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Counter-topographies of care: care activism in the movement for women's lives in Mexico

Counter-topographies of care examines how urban activism against femicide mobilizes care as an instrument for protest in opposition to an uncaring state and the devaluation of women's lives in Mexico. I survey selected feminist interventions against gender violence over the past decade to posit that care is a central element of modern-day feminist activism in Mexico. Further, I argue that these interventions rely on care practices to launch critical actions in defense of women's lives across the global-intimate as a whole, modeling a scalar politics anchored in an ethic of care and repair and moving away from masculinist models of justice and punishment. Through an in-depth empirical analysis of emplaced expressions of care activism, I show how activists work in, through, and with place to affect the qualities of urban spaces from which women have historically been excluded, producing feminist counter-places in a militant reclamation of women's right to public life. Overall, charting a counter-topography of care I bring into relief seemingly disconnected spaces where knowledge of place informs the use of care practices to denaturalize femicidal violence as a trait of the modern, neoliberal megalopolis. This project advances existing research on feminist political geographies and expands an emerging body of work on the geographies of care in connection to feminist urban theory. It also builds on geographic work that has developed counter-topographies as a methodology for the study of social movements and organized processes of resistance through a focus on place.