How Latinx kids and their undocumented parents struggle in the informal street food economy

Street food markets have become wildly popular in Los Angeles—and behind the scenes, Latinx children have been instrumental in making these small informal businesses grow. In *Kids at Work*, Emir Estrada shines a light on the surprising labor of these young workers, providing the first ethnography on the participation of Latinx children in street vending.

Drawing on dozens of interviews with children and their undocumented parents, as well as three years spent on the streets shadowing families at work, Estrada brings attention to the unique set of hardships Latinx youth experience in this occupation. She also highlights how these hardships can serve to cement family bonds, develop empathy towards parents, encourage hard work, and support children—and their parents—in their efforts to make a living together in the United States. *Kids at Work* provides a compassionate, up-close portrait of Latinx children, detailing the complexities and nuances of family relations when children help generate income for the household as they peddle the streets of LA alongside their immigrant parents.

“Estrada’s insightful ethnography reveals the complexity of the household economy of undocumented and mixed-status families in Los Angeles... *Kids at Work* forces a reconsideration of traditional notions of childhood, family relations, and work...”
—Zulema Valdez, author of *Entrepreneurs and the Search for the American Dream*

“This original, thoughtful, engaging ethnography vividly captures the texture of everyday life among immigrant children and children of immigrants who work selling food in the streets of Los Angeles. In the children’s own voices, we learn about their economic contributions, their lives, and aspirations, but also from them about immigrant entrepreneurship, the complex dynamics in immigrant families, and childhood in general.
—Cecilia Menjívar, co-author of *Immigrant Families*