

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES**

**DISSERTATION DEFENSE FOR**

**JENNY PADILLA**

**TITLE: THE DEVELOPMENT AND CORRELATES OF MEXICAN-ORIGIN  
YOUTH'S TIME WITH PARENTS FROM ADOLESCENCE INTO YOUNG  
ADULTHOOD**

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**PLACE:** 101 HHD Building

**Areas of Specialization:** Family Development, Developmental Research Methodology

**ABSTRACT**

Guided by three interrelated perspectives (family systems, developmental, and cultural ecological), my dissertation examines the development and correlates of Mexican-origin youth's time spent with parents from adolescence to young adulthood, advancing the literature on family dynamics in several key ways. First, I direct attention to the complexity of families by examining dyadic parent-youth and triadic parent-youth-sibling relationship experiences as well as characteristics of the larger family such as gender that may influence family dynamics. Second, because families are dynamic – changing over time as a result of changing circumstances and

changes in families, I utilize 8-year longitudinal data to examine the development and potentially bidirectional correlates of Mexican-origin youth's time spent with mothers and fathers from adolescence into young adulthood, a largely uncharted area of study. And finally, answering the call of cultural ecological theorists to investigate the substantial variation that exists within ethnic groups, I use an ethnic homogenous design to study the correlates of parent-youth shared time within Mexican-origin families.

Study 1 charts the longitudinal trajectories of Mexican-origin youth's time with mothers and fathers from early adolescence to young adulthood and tests two models regarding the associations between parent-youth shared time and youth adjustment: (a) mother's and fathers' time predicts youth adjustment; and (b) youth adjustment problems predict mother-youth and father-youth shared time. Study 2 examines whether siblings' differential time with parents positively predicted relatively more parent-youth similarity relative to a sibling, and/or whether youth's relative similarity to parents predicted their spending more time with parents as compared to their sibling. This dissertation further explored whether mother-youth and father-youth associations differed as a function of youth's and siblings' gender.

Study 1 results demonstrated that youth's time with mothers and with fathers declined from early adolescence to young adulthood, and further, that the developmental course of parent-youth shared time varied by youth gender and gender constellation of the sibling dyad, such that fathers spent more time with sons as compared to daughters and both parents spent more time with youth in mixed-gender than those in same-gender dyads. Results also indicated that mother-youth shared time neither predicted nor was predicted by youth adjustment. Father-youth shared time did not predict later adjustment, however, youth from mixed gender sibling dyads who reported more risky behaviors spent more time with fathers at the next occasion of measurement. Study 2 results revealed that mothers' differential time with siblings was not associated with siblings' relative cultural similarity with mothers in either direction. For fathers, siblings' relative cultural similarity did not predict differential time with siblings, however, youth who spent more time with fathers compared to a sibling were more culturally similar to fathers than was their sibling at the next occasion of measurement.

Findings highlight the need to incorporate both mothers and fathers as well as youth and sibling gender in studies of family processes. Such structure characteristics proved important, both in understanding patterns of change over time in parental involvement as well as the links between involvement and both youth adjustment and cultural similarity to parents. For instance, differences in time spent with parents as a function of gender constellation of the sibling dyad suggest that the presence of same-gender offspring may pull in both mothers and fathers to engage more with their opposite-gender offspring. Further, highlighting the dynamic nature of family systems, such findings demonstrate the importance of utilizing longitudinal data to illuminate patterns of change and directions of effect linking family processes and youth adjustment and development.