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A Generational Look into the Occurrence of Child Maltreatment among Latinos

And their Effects on Developmental Growth

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Abstract

Little is known about the prevalence or risk factors associated with child maltreatment among Latino immigrant and native born families. As a result, Latino children and families are often treated as a homogeneous group, with little understanding of the potential differences that may exist between immigrant and native-born families. This paper attempts to explain the concept of child maltreatment and explore the differences between the two groups, while taking into account the effects of acculturation, Belsky's Ecological Model of Maltreatment, childrearing practices, and the developmental consequences of maltreatment. Finally, the role that Child Protective Services plays in this issue will also be discussed and recommendations for Child protective services are presented.

Keywords: Latinos, Child Maltreatment, First Generation, Second Generation Native Born (U.S Born), Immigrant, Acculturation

Chapter 1: A Generational Look into the Occurrence of Child Maltreatment among

Latinos

This is a project centered on exploring the differences between the occurrences of child maltreatment (physical, sexual, psychological abuse and neglect of children) among two groups of Latinos: those with children who immigrate to the United States (first generation) as opposed to US born Latinos (second generation) who have children in the United States (third generation) as well as understanding the reasons for these differences. It is important to understand and be responsive to the problems that children of Latino immigrant families face as this population continues to grow. Understanding this in turn will help explain how things change in later generations. In the following chapters an explanation of child maltreatment will be given that includes the definition of what child maltreatment is for Anglo's and Latino cultures, followed by the child rearing practices of the two groups of Latinos as compared to the mainstream culture with an emphasis on the risk factors for the maltreatment of children in these two groups and the current research done of it's occurrence among Latinos. I will also discuss the consequences of child maltreatment, and finally how these differences affect the Child Protective Service System.

In order to reduce the risk factors that contribute to child maltreatment among Latinos, it is essential to work toward understanding the culture and its child rearing practices in addition to knowing how to distinguish and acknowledge that there are differences within the culture. Multicultural competence is vital in providing psychological services to the victims and families of child maltreatment. Once there is more knowledge about what it is that causes the differences in raising children within first generation and second or third generation families'; services such as prevention or intervention programs can be provided and potentially improve the situation for Latino children. Coming from an immigrant family myself as a first generation Latina I have

lived through many different circumstances that were caused by my situation, as a result I can truly understand the difficulty of growing up in a society whose values are much different from one's family and culture. It is a constant struggle that deserves to be looked at more in depth. As a future career I essentially want to counsel Latino children and help them through their struggles while taking into consideration how their family and culture contribute positively and negatively to their lives. This project will enhance my understanding of my own culture so as to become a more competent counselor with a stronger self identity and knowledge.

Chapter 2: Child Maltreatment and Its Occurrence among Latinos

This chapter describes the definition of child maltreatment in general as well as the definition for Latinos. Before giving a definition is of maltreatment it's important to note that there is no universally agreed upon way to define maltreatment, nor is there just one framework used to understand the focal point in which intervention should be initiated (Crosson-tower, 2010). Research has found that the criteria that parents and the lay adult community apply to and define as child maltreatment, as compared to child discipline or other child-rearing practices, vary with socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and occupational status (Ferrari, 2001). All though there is no agreed upon definition among parents and the adult community there are definitions used in the United States for each type of abuse and for the purpose of this paper Crosson-Tower's (2010) definition will be used. According to her description child maltreatment comes in many forms, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and psychological abuse. The physical abuse of children refers to non-accidental injury (bruises, fractures, head and internal injuries and burns) inflicted by a caregiver (Crosson-Tower, 2001). Sexual Abuse refers to the use of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult (assault, molestation, victimization and child rape (Crosson-Tower, 2001). Neglect is seen as an act of omission often related to parental

deficits, which some divide into three categories, physical neglect, emotional neglect and

educational neglect (Crosson-Tower, 2001). Psychological abuse refers to a pattern of

psychically destructive behaviors which may include rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, ignoring

and corrupting (Crosson-Tower, 2001). There have been also been many theories that try to

explain the etiology of child maltreatment in the general population. These theories have

evolved from the identification of single cause models to ecological models that are concerned

with the processes and conditions that govern parent–child relationships within the context of the

larger social environment (Johnson, 2007). According to Belsky (1993), child maltreatment has

increasingly been understood as a product of a variety of risk and protective factors that operate

through transactional processes at multiple levels of the ecology of parent–child relations. For

example, in Belsky's (1980) Ecological model, the ontogenetic system includes individual level

characteristics that prevent or contribute to maltreating behavior while the Microsystems

represents family dynamics and interactions that influence the likelihood of maltreatment. The

exosystem involves community level attributes that increase or decrease the probability of

maltreatment, such as social support and neighborhood dynamics. Finally, the macro system

consists of broader factors such as cultural beliefs and values, social norms regarding parenting,

and policies that influence child and family well-being. Theoretical models have also been

developed to explain the processes and outcomes of acculturation among recent immigrants and

their children. Acculturation is the process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviors of people from

one culture are modified as a result of contact with a different culture and reflects the extent to

which individuals learn and adopt the values, behaviors, lifestyles and language of a new culture.

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Children of immigrants are exposed to the influences of youth culture through school, peers, and the popular media. As a result, they may engage in activities and lifestyles that are consistent with local cultures but contradict their parents' traditional beliefs and rules of conduct, particularly pertaining to family expectations, education, dating and marriage. Tensions in cultural orientation often result in intergenerational conflict. However, parent-child differences in cultural orientation, goals, and values can also lead to maladaptive outcomes such as mental health problems (Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Polino, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Ying & Chao, 1996), high-risk behavior among adolescents (Peterson, Cobas, Balcazar & Amling, 1998), and child maltreatment (Smith-Hefner, 1998). According to Berry's acculturative strategies (1980, 2003), and LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton's (1993) theory of biculturalism assessment of the acculturative orientations of parents and their children may be useful in understanding family system dynamics, specifying the sources of intergenerational and intercultural conflict. In other words it will help in specifying where the sources of conflict are.

For Latino culture there has been little research done in understanding how they would define child maltreatment and to what point discipline turns into child abuse. What has been found in one Latino group such as the Mexican family is that it is largely traditional and that they find conformity to values and social norms as something to be noted (Diaz-Guerrero & Szalay, 1991). For example, corporal punishment is seen not only as a necessary disciplinary method but also as a positive practice to produce good citizens (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998). Such practices may not be seen as acceptable in the United States and therefore cause conflict within as well as outside the family. Tradition as stated before includes the disciplinary methods of corporal punishment and these ideas are passed down through generations. It is likely that that there will be intergenerational transmission not only of social norms and values but also of the

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use of corporal punishment.

The theory of the intergenerational transmission of abuse asserts that the most powerful predictor of parents' abusive behaviors to their child is the fact that the parent was abused and/or neglected in childhood. However, many parents who have suffered abuse as children grow up to be loving, non-abusive parents (Trickett & Susman, 1988, as cited by Zigler & Hall, 1989). Therefore, other factors must interact with a childhood history of maltreatment to either promote or buffer a parent's behavior with his or her child; one of these factors may be cultural attitudes and values. Cross cultural literature suggests that child maltreatment is less likely in cultures where children are valued for their economic utility, for perpetuating family lines and the cultural heritage, and for sources of emotional pleasure and satisfaction (Trickett & Susman, 1988). Bates and Pettit (1981) have suggested that individual differences between parents, such as the degree to which they like their children and their beliefs about children moderate the effects of child behavior on parenting style. Compared to non-abusive parents, abusive parents have been reported as being less satisfied with their children, finding both childrearing and their children to be less enjoyable (Trickett & Susman, 1988).

In general the most studied risk factors for child maltreatment have been socio-demographic variables, inter-marital violence, maltreatment histories of parents, and parental drug abuse. Some studies have concluded that abusive parents are more likely to be poor. Poverty stricken families are more likely to have less education and more stress as a result of the lack of means, which can cause more frustration toward their children if they are not able to understand the developmental needs of the child. Inter-marital violence can affect children's lives if they are witnessing the violence. It is also very likely that the violent parent will also physically abuse the children. With parental drug abuse children are at a higher probability of

being neglected as well as physically abused. Frias-Armenta and McCloskey (1996) pointed out that maternal education is a more powerful indicator of caretaking style than poverty per se. If the mother is well educated she is better able to understand and parent her child without resorting to violence even in conditions of poverty. Inter-marital violence poses a risk for children. The frequency and severity of inter-spousal aggression co-varies with aggression toward children, especially among fathers (Frias-Armenta and McCloskey, 1996).

The first national data available concerning the presence of Latino children of immigrants in the child welfare system (NSCAW), their characteristics, family and neighborhood risk factors, and incidence of maltreatment show significant differences between immigrant Latino families and native Latino families. Surprisingly, these data show that although children of immigrants who come to the attention of child welfare systems have a number of risk factors, these risks are less prevalent than in families of children with native-born parents. There are several potential reasons for these differences. First, although risks may be associated with the stress immigrant families experience from immigration and acculturation, immigrant families may possess a number of protective factors that are less present in native families. Dettlaff and Earner (2007) found that immigrant families were more likely to have a number of potential protective factors, including a two-parent household, a stable primary caregiver, helpful neighbors, and a safe community environment. Second, immigrant families may possess a number of protective factors that this study did not measure; such as the determination to take an expensive and uncertain journey to a foreign country in order to improve the lives of their children. Despite strong economic adversity, immigrant families in this study were significantly less likely to experience high family stress, actively use drugs, exhibit poor parenting skills, or have recent histories of arrest. This may be due to the strong sense of initiative and personal

family responsibility that many immigrant parents possess. Finally, immigration status may itself act as a social control agent, especially for the undocumented, as an arrest can result in deportation and separation from their children. By taking into consideration the risk factors of these groups there seems to be a better understanding of the differences among second and third generation (native born) Latinos as compared to First generation (immigrants) and how these differences relate to acculturation.

Chapter 3: Child Rearing Practices among US born Latinos and Immigrant Latinos as Compared to Anglo Culture

This chapter will discuss the different child rearing practices for the separate groups of Latinos as compared to Anglo Culture. There are certain factors in today's Anglo Culture that have altered family functioning. For example, an industrialized impersonal climate has increased mobility, as wage earners follow the expansion or relocation of business in search of satisfying, better paying or continuing positions. Moves frequently promote further isolation of families and emphases on faster more competitive lifestyles produces stress (Crosson-Tower, 2010). The stresses of this high pressured life have caused the family to make adjustments. Second the number of two-parent families (mother, father, and children) is now decreasing, as the single-parent family becomes more common (Crosson-Tower, 2010). The societal values of the majority culture that are passed down generations are values such as independence and high academic achievement. The parenting style that is most emphasized in Anglo culture is Authoritative parenting, which balances clear, high parental demands with emotional responsiveness and recognition of child autonomy. This parenting style is one of the most consistent family predictors of competence from early childhood through adolescence. In a CDC

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Healthy Parenting Cultural Norms study they took Eight focus groups that were conducted with parents from each of five cultural groups: African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians, and non-Hispanic Whites (total number of focus group discussions=40). Each discussion group consisted of 6-9 parents. All parents supported physical punishment, although there were some differences across cultural groups regarding the context of its use. All parent groups wanted their children to be respectful, obedient, and polite; to share and to do well in school; and expressed displeasure with their children being disrespectful, disobedient, selfish, dishonest, or having temper tantrums. All groups also agreed that when children misbehaved, disciplinary tactics such as signaling disapproval, explaining, and setting limits should be attempted before resorting to more punitive practices such as isolation, taking away privileges, or spanking. The results of this study points out how all though there are cultural differences between the families they seem to be in agreement in certain expectations for their children as well as to the extent that they would go in disciplining their child. Most importantly they all have their own reasoning behind their choice of action toward their children. According to Straus (1991), using corporal punishment is a generalized parenting practice in the United States. It is so common, in fact, that extending the definition of child abuse to include spankings would implicate the vast majority of American parents.

Particularly for Latinos living in a society very different from their own can make it inevitable for their families to deal with particular stressors that can disrupt the foundation of their family functioning. The Latino family's customs, beliefs, and values are an essential part of their identity. The persistent attempt of parents to preserve these may cause conflict within the parent-child relationship. It is important to acknowledge that there are different factors to consider within Latinos such as differing cultural ancestries (Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican) of

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Hispanic families in the United States, varying socioeconomic status (SES) levels among the families that have been studied and the potential effects of acculturation that can have an impact on child-rearing practices (Fernandez and Cortez, 2010 cited by Fox & Solis-Camara, 1997). Their cultural values are strongly incorporated into their parenting practices (Calzado, Fernandez, & Cortez, 2010). The process through which parents transmit these cultural values, beliefs, traditions, and behavioral norms to their children is referred to as ethnic-racial socialization (Highes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006). Such cultural values include: *Respeto* that has been defined as respect, deference, and obedience to elders, (Fernandez and Cortez ,2010 cited by Marin & Marin, 1991) *Familismo* that is defined as the importance of immediate and extended family, (Fernandez and Cortez ,2010 cited by Comas-Diaz, 1993), *Personalismo* that promotes interpersonal harmony by emphasizing the importance of attention to the thoughts and wishes of others and the importance of personal relationships (Fernandez and Cortez ,2010 cited by Bernal Shapiro, 1996), and *Machismo* a term derived from macho, which means male. The real macho possesses many traits of honor, dignity, and courage exemplifying masculine aggressiveness and sexual virility. The negative extremes of machismo center on absolute power in the form of violence and exploitation. Most parents neither expect nor wish to be friends with their children, although they enjoy each others company. Child rearing practices reflect this stress on hierarchies. Punishment, shaming belittling, deception, promises and threats are sometimes used in response to children's misbehavior (Fernandez and Cortez, 2010 cited by McGoldrich et al 1993). Qualitive data from Calzado, Fernandez and Cortez (2010) suggests that Dominican and Mexican mothers purposefully engage in ethnic-racial socialization (the process through which parents transmit cultural values as well as beliefs, traditions, and behavioral norms to their children). The ultimate aim of the study by Calzado,

Fernandez and Cortez (2010) was to use a culturally informed model of Latino parenting to reflect the way in which parents socialize children to follow the culturally bound expectations of behavior and to gain knowledge between parenting and child development in Latino families. The participants in this study were mothers born in Mexico, Foreign born Dominican mothers, and U.S. born Dominican mothers. The results indicated that the most important values for Latin mothers were *familismo*, *religion*, and *respeto* (Calzado, Fernandez, & Cortez, 2010). To socialize Latino children in behaviors that reflect the cultural value of *respeto* (i.e., obedience, deference, decorum, and public behavior), parents select parenting practices (e.g., corporal punishment, reasoning) that best teach children about these behavioral expectations (Calzado, Fernandez, & Cortez, 2010). In regards to *respeto*, a mother who wishes to teach her child to obey without question may select to use a spank as a means of most effectively reinforcing this socialization message; in this case, the mother's use of spanking and the socialization message that the child must obey without question are both regarded as predictors of the child's behavioral functioning (Calzado, Fernandez, & Cortez, 2010). Mothers in this study reported that in contrast to parents in their countries of origin, they were more likely to balance *respeto* with communication (Calzado, Fernandez, & Cortez, 2010). According to Calzado, Fernandez, and Cortez these findings can be indicative of parental acculturation and the attempt to balance the opposing values and practices from the mainstream culture. The role of Latino specifically Mexican fathers in the parenting of their children has also been studied by Fox and Solis-Camara (1997) in comparison to Caucasian fathers from the United States. Although this study relied on self report by the parents the findings of the study were that there were no significant differences between the parenting practices-developmental expectations, discipline, and nurturing-of Mexican and U.S. fathers of very young children. There were significant parenting differences

between lower and higher SES fathers. Lower SES fathers were less nurturing; they used more

frequent corporal and verbal discipline strategies (spanking, yelling) than did their higher SES

counterparts (Fox & Solis-Camara, 1997). These findings suggest that the demands of parenting

are similar across cultures accept when it came to SES between groups. The reason this may be

the case is because families of lower SES may be less equipped emotionally as a result of the

stress produced from the lack of means. It could also be that they may have never had their own

needs met as children and are unable to understand and help their own children just as their

parents before them. The values of respect may be more important then understanding their

children's needs, it might be more important for the children to be obedient and respectful

toward the parents without question, especially in a case when parents struggle to put food on the

table for their children. Surviving day to day and providing for their families could be the

number one priority for parents within lower socio-economic status; they do not have the

opportunity or the privilege to be more a part of their children's lives. Another study focusing

on the impact of culture on child rearing was conducted by Ferrari (2002) where cultural values

of familismo scale, a machismo scale and a valuing children scale was used on various parents of

different cultural backgrounds such as Hispanics, African American and European American.

They were investigated to evaluate how these cultural variables contribute to parental behaviors

and how they interact with the parent's history of maltreatment to predict parent's use of

physical and verbal punishment as well as nurturing behaviors towards their children (Ferrari,

2002). The study had the following objectives: (1) to test for the relationships between the

independent (cultural) variables of abuse and neglect that the parents' experienced as a child, the

parents' endorsement of machismo ideals, the value that parents held for children, and the

parents' attitudes of familism, with the dependent (parenting) variables of parents' severity

ratings of vignettes of abuse and neglect, use of verbal and/or physical punishment, and use of

reasoning and nurturance in the parenting of their own children; and (2) to test the hypothesis

that the cultural variables of familism, machismo, and valuing children would interact with the

severity of the parents' childhood trauma to buffer or strengthen the dependent variable of use of

physical punishment (Ferrari, 2002). The results from the Ferrari (2002) study indicated that

familism, for all parents, was associated with a lower frequency of nurturing behaviors by the

parents which they concluded can be accounted for by the presence of extended family members

who help care for the children. Machismo predicted more use of physical punishment from

fathers, but not for mothers controlling for ethnicity. The effect of machismo upon the use of

physical punishment was strong. Machismo predicted the use of physical punishment, while

controlling for ethnicity, and accounted for a significant 8% of the variance. For all parents, the

value assigned to children was related to the seriousness ratings abuse and neglect depicted in the

vignettes. Correlations found that valuing children more was associated with lower tolerance for

mistreating behaviors. The study did have its limitations in that it used college students that

were parents. It does however give insight into diverse parenting styles (Ferrari, 2002).

Looking at child rearing practices in Latin American countries is a challenge because

child abuse in Latin America and Mexico in particular has been understudied. Mexican parents'

endorsement of physical punishment has been uncovered in other research (Fry, 1993). Fry's

comparative study of two Mexican indigenous Zapotec communities that differ in their parenting

practices highlights the central role of beliefs and the socialization goals of the parents, even

beyond the influence of socioeconomic pressures. While both communities shared similar

socioeconomic circumstances they diverged in their beliefs about childbearing. The Mexican

family promotes positive and pro-social values among its members such as solidarity, family

loyalty, and friendship; however this same Mexican family also contains directive, authoritarian, and punitive tendencies in family relations. These patterns have been found even in parents born in Mexico but rearing their children in the United States, who foster greater adherence to parental authority compared to Mexican-American parents born in the United States (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998). These parenting beliefs and practices sometimes result in violent, abusive episodes against children, especially when stressor events combine with the normative hierarchical structure of families (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998). This relates to the values that were discussed earlier in that the structure of the family and what they find as important can also negatively affect their children.

Particularly for mothers who are Latinas, health and pediatric researchers revealed that several maternal practices and birth outcomes are positive for immigrants, then decline among second- and third-generation Latinos. Immigrant Mexican women, for instance, engage in healthy prenatal practices and breast feed their babies at higher rates than mothers in other ethnic groups. They give birth to healthy babies, although subgroup differences are apparent even after taking social class into account (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998 as cited by Escarce et al. 2006). The infant mortality rate for Mexican newborns was lower than for Whites in 2000, yet the rate for babies of Puerto Rican descent was higher compared with Whites (National Center for Health Statistics, 2003). An explanation for these differences could be that the social structure of Latino families varies across subgroups. The share of families that remain intact, headed by two parents, is comparable between Mexican American and White families but dips lower for families of Puerto Rican descent. Marital and cohabitation rates are declining among second- and third generation mothers for most Latino subgroups, especially those in poor neighborhoods (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998). Recent work illuminates how parenting

practices and cognitive demands placed on young children differ among Latino subgroups. One study found that an index of mothers' pre-literacy practices was almost half a standard deviation higher in the homes of English-dominant Latina mothers (often middle class), compared with the homes of Spanish-dominant mothers (Fuller et al., 2009). Galindo and Fuller (2010) explore class disparities in this issue, finding that social competencies of Latino children from poor families, as rated by kindergarten teachers, are significantly lower than for those from middle-class Latino homes, although variability in social skills within both subgroups predicts growth in learning during the kindergarten year (Fuller et al., 2009).

From the research that has been looked at in essence it seems as though the importance of tradition, values, and family is evident among all groups. The only main difference is the concept of interdependence and how it diminished over time in second and third generations. The childrearing practices among Latinos are based on these values and traditions, which do not necessarily condone the use of extreme punishment that will intentionally hurt their children. Their authoritarian style may be seen as to rigid, but other parts of their parenting are not taken into consideration, such as the possibility that although this is their parenting style it is accompanied by a lot of nurturance and love from parents which can be a mediating factor for this style of parenting. There are many other factors to take into consideration in these families such as outside variables that affect the stability of the family. These variables which are also seen as risk factors for the maltreatment can include; poverty, immigration status, lack of community support, discrimination or racism. They impact how Latinos perceive the world that they live in. It can make it difficult to be an exemplary parent when there is so much more that they must confront in their daily lives. In essence the effects on child discipline and maltreatment vary by generation socio-economic status and ethnic origin.

Chapter 4: Consequences of Child Maltreatment on Development

This chapter focuses on the development of the maltreated child, the consequences of the maltreatment including the consequences for Latinos. The development of a child from birth to adulthood is a complex journey filled with many obstacles. As this development progresses children are faced with issues of trust, getting their needs met, making friends, developing a positive self image, setting priorities and other tasks that prepare them for the adult world (Crosson-Tower, 2010). Healthy development requires constant guidance and support on the part of the adult, something not always available to neglected and abused children. According to Crosson-Tower (2010), in studies with abused and neglected children, researchers and practitioners have found two types of parenting that affect the development of the abused child. Crosson-Tower (2010) explains that "The first type of parent-child relationship has unstable, immature parents, whose own childhood needs are still unmet, and are faced with children who demand their time and limited psychological energies. The result of this is impaired bonding, emotional deprivation, and eventually role reversal as these parents place their children in the position of meeting their needs. Neglectful as well as some sexually and physically abusive parents often exhibit this type of parent-child relationship. For the physically abused child, this deprivation in parenting has a more profound effect then the physical abuse itself." (p.47) "The second type of parent-child relationship pattern is more likely to be exhibited by physically and sometimes sexually abusive parents. In the physically abusive family, the child is wanted and expected, but the desire carries with it a complex set of extremely high expectations. It can be the child's failure to meet these expectations that creates anger and frustration that can result in

abuse. For sexually abusive parents, the abuse often results from the parents' disillusionment with themselves and others in their lives, whom they perceive as having failed to meet their expectations. The unmet needs that these parents harbor but hide so well, surface and return to the child for satisfaction of these needs. Thus, the idealized child becomes the target for the sexual exploitation." (p.47). Crosson-Tower also explains that "by age one, the poorly parented baby shows little interest in toys or exploration in general. The ways in which children use toys mirror what they see in others. Children who have nothing to observe and who are not stimulated through mutual play, lack the ability to use toys or to show interest in playing. Many abused adults demonstrate the inability to play and enjoy life. Children also demonstrate frozen (or passive) watchfulness, whereby the child lies immobile, watching the actions of others. These children have learned that the world is not predictable or friendly. They learn that sometimes they are struck for their behavior and that other times that same behavior is ignored. Therefore, children from an abusive and neglectful home develop an uncanny ability of reading their environment. They become acutely aware of stimuli and what they mean. Unfortunately, this child's ability to read the environment is so basic for survival at home is a detriment in learning situations, such as when they enter school. (p.55) "By age four abused and neglected children demonstrate difficulty in relating to others, especially in the area of trust and language development is not comparable to children their age. They also have a low self-esteem and often fears and phobias". (p.57) "By age eight the abused child may not understand causal relationships. For example, it is common for a particular action or even one day to elicit a specific response from the parents, but the next day, the same action caused a totally different result. Thus, the child's sense of predictability has been distorted, and an inability to understand some of the most basic learning principles has been created (p.58). "By age twelve the abused or

neglected child whose parents have difficulty in nurturing is probably well established as the nurturer by now. The parents have long since indicated their expectations that the child assume their role and meet their needs. The unsure child then becomes a parentified child (one who takes the parents place as a caregiver) thus cares for the younger siblings and assumes household tasks". (p. 59) A "parentified child" especially the preadolescent girl, is particularly vulnerable to the onset of sexual abuse after taking on more and more household responsibilities culminating in the role reversal of her mother. In adolescents control and self-mastery are issues for all maltreated children. "The child who has received inadequate parenting may not have learned to internalize control. Neglecting families do not provide sufficient role models for standards and moral development. Overly, rigid, abusive families maintain the locus of control that makes it difficult for the adolescent to do anything but mimic their rigidity. For physically abused adolescents control has been ensured through violence. Separation is difficult for the adolescent whose needs have not been met. The break from parents is often abrupt through running away, early pregnancy, premature marriage, and total alienation." (Crosson-Tower, 2010, p.61)

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in 2008 Hispanic children and White children had rates of 9.8 and 8.6 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity, respectively for maltreatment. In 2008, an estimated 1,740 children ages 0 to 17 died from abuse and neglect (rate of 2.3 per 100,000 children), 80 percent of deaths occurred among children younger than age 4; 10 percent among 4-7 year-olds; 4 percent among 8-11 year-olds; 4 percent among 12-15 year-olds; and 2 percent among 16-17 year-olds. In terms of race 39% of deaths were non-Hispanic White children, 30% of deaths were African-American children, 16% of deaths were Hispanic children. From these current statistics it seems that for Hispanics/Latinos deaths from maltreatment are not at such a high rate as compared to non-Hispanic White children and African

American Children, but there is a higher rate of maltreatment for Hispanics as compared to non-Hispanic white children.

In the context of cultural change and its effect on development, children may not only experience parental acculturation stress and related dysfunction, but also become exposed to two, sometimes conflicting, socializing systems. Differences and conflicts between parental expectations (i.e., goals for child socialization and perceptions of normative and diverse behavior), and those of agents in the host culture (e.g., teachers, social workers, lawyers, physicians, community workers, well-baby nurses, psychologists, policy makers, etc.), are seen as a major risk factor in child development (Chau, 1992)). These cultural differences are a potential source of misunderstandings, misinterpretations, tensions and clashes between parents in cultural transition and the professional agents of assistance in the host culture. Such conflicts and clashes are seen as having potentially long-term detrimental effects on family functioning and cohesion on the prospects for successful integration into the host culture and on the development of children's self-identity (Ritchie, 2002). For first generation Latinos, adjusting to United States mainstream culture, along with poverty and residence in inner-city communities, may further predispose their children to risk for negative developmental outcomes (Calzado, Fernandez, & Cortez, 2010).

Maltreatment research on Latinos has typically focused on between-group comparisons among Latino and non-Hispanic Caucasian samples, with some investigations finding few ethnic differences in adjustment following abuse (Hatcher, Maschi, Morgen, & Toldson, 2009)) and others reporting that children and adults of Hispanic descent may suffer more serious symptomatology following abuse (Hatcher, Maschi, Morgen, & Toldson, 2009). However, this grouping together of individuals from particular cultural backgrounds to compare one ethnic

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group to another precludes a more thorough analysis of within group ethnically-based factors

that may play a role in adjustment to childhood maltreatment (Fontes, 1995). One such factor is

acculturation, or the degree to which Latinos identify with Anglo-American culture as opposed

to their culture of origin. As with other factors related to ethnicity, investigations examining the

effects of acculturation on various aspects of adult adjustment have yielded mixed results. For

example, one study found no relationship between acculturation and depressive symptomatology

among Latinos (Cuéllar & Roberts, 1997), while another revealed that acculturative stress may

increase levels of depression among Hispanics (Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991). To date,

however, no studies have looked specifically at the potential impact of acculturation on outcomes

for adult survivors of child maltreatment. Over all it seems that the consequences of child

maltreatment among Latino children has been understudied in addition to the effects of culture

on resiliency among maltreated children. Resilience refers to a child's ability to adapt effectively

in the face of threats to development (Crosson-Tower, 2010, as cited in Berke, 2009) This is why

resiliency is an important factor to consider when studying maltreatment, especially Latino and

other minority children who in the case of maltreatment in the home have to adjust to the outside

culture and are still able to overcome their difficulties and become successful adults.

Child Protective Services and Latinos

Within the child welfare system, the percentage of Latino children confirmed as victims

of maltreatment has risen from 14.2% in 2000 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

[USDHH], 2002) to 20.8% in 2007 (USDHH, 2009). While this increase represents a rising

population of Latino children involved in this system, the portion of these children who are

immigrants or children of immigrants is unknown, as these data are not collected uniformly at

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the state or national levels. Again as a result, little is known about the proportion of Latino

children who are children of immigrants, their characteristics, or the risk factors associated with

maltreatment that are present in their families. Additionally, little is known about how these

factors differ from those in Latino families who are native to the United States. Among Latino

children who come to the attention of the child welfare system, 64.0% have a parent who was

born in the United States, while 36.0% have a parent who is foreign-born. In total, Latino

children living with a foreign-born parent comprise 5.2% of all children involved with the child

welfare system. Among Latino children of immigrants, nearly 4 out of 5 (79.6%) are U.S.-born

(Dettlaff and Earner, 2007). The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being found

that Children living with an immigrant Latino parent were significantly more likely to be living

in a two-parent home with their biological father present than children living with a native Latino

parent. Biological fathers were present in 40.6% of homes with an immigrant parent, compared

to only 18.6% of homes with a native parent. However, households with a native parent were

significantly more likely to have a grandparent present in the home. Children with native-born

parents were significantly more likely to experience a change in primary caregiver in the

previous 12 months compared to children living with immigrant parents. Encompassing culture

in child protection is a necessary component of child protection work. The importance of

examining the cultural background of families in cultural transition will provides insight into

how ecological contexts influence parents' socialization goals and practices at various levels,

especially in the midst of a dramatic cultural transition and the current anti-immigration laws that

further alienate this population. Service providers also need to consider how to utilize the unique

positive attributes that Latino immigrant and Latino families possess in order to formulate

effective service plans that reduce risk to children, ensure safety, and facilitate permanency.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the most recent census, the minority-majority transition is a reality. Anglo Americans will not retain their majority status, and projections are that the minority-majority transition will occur at an earlier date for children in the United States. Child maltreatment occurs among Latinos just like any other culture. The differences among generations can account for the different parenting practices because of acculturation, but there is not enough evidence to suggest that children of Latinos are more at risk then other groups for maltreatment. The higher rates of apparent abuse are more likely to be due to the misinterpretation of cultural practices that are seen as neglectful or abusive, but that may not have negative effects on children. Children of Latinos require like all other children to be understood, this includes their cultural beliefs and practices. They deserve to be protected when needed without biases getting in the way. A deeper examination of acculturation needs to be done so as to shed light on the role that affiliation with Anglo versus Latino culture may play in moderating the long-term correlates of childhood maltreatment. Ethnic and cultural diversity is an important topic of investigation in child maltreatment research, in part, because factors associated with ethnicity and culture may play a role in moderating the long-term impact of abuse. Ethnically based variables such as religiosity, social and family support, coping strategies, and treatment seeking, have the potential to help or hinder long-term adjustment to maltreatment. For instance, religion may help to provide a protective environment and encourage a perception of community support that may decrease psychological effects (Clemmons, DeLillo, Martinez, De Gue, & Jeffcott, 2003). Cross cultural understanding of child abuse and neglect allows an enriched viewpoint regarding the etiology of child maltreatment and will benefit the development of proper solutions of different levels such as protection, treatment, and prevention.

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