

Social Capital in Multigenerational Households: A Key to Understanding Maternal and Infant Health
Disparities

Shannon Feliciano, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Anthropology, Sociology and Criminal Justice Department

Requested Funding Total: \$7,000 (Salary Supplement: \$5,500, Travel: \$1,500)

February 28, 2024

A concise description of the project

In 2001, Bengtson asserted that the growing prevalence of multigenerational bonds serves as a valuable resource for families in the 21st century, particularly concerning support for pregnant women (p. 15). However, the dynamics of these multigenerational households and their impact on maternal and infant well-being remain inadequately understood. This study is framed within the "Hispanic Paradox," where despite lower socioeconomic status, Hispanics or Latinos in the U.S. tend to exhibit better health outcomes than non-Hispanic whites. This paradox is particularly evident in life expectancy and rates of certain health conditions. Various factors contribute to this paradox, including the healthy migrant effect, cultural factors, selective migration, and robust social support networks within Hispanic communities (Markides & Eschbach, 2005; Abraido-Lanza et al., 2005; Palloni & Arias, 2004; Vega et al., 2009).

The proposed research aims to bridge gaps in the literature, specifically exploring how social capital influences health. It will extend existing research on intergenerational households and their impact on maternal well-being, assess the mediating effect of family structures on maternal stress and infant health, and empirically investigate the effects of intergenerational households on infant health and mortality, with a focus on understanding their role in the Hispanic Paradox.

Possible Data Sources:

- Child Trends: <https://www.childtrends.org/?a-z=>
- Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health: <https://www.childhealthdata.org/home>
- Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS): <https://dhsprogram.com/Data/>
- HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB): <https://data.hrsa.gov/maps/mchb/>
- The Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS): <https://ffcws.princeton.edu/documentationHRSA MCHB>
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Maternal and Child Health Legislative Database: <https://www.ncsl.org/health/maternal-and-child-health-legislative-database>
- OECD Family Database: <https://www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm>
- Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study: <https://fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/>

Measurable goals and objectives for the project

1. Identify and select relevant secondary data sources related to multigenerational households, maternal well-being, and infant health disparities.
2. Prepare the selected data sources for analysis, including data cleaning and merging if necessary.
3. Develop a detailed plan for data analysis, outlining statistical methods and analytical techniques to be employed.
4. Perform the planned data analyses, focusing on understanding the relationships between multigenerational households, maternal well-being, and infant health outcomes.
5. Produce a comprehensive research report outlining the research process and outcomes.
6. Present the research findings at the ESS (Eastern Sociological Society) and ASA (American Sociological Association) conferences.
7. Submit the research work to peer-reviewed journals for evaluation and publication.

The timeframe for the project

During the summer of 2024, the project will focus on the identification of pertinent secondary data sources and achieving a comprehensive understanding of the data. This phase will involve a meticulous examination of documentation and metadata associated with the selected datasets, along with a comprehensive review of variables, data collection methods, sample size, and potential data limitations. Subsequently, efforts will be directed towards securing access or permission to the chosen dataset(s), followed by data cleaning, preparation, and database merging if required. Another critical aspect during this period is the development of a plan for data analysis, outlining the statistical methods or analytical techniques that will be employed.

Transitioning into the summer of 2025, the project's focus will shift towards the execution of planned data analyses and the interpretation of results. A key objective during this phase is to document the entire research process, covering methodology, findings, limitations, and conclusions. This documentation will culminate in the creation of a detailed research paper. The final step of this timeframe involves the submission of the research work to peer-reviewed journals for evaluation and potential publication.

How the project will enhance teaching and research at Lincoln University

Students enrolled in my social statistics course will have the opportunity to participate in data cleaning and analysis, providing them with experiential learning opportunities and actively contributing to the broader enhancement of research capacity within our department. In addition, findings from the project can shape curriculum development, contributing to the creation of a new medical sociology course that reflects contemporary research insights.

How the outcome of the project will be measured

A pivotal benchmark will be the presentation of the research at the ESS and ASA conferences, providing an opportunity to share findings and engage with other sociologists. Additionally, the project's impact will be measured by the publication of the research in a scholarly journal.

How, when, where, and with whom the project's outcome will be shared

The results of the project will be disseminated through multiple channels. Interim achievements will be conveyed to Lincoln University's faculty via internal presentations held between summer periods, and project reports will be submitted to the FRDC Chair, Faculty Affairs, and CETL. Upon the project's conclusion, the research findings will be presented at Lincoln's Faculty Research Symposium, ESS and ASA conferences, and the final paper will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Budget

Summer Salary Supplement: \$5500

Travel to Summer ASA Conference ([Conference Brochure](#)): \$1500

Total: \$7000

References

- Bengtson, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63(1), 1–16.
- Markides, K. S., & Eschbach, K. (2005). Aging, migration, and mortality: Current status of research on the Hispanic paradox. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 60(Special Issue 2), S68–S75.
- Abraído-Lanza, A. F., Chao, M. T., & Florez, K. R. (2005). Do healthy behaviors decline with greater acculturation?: Implications for the Latino mortality paradox. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(6), 1243–1255.
- Palloni, A., & Arias, E. (2004). Paradox lost: Explaining the Hispanic adult mortality advantage. *Demography*, 41(3), 385–415.
- Vega, W. A., Rodriguez, M. A., & Gruskin, E. (2009). Health disparities in the Latino population. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 31(1), 99–112.
- Shaw, M., & Pickett, K. E. (2013). The health inequalities agenda: Have we lost our way? Commentary on “The society and population health reader: Income inequality and health” by Ichiro Kawachi. *Social Science & Medicine*, 93, 94–96.
- Fishman, S. H., Class, Q. A., & Pickett, K. E. (2021). Prenatal Stress and Infant Health: Direct Associations, Moderation by Prenatal Socioeconomic Position, and Moderation by Stressor Type. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(16), 8636.
- Class, Q. A., Abel, E. L., Khashan, A. S., Rickert, M. E., Dalman, C., Larsson, H., ... & D'Onofrio, B. M. (2013). Offspring psychopathology following preconception, prenatal, and postnatal maternal bereavement stress. *Psychological Medicine*, 43(5), 1133–1144.
- Adane, A. A., Mishra, G. D., Tooth, L. R., & Mishra, G. D. (2021). Psychological distress, moderate to vigorous physical activity, and risk of gestational diabetes mellitus. *Journal of Diabetes Research*, 2021.
- Leem, J. H., & Kim, J. I. (2019). Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Multigenerational Households. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 81(5), 1062–1080.
- Bengtson, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63(1), 1–16.
- Pointak, J. (2014). Multigenerational Coresidence and Maternal Depressive Symptoms: Evidence from a National, Longitudinal Study of Latino Households. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(13), 1762–1783.