

# Friday Seminar

Spring  
2024

## Economies of Resistance: Informal Labor and Street Vendor Uprisings in the Los Angeles Street Vending Campaign, 2013-2020

This talk reflects on my role as an applied anthropologist, ethnographer, and digital storyteller, with the Los Angeles Street Vending Campaign (LASVC) between 2013 and 2020. The campaign was mobilized by African American, Caribbean, Mexican, Central American, and Latin American street vendor communities whose political entanglements overturned a century-long anti-vending ordinance criminalizing their livelihoods. They persist in creating moments and movements that unmasked power imbalances, sought recognition, and forged solidarities by embracing strategies, cultures, and politics of each other's experiences.

Our research produced augmented fotonovelas, a digital humanities platform for the campaign. This digital and print popular media project utilizes digital humanities and ethnographic methods in combination with augmented reality to make the fotonovela print come to life using a cell phone application. These methods put ethnography "to use" (Van Willigen), incorporating participant observation of street vendors who invited me into their homes, and work sites, along with audio-visual recorded interviews and conversations. Augmented fotonovelas have a liberatory potential when aggrieved communities are directly involved in their production, and the medium is designed for them to speak against indignities they experience and visually and sonically express new policy visions.

**Prof. Leigh-Anna Hidalgo** is an Assistant Professor of Ethnicity, Race, and Migration at Yale. She received her Ph.D. in Chicana/o and Central American Studies from UCLA. She is an interdisciplinary scholar who integrates ethnography, digital humanities, and Latinx Studies to analyse urban labour struggles and resistance. She is completing a book under contract with Duke University Press and has published articles in the *Journal of Latino Studies* and *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*. Born in Los Angeles, to a Salvadoran father and a U.S. mother, she spent her childhood living between Guatemala and El Salvador.



**Mar 15**  
**1:00-2:30pm**  
**NAH 213**



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