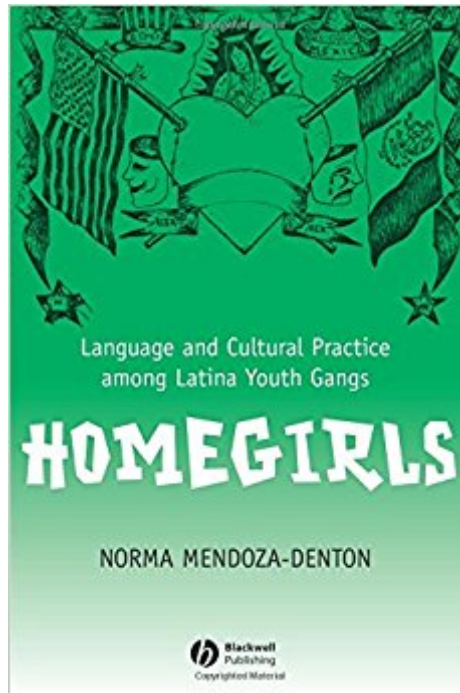




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# Homegirls: Language And Cultural Practice Among Latina Youth Gangs



## Synopsis

In this ground-breaking new book on the Norte and Sur (North/South) youth gang dynamic, cultural anthropologist and linguist Norma Mendoza-Denton looks at the daily lives of young Latinas and their innovative use of speech, bodily practices, and symbolic exchanges that signal their gang affiliations and ideologies. Her engrossing ethnographic and sociolinguistic study reveals the connection of language behavior and other symbolic practices among Latina gang girls in California, and their connections to larger social processes of nationalism, racial/ethnic consciousness, and gender identity. An engrossing account of the Norte and Sur girl gangs - the largest Latino gangs in California. Traces how elements of speech, bodily practices, and symbolic exchanges are used to signal social affiliation and come together to form youth gang styles. Explores the relationship between language and the body: one of the most striking aspects of the tattoos, make-up, and clothing of the gang members. Unlike other studies which focus on violence, fighting and drugs, Mendoza-Denton delves into the commonly-overlooked cultural and linguistic aspects of youth gangs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Homegirls should rock the very foundations of criminological understandings of gangs, especially concerning female gang members. If scientific rigor increases the book's impact, no one should begrudge Mendoza-Denton the specialization of the latter chapters. In any case, this is a book about much more than language-or perhaps it reveals language to be much more than we think-and

it is well worth picking up for an enlightening glimpse of a population that has been ascribed infamy without being known much at all." (American Studies Journal, 1 March 2009) "Homegirls, an experimental sociolinguistic ethnography of subaltern others, spans a decade of research by a woman who is keen to examine her position as an outsider/insider in the research process and the identity formation of her participants: female gang members." (American Journal of Sociology, September 2009) "Part reflexive narrative, part engaging ethnography, part fine-grained sociolinguistic study, and part riveting disquisition on the politics of eyeliner, this delightful book twinkles with wit and blazes with empathy and intelligence." Don Kulick, New York University "Wonderfully written and as riveting as a novel, Homegirls provides a unique window on the linguistic and ethnographic patterns and their interrelationship of Northern California Mexican-American high school students who are members of girl gangs. It's sure to become a classic." Deborah Tannen, Georgetown University "Mendoza-Denton provides an extraordinary fusion of ethnographic insight and sociolinguistic analysis. I know of no better demonstration of how linguistic and cultural variables are entwined in social interaction." William Labov, University of Pennsylvania "A landmark work in sociocultural linguistics! The breadth and depth are spectacular and the humanistic presentation makes the description captivatingly accessible to both a professional and a public audience." Walt Wolfram, North Carolina State University provides a stunning and innovative linguistic, anthro-political ethnography of how gang-affiliated Latina girls talk, dress, and interact. It is certain to become a classic in the fields of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology." Marjorie Goodwin, University of California, Los Angeles

In this ground-breaking new book on the Norte/South (North/South) youth gang dynamic, cultural anthropologist and linguist Norma Mendoza-Denton looks at the daily lives of young Latinas and their innovative use of speech, bodily practices, and symbolic exchanges to signal their gang affiliations and ideologies. She analyzes their use of language as well as social and cultural practices such as the circulation of poetry, photographs, and drawings, and also their practices around makeup and bodily presentation. Through this detailed exploration, Homegirls examines the localized North-South rivalry between the bilingual, English-speaking and Americanized Norte girls and the Mexican or Latin-American-oriented, Spanish-speaking Sur girls. Mendoza-Denton uncovers a new dimension to studies of youth styles, where gang members are innovative not only in terms of dress, make-up, and music, but also by participating in crucial processes of language variation and change. This engrossing ethnographic and sociolinguistic book

reveals the connection of language behavior and other symbolic practices among youth, and their connections to larger social processes of nationalism, racial/ethnic consciousness, and gender identity.

Great ethnography!

Wonderful book that provides both an ethnographic as well as scientific approaches to the language and cultural practices of Latina girls.

school

The book arrived on time. The description says moderate writing on the book and in excellent condition. The cover and pages are worn out and there is more than moderate writing on the book. Looks like they have some kind of writing on every page. But i bought this for the price. A-. thanks

I'm currently reading this book at midnight for a quiz in an anthropology class tomorrow. I want to go to bed, but I can't stop reading - I might complete my homework assignment in spite of myself! My study break is writing a 5-star review for it. Norma Mendoza-Denton has an amazing voice - she's clearly intelligent, but doesn't write in an alienating, overly-academic way. Her points are always clear and well-developed and often surprising. I love the process of how she came to her conclusions and how her research questions changed throughout the study, and how openly she admits that everything she experienced and transcribed is open for interpretation and shaped by her own identity as an anthropologist. She just seems like a great person and it's so much fun to read a book written by someone who enjoys what they're writing about. Highly recommended.

This book is actually quite enjoyable, given that it's an anthropology book. I had to read this for a class and me and several other students had a fine time reading the book. It's informative without it being too wordy.

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