



Nativity and immigration status among Latino families involved in the child welfare system: Characteristics, risk, and maltreatment



Jodi Berger Cardoso ^{a,*}, Alan J. Dettlaff ^b, Megan Finno-Velasquez ^c, Jennifer Scott ^d, Monica Faulkner ^d

^a University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work, 110 HA Social Work Building, Houston, TX 77204-4013, United States

^b University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College of Social Work, 1040 W. Harrison (MC 309), Chicago, IL 60607, United States

^c University of Southern California, School of Social Work, Montgomery Ross Fisher Building, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0411, United States

^d University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work, Child and Family Research Institute, The University of Texas at Austin, 1925 San Jacinto, Austin, TX 78665, United States

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to estimate the proportion of Latino children with non-citizen parents involved with the child welfare system and to identify how their household, community, and maltreatment characteristics differ from children of U.S. citizens. Data were drawn from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being – II, a nationally representative sample of children ($n = 5872$) who were subjects of maltreatment reports to child welfare agencies in 2008 and 2009. This study included Latino children who remained at home with a parent, for whom information was collected on citizenship and legal status ($n = 822$). Children of unauthorized immigrants represented 5% of all children and 19% of Latino children, reported to child welfare agencies. Additionally, 11% of Latino children had a legal resident parent. While the majority of children were citizens, 20% of children living with an unauthorized parent were also unauthorized. Children with unauthorized and legal resident parents exhibited both risk and protective factors for maltreatment. Non-citizen parents more often reported financial hardship, low educational attainment, and neighborhood disorganization. Despite these risks, children of non-citizen parents did not have higher rates of substantiated maltreatment than children with U.S.-born parents. Protective factors, such as a higher proportion of two-parent families, lower teenage childbearing, and lower active drug and alcohol abuse among noncitizen parents may act as buffers against maltreatment. Understanding the diversity within the Latino population based on factors such as citizenship and legal status is necessary to ensure provision of services that are responsive to the needs of non-citizen families.

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1. Introduction

Latino children represent the fastest growing child population in the United States as a result of several decades of increased migration coupled with decreased out-migration. Between 2000 and 2010 the Latino population increased by 43%, more than four times the growth rate of the total U.S. population (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). In 2010, Latino children represented nearly one-fourth of all children in the United States and 24% of all children under 18 (Motel, 2012). Roughly 72% of the foreign-born population in the United States consists of legal immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2011). As of 2010, 37% of the foreign-born populations were naturalized citizens, 31% were legal permanent residents, and 4% were legal temporary residents, consisting largely of students and those with temporary work visas, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. Only 28% (11.2 million residents) of the

foreign-born population is considered *unauthorized* or *undocumented*, meaning they either arrived in the United States without a valid immigration document or arrived with a valid document but stayed past the expiration date. Among the unauthorized population, the proportion of undocumented Latino individuals is higher than in other racial and ethnic groups. Nearly 71% of foreign-born Latinos are noncitizens (including legal permanent and temporary residents), and roughly half (48.3%) of noncitizens are undocumented residents (Motel, 2012).

Concurrent with the growth of the Latino population in the United States, the proportion of Latino children involved in the child welfare system has also rapidly increased in recent years. National data indicate that the proportion of children confirmed as victims of maltreatment who are Latino increased from 14.2% in 2000 to 21.4% in 2010 (U.S. Department of Health et al. [USDHHS], 2002, 2011a). Similarly, the proportion of children in foster care who are Latino increased from 15% to 21% over the same period (USDHHS, 2006, 2011b). Yet, while much is known about differences within the general population of Latinos in the United States based on factors such as nativity, citizenship, and legal status, very little is known about these differences among Latino children and families involved in the child welfare system as

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: jcardoso@central.uh.edu (J.B. Cardoso), aland@uic.edu (A.J. Dettlaff), mfinno@usc.edu (M. Finno-Velasquez), jenscott@utexas.edu (J. Scott), mfaulkner@mail.utexas.edu (M. Faulkner).

these data have not been collected by state or national reporting systems. As a result, most research examining Latino children in the child welfare system has treated them as a homogenous population, despite growing awareness of the importance of these differences.

The purpose of this study is to expand on previous research using newly available data from the second version of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being – II (NSCAW-II), which includes measures of citizenship and legal status for foreign-born parents. Using these data, we identify the proportion of children living in non-citizen Latino families involved in the child welfare system and examine how child, parent, household, community, and maltreatment characteristics differ for children based on the nativity and citizenship status of their parent. These analyses will allow for a more thorough examination of the characteristics of Latino children and families involved with the child welfare system by parent nativity and citizenship.

2. Challenges facing non-citizen children and parents

Immigrant families, particularly those who are non-citizens, tend to experience greater poverty and economic hardship compared to those who are citizens, in large part, to restriction of legal rights, access to services, and entitlement to benefits. Immigrant parents earn significantly less than U.S.-born parents, with Mexican parents having the lowest median hourly wage among all immigrant groups (Chaudry & Fortuny, 2010). The median income of families with immigrant parents is 20% lower than the median income of families with U.S.-born parents; therefore, children of immigrant parents are more likely to be living in poverty than children of U.S.-born parents. Furthermore, children in immigrant families are also significantly more likely than children in U.S.-born families to be at risk of inadequate nutrition and food insecurity (Chaudry & Fortuny, 2010).

Yet despite higher rates of poverty and economic hardship, immigrant parents have lower rates of public benefits use than U.S.-born parents (Fortuny & Chaudry, 2011). This is largely due to eligibility restrictions set in place through the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). In addition to denying access to most public benefits to unauthorized immigrants, PRWORA restricted documented immigrants' access to most means-tested benefits including TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, and SSI. Patterns of low benefit use are also true for U.S.-born citizen children of immigrant parents, despite the fact that they are eligible for certain benefits (Fix & Passel, 1999; Fix & Passel, 2002). For example, eligible U.S. citizen children with immigrant parents are less likely to participate in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) than children with U.S.-born parents (Kenney, Lynch, Cook, & Phong, 2010). Thus, restrictions based on eligibility rules do not fully explain differing degrees of utilization. Additional barriers include lack of awareness of the programs or of eligibility requirements, fear of immigration consequences for undocumented family members, or concerns that accessing benefits would limit one's ability to naturalize or to sponsor a relative (Fix & Passel, 2002; Shields & Behrman, 2004).

In addition to economic challenges, immigrant children and families experience a variety of challenges resulting from their experiences with migration and acculturation. Beginning with the migration experience, many immigrants experience violence, robbery, and sexual assault during the process of entering the country (Solis, 2003). When families migrate, children are often separated from parents and other siblings for extended periods (Partida, 1996). The stress associated with this initial transition can result in depression and anxiety, while individuals experiencing significant trauma during migration may develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Smart & Smart, 1995). Once in the new country, pressures resulting from acculturation often lead to a variety of strains and difficulties on immigrant children and families. Language barriers, loss of social support, inadequate financial resources, and discrimination are all factors typically associated with, or defined as, acculturative stress (Padilla & Perez, 2003). High levels of acculturative

stress have been found to be significantly associated with depression (Hovey, 2000; Thoman & Suris, 2004) and increased risk for family conflict and domestic violence (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002).

Legal status is another significant stressor for noncitizen families. Undocumented parents may experience considerable fear regarding the potential for discovery and deportation, which could result in permanent separation from their children. These fears of deportation are warranted, as immigration enforcement activities conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have increased significantly over the past decade. In 2011, nearly 400,000 immigrants – the majority of whom were from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador – were removed from the United States. Data on the numbers of families separated as a result of immigration enforcement are elusive; however, statistics from ICE show that over 200,000 parents of U.S. citizen children were removed from the United States between 2010 and 2012 (Colorlines, 2013; U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement, 2012).

Despite significant socioeconomic disadvantage and limited access to health care, research has consistently documented a number of social and cultural protective factors that contribute to a pattern of health advantage in children of immigrants – especially among Latino children of immigrants in the second generation. Known as the epidemiological paradox (Markides & Coreil, 1986), Latino children of immigrants are born with better health than their U.S.-born Latino and non-Hispanic White counterparts (Hamilton, Berger Cardoso, Hummer, & Padilla, 2011; Padilla, Boardman, Hummer, & Espitia, 2002; Padilla, Hamilton, & Hummer, 2009). However, recent studies provide conflicting evidence, whereby advantages exist for some health outcomes, such as lower chronic health problems, asthma, and learning disabilities (Hamilton, Teitler, & Reichman, 2011), but not for others, like childhood obesity (Hamilton, Teitler, & Reichman, 2011) and maternal-rated child health status (Schmeer, 2012).

While the paradox has typically been documented using epidemiological data on morbidity, mortality and early childhood health outcomes, recent studies have applied this framework within the context of child maltreatment (Dettlaff, Earner, & Phillips, 2009; Johnson-Motoyama, Dettlaff, & Finno, 2012; Osterling & Han, 2011; Putman-Hornstein, Needell, King, & Johnson-Motoyama, 2013; Putman-Hornstein & Needell, 2011). For example, in a study using the full population of children born in California in 2002, Putman-Hornstein et al. (2013) found that Latino children with an immigrant mother were significantly less likely to be referred for maltreatment, substantiated as a victim of maltreatment, or enter an out of home foster care placement than were Latino children with a U.S.-born mother. These findings were consistent even after controlling for demographic (gender, established paternity, maternal age at birth), socioeconomic (maternal education) and health (birth weight, birth abnormalities, prenatal care) indicators.

Other research has found higher rates of family reunification among children in out-of-home care among children with a Mexican immigrant compared to children with non-immigrant caregivers (Osterling & Han, 2011). However, examining racial and ethnic disparities by parental nativity is an emerging area of research within child welfare, and like in the general population, documenting a consistent pattern of advantage among Latino immigrant families has been challenging. For example, while the studies above suggest a consistent pattern of advantage among Latino immigrant families, other research has found that foreign-born Latino families experience greater challenges in providing adequate health care, safe supervision, and food security (Johnson-Motoyama, 2013), and report worse child health outcomes at age five (Schmeer, 2012) than did non-Hispanic White mothers. Several potential reasons for these inconsistencies have been suggested, including differential surveillance and tracking of migration patterns of undocumented families (Putman-Hornstein et al., 2013), the use of cross-sectional data, which may underestimate the effects of cumulative disadvantage and persistent deprivation on later childhood health

(Schmeer, 2012), and the heterogeneity of the Latino population – including country of origin and legal status of Latino families in the United States (Dettlaff et al., 2009) – which may confound results.

3. Children of immigrants involved in the child welfare system

As a result of the challenges experienced by immigrant families following migration, children in these families have historically been considered at increased risk for maltreatment (Earner, 2007; Roer-Strier, 2001; Segal & Mayadas, 2005). Many of these challenges – financial insecurity, depression, social isolation, and stressful life events – are factors also associated with child maltreatment (Cazdow, Armstrong, & Fraser, 1999). Combined with possible cultural differences in parenting styles (Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 2000; Mendez, 2006), as well as in child discipline (Fontes, 2002; Newell, 2002), these factors can affect the well-being of children in immigrant families, and lead to involvement with child welfare agencies. Yet, although this speculation has existed, very little data has been available to determine the extent to which these perceptions of increased risk are accurate. This is largely due to the fact that information on the nativity and immigration status of children and families is not collected by state or federal child welfare reporting systems.

However, upon the release of the first National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW), researchers were able to explore differences in child outcomes according to parental nativity. In the first study to do so, Dettlaff et al. (2009) found no significant differences in the overall rates of maltreatment between children with immigrant parents and children with U.S.-born parents. This finding contradicted the prevailing, though untested, view that children in immigrant families would be at increased risk of maltreatment as a result of the challenges and stressors they faced from immigration and acculturation. Their study suggested instead that although immigrant families may indeed face a number of risks resulting from immigration, the strengths within many immigrant families may serve as buffers against those risks. As evidence of this, Dettlaff et al. (2009) found that children of Latino immigrants were significantly less likely than children of U.S.-born Latinos to live in homes with many of the risk factors associated with maltreatment including active drug abuse, poor parenting skills, recent histories of arrest, and high family stress. Immigrant caregivers also demonstrated protective factors as they tended to be older and more often reported the presence of biological fathers in the home when compared to U.S.-born caregivers.

Subsequently, a small number of additional studies have produced consistent findings, particularly in relation to the presence of risk. Dettlaff and Johnson (2011) examined differences in maltreatment patterns and risk based on the *child's* nativity and found no significant differences in rates of overall maltreatment between U.S.-born and foreign-born youth. U.S.-born Latino children, however, were significantly more likely to be living in homes with active alcohol and drug abuse, active domestic violence, and recent histories of parental arrest. Similarly, Johnson-Motoyama et al. (2012) found that Latino children with U.S.-born parents were significantly more likely to be living in homes with active alcohol and drug abuse, recent histories of parental arrest, a history of maltreatment of the primary caregiver, and family difficulty meeting basic needs when compared to Latino children with foreign-born parents and Latino children with parents of mixed nativity (one U.S.-born and one foreign-born parent).

Although there are only a small number of studies on Latino families involved in the child welfare system, these studies have consistently shown that risk factors associated with maltreatment are more likely to be present in U.S.-born Latino families as compared to foreign-born families (e.g., Dettlaff & Johnson, 2011; Dettlaff et al., 2009; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012). They have also found no significant differences in overall rates of maltreatment. Given the disproportionate likelihood of socioeconomic disadvantage and limited access to resources by Latino immigrants and their children, some studies

(see Putman-Hornstein et al., 2013; Putman-Hornstein & Needell, 2011) have suggested that perhaps a similar paradox – consistent with population-based studies of Latino health – exists among children of Latino immigrants involved in the child welfare system. However, our understanding of the differences within the population of Latino families in the child welfare system has remained limited, due to the lack of available data on the citizenship status of foreign-born parents. In prior studies using data from NSCAW I, the category of foreign-born parents (as compared to U.S.-born parents) has included naturalized U.S. citizens, foreign-born immigrants with some form of legal status, and undocumented parents. This broad category that lumps together immigrants with multiple statuses poses a significant limitation as Dettlaff et al. (2009) noted, “undocumented parents likely experience even greater stress than immigrant parents with legal status, and differences in characteristics and risk factors between those with legal status and those without legal status could not be determined” (p. 782).

The current study thus seeks to expand on previous research using newly available data from the second version of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being – II (NSCAW-II), which now includes measures of citizenship and legal status for foreign-born parents. Specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions: (a) what proportion of Latino children involved in the child welfare system live in families with in U.S. born citizen, foreign-born citizen, legal resident, and undocumented parents, and (b) what are the parent, child, household, and maltreatment characteristics, as well as family risk factors, across these four subpopulations. To answer these questions, we draw on data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being – II (NSCAW-II).

4. Methods

4.1. Study design

NSCAW-II is the second national longitudinal study of children and families involved in the child welfare system. The target population of the NSCAW-II consists of 5873 children, birth to 17.5 years of age, who have come to the attention of the child welfare system due to an allegation of maltreatment. These analyses used data from the baseline interviews were collected between April 2008 and December 2009, approximately four months after the child abuse and neglect investigations were closed (Dowd et al., 2012). The NSCAW-II sample was collected using a two-stage stratified sample design. The United States was divided into eight strata. The first eight strata included the states with the highest child welfare caseloads, while the ninth corresponded to the remaining states and the District of Columbia. The final sample comprised children from 83 counties in 30 states (Dowd et al., 2012). Key respondents included caregivers, children (if they were 11 years of age and older), caseworkers, teachers, and agency directors. Interviews were conducted roughly four months after the child protective service (CPS) investigation was completed (Dowd et al., 2012).

4.2. Sample

The analytic sample included all children with a Latino primary caregiver ($n = 1300$) who remained with their biological parent ($n = 828$) and had complete information about parental nativity and legal documentation status ($n = 822$). Children in out-of-home care were excluded from the sample because we were concerned with validity of the citizenship information of parents as reported by the non-permanent caregiver, and we did not want to report population estimates on the parental status of the Latino foster care population with so few cases available in the data. Furthermore, in the final analysis of 822, there were 110 observations that were missing the caseworker assessment of maltreatment characteristics and risk assessment. Therefore, only 712 of the 822 observations were included in analyses that relied exclusively on the caseworker interview (Tables 3 and 4). The

final analysis included children living with parents who self-identified as a: 1) U.S.-born citizen, 2) foreign-born citizen, 3) foreign-born legal resident (e.g., a green card or any kind of temporary visa), or 4) foreign-born with no legal documentation (undocumented or not authorized to live and work in the United States).

4.3. Measures

Since this study seeks to expand on prior studies using NSCAW data to examine differences between U.S. born and foreign-born Latinos by analyzing these differences with regard to parental nativity and citizenship, the measures included in the current analyses were selected based on the measures used in those prior studies (Dettlaff & Johnson, 2011; Dettlaff et al., 2009; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012). Continuous variables were transformed into categorical variables when doing so was consistent with prior research using NSCAW data (e.g., Dettlaff et al., 2009; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012).

4.3.1. Child characteristics

Child characteristics included (a) gender (male/female), (b) child's age (0–2, 3–5, 6–10 and 11 and older), (c) ethnicity (Mexican, Puerto Rican, other), and (d) documentation status (U.S. citizen, legal resident, undocumented).

4.3.2. Parental characteristics

Parental variables were obtained from the biological parent¹ and included: (a) nativity and legal status (U.S.-born, foreign-born citizen, foreign-born legal resident, and foreign-born undocumented resident), (b) age (18–19, 20–29, 30–39, and 40 plus years old), (c) relationship to the child (biological mother, biological father), (d) marital status (married, separated, divorced, widowed, and never married), (e) employment status (full-time, part-time, unemployed, doesn't work/not looking for a job), (f) educational level (less than high school, high school diploma, more than high school), and (g) for foreign-born parents, years lived in the United States (0–4, 5–10, 11–20, and 21 plus years).

4.3.3. Family household and neighborhood characteristics

Variables in this section can be placed into two broad categories, household and neighborhood characteristics. Variables about household composition and caregiver instability were included to describe characteristics of the child's home life that could potentially relate to their involvement in the child welfare system. This included six variables, (a) family income as a percentage of the federal poverty level (percent of the federal poverty rate based on household size, income, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines for 2009), (b) caregiver's perception of economic hardship (save a little money each month, just getting by, and struggling to make ends meet),² (c) social service utilization (received Women's, Infants, and Children Food Assistance Program, food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), housing support and/or social security disability), (d) family composition (father, a grandparent, and other adult relatives present), (e) family instability (one or more changes in the caregiver during the prior 12 months), and (f) language use (English was spoken at home, parents' degree of comfort speaking English, and language of the interview).

¹ Information about the secondary caregiver was not used because roughly 60% of cases did not have a secondary caregiver or the secondary caregiver information was missing. Additionally, the secondary caregiver was not always the biological parent, (i.e., the stepparent or grandparent).

² Almost one-quarter of undocumented parents in the sample had missing data on the income variable; more than twice as much as citizen or legal resident parents. Because of the large proportion of missing data on the income variable, we also included a measure of perceived economic hardship, which had a better response rate among the undocumented parents in the sample.

The second category of variables includes neighborhood characteristics considered to be signs of disorganization, such as assaults, muggings, and gang activity. Neighborhood characteristics were obtained from the primary caregiver interview using the Abridged Community Environmental Scale from the National Evaluation of Family Support Programs (Furstenberg, 1993). The first five questions refer to neighborhood conditions (e.g., assaults, gang activity, drug use or dealing) and the remaining four questions refer to the quality of the neighborhood (e.g., safety, neighbors that help one another, involvement of other parents).

4.3.4. Alleged and substantiated maltreatment characteristics

Information about the most serious type of alleged maltreatment, the investigation outcome, type of substantiated maltreatment, and placement stability was obtained from the caseworker interview. The most serious form of maltreatment was assessed using a modified version of the Maltreatment Classification Scale (Manly, Cicchetti, & Barnette, 1994). Maltreatment categories included physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect (failure to provide), lack of supervision, substance exposure, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other. Similarly, the result of the maltreatment investigation (e.g., substantiated or not substantiated) was determined by the caseworker interview. Finally, variables were created to indicate whether the family received child welfare services, including in-home family preservation services, parent training, and respite care.

4.3.5. Parent and family risk factors

Risk factors were based on the caseworker's assessment of the family at the time of the maltreatment investigation. Examples of risk factors include: active drug and alcohol use, domestic violence, involvement in the criminal justice system, prior history of abuse, difficulty paying basic necessities, and the meeting needs of the child. The individual risk factors were examined separately in order to provide a description of the sources of risk in the family, as well as a computed mean score.

4.4. Analysis

Proportions, standard errors, and chi-square tests for the four parental nativity and legal status subgroups were conducted using weights developed by NSCAW investigators. Between-group differences in child and caregiver characteristics, family and household indicators, neighborhood factors, maltreatment and substantiation type, and family risk factors were tested using categorical tests of independence for complex survey designs adjusted for weighting and reported as an F-statistic using a second-order correction of Rao and Scott (1984). Weights were used to produce national estimates of children who were the subject of maltreatment reports to CPS agencies in the United States (National Data Archive on Child Abuse, Neglect, 2008).

Pairwise comparisons between each of the four groups are examined. Because there are four groups of parents – U.S. born, foreign-born citizen, legal resident, and undocumented – we present data on 6 pairwise comparisons. Superscripts “a,” “b” and “c” are used in the tables to denote where there are significant differences across groups. Proportions on a row with the same superscript letter do not differ significantly from one another, while proportions on a row with different letters indicate a statistically significant difference (see legend in Tables 1–4 for additional interpretation). We applied the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure to correct for multiple tests. All statistical analyses were conducted in STATA 12.

5. Results

This is the first study to use national child welfare data to generate an estimate of the proportion of children living in non-citizen households who come into contact with the child welfare system. Findings

Table 1
Weighted Proportions (SE) of child and caregiver characteristics stratified by parental nativity and citizenship.

Variable	Total (n = 822)	U.S.-born (n = 542)	Foreign-born U.S. citizen (n = 77)	Legal resident (n = 74)	Undocumented noncitizen (n = 129)	F (adjusted degrees of freedom)	p value
Total	1.00	.59	.11	.11	.19		
<i>Child characteristics</i>							
<i>Age</i>							
0 to 2	.21 (.02)	.25 (.03)	.19 (.08)	.08 (.05)	.18 (.05)	F (2.90, 208.79) = 1.49	ns
3 to 5	.22 (.03)	.26 (.04) ^a	.06 (.03) ^b	.05 (.03) ^b	.31 (.08) ^a	F (2.72, 195.92) = 4.73	**
6 to 10	.28 (.02)	.27 (.02) ^a	.20 (.07) ^a	.53 (.09) ^b	.22 (.06) ^a	F (2.85, 205.38) = 3.39	*
11 and older	.29 (.04)	.22 (.04) ^a	.55 (.11) ^b	.35 (.11) ^{ab}	.30 (.06) ^{ab}	F (2.64, 190.13) = 4.18	**
Mean child age	7.00	6.21 ^a	8.77 ^b	9.03 ^b	6.77 ^a	F (3, 70) = 5.83	**
<i>Gender</i>							
Male	.49 (.04)	.52 (.04)	.54 (.12)	.53 (.07)	.37 (.11)	F (2.51, 180.47) = 0.89	ns
Female	.51 (.04)	.48 (.04)	.46 (.12)	.47 (.07)	.63 (.11)		
<i>Child citizenship</i>							
U.S. citizen	.94 (.01)	1.00 (.00) ^a	1.00 (.00) ^a	.80 (.09) ^b	.80 (.09) ^b	F (1.17, 84.46) = 24.07	***
Legal resident	.02 (.01)	.00 (.00) ^a	.00 (.00) ^a	.18 (.09) ^b	.00 (.00) ^a	F (1.22, 87.89) = 30.52	***
Undocumented	.04 (.01)	.00 (0.00)	.00 (.00)	.02 (.02)	.20 (.07)	F (2.60, 187.05) = 10.04	***
<i>Child ethnic background</i>							
Mexican	.60 (.06)	.59 (.08) ^a	.25 (.09) ^b	.73 (.10) ^a	.76 (.10) ^a	F (2.07, 149.00) = 4.45	*
Puerto Rican	.10 (.02)	.13 (.03) ^a	.22 (.09) ^a	.00 (.00) ^b	.00 (.00) ^b	F (1.31, 94.40) = 12.07	***
Other	.30 (.05)	.29 (.07)	.53 (.12)	.27 (.10)	.24 (.10)	F (2.25, 162.14) = 1.58	ns
<i>Caregiver characteristics</i>							
<i>Age</i>							
18 to 19	.01 (.00)	.02 (.01) ^a	.00 (.00) ^{ab}	.00 (.00) ^b	.00 (.00) ^b	F (2.62, 188.44) = 6.08	**
20 to 29	.42 (.04)	.51 (.04) ^a	.17 (.06) ^b	.23 (.06) ^c	.39 (.07) ^{ac}	F (2.80, 201.50) = 7.05	***
30 to 39	.46 (.03)	.43 (.04)	.49 (.13)	.40 (.09)	.57 (.07)	F (2.35, 169.44) = 0.92	ns
40 and older	.12 (.03)	.05 (.02) ^a	.34 (.14) ^b	.37 (.09) ^b	.05 (.03) ^a	F (2.44, 175.61) = 10.13	***
<i>Relationship to child</i>							
Mother	.91 (.02)	.91 (.03) ^a	.90 (.06) ^a	.75 (.08) ^a	.99 (.01) ^b	F (2.15, 155.11) = 4.47	*
Father	.09 (.02)	.09 (.03)	.10 (.06)	.25 (.08)	.01 (.01)		
<i>Marital status</i>							
Married	.27 (.03)	.18 (.03) ^a	.41 (.12) ^{ab}	.38 (.10) ^{ab}	.43 (.09) ^b	F (2.47, 177.92) = 3.56	*
Separated	.21 (.02)	.21 (.03)	.12 (.05)	.29 (.10)	.21 (.06)	F (2.70, 194.21) = 0.72	ns
Divorced	.17 (.03)	.18 (.03)	.29 (.12)	.21 (.08)	.08 (.04)	F (2.56, 184.07) = 1.56	ns
Widowed	.00 (.00)	.01 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	F (2.51, 180.71) = 0.15	ns
Never married	.34 (.02)	.43 (.03) ^a	.18 (.06) ^b	.13 (.04) ^b	.28 (.06) ^{ab}	F (2.48, 178.76) = 6.91	***
<i>Employment</i>							
Full time	.35 (.04)	.36 (.05)	.42 (.13)	.39 (.11)	.28 (.06)	F (2.63, 189.63) = 0.48	ns
Part time	.18 (.04)	.17 (.04)	.09 (.05)	.18 (.08)	.25 (.10)	F (2.65, 190.86) = 0.96	ns
Unemployed	.17 (.02)	.19 (.02)	.18 (.06)	.28 (.11)	.06 (.03)	F (2.16, 155.36) = 2.34	ns
Doesn't work/other	.30 (.03)	.29 (.03)	.31 (.12)	.15 (.06)	.40 (.12)	F (2.37, 170.45) = 1.02	ns
<i>Educational level</i>							
Less than high school	.44 (.04)	.35 (.04) ^a	.33 (.14) ^{ab}	.68 (.10) ^b	.63 (.08) ^b	F (2.44, 175.71) = 4.23	*
High school diploma	.37 (.04)	.44 (.04)	.29 (.09)	.19 (.06)	.31 (.08)	F (2.40, 172.60) = 2.69	ns
More than high school	.20 (.03)	.22 (.04) ^a	.38 (.06) ^{ab}	.14 (.06) ^b	.06 (.03) ^b	F (2.72, 196.11) = 3.77	*
<i>Years residing in the U.S. (if foreign-born)</i>							
n = 280			n = 77	n = 74	n = 29		
0 to 4	.05 (.01)		.04 (.04)	.01 (.01)	.08 (.01)	F (1.48, 100.41) = 1.68	ns
5 to 10	.19 (.04)		.05 (.03)	.17 (.08)	.27 (.09)	F (1.53, 104.32) = 2.38	ns
11 to 20	.46 (.06)		.26 (.07)	.43 (.11)	.58 (.11)	F (1.50, 101.83) = 2.11	ns
21 +	.31 (.04)		.64 (.10) ^a	.40 (.10) ^a	.06 (.04) ^b	F (1.96, 133.18) = 10.08	***

Design-based Pearson F statistic; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, ns = not significant at p < .05. Proportions on a row with the same superscript letter do not differ significantly from one another but do differ from proportions with a different letter. For example, a proportion with superscript "a" is statistically different from a proportion with superscript "b". In contrast, a proportion with a superscript "a" is not statistically different from another proportion in that row with superscript "a". A proportion with a superscript of "ab" suggests that the proportion is not different from proportions with superscripts "a" or "b", but is significantly different from proportions with superscript "c". For example, for child age, children ≥ 11, U.S. born differ from foreign born citizens, but neither differs from legal resident or undocumented noncitizens.

reveal that the majority (70%) of Latino children who come into contact with the child welfare system lived with a U.S. citizen parent. The following sections discuss how parent, child, household, and community characteristics differ by nativity and legal status of the parent.

5.1. Differences in child characteristics by parental legal status

In analyses not shown using the full NSCAW sample, approximately 5% of all children reported for maltreatment who remained in their homes lived with an undocumented parent. In the current study of Latino children, 19% lived with an undocumented parent, 11% lived with a legal resident parent, 11% lived with a foreign-born citizen parent, and 59% lived with a U.S.-born Latino parent. Nearly all children in the sample were U.S. citizens (94%), although there was some variation in legal status depending on the citizenship status of the parents.

Children were evenly distributed by gender, with 49% male and 51% female. The mean child age for children in the sample was 7 years old. Children of U.S.-born (M = 6.66) and undocumented Latino parents (M = 6.77) were similar in age, while children of foreign-born citizen (M = 8.77) and legal residents were slightly older (M = 9.03).

Child legal status was significantly different across groups. All children with U.S.-born and foreign-born citizen parents were themselves U.S. citizens, while 80% of legal resident and undocumented parents had U.S. citizen children; among the remaining 20%, most of the legal resident parents had children who were legal residents and most of the undocumented parents had children who were undocumented.

5.2. Differences in parental characteristics by legal status

Also in Table 1, we present key differences in parental characteristics by citizenship and legal status. In general, U.S.-born citizen parents were

Table 2
Weighted Proportions (SE) of household and community characteristics stratified by parental nativity and citizenship.

Variable	Total (n = 822)	U.S.-born (n = 542)	Foreign-born U.S. citizens (n = 77)	Legal resident (n = 74)	Undocumented noncitizen (n = 129)	F (adjusted degrees of freedom)	p-Value
<i>Income (as a % of the federal poverty level)</i>							
<50%	.25 (.02)	.28 (.04)	.13 (.06)	.19 (.09)	.28 (.04)	F (2.26, 162.40) = 1.20	ns
50%–<100%	.35 (.03)	.32 (.03) ^a	.23 (.08) ^a	.66 (.11) ^b	.32 (.09) ^{ab}	F (2.52, 181.31) = 3.46	*
100%–200%	.22 (.03)	.26 (.04)	.30 (.08)	.08 (.04)	.16 (.07)	F (2.68, 193.28) = 2.52	ns
>200%	.09 (.02)	.08 (.02) ^a	.32 (.13) ^b	.04 (.03) ^a	.00 (.00) ^c	F (1.72, 123.72) = 8.21	***
Income missing	.09 (.02)	.06 (.01) ^a	.01 (.01) ^a	.03 (.02) ^a	.24 (.08) ^b	F (1.80, 129.47) = 10.92	***
<i>Financial hardship (%)</i>							
Just getting by	.38 (.02)	.48 (.03) ^a	.27 (.07) ^a	.27 (.09) ^a	.22 (.08) ^a	F (2.43, 175.07) = 4.06	*
Struggling to make it	.48 (.03)	.45 (.04)	.39 (.11)	.69 (.09)	.58 (.09)	F (2.68, 193.02) = 2.47	ns
WIC	.44 (.03)	.44 (.05) ^{ab}	.25 (.07) ^b	.31 (.07) ^b	.62 (.08) ^{ac}	F (2.63, 189.64) = 4.02	*
Food stamps	.56 (.04)	.68 (.05) ^{ac}	.30 (.09) ^b	.43 (.11) ^c	.43 (.08) ^{bc}	F (2.77, 199.62) = 5.69	**
TANF/AFDC	.16 (.03)	.16 (.04)	.07 (.04)	.20 (.08)	.18 (.07)	F (2.19, 157.56) = 0.68	ns
Housing support	.10 (.02)	.14 (.03) ^a	.10 (.06) ^a	.02 (.02) ^{ab}	.01 (.00) ^b	F (2.27, 163.65) = 6.53	***
Disability check	.15 (.03)	.21 (.04) ^a	.13 (.07) ^{ab}	.06 (.04) ^{ab}	.04 (.02) ^b	F (2.27, 163.43) = 5.11	**
<i>Family composition</i>							
Two parent household	.65 (.05)	.55 (.06) ^a	.66 (.13) ^{ab}	.51 (.17) ^a	.88 (.04) ^b	F (2.70, 194.55) = 3.81	*
Grandparent present	.20 (.05)	.31 (.05) ^a	.13 (.09) ^a	.27 (.11) ^a	.01 (.00) ^b	F (1.83, 131.57) = 7.77	***
Other adult relative present	.26 (.03)	.09 (.03)	.20 (.09)	.18 (.08)	.17 (.03)	F (2.19, 158.00) = 2.90	ns
<i>Placement instability in the last 12 months</i>							
Change of caregiver	.09 (.01)	.12 (.02)	.09 (.04)	.07 (.05)	.04 (.02)	F (2.51, 180.62) = 0.24	ns
<i>Language use</i>							
Language other than English spoken in home	.65 (.05)	.47 (.06) ^a	.82 (.13) ^{ab}	.94 (.04) ^b	.97 (.02) ^b	F (2.01, 144.46) = 13.35	***
Comfortable speaking English	.95 (.01)	.99 (.01) ^a	.89 (.05) ^b	.91 (.04) ^b	.88 (.06) ^b	F (2.53, 182.47) = 4.15	*
<i>Interview language</i>							
English	.72 (.05)	.96 (.02) ^a	.74 (.09) ^b	.33 (.08) ^c	.18 (.07) ^c	F (2.48, 178.30) = 40.91	***
Spanish	.28 (.05)	.04 (.02)	.26 (.09)	.67 (.08)	.82 (.07)		
<i>Community characteristics</i>							
Assaults and muggings	.11 (.02)	.06 (.02) ^a	.09 (.05) ^a	.23 (.09) ^a	.21 (.07) ^a	F (2.81, 202.10) = 3.14	*
Delinquency/gangs	.18 (.04)	.13 (.04) ^a	.13 (.07) ^{ab}	.32 (.11) ^{ab}	.31 (.07) ^b	F (2.39, 172.14) = 3.64	*
Open drug use/dealing	.16 (.03)	.11 (.03) ^a	.09 (.05) ^{ab}	.38 (.11) ^b	.22 (.08) ^{ab}	F (2.55, 183.32) = 3.89	*
Unsupervised children	.15 (.02)	.17 (.03)	.07 (.05)	.24 (.11)	.07 (.03)	F (2.52, 181.53) = 1.59	ns
Teens hanging out	.13 (.02)	.14 (.03)	.08 (.05)	.16 (.08)	.14 (.07)	F (2.71, 194.93) = 0.20	ns
Unsafe neighborhood	.19 (.04)	.09 (.03) ^a	.10 (.06) ^{ab}	.34 (.12) ^{bc}	.43 (.08) ^c	F (2.66, 191.40) = 8.84	***
Neighbors are not helpful	.35 (.03)	.34 (.03)	.27 (.07)	.58 (.09)	.31 (.10)	F (2.16, 155.26) = 2.32	ns
Less involved parents	.36 (.04)	.31 (.03) ^a	.29 (.08) ^a	.48 (.09) ^a	.50 (.08) ^a	F (2.40, 172.46) = 3.02	*
Neighborhood is worse than others	.08 (.03)	.10 (.03)	.05 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.07 (.04)	F (2.65, 190.61) = 0.52	ns

Design-based Pearson F statistic; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, ns = not significant at p < .05. Proportions on a row with the same superscript letter do not differ significantly from one another but do differ from proportions with a different letter. For example, a proportion with superscript "a" is statistically different from a proportion with superscript "b". In contrast, a proportion with a superscript "a" is not statistically different from another proportion in that row with superscript "a". A proportion with a subscript of "ab" suggests that the proportion is not different from proportions labeled "a" or the "b". For example, on unsafe neighborhoods, U.S. born parents differ from legal resident and undocumented parents and foreign-born citizen parents differ from undocumented parents. However, legal resident and undocumented parent do not differ, nor do U.S. born and foreign born citizen parents.

younger than other parents. Roughly 1% of parents in the sample were teen parents, and U.S. born parents were more likely to be teenagers than the other groups. U.S.-born parents (51%) were significantly more likely than legal resident (23%) and foreign-born citizen (17%) parents to be 20–29 years of age but there were no differences among U.S.-born and undocumented parents. There was little variation in the gender of the primary caregiver — nearly all (91%) parents in the sample were mothers. However, undocumented families were significantly less likely to have the primary caregiver identified as the father than were the other groups.

U.S.-born parents were the least likely to report being married (18%) and had the highest proportion of parents who had never married in the sample (43%). Similar to other demographic studies, results also revealed significant variation in educational attainment for parents by legal status. U.S.-born parents were more likely to have education beyond high school than legal resident parents and undocumented parents. Interestingly, foreign-born citizen parents (38%) had the highest proportion of parents with higher education — even more than U.S.-born parents (22%); although not significantly so. Finally, among foreign-born parents, more than three-quarters lived in the United States for greater than 10 years — suggesting that most parents

were long-term residents of the United States. However, undocumented parents were significantly less likely than foreign born citizen and legal residents to have lived in the United States for more than 20 years.

5.3. Differences in household and community characteristics by legal status

Table 2 shows the results for family and household characteristics stratified by nativity and legal status of the parent. The most pronounced difference in income was observed among foreign-born citizen parents. Foreign born citizen parents were significantly more likely to fall in the highest income level, with over 200% of the federal poverty level, whereas U.S.-born, legal resident and undocumented parents were less likely to be in this level, indicating greater poverty. It is important to note that undocumented parents were significantly more likely to have missing data on the income variables than were parents in the other three groups. Overall, undocumented families less often reported receiving support services, such as food stamps, housing support, and/or social security disability than U.S.-born parents. One exception was found in the proportion of undocumented families receiving WIC, who were significantly more likely than children of foreign born and legal resident parents to receive this service.

Table 3
Weighted Proportions (SE) of alleged and substantiated maltreatment type stratified by parental nativity and citizenship.

Variable	Total (n = 712)	U.S.-born (n = 484)	Foreign-born U.S. citizen (n = 69)	Legal resident (n = 61)	Undocumented noncitizen (n = 98)	F (adjusted degrees of freedom)	p value
<i>Most serious type of alleged maltreatment</i>							
Physical abuse	.18 (.03)	.16 (.03)	.28 (.11)	.23 (.08)	.15 (.07)	F (2.76, 199.03) = 0.79	ns
Sexual abuse	.04 (.01)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.02)	.05 (.03)	F (2.70, 194.50) = 0.20	ns
Emotional abuse	.04 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.17 (.13)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	F (1.84, 132.63) = 2.77	ns
Neglect: failure to provide	.04 (.01)	.06 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.03 (.03)	F (1.32, 94.90) = 1.95	ns
Lack of supervision	.33 (.03)	.33 (.04)	.18 (.06)	.41 (.09)	.38 (.09)	F (2.50, 180.08) = 1.55	ns
Substance exposure	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01) ^a	.00 (.00) ^b	.00 (.00) ^b	.00 (.00) ^b	F (1.83, 131.81) = 26.94	***
Substance abuse	.12 (.02)	.15 (.04)	.06 (.03)	.06 (.05)	.05 (.03)	F (2.50, 179.64) = 2.07	ns
Domestic violence	.11 (.02)	.10 (.03)	.13 (.06)	.05 (.03)	.22 (.09)	F (2.55, 183.81) = 1.72	ns
Other	.12 (.02)	.10 (.02)	.15 (.06)	.22 (.08)	.11 (.05)	F (2.72, 195.98) = 1.32	ns
						F (2.66, 191.58) = 0.86	ns
<i>Investigation outcome</i>							
Substantiated	.30 (.04)	.33 (.05)	.24 (.08)	.21 (.06)	.25 (.07)		
Not substantiated	.70 (.04)	.67 (.05)	.76 (.08)	.79 (.06)	.75 (.07)		
<i>Type of substantiated maltreatment</i>							
	n = 377	n = 256	n = 37	n = 27	n = 57		
Physical abuse	.12 (.03)	.11 (.04)	.11 (.05)	.26 (.18)	.06 (.05)	F (2.17, 156.04) = 0.91	ns
Sexual abuse	.03 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.01)	0 (0)	.06 (.03)	F (1.63, 117.13) = 0.60	ns
Emotional abuse	.04 (.02)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	0 (0)	F (1.47, 106.15) = 0.42	ns
Neglect: failure to provide	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.04 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	F (1.41, 101.66) = 0.76	ns
Neglect: lack of supervision	.32 (.05)	.36 (.05)	0 (0)	.33 (.19)	.26 (.12)	F (2.49, 179.54) = 1.57	ns
Substance exposure	.04 (.03)	.06 (.04)	0 (0)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	F (1.12, 80.61) = 0.92	ns
Substance abuse	.12 (.03)	.14 (.05)	.12 (.05)	.03 (.02)	.07 (.07)	F (1.76, 126.66) = 0.91	ns
Domestic violence	.21 (.05)	.15 (.05)	.46 (.17)	.24 (.17)	.35 (.14)	F (2.56, 184.44) = 1.93	ns
Other	.12 (.04)	.09 (.03)	.25 (.13)	.10 (.07)	.18 (.10)	F (2.21, 159.05) = 1.27	ns
<i>Services received</i>							
In-home services/family preservation	.27 (.03)	.25 (.04)	.29 (.10)	.28 (.11)	.35 (.09)	F (2.81, 202.63) = 0.32	ns
Parent training	.26 (.03)	.23 (.04)	.40 (.17)	.18 (.09)	.35 (.09)	F (2.54, 183.20) = 0.90	ns
Respite or child care	.08 (.03)	.10 (.04)	.06 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.00)	F (1.58, 113.45) = 2.56	ns

Design-based Pearson F statistic; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, ns = not significant at p < .05. Proportions on a row with the same superscript letter do not differ significantly from one another but do differ from proportions with a different letter. For example, a proportion with superscript "a" is statistically different from a proportion with superscript "b". In contrast, a proportion with a superscript "a" is not statistically different from another proportion in that row with superscript "a". A proportion with a subscript of "ab" suggests that the proportion is not different from proportions labeled "a" or the "b". For example, U.S. born parents differ from foreign-born citizen, legal resident and undocumented parents on substance exposure; however these latter groups do not significantly differ from one another.

Children with an undocumented parent more often lived in a two-parent household compared to children of foreign-born citizens, legal residents, and U.S.-born parents and they were less likely to live in a household with a grandparent than were all of other groups. There was little variation in the language spoken at home by legal status. Almost all undocumented (97%), legal resident (94%), and foreign-born citizen parents (82%) reported speaking a language other than English at home. This was significantly different from U.S.-born parents (47%). Nearly all of the parents reported feeling comfortable speaking English — with the lowest proportion of undocumented parents (88%) endorsing this statement. Finally, language of the interview was significantly different across groups. U.S.-born parents were significantly more likely to have the interview in English than were parents in the other three groups and foreign-born citizens were more likely than both legal resident and undocumented parents to have the interview in English.

There were several significant group differences in community characteristics between citizen and non-citizen parents on three of the nine environmental indicators. Overall, noncitizen parents had a higher proportion of negative community risk factors compared to U.S.-born and citizen parents. For example, both undocumented and legal resident parents were significantly more likely to report living in an unsafe neighborhood than U.S. born parents. Further, undocumented parents reported significantly greater exposure to delinquency and gangs than did U.S.-born parents.³

³ Legal permanent residents reported the highest proportion of delinquency/gang activity in the neighborhood. Although the proportion was slightly higher (.32) than found in undocumented parents (.31), the difference in the proportion between legal resident and U.S. born parents was not statistically significant, while the difference in the proportion between undocumented and U.S. born parents was statistically significant. This is likely related to the large standard error found in the legal resident group, which may be unstable because of the small sample size (n = 74).

5.4. Alleged and substantiated maltreatment type and CPS service use by legal status

Table 3 displays the results from analyses on alleged and substantiated maltreatment type and receipt of CPS services stratified by legal status. Among the categories of alleged maltreatment, significant differences by citizenship and legal status of the parent were observed only in the substance exposure category. In the total analytical sample, roughly 2% of parents had substance exposure as the most serious type of alleged maltreatment and U.S.-born parents were significantly more likely to be the subject of these reports than the other foreign-born groups. Among all cases, 30% of the investigations in the sample were substantiated. Yet, there were no significant differences in the proportion of families with a substantiated case of maltreatment by nativity and legal status. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in the type of substantiated maltreatment across these four groups.

5.5. Caseworker assessment of maltreatment risk and protective factors by legal status

Table 4 presents the parental and family risk factors identified by the caseworker. Of the 18 parental and family risk factors, there were only significant differences by group in 4 of the identified risk factors: active alcohol use, drug use, prior reports of abuse, and limited communication skills.

For most risk factors in which there was a significant difference between groups, the incidence of the risk factor was significantly lower for foreign-born Latino parents compared to U.S.-born Latino parents. Overall, the proportion of primary caregivers with active alcohol use was low (1%) — with the highest proportion found in U.S.-born parents (2%). The proportion of drug use in the sample was higher (4%) —

Table 4
Weighted Proportions (SE) of maltreatment risks and protective factors stratified by parental nativity and citizenship.

Variable	Total (n = 712)	U.S.-born (n = 484)	Foreign-born U.S. citizen (n = 69)	Legal resident (n = 61)	Undocumented noncitizen (n = 98)	F (adjusted degrees of freedom)	p
Active alcohol abuse by PPCG	.01 (.00)	.02 (.01) ^a	.00 (.00) ^b	.00 (.00) ^b	.01 (.00) ^b	F (2.92, 210.26) = 4.29	**
Active drug abuse by PPCG	.04 (.01)	.07 (.02) ^a	.01 (.01) ^{ab}	.01 (.01) ^{ab}	.00 (.00) ^b	F (2.19, 157.54) = 6.36	**
PCG has serious mental health or cognitive problems	.11 (.02)	.12 (.03)	.09 (.05)	.03 (.02)	.13 (.08)	F (2.27, 163.55) = 0.86	ns
PCG has physical impairments	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)	0 (0)	.00 (.00)	.03 (.03)	F (1.78, 128.39) = 0.97	ns
PPCG demonstrates poor parenting skills	.19 (.03)	.18 (.03)	.18 (.09)	.20 (.08)	.23 (.10)	F (2.48, 178.69) = 0.13	ns
PCG has limited communication skills	.06 (.01)	.01 (.01) ^a	.13 (.07) ^b	.14 (.10) ^b	.12 (.05) ^b	F (2.79, 201.17) = 3.33	*
Active domestic violence	.17 (.02)	.18 (.03)	.12 (.08)	.08 (.03)	.26 (.09)	F (2.06, 148.42) = 1.20	ns
PPCG or SCG uses inappropriate or excessive discipline	.14 (.03)	.12 (.04)	.12 (.06)	.25 (.10)	.18 (.08)	F (2.77, 199.23) = 0.69	ns
Recent history of arrests	.11 (.02)	.12 (.03)	.10 (.06)	.15 (.09)	.00 (.00)	F (1.87, 134.55) = 1.57	ns
Prior reports of abuse	.59 (.03)	.60 (.05) ^{ab}	.84 (.07) ^a	.61 (.09) ^{ab}	.36 (.08) ^b	F (2.90, 208.92) = 4.19	**
Prior investigated abuse given report	.96 (.02)	.98 (.01)	.93 (.06)	1.00 (0)	.84 (.13)	F (2.89, 207.77) = 1.80	ns
Prior substantiated abuse given investigation	.51 (.06)	.51 (.08)	.48 (.16)	.53 (.14)	.53 (.13)	F (2.41, 173.27) = 0.02	ns
Any PPCG history of abuse	.92 (.05)	.90 (.06)	.98 (.02)	.99 (.01)	.97 (.02)	F (2.16, 155.70) = 2.03	ns
Child has major special needs	.19 (.02)	.22 (.03)	.20 (.06)	.09 (.05)	.16 (.06)	F (2.88, 207.45) = 0.98	ns
Child has delinquent behavior	.03 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.07 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.05 (.05)	F (2.12, 152.84) = 1.47	ns
High stress in the family	.55 (.05)	.62 (.05)	.36 (.11)	.48 (.12)	.46 (.09)	F (2.60, 186.97) = 2.39	ns
Low social support	.24 (.04)	.23 (.04)	.27 (.09)	.22 (.20)	.26 (.08)	F (2.64, 189.87) = 0.07	ns
Family has trouble paying the basic necessities	.25 (.04)	.30 (.05)	.16 (.07)	.23 (.10)	.12 (.05)	F (2.33, 168.09) = 1.79	ns
Proportion caregiver problems	.18 (.01)	.20 (.02)	.15 (.03)	.17 (.03)	.17 (.03)	F (3, 70) = 0.81	ns

Design-based Pearson F statistic; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, ns = not significant at p < .05. Proportions on a row with the same superscript letter do not differ significantly from one another but do differ from proportions with a different letter. For example, a proportion with superscript "a" is statistically different from a proportion with superscript "b". In contrast, a proportion with a superscript "a" is not statistically different from another proportion in that row with superscript "a". A proportion with a subscript of "ab" suggests that the proportion is not different from proportions labeled "a" or the "b". For example, U.S. born parents differ on active drug use from undocumented parents but not from foreign-born citizen and legal resident parents and there is no difference on this variable among any of the foreign-born groups, regardless of citizenship status.

with 6% of U.S.-born parents actively using drugs. Despite the fact that there were relatively low proportions of active alcohol or drug use in the entire sample, it is important to note that U.S.-born citizen parents were assessed significantly higher on these indicators than were all foreign born groups regardless of citizenship status. Prior history of maltreatment reports also differed by group. Undocumented parents had the lowest proportion of prior reports (36%), followed by U.S.-born citizen (60%), legal resident (61%), and foreign-born citizen (84%) parents. However, a statistically significant difference in the proportion of prior reports was observed between foreign-born U.S. citizen and undocumented parents – with foreign-born citizens significantly more likely to have a prior report; differences across the other pairwise comparisons were not significant.

One exception to the trend of lower risk in noncitizen families was observed with limited communication skills. Undocumented parents were significantly more likely to have a caseworker assess them as having limited communication skills compared to U.S.-born parents. Significant differences between the groups based on citizenship were not observed. Finally, there were no group differences for most of the risk categories, including active domestic violence, excessive discipline, and history of abuse.

6. Discussion

There is growing recognition of the need for research on Latino populations that reflects the within-group diversity and the need to better understand the circumstances they face due to factors such as nativity and legal status. Over the last several years, advocates have expressed concern about how extreme poverty, mass deportations, and the psychological and financial stress of immigration may put noncitizen families at risk for child welfare involvement. However, until recently, there has been no data on the number of noncitizen families involved in the national child welfare system. Our study is the first known study to document the proportion of children in non-citizen families and describe the individual, family, and household characteristics in these families. Via examination of risk and protective factors at both individual and structural levels among Latino families

of varied legal statuses, we provide a more nuanced analysis of parental nativity and legal status on Latino families involved in this system.

6.1. Individual risk and protective factors

Families exposed to pervasive poverty often experience other perceived social disadvantages such as low educational attainment, teenage pregnancy, and single parenthood (Hayward, Grady, & Billy, 1992; Joo, 2013; Van Hook, Brown, & Kwenda, 2004). These factors are frequently considered "risk factors" as they are often associated with an elevated risk of maltreatment (Sedlak et al., 2010). In the current study, legal resident and undocumented caregivers were significantly more likely to report higher proportions of low educational attainment, but reported significantly lower proportions of teenage pregnancy and single parenthood – outcomes that may be considered protective. With respect to educational attainment, noncitizen and undocumented parents were at least 4 times less likely to report education beyond high school than were citizen parents. Yet, in terms of single parenthood and teen parenting, children living with an undocumented parent were significantly more likely to live in a two parent household and all children with a foreign-born parent – regardless of citizenship/legal status – were less likely to live be living with teenage parents than were children with U.S. born parents. These findings are consistent with previous research on Latino immigrant families involved in the child welfare system (Dettlaff et al., 2009) and lend support to general patterns of protective factors observed in the epidemiological studies of Latino immigrant families in the general population. Testing how socio-cultural factors vary by citizenship status and how these factors may exacerbate or attenuate these risk factors are questions that were not answered in the current study and are therefore important and critical directions for future research.

6.2. Structural risk and protective factors

Noncitizen families are often exposed to structural risk factors, including pervasive poverty and neighborhood disorganization (Fix & Passel, 1999, 2002). Research has documented a negative relationship between such structural barriers and child welfare involvement

(Coulton, Korbin, & Su, 1999; Drake & Pandey, 1996; Freisthler, Bruce, & Needell, 2007; Sedlak et al., 2010; Wulczyn, 2011). The findings of this study concerning Latino children are consistent with other research documenting the overrepresentation of children who live in poverty in the child welfare system (Wulczyn, 2011). Comparisons of poverty across the study groups indicated that 85% of legal, 60% of undocumented, 60% of U.S.-born, and 38% of foreign-born Latinos lived in extreme poverty (<100% of the federal poverty level). Complicating the high proportion of poverty in the noncitizen families was the poor access to social services that were observed. For example, while noncitizens were more likely to be poor, they were less likely to have access to food stamps, housing support and SSI social security disability. In 2007, undocumented immigrants made roughly \$13,000 less per year compared to the U.S.-born population, despite having more workers per household in the labor force (Passel & Cohn, 2009). While more pervasive poverty among noncitizen families does not currently translate to greater maltreatment reports and higher proportions of substantiated maltreatment, recent research suggests that pervasive poverty during infancy may be associated with worse child health at age 5 (Schmeer, 2012) and greater challenges in providing adequate health care, safe supervision, and food security (Johnson-Motoyama, 2013). Over the long-term, these factors may increase the risk of maltreatment for Latino immigrant families – although to date, there are limited longitudinal data sources to test these questions stratifying by parental legal status.

Neighborhood conditions were a significant source of disadvantage for noncitizen families. Noncitizen parents were more likely to describe their neighborhood as unsafe, where gangs, open drug use, and low parental involvement were predominant characteristics of their community. In general, the literature on spatial assimilation suggests that immigrant families tend to live in more segregated communities than do non-Hispanic Whites; this is likely the result of poverty, redlining or unequal lending and mortgage practices, as well as real estate agents steering clients into co-ethnic neighborhoods (Park & Iceland, 2011). For noncitizen families, there are challenges related to legal status and proof of employment that may act as additional barriers to finding housing in more desirable neighborhoods with less community disorganization. Poor access to resources, particularly housing supports, may provide fewer residential options. While we were unable to formally test this hypothesis with the data, the fact that both U.S.-born and foreign-born citizen parents were less likely to report these environmental stressors suggests that more research in this area is needed to better understand the community characteristics experienced by noncitizen Latino parents and how these characteristics may impact their involvement in the child welfare system.

Although current and previous research suggest that protective factors (i.e., two-parent households, high proportion of married families, low active risk factors like drug and alcohol use) may contribute to the low representation of foreign-born families in the child welfare system, it should also be noted that many of the structural barriers (individual poverty, neighborhood poverty, limited access to resources) experienced by these families are risk factors for maltreatment, as these indicators are linked to increased stress in Latino and minority populations (Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1991; Jackson, Knight, & Rafferty, 2010). Additionally, in the general population, these risk factors are linked to increased risk for substance abuse (Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, Morales, & Hayes Bautista, 2005) and mental health problems (Cook, Alegría, Lin, & Guo, 2009) – all of which elevate the risks for child welfare involvement.

6.3. Child maltreatment risk and protective factors

While there is substantial literature examining the epidemiological paradox in health outcomes among Latino children of immigrants in the general population, extending this framework to understand racial and ethnic differences in child maltreatment outcomes is an emerging

area of research. Within this framework, documenting the within group differences in child maltreatment by both nativity and citizenship status has been difficult due to the lack data. Yet, these distinctions are necessary to more thoroughly understand racial and ethnic differences in child maltreatment.

Consistent with previous research on children of immigrants in the child welfare system (Dettlaff & Johnson, 2011; Dettlaff et al., 2009; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012), this study found that foreign-born parents, regardless of citizenship status, were no more likely to have substantiated maltreatment cases than U.S.-born parents. These findings are consistent with previous research using data from NSCAW, which found no significant differences in the proportion of substantiation between U.S. born and foreign-born Latino families (Dettlaff & Johnson, 2011; Dettlaff et al., 2009; Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2012). In contrast, a recent study of children in California found lower risks for substantiation among Latino children with an immigrant mother compared to Latino children with a U.S.-born mother (Putnam-Hornstein et al., 2013). While the focus on both nativity and citizenship in the current analyses may explain some of the variation in these findings across studies, other researchers have indicated that differential migration patterns and infrequent contact with social service organizations may explain the low proportions of initial contact and substantiation in foreign-born families (Putnam-Hornstein et al., 2013; Johnson-Motoyama, 2013). Although the current analysis does not provide concrete evidence of a paradox per se, given the socioeconomic disadvantages experienced by noncitizen families in the sample (e.g., low income, low educational attainment, poor neighborhood quality), the lack of significant differences in substantiation suggests that there may be protective factors operating for undocumented families despite differential risk.

In the current study, there were few differences in maltreatment characteristics by nativity and citizenship status. Among maltreatment allegations, substance exposure was the only indicator that was significantly different across the groups. Children with a foreign-born parent, regardless of citizenship status, had lower proportions of allegations of substance exposure than did children with a U.S.-born parent. However, the current study found no significant differences in type of substantiated maltreatment by nativity and citizenship status. This is in contrast to previous work that found foreign-born Latino families were significantly more likely to have a substantiated report of sexual abuse (Dettlaff et al., 2009; Vericker, Kuehn, & Capps, 2007) and children of U.S.-born parents were more likely to have a substantiated report of physical neglect (Dettlaff et al., 2009).

With respect to risk and protective factors, the low proportions of active alcohol and drug abuse observed among non-citizen parents can be considered additional protective factors. The negative effects of substance abuse on childhood maltreatment have been well documented (Cash & Wilke, 2003; Cazdow et al., 1999; Chaffin, Kelleher, & Hollenberg, 1996; Kelleher, Chaffin, Hollenberg, & Fischer, 1994). Whereas previous work by Dettlaff et al. (2009) only identified significant differences in active drug use by parental nativity, the current study found significantly lower proportions of both active alcohol abuse and active drug abuse among all categories of foreign-born parents when compared to U.S.-born parents. Specifically, foreign-born citizen, legal resident, and undocumented parents were roughly 6 times less likely than U.S.-born parents to be actively abusing drugs as well as 1–2 times less likely than U.S.-born parents to be actively abusing alcohol. Although the overall proportions of active alcohol (1%) and drug (4%) abuse were low, these patterns mirror epidemiological data showing lower rates of substance abuse disorders in Latino immigrants compared to U.S.-born Latinos (Alegría et al., 2008).

Evidence of a final risk factor, history of child welfare involvement (defined as having a previous report of abuse), was more than twice as high among foreign-born citizen compared to undocumented parents. Other risk factors, such as poor parenting skills, intellectual/cognitive impairment, recent history of arrest, and high family stress,

were not found to be significantly different across groups. While these risk factors were found to be more prevalent in U.S.-born Latinos than in foreign-born Latinos in a previous study (Dettlaff et al., 2009), they were not found to be significantly different when stratified by citizenship and legal status.

6.4. Study limitations

While the current study offers something as essential as a demographic profile of noncitizen families with children involved in the public child welfare system as compared to U.S.-born and foreign-born citizen families, it should be considered in the context of certain limitations. One, children who were in out-of-home care were excluded from our analytic sample. Although the data do allow for an analysis of legal and citizenship status for children in out-of-home care, the missing data for this particular group threatened the validity and conclusions that could be made with the data. It should be noted that children in out-of-home care may be the most vulnerable and therefore future demographic studies should consider ways to effectively collect information about the legal status of biological parents for children in out-of-home care. Two, we have no information about parents' involvement with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or other legal systems. Information about family separation and deportation is critical in order to have a more complete picture about why these families are involved in the public child welfare system. The third limitation is that information about potential acculturative stressors, such as those related to discrimination and marginalization, was not measured. Future data collection should consider addressing some of these limitations by adding measures that effectively capture the cultural stressors associated with the migration and settlement process, as well as about family experiences with DHS. Despite these limitations, the demographic analyses conducted in the study provide insight about the individual, structural and maltreatment characteristics of foreign-born families and highlight important questions for future research, which may include examinations of differences among Latino children in out of home care according to nativity and citizenship status, the impact of immigration enforcement on children involved in the child welfare system, and the impact of migration and the acculturative process on Latino children who come to the attention of this system.

6.5. Implications

According to our study, approximately 19% of Latino children live with at least one parent who is undocumented and an additional 11% of Latino children involved in the child welfare system live with a parent who is a non-citizen legal resident. This finding is important as it demonstrates the need for child welfare agencies to recognize the diversity within the Latino population with respect to citizenship and legal status and to ensure that workers are equipped to respond to the unique issues and challenges that these families may face. Child welfare agencies should collaborate with immigrant serving community agencies to facilitate the development of training programs for staff that address these unique challenges and provide information on potential strategies to address these challenges.

This study also identified important differences between foreign-born citizens and foreign-born non-citizens (both legal resident and undocumented) across several variables including socioeconomic status and educational level. These findings suggest that differences that may impact child welfare outcomes exist within the Latino population not only according to parental nativity, but also within the population of immigrant families according to their legal status. Although obtaining information about legal status requires sensitivity and the establishment of trust with immigrant families, this information is necessary as part of a thorough assessment, as it may impact families' access to safety net services, their ability to obtain employment, as well as the type of employment they may pursue. Policies are needed that

address the safe collection and storage of this information within child welfare systems, and training is needed that provides case-workers with strategies for collecting this information in safe and appropriate ways.

At the same time, this study found a number of strengths in regard to protective factors that are present within immigrant families, which could be built upon to improve child and family outcomes. Despite significant socioeconomic disadvantage, children in noncitizen families were no more likely than children in citizen families to be involved in a substantiated case of maltreatment. This contradicts prior prevailing notions that immigrant and non-citizen families would be at increased risk for maltreatment given the socioeconomic and structural stressors they are likely to experience. Although we were able to identify some of the protective factors likely associated with the resilience of non-citizen families, such as low substance use and high percentages of two-parent families, there are likely many other protective factors in addition to those that we highlight. This highlights the need for comprehensive assessments that explore the range of protective factors that may be present among immigrant families, in connection to the development of strategies to promote protective factors among families when these factors are not present. Collaborations with community agencies may facilitate the development of these strategies, as well as build the capacity of child welfare agencies to identify community-based resources for immigrant families.

Finally, it is important for practitioners to understand how public policies that affect access to services may affect immigrant families' abilities to meet the needs of their children. Many of the problems affecting immigrant families originate outside of the family and are instead located in the social and economic dynamics of globalization and transnational migration that have led to the development of anti-immigrant policies at the state and federal levels. Immigration policies that don't adequately permit the cross-border movement of workers alongside increased restrictions in eligibility for social welfare programs (e.g., TANF) that could provide the most basic of support to families on the margins may result in the unnecessary entry of these families into the child welfare system. Both have a considerable effect on the services available to immigrant families upon contact with child welfare systems. Child welfare agencies should consider these structural disadvantages and make efforts to collaborate with other community organizations and advocate for eliminating the structural barriers experienced by noncitizen and undocumented immigrants, as well as increased access to the necessary support services.

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