

The Biosocial Framework and Birth (from Brigitte Jordan)

As part of your introduction please make it clear where and when this birth event took place, since we are arguing that cultural context (both in time and space) is very important in determining how the birth event plays out.

Please consider the following components of your own birth for your ANTH 110 assignment:

Preparation for birth: What types of things were part of the prenatal period, for example prenatal classes, vitamins and special diets, doctors' visits, ultrasounds and other medical tests

Attendants and support systems: Who was present when you were born? Was your father, or any other family members present? Were there people your mother didn't know?

Birth territory: Where were you born? At home? In a hospital? This generally reflects social expectations and norms, for example in a biomedical definition of birth (like in our culture) there is tremendous pressure to give birth in a hospital environment

Medication and technology: What technology was used as part of your birth? Pain medication? Epidural? Forceps? A C-section? An incubator after you were born (Especially important for premature babies!)

Locus of decision making: Who was making the decisions during the birth? Your mom? Both parents? Just the doctor?

Post partum period: What did the time after you were born look like? Did your mother have to return to work right away? Did she have help from relatives? In Thai culture a new mother is expected to stay in bed for several weeks after a birth to recover and devote her energies to looking after her newborn, so relatives come to stay and take over all of her other responsibilities. I think this would be a nice way to ease in to this incredible life change; in our culture I think we expect to "get back to normal", doing everything from exercise to going back to work (remember in the US there is only a 6 week period of paid maternity leave) within weeks of delivering a baby! In Thai culture the new baby doesn't even leave the house for the first month, while in our culture we have them out and about within days!

I hope this helps. Please just ask if you need a bit more direction!