ACHIEVING AND ENHANCING CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH TRADITIONAL FOODS AND TECHNOLOGY

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Texas Colonias

- Rapidly growing rural borderlands area outside McAllen, TX
- Much of population increase into newer developments called colonias
- High, persistent poverty
- Mexican-American immigrants
Colonias families: Nutritional problems

- Obesity, diabetes, poor dental care
- Food insecurity (economic, environmental)
- Neighborhood deprivation
- Locational disadvantage
Research contributions

**Primary:** An in-depth exploration of the liberating aspects of women’s food preparation in domestic environments, especially for underprivileged women
- Low-income Mexican immigrant women maintaining family health through traditional homemade meals

**Secondary:** Nutritional aspect of the study and the role of traditional (Mexican) diet
Achieving and enhancing cultural sustainability through traditional foods

• Analysis and implementation of new technologies applied to specific cultural contexts

• Nutritional programs: considerations to social & cultural values of minority groups
  • *Re-articulation of food*, i.e., preparing a meal differently while still maintaining its cultural qualities

• Current project: creating a mobile app or a game that would allow users to re-articulate food, i.e., to learn how to utilize their own food-related cultural traditions to improve their nutritional habits and revive and reclaim their cultural heritage

• Formative & community-based participatory research

• One-to-many communication (similar to a simple/primitive social network)

• Goal: effecting positive, community-driven change in underrepresented communities by closely collaborating with individuals in these communities to identify, protect, and enhance their important cultural traditions