

Cartographies of Youth Resistance: Hip Hop, Punk, and Urban Autonomy in Mexico. By Maurice Rafael Magaña. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2020. 206 pages.

In his new book *Cartographies of Youth Resistance: Hip Hop, Punk, and Urban Autonomy in Mexico*, sociocultural anthropologist Maurice Rafael Magaña explores the political role of urban youth in Oaxaca City during and after the social movement formed in 2006. There was a before and after this movement for the Indigenous and migrant youth of this city, one that the author categorizes as catalyzed by the “2006 Generation” (14). This book analyzes what happens when militarization, neoliberal development and the criminalization of young activists collide with a strong political movement such as the one in Oaxaca. Under the concept of *neoliberal militarization* which draws upon Shannon Speed’s idea of neoliberal multicriminalism (2016), the author emphasizes the “spatial manifestations of neoliberalism (displacement, crafting of tourist spaces, etc.) and of militarization (surveillance, policing of bodies and spaces, etc.)” (7). By focusing on spatial formations, Magaña is able to recognize the ways Oaxacan urban youth create urban autonomy practices while countering the spaces that have been shaped by the dominant system. *Counterspaces*, as the author defines it, are embedded with horizontal organizing and practices, and put *rebel aesthetics* in circulation through “hip hop and punk culture to create meaningful channels for political and social participation” (11).

Magaña charts how youth reclaim public space throughout this book. The author shows us the palimpsest that shapes urban Oaxaca through the social centers, artistic expressions, and political practices that youth create in the city. It is the intersection between spatialization, cultural production and social movement organizing that the author finds most worthy of highlighting. Therefore, rather than doing an artistic analysis of hip hop and punk expressions, the author focuses on the connections that these cultural movements have with the social and spatial practices that have taken place throughout the city. In addition to this, Magaña contributes to our understanding of the role of youth in the 2006 movement in Oaxaca and how their resistance was shaped by the Indigenous legacy they inherited in their social organizing.

The first chapter explores the context and history of Oaxaca’s social movement in 2006. Particularly, it describes and analyzes the role and formation of Section 22 and the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO). The author aims to reveal the ways in which some groups were marginalized from having a voice in the assemblies. In response, the Oaxacaqueña activist youth created horizontal spaces to become more politically involved in the ongoing uprising through radio programming and the punk movement. Radio Cacerola is one of the first examples Magaña gives us as a *counterspace* mediated by the people excluded from institutional activism, such as women who challenged the masculinized voice of the movement using the radiophonic medium as their outlet. This radio station “aired grassroots programming in at least six

different indigenous languages” (33) echoing the large tradition of Indigenous radio and sonic spaces born and shared in Oaxaca. Likewise, other horizontal counterspaces such as the youth collectives VOCAL, the Ocupación Intercultural en Resistencia (OIR), and the Bloque Autónomo de Resistencia Libertaria (BARL) formed by punk, liberationist, and anarchist youth were crucial for the movement and aided in protecting the barricades. “The barricades were a symbol of popular control of the city” (45) and it was within them that many young people had the physical space to experience non-hierarchical, political and social practices.

Chapter 2 delves into the connections between the Sierra’s Indigenous autonomy movements in Oaxaca and the insurgent Zapatistas. Magaña reflects upon the formation of the youth collective VOCAL in order to identify some of the genealogies of the 2006 Generation’s politics. According to the author, its beginning is rooted in a space shaped and inspired by Zapatista practices and thought, which is why autonomy is a central concept to this generation. For them, autonomy is conceived as “the capacity for self-determination, the right to difference, the right to collective or communal governance territory (including urban space), and it is also about social relationships and solidarity between communities.” (66) Thereby, their praxis is highly shaped by Indigenous ways of organizing centered on solidarity and communal building. In addition to these ideas, an important aspect of this generation has been mobilizing urban Indigenous youth as an answer against neocolonial dispossession and neoliberal militarization. As Magaña points out, “In mobilizing as urban Indigenous, collectives like VOCAL place themselves as Indigenous actors in the center of the political and social life of the city.” (70) In this way, they build an insurgent indigeneity uniquely shaped by the counterspaces they formed during the barricades, and horizontal practices taken from “decolonial anarchism” (76), Zapatismo, *communalidad*, solidarity, and urbanity.

Chapter 3 goes in depth about the history of the social center CASOTA in which collectives like VOCAL, along with NGOs and researchers meet and share their concerns about the post-2006 Oaxaca. CASOTA “was both a collective formed by social movement youth and the name of the physical space they opened to house their social and political projects.” (82) As such, CASOTA represents a counterspace with radical horizontal politics shaped by mutual-aid practices and solidarity with Indigenous communities and other groups in resistance. In this way, Magaña shows us how these counterspaces prioritize the views of Indigenous, migrant and urban youth when forming a political and social space. They are linked to “direct action and cultural production since 2006.” (84)

The author is concerned with the ways youth organizing challenge geographies of power and marginality in Oaxaca city. For the 2006 Generation, their experience of living within the urban periphery is directly connected to the physical and cultural displacement they have faced with neoliberal militarization and policies. An urban and insurgent indigeneity is thus displayed by this group which only further complicates the already tenuous relationship between

politics, identity and citizenship in Oaxaca. We see part of this phenomenon through collective urban agriculture inside CASOTA as a manner to counter land dispossession while promoting a new relationship with land, food and collective labor. Practicing everyday autonomy in all aspects of their life is a key aspect of VOCAL and CASOTA organizing. In this way urban and indigenous youth in Oaxaca engage with horizontal politics, support other liberationist struggles and sustain their lives collectively.

Chapter 4 portrays what the author calls “constellations of resistance” which are formed through direct actions and street art to maintain their political views and presence in Oaxaca City. This chapter highlights the importance of counterspaces in “linking youth with each other, the city center, and a constellation of already existing counterspaces.” (107) This idea is displayed through three vignettes, namely, “The Temporal and Spatial Life of a Social Movement,” “Cinco Señores Roadblock,” and “Rebel Aesthetics and Palimpsestic Space.” The first one delves into the art space called Estación Cero which was “opened by graffiti crews, street art collectives, printmakers, and individual artists in the years following the emergence of the social movement.” (109) This counterspace, just like CASOTA, displays pedagogies of resistance and demonstrates the political commitment of the 2006 Generation artist. Likewise, it shows us the role art and street culture had in spreading their political views to a wider and popular audience. The second vignette explores the political context of the formation of the Autonomous Municipality of San Juan Copala and the Human Rights caravan created to aid the people in Copala and make Human Rights abuse visible to the public. So brave and powerful were their actions that their Human Rights caravan was targeted and once even ambushed by paramilitaries. Many activists from CASOTA and VOCAL—who were actively involved in the formation and support of this caravan—were shot. In this powerful vignette, Magaña recounts how undeterred from the violence, the activists created a second and larger caravan now with the full support of Section 22, the APPO, and other international organizations so that the government could finally provide a secure passage for the caravan. By highlighting one of the most important barricades and occupations that took place during the uprising, Magaña demonstrates that besides the relevance and need for direct action to disrupt the hegemonic order, the young rebels, through the barricades of 2006 and the roadblock of 2011, converted Cinco Señores—one of the busiest streets in Copala—into a counterspace for education and political resistance against militarization and oppression in Oaxaca.

The third vignette in chapter 4 focuses on artistic and social interventions as a counterspace created by Oaxaca youth which, along with the events just mentioned, “helped to spatialize the power generated during height of grassroots control of the city and helped incubate activism through the ebbs and flows that followed.” (125) Magaña highlights the presence of ‘rebel aesthetics’ within the practices of the 2006 Generation which are collective and give form to social and political imaginations and sensibilities (126).

They allow youth to reconfigure space and create new possibilities for how social and urban space should function, and to reimagine for whom they should function and what they should look like. Among some expressions of these rebel aesthetics we find murals, graffiti, rap songs, wheat paste art, and many more. What they all share in common is that they both address current political issues in a critical manner and form new imaginaries of dwelling in the city as a young indigenous activist movement. Indeed, chapter 5 is especially dedicated to exploring rebel aesthetics and the way they spatialize practices and politics.

Rebel aesthetics in Oaxaca “disrupt politics and business as usual in the city by remarking highly transited spaces into open political terrains where youth have the power to engage fellow citizens, passersby, and the government.” (136) As a cultural studies student, I especially appreciate this chapter since it eloquently highlights the power of urban street art. Chapter 5 specifically discusses the pioneering hip hop art of Mare Advertencia Lirika, a Zapotec, feminist, and activist woman; and it also analyzes the work of anarcho-punk collectives. In this manner, the chapter shows how creative artists/activists have been able to forge strong networks to impact politics and generate a radical imaginary. Even when they have had to face police brutality because of their artistic work, youth have produced “culture and knowledge that is intimately connected to grassroots organizing.” (145) The chapter also brings to mind the strong difference between autonomous art, which I just described, and institutional multicultural state-sponsored art, such as the art “projects” that have been produced by some artists upon government request. The first is a political form of art that resignifies streets and urban spaces, where activists challenge police surveillance and brutality and build collective forms of resistance. The second art practice reinforces the politics of the settler colonial state and its surveillance regime. Mexico’s racial geographies are undermined through the creative actions that the 2006 Generation artists have generated, denouncing and protesting against state violence in a manner which reshapes public space through horizontal counterspaces and practices.

In the conclusion of the book, Magaña explains what happened with the counterspaces and the youth collectives in the post-2006 and 2010 period. Several art spaces were open with state support in the city center although the original collectives of the area, such as CASOTA, Estación Cero and VOCAL, no longer have any place there. Yet, these anti-systemic youth movements continue expressing their convictions and have not abandoned their struggle over public space. Indeed, “they decentered the city center in their constellations of resistance and creation by bolstering their presence in the working class periphery of the city, in rural communities, and outside the state.” (164) The 2006 Generation shaped urban Oaxaca and their legacy is still on the streets of the city to this day. Indeed, the anarcho-punk movement have continued their political work holding free workshops for urban and rural communities in order to bring socio-political awareness. In this section, the author also

mentions the influence of *feminismo comunitario*, which is a type of feminism created by Indigenous women in Guatemala and later spread to other territories in Latin America. His analysis of this could have benefited from focusing on how Mare Advertencia Lirika and other young women and activists are directly influenced by this wave of community feminisms, or how some of their ideas are present in the counterspaces he examines. Instead, Magaña only gives few pages to discuss on the role of this feminist movement, a movement that has inspired many Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in the continent. It felt more like a courtesy mention by the end of the book, rather than an engaged exploration of all the anti-patriarchal and decolonizing practices that this movement has inspired in Oaxaca.

What we see throughout Magaña's book is the palimpsest that symbolizes youth interventions and counterspaces in the story of urban Oaxaca, one which rediscovers the political voice of the young insurgents and their efforts to challenge the colonial and neoliberal capitalist structures that continue to dominate the city. No doubt that *Cartographies of Youth Resistance: Hip Hop, Punk, and Urban Autonomy in Mexico* is a book that expands our understanding of 2006 Oaxaca and especially of the contemporary social movements there that continue to be led by the youth, echoing the struggles of the 2006 Generation. The book also provides a great contribution to

the area of hip hop and punk studies within Latin America, and can be placed as an excellent addition to current scholarship in anthropology of the arts and youth studies. It opens up a rich dialogue with recent works such as *Punk and Revolution: Seven More Interpretations of Peruvian Reality* (2016) by Shane Greene or *Negro Soy Yo: Hip Hop And Race Citizenship In Neoliberal Cuba* (2016) by Marc D. Perry; or even more, Magaña's book can certainly be put in conversation with recent Native American scholarship on hip hop, such as Kyle Mays's *Hip Hop Beats, Indigenous Rhymes: Modernity and Hip Hop in Indigenous North America* (2018). The cultural work of anti-systemic youth movements is essential to unveil the impact of militarized and/or neoliberal powers and its countercurrents. Magaña's book demonstrates how these movements are able to intervene and stop projects of dispossession and the erasure of the Indigenous peoples and local communities in resistance. Throughout these pages we can see the tangible power that politically-committed art and youth have. It is indeed the youth who continue to plant the seeds of rebellion in so many countries in Latin America, just as we all witnessed with the uprisings in Chile, Colombia, Puerto Rico or Haiti in the past few years.

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