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**Daily Family Interactions among Young
Adults from Latino, Asian, and European
Backgrounds**

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Abstract

A total of 220 young adults ($M_{\text{age}}=25.5$ years) from Latin American, East Asian, Filipino, and European backgrounds reported their family interactions, daily activities, and psychological well being for fourteen days. Although young adults reported a lower frequency of family interactions than what has been observed during adolescence, leisure time and conflict with parents and siblings continued to have significance for psychological well being. Time spent in work, school, and other relationships made it difficult for young adults to spend time being with or helping family members. Other findings suggested a potentially higher level of family importance and connectedness among young adults from Filipino backgrounds as compared to their peers.

Key words: youth/emergent adulthood; adolescence/family interaction; family/ethnicity; culture/race/ethnicity; family diversity

Daily Family Interactions among Young Adults from Latino, Asian, and European Backgrounds

The transition to adulthood represents a unique period in the development of family relationships. The mid-twenties are an age when individuals engage in educational activities, occupational endeavors, and social relationships that can lead them physically and psychologically away from their families of origin. Yet in contrast to the voluminous literature on the adolescent years, there is limited research on a developmental period that arguably presents more challenges to family relationships. The lack of research is particularly true for young adults from Asian and Latin American backgrounds, whose cultural norms and postsecondary activities could result in family relationships that are significantly different than those of their peers from European backgrounds.

Family Interactions during Young Adulthood

Within contemporary American society, the period of the early to middle twenties has been characterized as a time of increased independence and focus on the pathways individuals will follow in their adult lives (Arnett, 1998). Some young adults continue to attend school, whether because of delayed progress through college or because of their desire to obtain advanced graduate, legal, or medical training. Many other individuals, including those who never pursued postsecondary education or already received their degrees, are beginning occupational careers and working either in part or full time jobs. Although marriage has increasingly become delayed such that it occurs at an average age of 26 years for women and 27 for men (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006), more than half of young adults are either married or involved in long-term romantic relationships, and two-thirds have lived with a romantic partner at least once (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1995; Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2005). Collectively, these activities create a sense among those in their early to middle twenties that this

period of life is a time to focus on developing self reliance, financial independence, and responsibility for one's own decision making (Arnett, 2000).

The educational, occupational, and relational activities of this period in life mean that many children begin to figuratively and literally leave their families of origin as part of their transition into adulthood. This transition process should have important consequences for the nature of family relationships, presenting even more challenges to the maintenance of family connectedness than the adolescent period. Yet the amount of research on family relationships during young adulthood pales when compared to the large body of work that has focused on the teenage years. The few studies that have been done paint a picture of continued connection between young adults and their families, but in somewhat different forms than in earlier years. Despite their increased independence from the family, most young adults continue to see parents as an important source of guidance for issues such as education and occupational careers, although the evidence for this is based upon young adults from European backgrounds (O'Connor, Allen, Bell, & Hauser, 1996; Young & Ferguson, 1979). In addition, there is a trend toward an increased sense of obligation to give back to the family and support family members during this period as compared to adolescence that is evident among young adults from Asian, Latin American, and European backgrounds (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). Yet individual differences do exist and there is a strong continuity such that relational quality during the teenage years predicts the types of family bonds that exist in young adulthood, although it is unknown whether this is true across different ethnic and cultural groups (Aquilino, 2004).

In order to enrich our understanding of the nature of family relationships during young adulthood, it is important to go beyond family members' overall appraisals of closeness and connection and to examine their daily interactions. Studying the interactions between family

members on a daily basis is a good way to assess the behavioral manifestations of their relationships, as has been done during the adolescent years (e.g., Larson & Richards, 1994). Behavioral interactions are critical yet understudied aspects of relationships that are likely to be more dependent upon the activities and life circumstances of the young adults than young adults' assessments of closeness or connection. In addition, studying interactions could shed light upon the variety of ways in which relationship dimensions such as closeness or conflict occur. For example, do young adults spend actual time with their families of origin or do they try to maintain contact through the use of phone or electronic mail? Finally, behavioral measures can reveal group differences that might not be observed in overall appraisals of family relationships. For example, in a study of high school students, Hardway and Fuligni (2006) reported that even though adolescents from Mexican and Chinese backgrounds reported a similar overall sense of obligation to the family, those with Mexican backgrounds spent more time interacting with and helping their parents and siblings on a daily basis.

In the present study, we employed the daily diary method to examine the family interactions of young adults aged 24 to 28 years from Latin American, East Asian, Filipino, and European backgrounds. Over 200 young adults completed a daily checklist on which they reported their family interactions, activity involvement, and psychological well being each night for a period of two weeks. Asking participants to report experiences every day minimizes the amount of error that occurs in the retrospective reporting of events (Bolger, Davis, & Raffaelli, 2003). This method also allows researchers to estimate whether specific events, behaviors, and feelings co-occur with one another on a daily basis (e.g., do young adults feel more positive or negative on days in which they spend more time with their families?). In addition, researchers can estimate the extent to which the co-occurrence of daily-level phenomena varies across

individuals and groups (e.g., is the link between family time and psychological well being greater for young adults from Latin American backgrounds than those from European backgrounds?).

We examined four aspects of daily family interactions thought to be relevant for young adults from Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds: leisure time with family, distal communication by phone or electronic mail, providing assistance to other family members, and family conflict. Leisure time and distal communication represent the amount of time young adults spend simply being with and talking to their parents and siblings and assessing both allowed us to examine whether young adults who are unable to be with their families due to living arrangements or other activities still attempt to maintain contact and communication. Family assistance, such as taking care of younger siblings or providing other kinds of help to family members, is another form of family connection that more salient for members of families with Latin American and Asian backgrounds as compared to those from families with European backgrounds (Chao & Tseng, 2002; García Coll & Vázquez García, 1995). Finally, family conflict is a commonly studied aspect of family relationships throughout development, and is thought to be particularly relevant for the adjustment of adolescents and young adults from a variety of ethnic backgrounds as they negotiate increased autonomy and independence within the family (Laursen & Collins, 1994; Steinberg, 1990).

Ethnic, Generational, and Gender Differences

Our predictions for ethnic and generational differences in these aspects of family interactions were based upon prior findings during the adolescent period as well as a consideration of group differences in life circumstances during adulthood. The greater cultural emphasis placed upon family togetherness and obligation within many Asian and Latin

American families might suggest that young adults from these families would spend more time being with and assisting their families as compared to those from families with European backgrounds (Chao & Tseng, 2002; García Coll & Vázquez García, 1995). Yet prior research has suggested the tendency for many young adults from East Asian backgrounds to attend four year universities away from home leads to a lower sense of family obligation as compared to their peers from Filipino and Latin American backgrounds, who are more likely to live at home and provide financial assistance to the family (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). Therefore, we expected those from Filipino and Latin American backgrounds to spend the most leisure time and assistance time with their families of origin whereas young adults from East Asian backgrounds were expected to be more similar to those from European backgrounds in leisure and assistance time.

Previous research during adolescence has suggested that despite expectations that family conflict would be lower in families with Asian and Latin American backgrounds due to a greater emphasis upon parental authority, adolescents in these families report similar levels of conflict as their peers from European backgrounds (Fuligni, 1998). We expected the same to be true and that there would be no ethnic differences in conflict during young adulthood in the current study. Finally, it was unclear what to expect in terms of ethnic differences in communication due to limited previous research. The one possibility is that family communication would be lower among young adults from East Asian backgrounds due to a potentially greater formality in the relationship that leads to less frequent discussions about personal issues and concerns (Cooper, Baker, Polichar, & Welsh, 1993), but we did not have definitive hypotheses for other ethnic differences.

The majority of young adults from Latino and Asian backgrounds come from immigrant families, and generational status could play an important role in the family interactions examined in the current study. Immigrant parents often try to promote more traditional types of parent-child interactions, such as higher levels of family assistance from children and a stronger hierarchy and emphasis on harmony that minimizes family conflict (Zhou, 1997). Generational status, therefore, could both produce variability among young adults from Latino and Asian backgrounds and potentially account for any observed ethnic differences, particularly in comparison to those from European backgrounds. Yet the only consistent generational differences in family interactions observed in previous research has been in the somewhat greater likelihood of adolescents and young adults from immigrant families to provide support and assistance to their families of origin (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Hardway & Fuligni, 2006). We expected to obtain similar results in this study, and that there would be generational similarity in the other aspects of family interactions.

In terms of gender, previous research has suggested that females maintain an overall higher level of closeness and connection with their families during both adolescence and adulthood (Collins & Russell, 1991). Therefore, we expected females from all ethnic backgrounds to report higher levels of leisure time, telephone and email communication, and family assistance on a daily basis. This higher level of contact ironically provides more opportunity for conflict between females and their parents, so we expected there to be more frequent conflict between daughters and their families during young adulthood, as has been observed during the adolescent years (Steinberg, 1990).

Current Life Circumstances and Other Daily Activities

In addition to examining ethnic, generational, and gender differences, we also explored the role of young adults' current life circumstances and other daily activities in shaping their interactions with their families of origin. Young adults who live outside of the home have presumably fewer opportunities to interact with family members, thereby leading to lower levels of almost all of the indices that we examined. The only exception could be communication by telephone or email, where those living away from their families might engage in more of this communication in order to make up for less interaction in person. Other life circumstances that could shape family interactions include current college attendance, work status, living with a partner or spouse, having children, and the young adults' own financial status. All of these factors could potentially shape family interactions because they represent increased independence from the family of origin and require time and attention that could reduce the time that young adults will spend interacting with family members. Some of these life circumstances (e.g., living with parents, college attendance) demonstrate significant variations across ethnicities and could explain observed ethnic differences in family interactions (Fuligni, 2007).

In order to obtain a closer view of how family interactions fit into the other demands of young adults' daily lives, we also assessed the time the young adults spent in four primary activities each day: socializing with friends, working in jobs, studying, and being with their partners and their own children. All of these activities can represent substantial demands placed upon the young adults' daily lives as well as reflect their preference to invest time and energy in other areas of their lives besides their families. We analyzed how these activities were associated with family interactions at both the individual and the daily levels. By examining these associations at the daily levels, we could obtain a closer view of how young adults attempted to

balance these different demands in their lives as they occurred on a daily basis, as well as examine whether young adults from different ethnicities and genders tried to balance them differently.

Family Interactions and Psychological Well Being

Finally, we examined the implications of the different forms of family interactions for the young adults' psychological well being in order to examine the continued significance of family relationships for adjustment and development. Given the significance of family relationships and support for well being (Aquilino, 2004), we expected more time spent with the family to be associated with more positive emotions and less psychological distress. We also assessed the young adults' feelings of guilt because such an emotion could more precisely assess the feelings that result from not spending as much time with family members as one feels that one should. By assessing these indices of psychological well being each day, we could examine the links between family interactions and well being at both the individual and the daily levels. Given the strong emphasis placed upon the family in Latin American, East Asian, and Filipino traditions, it is possible that family interactions have more significance for the psychological well being of young adults from these backgrounds as compared to those from European backgrounds. We expected the same to be true for females as compared to males, given previous studies that have suggested that females are more likely to internalize and be psychologically affected by interpersonal relationships as compared to males (Almeida & Kessler, 1998). Therefore, we examined ethnic and gender differences in the strength of the association between family interactions and psychological well being on a daily basis.

Method

Sample

Participants were drawn from an ongoing longitudinal study of adolescents and young adults with Latin American, East Asian, Filipino, and European backgrounds in San Francisco Bay area of California. The sample included in the present paper included 220 young adults, ranging in age from 23.6 to 27.9 years ($M = 25.5$, $SD = 1.10$). There were approximately equal numbers of males and females (62% female), and participants represented four distinct ethnic backgrounds: Filipino (30%), East Asian (18%), Latin American (25%) and European American (27%). Approximately 90% of the participants from East Asian backgrounds reported being Chinese, and 33% of participants from Latin American backgrounds reported being Mexican, with the remainder being from a mix of Central and South American backgrounds. Among young adults from Filipino families, 39% were first generation and 61% were second generation. Among young adults from East Asian families, 15% were first generation and 49% were second generation. Among young adults from Latin American families, 32% were first generation and 50% were second generation. Among young adults from European American families, 5% were first generation and 15% were second generation.

Participants reported the number of years their parents attended school and the mean educational level of both parents was computed. On average, parents attended some college beyond high school ($M = 13.52$, $SD = 2.38$), with significant variation according to ethnicity, $F(3, 204) = 20.57$, $p < .001$. Parents of young adults from both East Asian and European American backgrounds fell at the mean for level of education attained (East Asian: $M = 13.50$, $SD = 2.33$; European: $M = 13.46$, $SD = 1.79$). Parents of young adults from Latin American backgrounds were below the mean, having attained an education level equivalent to a high

school degree ($M = 11.87$, $SD=2.80$), while parents of young adults from Filipino backgrounds were above the mean, having finished more college than parents of young adults from all other backgrounds ($M = 14.94$, $SD = 1.46$).

Almost all participants (95%) had at least one sibling, and there were no significant ethnic differences in whether participants had siblings (Latin American: 94%; East Asian: 97%; Filipino: 94%; European: 93%).

Procedure

All twelfth grade students who attended the two public high schools in a small city in the San Francisco Bay region were originally invited to participate in a longitudinal study of the transition to adulthood that consisted of questionnaires and phone interviews of approximately 750 participants. The schools were selected on the basis of having sufficient numbers of students from Asian, Latin American, and European backgrounds and variation in immigrant status and socioeconomic background. Randomly selected participants in this larger study were recruited to participate in the present, more intensive study of daily experience. Randomly selected participants from prior waves of the study were mailed a letter describing the study and received a follow-up telephone call to ensure that they received the mailing. Respondents were asked to sign and return a consent form to indicate their interest in participating. Responses rates were similar across ethnic groups (Latin American = 59%, East Asian = 64%, Filipino = 53%, European = 63%) and were similar to the rates obtained in other national, time diary studies that ask respondents to report on daily activities for multiple days in a row, such as the 1998-99 Family Interaction, Social Capital, and Trends in Time Use Study (56% participation rate; Bianchi, Robinson, & Sayer, 2001) and the American's Use of Time, 1985 study (50-67% participation rate; Robinson, 1997).

Upon receipt of their signed consent, participants were mailed an initial questionnaire, a 14 day supply of daily diary checklists, and a small electronic time stamper to help monitor diary completion. The initial questionnaire included questions about participants' educational, occupational, and relational experiences. For the daily diary portion of the study, participants were asked to complete one daily checklist each night before going to bed for 14 consecutive nights. They were instructed to use the electronic time stamper to indicate on the top of each checklist the time and date they completed each diary. Daily interactions with family members as well as other experiences were assessed with these diary checklists. At the end of the two week study period, participants returned all materials in a postage paid envelope. On average, participants completed diaries on 10.3 of the 14 days. Respondents were compensated \$50 for their participation. Data collection took place from October through April in order to allow for the examination of the impact of college attendance on the family interactions of those who were attending school at the time. Only a small number (n=6) of participants attending school completed the diary checklists during the traditional holiday break period of mid-December to early January.

Questionnaire Measures

Current life circumstances. To determine whether young adults were currently living with parents, we asked participants to list all the people currently living in their household and each person's relationship to the participant. Participants were coded as currently living with parents if they listed any of the following: mother, father, parent, father in law, mother in law, stepfather, or stepmother. Participants were coded as currently attending college if they reported that they were currently taking classes at a two- or four-year college, or at a technical, trade or vocational school. Participants were coded as currently working if they reported that they were

currently working for pay at a full-time or part-time job. For participants who were currently working, income was determined using a scale ranging from 1 (less than \$10,000) to 11 (\$100,000 or more) that increased in increments of \$10,000, or by selecting “don’t know”.

Participants were also asked to report whether they were currently living with a romantic partner, regardless of whether they were married, and they were asked whether they had any biological, adopted or stepchildren.

Daily Checklist Measures

Family interactions. Each day, participants completed a checklist and reported how much time they had spent helping their parents or siblings, engaged in leisure activities or sharing a meal with their parents or siblings, and talking on the phone or emailing with their parents and siblings (e.g., “How much time did you spend helping your parents or siblings today?”). These variables were coded as the number of hours reported each day. If a participant reported an amount of time on a particular day that exceeded 12 hours for any family interaction variable, the amount of time for that variable on that day was coded as 12 hours. For individual level analyses, daily time spent in each of these family interactions was calculated by averaging the time reported across each of the 14 days. Participants also reported whether or not they had argued with their parents or siblings each day (1 = yes, 0 = no). For individual level analyses, daily conflict was calculated as a mean between 0 and 1 across the 14 days, representing the proportion of days on which participants reported arguing with their parents or siblings.

Other daily activities. Each day, participants also reported how much time they had spent with friends, working at a job, and studying or doing homework. These variables were coded as the number of hours reported each day. If a participant reported an amount of time on a particular day that exceeded 12 hours for any of these variables, the amount of time for that variable on that

day was coded as 12 hours.

Participants also reported how much time they spent helping a partner or spouse, spending leisure time or sharing a meal with a partner or spouse, talking on the phone or emailing with a partner or spouse, taking care of their children, spending leisure time or sharing a meal with their children, and talking on the phone or emailing with their children. Given the small amounts of time that participants reported for each of these individual activities, a summary variable of time spent with partner or child was created by adding together the total time spent in all activities each day. If the total amount of time for all of these activities on a particular day exceeded 24 hours, the amount of time spent with a partner or children on that day was coded as 24 hours. A 24-hour limit was allowed for this particular variable to allow for participants who reported caring for children all day; as it was, only 1 participant reached this limit on 3 of the 14 days.

For individual level analyses, daily time spent with friends, studying, working and with a partner or children was calculated by averaging the time reported across each of the 14 days.

Psychological well-being. Daily well-being was assessed using (1) the Anxiety and Depression subscales of the Profile of Moods States (POMS; Lorr & McNair, 1971), which have been used successfully in previous diary studies to measure distress; (2) a newly created Happiness scale modeled after the POMS; and (3) a newly created Guilt scale modeled after the POMS. Each day, participants rated the extent to which they felt each item on the subscales (Anxiety: on edge, uneasy, nervous, unable to concentrate; Depression: sad, hopeless, discouraged; Happiness: joyful, calm, happy; Guilt: guilty, shameful, regretful). Answers were provided using a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). Overall, internal consistencies for each of these subscales were calculated at the daily level (across days, standardized within

subjects), and were acceptable: Distress (including items from both the Anxiety and Depression subscales), = .81; Happiness, = .69; Guilt, = .78. Within Latin American, East Asian, Filipino, and European American young adults, respectively, internal consistencies remained acceptable (range: .67 - .83).

For individual level analyses, average daily distress, happiness, and guilt were calculated by averaging across the 14 days. Internal consistencies at the individual level were also acceptable overall: Distress, = .90; Happiness, = .83; Guilt, = .89; and within each ethnic group (range: .80 - .95).

Results

Ethnicity, Gender, and Generational Differences in Family Interactions

Overall, young adults reported spending the most amount of time in leisure activities with their families ($M = .79$, $SD = .86$), followed by time spent assisting family members ($M = .50$, $SD = .75$). They spent only about one-fifth of an hour talking on the phone or emailing with their family ($M = .18$, $SD = .25$) and reported arguing with family members on only 4% of the days ($SD = 8.6\%$).

In order to examine ethnic and gender differences in young adults' reports of interactions with their families, a series of ethnicity (4) by gender (2) analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. As shown in Table 1, young adults from Filipino families spent more time assisting the family than young adults from East Asian families and reported less family conflict than young adults from Latin American families, Bonferonni contrasts: $ps = .05 - .01$. There were no ethnic differences for the amount of leisure time or for time spent talking on the phone or emailing parents.

In terms of gender, compared to males ($M = .57$, $SD = .73$), females ($M = .92$, $SD = .91$)

reported spending more time each day engaged in leisure activities with family, $F(1, 212) = 8.42, p < .01$. In addition, compared to males ($M = .13, SD = .21$), females ($M = .21, SD = .27$) reported spending more time talking on the phone or emailing family members each day, $F(1, 212) = 5.11, p < .05$. Overall, males and females did not differ in the amount of time they spent assisting the family or in reports of family conflict each day.

For amount of time spent assisting the family, there was a significant ethnicity by gender interaction, $F(1, 212) = 3.68, p < .05$, indicating that males from Filipino backgrounds spent more time assisting the family each day as compared to females. Among young adults from other backgrounds, females spent more time than males helping the family each day. There were no significant ethnicity by gender interactions for any other type of family interaction.

The roles of generational status, parental education, and presence of siblings (whether or not the individual had at least one sibling) in family interactions were examined by including each as covariates in the ANOVAs described above (generation was included as two dummy codes representing the first and second generations, with the third generation serving as the baseline group), in order to see whether these additional variables might explain ethnic differences. Results indicated that after controlling for generational status, parental education and presence of siblings, the ethnic difference for amount of time spent assisting the family remained significant, $F(3, 197) = 3.39, p < .05$, and neither generational status, parental education or the presence of siblings was a significant covariate. The ethnic difference for daily reports of family conflict also remained significant after controlling for these variables, $F(3, 197) = 3.31, p < .05$, despite second generation young adults being significantly more likely than third generation young adults to argue with their parents, $B = .05; F(1, 197) = 9.65, p < .01$.

Current Life Circumstances

Approximately half of the sample lived with their parents ($M=.47$, $SD=.50$) and somewhat less than half were currently attending college ($M=.41$, $SD=.49$). Only a minority lived with a partner ($M=.30$, $SD=.46$), were married ($M=.15$, $SD=.36$), or had children ($M=.17$, $SD=.37$). Most of the participants worked in a job ($M=.82$, $SD=.38$) and the average income for the entire sample was approximately \$30,000 per year ($M=3.65$, $SD=1.93$, on the categorical response scale). The only ethnic differences to emerge were that young adults from Filipino ($M=.52$, $SD=.50$) and Latin American ($M=.62$, $SD=0.49$) families were more likely to live with their parents than young adults from European American families ($M=.25$, $SD=.44$), $F(3,220)=7.53$, $p<.001$, Bonferonni contrasts: $ps<.05$, $.001$. In terms of gender, females ($M=.35$, $SD=.48$) were more likely to live with a partner than males ($M=.20$, $SD=.41$), $F(1,220)=5.34$, $p<.05$. Males and females did not differ significantly for any other current life circumstance variable.

The role of current life circumstances in young adults' family interactions was examined through a series of multiple regressions in which all of the life circumstances were used to simultaneously predict each aspect of family interactions. As shown in Table 2, living with parents predicted both time spent in leisure activities with the family as well as time spent assisting the family. Living at home also marginally predicted less time spent talking on the phone and emailing family ($p = .09$), suggesting young adults who live away from home may communicate with their families more often using the phone or internet. In addition, attending college negatively predicted leisure time spent with the family. No other current life circumstances were significantly related to young adults' family interactions.

Although living with parents was associated with time spent helping the family, it was not used to explain the previously observed ethnic difference between young adults from Filipino

and East Asian families in family assistance because the young adults from these two backgrounds lived with parents at very similar rates (Filipino: $M=0.52$, $SD=.50$; East Asian: $M=0.49$, $SD=0.51$).

Other Daily Activities

Overall, participants spent the most hours each day working ($M=3.95$, $SD=2.33$) and with their partner or child ($M=2.82$, $SD=3.61$). Among those who actually had a partner or child, the average time spent with them per day was 4.16 hours ($SD=3.69$). Across the entire sample, less time was spent with friends ($M=1.23$, $SD=1.17$) or studying ($M=.65$, $SD=1.16$). The only ethnic differences were young adults from Filipino families ($M=4.24$, $SD=4.40$) spent significantly more time each day with a partner or child than young adults from East Asian ($M=1.37$, $SD=1.86$) and European American families ($M=2.23$, $SD=3.12$), $F(3, 219)= 4.07$, $p<.01$, Bonferroni contrasts: $ps<.01$ - $.001$. In terms of gender, compared to males ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 3.09$), females ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 3.79$) reported spending more time each day with a partner or child, $F(1, 211) = 7.58$, $p < .01$.

In order to examine the associations of young adults' other daily activities with their family interactions at the individual level, we conducted multiple regressions in which we predicted each aspect of family interaction with time spent socializing with friends, working, studying, and being with a partner or children. As shown in Table 3, the amount of time spent working was negatively related to the amount of time that young adults spent assisting the family, and the amount of time that young adults spent with a romantic partner or child was negatively related to the amount of time spent in leisure activities with the family. In contrast, the amount of time that young adults spent studying was positively related to the amount of time they spent talking on the phone or emailing with family members.

Although time spent working was associated with time spent helping the family, it was not used to explain the previously observed ethnic difference between young adults from Filipino and East Asian families in family assistance because the young adults from these two families worked for similar amounts of time (Filipino: $M=3.52$, $SD=2.26$; East Asian: $M=3.99$, $SD=2.50$).

Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM; Bryk & Raudenbusch, 1992) was used in order to examine the association between other activities and family interactions at the daily level. Models were estimated in which each aspect of family interactions was predicted by daily reports of time spent with friends, working, studying and being with a partner or child. The daily level equation was as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Family Time (Leisure, Phone/Email, Assistance or Conflict)}_{ij} = & b_{0j} + b_{1j}(\text{Friend Time}) + \\ & b_{2j}(\text{Work Time}) + b_{3j}(\text{Study Time}) + b_{4j}(\text{Partner/Child Time}) + \\ & b_{5j}(\text{Weekend/Weekday}) + e_{ij} \end{aligned} \quad [1]$$

Each type of family interaction on each day (i) for an individual young adult (j) was modeled as a function of the average family time for the individual across the 14 days of the study (b_{0j}), time spent with friends (b_{1j}), time spent working (b_{2j}), time spent studying (b_{3j}), time spent with a partner or child (b_{4j}), and whether the day was a weekend day or a weekday (b_{5j}). This last predictor is a typical control variable included in daily diary analyses using HLM. The error term (e_{ij}) accounts for the remaining variance that is not explained by the other variables included in the model. Time variables represent hours, and weekend/weekday was coded as +1 (weekend) and -1 (weekday) so that the estimates for the other predictors would be for the average day of the week.

As shown in Table 4, the HLM results indicated that all young adults' daily activities

were associated with family interactions at the daily level. The amount of time that young adults spent with friends and the amount of time that they spent studying negatively predicted time spent engaged in leisure activities with family and assisting the family. In contrast, more time spent studying predicted more time talking on the phone or emailing the family. The amount of time that young adults spent working each day negatively predicted time spent both engaged in leisure activities with family and assisting the family, and also was associated with less frequent family conflict. In addition, the amount of time that young adults spent with a partner or child each day negatively predicted time spent in leisure activities with family.

Simultaneous inclusion of all predictors in this model resulted in a relatively small number of subjects ($N = 50$) for whom daily variability across all predictor variables was adequate for analysis. Therefore, in order to examine each of these predictors for a greater number of subjects, a second series of HLM models were estimated in which each aspect of family interactions was predicted by each of the predictor variables separately. For the most part, results from these separate analyses revealed patterns similar to those observed in the previous analysis in which predictors were included simultaneously, but a few differences emerged. First, the negative relationship between time spent with friends and time spent in leisure activities with family was not significant in the current analysis, although the coefficient remained negative. In addition, time spent studying remained negatively associated with leisure time with family and positively associated with time talking on the phone or emailing with family, however, these relationships dropped to a marginal level of significance ($p = .10$, $p = .06$, respectively). Finally, time spent with a partner or child was no longer a negative predictor of leisure time with family in the current analysis, although the coefficient remained negative.

In order to examine whether the daily level associations of other activities with family interactions varied across ethnicity and gender, the significance of the variance of the estimates of the daily associations reported in Table 4 were examined. The estimates of the associations of all of the daily activities with conflict and the associations of studying and working with assistance varied significantly across individuals, $ps < .05 - .01$. None of the other daily level associations varied significantly across individuals. In order to examine whether the significantly varying daily associations could be predicted by ethnicity and gender, the intercept and the coefficients representing the relevant daily level associations presented in Equation 1 above were modeled by ethnicity and gender at the individual level. For example, the individual level equation for the intercept was as follows:

$$b_{0j} = b_{00} + b_{01}(\text{Latin American}) + b_{02}(\text{East Asian}) + b_{03}(\text{Filipino}) + b_{04}(\text{Gender}) + u_{0j} [2]$$

Ethnicity and gender were included in the equations for the slopes (b_{1j} , b_{2j} , b_{3j} , b_{4j}) in Equation 1 in the same way. Ethnicity was dummy coded, with young adults from European American families as the reference group, and gender was coded as +1 (males) and -1 (females). The error term (e.g., u_{0j}) accounts for the remaining variance that is not explained by the other variables included in the model. Whether the particular day was a weekend or weekday (b_{5j}) was not predicted by ethnicity or gender.

In no case did ethnicity or gender significantly predict the relevant daily level associations, indicating that the daily level links between family interactions and other activities did not differ significantly across ethnicity and gender.

Psychological Well Being

In order to examine the associations of young adults' family interactions with their

psychological well being at the individual level, we conducted multiple regressions in which we predicted each aspect of well being with the different aspects of family interactions simultaneously. As shown in Table 5, time spent in leisure activities with the family was positively related to young adults' average reports of daily happiness. In addition, daily reports of family conflict were positively related to young adults' average reports of daily distress and guilt.

HLM was used in order to examine the association between family interactions and psychological well being at the daily level. Models were estimated in which each aspect of psychological well being was predicted by daily reports of time spent engaging in leisure activities, talking on the phone or emailing with family members, and assisting the family, as well as whether it was a weekend or weekday. The daily level equation was as follows:

$$\text{Well Being (Distress, Happiness, or Guilt)}_{ij} = b_{0j} + b_{1j}(\text{Leisure}) + b_{2j}(\text{Phone/Email}) + b_{3j}(\text{Assistance}) + b_{4j}(\text{Conflict}) + b_{5j}(\text{Weekend/Weekday}) + e_{ij} \quad [3]$$

Each psychological well being variable on each day (i) for an individual young adult (j) was modeled as a function of the average well being for the individual across the 14 days of the study (b_{0j}), leisure time with the family (b_{1j}), time spent talking on the phone or emailing family members (b_{2j}), time spent assisting the family (b_{3j}), whether the individual reported arguing with family (b_{4j}), and whether the day was a weekend day or a weekday (b_{5j}). The error term (e_{ij}) accounts for the remaining variance that is not explained by the other variables included in the model. Well being variables represent the amount of each reported on a particular day, time variables represent hours, and weekend/weekday was coded as + 1 and - 1.

As shown in Table 6, the HLM results indicated that the amount of time that young adults

spent engaging in leisure activities with their family each day negatively predicted their daily feelings of distress and positively predicted their daily feelings of happiness. Results also indicated that the time young adults spent talking on the phone or emailing with family was positively related to their feelings of distress on that day. In addition, on days when young adults reported arguing with their family, they reported higher levels of distress and guilt and lower levels of happiness. Finally, young adults reported lower levels of distress and higher levels of happiness on weekend days than on weekdays.

Including daily reports of family conflict with the other family interaction variables in this model resulted in the inclusion of a relatively small number of subjects ($N = 48$) in the analysis due to the lack of daily variability in conflict for many of the participants. Therefore, an additional series of HLM models were estimated in which conflict was excluded as a predictor. The daily level equation was identical to Equation 4, except for the exclusion of conflict. Results excluding conflict were almost identical to those including conflict as a predictor. Only one difference emerged; when conflict was excluded, the positive association between time spent talking or emailing with parents and reports of daily distress dropped to just below significance ($B = .07, SE = .04, p = .06$).

In order to examine whether the daily level associations of family interactions with psychological well being varied across ethnicity and gender, the significance of the variance of the estimates of the daily associations reported in Table 6 were examined. The daily associations of talking with distress, helping and leisure with happiness, and conflict with guilt significantly varied across individuals, $ps < .05 - .001$. The extent to which ethnicity and gender predicted these daily associations was examined in additional models in which the intercepts and relevant daily

associations presented in Equation 3 above were modeled by ethnicity and gender at the individual level, using the same equation as shown in Equation 2 above.

The association between daily happiness and time spent in leisure activities with the family was significantly different among young adults from Filipino families and young adults from European American families, ($B = .05$, $SE = .02$, $p < .05$). For young adults from Filipino families there was a significant positive relationship between daily happiness and time spent in leisure activities with the family, ($B = .08$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$), whereas for young adults from European American families there was a positive relationship that was not quite as strong, ($B = .03$, $SE = .02$, $p < .05$). In terms of guilt, the negative association between daily feelings of guilt and daily reports of conflict with family significantly differed for young adults from Filipino families and young adults from European American families, ($B = .43$, $SE = .20$, $p < .05$). For young adults from Filipino families daily guilt was positively related to daily conflict, ($B = .52$, $SE = .15$, $p < .001$), whereas for young adults from European American families there was no significant relationship between daily guilt and conflict, ($B = .09$, $SE = .13$, $p = n.s.$).

The association between daily happiness and time spent assisting the family was significantly different among young adults from Latin American families compared to young adults from European American families, ($B = -.09$, $SE = .04$, $p < .05$). For young adults from Latin American families the association between daily happiness and time spent assisting the family was not significant, ($B = -.04$, $SE = .03$, $p = n.s.$), whereas for young adults from European American families this association was marginally significant in the positive direction, suggesting more time spent assisting the family was related to more daily happiness, ($B = .05$, $SE = .03$, $p = .10$).

Discussion

Compared to previous research conducted during the adolescent period, results from the current study suggest that young adults spend less time interacting with their parents and siblings than they do during the teenage years. Participants reported less than half the helping and leisure time with family members that a sample of ninth-grade adolescents with similar ethnic backgrounds reported in an earlier daily diary study (Hardway & Fuligni, 2006). The approximately three-quarters of an hour per day spent in leisure time with the family was less than the amount of time that the young adults spent in activities with other people, such as their friends, partners, and children. Nevertheless, the total amount of time young adults spent doing things either with or for their parents and siblings was not insignificant. Altogether, young adults spent almost one and one-half hours per day assisting, communicating, and being with family members. Therefore, although interactions with parents and siblings become much less frequent during young adulthood as compared to adolescence, family remains a part of the daily life of individuals as they move into their mid-twenties.

Ethnic differences emerged in two aspects of family interactions, with those from Filipino backgrounds reporting the greatest amount of time spent helping the family and the lowest frequency of conflict with parents and siblings. The higher level of family assistance among the young adults from Filipino backgrounds is consistent with previous research that suggested members of this group have one of the strongest values of family obligation and one of the highest rates of providing financial assistance to the family (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). Although young adults from Latin American backgrounds reported more daily family assistance than other groups, which is consistent with the results of studies during the adolescent years (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Hardway & Fuligni, 2006), the

differences were not great enough to attain significance because of the smaller sample size used in the present study. The similarity in family assistance between those from East Asian and European backgrounds is consistent with a trend observed soon after the high school years in which those from East Asian backgrounds began to report levels of family obligation and assistance similar to those from European backgrounds (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). This trend may be due to the educational and occupational mobility of many children from East Asian backgrounds, which may draw them away from traditional cultural values of family obligation and assistance. It also may be the case, however, that the pursuit of educational and occupational mobility is consistent with an obligation to succeed and provide financially for the family among those from East Asian backgrounds (Fuligni, 2007).

The lower level of conflict among those from Filipino backgrounds despite living with parents at fairly high rates is more difficult to explain, given the limited prior research on family conflict among this ethnic group. Prior research conducted during adolescence indicated no difference in parent-adolescent conflict between those from Filipino and other ethnic backgrounds (Fuligni, 1998). It is possible that the higher level of family assistance and lower level of family conflict together reflect generally more positive relationships with parents and siblings among Filipino young adults. If so, the apparently stronger connectedness between young adults and their families during young adulthood among those with Filipino backgrounds merits continued investigation. Future research also should endeavor to obtain samples of young adults from Filipino backgrounds from the third generation or greater in order to clarify whether this stronger connectedness is more a function of being from an immigrant family as opposed to a Filipino family. Although few generational differences were observed in the current study, the

lack of a third generation from the Filipino group limited the ability to definitively examine the potential confound between ethnicity and generational status.

In terms of gender, females spent more time interacting with their parents and siblings either through joint leisure activities or through distal communication such as telephone calls or electronic mail. The apparently stronger connection between daughters and their families of origin is consistent with results obtained during the high school years (Collins & Russell, 1991). Gender differences in family assistance differed according to ethnic background, with males providing more assistance than females among young adults from Filipino backgrounds, but females providing more assistance than males among young adults from other backgrounds. This unexpected finding was likely due to the males from Filipino backgrounds being more likely to live with parents than females from Filipino backgrounds, which as discussed below, was a significant predictor of family assistance. Given the lack of similar gender by ethnicity interactions in other life circumstances such as being enrolled in college or living with a partner or child, it appears that the tendency for Filipino males to live with and provide assistance to their families cannot be explained by other activities in which they are engaged. It is possible that there are unique gender norms regarding living with parents and family assistance among Filipino families during young adulthood, but as with the apparent overall greater family closeness among Filipino young adults, this particular form of family connectedness among Filipino males should be a focus of future study.

Not surprisingly, those who lived with their parents were more likely to spend leisure time with their families and to provide assistance to their parents and siblings. These associations may reflect individuals who are generally closer to their families of origin, and the decision to live with parents may have been made so that individuals could spend more time being with and

helping their families of origin. Although ethnic differences in the rates of living with parents were observed, they did not explain the previously reported ethnic difference in family assistance because young adults from Filipino and East Asian backgrounds lived with parents at similar rates, providing further evidence that the higher rate of family assistance among those from Filipino backgrounds may primarily be due to greater family closeness and connectedness. The only other life circumstance predicting family interactions was whether young adults attended college, which resulted in less leisure time with parents and siblings. It is likely that the demands and activities associated with being a college student gets in the way of the time that young adults may spend socializing and having meals with their families.

The involvement of young adults in other daily activities shapes the extent of their interactions with family members. At the individual level, young adults who spent more time with their partners and children spent less leisure time with their families of origin and those who worked more hours per day provided less assistance to parents and siblings on a daily basis. Each of these other activities is demanding in terms of its time and attention, so it is not surprising that they cut into time with parents and siblings. Interestingly, young adults who spent more time studying actually called or emailed their parents and siblings more often, likely reflecting a desire to connect with and seek support from families in the midst of high levels of academic demands.

The association between other daily activities and family interactions were most evident at the daily level, which is a better and closer test of the links between the activities and interactions themselves. On days in which young adults spent more time with friends, working, studying, and with their partners and children, they spent less leisure time with their families. Similar results were obtained for family assistance on a daily basis, with only time spent with

partner and children not being a significant predictor. Together, these results highlight the difficulty for young adults to maintain frequent interactions with their parents and siblings in the face of the other productive and social demands of being a young adult, and they could partially explain why family interactions apparently occur at a lower frequency during this period as compared to adolescence. Fewer associations were obtained with calling or emailing families and with family conflict, likely because distal communication with parents and siblings can still be done while engaged in other activities and because family conflict occurred at such a low frequency overall. Daily associations of family interactions with other activities were similar across different ethnicities and genders, pointing to the generality in the difficulty that young adults have in maintaining family interactions in the face of the other demands of their daily lives.

Despite the fact that they occur at a lower frequency during young adulthood as compared to adolescence, family interactions continue to be important for individuals' psychological well being. Spending more leisure time with parents and siblings was associated with higher levels of happiness at the individual and daily levels, and lower levels of distress at the daily level. The continued importance of such family time for psychological well being is particularly notable given the other findings regarding how difficult it can be for young adults to make room for leisure time with family members in the face of the demands from work, school, and other social relationships. Although family conflict occurred at a very low frequency of only 4% of days, which translates into a rate of about once per month, it was particularly significant for well being in that more conflict was associated with less positive well being across a variety of indices at both the individual and daily levels. Collectively, these results highlight how even in the face of the pressures to spend less time with their families of origin, it is psychologically

important for young adults to maintain positive interactions with their parents and siblings on a daily basis.

In general, the associations between family interactions and psychological well being were consistent across the different ethnic groups and genders. Of the few differences across ethnic groups, there was a tendency for family interactions such as leisure time and conflict to be more consequential for the psychological well being of young adults from Filipino backgrounds supporting the idea that family connectedness may be particularly important and salient for young adults from this ethnic background.

The use of the daily diary method across two weeks provided a more accurate measurement of the daily family interactions, activities, and psychological well being than traditional questionnaire measures, and resulted in high levels of statistical power to detect associations at the daily level. Yet the intensity and demands of the method resulted in an overall sample size that was somewhat limited in its ability to detect mean differences in family interactions at the individual level across the young adults from different ethnic backgrounds. Future research should involve larger numbers of young adults from each group in order to determine whether some of the apparently smaller differences between ethnic groups are robust, reliable, and significant and to better distinguish between the impact of ethnicity and generational status. It also would be helpful in future diary research to expand the number of days in the study in order to prevent to need to examine daily predictors individually, as was done in this study, because of the low frequency of some family interactions. Daily diaries are also limited in that they rely upon self report and may not be the best method to assess the impact of relatively rare family interactions, such as conflict, and additional observational and

experimental studies with multiple ethnic groups would help to determine the robustness of the findings reported in this paper.

An additional weakness of the study was the combining of interactions with parents and siblings within the same question. It would be good for future work to ask about interactions with parents and siblings separately in order to detect potential differences in the frequency and implications of family interactions according to the specific member of the family. The role of beliefs and values regarding issues of autonomy and family responsibility, in addition to the life circumstances assessed in this study, would provide additional insight into the nature of this period of development. Finally, additional insight into the nature of family interactions during this developmental period would be obtained by varying measurement across different seasons and times of the year, as has been done in previous research during the adolescent period (Crouter & Larson, 1998). Examining the impact of special events such as holidays would also provide additional insight.

In summary, results from this study suggest that although family interactions may occur less often during young adulthood than during adolescence, they continue to have significant implications for the individuals' well being. Yet the demands from other domains that typify this developmental period in American society can make it difficult for young adults to find the time to spend with their parents and siblings. This developmental period, therefore, appears to represent a time of unique challenges to the maintenance of family relationships and warrants continued study in order to provide a body of knowledge that more closely approximates the more sophisticated understanding that we currently have on the teenage years.

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Table 1

Daily Family Interactions According to Ethnic Background

	Ethnic Background								<i>F</i>	η^2
	Latin American		East Asian		Filipino		European			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Leisure time	.65	.64	.67	1.04	.99	.94	.79	.79	2.48	.03
Phone or email	.18	.22	.11	.12	.21	.30	.21	.28	1.44	.02
Assistance	.53	.78	.28	.38	.69	.96	.41	.58	4.82**	.06
Conflict	.07	.11	.03	.08	.02	.06	.04	.09	2.67*	.04

Note. $N = 220$. Figures for “Leisure time,” “Phone or email,” and “Assistance” represent the average number of hours spent per day; figures for conflict represent the proportion of days that participants argued with their family. *F* and η^2 refer to the effect of ethnicity in the ANOVAs.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Multiple Regressions Predicting Family Interactions by Current Life Circumstances

	Leisure Time			Phone/Email			Assistance			Conflict		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Intercept	.77***	.23		.17**	.07		.23	.19		.08***	.02	
Live with parents	.34	.14	.20*	-.07	.04	-.14	.40	.12	.28***	.01	.01	.05
Attending college	-.30	.13	-.17*	.01	.04	.03	.04	.11	.03	-.00	.01	-.01
Working	.08	.17	.04	.01	.05	.01	.09	.14	.05	-.02	.02	-.07
Live with partner	-.01	.16	-.01	.03	.05	.06	.19	.13	.12	-.01	.02	-.08
Have children	-.31	.17	-.13	-.01	.05	-.01	-.10	.14	-.01	.02	.02	.08
Income	-.01	.03	-.03	.01	.01	.05	-.02	.03	-.05	-.01	.00	-.14

Note. $N = 206$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Multiple Regressions Predicting Family Interactions by Other Activities at the Individual Level

	Leisure Time			Phone/Email			Assistance			Conflict		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Intercept	1.22***	.18		.09	.05		.90	.16		.05**	.02	
Friends	-.09	.05	-.12	.00	.02	.01	-.08	.05	-.12	.00	.01	.04
Working	-.04	.03	-.11	.01	.01	.09	-.06	.02	-.19**	-.00	.00	-.11
Studying	-.08	.05	-.11	.05	.02	.25***	-.03	.05	-.04	.00	.01	.05
Partner/children	-.04	.02	-.15*	.01	.01	.09	-.01	.02	-.07	-.00	.00	-.03

Note. $N = 219$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Daily Family Interactions by Other Daily Activities at the Daily Level

	Leisure Time		Phone/Email		Assistance		Conflict	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	1.37***	.13	.20***	.02	.84***	.10	.048***	.010
Friends	-.05**	.02	-.01*	.00	-.04***	.01	-.001	.002
Working	-.09***	.01	.00	.00	-.06***	.01	-.003*	.001
Studying	-.08*	.03	.01*	.01	-.05*	.02	-.000	.004
Partner/children	-.02*	.01	.00	.00	-.01	.01	-.001	.001
Weekday/weekend	.08	.04	.02	.01	.01	.03	-.007	.005

Note. $N = 50$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5

Multiple Regressions Predicting Psychological Well Being by Family Interactions at the Individual Level

	Distress			Happiness			Guilt		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Intercept	1.5***	.04		2.83***	.07		1.25***	.05	
Leisure Time	.00	.04	.00	.20	.07	.21**	.03	.05	.04
Phone/Email	.11	.12	.06	.22	.20	.08	.10	.13	.05
Assistance	-.00	.05	-.00	.00	.06	.00	-.02	.04	-.04
Conflict	.99	.34	.19**	-.76	.54	-.09	.85	.35	.16*

Note. $N=220$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 6

Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Psychological Well Being by Family Interactions at the Daily Level

	Distress		Happiness		Guilt	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	1.49***	.03	2.94***	.05	1.30***	.03
Leisure time	-.02**	.01	.05***	.01	-.01	.01
Phone/email	.07*	.04	.03	.04	.02	.04
Assistance	-.01	.01	.02	.02	-.00	.01
Conflict	.20***	.06	-.31***	.07	.15*	.07
Weekday/weekend	-.03**	.01	.06***	.02	.02	.01

Note. *N* = 48.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.