Immigrant Generation and Offending: Gender Differences Over the Life Course

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Background

- Research has consistently shown that first generation immigrants are less likely to be involved in crime compared to their US-born counterparts. However, the majority of that research focuses on males, leaving a scarcity of knowledge about immigrant women and offending.

- Also lacking in the available research is an understanding about how offending is manifested in the life course with relation to other life events, such as educational attainment, employment, marriage, having children, and how the timing of these events are influenced.

Current Study

- Our study attempts to examine immigrant offending and other life events through a gendered and generational lens.

- The study is framed by the Segmented Assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993), which proposes different pathways and outcomes for different immigrants, as well as the Life Course Perspective (Elder, 1998), which demonstrates the significance of major life events and the importance of timing for these events.

Data

- Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) (2004)
  - A targeted study that focused on 1.5, 2nd, and 3rd generation immigrants
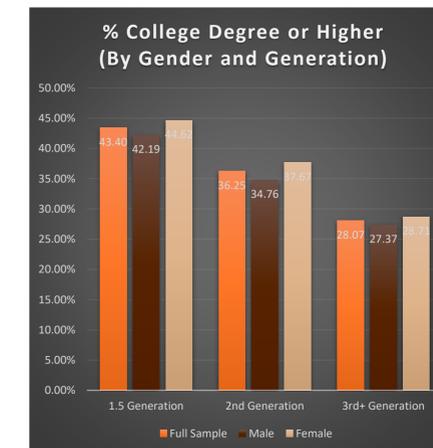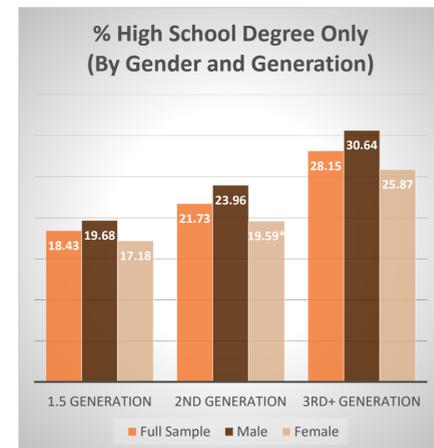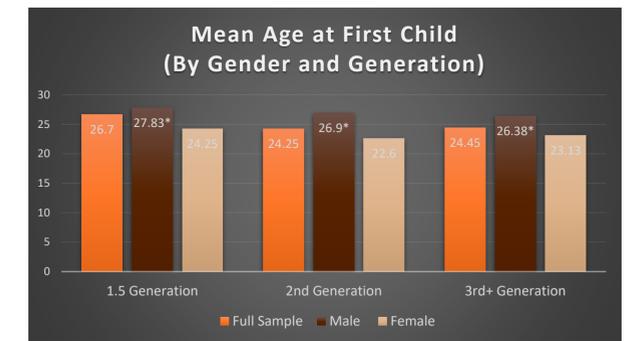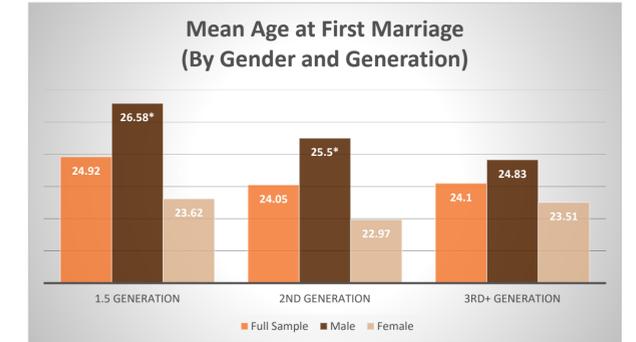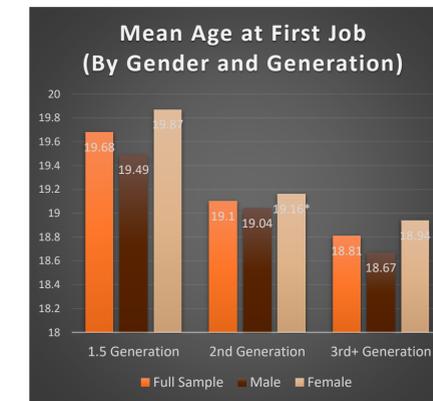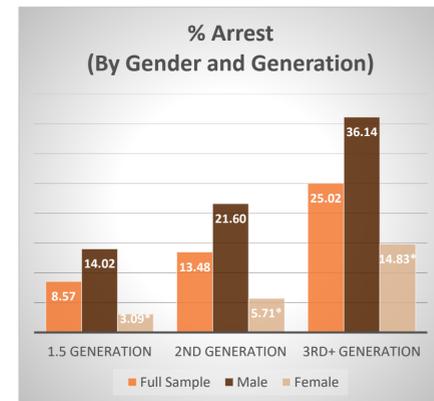 - Final sample included 4,655 telephone based interviews

Descriptive Results

Table 1: Percentages and Means By Gender and Immigrant Generation (N=4,655)

	Full Sample	1.5 Gen Male	1.5 Gen Female	2nd Gen Male	2nd Gen Female	3rd+ Gen Male	3rd+ Gen Female
Full Sample	100.00	17.47	17.38	19.10	19.96	12.48	13.62
Arrested	14.78	14.02	3.09*	21.60	5.71*	36.14	14.83*
Age	28.50	28.76	28.86	27.04	27.04	30.39	30.15
Ever Worked	96.22	95.69	93.70	96.06	96.23	98.28	98.42
Currently Employed	68.31	78.28*	63.06	75.53*	67.11	78.63*	63.94
Ever Married	40.77	38.01	48.08*	29.92	38.86*	44.58	49.53*
Currently Married	34.09	34.56	41.16	27.11	30.46	36.66	37.22
Have Children	41.42	32.60	48.21*	27.33	41.77*	44.92	60.09*
No High School Degree	5.16	5.66	6.18	3.71	3.55	7.40	5.52
HS Degree	22.26	19.68	17.18	23.96	19.59*	30.64	25.87
Some College	35.98	32.47	32.01	37.57	39.18	34.60	39.91
College	26.40	29.27	33.37	25.31	27.02	20.65	19.72
Post College	10.20	12.92	11.25	9.45	10.66	6.71	8.99
White NH	15.12	4.18	6.18	11.36	12.06	34.60	32.49
Black NH	9.56	0.62	0.87	0.90	2.15*	32.01	34.54
Asian	36.48	62.12	59.21	40.27	38.11	0.34	0.00
Latin American	38.84	33.09	33.75	47.47	47.69	33.05	32.97

* represents a significant difference between males and females at p<.05

Descriptive Charts

% Arrest (By Gender and Generation)

Mean Age at First Job (By Gender and Generation)

% High School Degree Only (By Gender and Generation)

% College Degree or Higher (By Gender and Generation)

Mean Age at First Marriage (By Gender and Generation)

Mean Age at First Child (By Gender and Generation)

Findings

- Females (all generations) are significantly less likely to have been arrested compared to their male counterparts.
- 2nd Generation females are significantly less likely to complete high school compared to 2nd generation males, and are significantly older at age of first job.
- 1.5 and 2nd Generation males are significantly more likely to be older than their female counterparts at first marriage, and males (all generations) are significantly more likely to be older at age of first child.