CHAPTER 5

Through Children's Eyes: Families and Households of Latino Children in the United States

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INTRODUCTION

The children of Latinos today are a diverse group along several dimensions. They differ in generational composition. Some are children of recent immigrants, whereas others are born in the United States from families with several generations of U.S. citizens. They differ in ethnic origins. Some originate from Mexico, but they also come from countries in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. They identify as different races. These children might or might not accept a pan-ethnic identity as their own.

This great diversity in origins is also associated with differential outcomes in the United States. Concerns about the well-being of Latino children stem from their lower socioeconomic position relative to other pan-ethnic groups and the lower educational attainment evidenced by second-generation children, particularly those of Mexican origin (Bean & Stevens, 2003). This has led to a debate over generational progress and whether some Latino groups are likely to become permanently disadvantaged in the United States (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Although the concern about children's well-being stems from the lower socioeconomic background of Latino families in general, other characteristics might mitigate negative effects of low socioeconomic status on children. This is because the disadvantaged structural position of some Latinos is not associated with the same family behavior patterns associated with other

disadvantaged groups in the United States (Perlmann, 2005). For example, age at marriage tends to be lower among Mexican- and Central/South American-origin adults than non-Latino Whites, a pattern that is consistent with the cultural stereotype emphasizing marriage and religious conservatism. Low divorce rates, high marriage rates, and greater extended family coresidence are also commonly cited as traditional "familistic" patterns that might be protective for Latino children (Feliciano, Bean, & Leach, 2005). Even among second-generation youths in the United States, family formation patterns are more similar to non-Latino Whites than other minorities with similar economic profiles (Glick et al., 2006; Wildsmith & Raley, 2006).

However, even within Latinos, considerable diversity remains. Lower marriage rates persist among those of Puerto Rican origin for example. Puerto Ricans have some of the highest rates of nonmarital fertility and cohabitation than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States (Landale & Fennelly, 1992). Those of Cuban origin, on the other hand, evidence a higher average age at marriage and lower nonmarital fertility (Landale, Oropesa, & Bradatan, 2006) than among other groups. Socioeconomic disparities and structural barriers faced in the United States might indeed play a role in this diversity (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Some differences in family patterns are, in part, attributable to the recent immigration of many from Central and South America. Family structures and practices might be brought from the country of origin and might change as immigrants adapt to the family formation and living arrangement norms in the United States. Yet there is great variation in the family behavior patterns of Latinos in the United States and it is difficult to conclude that these differences are solely based on cultural preferences from the origin community.

This chapter examines the considerable diversity in the family and household structures experienced by Latino children in the United States and the association of these structures with children's outcomes. The role of family and household composition on children from different Latino groups has not been extensively documented in national studies because so few surveys contain sufficient samples of Latinos as one pan-ethnic group, let alone allow for an in-depth analysis across ethnic groups or generation statuses. Here we document these variations across as many groups as possible. We examine the living arrangements of Latino children, highlighting the diversity of patterns among various Latino subgroups and differences from native Whites and Blacks. We specifically examine whether children live with one, both, or neither parent and whether children live with other adult relatives or nonrelatives. We consider not only the ethnic or national group of origin but also the possibility that family structures vary by generation status. Then we examine the effects of various living arrangements and their stability on children's academic achievement. We pay particular attention to the extent to which differences in performance across generation status and ethnic origins are attributable to socioeconomic status, family structure and stability, and the social environment provided in the child's home. The analyses shed light on the extent to which children's family structure helps offset the possible negative effects of low socioeconomic status on academic achievement, a key indicator of children's well-being.

"FAMILISM" AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR CHILDREN

Latinos as a group have been perhaps the most stereotyped by their orientation toward family, perceived as "familistic," placing a high value on marriage and childbearing and committed to sharing support among extended kin (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). This stereotype receives support when the higher marriage and fertility rates among various Latino groups are compared

to lower marriage and fertility rates among non-Latino Whites and Blacks (Landale, Oropesa, & Bradatan, 2006). The prevalence of extended kin sharing households is also viewed as evidence that Latinos in the United States are more "familistic" than other groups. Immigrants, in particular, might favor coresidence with extended kin as the ideal family form. Latinos in general are more likely to live in extended family households at much higher rates than non-Latino Whites or Blacks (Burr & Mutchler, 1992; Van Hook & Glick, 2007).

In the past, scholars suggested this orientation toward family would lead to detrimental outcomes for children in the United States, but there is reason to expect they could be associated with positive outcomes for children that mitigate the disadvantages associated with low economic status or mobility (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). For example, family disruptions in the form of divorce, cohabitation, and remarriage are associated with negative outcomes for children in general (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; McLanahan, 1997). Certainly, lower rates of divorce and cohabitation (for some Latino groups) could result in positive outcomes for Latino children (for some subgroups) when compared to other children from similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

Additionally, living with extended kin, particularly grandparents, can be associated with positive outcomes for children both by increasing the earnings of parents freed from child-care costs and by increasing the number of adults available for supervision and support (Perez, 1994). Although the research on the effects of living with extended relatives is not as well developed as the literature on parental marital status, extended-family coresidence might well be associated with greater attention and interaction with loving, consistent caregivers.

Family and household size and complexity could be associated with greater focus on children's activities. Just as there are ethnic and generational differences in family formation patterns and living arrangements, it is likely that families also differ in the social environment for children, and families might behave in ways that promote academic success for their children (Fuligni, 1997). Engaging children in academically oriented activities might enhance subsequent educational outcomes (Sy & Schulenberg, 2005). Extended households could provide children greater opportunities for involvement in activities that enhance their academic achievement because more adults are available than in nonextended households.

"FAMILISM" MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH

Although it is clear that Latino children are more likely to live with extended family members than children from other backgrounds in the United States, such structures might be formed to meet the needs of adults rather than children and thus would not necessarily enhance children's development and well-being. Here there might be larger differences in household/family structure by immigration status than across Latino groups. Children are impacted by migration when they are left in the country of origin in the care of other relatives while one or both parents migrate (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Menjivar, 2000). However, migration can also disrupt family patterns in the United States. Children of immigrants might live in families in a state of flux and change as their parents adjust to the economic opportunities and constraints facing new arrivals while other family members might be housed temporarily (Chavez, 1990; Feliciano, Bean, & Leach 2005; Van Hook & Glick, 2006). These households are likely to be more unstable than other households as new arrivals come in and others move out. It is possible that such instability is associated with disruptions in schooling and inconsistent caregivers. The picture is further complicated if households contain family members from multiple nativity statuses, including U.S.-born citizens, longer-resident immigrants, and recent arrivals. Mixed-nativity households

add to the complexity in children's lives. For example, U.S.-born children are eligible for social services to which their foreign-born family members do not have access.

Additionally, children themselves might be the newest arrivals as they migrate to join parents who have left the country of origin before their children. Also, children migrate as labor migrants in their own right. This is more common among Central Americans than other groups (Menjivar, 2006). These children are likely to live without any parents in the household temporarily or long term. Thus, the complex living arrangements associated with immigration might also be associated with greater instability for children's lives and poorer subsequent outcomes. Because immigrants' family behaviors are directly impacted by the challenges of the migration process and further complicated by unauthorized migration status (Menjivar, 2006), the effects of family structure on children might be different for children of immigrants than children of natives even within the same ethnic group.

Certainly we cannot understand the outcomes for Latino children in the United States without considering the diversity of their origins and nativity statuses. Thus, our first task is to document the diversity of living arrangements of children across multiple Latino groups and by generation status using a large nationally representative data source—the Current Population Survey (CPS). We expect that Latino children will be more likely to live with married parents and with extended relatives, but also more likely to live in households that do not include their parents, especially among children in the first and second generations. We further posit that greater family and household stability might be evidenced among those in the higher-order generations, as children of immigrants experience their own immediate family's settlement in the United States and quite possibly the addition of other family members.

Our second task is to explore the possible associations of Latino children's living arrangements with academic achievement. If Latino children's family structure ameliorates the negative effects of poverty among Latino families, we would expect to see significant positive effects of living with married parents and extended-kin coresidence on achievement. In addition, we would expect the effects of Latino ethnicity (relative to native Whites) to increase (become more positive) when socioeconomic status alone is controlled, but then to decrease once family structure and socioeconomic status are both controlled (i.e., we expect to see a suppression effect). This outcome is expected to be stronger for groups with both relatively high poverty and intact family structures.

DATA AND MEASURES

We used the pooled 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 March CPS to document the living arrangements of Latino children aged 0–17 years. The strength of the CPS data lies in its sample size. The pooled CPS sample contains 54,574 Latino children, among whom 9,036 are foreign-born (first generation), 36,906 are U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents (second generation), and 8,632 are U.S.-born children of U.S. natives (third and higher generation). The large sample permits the analysis of numerically small Latino subgroups, including first, second, and third or higher generations of Mexican-, Cuban-, and Puerto Rican-origin children (numbering 35,538, 1,469, and 4,930, respectively). It is impossible to determine the specific national ancestry of the third and higher generation of other Latino groups (these groups are not identified by the "Hispanic ethnicity" variable available in the CPS). However, we are able to identify the first and second generation according to their country of birth and parents' country of birth. In this way, we are able to compare the family/household structures of first- and second-generation Salvadorans (N = 2,303), Guatemalans (N = 1,030), Hondurans (N = 692),

Nicaraguans (N = 412), Dominicans (N = 1,956), Columbians (N = 985), Ecuadorians (N = 627), and Peruvians (N = 1,962).

Although we can use the CPS to document the family and household composition of children in all of these groups, we cannot directly observe the association between these arrangements and children's outcomes using the CPS. We therefore turn to a smaller dataset with a longitudinal design, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), to explore the extent to which family and household structure, stability, and involvement with children are associated with academic outcomes for one cohort of young children. We examine family and household structure in the kindergarten year as well as changes in family and household structure by the third-grade year. We then use regression analyses to examine the associations of these structures and changes with subsequent academic achievement in the third grade. We cannot separate all groups with the same detail as with CPS, but we can compare third- and higher-generation children whose parents identify them as "Hispanic" to those who are identified as non-Hispanic White or non-Hispanic Black. We also include a comparison to children with foreign-born parents. Children are included if at least one parent originated in Mexico, Central America (includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua), South America (includes Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Brazil, and Panama), Cuba or other Caribbean countries (includes Aruba, Bahamas, Bermuda, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, Virgin Islands, and Dominican Republic who also identified as "Hispanic").

DIVERSITY BY NATIONAL ORIGINS AND GENERATION STATUS

Latino children are much more likely to be impacted by recent immigration within their own families than White or Black children. Children of immigrants, whether they migrated themselves (1.5 generation) or are the U.S.-born children of immigrants (second generation), all share the unique position of being socialized in the United States by foreign-born parents. The generation status of children in the United States today is shown in Table 1. The vast majority of non-Latino White and Black children are in the third or higher generation; that is, they are removed from the migration experience by at least two generations and many are five or more generations removed from their families' origin countries. On the other hand, children of Latino origin are much more likely to be the U.S.-born children of immigrants, or the second generation. The majority of all Mexican-, Cuban-, and Puerto Rican-origin children aged 0–17 are the children of immigrants or are immigrants themselves. The numbers are even higher for children of other national origins.

FAMILY STRUCTURES EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN

National origin and generational status of Latino children are associated with different family structures. Table 2 demonstrates this, focusing on the largest groups discernable in the CPSs by generation status. Over half of all Mexican-, Cuban-, Salvadoran-, Honduran-, Columbian-, Ecuadorian-, and Peruvian-origin children of all generations reside with two married parents. A sizable minority live with two cohabiting partners. Such cohabitation is most commonly experienced by Central American- and South American-origin children, including Salvadoran-, Nicaraguan-, and Ecuadorian-origin children. Although we cannot go beyond the descriptive

Table 1. Race/ethnic and Generational Composition of U.S. Children

	Number[a]	%	% 1st Gen	% 2nd Gen	% 3rd+
Non-Latino White	45,683,768	62.7	1.3	5.5	93.2
Non-Latino Black	11,006,741	15.1	2.1	7.3	90.6
Other Non-Latino	4,721,595	6.5	14.0	46.1	39.9
Latino	11,425,360	15.7	16.1	67.4	16.4
Mexican	7,761,925	10.7	15.3	66.4	18.2
Puerto Rican	886,760	1.2	15.2	60.5	24.3
Cuban	309,515	0.4	16.6	74.8	8.6
Other Latino	2,467,160	3.4	18.9	72.1	9.0
Salvadoran	460,700	0.6	13.1	86.9	
Guatemalan	186,237	0.3	19.7	80.3	
Honduran	140,301	0.2	19.9	80.1	
Nicaraguan	85,480	0.1	22.2	77.8	
Dominican	371,182	0.5	18.6	81.4	
Colombian	189,562	0.3	29.1	70.9	
Ecuadorian	124,459	0.2	20.6	79.4	
Peruvian	422,206	0.6	27.7	72.3	
TOTAL	72,837,465	100.0	4.6	18.1	77.3

[a]Average population 2000–2005.
Source: March CPS 2000–2005.
Sample: Children ages 0–17.
Note: "Other Latino" subgroups include only 1st and 2nd generation children.

patterns here, we note the meaning of cohabitation might differ for these groups just as it does outside the United States (Landale & Fennelly, 1992).

When married and cohabiting parents are combined, children from the remaining national-origin groups are also likely to live with two parents or parental figures in the case of married or cohabiting stepparents. However, for several groups, living with a single mother is also quite common. Dominican- and Puerto Rican-origin children are the most likely to live with a single mother, but these families are certainly prevalent among all of the groups we examine here.

One key component so much of the research on Latinos has addressed is the extent to which their generational progression is less positive than might have been the case for others (Alba & Nee, 2003), and family structure, to the extent that it is associated with positive or negative outcomes, might be an important indicator for this. Table 2 demonstrates that a simple story of generational progression does not hold for all Latinos. For example, first- and second-generation Mexican children are less likely to live with a single mother than their third- and higher-generation counterparts, a pattern consistent with a story of negative adaptation if one considers that single-mother families are generally associated with less favorable outcomes than two married parent families. However, this story is much less clear in the case of Cuban-origin children for whom single-mother families are more prevalent in the second generation than third or higher.

Table 2 also offers some insight into the likelihood of living with neither parent. There might be several reasons why children do not reside with either parent, including parental death, migration, or the removal of children from the parental home by social service agencies. One might imagine that first- and second-generation children are more likely than third- and higher-generation children to experience separation from their parents due to migration as parents seek employment or work in live-in situations. For most of the Latino groups, first-generation children are the

TABLE 2. Parental Status by Generational Status among Latino Children, 2000–2005

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Salvadoran	Guatemalan	Honduran	Nicaraguan	Dominican	Colombian	Ecuadorian	Peruvian
Married Parents											
1st Generation	68.2	36.2	58.9	56.2	46.6	53.9	45.9	42.7	58.8	59.5	65.0
2nd Generation	66.3	42.5	51.5	60.5	58.7	54.5	59.0	36.7	62.2	64.8	63.4
3rd+ Generation	51.6	40.2	68.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cohabiting Parents											
1st Generation	7.7	11.7	14.5	14.3	8.4	6.3	15.3	9.3	20.1	12.5	14.6
2nd Generation	10.0	10.5	18.5	13.5	11.3	9.9	15.9	12.2	12.7	16.4	13.1
3rd+ Generation	8.4	10.5	14.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mother Only											
1st Generation	12.3	43.4	19.6	17.8	19.0	15.6	26.4	36.5	11.8	15.2	12.3
2nd Generation	17.8	38.9	22.1	18.9	21.5	26.7	18.8	43.4	20.0	11.1	17.9
3rd+ Generation	28.7	39.4	11.8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Father Only											
1st Generation	2.6	1.3	4.8	2.4	2.1	5.9	5.7	5.0	1.9	5.1	2.0
2nd Generation	2.3	2.6	2.7	3.7	5.1	2.5	2.7	2.1	2.1	3.9	3.6
3rd+ Generation	4.2	2.1	2.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
No Resident Parent											
1st Generation	9.2	7.4	2.3	9.4	23.9	18.3	6.7	6.4	7.5	7.7	6.2
2nd Generation	3.6	5.6	5.1	3.3	3.4	6.4	3.6	5.6	2.9	3.8	2.0
3rd+ Generation	7.1	7.8	3.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source and Sample: See Table 1.

most likely to live without a parent in their household. The high proportions of Guatemalan and Honduran first- generation children residing without a parent might reflect a greater likelihood of children migrating to join parents among Central Americans (Menjivar, 2006). It might also reflect a number of adolescents who are labor migrants in their own right who do not have parents to join in the United States. Over half of the Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, and Colombian children living without parents are teenagers. When only foreign-born children are considered, we find that approximately two-thirds of all children living without parents present are teenagers (with the notable exception of Cuban foreign-born youth).

The cross-sectional descriptive picture we have presented so far illustrates the diversity of family structures among Latino children. We can also address the extent to which young children experience changes in their family's structure by utilizing longitudinal data on a smaller sample of children. Although the ECLS-K cohort does not provide as many groups to compare as is possible with the CPS data, we observe similar patterns in family structure by ethnic origins in the kindergarten year as we did in CPS with a sample of children from birth to age 17. Table 3 reveals that all of the young children of Latino origins, regardless of generation status, are more likely to live with two married parents than non-Latino Black children, and their living arrangements are quite close to the pattern observed for non-Latino White children.

The greatest frequency of living with cohabiting parents occurs among children of Puerto Rican-born parents, but there are also fairly high levels of cohabitation among other children of immigrants, including those of Mexican origin. By third grade, the majority of children are still residing with two married parents. There is a decrease for most groups in cohabiting families. These families might have dissolved or moved into formal marriages. The proportion of children living with a single mother also decreases for several groups. Most notably, we observe fewer Puerto Rican-origin third- and higher-generation children in these families by third grade. A similar decrease is observed among Puerto Rican children of immigrants. We observe only small changes in the proportions of children residing with neither parent, suggesting few children are reunited with their parents or experience the separation from their parents in these few years.

Children Living in Extended Family Households

Extended-family households are formed for many reasons, including the addressing the needs of aging parents, pooling income in hard times, and providing enough caregivers to young children. Thus, there are many reasons why other relatives might reside in children's households. Because extended-family households containing relatives at different points of the life course might meet different needs and are prevalent to a very different extent among different groups, we consider the extent to which children live with a variety of relatives. Table 4 demonstrates that having adult siblings in the same home is more common among first-generation children of all groups with the exception of Cubans. For immigrant families, adult children might represent important contributors to the economic stability of the household. Sharing a household with a grandparent, on the other hand, varies more across groups and by generation status. In part, this could reflect greater kin availability among children in the third and higher generation whose grandparents are, by definition, more likely to be proximate (i.e., possibly born in the same country as the grandchild). However, although an increasing prevalence of grandparents in the household occurs across generations for Mexican- and Puerto Rican-origin children, the same is not necessarily the case for all groups. Cuban-origin children in the third and higher generation are the least likely to share a household with a grandparent.

Table 3. Living Arrangements of One Cohort of Young Children Over Time

	Married parents		Cohabiting parents		Mother only		Father only		No resident parent		Grandparent in household	
	Year 1	Year 4	Year 1	Year 4	Year 1	Year 4	Year 1	Year 4	Year 1	Year 4	Year 1	Year 4
Non-Latino, Third and higher generation												
Whites	81.3	81.4	3.3	2.9	12.8	12.5	1.5	1.9	1.0	1.0	9.2	8.4
Blacks	41.3	47.6	5.8	3.3	45.0	41.4	1.2	1.2	6.7	6.5	17.5	16.3
Latino, Third and higher generation:												
Mexican origin	69.6	73.1	5.3	2.2	22.3	21.1	1.0	2.4	1.8	1.2	14.9	11.6
Puerto Rican origin	63.4	72.9	3.0	3.8	27.8	18.8	3.3	3.6	0.7	0.7	17.5	15.0
Other Latino	63.2	76.5	6.3	6.4	26.0	12.9	0.9	0.9	3.5	3.3	14.1	9.8
Latino Children of Immigrants												
Mexican origin	78.1	85.1	7.8	2.0	13.3	11.7	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.9	8.1	6.7
Puerto Rican origin	66.5	78.9	9.2	4.7	24.3	15.2	–	–	–	–	3.4	6.6
Carribean origin	62.6	72.4	3.5	2.4	28.7	24.4	–	–	–	–	6.5	6.9
Central American	73.4	72.4	5.6	3.4	19.7	18.6	–	–	–	–	8.2	9.4
South American	81.1	88.5	1.8	0.7	17.1	9.0	–	–	–	–	10.5	15.7

Source: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort
Note: Sample weighted and adjusted for design effects; unweighted sample size presented

TABLE 4. Extended Family Living Arrangements of Latino Children by Generational Status, 2000–2005

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Salvadoran	Guatemalan	Honduran	Nicaraguan	Dominican	Colombian	Ecuadorian	Peruvian
Older Sibling[a]											
1st Generation	14.6	13.2	7.8	14.9	14.1	16.8	20.6	17.4	10.9	15.9	14.3
2nd Generation	11.2	11.2	11.1	9.0	12.3	5.3	6.4	14.0	13.1	10.7	12.4
3rd+ Generation	8.9	8.4	4.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Grandparent[b]											
1st Generation	4.4	4.6	10.9	6.0	2.5	7.1	7.0	7.8	5.4	16.2	6.7
2nd Generation	8.2	9.4	13.3	9.0	8.0	8.1	8.5	13.0	12.2	8.1	8.7
3rd+ Generation	15.9	11.3	8.8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other Relative[c]											
1st Generation	20.8	7.7	11.9	24.4	17.6	20.6	8.6	10.8	5.3	20.9	11.2
2nd Generation	12.5	6.7	4.9	14.6	14.3	11.2	8.9	8.3	3.1	16.2	4.4
3rd+ Generation	6.3	6.6	5.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Non-relative[d]											
1st Generation	6.1	7.1	4.2	7.9	13.9	8.4	8.1	9.5	6.4	6.1	3.1
2nd Generation	3.9	3.8	2.7	6.1	6.5	7.2	6.2	5.3	3.8	4.4	3.0
3rd+ Generation	5.2	5.5	5.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source and Sample: See Table 1.

[a] Child lives with sibling age 18+, but no other related adults besides parents.

[b] Child lives with a grandparent. Child *may* live with other relatives or parents as well.

[c] Child lives with an extended relative other than a grandparent. Child *may* live with siblings or parents as well.

[d] Child lives with a non-relative age 18+, but no related adults besides parents.

A similar pattern of living with grandparents is also found in the longitudinal ECLS-K data. The last column of Table 3 demonstrates that more third- and higher-generation Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Latino children live with grandparents than their counterparts who are children of immigrants. This is again likely associated with the greater availability of grandparents for children who are the grandchildren of immigrants to the United States. There is also some change in the prevalence of grandparents in the homes of these young children over time. This could be associated with grandparent's aging but could also be associated with decreased needs for childcare provided by grandparents as children age and progress through school.

Grandparents might become more common in households across generations, but other relatives and nonrelatives become less common household members for children in the third and higher generations. As we see when we return to Table 4, other relatives are more common for some first- and second-generation groups than others. More than 20% of first-generation children of Mexican, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Ecuadorian origin share a home with a relative outside of their immediate or vertically extended families (i.e., relatives other than an adult sibling, parent, or grandparent). Some in these groups are also likely to face added uncertainty from undocumented status (Menjivar, 2006). It seems likely that for these families, coresidence provides an important resource in precarious economic or legal situations.

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES

Certainly one reason scholars have been concerned with family structure is the likelihood that these living arrangements are associated with differential outcomes and childhood well-being. If "familism" is indeed protective for children, then the negative impact of low economic status might be offset by the benefits afforded by living with two-parent families or having access to additional coresident kin. On the other hand, if these households are less stable than others, the benefits of additional kin will be offset and we might conclude that the attributes associated with "familism" are neutral for children, at most.

Here we offer a basic comparison of academic progress of young Latino children by looking at standardized reading test scores from the spring of 2002. Early reading success is necessary for subsequent educational attainment. The analyses examine the relative impacts of parental education, household income, and family and household composition and stability on children's trajectories over time. The analyses also include measures of the resources families provide to enhance their children's academic opportunities. These activities include being enrolled in sports or arts classes outside of the school in their kindergarten year. In addition to formal enrollment in classes, we include two variables for outings taken with any member of the family and the focal child in the previous month. The first variable represents outings to the library and the second represents other outings, including trips to zoos, museums, aquariums, concerts, plays, or sporting events. These measures are particularly useful for our purposes because they include involvement by anyone in the household. In this way, we are able to consider the direct involvement of extended-family members with the child. There is considerable variation in the types of activity and the level of activity children are exposed to in kindergarten. For example, Latino children are all more likely to be enrolled in a non-English language class outside of school than are non-Latino Whites or Blacks. Yet, children of immigrants are less likely to be enrolled in other activities outside of school. There is somewhat less variation in the likelihood children are taken to the library and we note that there is considerable similarity by generation status across Latino groups. Children of immigrants are less likely to be taken on other outings than their

Latino counterparts in the third and higher generation, possibly reflecting the ability to pay for such activities.

To address the extent to which family structure, household structure, household stability and activities all contribute to children's reading success, Table 5 presents the regression results predicting children's third-grade Item Response Theory scaled reading scores while also controlling

TABLE 5. Regression of Children's Reading Test Scores in Third Grade

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Race/ethnicity/generation status (vs. non-Latino Whites, third+ generation)				
Non-Latino Blacks, 3rd+ generation	−0.41***	−0.32***	−0.31***	−0.30***
Mexican origin, 3rd+ generation	−0.25***	−0.17**	−0.16**	−0.16**
Other Latino, 3rd+ generation	−0.12**	−0.07	−0.07	−0.07
Mexican origin, 1st or 2nd generation	−0.28***	−0.12*	−0.13*	−0.10*
Carribean origin[c], 1st or 2nd generation	−0.30***	−0.26*	−0.26*	−0.23*
Central American, 1st or 2nd generation	−0.11	0.01	0.00	0.03
South American, 1st or 2nd generation	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.04
Male		−0.07***	−0.07***	−0.07***
Child's Age (in months)		0.00	0.00	0.00
Parent Age (in years)		0.01*	0.01*	0.00
Family Income (log)		0.03***	0.03***	0.02**
Parent Education (vs. more than college)				
Less than High school		−0.44***	−0.43***	−0.40***
High school graduate		−0.25***	−0.25***	−0.23***
Some College		−0.13***	−0.13***	−0.13***
Four year degree		0.00	0.00	−0.02
Family Structure (vs. Both Parents)				
Parent & Partner			−0.02	−0.02
Single Parent			−0.03	−0.01
Neither Parent			−0.09	−0.06
Household Structure				
Grandparent in Household			0.03	0.01
Other relative in Household			0.00	0.00
Changes in Family/Household Structure				
Lost Parent from Household			−0.08*	−0.08*
Parent added to Household			0.03	0.03
Lost Grandparent from Household			−0.06	−0.06
Grandparent added to Household			−0.06	−0.06
Non-school involvement (Kindergarten year)				
Sports or Arts classes/activities[a]				0.05*
Non-English language instruction				0.00
Went to library in last month[b]				0.06**
Other outings in last month				0.05**
Reading Test Score in 2000	0.69***	0.65***	0.65***	0.64***
Intercept	0.09	0.13	0.14	0.09
R square	0.56	0.58	0.58	0.58

Source: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study- Kindergarten Cohort

Note: Sample weighted and adjusted for design effects; unweighted sample size presented

[a]Child was enrolled in an organized sport, took dance, music or arts classes

[b]Family/household member took child to one of these in previous month: museum, zoo, aquarium, play or concert, game.

[c]Includes Puerto Rican origin

for their previous test scores from first grade. In other words, the results demonstrate the extent to which children's scores are associated with various characteristics net of their underlying abilities as measured by the previous test. The results show that reading scores vary greatly by ethnicity and generation status even when we take previous performance into account. Children of immigrants, however, do not have the lowest scores. Mexican- and Caribbean-origin Latino children have lower scores than non-Latino Whites, but their scores are also significantly higher than non-Latino Blacks (results not shown). Family income and parents' education are important predictors of initial school performance. Model 2 reveals that differences are further reduced when family income and parents' education are added to the model. Note that this is still controlling for previous test scores. This strongly suggests that the structural position of the child's family is of continued importance in academic achievement over time and explains some of the difference across ethnic and generation status groups.

Model 3 adds family structure and instability to our analyses. Although living in a stepparent family or family with neither parent present is associated with lower test scores initially (results not shown), little of the difference in reading scores over time is explained by family structure. Nor are the effects of ethnicity or generation status suppressed when family structure is added, which is what we would expect if family mitigates other disadvantages. However, family dissolution (i.e., losing a parent or guardian between kindergarten and third grade) is associated with a negative academic trajectory.

In addition, family activities are important predictors of improvement in reading scores even when we control for family income that might make these activities less affordable for some families. We observe a modest reduction in the coefficients for first- and second-generation children that is not observed for non-Hispanic Black third- and higher-generation children when moving from model 3 to model 4 in support of our expectations. Interactions of ethnicity and generation status with these activities are not significant, suggesting that all children benefit similarly from such extracurricular activities and outings. Further interactions of family and household structure and race/ethnic group also fail to achieve statistical significance. Thus, we do not conclude that there are group differences in the effects of family instability on children. Rather, we suggest that the benefits of family involvement, as evidenced by the positive effect of extracurricular activities and outings, are offset by types of instability, as evidenced by the negative effect of losing a parent or guardian from the household, and that these factors affect outcomes similarly across groups.

CONCLUSIONS

Latino children in the United States are a diverse group representing multiple ethnic origins as well as the legacy of past and recent migration. Because family structure and stability are important assets for children's well-being, we present a detailed look at family structure among Latinos in the United States from the perspective of these children. We find that many children of Latino origin are more likely to live with two parents than non-Latino Black or non-Latino Whites, as suggested by the "familistic" stereotype sometimes applied with one broad brush to all Latinos. However, considerable variation across ethnic groups and generation status suggests that such images are limited. We also note that the extended-family households among Latino children contain a wide variety of different types of kin and our analyses of one cohort of young children suggests that these households are not the stable living arrangements depicted by the same "familistic" stereotype. Rather, we suggest that the benefits of two-parent homes with extended kin who provide resources or care are offset by the instability of such households. This

instability is more likely in the households of immigrant youth across Latino groups. With federal efforts aimed at "promoting" marriage among low-income groups, we suggest marriage alone is not a guaranteed path to family stability. Rather, our results suggest that instability in children's homes is present in the face of structural constraints even for groups where marriage is prevalent.

When considering the diversity of family structures among these children, we note particularly the greater likelihood of living with nonrelatives and without parents present among Central American first-generation youth. These children are likely to be in the least stable living arrangements. Losing their parent or guardian is likely to be associated with negative outcomes and more precarious status overall. Current debates over immigration have not addressed the needs of these vulnerable migrants who might remain outside the scope of school or social service outreach.

There is one significant impact of migration on Latino children that we were not able to address here. Many children are left behind in origin countries when parents migrate to the United States. These families face considerable challenges as they work to maintain close ties and struggle with their roles as parents (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Such "transnational" families also once again highlight the importance of grandparents. Grandparents play important roles as caregivers when parents migrate, creating "skipped-generation" households in origin countries. Further research from the perspective of these households would extend our understanding of the extent to which grandparents play key roles in children's development within the context of international migration.

Latino families cannot be described under a single "familistic" rubric. Some groups are more typified by married two-parent families. For other groups, single-parent families are more common. Further, living arrangements across groups are complex, as reflected by the greater prevalence of coresident adult children or grandparents in some groups or the prevalence of children living without either parent in the case of others; many households, particularly those containing recent immigrants, experience turnover and instability. We suggest that these characteristics offer offsetting strengths and vulnerabilities for children. For children from groups with the most recent migration histories and precarious economic or legal status in the United States, the challenges might be large indeed.

There are several areas in need of further investigation as researchers address the considerable diversity within the large Latino pan-ethnicity. Although many excellent smaller detailed studies exist, we must rely on large national-level datasets to provide the answers to questions of comparability across diverse groups. We are limited by the few, but growing, data sources that address both family and household complexity *and* detailed ethnic and generation status information. It is not enough to paint all Latino families with one broad brush, but few data sources would permit a detailed comparison.

Beyond data limitations, the research we present here raises intriguing questions about the dynamics of living arrangements for Latino children and their own experiences with the migration process. We need a better understanding of how family members' migration impacts children's opportunities and well-being. Perhaps, children are helped by the arrival of grandparents or, perhaps, children are disrupted by the turnover in their households as new arrivals seek assistance. More longitudinal analyses of children's progress and family dynamics that include children from diverse origins can help address these questions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research is supported by grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (RO3 HD044006 and R03 HD44700-01A1).

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