

# DISSERTATION DEFENSE

## Constructing and Navigating Autonomous Self-Organization: Notes and Experiences From Community Struggles in Mexico

By

**Ryan Knight**

This dissertation explores autonomous politics as political resistance, through an engagement with various processes of communal self-organization being carried out in Mexico. Resisting the approach to “autonomy” as a static and separate space that is fully self-determined, this dissertation seeks to explore the complexities and tensions that characterize struggles for autonomous self-organization through their ongoing construction and navigation of internal and external forces.

Through a look at the struggle of the community assembly in Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Oaxaca, armed forces of community self-defense and justice in the states of Michoacán and Guerrero, and the community radio milieu that crisscrosses much of the country, this dissertation explores the diversity and located-ness of autonomous processes and struggles in the context of Mexico. It seeks to show how autonomous struggles are located in historical, political, cultural and social contexts that influence their character, thus making autonomy better understood in the plural as “autonomies.” Simultaneously, this dissertation investigates the manner in which autonomous struggles of self-organization are constantly working beyond their material locations, in processes of cross-communal and cross-struggle organization.

There, between the located-ness and movement of autonomous processes of self-organization, this dissertation seeks to understand autonomous struggle as ongoing processes of construction and navigation that both rupture yet reinforce their insides and outsides. Through a focus on what might be called the borderlands of autonomies, we can begin to understand the multiple layers of complexity that animate resistance politics and animate autonomous struggles of self-organization specifically.

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