

“Mothering as Health Security: Undocumented mothers, children and medical alienation in the United States”



Dr. Elizabeth Farfán-Santos

Department of Comparative Cultural Studies

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

12:15 - 1:15 pm, MD Anderson Library

Room 306 (Brown bag lunches welcome)

Over generations of exclusion, undocumented Mexican immigrants have had to regularly confront a prohibiting health care system despite alienation, marginalization and the threat of deportation. In this talk, I discuss the impact of political exclusion and alienating discourses on the health practices and beliefs of undocumented Mexican mothers through the narrative of mothers in Houston, who find themselves at the painful intersection of political and medical alienation. These narratives reflect an analytical framework that center undocumented motherhood as a space of necessary resilience and resistance where women are forced to advocate for their children’s health despite prohibitive barriers and dangerous potential consequences.

Speaker Biography

Elizabeth Farfán-Santos is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Houston and author of *Black Bodies, Black Rights: The Politics of Quilombolismo in Contemporary Brazil* (University of Texas Press, 2016). She holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Medical Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. Currently, her research is in the United States on the medical alienation and exclusion of undocumented immigrant communities, especially following recent health care reforms and ongoing policy discussions in health care and immigration. Her current book project, *Undocumented Motherhood*, builds from this research and examines the impact of an undocumented status in shaping the everyday health practices and narratives of maternal sentiment among undocumented Mexican mothers in Houston.

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