



Public talk by Dr. Lydia Dixon, University of California, Irvine

*La Protagonista y La Partera:*

**Mexican Midwives and Narratives of Birth and Nation**

In this talk I will be examining the relationship between women's bodies, reproduction, and national development through the lens of professional Mexican midwives. Central to my analysis is the finding that the recognition of midwives as an international global health intervention has changed their position within Mexico and expanded their future professional possibilities. As the state begins to reconsider the efficacy of midwifery as a development tool, midwives have become more vocal in their critiques against the current state healthcare system both in terms of its infrastructural insufficiencies and its treatment of women. Drawing on 18 months of ethnographic research with midwives across Mexico -- including illustrations done by midwifery students-- I will discuss the ways that midwives' arguments for the need to center women as the "protagonists" of their own births illustrate their dual goals of prioritizing quality women's healthcare and securing a future for their profession.

**Mon. November 21st  
4:00pm**

**Hesburgh Center C104**