NUANCED EFFECTS OF STATUS TRANSITIONS ON CRIME IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD*

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When and why will movement into and out of adult statuses lead to changes in young adult crime? We use longitudinal data on thirty cohorts of young adults to examine the effects on crime of a broad set of family statuses, living arrangements, and student and work statuses. The status changes that most reduce crime are those that are likely to provide the clearest behavioral expectations and guidelines (e.g., entry into marriage, engagement, and professional work). Other statuses (e.g., parenthood and non-professional work) have weaker and inconsistent effects on crime. We also find that status changes can increase the odds of adult crime when they sever formal roles (e.g., divorce and widowhood) or when they immerse young adults in peer contexts. The observed relationships are not contingent on demographic factors or on cohort, which suggests that the mechanisms connecting adult statuses and crime are relatively time- and space-invariant.

*We thank Chris Uggen for his helpful comments. We use data from the Monitoring the Future study, which is supported by a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (R01 DA01411). Jeremy Staff gratefully acknowledges support from a Mentored Research Scientist Development Award in Population Research from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (HD054467). Send correspondence to Sonja E. Siennick, College of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Florida State University, 634 West Call Street, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1127 (e-mail: ssiennick@fsu.edu).

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Scholars have long noted that the most dramatic decrease in criminal behavior over the lifespan occurs during the "demographically dense" (Rindfuss 1991) young adult years (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Quetelet 1984 [1833]). Not surprisingly, most attempts to explain this decline have dealt with transitions into adult statuses. Some transitions, such as entry into marriage, appear to have robust beneficial effects on crime, but others, such as entry into work and parenthood, have inconsistent effects (Blokland and Nieuwbeerta 2005; Horney et al. 1995; Laub et al. 1998; Piquero et al. 2002; Simons et al. 2002; Uggen 2000; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998; Warr 1998). What makes certain status changes common "turning points" or "hooks for change" in the life course of crime?

We draw on theoretical and empirical work on life course development, criminal behavior, adult socialization, and work and family roles to explore the types of status changes that are most consistently linked to changes in young adult crime.[1] We move beyond prior research by decomposing broad categories of adult statuses (i.e. "partner", "parent", "employee", and "student") into several theoretically guided, nuanced sub-statuses and by considering those sub-statuses in the context of young adults' changing residential contexts. We also use a strong within-person research design, use multi-cohort panel data from a nationally representative sample, follow respondents through a large portion of young adulthood, and include young people from contemporary cohorts who are increasingly likely to experience reversible and "blurry" or ill-defined status transitions. Our findings provide new evidence on the conditions under which new social statuses cause changes in offending behavior.

[1] In this paper we focus on crimes against people and property, although our theoretical and analytical frameworks are highly relevant to the study of deviance more generally, and substance use specifically (cf. Bachman et al. 1997; Laub and Sampson 2001; Staff et al. 2010).

SHORT-TERM BEHAVIOR CHANGE AS A WINDOW ON THE MEANINGS OF STATUSES

Past theorists have offered several explanations for status-crime relationships, ranging from status-facilitated identity shifts (Giordano et al. 2002; Shover 1996) to constraining commitments to conventional institutions (Sampson and Laub 1993) to status partners' supervision and monitoring (Laub and Sampson 2003) to status-prompted changes in peer relations (Osgood et al. 1996; Warr 1998). The better-developed explanations emphasize long-term and lasting changes in adult status holders' criminal propensity. For example, Giordano and colleagues (2002) describe the process of crafting a prosocial "replacement self," and Sampson and Laub (1993; Laub and Sampson 2003) describe the gradual development of "stakes in conformity" and increasing potential costs to criminal behavior. This emphasis is consistent with criminologists' interest in desistance, or movement into a stable non-offending state (Laub and Sampson 2001).

These gradual mechanisms, however, may be conceptually and empirically distinct from the mechanisms behind offenders' initial movement out of crime and from the environmental changes that first produce shifts in the meanings and desirability of crime (Giordano et al. 2002). Adult statuses can foster gradual personal change which in turn fosters behavioral stability, but they also can spark immediate behavior change by imposing on incumbents new situational requirements (Becker 1964). Becker (1964) labeled these socialization processes commitment and situational adjustment, respectively. Consistent with this two-pronged approach, research supports both gradual and immediate effects of status changes on crime (Horney et al. 1995; Laub et al. 1998). Research also suggests that some statuses have reversible effects on crime (e.g., separating from a spouse increases offending; Farrington and West 1995; Horney et al.

1995), as well as on substance use (Bachman et al. 1997; Staff et al. 2010), which underscores the potential importance of situational adjustment.

Theoretically, new adult statuses cause immediate decreases in offending by providing clear guidelines for behavior and by immersing individuals in routines and peer groups that reinforce those guidelines (Giordano et al. 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003). Identifying the specific statuses that have the strongest short-term associations with crime thus would yield important information about what it means to hold different social statuses. It is critical to understand these meanings because status transitions may offer opportunities for intervention (Schulenberg and Zarrett 2006; Siennick and Osgood 2008) and because long-term desistance processes depend on the success of early behavioral change (Laub and Sampson 2003). In the following sections we describe theories and evidence that link statuses with social meanings and with individual behavior.

DEFINING THE "EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENT" OF STATUS CHANGES

According to classic role theories, statuses have implications for behavior because they carry sets of expectations, rights, and duties (Linton 1936). These are roles, and as integrated sets of norms they tell status holders how a person of their status should act (Bates 1956). These expectations can be formally defined through institutions, or interactively defined through observation and informal socialization (Linton 1936; Turner 1962). The clearer and more structured roles are, the more reliably their associated statuses should be linked to behavior, possibly including criminal behavior (Giordano et al. 2002). Ambiguity of role definitions makes it difficult not only for incumbents to assess others' expectations for their behavior, but also for others to sanction inappropriate behavior (Mortimer and Simmons 1978). Also, consistent effects

of statuses on offending imply that incumbents are not left to independently define the associated roles.

Young adults perceive adulthood and a range of adult statuses as incompatible with offending (Massoglia and Uggen 2010). Consistent with these perceptions, young adults tend to reduce their offending upon marrying (King et al 2007; Piquero et al. 2002; Warr 1998). Still, romantic partnership, employment, parenthood, and other statuses have far from guaranteed effects on crime (Giordano et al. 2002; Horney et al. 1995; Piquero et al. 2002). This could be because their role expectations are flexible and allow a variety of behaviors (Mortimer and Simmons 1978). In addition, Becker (1964) traces inconsistencies in the behavioral effects of social institutions to within-institution variation in "life situations":

> …[C]ases in which it appears that people are not adjusting to situational pressures are cases in which closer analysis reveals that the situation is actually not the same for everyone involved in the institution… Subgroups in an institution will often have somewhat different life situations. College, for instance… [is] one thing for members of fraternities and sororities, another for independents… we must make sure we have discovered the effective environment of those whose personal development we want to understand. (48-49)

This idea suggests that the effects of social statuses on crime may vary depending on the social context in which the corresponding roles are enacted. It also suggests that scholars' use of broad categories of statuses may mask real behavioral effects of relevant sub-statuses. For example, as Becker might expect, Greek affiliation, dorm living, and off-campus living without parents predict heavy and problem drinking among college students (Bachman et al. 1997; Carter et al. 2010; Harford et al. 2002; McCabe et al. 2005; Presley et al. 2002; White et al. 2006). This finding and other evidence suggest that there is not a unitary definition of the college student role (Carter et al. 2010; Presley et al. 2002) and that "student" is too general a label to allow scholars to consistently predict individual behavior.

If the effective environment of reduced offending involves clear behavioral expectations, then the statuses or sub-statuses that best set those expectations should have the most robust effects on crime. We next review empirical evidence on the meanings of work and family statuses and on the extent to which those meanings are aligned with the theoretical mechanisms behind changes in offending.

WHICH STATUSES SHOULD BE MOST RELEVANT FOR CRIME?

Effective Forms of Romantic Partnership

Marriage may be our culture's most institutionalized and symbol-laden family status (Waite and Gallagher 2000). By our theoretical logic, then, it is not surprising that marriage has atypically robust beneficial effects on crime (Siennick and Osgood 2008). If statuses affect crime through their associated behavioral expectations, then engagement should have similar effects. Like marriage, engagement is a "cultural emblem" (Stanley et al. 2010:79) of individuals' maturity and dependability, and it carries expectations of adherence to "normative guidelines for good interpersonal behavior" (Nock et al. 2008:79). It also signals that romantic partners have reached a consensus about their relationship (Stanley et al. 2010). In contrast, the social meanings of cohabitation are ambiguous, and cohabiting partners' shared understandings of their roles and relationships are much weaker (Manning and Smock 2005; Stanley et al. 2010; Thornton et al. 2007; Waite and Gallagher 2000). In the absence of a clear, structured cohabiter role, individual cohabiters independently construct their roles by adopting norms of dating or marital relationships or by blending the two (Edin et al. 2004; Manning and Smock 2005; Nock 1995). Cohabiting partners also have less authority to enforce behavioral expectations because each reserves the right to leave the relationship at any time (Edin et al. 2004; Umberson 1992).

Because the status "cohabiting" will capture wide ranges of individuals and enactments of the partnership role, cohabitation should have a less consistent effect on offending.

It is possible that marriage and cohabitation effects vary by cohort. For example, more recent cohorts may use cohabitation as a normative step toward marriage, or alternatively the contemporary "decline in marriage" could mean that only the strongest and most potentially influential relationships culminate in marriage (e.g., Waite 2000). As described below, we examine historical variation in the effects on crime of romantic partnership and of other status transitions. It also is possible that romantic partners have similar expectations of each other regardless of their formal relationship status, and that their ability to supervise each other determines their effect on each others' behavior (Laub and Sampson 2003). If this is true, then a romantic partner's presence in the household should be more consequential for crime than is the couple's formal label for their partnership. Co-resident spouses and cohabiting partners should be associated with greater reductions in crime than are non-co-resident fiancés. We test these potential explanations by examining young adults' formal partnership statuses in conjunction with their living arrangements.

Effective Forms of Parenthood

Parenthood has long been described as an especially demanding adult status (e.g., Rossi 1968). Parents are expected to meet their children's material, physiological, and psychological needs (Sabatelli and Waldron 1995). Children can dramatically change parents' daily routines because they require constant care, supervision, and guidance (Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003). Children also seem to make parents more traditional (Rossi 1983) and to expand their social networks and strengthen their connections to conventional institutions such as schools and religious organizations (Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003; Umberson and Gove 1989). Any of these

features of the parent role could reduce new parents' offending (Siennick and Osgood 2008). Several studies, however, have found no significant effect of having children on crime (Blokland and Nieuwbeerta 2005; Giordano et al. 2002; Thornberry et al. 2000; Warr 1998).

Like romantic partnership, parenthood can be enacted in so many ways that it may not make sense to speak of a unitary "parent" role (Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003; Umberson and Williams 1999). This may be especially true for nonresident parenthood. Although custodial parents tend to be heavily involved in day-to-day childrearing, non-intact families, and the courts, create highly individualized roles for the noncustodial parent (Seltzer 1991). Newly separated nonresident fathers similarly must make sense of widely varying beliefs and practices regarding the appropriate level of their involvement in their children's lives (Seltzer 1991). Because the parent role is not uniformly defined for parents who do not live with their children, only resident parenthood should consistently reduce offending.

Effective Forms of Employment

Studies find beneficial effects of employment on crime more often than not (e.g., Farrington et al. 1986; Shavit and Arye 1988), but those effects often are subject to un-reproducible contingencies. Work may have effects only for older offenders (Uggen 2000) or only for arrests but not drug use (O'Connell 2003), property crime but not violence (Horney et al. 1995), or violence but not property crime (Piquero et al. 2002). Research also suggests that work effects may be limited to stable and high-quality jobs (Sampson and Laub 1993; Uggen 1999).

Our theoretical framework leads us to distinguish between forms of employment based on the intensity of the associated work role. Professional jobs in particular are distinguished by their extensive socialization processes and "distinctive norms, practices, ideologies, and

organizational forms" (Leicht and Fennell 2001:90). Because these jobs require special skills and training, incumbents undergo formal anticipatory socialization (Mortimer and Simmons 1978). Relative to people with nonprofessional jobs, professionals also report greater spillover of work pressures and responsibilities into their non-work lives (Schieman et al. 2009), which indicates that the professional work role extends beyond the workplace. In comparison and partly by definition, nonprofessional jobs are not as institutionalized. Dubin's (1956) early research found that work demands and colleagues played only peripheral roles in the priorities and social lives of industrial workers. Contemporary studies document the relative marginality of non-professionals, especially those working in the secondary labor market with its attendant low wages, shift work, job instability, and lack of employer investment in workers (Crutchfield and Pitchford 1997; Kalleberg et al. 2000). Because professional jobs offer more complete role socialization, they should be more consistently associated with declines in offending.

Work also may suppress crime by restricting offenders' routines and limiting their leisure time (Osgood et al. 1996; Shover 1996). If time use, rather than role socialization, is the key mechanism behind work effects, then full time employment should be associated with greater reductions in crime than is part time work. We examine both potential mechanisms by examining job type in conjunction with work hours.

Effective Forms of Student Status

Student status has received less attention from criminologists than have work and family roles (Siennick and Osgood 2008). The limited available evidence suggests that school enrollment reduces adult offending (Blokland and Nieuwbeerta 2005; Shavit and Arye 1988; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998). As Becker (1964) suggested, though, the student status likely has several associated roles that track other life circumstances such as living arrangements and

affiliation with student groups. For example, as noted above, shared student housing and participating in fraternities and sororities increase college students' alcohol use, problem drinking, and alcohol-related problems (Harford et al. 2002; McCabe et al. 2005; Presley et al. 2002; White et al. 2006). Criminologists do not often study new onset or increasing offending among adults (Eggleston and Laub 2002), but immersion in new peer contexts of young adulthood may carry clear expectations for partying, substance use, and other deviant behavior. We thus examine not only full- and part-time school enrollment, but also the broader peer and family context of that enrollment.

UNIVERSALITY OF PROCESSES BEHIND STATUS EFFECTS

Thus far we have focused on the roles that accompany statuses, but status effects on crime also may vary according to personal characteristics of incumbents or by historical era. Family scholars rarely study marriage and parenthood without examining gender differences, and some have identified dramatic differences between husbands' and wives' and fathers' and mothers' roles (Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003; Rossi 1983; Umberson 1992). Enactment of work roles also may be gendered (Bielby 1992). In addition, although criminologists often study selected and disadvantaged populations (Siennick and Osgood 2008), those populations may be atypical in their access to adult statuses or in their fulfillment of the associated roles. Thus far marriage effects on crime appear fairly consistent across genders and populations (e.g., Bersani et al. 2009; Kreager et al. 2010), but our focus on role socialization and enactment leads us to examine gender and socioeconomic status (SES) as potential moderators of a range of status effects.

In addition, role theorists have long been concerned with the impact of social and historical change on status-behavior associations (Becker 1964; Mortimer and Simmons 1978).

This concern may be especially relevant for studies of young adults because rates of cohabitation, part-time college attendance, and other nontraditional statuses are rising (Shanahan 2000). As young people invent increasingly diverse ways to be partners, parents, students, and employees, the behavioral effects of nominally holding these roles may become weaker and less consistent. We thus examine cohort change in the effects of status transitions on crime.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Using multi-cohort national panel data, we examine the effects on crime of a broad and highly nuanced set of family roles, work roles, and student roles. Our measures allow us to distinguish whether the effects of nominally holding a role differ according to the formality of the role and according to living arrangements, which provide an important social context for role performance.

DATA AND METHODS

THE MONITORING THE FUTURE STUDY

Our data come from the follow-up portion of Monitoring the Future (Bachman, Johnston, O'Malley, and Schulenberg 2010), an ongoing study that annually surveys a nationally representative sample of high school seniors using multiple forms of self-completed questionnaires and then longitudinally follows a subset of each cohort into adulthood. Serious drug users are oversampled for the follow-up portion of the study. A random subset of each cohort answers the version of the survey that features the items we use here. We use data from the first five (ages 19-28) follow-up surveys of the 1976-2005 cohorts, which gives us 52,143 observations on 15,860 respondents.

MEASURES

Offending. Our dependent variables are dichotomous measures of whether during the last 12 months respondents had engaged in gang or group fighting, serious assault, or robbery (*violent crime*) or had engaged in any of five types of theft, arson, or trespassing (*property crime*).

Adult statuses. Our independent variables are dichotomous indicators of whether or not respondents held various statuses at each wave. Our measures of formal partnership status include indicators of whether respondents were *married*; *divorced, widowed, or separated*; or *engaged but not cohabiting*. We also include indicators of whether respondents were *cohabiting with a fiancé(e)*; *cohabiting but not engaged*; *living only with roommates*; *living with roommates and family members or romantic partners*; and *living with parents*. Our measures of parenthood indicate whether respondents were *resident* or *non-resident parents*. Together these measures help us distinguish the effects of formal or legal partnership and parenthood from the effects of the physical presence of partners and children in the household.

We make similarly fine distinctions between various student and work roles. Our student measures indicate whether respondents were *part-time students* or, if full-time students, whether they lived in a *fraternity or sorority*; in a *dormitory*; *with their parents*; or in some *other residence*. When layered over our indicators of living arrangements, these measures allow us to determine whether studenthood has effects on crime above and beyond the effects of living arrangements that are common among students, namely living with roommates and living with parents. We also include an indicator of whether respondents had earned a *bachelor's degree*. Working respondents reported whether they held a professional job such as nurse, engineer, accountant, lawyer, physician, and other similar occupations. Our measures of work statuses

indicate whether respondents held *full-time professional jobs*, *part-time professional jobs*, *full-time non-professional jobs*, *part-time non-professional jobs*, were *homemakers*, or were in the *military*.

ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

We estimate two-level random effects logistic regression models in HLM. This approach lets us use our longitudinal design to rule out all time-stable selection factors by comparing individuals to themselves under different conditions. We do this by expressing all predictors as deviations from their respondent-specific means across waves of data collection. This corresponds to a fixed-effects analysis within respondents (Allison 2005). Our models include terms for residual variation in individual intercepts, polynomials for age, and error terms for the age terms to allow for serially correlated error.

Given our interest in nuanced effects of status transitions, our key predictors are complex. For example, because dorm living reflects both student status and living arrangements, and we include a separate indicator of living with roommates, the coefficient for our measure of whether respondents were full-time students living in dormitories captures the additive effect of full time studenthood above and beyond the impact of living with peers. We successfully replicated all of our findings in four separate, simpler models predicting crime from partnership statuses only (model 1), parent statuses only (model 2), school statuses only (model 3), and work statuses only (model 4; results of all four models are available upon request). These models allowed us to confirm the total effects of the statuses of interest (dorm living, for example) by referencing smaller sets of coefficients and more straightforward reference categories. To better illustrate our findings, we also present selected results in graphical form.

Finally, because the meaning and consequences of statuses may well differ across demographic characteristics and historical time, we examine interactions of statuses with *gender*, *parental education* (some college versus not), and earlier (1976-1991) versus later (1992-2005) *cohort*.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of within-person models predicting violent and property crime from changes in social statuses over several waves of data collection. The first violence and property crime models use basic, dichotomous measurements of family, parent, school, and work statuses. Times when respondents were married were associated with lower involvement in both violent (b = -.379; t = -7.26) and property crime (b = -.214; t = -6.15). Being a parent, on the other hand, had no significant association (violent b = -.105; t = -1.76; property b = .021; t = 0.51). No significant overall effects were found for student status on violent crime (b = .006; t = 0.17), but being a student is associated with increases in property crime (b = .143; t = 5.52). The basic employment measure is significant in its association with reduced property crime (b = -.054; t = -1.98), but not with violent crime (b = -.068; t = -1.80). Because these two models use only simple measurements, we only receive the average estimate of each social status.

----- Table 1 about here -----

NUANCED EFFECTS OF ROMANTIC PARTNERSHIP ON CRIME

Turning to the second set of violent and property crime models in Table 1, we can use refined categorization to examine more nuanced effects of these statuses. Marriage is still associated with lower odds of violence (b = -.370; t = -5.37) and property crime (b = -.147; t = -3.24), whereas divorce, widowhood, or separation accompanies increased odds of violence (b = .302; t = 2.69) relative to the category of not yet married. Engagement without cohabitation

predicts lower levels of crime (violent b = -.402; t = -5.59; property b = -.124; t = -2.47) relative to being unmarried, but cohabiting with a romantic partner does not influence crime (violent b = .004; t = 0.06; property b = .041; t = 0.89), even if the cohabiters are engaged (violent b = -.164; t = -1.75; property b = -.039; t = -0.62). Respondents who are not full-time students have higher odds of crime when they live with roommates for both violence (b = .215; t = 3.62) and property crime (b = .208; t = 5.13), or with their parents for property crime (b = .086; t = 2.12) than they do when they live alone or are cohabiting. Roommates increase the odds of property crime even among respondents who additionally live with relatives or romantic partners (b = .110; t = 3.13). These findings suggest that the formal statuses of marriage, divorce, and engagement are more relevant for crime than is simply living with a romantic partner. They also suggest that co-resident peers and relatives may create a social milieu that promotes crime.

EFFECTS OF PARENTHOOD DO NOT DEPEND ON PARENT-CHILD CORESIDENCE

Contrary to our expectations, we find little evidence that resident parenthood matters more for crime than does non-resident parenthood. Neither predicts property crime (resident b = -.034; t = -0.72; non-resident b = .053; t = 0.85), and their beneficial effects on violence (resident b = -.166; t = -2.43; non-resident b = -.173; t = -1.91) are statistically indistinguishable (χ^2 for difference = -.008; $p > .05$).

EFFECTS OF EMPLOYMENT DEPEND ON PROFESSIONALISM AND HOURS WORKED

We find that the effect of work on crime partly depends on the professionalism and intensity of respondents' work roles. Full-time professional jobs carry the largest benefit for violence (b = -.297; t = -3.67), but full-time work reduces the odds of property crime regardless of whether it is a professional (b = -.125; t = -2.39) or non-professional (b = -.092; t = -2.55) job (χ^2 for difference = -.030; $p > .05$). Part-time professional and non-professional jobs do not

appear to influence crime, although periods of holding part-time professional jobs are rare. Becoming a homemaker also reduces the odds of property crime (b = -.202; t = -2.81), but not violent crime (b = -.081; t = -.73).

EFFECTS OF STUDENT STATUS VARY BY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Our findings on student status indicate that students' household compositions are more relevant for crime than is their student status itself. The coefficients reflect the interactive effects of student status and students' living arrangements, above and beyond the effects of living with roommates or parents (described above). Full-time students who live in fraternities (b = .489; t = 2.90) or dormitories (b = .119; t = 2.12) have even greater odds of violent and property crime, respectively, than they do during periods when they are out of school and living only with roommates. Part-time student status and student status in combination with other living arrangements have no unique effects on crime.

UNIVERSAL EFFECTS ACROSS GENDER, SES, AND HISTORICAL TIME

In supplemental analyses, we examined whether these relationships varied by gender, parental education, and cohort (full results are available upon request). The frequency with which respondents reported experiencing these statuses varied across these factors. For example, not only did males and females differ in their levels of offending, but also on average across all of the follow-up surveys women were more likely than men to be married (spending 28% versus 21% of person-periods married), resident parents (20% versus 11%), employed in part-time non-professional jobs (28% versus 22%), and full-time homemakers (6% to less than 1%). Men were more likely to be living with roommates and no family members (29% versus 22%) and in full-time non-professional jobs (42% versus 34%). Despite these varying amounts of participation, the influences of these statuses on crime vary little by the gender of the participant. For each

relationship, we employed Clogg tests to compare regression coefficients between models. Although 7 of 42 coefficients varied significantly ($p < .05$) between male and female models (more than would be expected by chance), the findings yielded no interpretable pattern (results are available upon request.)

We found similar results comparing respondents whose parents had no more than a high school education to those whose parents had attended at least some college. Those from lower SES origins were more often resident parents (23% versus 13%), more often married (31% versus 22%), and more often full-time workers in a non-professional job (47% versus 33%). Respondents from higher SES origins were more likely to be living with roommates and no family members (30% versus 16%) and more likely to hold a BA. Yet the results of the Clogg tests indicated that the relationships between holding these statuses and crime do not vary by SES origin. Only 1 of all 44 parental education comparisons reached statistical significance (at $p < .05$).

Finally, different cohorts also varied in their rates of participation in these statuses. Later cohorts were less likely to be married (30% versus 19%), less likely to hold full-time non-professional jobs (34% versus 41%), and more likely to hold part-time non-professional jobs (29% versus 22%). This historical change in statuses' prevalence may accompany social change in statuses' meanings and associated roles, which could have implications for status effects on behavior. Although six differences between coefficients emerged between the cohort models, they followed no interpretable pattern. Thus, we found that although the amount of time that respondents held some statuses varied across gender, SES origin, and cohort, the relationships between social statuses and crime remained largely the same across contexts.

DISCUSSION

We provide new evidence for highly nuanced short-term effects of adult statuses on criminal offending. In general, the status changes that cause the greatest reductions in crime are those that are likely to provide the clearest behavioral expectations and guidelines (e.g., marriage, engagement, and professional work). Other status changes, such as entry into parenthood and non-professional work, may reduce the odds of crime; however, they show weaker and less consistent effects. Although we expected greater effects of becoming a resident parent, our findings are broadly consistent with theories of adult socialization that posit more robust status-behavior links when statuses have unambiguous associated roles (Giordano et al. 2002; Mortimer and Simmons 1978). Interestingly, we compared older cohorts (the high school senior classes of 1976-1991) with more contemporary cohorts (the high school senior classes of 1992-2005) and found very few cohort differences in status effects. Similarly, we found very little variation in effects by gender and socio-economic position. These findings suggest that the mechanisms connecting social statuses and crime are relatively universal and time- and space-invariant. They also suggest that statuses such as marriage, engagement, and professional work remain highly institutionalized, and that statuses such as cohabitation remain fairly uninstitutionalized, despite recent changes in their prevalence. Earlier analyses of substance use among Monitoring the Future panel respondents showed similarly consistent effects, especially of marriage and other living arrangements, that also were universal across time (Bachman et al, 1997; Bachman et al, 2002; Staff et al. 2010).

Criminologists have paid little attention to adult onset offending, except to imply that it is the result of falling "off course" from normal development or otherwise becoming newly marginalized (e.g., Laub and Sampson 2003). We show that some novel contexts of young

adulthood, in particular peer co-residence and shared student housing, may prompt increases in deviance even though they are embedded in conventional trajectories. In fact, certain school settings seem to magnify the harmful effects of peer contexts (cf. Carter et al. 2010; McCabe et al. 2005). In this connection it is worth noting that Bachman et al (1997) found that heavy drinking increased sharply among those living in dormitories or in other living arrangements involving roommates, and heavy drinking can increase the likelihood of involvement in violent crime. In combination with the harmful effect of divorce and widowhood, these results suggest that adult change is not necessarily synonymous with conventionality. They also reinforce Giordano and colleagues' (2002) assertion that the effects of status changes may depend on whether the changes bring individuals into contact with conventional or deviant others. Scholars thus should consider status changes in their immediate social contexts.

We do find some evidence that status changes may exert some of their effects by affecting opportunities for crime. For example, full time professional work matters more for crime than does part time professional work, and becoming a homemaker reduces property offending. If status effects boiled down to opportunity, we would expect co-resident romantic partners and children to have more consistent effects on crime than they apparently do. Still, it is possible that status effects reflect some combination of the provision and enforcement of behavioral guidelines and of the direct restructuring of daily routines (cf. Giordano et al. 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003).

The present study uses national multi-wave and multi-cohort panel data spanning ages 19-28 and thus brings greater generalizability and age coverage than is typical of criminological studies of social role effects during late adolescence and early adulthood. Our use of fixed-effects estimates allows us to rule out a large class of selection effects. Another major strength of

our study is the perfect consistency of measurement across age and cohort. The study's biannual data collection does leave some ambiguity about the timing of status effects; more frequent measurement would allow better precision on this point.

In sum, we find that transitions into and out of adult statuses can have abrupt and reversible effects on adult offending, and that these effects likely depend on the statuses' social meanings and contexts. Our study highlights the importance of definitional issues in work on the demographic correlates of crime. It also suggests that policies that encourage or facilitate offenders' entry into work and family statuses may be effective if those statuses are carefully chosen. The continuing behavioral relevance of young adults' participation in our society's most institutionalized statuses calls for continued research attention to this important and interesting period of the life course.

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Table 1. Within-Individual Estimates of Nuanced Effects of Status Transitions on Self-Reported Criminal Behavior

	Violent Crime				Property Crime				Time in
Variable	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t	Status
Family Statuses									
Married (vs. Single)	-.379	-7.26	-.370	-5.37	-.214	-6.15	-.147	-3.24	25%
Divorced/Widowed/Separated			.302	2.69			.066	0.88	3%
Cohabit (not engaged)			.004	0.06			.041	0.89	8%
Cohabit (and engaged)			-.164	-1.75			-.039	-0.62	3%
Not cohabiting (but engaged)			-.402	-5.59			-.124	-2.47	5%
Living with roommates and no family or partners			.215	3.62			.208	5.13	25%
Living with roommates and family or partners			.020	0.40			.110	3.13	12%
Reside with parents			.040	0.69			.086	2.12	32%
Parent Statuses									
Parent (vs. Non-Parent)	-.105	-1.76			.021	0.51			20%
Non-Resident Parent			-.173	-1.91			.053	0.85	4%
Resident Parent			-.166	-2.43			-.034	-0.72	16%
School Statuses									
Student (vs. not a student)	.006	0.17			.143	5.52			41%
Part-time Student			.006	0.12			-.007	-0.19	10%
Full-time Student in Fraternity/Sorority			.489	2.90			.064	0.50	1%
Full-time Student in Dorm			.081	1.05			.119	2.12	8%
Full-time Student Residing with Parents			-.040	-0.65			-.042	-0.90	10%
Full-time Student in Other Residence			-.036	-0.58			.081	1.93	13%
BA/BS degree holder			.063	1.05			-.168	-4.09	21%
Work Statuses									
Worker (vs. Non-Worker)	-.068	-1.80			-.054	-1.98			78%
Full-time Professional Job			-.297	-3.67			-.125	-2.39	10%
Part-time Professional Job			-.099	-0.87			.109	1.61	3%
Full-time Non-Professional Job			-.089	-1.74			-.092	-2.55	38%
Part-time Non-Professional Job			.003	0.07			.013	0.40	25%
Homemaker			-.081	-0.73			-.202	-2.81	3%
Military			.031	0.22			-.110	-1.08	2%

N = 15,860 respondents; 52,143 person-years