

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 (Cúellar, 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).

Figure 1. Interaction between Familism and Neighborhood Hazards by Resilience

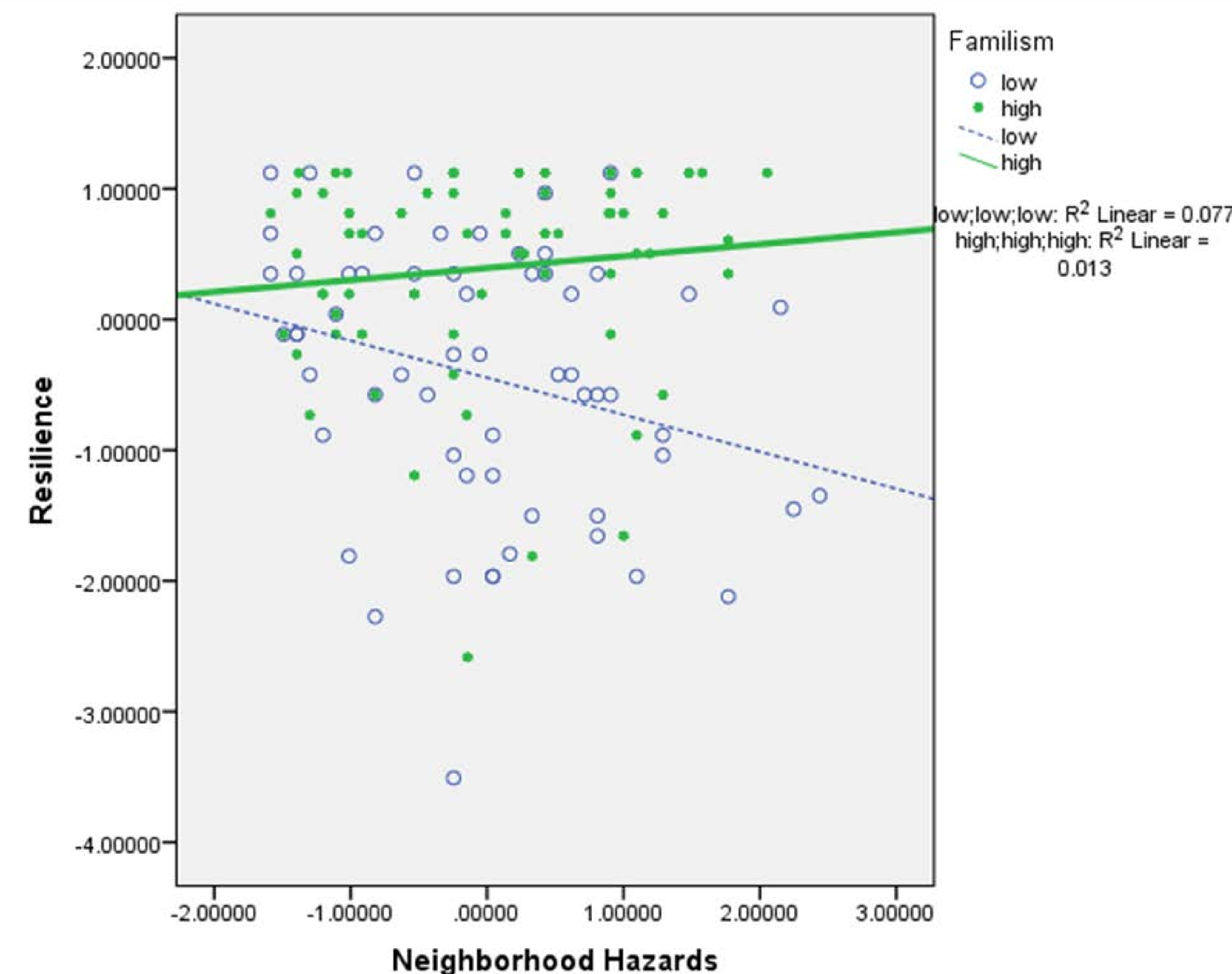
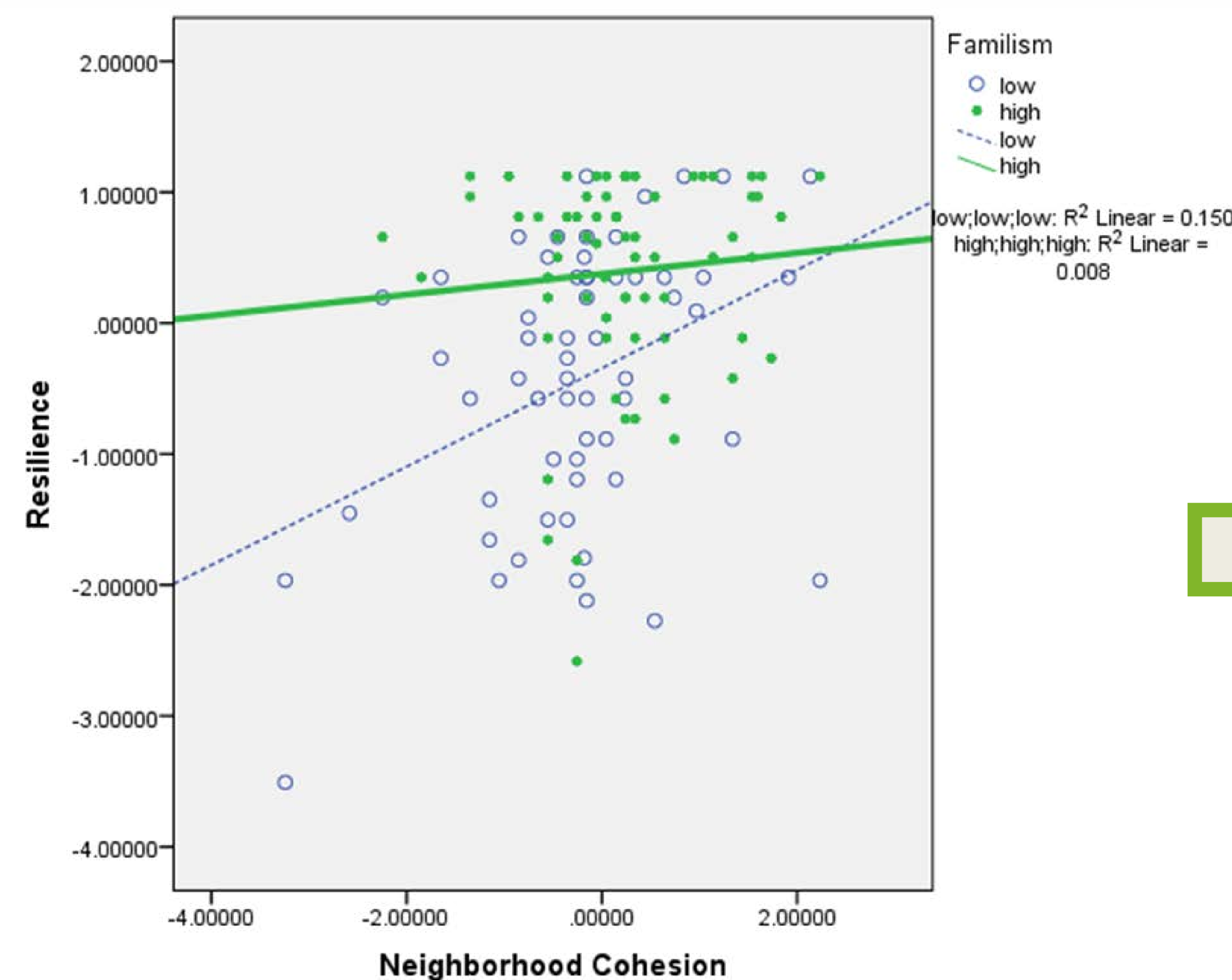


Figure 2. Interaction between Familism and Neighborhood Cohesion by Resilience



Results

- Using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, higher levels of familism ($\beta=.40$, $p=.000$) and neighborhood cohesion ($\beta=.17$, $p=.040$) were associated with higher levels of resilience, $F(1,112)=6.19$, $R^2=.30$, $p=.000$.
- The interactions between familism and neighborhood hazards ($\beta=.20$, $p=.020$) and between familism and neighborhood cohesion ($\beta=-.16$, $p=.040$) 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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