

The series Working Papers on Economics is published by the Office for Economic Studies at the *Banco de la República* (Central Bank of *Colombia*). The works published are provisional, and their authors are fully responsible for the opinions expressed in them, as well as for possible mistakes. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Banco de la República or its Board of Directors.

AUTHOR OR EDITOR

Carlos Medina

Jorge Andrés Tamayo

Christian Posso

We use a unique data set at the individual level to estimate an empirical model explaining the probability of young individuals to become criminals as a function of the presence of adult criminals in their neighborhoods, and a complete set of control variables, including census sector fixed effects. We use the census of criminals captured in Medellín between 2000 and 2010 to construct our peer's variables, and find a strong and robust positive effect of the presence of adult criminal neighbors on the probability of becoming criminal. The result is robust across different specifications of the presence of criminals, and with respect to the probability of committing different types of crimes, even controlling for contextual and group effects. Both modeling peer effects as the sum of friends' efforts and modeling them as deviations from the means, affect the likelihood to become criminal, although with differential importance by type of crime.

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and not of the Banco de la República de Colombia nor of its Board.