

Cecilia Ballí, Ph.D.



Cecilia Ballí is a magazine writer, cultural anthropologist, educator, and research and communications consultant. For 23 years, she has conducted research and written about the U.S.-Mexico border and Latino issues. In 2000, she became the first Latina or Latino writer at *Texas Monthly*, where she continues to serve as a writer-at-large, writing stories that seek to elevate the voices of Latinos and to challenge the mainstream narrative of Texas. She has written about the sexual killing of women in Ciudad Juárez, immigration, Mexican drug violence, U.S.-Mexico border culture, and Tejano history and identity, among other subjects. She has published in other highly regarded media outlets including *Harper's Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and *Columbia Journalism Review*, and was a reporter at the *San Antonio Express-News* and *The Brownsville Herald*. She has won various journalism and writing awards, and her stories have been reprinted in several anthologies, including *Hecho en Tejas: An Anthology of Texas-Mexican Literature* and *Best American Crime Writing*.

As an anthropologist, Ballí has conducted extended ethnographic research on the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez and on the 2006 Secure Fence act and construction of the border wall. For six years, she served as a tenure-track professor in the University of Texas at Austin's Department of

Anthropology, where she taught in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands Program and was affiliated with the Center for Mexican-American Studies, the Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies, the Center for Women's and Gender Studies, and the Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice. She left academia to write full-time, but is presently a Visiting Scholar at the University of Houston's Center for Mexican American Studies. She has also been a Visiting Researcher at the Humanities Institute and the Center for Mexican American Studies at UT Austin.

In 2018, she founded Culture Concepts, LLC, a strategic and creative consultancy offering services throughout Texas. In this role, Ballí works with nonprofits, foundations, museums, and other organizations providing ethnographic research and storytelling, as well as offering analysis and strategy on projects related to U.S. Latinos and the U.S.-Mexican border. She conducted a groundbreaking statewide study of Latino voters that shed new light on partisanship and low voter participation.

Ballí received her B.A. from Stanford University and her Ph.D. from Rice University. The daughter of former migrant farmworkers who have long roots on the Texas-Mexico border, she was raised in Brownsville and considers herself a proud tejana and fronteriza.

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