Familism and Neighborhood Cohesion as Sources of Family Resilience among Low-Income Mexican Descent Adolescents
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**Literature Review**

Poverty disproportionately affects Latina/o youth (Cohn, 2012), leading to increased exposure to economic stress and neighborhood hazards. Yet some research finds that Latina/o immigrant families living in poverty exhibit resilience to such adversities (Conger et al., 2012).

- **Familismo**, or familism, is a protective factor among Latina/o adolescents, shaping behaviors by prioritizing family relationships, interdependence, family social support, and emotional closeness (Cuellar, Arnold, & Gonzalez et al., 1995; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994).
- **Neighborhood Cohesion** is a protective factor that appears to buffer negative influences of neighborhood hazards (Coleman, 1988; Sampson et al., 1998).

The **Integrative Model** for the development of minority children (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996) argues that youth navigate impoverished neighborhoods by tapping into positive resources in their families and neighborhoods.

**Hypothesis:** Higher levels of neighborhood cohesion and familism will be associated with higher resilience.

**Methods**

- Youth participants (n=127) in a low-income neighborhood (65% of children living in poverty) (Census Bureau, 2014) participated in the survey (M=15.7, SD=2.06, 53% female, 95% Mexican descent 5% other, 16% immigrants, 37% children of immigrants, 47% later generation).
- Measures included familism (Romero & Ruiz, 2007), resilience (Unger & Liebenberg, 2011), economic stress (Conger & Elder, 1994), neighborhood cohesion (Buckner, 1988; Seidman et al, 1998), and neighborhood hazards (Seidman et al., 1998).

**Results**

- Using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, higher levels of familism (β=.40, p=.000) and neighborhood cohesion (β=.17, p=.040) were associated with higher levels of resilience, F(1,112)=6.19, R²=.30, p=.000.
- The interactions between familism and neighborhood hazards (β=.20, p=.020) and between familism and neighborhood cohesion (β=-.16, p=.040) were statistically significant (see Figures 1 & 2).

**Conclusion**

- Higher levels of **familism** significantly protected youth resilience from higher neighborhood hazards.
- **Neighborhood cohesion** protected youth resilience at low levels of familism.
- These findings provide new evidence for the protective role of neighborhoods in tandem with familism for low-income Mexican descent families.
- The implications of this study are that strong positive family connections play a critical role in the positive development of low income Mexican descent youth.
- Future studies will need to further investigate the protective neighborhood factors that exist within low-income communities.

**Contact Info**

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