

Racially Disparate Impacts of Juvenile Drug Arrests on College Enrollment

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Introduction

Recent movements targeted at the differential treatment of minorities by the criminal justice system in the United States rest on the reality that Black and Latinx youths are treated more harshly both during and after an arrest by the American criminal justice system.¹ Much of these racial biases in policing have been fueled by the racialized policies of the War on Drugs, which have given legal grounds for controversial racial profiling and aggressive policing tactics (e.g., unwarranted “stop and frisk” searches, pretextual car stops, zero-tolerance policies, etc.) focused mainly on minority youths.² What are the consequences of racial bias and aggressive drug enforcement on the lives of youths in America? This study builds on prior work to consider the racialized effects of juvenile drug arrests on high school completion and examines whether these racialized effects exist for college enrollment—a significant steppingstone in the transition to adulthood that impacts lifelong earnings and unemployment.³

Over the last three decades, drug enforcement has become synonymous with racial profiling and selective policing. These racial biases in drug enforcement mean that Black and Latinx youths face an ever-constant risk of being randomly stopped and searched, without any probable cause. Conversely, white youths are targeted far less by law enforcement and run a significantly lower risk of getting

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1. Jeffrey Fagan, Ellen Slaughter, and Eliot Hartstone, “Blind Justice? The Impact of Race on the Juvenile Justice Process,” *Crime & Delinquency* 33, no. 2 (1987): 224–58.

2. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010); Jaimie Fellner, “Targeting Blacks: Drug Law Enforcement and Race in the United States” (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2008); Lawrence D. Bobo and Victor Thompson, “Unfair by Design: The War on Drugs Race, and the Legitimacy of the Criminal Justice System,” *Social Research* 73, no. 2 (2006): 445–72.

3. Marilyn J. Montgomery and James E. Côté, “College as a Transition to Adulthood,” in *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence*, eds. Gerald Adams and Michael Berzonsky (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 149–72.

caught with drugs and subsequently arrested.⁴ One consequence of this increased and unequal surveillance is the well-documented gap in drug arrests. Between 1980 and 2010, the rate of drug arrests for Black youths were more than double the rate of drug arrests for white youths, with the rate for Latinx youths not far behind their Black peers.⁵ Unlike other types of arrest, these racial disparities in juvenile drug arrests do not correspond to actual drug activity as white youths are actually slightly more likely to use or sell drugs than Black or Latinx youths.⁶

In this study, I argue that the well-documented prevalence of racial profiling in drug enforcement leads to a unique selection process among drug arrestees. Since Black and darker-phenotype Latinx youths run a significantly higher risk of being randomly stopped and subsequently arrested for low-level drug offenses, the “net” of arrests is cast widely for them. Therefore, arrested youths are more likely to include youths who do not otherwise engage in serious criminal and delinquent behavior. In contrast, since white youths are targeted less and rarely subjected to random searches, the “net” of arrests is cast more narrowly for these youths.⁷ Therefore, white youths who *are* arrested are more likely to be youths who engage in criminal and delinquent behaviors serious enough to garner police attention. While I cannot test whether racial profiling directly causes this selection process in this study, I will assess whether Black and Latinx drug arrestees represent a more heterogeneous group with lower levels of delinquency than white drug arrestees as Ashtiani found in her study.⁸

Prior research finds that the negative impact of a juvenile arrest, regardless of arrest type, on educational attainment is more pronounced for less delinquent youths, and that a juvenile drug arrest has more detrimental effects on the high school completion outcomes of Black and phenotypically darker Latinx youths.⁹ Building on this research, this study first replicates previous findings to confirm whether Black and Latinx youths arrested on drug-related charges are less delinquent than white youths who have been arrested for drugs. Next, I examine

4. David Rudovsky, “Law Enforcement by Stereotypes and Serendipity: Racial Profiling and Stops and Searches without Cause,” *U. Pa. J. Const. L.* 3 (2001): 296–366.

5. Charles Puzzanchera, “Juvenile Arrests 2010. Juvenile Offenders and Victims: National Reports Series,” Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2013).

6. Lloyd D. Johnston et al., “Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I, Secondary School Students,” Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan (2011): 1–783.

7. Shytierra Gaston, “Producing Race Disparities: A Study of Drug Arrests across Place and Race,” *Criminology* 57, no. 3 (2019): 424–51.

8. Mariam Ashtiani, “The Racially Disparate Effects of Drug Arrest on High School Dropout,” *Socius* 7 (2021). DOI: 10.1177/23780231211027097.

9. Ibid.; G. Sweeten, “Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement,” *Justice Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2006): 462–80.

whether the detrimental effects of a juvenile arrest extend to college attendance outcomes for those Black and Latinx youths who were able to complete high school. As I will show, the distribution of prior delinquency or criminality differs across race for drug offenses (but not for other types of arrest) and this leads to more detrimental consequences for Black and darker-phenotype Latinx youths, but a drug arrest has no impact on the likelihood of college enrollment for white and lighter-phenotype Latinx youths. Therefore, while most white and lighter-phenotype Latinx youths who are arrested for drugs are already on the path to educational failure, Black and darker-phenotype Latinx youths who are arrested for drugs are often not on such a path, and the arrest itself significantly derails their chances of attending college.

I: Previous Research

College enrollment serves as an important “turning point” in the lives of youths that can alter their life trajectories in several arenas.¹⁰ Most research on the educational consequences of juvenile justice contact focuses on earlier educational outcomes (e.g., high school completion).¹¹ These studies find that youths with a juvenile arrest are significantly more likely to drop out of high school. However, the negative impact of a juvenile arrest may also extend beyond high school, especially for those youths who do not drop out. Youths who attend even some college courses have higher lifelong earnings, and are less likely to experience unemployment, job instability, poverty, and incarceration in adulthood.¹² Given the importance of a college education for future employment and earnings, it is imperative to understand to what extent an arrest influences this aspect of the transition to adulthood, and whether this influence is more pronounced for racially disadvantaged youths who need the advantages of a college education the most.

Only three studies to date have examined the relationship between juvenile arrest and college enrollment. All three found a significant gap in four-year college enrollment between youths who have been arrested and youths who have

10. Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub, “A Life-Course Theory of Cumulative Disadvantage and the Stability of Delinquency,” in *Advances in Criminological Theory, Volume 7: Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*, ed. T. P. Thornberry (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1997), 133–61.

11. J. G. Bernburg and M. D. Krohn, “Labeling, Life Chances, and Adult Crime: The Direct and Indirect Effects of Official Intervention in Adolescence on Crime in Early Adulthood,” *Criminology* 41, no. 4 (2003): 1287–1318.; L. Hannon, “Poverty, Delinquency, and Educational Attainment: Cumulative Disadvantage or Disadvantage Saturation?,” *Sociological Inquiry* 73, no. 4 (2003): 575–94.

12. Sandy Baum, Jennifer Ma, and Kathleen Payea, “Education Pays, 2013: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society.” Trends in Higher Education Series. College Board (2013).

not.¹³ While these studies are informative, they do not look at differences across race and arrest type. Given the historical trend of the mistreatment of Black, and to some extent Latinx youths, both during and after an arrest by police officers, judges, schools, and community members, it is important to examine whether the effect of a juvenile arrest on educational attainment is more detrimental for minority youths.¹⁴ Several scholars have called for such research; however, the majority of studies that answered this call focus on high school dropouts and conclude that the effect of a juvenile arrest does not vary across racial groups.¹⁵ According to these studies, all types of juvenile arrest similarly impact all youths. However, in her 2021 study, Ashtiani finds that aggregate measures of arrest used by prior studies mask racial differences that exist for one particular type of arrest: drug arrests.¹⁶ Ashtiani finds that the impact of a juvenile drug arrest had significantly more damaging effects on the likelihood of dropping out of high school for Black and phenotypically darker Latinx youths than their white peers. The current study builds on this research to see if the racially disparate consequences of a drug arrest extend beyond high school and also impact the likelihood of enrolling in college.

In addition to methodological gaps in the literature, this study also addresses theoretical gaps in the existing literature. There is a debate among scholars concerning *how* a juvenile arrest impacts the educational trajectories of youths. While most research finds that a juvenile arrest has a direct detrimental impact on the educational trajectories of youths, other scholars argue for propensity theories, which contend that this effect is in fact spurious, that both arrest and not attending college are explained by prior behavior (e.g., high rate of delinquency and low self-control). For example, Gottfredson and Hirschi argue that external events, such as an arrest, do not impact educational attainment because they are both the product of a delinquent propensity established earlier in life.¹⁷ According to these

13. David S. Kirk and Robert J. Sampson, "Juvenile Arrest and Collateral Educational Damage in the Transition to Adulthood," *Sociology of Education* 86, no. 1 (2013): 36–62.; Matthew Makarios, Francis T. Cullen, and Alex R. Piquero, "Adolescent Criminal Behavior, Population Heterogeneity, and Cumulative Disadvantage: Untangling the Relationship between Adolescent Delinquency and Negative Outcomes in Emerging Adulthood," *Crime & Delinquency* 63, no. 6 (2017): 683–707; Alex O. Widdowson, Sonja E. Siennick, and Carter Hay, "The Implications of Arrest for College Enrollment: An Analysis of Long-Term Effects and Mediating Mechanisms," *Criminology* 54, no. 4 (2016): 621–52.

14. Victor M. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

15. Bernburg and Krohn, "Labeling, Life Chances, and Adult Crime"; Sweeten, "Who Will Graduate?"

16. Ashtiani, "The Racially Disparate Effects."

17. Michael R. Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, *A General Theory of Crime* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

propensity theories, youths who get arrested were never on the path to college, regardless of an arrest. This study adjudicates among these competing hypotheses by examining racial differences in the ways different types of juvenile arrest hinder the prospects of college enrollment.

II: Why Arrest Type Matters

There are several reasons to expect racial differences in the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment and not for other types of arrest. First, unlike violence and property crimes,¹⁸ most drug arrests are for low-level victimless offenses like drug possession.¹⁹ Regardless of race or class, recreational drug use is relatively common among youths.²⁰ As a result, compared to violence and property offenders, youths arrested for drug related charges more often have limited prior delinquent and criminal behavior, and are not necessarily on a path of subsequent criminal offending.²¹ However, *who* is arrested for drug charges is strongly influenced by race.²²

The decision to stop, question, and arrest someone for drugs is often left to the discretion of police officers, who are more likely to make a drug arrest, net of other factors, when the suspect looks black or phenotypically darker.²³ Over-policing in Black and Latinx neighborhoods and discriminatory stops and arrests have led to significant racial disparities in drug arrests.²⁴ White youths report higher rates of drug use and sale, yet Black youths are five times and Latinx youths three times more likely to get arrested.²⁵

This ever-present risk of (often unwarranted) stops, searches, and arrests for minor offenses (i.e., drug possession) among Black and phenotypically darker

18. Arrests for violence, property, and drugs comprise the three largest types of juvenile arrests in the United States (United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook* [UCR]. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004). <https://lccn.loc.gov/2004483104>.

19. Puzzanchera, "Juvenile Arrests 2010."

20. Johnston et al., "Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2010."

21. Ashtiani, "The Racially Disparate Effects."

22. Jaimie Fellner, "Decades of Disparity: Drug Arrests and Race in the United States," in *Human Rights Watch Report* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009).

23. Karletta M. White, "The Salience of Skin Tone: Effects on the Exercise of Police Enforcement Authority," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 6 (2015): 993–1010.

24. Andrew Gelman, Jeffrey Fagan, and Alex Kiss, "An Analysis of the New York City Police Department's 'Stop-and-Frisk' Policy in the Context of Claims of Racial Bias," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* (2012): 813–23.

25. H. N. Snyder and J. Mulako-Wangota, "Drug Arrest Rates of Juveniles by Race, 1980–2009," *Generated using the Arrest Data Analysis Tool. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics*. www.bjs.gov.

Latinx youths means that even youths with minimal delinquent involvement run the risk of getting arrested.²⁶ In contrast, white youths are targeted less and arrested only if their behaviors are serious and obvious enough to garner police attention. Even when caught with drugs, white youths are more likely to get a “pass” from police officers.²⁷ Therefore, white drug arrestees are more likely to be youths who are highly involved in prior delinquent behavior and may already perform poorly in school and have lower educational goals and expectations. In her 2021 study, Ashtiani finds significant differences between white, Black, and Latinx youths with drug arrests, with white drug arrestees having higher rates of delinquent behavior and lower levels of college expectations and academic indicators than Black and Latinx drug arrestees. I will replicate the findings here and expect to find similar characteristic differences.

Ashtiani’s 2021 study goes on to find that, in terms of high school completion, a juvenile drug arrest is less damaging for white youths, compared to their Black and Latinx peers, because the white arrestees had early predictors of educational failure and many were already on a pathway to dropout. Building on this, I ask if the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment similarly has little to no effect for white youths who may not be on a college-bound pathway, regardless of an arrest. This falls in line with the predictions of propensity theories, where early behavior traits, like delinquency, explain the effect a juvenile arrest has on educational attainment, because the youths arrested were already on the path to educational failure. Accordingly, I expect that for white youths, any effects of a drug arrest on college enrollment is explained by delinquency and academic performance, but not for Black or Latinx youths.

Other theoretical frameworks may explain the relationship between an arrest and college enrollment for Black and Latinx youths. Some scholars challenge propensity theories and argue that a juvenile arrest imposes a direct negative impact on the educational trajectories of youths, even after taking prior delinquency and academic indicators into account. These scholars point to the stigma or label imposed on youths after arrest and argue that this criminalization can lead to the development of low self-esteem and blocked opportunities, like exclusion from school and in youth communities.²⁸ For example, counselors and teachers may avoid spending any institutional resources preparing and supporting

26. Richard J. Lundman and Robert L. Kaufman, “Driving While Black: Effects of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender on Citizen Self-Reports of Traffic Stops and Police Actions,” *Criminology* 41, no. 1 (2003): 195–220.

27. Katherine Beckett, Kris Nyrop, and Lori Pfingst, “Race, Drugs, and Policing: Understanding Disparities in Drug Delivery Arrests,” *Criminology: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 44, no. 1 (2006): 105–37.

28. R. L. Matsueda, “Reflected Appraisals, Parental Labeling, and Delinquency: Specifying a Symbolic Interactionist Theory,” *American Journal of Sociology* 97, no. 6 (1992): 1577–1611.

students who they may view as criminally inclined and not “college material.” Labeled youths may also experience a loss of support from family networks and peers, which may make the dream of attending college seem less tangible.²⁹ An arrest can also serve as a key trajectory in shaping youths’ expectations of future educational opportunities and achievement.³⁰ These factors can lead to increased delinquency, truancy, poor school performance, and disengagement from school, which decrease the likelihood of college enrollment.³¹ Arrested youths may also opt out of the college path simply because they may not be able to compete against their non-arrested peers for college admissions. Given that more and more colleges and universities are performing criminal background checks, arrested youths may have significant disadvantages in the application process.

The negative stigma or labeling after an arrest may matter more for Black and Latinx youths with drug arrests for several reasons. Prior studies find that the negative impact of labeling after an arrest on educational attainment is contingent on prior delinquency and criminal behavior, where less delinquent youths suffer the more damaging effects of a criminal stigma after arrest.³² Other scholars argue that Black and Latinx youths have fewer resources to shield them from the negative educational consequences of an arrest, compared to more advantaged white youths.³³ For example, white youths may have greater access to the knowledge and resources necessary to expunge their juvenile records. However, there are some scholars who suggest that white arrestees are more vulnerable to the stigma after an arrest, because they are more advantaged and have more to lose.³⁴ These scholars argue that Black and Latinx youths face more structural barriers to educational attainment, so there is less of an educational penalty after an arrest. Furthermore, since Black and Latinx youths are more likely to have frequent police encounters in their schools and neighborhoods, an arrest is normalized for them, and less impactful. Despite these latter arguments, there is greater evidence for the more detrimental impact among racially disadvantaged youths. Black and Latinx youths may also experience higher levels of anxiety and trauma after an arrest since they are more likely to experience more frequent

29. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*.

30. E. B. Stewart, E. A. Stewart, and R. L. Simons, “The Effect of Neighborhood Context on the College Aspirations of African American Adolescents,” *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 4 (2007): 896–919.

31. S. R. Jimerson, G. E. Anderson, and A. D. Whipple, “Winning the Battle and Losing the War: Examining the Relation between Grade Retention and Dropping out of High School,” *Psychology in the Schools* 39, no. 4 (2002): 441–57.

32. Sweeten, “Who Will Graduate?”

33. Sampson and Laub, “A Life-Course Theory of Cumulative Disadvantage and the Stability of Delinquency.”

34. Hannon, “Poverty, Delinquency, and Educational Attainment: Cumulative Disadvantage or Disadvantage Saturation?”

police contact and police brutality.³⁵ Taken together, I hypothesize that the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment will be more damaging for Black and Latinx youths.

There may also be differences in the impact of an arrest among Latinx youths, given that they are a racially heterogeneous group, including youths who are racialized as Black, white, and “other.” Skin tone (phenotype) impacts racial profiling for Latinx youths, where darker-phenotype Latinx youths are stopped and arrested more often than lighter-phenotype members of the same group.³⁶ In his study of Oakland youths, Rios finds that after an arrest, lighter-phenotype Latinx youths were afforded second chances more often and gained respect from teachers and police once they changed their behavior and dress style. Black youths and darker phenotype Latinx youths, however, still faced criminalization, even after they changed their behavior and dressed more formally.³⁷ Therefore, in this study, I break down Latinx respondents by phenotype, and I hypothesize that the effect of an arrest for lighter-phenotype Latinx youths may be more similar to white youths, while the effect for darker-phenotype Latinx youths may be more akin to the effect for Black youths.

There are other possible mechanisms that may explain why Black and Latinx youths may also be less likely to attend college after a drug arrest beyond mechanisms discussed here. Racial biases in sentencing may be one explanation given that Black and Latinx youths have a higher likelihood of being convicted and experience harsher sentencing.³⁸ If the perceived negative effect of an arrest is actually the result of biases in conviction rather than the result of the arrest itself, then accounting for the effect of conviction should explain any racial differences in the negative impact of a drug arrest on college enrollment.

Scholars also argue that low-income youths suffer greater educational consequences after an arrest because they have less access to the necessary financial and social resources to avoid the negative labeling of an arrest.³⁹ This is especially relevant since federal financial aid is denied to only one type of juvenile offense: a drug offense.⁴⁰ Given that drug enforcement is concentrated in low-income Black and Latinx neighborhoods, and Black and Latinx youths are more

35. Amanda Geller et al., “Aggressive Policing and the Mental Health of Young Urban Men,” *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 12 (2014): 2321–27

36. White, “The Salience of Skin Tone.”

37. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*.

38. Bard R. Ferrall, “Juvenile crime, juvenile justice—panel on juvenile crime: Prevention, treatment and control.” *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 91, no. 4 (2001): 1154–55.

39. Sampson and Laub, “A Life-Course Theory of Cumulative Disadvantage and the Stability of Delinquency.”

40. U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Report to Government Requesters: Various Factors May Limit the Impacts of Federal Laws That Provide for Denial of Selected Benefits” (2005).

likely to report college costs and financial aid offers as a decisive factor for attending college, then lack of financial aid may be more of a deterrent for Black and Latinx youths when applying to or attending college.⁴¹ By accounting for the effects of a low-income background, I can conclude that any remaining racial differences in the effects of a drug arrest are not simply a result of class differences among youths.

In sum, there are several possible mechanisms that may be driving racial differences in the impact of a drug arrest that do not exist for other types of juvenile arrest. While I cannot test every mechanism (e.g., labeling theory, racial profiling), the findings of this study can decipher whether a drug arrest derails the college trajectories of white, Black, and Latinx youths differently. The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: I expect significant characteristic differences between white, Black, and Latinx youths with drug arrests, where white drug arrestees have higher rates of delinquent behavior and lower levels of academic performance than Black and Latinx drug arrestees.

Hypothesis 2: For white youths, any effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment is explained by delinquency and academic performance, but not for Black or Latinx youths.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment will be more damaging for Black and Latinx youths compared to white youths.

Hypothesis 4: The effect of a drug arrest for Latinx youths will vary by phenotype, where the effects of a drug arrest are more damaging for darker-phenotype Latinx youths compared to lighter-phenotype Latinx youths.

Hypothesis 5: Any racial differences in the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment are explained by racial biases in post-arrest processing/conviction or class differences, rather than racial biases in drug arrests and characteristic differences among youths.

III: Methods

1. Data and Sample

This research uses data from three waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), a nationally representative study of American adolescents from a multistage stratified sample of 134 middle and high schools in eighty communities. The first in-home survey was in 1994–1995 (Wave 1, N=20,745, 7–12th-grade students). I use data from the initial survey as

41. Beckett, Nyrop, and Pfingst, “Race, Drugs, and Policing: Understanding Disparities in Drug Delivery Arrests”; Donald E. Heller, “Student Price Response in Higher Education: An Update to Leslie and Brinkman,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 68, no. 6 (1997): 624–59.

well as the third follow-up, conducted in 2001–2002 (N=15,197), and the latest follow-up, conducted in 2007–2008 (N=15,701). This study also uses data from the Adolescent Health and Academic Achievement Study (AHAA), which contains official transcript information for 12,160 respondents. To provide nationally representative estimates, I limit the data to respondents who were assigned sample weights. Respondents who were not part of the nationally representative data were excluded (29.4 percent of sample). The final sample consists of 9,421 respondents, but this study only presents the findings for white, Black, and Latinx youths (N=8,563).

2. Variables

Dependent Variable

College Enrollment. The binomial outcome for this study, college enrollment (vs. never attended college), was constructed from a self-report question at Wave 4 (2007–2008), when respondents are between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-two, asking respondents to indicate the highest level of education they had completed. Respondents who report attending any college at all (two-year or four-year) were coded as having enrolled in college. Respondents who marked any other response (less than high school degree, high school diploma/GED, vocational training) were coded as never enrolling in college.

Main Dependent Variables

Arrest Type. A categorical variable for youths' *first* juvenile arrest is constructed based on a series of Wave 4 questions where respondents are asked to report whether they had ever been arrested, and the age and charge(s) of their first arrest. The charges were ranked based on severity, with violent arrests ranked as the most serious, followed by property arrests, drug arrests, and finally other minor offenses. Respondents who reported no arrest before the age of eighteen are coded as having no juvenile arrest. Respondents who reported a first-time arrest that occurred before age eighteen, and who were charged with a drug offense as their most serious charge, are coded as having a juvenile drug arrest. Respondents who reported a property, violent, or other charge as their most serious offense were coded in the other arrest category. (See Appendix D for descriptive statistics of drug arrests by race.)

Race. The Wave 1 in-home questionnaire asked two separate questions for race and ethnicity; one question asked respondents if they are ethnically Latinx, while another question asked respondents to mark one or more races they identify with (white, Black, Native American, Asian, other). In a third question, respondents who marked more than one race were asked to mark one race they “best” identify

with. Combining the three above questions creates an overall race variable, with mutually exclusive categories: Latinx, White, Black, Native American, Asian, and other. Asians, Native Americans, and others were aggregated into one “other” category because of small cell counts for drugs and are not presented in the tables or discussed in this study.

Other Variables

Several control variables are included in the regression models. Descriptive statistics for all variables are displayed in Appendix A. I include two demographic controls: age and sex. Sex is measured with a dummy variable equal to 1 for females. I also include the respondent’s phenotype, based on a question Add Health provide in the interviewer questionnaire from Wave 3, where interviewers were asked to note the phenotype of the respondent based on their own assessment on a skin color scale (1=light/white, 5=dark/black).

Family background variables are also included since youths from disadvantaged households have a lower propensity to attend college. An ordinal measure of parental education is included, representing the highest level of completed schooling of the respondent’s mother and/or father. The educational attainment categories are “less than a high school diploma,” “a high school diploma or equivalent,” those who attended “some college” but did not achieve at least a bachelor’s degree, and a “bachelor’s degree or higher” category. A Wave 1 assessment of family income relative to the poverty level is included. This measure is adjusted for household size. A dummy variable indicating if youths lived with both parents at Wave 1 is also included.

Several early measures of school performance and sanctions are also included in the regression models since students with poor academics are also less likely to attend college. First, using official transcript information, student grade point averages in the ninth grade (four-point scale) are included as a measure of early school performance. A dummy variable for educational expectations is included in the model (“On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high, how likely is it that you will go to college?”). Respondents who reported a 4 or 5 on the scale were coded as “likely to attend college” (vs. respondents who reported a 1, 2, or 3, who were coded as “unlikely to attend college”). Two dummy variables for school sanctions are also included, one dummy indicating any suspensions, Wave 1 (vs. no suspensions), and another dummy indicating any school expulsions prior to respondent’s first arrest (vs. no expulsions before first arrest). However, school sanctions may not necessarily be accurate indicators of delinquent behavior, since Black and Latinx youths are more likely to get reprimanded and punished in school than white youths for similar behavior. Regardless, these variables help shed light on the path that youths may be on prior to arrest.

Four measures of delinquency and criminal proclivity (behavioral variables)

are also included from Wave 1 (before arrest). Youths who had their first arrest before Wave 1 (18 percent of total arrestees) were excluded to ensure that the behavior variables measured at Wave 1 are pre-arrest characteristics. In addition to family background and school performance, inclusion of prior delinquency or criminal proclivity is crucial, since labeling arguments imply that an arrest affects dropout beyond the impact of prior delinquency/criminal behavior. First, the delinquency measure from Add Health is included, created from adolescents' responses to fourteen items that included subscales of delinquency (see Appendix E for delinquency scale questions). Mean scores were calculated with at least eight non-missing responses and recomputed to the original 0–3 scale with an alpha reliability score of 0.82. In addition, two measures of self-reported drug involvement are included: first, whether the respondent has ever used any illicit drug; and second, whether the respondent has ever sold illicit drugs.

Finally, I include two dummy variables indicating whether respondents had a juvenile conviction, and whether they had any subsequent juvenile arrests. Given that Black Americans are more likely to be convicted and potentially institutionalized, this measure accounts for the possibility that an arrest may disproportionately impact their likelihood of attending college simply because Black youths are punished more harshly.

IV: Analysis Plan

Preliminary analyses include χ^2 and t-tests⁴² to examine differences in college enrollment as well as characteristic differences between youths across arrest types and racial groups (hypothesis 1). To test whether the effects of a first-time drug arrest on college enrollment vary for white, Latinx, and Black youths, I ran a weighted logistic regression and include interaction terms for race and arrest, as well as predicted probabilities (hypothesis 3). A significant interaction for Black or Latinx youths would indicate that a drug arrest has a greater impact on the odds of college enrollment for these groups compared to white youths with a drug arrest. Third, separate logistic regression models were estimated for each racial/ethnic group to determine whether the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment is mediated by different factors. The variable blocks are included in successive steps to parse out which block or domain mediates the effect of drug arrests on college enrollment for each group. The order in which variables are added was based on my specific questions. First, I wanted to know whether a drug arrest affects the likelihood of college enrollment for each group, accounting only for demographics and family background. Next, I wanted to account for propensity

42. An χ^2 test is a statistical test used to examine the differences between categorical variables from a random sample to judge goodness of fit between expected and observed results. A t-test is a statistical test that is used to compare the means of two groups.

theories and determine the extent to which the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment is explained by prior delinquency or academic performance (hypothesis 2). In the final model, I include juvenile convictions and subsequent arrests to account for post-arrest mechanisms and the effect of repeated contact with the criminal justice system (hypotheses 5). Finally, separate logistic regression analyses were conducted for Latinx youths only. These analyses include interactions for phenotype and drug arrest to examine the nuanced differential impacts that may exist for this racially and phenotypically heterogeneous group (hypothesis 4).

V: Results

Table 1 shows the percentages or means of the key outcome variable (college enrollment) and the individual characteristic variables, by race and arrest type, with chi-square and t-test results.⁴³ First, we see among all arrested youths, Black youths with drug arrests have the lowest rate of college attendance (37%) compared to Black youths arrested for other reasons (44%). For white and Latinx youths, the rates of enrollment are similarly low across arrest types (47%/48% for white youths, 41% for Latinx youths). Descriptively, this suggests that while the impact of a juvenile arrest on college enrollment may not vary by arrest type for white and Latinx youths, a drug arrest may be more damaging for Black youths.

VI: Characteristic Differences Among Arrested Youths

Next, I turn to the individual characteristics of arrested and non-arrested youths to address the first research question: whether Black and Latinx youths with drug arrests are characteristically different than white youths with a drug arrest, as well as youths arrested for other crimes. In terms of school performance, there are more significant racial differences among drug arrestees than youths arrested for drug offenses. Black youths who were arrested for drug offenses express higher college expectations (3.891) than white and Latinx drug arrestees prior to their arrest (Wave 1). Although white drug arrestees appear to have the highest ninth grade GPA (2.289) among all arrestees, it's important to compare their GPA to white youths without an arrest. The GPA of white drug arrestees is 0.48 points lower than white non-arrestees. For Latinx youths this difference is only 0.24 points, and for Black arrestees the difference is 0.14. These smaller differences highlight how Black and Latinx youths with a drug arrest are more like their non-arrested peers compared to White youths. This also highlights how Black—and to some extent Latinx—drug arrestees may not be on the same educational pathways as white youths prior to their arrest. Furthermore, these racial gaps are not as

43. All of the following tabular material is taken from the author's data.

Table 1. Percentages and means of college enrollment and individual characteristic variables, by arrest type and race

Independent Variable	No Arrest			Drugs			Other		
	White	Latinx	Black	White	Latinx	Black	White	Latinx	Black
College Enrollment	70.6% ^{bl} *	60.3% ^{wb} *	57.3% ^{wl} *	47.1% ^{bl}	41.3% ^{wb}	36.6% ^{wl}	48.0% ^{bl}	40.5% ^{wb}	44.2% ^{wl} *
High School/GED or Less	29.4% ^{bl} *	39.7% ^{wb} *	42.7% ^{wl} *	52.9% ^{bl}	58.7% ^{wb}	63.4% ^{wl}	52.0% ^{bl}	59.5% ^{wb}	55.8% ^{wl} *
School Performance and Sanctions									
College Expectations (1=low, 5=high)	4.228 ^{bl} *	3.955 ^{wb} *	4.141 ^{wl} *	3.711 ^{bl}	3.591 ^{wb}	3.891 ^{wl}	3.694 ^l	3.464 ^{wb} *	3.701 ^l *
	(0.037)	(0.063)	(0.049)	(0.169)	(0.174)	(0.140)	(0.137)	(0.242)	(0.319)
9th grade GPA (0–4)	2.765 ^{bl}	2.366 ^w *	2.195 ^{wl} *	2.289 ^{bl}	2.122 ^{wb}	2.056 ^{wl}	2.224 ^{bl}	2.015 ^{wb}	1.864 ^{wl} *
	(0.033)	(0.045)	(0.041)	(0.107)	(0.345)	(0.091)	(0.097)	(0.201)	(0.157)
School Suspension(s)	18.5% ^{bl} *	26.4% ^{wb} *	42.0% ^{wl} *	49.6% ^{bl}	53.7% ^{wb}	58.1% ^{wl}	54.0% ^{bl} *	57.7% ^{wb} *	73.3% ^{wl} *
School Expulsion(s)	4.5% ^{bl} *	5.4% ^{wb} *	11.3% ^{wl} *	15.7% ^{bl}	17.0% ^{wb}	20.7% ^{wl}	10.6% ^{bl}	20.5% ^{wb} *	22.2% ^{wl} *
Behavioral Variables									
Delinquency Scale (0=low, 3=high)	0.26 ^l *	0.30 ^{wb} *	0.27 ^l *	0.58 ^{bl}	0.51 ^{wb}	0.41 ^{wl}	0.52 ^{bl} *	0.55 ^{wb} *	0.49 ^{wl} *
	(0.30)	(0.36)	(0.28)	(0.43)	(0.63)	(0.42)	(0.23)	(0.48)	(0.39)
Drug Use	28.7% ^b *	28.9% ^b *	22.9% ^{wl} *	62.7% ^{bl}	56.5% ^{wb}	52.4% ^{wl}	55.1% ^b *	56.4% ^b	41.9% ^{wl} *
Drug Sale	5.4% ^l *	6.8% ^{wb} *	5.2% ^l *	30.3% ^b	30.9% ^b	28.0% ^{wl}	21.9% ^{bl} *	20.5% ^{wb} *	18.9% ^{wl} *
Formal Sanction									
Juvenile Conviction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.27% ^{bl}	31.11% ^{wb}	36.69% ^{wl}	39.6% ^{bl} *	37.0% ^{wb} *	42.5% ^{wl} *
Subsequent Juvenile Arrest	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	63.5% ^{bl}	60.5% ^{wb}	57.8% ^{wl}	59.9% ^{bl} *	61.1% ^{wb} *	55.3% ^{wl} *
N	4,483	1,180	1,516	128	49	134	554	239	248

Notes: χ^2 test results shown, w=significantly different from whites at p<.05; b=significantly different from blacks at p<.05; l=significantly different from Latinx at p<.05; * =significantly different from same-race drug-arrestees at p<.05.

obvious for other types of arrest, highlighting a unique selection process for drug arrests.

It is striking that although white youths with drug arrests report lower rates of suspension and expulsion (50% and 15% respectively) than Latinx (54% and 17%) and Black youths (58% and 21%), white drug arrestees also have the highest rates of delinquency (0.58), drug use (62.7%), and selling drugs (30.3) in adolescence. Conversely, Black youths with a drug arrest have one of the higher rates of suspension and expulsion, yet they report the lowest delinquency rates (0.41) among all arrested youths, followed by Latinx youths (0.51). These findings lend support to Hypothesis 1, where Black, and to some extent Latinx youths, arrested for drug offenses have lower rates of prior delinquent behaviors than white youths. That a much smaller proportion of Black youths arrested for drugs reported drug use (52%) or selling drugs (28%) compared to white (63% and 30%) and Latinx youths (57% and 31%) underscores how Black youths bear the disproportionate brunt of drug enforcement. These findings are consistent with prior research that Black youths face harsher school sanctions than white and some Latinx youths, even after considering delinquent behavior. It also supports the notion that white youths must exhibit behaviors that are more noticeably delinquent to get sanctioned, either by the criminal justice system, or by school officials.

We also see in Table 1 that white drug arrestees have a higher conviction rate (40%) than Latinx (31%) and Black (37%) drug arrestees. This is surprising given prior research suggesting racial biases after an arrest result in higher convictions for Black and Latinx youths. However, prior research also shows that Black youths are more likely to be incarcerated and sent to adult prisons, which is not captured in this measure. The higher conviction rates for white youths may also be driven by the fact that White youths who are arrested for drug offenses are more likely to have committed a drug offense than Black and Latino youths in this study. White drug arrestees also have higher rates of subsequent juvenile arrests. Since white drug arrestees have higher college enrollment rates, conviction and subsequent arrest may not be driving the racial differences in enrollment. It may be that white youths have more access to information and resources to expunge their records after a conviction so that this has no impact on college enrollment.

Taken together, the descriptive findings reveal (1) higher levels of racial differences in both academic performance and behavior variables among drug arrestees compared to other arrestees, and (2) based on their background variables, Black youths with drug arrests should be more likely to enroll in college than other drug arrestees since they have higher college expectations, exhibit better academic indicators, and report lower rates of delinquent behavior overall. Therefore, their lower rates of college enrollment suggest that the arrest itself may be derailing their educational trajectories, whereas white youths with drug arrests report lower academic indicators and higher rates of delinquency, suggesting they

are not on a college-bound pathway. Next, I turn to logistic regression and predicted probabilities to determine whether the consequences of an arrest are, in fact, more pronounced for Black and Latinx drug arrestees than white youths arrested for drugs.

VII: Racial Differences in the Impact of an Arrest

To test for racial differences in the impact of an arrest, I run regression models, which include all controls, for the likelihood of attending college, and include interaction effects for arrest type and race (see Appendix B). The results of this analysis are summarized in Figure A, which looks only at the impact of drug arrests on college enrollment, because I find no significant racial differences in the effect of other arrest types. The results support Hypothesis 3, where the only statistically significant interaction effects are for Black and Latinx youths with drug arrests, who are significantly less likely to attend college compared to their non-arrested same-race peers (Latinx youths 65% vs. 75%, Black youths 50% vs. 73% respectively). I also ran the same model (available upon request) with Latinx youths as the reference group and found that Black drug arrestees are significantly more impacted by a drug arrest than Latinx youths. Given that Black youths are much more likely to experience the brunt of racial profiling in drug enforcement, it would follow that they would also be more negatively impacted by a drug arrest.

Since Black drug arrestees had the lowest levels of delinquency among all arrestees, these findings are consistent with previous research that finds an arrest is more detrimental to youths with minimal prior delinquency. However, while previous research has found this for high school dropouts, these findings extend this relationship to college enrollment. The findings here also highlight how disaggregating by arrest type un masks important racial differences that only exist for certain types of arrest.

While these results tell us that getting arrested for drugs is more detrimental to the postsecondary educational trajectories of Black and Latinx youths, they do not tell us why a drug arrest does not affect white drug arrestees in the full model. To address this, I run separate models by race in Table 2 to examine whether certain variables explain the effect of a drug arrest for white drug arrestees, as discussed in the Analysis Plan above.

Model 1 for white youths shows that the effect of both a first-time drug and other arrest significantly decreases the odds of attending college. Model 2 adds the school and behavioral variables, and the effect of a drug arrest decreases and loses significance. This means that the relationship between a drug arrest and college enrollment is spurious for white drug offenders. This supports the predictions of propensity theories and Hypothesis 2, that white drug offenders have lower academic indicators and are more involved in delinquent and criminal behaviors, and not bound for college, regardless of an arrest. Model 3 adds the

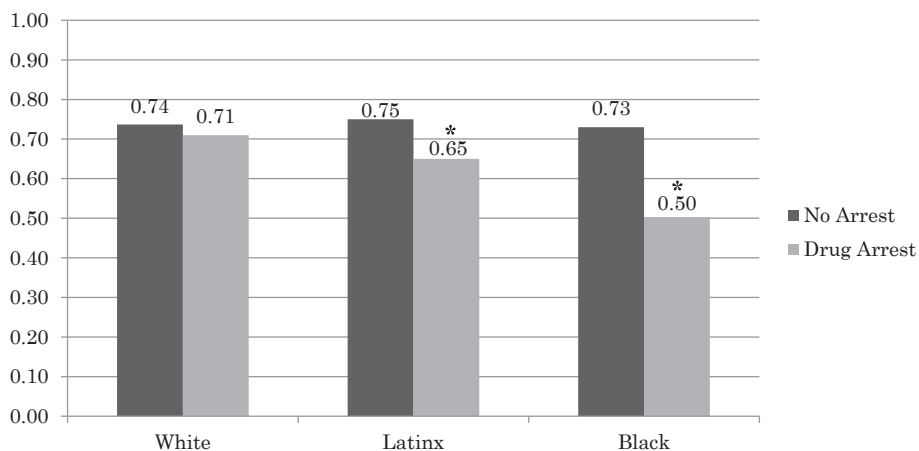


Figure A. Predicted Probability of College Enrollment, by Race and Juvenile Drug Arrest (Full Model)

Note: Based on full models with significant interactions of race and drug arrest (see Appendix B).

N = 8,531

Significance Tests for Racial Differences: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

remaining variables, and the effect of other arrest types remains significant for white youths.

For Latinx youths, the effects of both arrest types significantly reduce the odds of attending college in Model 1 and remain significant after introducing academic and behavior variables in Model 2 and the remaining variables in Model 3. Notably, in Model 2, phenotype explains some of the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment, where lighter-phenotype Latinx youths are more likely to attend college than their darker-phenotype peers. To some extent, this supports the prediction that Latinx youths comprise a racially mixed population with varying experiences, driven to some degree by their racial phenotype. I explore this further in the next section.

For Black youths, both arrest types on the likelihood of attending college are also significant in Model 1. Comparing across models, we see that the effect of a drug arrest is stronger (0.398) for Black youths than the effects of a drug arrest for Latinx (0.590) and white youths (0.609). Furthermore, the effect of a drug arrest remains significant, even when the remaining variables are introduced in Models 2 and 3. Low-income background is significant in all models and explains some of the effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment, but not fully. This suggests that the negative effect of a drug arrest on college enrollment is driven *partially* by financial restrictions, and possibly by the fact that drug arrestees are banned from receiving any type of financial aid for higher education. While conviction is significant in the full model for Black youths, it does not explain away the effect of either arrest variable, which highlights the damaging impact of an arrest, above and beyond an actual conviction.

Table 2. Odds ratios from logistic regression of the effects of juvenile drug arrests on college enrollment, separate models by race

	White			Latinx			Black		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Juvenile Arrest Type									
Drug	0.658*	0.821	0.826	0.682**	0.757*	0.769*	0.411**	0.428**	0.559*
Other	0.555**	0.739*	0.757*	0.724*	0.817*	0.829*	0.611*	0.697*	0.701*
Control Variables									
Sex (female)	1.219*	1.378***	1.131**	1.416**	1.392**	1.203*	1.439**	1.421***	1.424**
Age	1.219*	0.957	1.066	0.949	0.940	1.030	0.941	0.958	0.943
Phenotype	1.015	1.090	1.011	1.270**	1.212**	1.188*	1.186*	1.208*	1.212*
Family/Home									
Parents Education (ref: no HS diploma)									
HS Diploma/GED	1.731**	1.776**	2.223**	1.199*	1.245*	1.235*	1.607*	1.599*	1.600**
Some College	2.544***	2.611***	4.102***	2.488**	2.644**	1.265**	2.949***	2.990***	2.987***
BA Degree or more	3.829***	3.921***	6.953***	2.251**	2.348**	1.234**	3.909***	3.953***	3.934***
Two-Parent Home	0.901	0.918	0.997	0.831	0.806	0.809	0.847	0.855	0.857
Low-Income	0.763**	0.777*	0.753*	0.788*	0.782*	0.775*	0.678*	0.690*	0.690*
School Performance and Sanctions									
College Expectations (0-5)									
GPA (0-4)		1.627***	1.829***		1.460***	1.467***		1.564***	1.567***
Suspension(s)		1.902***	2.553***		1.425***	1.422***		1.775***	1.775***
Expulsion(s)		0.775**	0.769**		0.724	0.716		0.716*	0.716*
Behavior Variables		0.712*	0.717*		0.761*	0.767*		0.989	1.020
Delinquency Scale (0-3)		0.760**	0.769*		0.816*	0.818*		0.630**	0.659
Drug Use		0.772*	0.710*		0.781	0.771		0.997	1.409*
Drug Sale		0.502**	0.830**		0.602*	0.606*		1.035	0.929
Juvenile Conviction			0.947			1.209			1.538*
Subsequent Juvenile Arrest			0.889			0.915			0.902
N	5165	5165	5165	1468	1468	1468	1897	1897	1897

Note: Significance tests * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

In the full models (Model 3) for each racial group, getting arrested for other crimes significantly decreases the likelihood of college enrollment for all youths. This finding supports Kirk and Sampson's findings that aggregate measures of juvenile arrest significantly decrease the likelihood of attending college after accounting for a host of behavior and family factors.⁴⁴ However, contrary to Kirk and Sampson, I find that not all arrest types impose a negative impact on college enrollment. Unlike other arrest types, I find significant racial differences in the impact of a drug arrest, which are a significant hindrance for college enrollment among Black and Latinx youths only.

VIII: Phenotypical Differences Among Latinx Youths

Given that phenotype plays a significant role in the process of criminalization and racialization, which are important components of racial profiling in law enforcement, I provide a brief breakdown of ascribed phenotype for the Latinx youths in the sample. The average phenotype classification of the Latinx sample (1.72) was significantly darker than white youths with drug arrests (1.04), but lighter than Black arrestees (3.69) (see Appendix A). This means that the effect I find in the previous section for Latinx youths may be a result of the phenotypically heterogeneous youths from a range of racial phenotypes who may be experiencing different impacts from a drug arrest. Next, I break down the phenotype of Latinx youths by arrest type and find that Latinx youths who had no arrest or other arrests had the lightest phenotype, while Latinx youths with a drug arrest had the darkest phenotype (results not shown here). This supports previous research that finds darker-phenotype Latinx youths are stopped and arrested more often than lighter-phenotype members of the same group.⁴⁵ This also speaks to the racialization of drug enforcement in the United States and the significance of racial profiling for this type of arrest.

To test whether the effect of a juvenile arrest varies for Latinx youths by their racialized status, I present predicted probabilities of college enrollment in Figure B (based on logistic regression models for college enrollment with interactions for phenotype and arrest type; see Appendix C). In these models, I merge Latinx youths who were ascribed brown or black skin into one category, because of the small cell sizes within each phenotype category. The results show a significant interaction for brown/black Latinx youths who had a drug arrest, net of all controls. The results for lighter-phenotype Latinx youths resemble the results in Figure A for white respondents, where I find little consequence for a drug arrest. However, for Brown/Black Latinx youths, a drug arrest decreases their probability

44. Kirk and Sampson, "Juvenile Arrest and Collateral Educational Damage in the Transition to Adulthood."

45. White, "The Salience of Skin Tone."

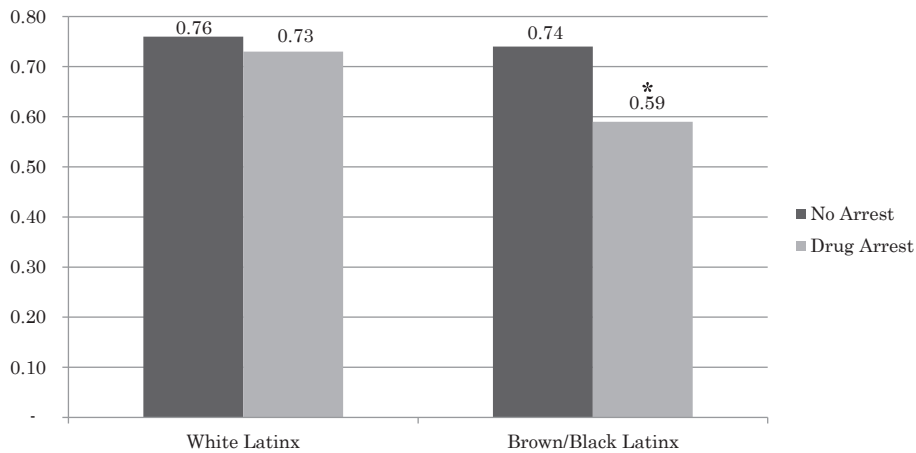


Figure B. Predicted Probability of College Enrollment, by Latinx Phenotype and Drug Arrest (Full Model)

Note: Based on full models with significant interactions of race and drug arrest (see Appendix C).

N = 1,468

Significance Tests for Racial Differences: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

of attending college from 0.75 to 0.59. While the probability is not as small as the probability of attending college for Black drug arrestees (0.50) in Figure A, they still indicate that darker-phenotype youths experience a more detrimental impact from a drug arrest compared to white and lighter-phenotype Latinx youths. This finding lends further support to the predictions that the impact of a drug arrest is uniquely negative for racialized and marginalized youths.

Discussion and Conclusion

Two broad conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, the findings confirm previous studies that show there are significant racial differences in the characteristics of juvenile drug arrestees that do not exist for other types of arrest. Among drug arrestees, Black youths, and to a lesser extent Latinx youths, have significantly lower rates of prior delinquency and criminal behavior than white youths. The mechanisms driving these differences cannot be tested here; however, numerous studies have shown that despite similar rates of drug use and sale, Black youths, due to racial profiling, are more likely to be arrested for drug offenses than white youths. As a result, it may be that Black youths who are arrested for drugs are more likely to be youths with minimal prior delinquent and criminal behavior. In contrast, white youths who are arrested for drugs are more likely to be youths who engage in more criminal and delinquent behaviors.

Second, like previous research on the effect of a first-time drug arrest on high

school dropouts,⁴⁶ this study finds that a juvenile drug arrest also hinders the likelihood of attending college for Black youths more so than white youths. Drug arrests have a weaker effect on Latinx youths than Black youths but are explained to some extent by the heterogeneous racialized experiences among this group—where darker-phenotype Latinx youths experience more damage from a drug arrest than their lighter-phenotype Latinx peers. Surprisingly, being arrested for drugs has no bearing on the likelihood of attending college for white youths, once delinquent behaviors are considered. These findings suggest that most white youths who are arrested for drugs were not bound for college. These findings also address the theoretical debate regarding the spurious versus non-spurious effects of a juvenile arrest on educational attainment. Based on the findings in this study, I argue that these propensity theory predictions of a spurious effect *are* correct, but only for white youths with drug arrests. These findings challenge long-held assumptions that juvenile arrests negatively impact all white youths, when surprisingly, drug arrests do not.

While the current study cannot address the exact mechanisms at work for Black and Latinx drug arrestees, prior theorists have argued that an arrest can stigmatize or mark youths, and the effect of this stigma matters more for racially disadvantaged youths. These youths have less protective social, human, and financial capital with which to bargain their way out of stigmatization (i.e., delinquent tracking in school, expunging/sealing their juvenile records, etc.).⁴⁷ Previous research also shows that the effect of this stigmatization is more pronounced for youths who are less involved in delinquency.⁴⁸ Therefore, one possible explanation for these findings is that Black and phenotypically darker Latinx youths who are arrested for drugs are youths who are not on the same pathway as white drug arrestees. These youths may have gone on to college, but the road they were on to educational success was derailed by the negative stigma or “mark” after an arrest.⁴⁹ Future research should address more concretely *why* drug arrests affect Black adolescents differently.

While prior research finds that juvenile arrests negatively impact the college prospects of all youths, the findings here highlight how aggregate measures of juvenile arrest mask important differences that exist for drug arrests.⁵⁰ Given the level of discretion, racial profiling, and selective policing that exists for drug enforcement in the United States, the findings highlight tangible consequences of

46. Ashtiani, “The Racially Disparate Effects.”

47. Sampson and Laub, “A Life-Course Theory of Cumulative Disadvantage and the Stability of Delinquency.”

48. Sweeten, “Who Will Graduate?”

49. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*.

50. Kirk and Sampson, “Juvenile Arrest and Collateral Educational Damage in the Transition to Adulthood.”

holding Black and Latinx youths to a different moral standard than white youths. Given that Black and Latinx youths already have a lower likelihood of attending college, it is especially important for them to be tied to institutions that can help them succeed in high school and enroll in college. Instead, these youths are being disproportionately policed and arrested, for crimes that white youths are more likely to commit, and then derailed into pathways that are detrimental to their future success. Furthermore, the results also show that racial differences in the impact of a drug arrest on college enrollment are not explained by differences in conviction, which highlights how an arrest itself can be more traumatic for Black and darker-phenotype Latinx youths, who are more likely to experience police brutality, excessive force, and consequently social stigma after an arrest. This is concerning given that unwarranted stops and arrests are not an uncommon occurrence in Black and Latinx communities in the United States.

These findings on the damaging impact of drug arrests on Black youths underscore another way in which racial inequality is reproduced in America and suggest that in terms of opportunities and obstacles, the pathway to achieving success distinctly differs for Black Americans, who continuously remain the most disadvantaged, given the nearly impermeable color line they have historically confronted. The significantly stronger effect of a drug arrest on the educational pathways of Black youths suggests that “Blackness” continues to constitute a fundamental racial construction in American society.⁵¹ Future research should explore the effect of drug arrests on other important life outcomes (e.g., employment and criminal justice involvement), as well as the impact of drug arrests in adulthood to see if similar patterns persist.

This study and the data used have several limitations, and notably most of the measures are self-reported. This could potentially pose issues if respondents feel uncomfortable disclosing previous criminal justice involvement or other sensitive information or if one racial group is less likely to report than another. A mitigating factor for this limitation is the research design of Add Health, which allowed respondents to enter their own answers into a laptop computer for privacy; this increases the validity of responses. Additionally, there are other fitting analysis strategies (e.g., propensity score matching) that may present a better test of the relationship between these variables; however, regression interactions are a more rigorous test of comparisons across groups. The results of propensity score matching (results available upon request) match the findings presented here. Propensity score matching, however, reveals that the effects are more pronounced

51. David O. Sears, “The American Color Line 50 Years after Brown V. Board: Many ‘Peoples of Color’ or Black Exceptionalism? ,” in *Commemorating Brown: The Social Psychology of Racism and Discrimination*, eds. G. Adams, M. Biernat, N. R. Branscombe, C. S. Crandall, and L. S. Wrightsman (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2008), 133–52.

for Black and Latinx youths, but they do not allow separate models for Black, white, and Latinx youths to assess what factors and variables explain away the effect for white youths.

The findings of this study highlight yet another consequence of vastly different policing among Black, white, and Latinx youths. By treating youthful missteps and mistakes, like drug possession, differently, most white youths who do drugs never experience negative educational consequences because most are not arrested. This pass, however, is not afforded to most Black and Latinx youths. By focusing on drug arrests, rather than aggregate measures of juvenile arrest, the findings here suggest that estimates of the consequences of the War on Drugs in the United States underestimate the impact on racial disparities because not only are Black youths much more likely to be arrested than Latinx and white youths for drug related charges, but a drug arrest strongly effects their life chances and the educational opportunities afforded to them.

Appendix

Appendix A. Sample descriptive statistics of all variables, percentages, and means (N=8,531)

Variables	<u>White</u>	<u>Latinx</u>	<u>Black</u>
Percent of sample	70.71%	13.16%	16.13%
<i>Main Dependent Variable</i>			
College Enrollment	68.05%	56.85%	55.51%
Juvenile Arrest Type			
No Arrest	86.80%	80.37%	79.90%
Drug	2.48%	3.33%	7.04%
Other	10.72%	16.30%	13.06%
Control Variables			
Sex (female)	50.34%	48.70%	51.15%
Age	15.46	15.62	15.74
Phenotype (1=White, 5=Black)	1.04 (0.28)	1.72 (0.85)	3.69 (1.02)
Family/Home			
Parents Education			
No HS diploma	7.60%	32.84%	14.24%
HS Diploma	30.28%	30.13%	38.46%
Some College	23.04%	17.53%	19.64%
BA Degree or more	39.08%	19.50%	27.66%
Low-Income Household	25.22%	44.32%	45.92%
Two-Parent Home	74.67%	69.05%	41.21%
School Performance and Sanctions			
College Expectations (0–5)	4.16 (1.17)	3.86 (1.19)	4.09 (1.11)
9th Grade GPA (0–4)	2.68 (0.87)	2.31 (0.90)	2.14 (0.89)
School Suspension(s)	21.28%	31.69%	47.24%
School Expulsion(s)	5.21%	9.07%	14.25%
Behavior Variables			
Delinquency Scale (0–3)	0.28 (0.34)	0.36 (0.40)	0.29 (0.33)
Drug Use	27.89%	29.79%	26.62%
Drug Sale	6.38%	9.51%	7.89%
Juvenile Conviction	4.31%	4.53%	4.46%
Subsequent Arrest	2.70%	4.77%	4.16%
N	5165	1468	1897

Note: Respondents who reported their race as Asian, Native American, or Other are excluded from this sample.

Appendix B. Odds ratios from logistic regression of the effects of juvenile arrest on college enrollment, including interactions for race and arrest type, 1995–2008

Juvenile Arrest Type (ref: no arrest)	
Drug	1.034
Other	0.875 *
Race: (ref: White)	
Latinx	1.388 *
Black	1.241
Race Interactions (ref: White X no arrest)	
Latinx X Drug Arrest	0.884 *
Latinx X Other Arrest	0.909
Black X Drug Arrest	0.700 *
Black X Other Arrest	1.096
Control Variables	
Sex (female)	1.242 **
Age	0.987
Phenotype (1=Black, 5=White)	1.080
Family/Home	
Parents Education (ref: no HS diploma)	
HS Diploma/GED	1.360 *
Some College	2.192 **
BA Degree or more	3.655 ***
Low-Income Household	0.727 *
Two-Parent Home	0.901
Academic Performance and Sanctions	
College Expectations (0–5)	1.568 ***
9th Grade GPA (0–4)	2.293 ***
School Suspension(s)	0.746 **
School Expulsion(s)	0.871
Behavior Variables	
Delinquency Scale (0–3)	0.923 *
Drug Use	0.746
Drug Sale	0.807 *
Juvenile Conviction	0.417 *
Subsequent Juvenile Arrest	0.953
N=9421	

Note: Significance tests * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Odds ratios not shown for Asian, Native American, or respondents who reported their race as “other.”

Appendix C. Odds ratios from logistic regression of the effects of juvenile arrest on college enrollment for Latinx youth, including interactions for phenotype and arrest type, 1995–2008

Juvenile Arrest Type (ref: no arrest)	
Drug	0.826
Other	0.721 **
Phenotype (0=White, 1=Brown/Black)	0.912
Phenotype Interactions (ref: White Latinx w/no arrest)	
Brown/Black * Drug Arrest	0.785 *
Brown/Black * Other Arrest	0.893
Control Variables	
Sex (female)	1.293 *
Age	0.805
Family/Home	
Parents Education (ref: no HS diploma)	
HS Diploma/GED	1.475
Some College	2.055 ***
BA Degree or more	2.582 ***
Low-Income Household	0.881
Two-Parent Home	0.757
School Performance and Sanctions	
College Expectations (0–5)	1.384 ***
9th Grade GPA (0–4)	2.262 ***
School Suspension(s)	0.866
School Expulsion(s)	0.426 *
Behavior Variables	
Delinquency Scale (0–3)	0.926 *
Drug Use	0.817
Drug Sale	0.593 *
Juvenile Conviction	2.918 *
Subsequent Juvenile Arrest	0.976
N=1468	

Note: Significance tests * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Appendix D. Descriptive statistics for juvenile drug arrests by race (N=295)

Variables	<u>White</u>	<u>Latinx</u>	<u>Black</u>
Marijuana Possession	75%	71%	70%
Marijuana Sale	19%	23%	17%
Other Drug Possession	24%	22%	28%
Other Drug Sale	9%	13%	19%
N	128	49	134

Appendix E. Wave 1 Add Health Delinquency Scale

Wave 1 Delinquency Scale

The delinquency scale is created from the Add Health Delinquency Scale. Respondent's were asked, "In the past 12 months, how often did you..." and then given the following scenarios with the scale: 0=never, 1=1 or 2 times, 2=3 or 4 times, 3=5 or more times:

- 1) paint graffiti or signs on someone else's property or in a public place?
- 2) deliberately damage property that didn'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 badly enough to need bandages or care from a doctor or nurse?
- 7) run away from home?
- 8) drive a car without its 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) steal something worth less than \$50?
- 13) take part in a fight where a group of your friends was against another group?
- 14) act loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place?

The final question in the scale (how often respondents sold marijuana or other drugs), was not included in the scale, but used to create the variable indicating respondents had sold drugs.