



# Birth Outcomes and Cultures of Pregnancy: Challenges Facing Mexican Immigrant Women and Their Families

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# The Latina Paradox

**◦ IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE  
CHANGE AND IMMIGRATION, HOW  
CAN WE CAPTURE AND RETAIN  
THE CULTURAL PROCESSES  
ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE  
BIRTH OUTCOMES AMONG  
IMMIGRANT WOMEN FROM  
MEXICO?**



**ANTHROPOLOGY  
OF PREGNANCY**



Pregnancy as risk condition

Obstetricians and technology as authorities

Pregnancy: status quo relationships and responsibilities

# AMERICAN APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY

E.g., Davis-Floyd 1992, 2004; Martin 2001; Rapp 2001; Fleuriet 2009a; Jordan 1993; Browner & Press 1997



Pregnancy as normal  
Pregnancy as time of increased love and support  
Pregnant women and embodied knowledge and authority

# MEXICAN APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY

E.g., Torres 2005; Browner & Press 1997; Sesia 1996; Guendelman et al. 2001; Fleuriet 2003; Jackson 2009; Cheney 2010



# METHODS

	1996	2003-2005	2011-2012
<b>Who</b>	226 Mexican-American and Mexican women	28 Mexican women; 6 health care providers	600 Mexican and Mexican American women; 80 Mexican and Mexican American women and household members
<b>Where</b>	Hidalgo and Cameron	Hidalgo and Cameron	Hidalgo and Cameron
<b>Clinic Type</b>	Private; community; religious/alternative	Community; Religious/Alternative	Community; Religious/Alternative
<b>What</b>	Preference of obstetrical care provider; barriers to care	Pregnancy, prenatal care and birth narratives	Status, stress, and birthweight; pregnancy narratives
<b>How</b>	Survey; observations; informal interviews	Survey; in-depth interviews, participant observation	Survey; in-depth interviews



# MEXICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY

**Time → Cultural Approach to Pregnancy →  
Subjective Social Status →  
Psychosocial Stress → Birthweight**

Status: community standing

○ Stress: perceived stress during pregnancy

Pregnancy anxiety


Experiences, stories → cultural approaches to pregnancy

Mexican and Mexican American women and their families

**NEXT STEPS: SURVEY,  
INTERVIEWS,  
COMPARISONS**

**Research Directions:** biomarkers, ethnography

**Intervention Directions:** increase support and decrease stress during pregnancy



**BIRTH OUTCOMES AND  
CULTURES OF  
PREGNANCY:  
CHALLENGES FACING  
MEXICAN IMMIGRANT  
WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

- Research participants in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, Texas
- Office of the Vice President for Research, UTSA
- San Antonio Life Sciences Institute, UTSA and UTHSCSA
- Institute for Health Disparities, UTSA
- Culture and Policy Institute, UTSA

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**