

# THEORY

## COMUNALIDAD (COMMUNALITY)

*Comunalidad* is a way of naming and describing the daily practice of coexistence in an autonomous collectivity, in the service of everyone, as practiced in the indigenous communities of Oaxaca, Mexico.

### CONTRIBUTED BY

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"In the community there is no individual statement, only collective conglomerate producers of communal statements."

—Xtobako (Pablo Cruz), Yagavila, Oaxaca

*Comunalidad* (communality) is an autonomous community expression of the life of the Zapotec peoples in the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca, in southern Mexico, and of numerous other non-indigenous rural communities. Communal life in these places is not just a coercive connection to a territory, but the real and symbolic process of a community exercising its political autonomy.

Communal life takes place in a territory considered sacred, composed of people, nature and supernatural forces whose relations are based on myths and other ritually mediated narratives. This territory, as a common good, is where one learns the sense of *comunalidad*, and the oral storytelling that describes it is what allows anyone to be able to understand and discuss issues related to the community.

The practice of *comunalidad* centers around four pillars of communal life: communal governance via the popular assembly; communal territory, or land held in common; communal celebration, or feast days; and communal work for the benefit of the whole. *Comunalidad* originates from the history of dispossession and extreme colonial exploitation of land, but its defense right now, as a form of production and life, stands as a real alternative of resistance against the new cycle of neoliberal capitalist accumulation.

### LEARN MORE

New World of Indigenous Resistance

Edited by Noam Chomsky, Lois Meyer, and Benjamín Maldonado, 2010

<https://citylights.com/open-media-series/new-world-of-indigenous-resistance/>

### RELATED TOOLS

#### Stories

- Every Heartbeat Counts
- Stripping Power in Uganda

#### Tactics

- Blockade
- Occupation

#### Principles

- Be the change you want to see in the world
- Beware the tyranny of structurelessness
- Breakfast is persuasive
- Consensus is a means, not an end
- Focus on basic needs
- Follow the lead of the most impacted
- Give voice to those that can't speak
- Know your community
- Know your cultural terrain
- Use organizing strategies that scale
- Use your cultural assets

#### Theories

- Decolonization
- Dunbar's number

The Fourth Principle: Comunalidad

Chapter from \*New World of Indigenous Resistance\*, by Jaime Martinez Luna, 2010

[http://realitysandwich.com/55644/the\\_fourth\\_principle\\_comunalidad/](http://realitysandwich.com/55644/the_fourth_principle_comunalidad/)

- Neoliberalism
- Pedagogy of the Oppressed
- Postcolonialism
- Prefigurative politics
- The commons
- The Global South

### **Methodologies**

- Art of Hosting
- Baraza

### **TAGS**

Community building, Indigenous rights