

# Weathering, Crimmigration Policy Enforcement & Latina Health

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## Weathering as an alternative model for considering age and health

- Current health represents the cumulative physiological *impact of lived experience* from conception/birth to current chronological age
- Population variations in lived experience are *structured* and *dynamic*

# Structurally-rooted Biopsychosocial Stressors

- Activate physiological stress reactions
- Can be objective (cold, hunger, environmental toxins, sleep deprivation...)
- or subjective (sustained cognitive and emotional engagement with social adversity or material hardship)
- Adverse ***contingencies of social identity*** that arouse fear, anxiety, vigilance, identity management in specific settings

# Structurally-rooted Biopsychosocial Stressors activate physiological stress reactions

- Human bodies are designed to have life-threatening stressors activate a physiological stress response; increases heart rate and blood pressure to circulate blood towards muscles quickly for “flight or fight”, and turns off body functions that can be a drag in the moment – such as reproduction
- Works well in intense, crisis life-or-death moments, where you face a brief period of terror and, if you survive it, the threat is gone and biological functions return to their more routine activity levels
- Today’s stressors are multiple, chronic, repeated and are symbolic & psychosocial as well as objective. Stress hormones do not recede as threats do not recede.

# Biological Mechanisms

- Over time, experience with repeated or chronic stressors and the high-effort coping they entail, induce stress-mediated wear and tear on important body systems (neuroendocrine, cardiovascular, metabolic, immune)
- Systems become dysregulated or exhausted, as cell integrity is violated, leading to accelerated biological aging and increased general health vulnerability --
- Vulnerability can be expressed, for example, in poor maternal health, chronic inflammation, obesity, early onset chronic disease (e.g. hypertension, diabetes) and increased susceptibility to some cancers and to infections

# Example: the Postville Raid

- ICE raid on a meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa in May 2008 with no advance warning
- Heavily militarized – 900 armed agents deployed; UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter....
- 398 employees arrested, 98% Latinx –anyone “suspected” of being undocumented based on presumed race/ethnicity
- Handcuffed all employees together

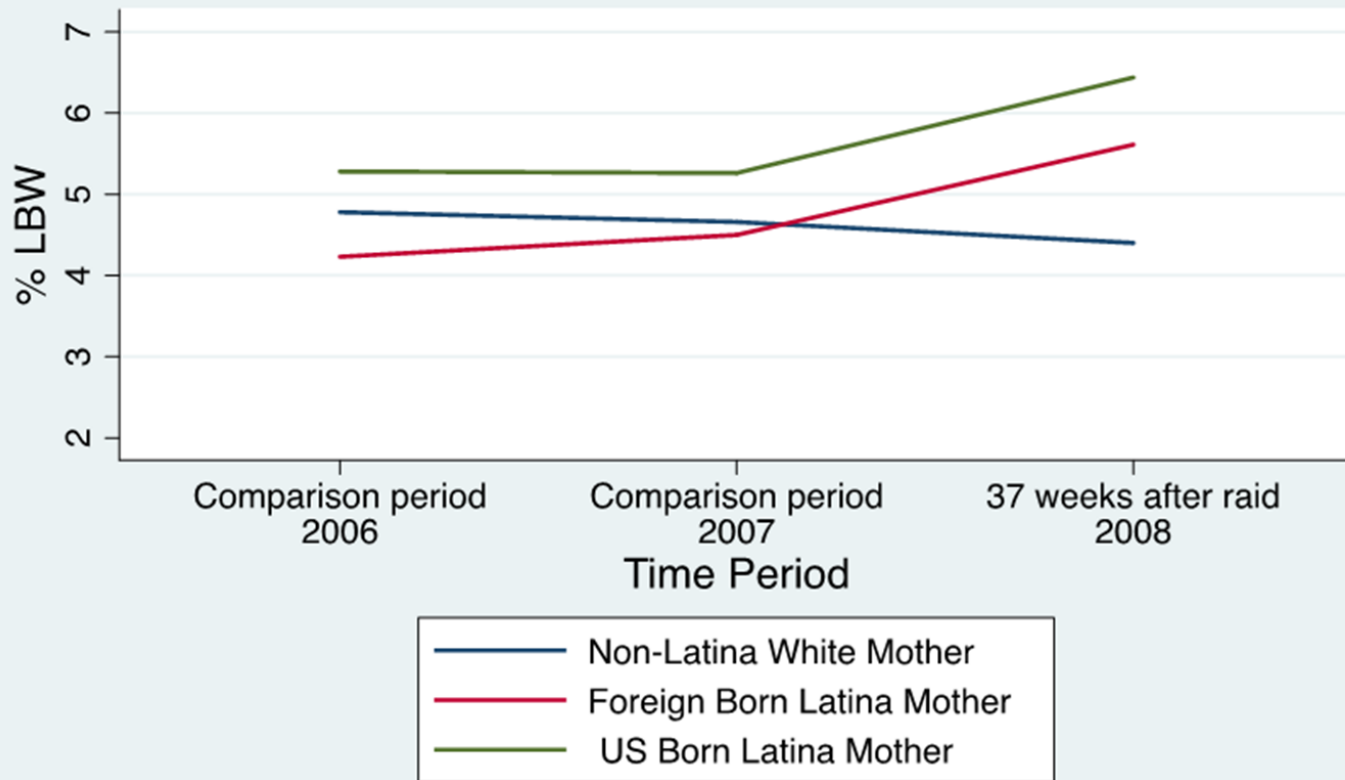
# Postville Raid

- Male arrestees detained in 80 miles away at the National Cattle Congress, cuffed and chained together from waist to ankles
- Women detained in county jails
- Mothers of young children could return to Postville with ankle monitors and barred from working
- A group plea bargain led most to plead guilty to felony charges, even if not guilty of those charges
- 297 arrestees were deported after serving a 5-month prison sentence
- Raid covered in Spanish newspapers throughout Iowa, including eye witness testimony

# Impact on Birth Outcomes

Rates of low birth weight (LBW) before and after Postville Raid  
by mother's ethnicity/nativity

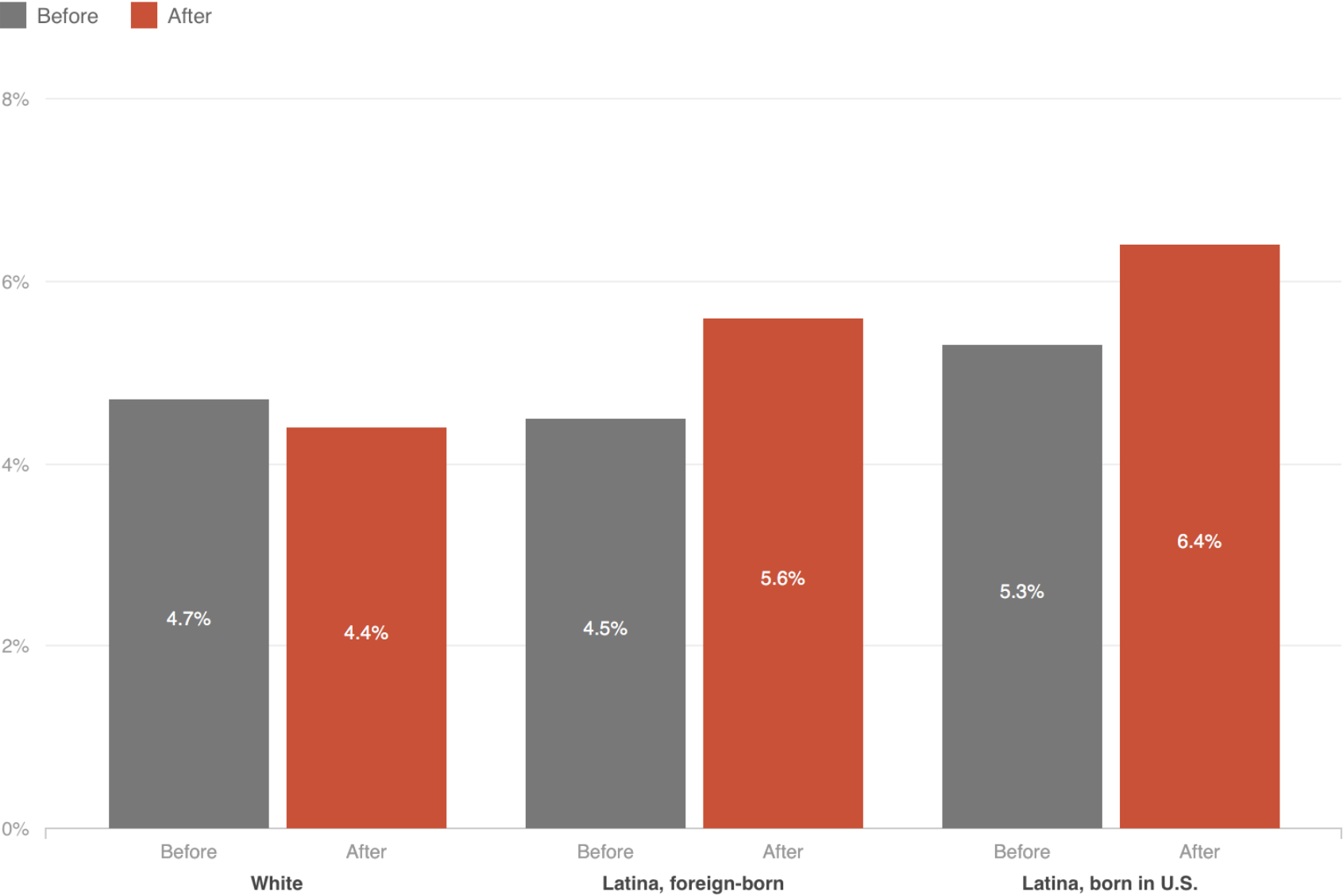
2006-2008





# Low Birth Weight Rates Rose In Latina Mothers After Postville Raid

Percentage of babies born low birth weight to women in Iowa in the 37 weeks after the Postville immigration raid, which occurred May 12, 2008, versus the same 37-week time period a year before.



Source: International Journal of Epidemiology

# Why impact on US-born Latinas and Latinas throughout Iowa?

- Terror and trauma were experienced on the basis of social identity as Latinx
- Latino Iowans likened the experience to a flood or earthquake
- US-born and naturalized Latinx embedded in targeted communities; have affective ties to undocumented; experience discrimination, othering and chronic identity-related vigilance

- Lack of warning or due process could increase fear, anxiety and vigilance for all Latinx – no expectation of justice
- Employment discrimination & material hardship
- Families prepared for the possibility of more raids, left jobs, avoided public space, restricting spending

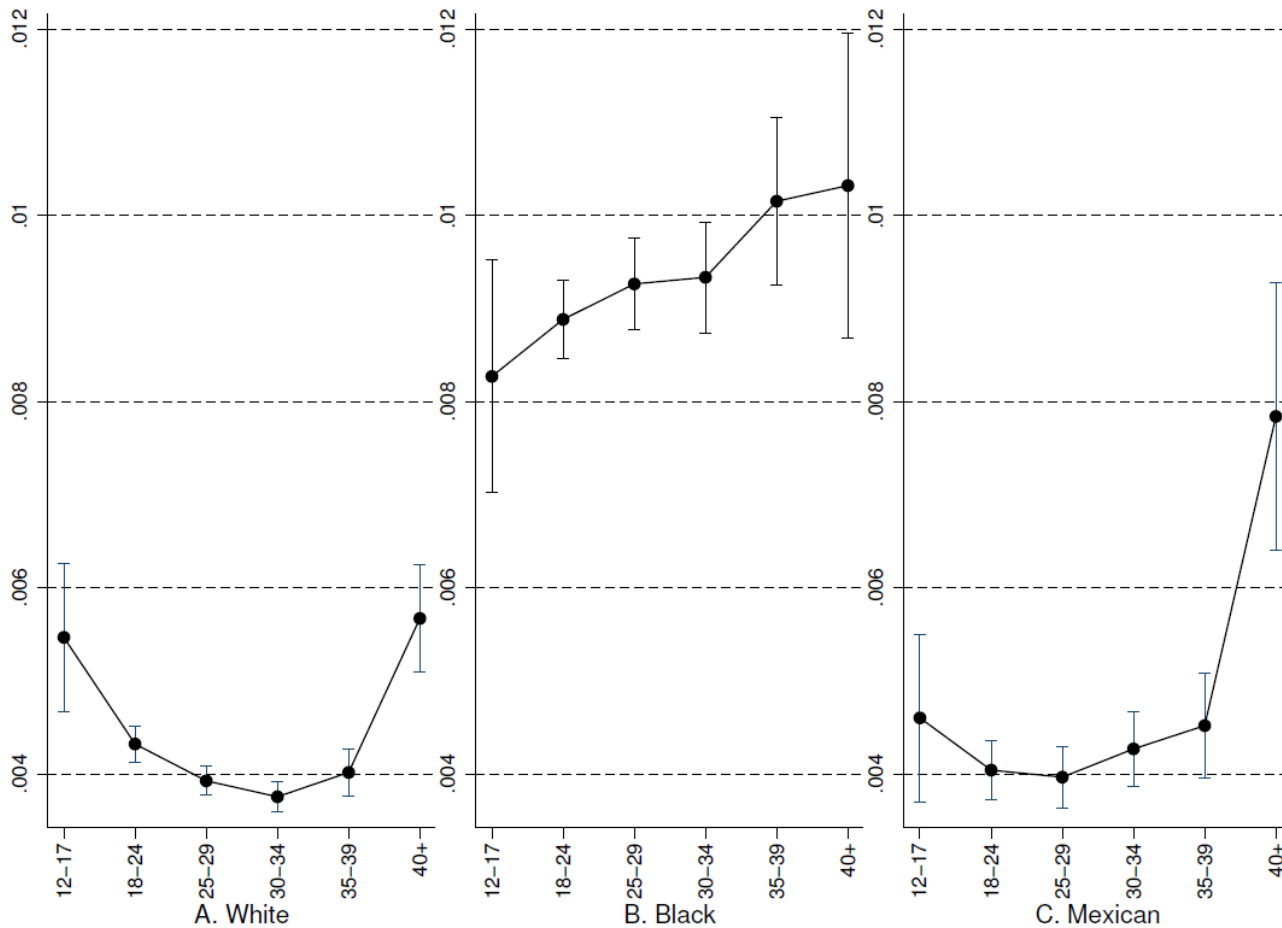
# Root Cause

- The belief by a growing and increasingly powerful segment of the US population that draconian tactics and military grade weapons and vehicles are necessary to enforce immigration policy provides a compelling basis for sustained vigilance among Latinx children and adults alike
- Structurally rooted biopsychosocial processes (inherent in the structures of US immigration policy & enforcement; broader marginalization/stigma of Latinx) include social identity threats with concrete, measureable, health consequences.

- Fetal vulnerability to maternal stress response
- Maternal stress response is a window into the stress responses of all Latinx lowans
- Implications of prior weathering and for future weathering



# Probability\* of Infant Death by Maternal Age: White, Black, & Mexican Mothers, US, 2013



\*adjusted for plurality, birth order, maternal education, prenatal care, payment source, and cigarette smoking

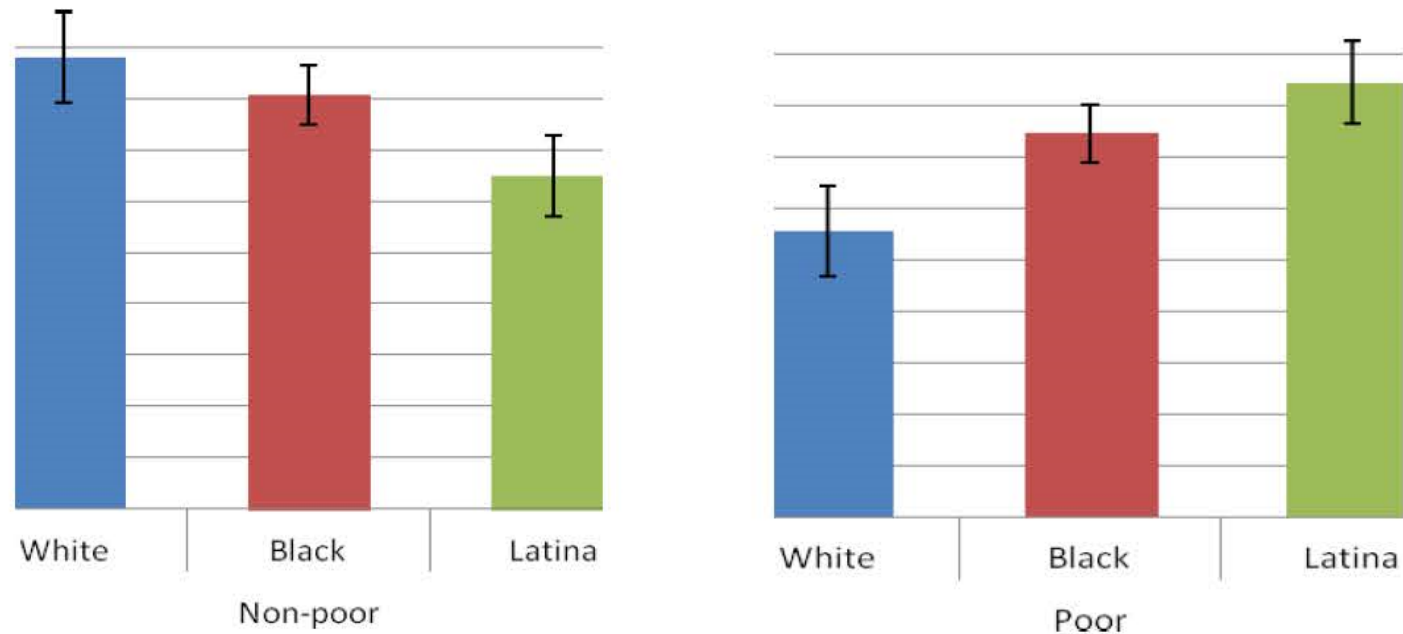
# Population Weathering is a Function of

- Exposure to ***structurally-rooted biopsychosocial stressors*** over time
- Strength of Autonomous Protections to mitigate, resist, or undo them
- Access to alternative cultural frameworks to the dominant one that marginalizes or stigmatizes them
- Empathy, support, or validation from broader society

***Health impacts of social identity are dynamic and environmentally contingent (not biologically or culturally essential or reduceable to behaviors, traits, or material assets); Health impacts can be rapid, cumulative, or enduring***



# Estimated Mean TL, women, age 45 years, by race/ethnicity and poverty



Model 2: Controlling for Age, Sex, PIR \* Race/ethnicity interaction

Geronimus et al. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 2015.

