the children of immigrants, the second generation (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000a, 2000b; Herberg 1960; Peek 2005; Smith 1978; Warner and Wittner 1998; Zhou and Bankston 1998). These effects are especially salient for Latino immigrants, as many congregations specialize in helping them integrate into America and oftentimes serve as a haven for Latino immigrants (Deck 1989). Therefore, the buffering effect of religion on strain and negative emotions would be stronger for Latino immigrants than native born Latinos. This is crucial since foreign born Latinos are also more likely to encounter stressful situations and experience strain within their current environment and leads to my last four hypotheses.

H7: The direct negative effects of religiosity on negative emotions are stronger for foreign born than native born Latino Americans.

H8: The direct negative effects of religiosity on deviance are stronger for foreign born than native born Latino Americans.

H9: The buffering effects of religiosity (see H5) for negative emotions are stronger for foreign born than native born Latino Americans.

H10: The buffering effects of religiosity (see H6) for deviance are stronger for foreign born than native born Latino Americans.

Data and methods

Data for this study come from the first and second waves of the restricted-use sample of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). Add Health is a longitudinal

nationally representative survey collected during the 1994–1995 school year with 18,924 student participants in seventh through 12th grade in the first wave, 13,570 of whom were also surveyed in Wave 2. Add Health contains an extensive array of survey items ranging from social, economic, psychological and physical well-being, including several questions on delinquency and alcohol use. Eighty high schools were systematically selected from over 26,000 schools sorted by enrollment size, school type, region, location, and percent white and then divided into several groups for sampling. Every high school selected that did not contain the seventh and eighth grades was asked to provide a list of middle or junior high schools that contributed to the schools incoming class. From this list of feeder schools, 52 schools were selected with each high school having no more than one feeder school included. Respondents were selected using a multistage, stratified, cluster sampling procedure of schools with a total of 132 total schools participating.

All students who were in attendance at these schools on the day of the interview in 1994 completed an in-school questionnaire. A sample of these students were also administered a follow-up in-home survey in 1995 using laptops, headphones, and audio-recordings in an attempt to encourage honest answers to the survey's more personal questions. These in-home surveys included an oversampling of students with certain racial and ethnic backgrounds, including specific Latino ethnicities, namely Puerto Ricans and Cubans (see Chantala 2006 for an in-depth look at the methodology and sampling design used in the Add Health). Wave 2 data were collected from those who had not yet graduated high school from April to August of 1996. Given this study's focus on Latino Americans, the present sample only includes the 2,258 respondents who identified as being from Hispanic or Latino origins and were in both waves of the study. From this sub sample, 1746 or 76.01% are born in America, while 551 or 23.99% are foreign born.

Deviance

Deviance is measured using a combination of several items from Wave 2, which form two different scales measuring lagged deviance: delinquency and heavy drinking. First, in order to measure delinquency, respondents were asked how frequently they committed fifteen different delinquent acts in the past twelve months, and the provided answer choices ranged from 0 (never) to 3 (5 times or more). These fifteen items are: (1) "paint graffiti or signs on someone else's property or in a public place," (2) "deliberately damage property that doesn't belong to you," (3) "lie to your parents or guardians about where you had been or whom you were with," (4) "take something from a store without paying for it," (5) "get into a serious physical fight," (6) "hurt someone bad enough that they needed bandages or care from a doctor or nurse," (7) "run away from home," (8) "drive a car without the owner's permission," (9) "steal something worth more than \$50," (10) "go into a house or building to steal something," (11) "use or threaten to use a weapon to get something from someone," (12) "sell marijuana or other drugs," (13) "steal something worth less than \$50," (14) "take part in a fight where your group of friends was against another group," and (15) "were loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place." These items were combined together to form a scale, which was log transformed on account of the positively skewed distribution (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). Several other studies have employed similarly constructed scales using various waves of Add Health (see Dornbusch et al. 2001; Gault-Sherman 2011, 2013; Kort-Butler 2008).

In addition to delinquency, I also utilize a two-item index measuring heavy drinking as another form of deviance. Respondents were asked how many days they (1) "drank five or more drinks in a row" (i.e., binge drinking) and (2) "gotten drunk or 'very, very high' on alcohol" during the 12 months prior to the survey being administered. The possible responses range from 1 (never) to 7 (everyday). These two measures were summed forming a 13-point index with a high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). This coding is identical to that used by Jang, Ferguson, and Rhodes (2016).

Strain

I formulated three separate indices from Wave 1 to measure Agnew's (1992) three ideal types of strain. First, in order to account for strain originating from the presence or perceived presence of negative stimuli, a four item index was created measuring a respondent's vicarious as well as experienced crime victimization. Respondents were asked to report the frequency they experienced the following incidents in the 12 months prior to taking the survey: (1) they saw someone shot or stabbed by another person, (2) they had a knife or gun pulled on them, (3) they were stabbed, and (4) they were jumped (Cronbach's = .73).² The possible responses included 0 (never), 1 (once), and 2 (more than once). Second, to measure strain stemming from the removal of positive stimuli from the individual, I summed two items assessing health/emotional strain. Respondents were asked how often they had a health or emotional problem that caused them to miss (1) a day of school or (2) a social or recreational activity in the month prior to taking the survey. The possible answer choices ranged from 0 (never) to 4 (every day). The previous two indices measuring criminal victimization and health or emotional strain are identical to the measures employed by Jang and his colleagues (2016). Finally, as a measure of strain deriving from the failure to achieve positively valued goals, I summed whether or not (yes = 1) the respondent had ever (1) received an out-of-school suspension and (2) been expelled from school.

Negative emotions

Negative emotions serve as both a dependent variable (Wave 2) and independent variable (Wave 1). The experience of negative emotions is measured using a nine item index of variables measured on a scale of 0 (never) to 3 (most of the time or all of the time) that is similar to the indices used by other studies (see Jang et al. 2016; Kort-Butler 2008). Respondents were asked how often the following things were true during the past week: (1) "felt that you could not shake off the blues, even with the help of your friends," (2) "felt depressed," (3) "felt fearful," (4) "felt happy" (reversed coded), (5) "felt lonely," (6) "felt sad," (7) "felt life was not worth living," (8) "thought your life had been a failure," and (9) "felt hopeful about the future" (reverse coded). These nine items form an additive index measuring negative emotions, that will subsequently be referred to as depression/anxiety (Cronbach's = .77 in Wave 1 and .76 in Wave 2).

Religiosity

To measure religiosity, I constructed two indices accounting for both the communal and personal aspect of religion from Wave 1. Two items comprise the communal aspect (Cronbach's = .66), and both of these variables are measured using a four item scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (more than once a week). Respondents were asked how frequently in the past 12 months they (1) attended religious services and (2) took part in special activities at their congregation outside of regular worship attendance, such as classes, retreats, small groups, or choir. In order to account for the personal aspect of religiosity, two additional items are summed to form a separate index (Cronbach's = .80). First, respondents were asked: "How important (if at all) is your religious faith to you?" Four answer choices were provided, ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (more important than anything else). Next respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (more than once a day) how frequently they prayed privately in a non-church setting. The bifurcation of religiosity into communal and personal aspects is especially salient for this study. Agnew (1992) stressed the importance of both internal and external factors for coping with negative emotions in a

²Since Agnew emphasized both the presence and perceived presence of negative stimuli as a form of strain, I have included measures of actual criminal victimization as well as vicarious victimization (witnessing someone else getting stabbed or shot).

legitimate manner. As mentioned earlier, religion provides both internal and external support to its adherents and these two indices, subsequently referred to as personal and communal religiosity, capture these unique dimensions of religiosity.

Controls

Several potentially confounding factors are controlled for in all models using measures from the first wave of Add Health. These include a number of standard demographic measures such as: age (in years), gender (male = 1), and whether or not the respondent was born in the United States (foreign born = 1). Social class is controlled for through parental education (0 = never went to school, 1 = eight grade or less, 2 = less than a high school diploma but greater than eighth grade, 3 = High school diploma or general education development (GED), 4 = some college or vocational training post high school, 5 = college graduate, 6 = professional training beyond a 4 year degree). In addition to these demographic measures, I also account for whether or not the respondent is Catholic (1 = Catholic) since Catholicism is the dominant religious tradition among American Latinos (D’Antonio et al. 2007)

Finally, as a measure of social bonding, I control for how close the respondents are to their parents. Parental attachment is consistently used as a measure of social control or bonding as it is a pivotal source of social support and socialization and expected to be correlated with all three dependent variables (Agnew 1992; Agnew and White 1992; Jang and Johnson 2003). This variable is especially salient for Latino youth since *familia* plays an important role within Latino culture, and strong parental and family bonding are known to operate as protective sources against youth problem behaviors (Castro et al. 2007). Parental bonding is measured using the average of how close students felt to their mother and father individually on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Table 1 includes descriptive statistics and bivariate tests for all independent and dependent variables broken down by nativity. Results from bivariate analyses indicate that native born Latino youth are more deviant than their foreign born counterparts, as they participate in delinquent acts and abuse alcohol at higher rates ($p \leq .001$). This difference aligns with prior findings suggesting lower rates of crime are associated with Latino immigrants (see Rumbaut and Ewing 2007) There is no significant difference in depression/anxiety between native and foreign born Latino adolescents in Wave 1 or 2. With regard to strain, native born Latinos are more likely to experience criminal victimization than foreign born Latinos ($p \leq .001$), but both groups report comparable levels of strain

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for native and foreign born Latinos.

Variable	Range	Native born	Foreign born
<i>Dependent variables (W2)</i>			
Delinquency***	0–4	0.96	0.51
Alcohol abuse***	0–12	1.69	0.81
Depression/anxiety	0–24	4.38	4.20
<i>Independent variables (W1)</i>			
Strain			
Criminal victimization***	0–8	0.85	0.49
Health	0–8	0.77	0.66
Suspended/expelled	0–2	0.41	0.37
Depression/anxiety	0–24	4.15	4.26
Personal religiosity	2–9	6.65	6.97
Communal religiosity	2–8	4.61	4.73
Socioeconomic status***	0–6	2.81	2.28
Male ^a	0–1	0.52	0.49
Age**	12–21	15.48	16.19
Catholic ^a	0–1	0.55	0.61
Parental bonding	1–5	4.45	4.49
<i>n</i>		1,746	551

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (chi-square for cross-tabs, *t*-tests for means; two-tailed tests)

^aRow percentages reported

Table 2. Unstandardized OLS regression coefficients representing the effects of religiosity, nativity, strain, social bonding, and controls at Wave 1 on lagged depression/anxiety at Wave 2.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	4.774**	5.873***	5.802***
<i>Controls</i>			
Socioeconomic status	−0.139	−0.161*	−0.157*
Male	−1.343***	−1.350***	−1.349***
Age	0.143	0.136	0.141
Catholic	−0.449	−0.462	−0.429
Parental bonding	−0.500**	−0.495**	−0.502*
<i>Strain</i>			
Criminal victimization	0.379***	0.376***	0.355***
Health	0.579***	0.576***	0.552***
Suspended/expelled	0.471*	0.479*	0.498*
<i>Religiosity</i>			
Personal	−0.005	−0.126	−0.144
Communal	−0.132*	−0.178	−0.159
Foreign born	−0.354	−0.433	−0.468
<i>Two-way interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB		0.137	0.305
Comm Religion*FB		0.069	−0.010
Pers Religion*Victim		−0.026	−0.062
Comm Religion*Victim		−0.047	−0.013
Pers Religion*Health		0.019	−0.003
Comm Religion*Health		−0.009	−0.008
Pers Religion*Suspend		0.206	0.245
Comm Religion*Suspend		0.066	0.026
<i>Three-way interaction</i>			
Pers Religion*FB*Victim			0.245
Comm Religion*FB*Victim			−0.168
Pers Religion*FB*Health			0.185
Comm Religion*FB*Health			−0.005
Pers Religion*FB*Suspend			−0.242
Comm Religion*FB*Suspend			0.189
<i>n</i>	1,873	1,873	1,873
R-squared	.1466	.1568	.1612

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

resulting from health conditions or school suspensions/expulsions. Levels of personal and communal religiosity are also similar for both native and foreign born Latino youth. Additionally, native born Latinos have families of higher socioeconomic status and are younger than foreign born Latinos.

Analytic strategy

I ran a series of multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions to test my hypotheses, and I utilize the sampling weight GSWGT2 for the longitudinal data to adjust for the complex survey format of Add Health. Additionally, I adjust for the complex sampling design in order to prevent the underestimation of the coefficient’s standard errors by using the SAS procedure PROC SURVEYREG (Chantala 2006). All missing cases are the product of listwise deletion.

I test the effects of strain (H1), religiosity (H3), and nativity status (H7) on negative emotions using a lagged longitudinal model (Table 2). I also employ two-way interaction terms involving religiosity and stain (religiosity $\times$ strain to test H5) and religiosity and nativity status (religiosity $\times$ foreign born to test H7). I also utilize a three-way interaction term for nativity, strain, and religiosity (religiosity $\times$ strain $\times$ foreign born to test H9).

Moreover I test the effects of strain and negative emotions (H2), religiosity (H4) and nativity status (H8) on deviant behavior, using two measures of deviant behavior: delinquency (Table 3) and heavy drinking (Table 4). Once again I test these using a lagged longitudinal model (Wave 2 dependent variable). For all models of deviant behavior I employ two-way interactions of

Table 3. Unstandardized OLS regression coefficients representing the effects of religiosity, nativity, depression/anxiety, strain, social bonding, and controls at Wave 1 on lagged delinquency at Wave 2.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	1.647***	1.951***	2.009 ***
<i>Controls</i>			
Socioeconomic status	0.069**	0.067**	0.068
Male	0.078	0.084	0.083
Age	−0.083***	−0.084***	−0.087***
Catholic	0.076	0.075	0.077
Parental bonding	−0.007	−0.011	−0.015
<i>Strain</i>			
Criminal victimization	0.149***	0.148***	0.145***
Health	0.021	0.027	0.023
Suspended/expelled	0.237***	0.237**	0.244**
Depression/anxiety	0.030**	0.027*	0.028*
<i>Religiosity</i>			
Personal	−0.031	−0.031	−0.034
Communal	0.007	−0.017	0.007
Foreign born	−0.292***	−0.285***	−0.290***
<i>Two-way interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB		−0.051*	−0.038
Comm Religion*FB		0.014	−0.036
Pers Religion*Victim		−0.014*	−0.017*
Comm Religion*Victim		−0.011	0.005
Pers Religion*Health		−0.024	−0.030
Comm Religion*Health		−0.004	−0.002
Pers Religion*Suspend		0.026	0.033
Comm Religion*Suspend		0.044	0.021
Pers Religion*Depression		0.010	0.002
Comm Religion*Depression		−0.001	−0.001
<i>Three-way interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB*Victim			0.015
Comm Religion*FB*Victim			−0.035
Pers Religion*FB*Health			0.031
Comm Religion*FB*Health			0.005
Pers Religion*FB*Suspend			−0.018
Comm Religion*FB*Suspend			0.096
Pers Religion*FB*Depression			−0.004
Comm Religion*FB*Depression			−0.006
<i>n</i>	1,831	1,831	1,831
R-squared	.1773	.1663	.1693

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

religiosity and negative emotions (religiosity $\times$ negative emotions to test H6) and religiosity and nativity status (religiosity $\times$ foreign born to test H8). Additionally, I use a three-way interaction term of religiosity, negative emotions, and nativity status (religiosity $\times$ negative emotions $\times$ foreign born to test H10).³

Results

Table 2 displays the lagged results from regressing depression/anxiety at Wave 2 on religiosity, nativity, strain, social bonding, and controls at Wave 1. Model 1, which does not contain interaction terms, reveals that higher levels of parental bonding are negatively correlated with experiencing depression or anxiety. Additionally, males are less likely than females to experience depression or anxiety. H1 finds support in Model 1 as all three measures of strain: criminal victimization, health strain, and being suspended or expelled from school are positively correlated with depression/anxiety. Consistent with H3, communal religiosity is

³In ancillary analyses all interactions were run individually. The results were consistent with the models shown, and all significant differences are footnoted.

Table 4. Unstandardized OLS regression coefficients representing the effects of religiosity, nativity, depression/anxiety, strain, social bonding, and controls at Wave 1 on lagged alcohol abuse at Wave 2.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	−2.818*	−2.470*	−2.510*
<i>Controls</i>			
Socioeconomic status	0.135*	0.138*	0.137*
Male	0.421*	0.431*	0.420*
Age	0.232***	0.233***	0.229***
Catholic	0.421**	0.447**	0.455**
Parental bonding	−0.111	−0.105	−0.080
<i>Strain</i>			
Criminal victimization	0.328***	0.313***	0.327***
Health	0.123	0.135	0.159
Suspended/expelled	0.301	0.310	0.335*
Depression/anxiety	0.021	0.016	0.014
<i>Religiosity</i>			
Personal	−0.080*	−0.038	−0.061
Communal	−0.003	−0.034	−0.019
Foreign born	−0.776***	−0.749***	−0.782***
<i>Two-way interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB		−0.159	−0.170
Comm Religion*FB		0.099	−0.054
Pers Religion*Victim		−0.014	−0.012
Comm Religion*Victim		0.013	0.039
Pers Religion*Health		0.034	0.058
Comm Religion*Health		0.020	0.024
Pers Religion*Suspend		−0.018	0.016
Comm Religion*Suspend		0.012	−0.023
Pers Religion*Depression		−0.025*	−0.028*
Comm Religion*Depression		0.006	0.003
<i>Three-way interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB*Victim			−0.144
Comm Religion*FB*Victim			−0.206*
Pers Religion*FB*Health			−0.163*
Comm Religion*FB*Health			−0.020
Pers Religion*FB*Suspend			−0.128
Comm Religion*FB*Suspend			0.191
Pers Religion*FB*Depression			−2.510
Comm Religion*FB*Depression			0.137
n	1,851	1,851	1,851
R-squared	.1397	.1492	.1619

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

negatively correlated with experiencing depression or anxiety. Reflecting the bivariate analyses, no significant correlation is found between nativity and depression/anxiety.

Models 2 and 3 tests the moderating effects of religiosity and strain on depression/anxiety for both native and foreign born Latinos, and no significant interactions are present.

Table 3 displays the lagged results from regressing delinquency at Wave 2 on religiosity, nativity, negative emotions, strain, social bonding as well as the control variables at Wave 1. Once again Model 1 tests the direct effects, and it reveals that age is negatively correlated with delinquency. Consistent with H2, students who reported experiencing strain in the form of criminal victimization or being suspended or expelled from their school at Wave 1 are more likely to report committing delinquent acts at Wave 2. Additionally, higher levels of depression or anxiety at Wave 1 are positively correlated with delinquency at Wave 2. Mirroring the bivariate analyses, foreign born Latinos remain less likely to partake in delinquent acts than native born Latinos when all the controls are included in the model. No significant direct relationship exists between religiosity at Wave 1 and delinquency at Wave 2.

Model 2 tests the relationship between religiosity and strain, depression/anxiety, and nativity on delinquency through the use of two-way interactions. Personal religiosity amplifies the effects for foreign born Latinos, as higher rates of personal religiosity at Wave 1 reduce the likelihood of juvenile

delinquency at Wave 2 for foreign born Latinos.⁴ Model 3 includes the three-way interaction terms between religiosity, nativity and strain/depression or anxiety, and no significant effects were found.

Table 4 reveals the lagged effects of religiosity, nativity, depression/anxiety, strain, parental bonding, and other controls at Wave 1 on alcohol abuse at Wave 2. Model 1 reveals that parental educational levels, age, being Catholic, and being male are positively correlated with abusing alcohol at Wave 2. Consistent with H2 those who reported witnessing or experiencing criminal victimization at Wave 1 are more likely to report abusing alcohol at Wave 2. Personal religiosity is negatively correlated with abusing alcohol, which provides support for H4, but communal religiosity is not significantly correlated with alcohol abuse. Foreign born Latinos report lower levels of alcohol abuse than native born Latinos.

The interactions between religiosity and strain, depression/anxiety and nativity are displayed in Model 2. Interestingly, while personal religiosity does not have a direct effect on negative emotions (Table 2), it does buffer the effects of depression/anxiety on alcohol abuse for Latino adolescents in accordance with H6. Thus, among Latino individuals with high levels of depression/anxiety, those with high levels of personal religiosity are less likely to cope with these negative feelings by abusing alcohol than depressed/anxious Latino students with low levels of religiosity.

Model 3 includes the three-way interaction terms and reveals that personal religiosity's moderating effect of depression/anxiety on heavy drinking is consistent for both native and foreign born Latino students. Additionally, among foreign born Latino youth, personal religiosity buffers the effects criminal victimization on abusing alcohol, while communal religiosity buffers health strain on alcohol abuse. Thus, the internal and external components of religiosity function in distinct ways for foreign born Latinos as they alleviate different forms of strain.

Discussion and conclusion

The current work extends the growing body of literature on GST by applying the theory to an understudied minority group that is disproportionately represented in the nation's criminal sentencing: Latino Americans. Furthermore, this study proposes that religion serves as a viable and legitimate coping mechanism for Latino youth that directly reduces experiencing negative emotions and deviant behavior as well as buffering the negative impact of both strain and negative emotions. Additionally, I hypothesize that the buffering effect of religion for Latino youth would be stronger among those who are foreign born as opposed to native born.

Overall the results provide support for my hypotheses. GST is a general theory applicable for all racial and ethnic groups, but the heightened structural disadvantages Latinos face makes it especially salient for them. However, the application of GST for Latinos has received little empirical attention. My results contribute to understanding Latino rates of deviant behavior, and empirically demonstrates that GST is applicable among Latino youth, as strain is positively correlated with both negative emotions and deviance and negative emotions are positively correlated with deviance in a similar fashion to other racial and ethnic groups (Agnew and White 1992; Brezina 1996; Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle 2001; Broidy 2001; Jang and Johnson 2003). Moreover, religiosity is negatively correlated with depression/anxiety and alcohol abuse, but not directly correlated with delinquency, which is similar to findings among African Americans (Jang and Johnson 2005). Also, religiosity serves as a buffer for depression/anxiety on alcohol abuse. Therefore, religion legitimately provides a viable form of coping for Latino youth as it offers both an internal and external coping mechanism.

These findings also have implications for the sociology of religion. Religiosity is multifaceted and should not be treated as a generic concept, and in this study the various dimensions of religiosity do

⁴The coefficient in the model shown was not significant ($p = .202$). However, in the ancillary analyses run when individual and corporate religiosity were interacted with nativity without the rest of the interactions included, the coefficient was significant ($b = -0.65$ and $p = .015$). Consequently, this interaction is marked as significant in the table.

not work in unison with each other with regards to depression/anxiety and deviance. I find that different components of religiosity impact Latino youth in distinct ways. Specially, I find that communal forms of religiosity helps Latino youth cope with depression and anxiety and alleviates the negative impact of criminal victimization on deviance among foreign born Latinos. Conversely, personal religiosity directly and indirectly reduces alcohol abuse for Latinos students by buffering the effects the depression and anxiety, and lowers participation in delinquent acts for foreign born Latinos. Religion is both corporate and private, and by bifurcating religiosity, the specific beneficial mechanisms of religion on deviance are better teased out. Agnew discussed the importance of internal and external coping mechanisms for reducing deviance, and similarly, religion provides individuals with both types of coping mechanisms. Personal religiosity can enhance individual problem-solving skills and morally convict individuals to cope with their negative emotions in a pro-social manner. Likewise, communal forms of religiosity provide individuals with a social support group as well as access to economic resources. Thus, future studies would do well to account for the different components of religion to fully understand its complex nature (Olson and Warber 2008).

Interestingly, foreign born Latinos are less likely than native born ones to participate in both forms of deviant behaviors. Even though foreign born Latinos typically report worrying about finding a job, deportation, and being asked about their immigration status at higher rates than those who are native born (Lopez and Light 2009; Lopez and Minushkin 2008), Latino foreign born youth participate in delinquent behavior less than their native born counterparts. This is an important finding in and of itself. As mentioned earlier, public opinion, and consequently state and local legislature, believe foreign born Latinos are more prone to crime than those who are native born (Chavez and Provine 2009). This finding contributes to the notion that the higher crime and incarceration rates of foreign born Latinos are more the product of restrictive treatment from the criminal justice system than the difficulties that accompany immigration (Hagan and Palloni 1999; Steffensmeier and Demuth 2000; Stowell, Martinez, and Cancino 2012). Despite these lower rates of deviance, religiosity still provides a distinct buffer for health strain and criminal victimization on alcohol abuse and reduces delinquent behavior for foreign born Latinos, which supports H10 and highlights the important role religiosity plays in the lives of foreign born Latinos.

Future studies should determine what other venues of coping foreign born Latinos pursue instead of deviant coping. More work is needed to determine what other factors buffer strain and negative emotions for foreign born Latinos, and if there are consistent coping mechanisms for all immigrants, regardless of ethnicity. It would also be beneficial for future research to explore if there are generational differences in coping strategies for minority groups. Portes and Zhou (1993) propose that among some minority groups, including Mexican Americans, the immigrant assimilation process is no longer an upward trajectory from working class to middle class. Instead, immigration in the United States reflects a segmented pattern where new immigrants enter the nation at various socioeconomic starting points and experience upward, downward, or lateral mobility at varying rates. Consequently, second generation individuals can experience greater hardships and structural inequalities than first generation immigrants. Thus, the structural inequalities faced by the parents of native born, especially second generation, Latino youth could cause them to hold less optimism for their own upward mobility and look towards deviant forms of coping as a result. Conversely, foreign born youth who are less aware of the nation's structural hardships could more optimistically believe in the achieving the American dream through conventional and socially accepted means (Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller 2005; Zhou et al. 2008). A recent study has displayed that some children of Mexican American immigrants do not succumb to patterns of segmented assimilation and are able to make impressive intergenerational gains despite their limited access to resources and negative stereotypes (Lee 2013). The findings from this study suggest other important consequences arise for second and third generation Latinos, as native born Latino youth are significantly more likely to experience criminal victimization than foreign born Latinos. Additionally, native born Latinos exhibit higher rates of juvenile delinquency and alcohol abuse. Future studies should examine the other consequences of straining experiences for second generation Latinos, and if these second

generation individuals employ various coping mechanisms in response to these high levels of strain. Moreover, future studies should explore if these effects are consistent for other second generation immigrants, such as Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants who often experience high rates of economic segmented assimilation.

The present study also has implications for the burgeoning literature on the Hispanic paradox, which finds a relatively good health profile for Latino Americans despite their socioeconomic disadvantages (Markides and Coreil 1986). Prior research has found the presence of ethnic enclaves to contribute to these positive health outcomes (Eschbach et al. 2004; Stroope et al. 2015). My findings reveal communal religiosity impacts rates of depression and anxiety as well as alcohol abuse for young Latinos; two outcomes that have direct health implications. Moreover, the significant differences in delinquency and alcohol abuse between native and foreign born Latino youth supports the notion that the benefits of ethnic enclaves are stronger for immigrants than more acculturated Latinos (Zemore 2007). Future studies need to tease out the other differences that exist between native and foreign born Latinos, and if they help account for the Hispanic paradox.

In conclusion the present study provides an empirical test of Agnew's GST (Agnew 2005) for an understudied minority group. This study also finds that religion can serve as alternative form of coping for Latinos, reducing depression/anxiety and some forms of deviant behavior as well as buffering the effects of strain and negative emotions on both depression/anxiety and deviance. Furthermore, religiosity appears to benefit foreign born Latinos more than native born ones with regards to alcohol abuse, providing a legitimate means of coping that should be accounted for future studies in GST (Jang and Johnson 2005). Finally, I recommend future studies to further explore the various coping strategies employed by foreign Latino youth that makes them less likely to participate in deviant behaviors than their native born counterparts, and if second generation Latinos experience heightened strain as a result of segmented assimilation.

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