Total Mobilization: Stasis, Infrapolitics, and Contemporary Temporalizations in Alonso Ruizpalacios's *Güeros*

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Abstract

Alonso Ruizpalacios's 2014 cinematographic debut *Güeros* is a nostalgic coming-of-age that engages with the golden age of Mexican cinema, emblematic spaces of Mexico City, and the student-led strike of 1999 at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) against its privatization. By examining the film's depiction of another iteration of the historical Mexican student movement, this article analyzes the notion of *movement*, which is crucial for cinema, Mexican political culture post-1968, and Western political thought. This project points to how political movement, usually associated with the creation of political antagonisms, public protest, and the construction of a popular subject, is akin to what theorists such as Giorgio Agamben, Ernst Jünger, and Gil Anidjar argue is modernity's total mobilization of life by which every aspect of subjectivity is turned to an increasingly accelerating war or a productive effort.

This article shows that the film's alternation between personal, political, and narrative planes questions the notion of movement as the foundation for militancy and social change against neoliberal reform and whether these have been subsumed by the ever-increasing forces of spectacular capitalism. From an infrapolitical perspective, this article argues that faced with the increasing

compulsion of the mediatized markets and identitarian politics to engulf every aspect of life, *Güeros* meditates on the exhaustion of movement and argues that the film posits the existence of something yet to be thought about and that emerges from the crevices of that which cannot be reduced, or rather, mobilized, by the market or politics.

Keywords: Mexican cinema, infrapolitics, Mexican student movement, political movements, Alonso Ruizpalacios

Resumen

Güeros (2014), de Alonso Ruizpalacios es un coming-of-age nostálgico sobre el cine mexicano, la cultura y espacios urbanos de la Ciudad de México a finales del siglo XX y, sobre todo, de la huelga estudiantil de 1999 en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) en contra de su privatización. Al analizar la representación de este film de una nueva iteración del movimiento estudiantil en este país, este artículo explora la pertinencia de la noción de *movimiento* como central al cine, a la cultura política mexicana a partir de 1968 así como para el léxico político occidental. Este proyecto muestra como el concepto de *movimiento*, usualmente asociado al campo de los antagonismos políticos, así como fundamento de la militancia y la subjetividad política es similar a lo que teóricos como Giorgio Agamben, Ernst Jünger y Gil Anidjar señalan como rasgo de la modernidad una "movilización total" en la que se busca que todos los aspectos de la subjetividad sean puestos al de un esfuerzo bélico o productivista.

Este artículo señala cómo al alternar entre los planos político, narrativo y personal este film cuestiona la noción de movimiento como fundamento de la militancia y el cambio social. Desde una tonalidad infrapolítica, el artículo argumenta que esta película reflexiona sobre el agotamiento del concepto de movimiento como catalizador de la transformación social y la producción de subjetividades ante su subsunción por el mercado y la tendencia de la política de absorber cada dimensión de la vida. Por el contrario, este artículo muestra que la postura del film respecto a la idea de movimiento pone de manifiesto

la existencia de algo, *aún por pensar*, que emerge de entre los intersticios de aquello que no puede ser reducido a la movilización total de la vida por la política y el mercado.

Palabras claves: Cine mexicano, infrapolítica, Movimiento estudiantil mexicano, movimientos políticos, Alonso Ruizpalacios

Despite its not-so-stellar performance at the box office, Alonso Ruizpalacios's 2014 cinematographic debut, *Güeros*, caught the attention of critics and film festivals alike and became a reference for Mexican art-house cinema. *Güeros* received the best Feature Film award at the Berlin Film Festival and best film, director, and cinematography in the Ariel Awards, amongst other accolades. This success might have come at least partially from its mobilization of nostalgia for Mexican cinema and popular musical classics. One of the most salient aspects of the film is that is fictionalizes the 1999 student strike in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), which, in tandem with the film's evocation of popular cultural references, produces a nostalgic account of this university's most recent major strike.

Güeros follows Tomás (Sebastián Aguirre), a teenager from Veracruz, whose mother sends him to Mexico City to live with his older brother Federico, Fede, (Tenoch Huerta)—cruelly nicknamed 'Sombra' for his dark skin in contrast to his lighter-skinned sibling. Fede and his roommate Santos (Leonardo Ortizgris) study at UNAM. As Tomás quickly picks up, his older brother is depressed, suffers panic attacks, and is trying without much success to complete his bachelor's thesis. To make things worse, Federico is not attending any academic activity as the movie is set during the 1999 UNAM strike, the longest in its history and the most important iteration of the historic Mexican student movement at the turn of the century, often known simply as *la huelga de la UNAM*. The film embarks on an adventure that takes the protagonists out of their stupor as they search throughout Mexico City for the fictional Mexican rock legend

Epigmenio Cruz.

The wandering throughout the city and the search for Epigmenio frame *Güeros* as a road trip movie, albeit one internal to Mexico City, whose cinematic form and plot are constructed through an alternation between mobilization and paralysis. In Ruizpalacios's words, the transposition between movement and stasis is the film's central concept that grounds other technical decisions, like its notorious black-and-white palette. Ruizpalacios has claimed different sources of inspiration for his film such as the disillusionment of finding one's idol (based on a Bob Dylan anecdote in which he was disappointed once he met an admired musician), politics, and Mexican slang. Although critics have focused on soundscapes and color, this analysis foregrounds the movement—paralysis axis as the link between the film's form and its theoretical significance. According to the director, this is a coming-of-age in which:

> The whole "rolling stone gathers no moss" attitude kept our fingers tapping on the keyboard and back into movement. Just like that, for the mere sake of movement, of keeping on... Sombra and Santos go from stasis back to movement. They leave their apartment and venture into the wild city. They come back to life... the whole visual concept goes back to the main concept of the film: the change from stasis to movement. It was important for the camera to help in creating these atmospheres. After the frenzied prologue—where Tomás throws the water-balloon at the mother and her baby—the camera hardly moves in the first third of the film. With long static shots, it accompanies the characters in their limbo. But as soon as they are forced out of their apartment by their angry neighbors, the camera literally comes off the tripod (you can actually hear it snap) and becomes free again." ("Five Questions")

The film deploys *movement* and *stasis*—acceleration and paralysis—as a dialectic shaping personal and political temporality, narrative, and history. Ruizpalacios presents a dichotomy between movement and stasis. The polysemy of stasis resists containment, signifying both movement and paralysis. When meaning

stoppage or paralysis stasis is tied to a political order's cohesion and stability of a territorial order. Stasis is also used to refer to civil war or internal conflict, that is, of an internal movement that is destructive yet constitutive of every political formation.

This article shows that *Güeros* undoes this dialectic to point out that movement and paralysis no longer structure modern politics but that technological mobilization and mediatization, which resemble what Peter Osborne calls the "contemporary," have encompassed politics and its internal mobilizations and rhythms. Here, I point out how the technological encompassing of the world and, therefore, of politics, life, and art is twofold. On the one hand, it fulfills Western metaphysic's trajectory of creating a self-contained subjectivity. On the other, it points to an infrapolitical remnant, an excess of life that cannot be subsumed either by political or technological mobilizations.

*Güero*s, like most films, is a commodity produced by an assemblage of cultural infrastructures such as film festivals, private and state funding, and spectatorship dynamics. However, I also show that it is a cultural text that lends itself to be read in an infrapolitical key. As such, *Güeros* makes evident that neither politics nor the mediatization of contemporary society are coextensive to life and subjectivity, and neither can cure Fede's paralysis. In other words, while the film comments extensively on neoliberal youth disappointment, neither politics (in the form of protests) nor mediatization (in the form of counterculture or mass) are tantamount to life.

On the contrary, this movie shows that in spite how strong political and mediatization forces shape the character's lives, as Alberto Moreiras has pointed out referring to infrapolitics (and the impossibility of reducing it to a concept) there is a "diferencia absoluta entre la vida y la política, también por lo tanto entre ser y pensar. De la que ningún experto puede hablar" (105). *Güeros* is a film that sheds light on gap between life, politics, and

technology and the difficulty of thinking and experiencing them separately in our times. Furthermore, I will argue that this film pushes us to meditate on the emergence of something that is neither politics nor economics and technological calculation. In the next section, I turn to the social and historical significance of the student strike and point out how Güeros's engagement with this event makes it a film that distances itself from the depoliticized neoliberal aesthetics of Mexican cinema that prevailed during the nineties.

Screening *La huelga*: Neoliberal Cinema and "Depoliticization" of Mexican Society at the Turn of the Century

Mexico's shift from one-party rule to electoral democracy paradoxically undermined democratic ideals. The nascent Mexican democracy of the 1980s and 1990s incorporated human rights policies and free elections as long as integration into NAFTA and global financial circuits remained uncontested. As Rafael Lemus has pointed out, although neoliberalism claims to reject state intervention, it often enforces its agenda through authoritarian uses of state power.

Yet, as Lemus also makes evident, Mexican liberal intelligentsia and swaths of the middle and upper classes granted a certain degree of legitimacy to neoliberalism's promise of democracy and modernization. This optimism collapsed in 1994 amid political, security, and economic crises the *error de diciembre*, the EZLN uprising, and Colosio's assassination—revealing neoliberalism's limits. What came next was not neoliberalism's collapse but its emptying in what Lemus calls its post-hegemonic period. Although the efficiency and morality of neoliberalism became discredited during this second neoliberal moment, the possibility of any other alternative project was regarded as dangerous and potentially leading to a greater disaster.

In this sense, *Güeros* reflects on a recent chapter of Mexican cultural

history marked by simmering disillusionment with neoliberalism and recurring waves of resistance—yet a future beyond the relentless cycle of failed policies and their opposition remains difficult to imagine. If the *Movimiento Estudiantil* is one of many reflections of the nation's political climate, the 1999 movement must be thought of in the context of sweeping neoliberal reform and the dismantling of the state as the center of public life. The Mexican student movement dates back to the 1929 strike that gave way for UNAM's autonomy in the context of an imperial presidency, and 1968, which made evident the limits of the post-revolutionary regime to accommodate the demands of the new middle class, This iteration of the student movement at the turn of the century is in line with an understanding of political mobilization as a dynamic force that aims at "unclogging" a paralyzed political system.

La huelga began when UNAM's President Francisco Barnés de Castro proposed that students pay for tuition or *cuotas* according to their family's income, along with other controversial reforms. Barnés proposed a progressive tuition system in which students with lower incomes would pay less and, in some cases, nothing. Other measures included capping the number of students admitted from UNAM's high schools and having degrees accredited by CENEVAL (Centro Nacional de Evaluación para la Educación Superior, an ONG with close ties to Mexican elites and big business). Had these policies been put in place, they would have meant an erosion of UNAM's mission of promoting upward mobility. As María Rosas's account of the strike recollects, the good faith that some in the academic community had towards the proposal faded as Barnés tried to pass this reform without holding any dialogue with opposing students and faculty. The *Consejo General Huelga* (CGH) capitalized on this mistake and eventually convinced a large number of students to shut down UNAM for over a year and engaged in a public mobilization.

In spite of most mainstream media outlets smear campaign (except for the left-leaning *La Jornada*) that echoed the talking-points of the university

administration and the government that relativized the cost of tuition (students spent more money annually in public transportation, they argued) an portrayed the protestors as lazy and radical troublemakers the students managed to turn public opinion in their favor. Even as the strike ended forcefully in February of 2000 when President Zedillo ordered the federal police to take over campus, the reforms promoted by Barnés were not put in place, and no further attempts to establish tuition and fees at UNAM have been pushed.

Güeros is a sympathetic representation of the student strike while maintaining a critical eye on its darker side. The film emphasizes the commune-like experience of the strike in which chores such as cleaning and cooking were shared and key decisions were democratically made in student led assemblies. The assemblies, experimental horizontal democracy, and critical stances against neoliberal governance built from previous experiences such as the Zapatismo and anticipated other resistance movements to nihilist neoliberalism such as the Oaxaca commune, *Los indignados*, and Occupy Wall-Street. This democratic experience contrasts with the authoritarian way economic reform was imposed in Mexico. Conversely, the film maintains an ambiguous relationship with the mishandling of university equipment and historic murals at UNAM and is highly critical of the enduring *machismo* and economic inequalities within the student body.

This analysis does not seek to downplay the achievements or legitimacy of the student-led strike that halted UNAM's de facto privatization—a pivotal episode in the broader history of resistance to neoliberal authoritarianism. My goal is to inquire what our critical language expresses when we talk about a movement, as well as to better understand what is at stake when grass-roots politics, charismatic leaders, political parties, and popular resistance alike take on the name *movimiento*. From the rise of the Zapatistas to the multiple iterations of the student movement—and 1968 as a key moment in Mexico's

modern history—to the rise of MORENA (*Movimiento Regeneración Nacional*, Mexico's current ruling party that put an end to the democratic transition's discourse), all the way to MAGA politics and other forms of left and right-wing leaning "populisms," *el movimiento* grants legitimacy vis-à-vis neoliberalism's erosion of democracy.

A *movimiento* narrates itself as a transformative, dynamic, and regenerative force in opposition to a political order that is stagnant or paralyzed and grounds its political legitimacy on so-called technical decisions that are imposed anti-democratically upon a passive body politic. Yet, at is shown in the movie, such transformations often follow what Claudio Lomnitz calls the sacrificial logic of protest, revealing the ambivalence of stasis as both movement and paralysis. A political movement's actions to defend something cherished, i.e., access to education, often work by hindering that which is worth fighting for, in this case, by paralyzing academic life (which in turn raises a question of political calculation: how long a strike should last before destroying that which it is protecting). This dialectic is inscribed in the semantics of strikes, as the *paro*, that is, stoppage and paralysis, is the condition of possibility for movement to take place.

Güeros portrays this dialectic between mobilization and paralysis in political and personal dimensions. The shutdown of the university, the *paro estudiantil*, Fede's panic attacks, the journey through the city, and the alternation between meditative and frantic shots and rhythm can be easily associated to struggles of leaving behind personal stagnation but also to move Mexico beyond a neoliberal crisis of democracy.[1] As such, this movie represents a student movement whose strategy consists of a paralysis of quotidian life to overcome the erosion of democracy, while at the personal level, characters circulate through the city to overcome personal paralysis to meditate on the larger meaning of movement at a personal and societal level as *a concept and practice that seeks to accelerate politics and historical time*.

The erosion of public life by unmoored markets is not foreign to cinema. As Ignacio Sánchez Prado comments in *Screening Neoliberalism*, neoliberal policies such as the retreat of state funding in film production and the exhibition market upended Mexican cinema during the 1990s. These changes in cinematic production marked a departure from neo-Mexicanist aesthetics and nationalist cinema during the 1990s and the 21st century. Sánchez Prado correctly identifies that most of the films produced during this period had little to no presence of the Mexican popular classes, as their subject of representation became the rising middle class connected to global markets. Middle-class aesthetics, which often created filmic sanitized and privatized spaces, began to wane with Alfonso Cuarón's 2001 *Y tu mamá también*, in which social thematics—or rather, the impossibility of inscribing the social in neoliberal forms of cinema production—began to be thematized on the big screen. Sánchez Prado comments that while the spaces of neoliberal films were notorious for their avoidance of politics or had a skewed vision of it (i.e., one in which the new middle class was threatened by both the popular classes and the authoritarian government), Cuarón's film exhausts this aesthetic. For instance, this movie uses a voice-over narrator that comments on social issues to speak about the impossibility of "inscribing such realities in forms that would either be too contrived (for instance, by narrating Julio and Tenoch's potential acquisition of social consciousness) or too sanctimonious (like tying the characters' failed pathos to a concrete political or social event), the film opts to place the impossibility of political articulation itself as a formal resource" (186). Although Sánchez Prado's work is seminal for understanding contemporary Mexican cinema, his work takes at face value one of the most ideological propositions of the so-called democratic transition: the notion that the state and politics are the other of private markets.

A surface-level approach to infrapolitics could ask, why bother with politics when the global economy has eroded its relevance? Infrapolitics unsettles the

opposition between economics and politics to demonstrate that they build from the same subjectivist narrative. To show this, Moreiras works around the well-known May 1968 slogan "the personal is political" whose afterlife reaches the 1999 strike. Taking to the letter that the *personal is political* implies that every aspect of our lives—gender, race, or otherwise—is one at the same with politics. While Moreiras acknowledges that the 1968 social movements aided in reforming repressive family and gender relations, their goal was to liberate life, not "convertir la vida en el instrumento ni tampoco en la consecuencia de la política" (106). Contemporary politics has sidelined freedom for the sake of its total expansion, which is not foreign to the relentless advancement of capital but rather is "profundamente dependiente del discurso capitalista y de su principio de equivalencia general" (112).

Moreiras's comparison of politics to capitalist logic goes beyond stating that economic interests have eroded politics. Instead, he points out that much like Marxism laments that general equivalence turns everything into a fungible abstract value—capital-politics is the culmination of this process by which every subjectivity is interchangeable in as much as it becomes a term recognizable for political struggle (subjectivities are framed as citizens, activists, militants, or antagonists–all ready to be mobilized by politics). When fully subsumed by politics' narratological structure, all dimensions of contemporary subjectivities are at once politically productive (all aspects of the "self" must serve a cause) and the product of politics (I am but the product of politics and power relations). The belief that the self is the product of power relationships and that therefore personal and social transformation must go through politics falls under what I call "political productivism."

If the label "productivism" suggests that society's leading principle is to increase production, infrapolitics exhibits how a political subjectivity is one that understands itself as produced by politics and therefore destined to engage in politics. Politics and economics share a common logic: both demand that

every facet of life be productive–a convergence that ultimately turns politics into spectacle. This complicates historicist critiques of neoliberalism such as Lemus's and Sánchez Prado's, not because there is no difference between the post-revolutionary Mexican and neoliberal periods but because the shared metaphysical underpinnings of politics and economics become visible.

In what follows, I argue that *Güeros*, read through an infrapolitical lens, moves beyond a critique of neoliberalism to reimagine politics. The film resists a purely political inscription–not due to ethnic, gendered, class, or geopolitical constraints–but to invite viewers back to the emancipatory spirit of 1968 and its legacies, seeking not greater regulation of life but the liberation of its manifold possibilities.

Infrapolitical Mobilizations

Thinking *Güeros* as an opening beyond politics requires working through the movie, especially as the film lends itself to an allegorical interpretation of Fede's crisis as embodying the Mexican nation. Early in the film, Tomás realizes that his brother does not participate in the strike, nor is he against it. Instead, he takes pride in not participating in the strike nor breaking the picket line (like some students who continued their studies through *extra-muros* classes). Fede and Santos argue that they are not *esquiroles* or strikebreakers; in contrast, they are, in Fede's words, "en huelga de la huelga" (00:18:20-00:18:37) as they refuse to either protest or become complicit in the neoliberalizaiton of UNAM. As Dan Russek puts it, in contrast to the strikers and Ana (Ilse Salas), who is a student activist, Fede "takes a decidedly apolitical stance" (82). However, despite Fede's mental gymnastics to justify his lack of involvement with the strike, he is going through a personal crisis, suffering from writer's block and panic attacks. The film portrays the fragmentation of Fede's subjectivity through high-pitched frequencies and dark compositions that convey a sense of disorientation.

Güeros's monochromatic composition starkens the contrasts of a fragmented Mexico City. The different tonalities make visible the difference between wealthy western parts and impoverished and racialized eastern neighborhoods, as well as between the upper classes who work in creative industries and exploit service industry workers and marginalized youth. As Jacobo Asse Dayán points out, the film is a tapestry of fragmented individuals, families, and social classes to that point that it seems that "[t]he whole country appears to be feeling the debilitating effects of neoliberalism (109).

What this critic detects as the protagonists' discomfort, which "seems to spring from a sense of social fragmentation and the ensuing impossibility of creating a truly collective movement" (160) is also portrayed in the film's urban disintegration. Mexico City's disjointed topography shows no evidence of cohesive body politic, but only dismembered and fragmented groups and individuals struggling to survive in a hyper-competitive society. The film's interplay between Fede's inner turmoil and Mexico's social fragmentation suggests that neither individual subjectivity nor the public sphere can resist neoliberal erosion.

Güeros would then be a representation of neoliberalism's effects on Mexican society through Fede's body. We are thus presented with a body politic aching from not foreseeing a future or anything that is not neoliberal repetition: that is, subjecting everything to the logic of general equivalence, including higher education. The film's metaphorization of crisis as infirmity and fragmentation would be in tune with Giorgio Agamben's notion that the rise of neoliberalism by foreclosing the question of revolution can be compared to a disease with no cure, that is, a chronic disease.

Güeros takes the notion of disease as it relates to movement as a political and aesthetic question. Like other road movies that act as coming-of-age films, a car and a group of friends become central to the development of the characters and the advancement of the plot, narrative, and the protagonists'

rites of passage to a fully formed subject (and in this case, one without anxiety). The film is structured around a series of random encounters in different parts of the city entangled with the seemingly pointless mission of finding a lost poet, Epigmenio Cruz.

Epigmenio is a fictional ’60s rock musician who produced an album named *Los Güeros* and who Tomás finds out is in his final days. The singer is the last memento from the sibling’s absent father, who, along with the tape, bequeathed to his sons the dubious anecdote that the musician “hizo llorar a Bob Dylan,” which, in the eyes of Tomás, gives him an epic status. He is also attributed with a redemptive yet failed messianic condition as the one who “pudo haber salvado al rock nacional” (00:16:00-00:16:30) had he only played at the mythical 1971 Avándaro music festival, often regarded as a sort of belated Mexican Woodstock, instead of getting entangled in a romantic triangle with his producer’s girlfriend. Epigmenio also evokes the figure of the absent father that an allegorical reading would quickly expand to the failed Mexican statehood during neoliberalism. Russek further expands the symbolic association of the singer as a placeholder for the melancholy of the sixties for those who did not experience it, which triggers in the audience a longing for a radical past.

It is worth noting that we never listen to Epigmenio’s music, as every time his record is played in Tomás’s headphones, the audience hears silence, a screeching tape, or witnesses the characters’ ecstatic musical experience. Epigmenio’s music is therefore only a mirage, an ellipsis that allows the spectator to project an image of fulfillment, but whose unveiling would ultimately be disappointing. The resemblances between *Güeros* with Roberto Bolaño’s *Los detectives salvajes* as works in which the protagonists search for a lost poet only to become disappointed when finding them and the shortcomings of aesthetic experience have not gone unnoticed by critics. The cinematic ellipsis that is Epigmenio’s music also resembles Mexican cinema

classic *María Candelaria*. Much like in the Mexican classic we never see the portrait that generates a commotion and mobilize communal violence, we are also left to wonder how and why Epigmenio's music generates an ecstatic experience in the characters. The illusion surrounding Epigmenio collapses when the group finally meets him, only to discover a disillusioned alcoholic unwilling to sign an autograph. Yet this disappointing encounter propels the characters out of their domestic paralysis, enabling the narrative to embrace the conventions of a road movie.

By reading this film allegorically, movement allows Fede to confront his anxiety through *political and aesthetic experience*, namely his exposure to student politics and the search for the lost poet. This is a common trait road of movie characters who overcome hardships by opening themselves to the world. As Nadia Lie points out, the journey and its hardships, the contact with "otherness," romance, casual conversations, and the competition amongst young males are conventions within the road film genre that allow a transformation in the protagonists' subjectivities regardless of the trip's destination (which answers Santos's question "¿Para qué nos vamos si al rato vamos a regresar?" (00:21:30-00:21:40), by showing that the journey in itself is what matters).

The notion that mobilization can overcome paralysis is a common ground between politics and aesthetics. Much like in road movies, whose characters develop their subjectivity through a journey, social movement's structures give meaning to a political subject by mobilizing every aspect of life, which brings us back to the totalizing understanding of "the personal is political" about which Moreiras warns. In other words, towards the end of the movie there are glimpses that Fede is no longer anxious and apathetic and that this change was triggered by his contact with subalterns such as immigrants and dwellers of the low-income neighborhoods, the remains of nature in the city, Ana's femininity, and the experience of the student strike. Güeros's narrativization

of the subject comes full circle as aesthetic experience, in tandem with the student movement, allows the Mexican political subject represented by Federico to abandon paralysis by partaking in the mobilization of civil society.

By the same token, the movie's representation of the student movement–in line with Rosas's recollection–shows that engaging with politics allowed protesters to overcome neoliberal individualism and fragmentation and to leave behind class, gender, and ethnic cleavages. Mónica García Blizzard expands on this interpretation by looking at the film's romance between Fede and Ana as the overcoming of an impossible union for Mexican *mestizaje*: a white Mexican woman with a dark-skinned man. That this romance is successful opens a new set of possibilities to the histories of racism of Mexican culture, which historically excluded indigenous men from the fabric of *mestizaje* in favor of white males' domination over racialized women. Instead, this opens the door to a reparative alternative to a cinematographic tradition that, despite its attempts to compensate for historical exclusions, ultimately fell prey to them. Even as *Güeros* speaks to Mexico's racial constructions and its limits (Fede and Tomás are siblings who are treated differently because of their skin tones), this reading of the film remains too imbued in politics' unmoored expansion. García Blizzard's interpretation is geared towards accomplishing *mestizaje*'s fantasy: a full synthesis of Mexican identity and society. However, the film presents the audience elements that put a break on this interpretation.

Although *güero* is a marker for white-skinned and wealthier Mexicans (lighter skin tonalities and social position tend to coincide), the film shows that there is nothing essential to race. Racial categories are constantly problematized, for instance when the protagonists accidentally venture into a shady neighborhood and are pushed by one of the locals to buy him a round of beers. A marginalized light-skinned youngster tells Tomás as he fears for the safety of his brother "¿Qué pasó güerito? ¿A poco me tienes miedo?" (00:40:30-00:40:40). This is further expanded on in the scene when Santos

explodes as a security guard calls Fede "güero" to which he responds, "¿Te parece que esto es güero?" while holding his friends head, and the guard cynically replies, "sí, lo es" (01:10:50-01:11:30)

Asse Dayán argues that while fragment points to Güeros's self-awareness of its critical position towards neoliberal fragmentation, it also partakes in the production of auteur cinema palatable for the upper and middle classes, therefore it is a movie "that wants to address social fragmentation but is only going to be watched by one of those fragments" (163). So, even if critical of neoliberalism, participation in this type of cultural production turns Fede or anyone into a *güero*. This is an intuitive reading that picks up on the fact that the abovementioned scenes show that *güero*, as a social marker of privilege can be disembodied from racial traits as Fede is at once a racialized subject, a university student, and an object of neoliberal fiction. This self-referential gesture comes to fruition as Fede complains about Ana's preppy friends who work in auteur cinema that exploit "Neo-Mexicanist aesthetics" to have their movies circulate internationally and receive public financing. Under this reading, Fede shows that *güero* is now a marker of those who participate in the global economy regardless of their ethnic provenance. Asse Dayán, however, sees this as a political shortcoming by which even if the film is critical of neoliberalism, it is not revolutionary but "not conservative either, just very modest...in its progressive political ambitions" (162).

The disaffection with *Güeros*'s revolutionary shortcomings comes from the expectation that art must be subservient to politics and social representations. What Asse Dayán misses that while the film acknowledges the student movement's relevance in defending education, politics gradually vacates the film, which allows push back against a strictly political reading of *Güeros*. The notion that the development of a film and its character development must come to a full closure–that is, all elements within a movie must be subsumed into a cohesive narrative ultimately frame cinema as a teleological enterprise.

Gareth Williams, commenting on Willy Thayer's work on Raul Ruiz, defines argues that the industrial narrative paradigm of commercial film makes every aspect of a movie conform to an anthropological narrative in which a subject develops. By the same token, much like politics strives for every aspect of life to serve it, commercial cinema displays a compulsion to have every element on the screen represent reality (the sociological aspect of *Güeros* by which neoliberalism, higher education, and other aspects are displayed on the screen). This compels filmmakers, spectators, and critics to align every cinematic element with a narrative structure grounded in a fixed conception of the human subject–what Williams terms "anthropological."

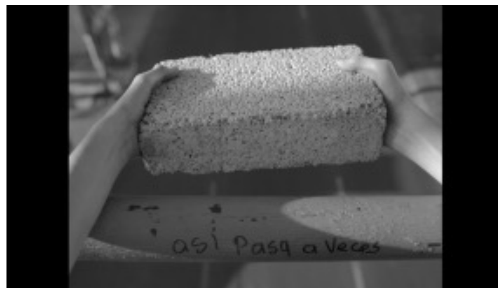
First, I will show that while the film presents movement as necessary supplement for galvanizing politics, its deployment erodes political structures. Secondly, the film is aware that although political movements still inhabit our imaginary, technological mobilization increasingly hold sway of them. Let's begin with the first point. Countering the simplification that political movements are a reaction against institutions, Gil Anidjar points out that political institutions and concepts are not static entities. On the contrary, politics only exists as sovereign operations that are mobilized, put in circulation, all of which ultimately erode any consistency in our political lexicon and institutions. Anidjar takes on the concept of "blood" not as a political concept, but as a metonym whose presence oscillates from signifying life to capital and from community to contagion for circulation and stagnation constantly, that is, a semantic field constructing and eroding conceptual demarcations. Blood works an analytical category in Western imagery, that at the heart of imageries of the body politic like the Hobbesian Leviathan—but also Eucharistic practices, sacrifice, biological racism, and community—lies a narrative of blood and fluidity. Anidjar alters Schmitt's famous motto about the secularization of political modernity that aimed at philologically grounding concepts by saying that "all significant concepts of the history of the modern

world are *liquidated* theological concepts" (85). By adding that concepts are constantly "liquidated," Anidjar shows that although modern political operations repeatedly construct a community by *mobilizing it*, or as biopolitics would have it, by production of life, the operations imposed on life by politics constantly undo any conceptual sedimentation.

The portrayal of fragmentation and paralysis through the movie's use of shaky hand-held cameras and upside-down transitions convey disorientation, discomfort, and pain but also allow the characters and narrative to be set into motion. The film's representations of malaise and uneasiness anticipate the transition from paralysis to movement and starken the film's association of the dialectics of stasis to that of health and infirmity and suggests the idea that pain is necessary for a movement to take shape (which echoes Lomnitz's description of self-sacrifice in student movements). This alternation between stasis and paralysis and the correlation between pain and movement are portrayed similarly in three major scenes that showcase images of pain and persecution: seemingly random objects falling vertically from the sky that accelerate or slow down movement.

The first is the opening scene that triggers Tomás's trip to Mexico City and begins with woman with signs of physical abuse desperately trying to leave a house while her baby cries and the phone keeps ringing (which introduces the recurring trope of the absent father and the sense of uneasiness at home). We then see an alternation of nadir and overhead shots of Tomás and a friend throwing water-filled balloons from a rooftop, one of which lands on the woman's baby. After being called out by the neighbors, we see Tomás running away in a shot filmed by a traveling dolly that progressively turns upside down.

The second scene begins with an overhead shot of Federico and Santos duping their neighbor's daughter who is disabled to connect their house appliances with an extension cable after their power is cut off. The neighbor finds out and chases them down the building until they flee in their old car,



Figures 1, 2 & 3: Different objects in vertical overhead and point-of-view shots propel and end action.

propelling them into the city, all of which happens while Fede has a disorienting panic attack filmed with a shaky personal camera–we even hear the camera pop out of its tripod and lose its stability. The third scene leads the movie to its ending and is composed of alternating shots of the protagonists looking for Epigmenio in their car and a boy being chased and bullied by two other kids. The boy, who like the woman at the beginning of the film is hurt, throws a brick from a pedestrian bridge to intimidate his bullies. The brick crashes into the windshield of the protagonists' car, which leads Federico to chase the boy, (a scene also shot with a shaky camera), all of which eventually leads the

group to find Epigmenio (Figures 1, 2, & 3).

These sequences trigger and stop motion in the film by presenting vertical shots (overhead and point-of-view). It is easy to see in them an allegory for pain initiating movement, and the latter as a remedy for paralysis, not to mention the representation of transcendence in falling objects that set in motion an immanent world. And yet, it would be hard to affirm that these vertical shots grant a transcendental perspective or a subject with control over the world. On the contrary, while these shots accelerate the plot, they show how random acts and sheer chance set characters in motion.

The film's engagement with politics only to later abandon it becomes evident in the fictionalization of one of the most controversial events of the strike, the defacement of David Alfaro Siqueiros's mural *El derecho a la cultura* at the *Rectoría*. The mural, which UNESCO recognizes along with the rest of UNAM's main campus as a World Heritage Site, contains different key dates in Mexican history: 1521, the conquest of Mexico; 1857, the first liberal Constitution; 1810, the Mexican Independence; 1910; the Mexican Revolution,

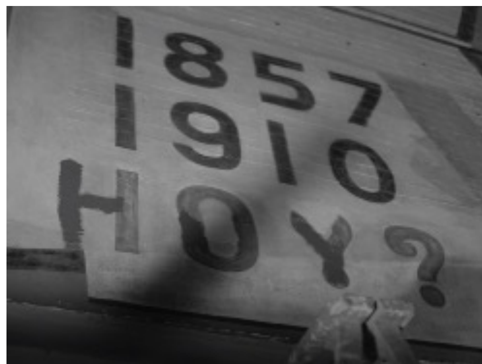


Figure 4: A fictionalized account of Siqueiros's *El derecho a la cultura*

and finally a 19 followed by two question marks (19??) that lead the beholder to question when the next Mexican insurrection will be (although is worth noting that the 19?? assumed that this would have happened in the 20th century, which retroactively indicates that the cycle of revolutions ended with the century.) This open date has been altered two times during student occupations, one in 1968 and the other in 1999, which makes evident the student movement's desire to partake in historical periodization. *Güeros*'s fictional account of this intervention has the students inscribing "HOY?" instead of "1999," as happened during *la huelga* (Figure 4).

By replacing 1999 with "Hoy," the film makes the audience reflect on the strike's relevance a decade after, its relation to Mexican history, and even how their demands remain valid. After unsuccessfully trying to stop her former boyfriend Furia from altering the mural, Ana asks Fede what Siqueiros–a well-known leftist–would have thought of this event to which Federico simply responds, "seguramente estaría de acuerdo" (01:01:45-01:01:02). This exchange points to the recurring tension between constituent and constituted power or between legitimacy and legality that signals to the dilemma that any transformative politics faces of whether to abide by legality or provoke change through violent means.

Although there is much to be said about the intricacies of the use of violence beyond legal structures, the movie stops us short of making us think through the political. The references to Mexican history and the excitement of the mural scene that showcases the students' tribal energy, many of them carrying torches and beating drums in addition to Fede's answer, seem to have moved him from the solipsistic "I" who is "en huelga de la huelga" to becoming part of a political project. However, as soon as Fede's self-recognition as part of a collective movement comes, the movie backs off from politics.

Fede's answer comes as the camera lingers in a medium shot in which we see him and Ana from the back as they witness from afar the rest of the

students. Not only does the scene mark a visual and auditive distance to the students–their image blurs and we just hear a distant murmur–but also Fede's unexcited tone contrasts with his ecstatic expressions when listening to Epigmenio or his romantic infatuation with Ana. Politics becomes relegated to the background at the precise moment that Fede sees himself as a part of a political movement. Fede's recognition of belonging to the movement is shown by portraying him as emotionally and physically detached from the students, which is followed by the group leaving campus and the strike. The flight from the political scene should not be seen as the closure of movement by which Fede turns away from his anxiety. While this might be partially true, the movie not only problematizes political movements but raises the question of technological mobilization as a force that engulfs political movements.

Agamben's article "Movement" illustrates Anidjar's "liquidated" political concepts by explaining how 19th century canonical state theories that associated movement with dynamic civil society opposed to the rigid legality of the nation-state were upended by a 20th century unmoored expansion of politics. According to Agamben, Carl Schmitt's *State, Movement, People* reconfigured the rigid dichotomy (nation-state versus dynamic society) by understanding the public bureaucracy as a static element and a political movement (embodied in the Nazi party but also the Soviets) as a dynamic component. By doing so, Schmitt introduces a third element in "the people," which is presented as "impolitical" or "apolitical" *that must be mobilized by the party*. Movement then becomes a technological relation by which a body politic is set into motion and hence is produced by a political force or by–in the language of contemporary theory–biopolitical apparatuses.

This reflection puts Agamben in line with authors such as Schmitt and Jünger that argue that the mobilization of populations for militaristic efforts has caused an erosion of the frontier between war and other types of violence. From an infrapolitical perspective, we could say that much like the erasure of

the boundaries of war, hyper-politicization of identities mobilizes every aspect of life in the pursuit of political efficiency. Agamben's reading of Schmitt allows to see that modern democracies mobilize a people, which in turn becomes at once its source of legitimacy and the impolitical object of the operations of power. Modern democracy, therefore, is the total identification of politics to the people. From this axiom, it follows that hegemonic struggle, even that for the liberation of people, is ultimately dependent on the total mobilization of every aspect of life–that is, everything from literature, art, affect, and the body must be directed at the consolidation of power. These reflections call our attention to the consequences of making politics indistinguishable from life but also shed light the complexities of the technological production of the people.

Total Mobilization: Full Mediatization and Contemporary Aesthetics

Even as Asse Dayán has commented on the movie's meta-cinematic reflections on its own relation to neoliberal cinema, this gesture also allows us to think about the erosion of politics that gives way to technological mediatization but also allows for thinking from an infrapolitical perspective. This happens after "el Oso"–an actual striking student who participated briefly in the film–lets the protagonists come inside the UNAM campus. In this scene El Oso and the protagonists ramble about the strike (Is it a revolutionary event? Is the university inclusive enough? Is the strike a political event, or does the event come from everydayness at the strike, such as cleaning a toilet?)

Fede, or rather, Tenoch Huerta, breaks character as he cannot contain his laughter when el Oso bashes him. This is followed by Santos (or actor Leonardo Ortizgris, as the fiction collapses) asking him his opinion on the film's script. As el Oso continues to share his opinions, the camera drifts apart, and we see a film clapboard, which breaks down the narrative and reminds us of its fictive

character. El Oso finally comes clean and mocks the script's verisimilitude, to state that "a mi me parece particularmente malo. Yo veo el guion como una película de correteadas… y ustedes son los protagonistas." (00:49:10-00:50:00). While Asse Dayán thinks of this fragment as one questioning *Güeros*'s neoliberal aesthetics of making middle-class urban protagonists "the privileged witnesses of our times" (165), this fragment also parodies the seriousness of militancy and denarrativizes the link between aesthetics and political mobilization by showing–at least briefly–the fictive but also the mediatized and technological mobilization undergone by the characters.

Despite the film's reluctance to adhere to political mobilization, even a critic like Camila Torres-Castro who doesn't chastise the film for doing so, looks to ground subjectivity elsewhere. Her reading correctly locates the trope of the lack of a house and the possibility of finding an abode in the *movimiento*. As she points out, most characters are forced out of their homes and are striving to find one (like the students who have made UNAM their home) as the neoliberal fragmented nation no longer provides stable refuge. Moreover, the disappointing encounter with Epigmenio forces Tomás and Fede to let go of their nostalgic relationship with the past (and the revolutionary politics of 1968). Torres-Castro argues that the film avoids paralysis by looking inward into silence. This does not refer to the muteness of a paralyzed Fede, but the "utopic" silence showcased in the communal experience of music and the silent and intimate dialogues that are a "shell that guards the self from public space" (37) and which are able to posit an alternative space (a new social geography), and therefore, a new refuge.

Torres-Castro correctly infers that the social space laid out in *Güeros* is one of fraught politics and neoliberal exploitation that has destroyed the notion of a stable home (or, more precisely, dispelled the illusion that it ever existed). Ana is the radio broadcaster for *Contrabanda FM* (which resembles *Ke Huelga*, a student radio of the time of the strike). In a scene she reads on air a poem

written when she was a first-semester student. The poem is Javier Peñalosa's "Extensión de la casa" whose verses deal with the fragmentation of the abode and the self and its extension outside set boundries, which coincides with the film's reflection on mediatization: "Observamos los escombros largamente/ como si en ellos reconociéramos los vestigios de la casa/ Como si en cada piedra pudiéramos adivinar/ los espacios en los que crecimos/ Tantos fragmentos de nosotros derrumbados... Para extenderla a los lugares más queridos/para lanzar la casa con fuerza hacia el agua/ a las ramas más altas de los árboles" (00:20:00-00:21:17). This reading of the film, however, does not consider that the notion of home has also been mobilized by politics and the market. To expand on this, let us return to the film's fictionalization of the alteration of Siqueiros's mural. As I have indicated, the film depicts the striker's writing "HOY" in the mural instead of the original inscription "1999". This change in the mural points to a different element within the film: its contemporary character, as it shows the audience that strike's demands continues to be pertinent and the mural remains a contested site of inscription in history (i.e., the mural has recently been subject to alterations by feminist activists).

Following Peter Osborne, the contemporary also speaks to a notion that goes beyond present-day relevance and refers to the temporal regime of late capitalism. The contemporary is also the temporal structure that arises when modernity's possibilities for historical and political change are exhausted. For Osborne, if modernity was a "temporal experience" in which novelty, a "new time" constantly ruptured with tradition and the present (political or a cultural Avant-Garde would be its most extremes versions in which revolutionary subject or artistic force spearheads historical movement), the contemporary has done away with any sense of futurity. In Osborne's words, the contemporary engulfs temporality in a continuous present: "[i]f modernity projects a present of permanent transition, forever reaching beyond itself, the contemporary fixes or enfolds such transitoriness within the duration of a conjuncture, or at its

most extreme, the stasis of a present moment" (24).

The structural form of the contemporary is then experienced as a perpetual movement with no origin or end in sight–as Osborne puts it, the contemporary constantly disavows the horizon of expectation that propels modern history. To bring Osborne's meditation on art and philosophy to our concerns, the contemporary is an experience in which the erasure of a historical principle has left time ungrounded, with the exception of the demands of the market. For Osborne, mediations such style, genre, medium, or a movement gave ontological certainty to art. While its questioning and negation propelled modern art, "which is at the same time that of the production of new, more complicated, negatively mediating forms: mediations of the crisis of mediations" (83) The weakening of mediations and the erosion of art's principles (and their colonial and geopolitical mandates) open a space of freedom in which archaic art, modernism, or post-conceptual art could be labeled as contemporary art regardless of their style with the caveat that they must negotiate with market imperatives. The contemporary as the temporal regime of neoliberalism is one in which we no longer think of time as a historical progression that moves forward but as a perpetual present into which different temporalities coexist *in a saturated present as long as they abide by market forces*.

This stagnant temporality is made evident in the film, as there are distinct references in the film to 1999, but also gags, shots (which reference Tizoc, Pedro Infante, etc.) that resort to the Golden Age of Mexican cinema, and a musical score (Toña La Negra, Agustín Lara, Natalia Lafourcade, and Juan Gabriel) that brings this period and more recent periods making them "contemporary." While these allusions have garnered the attention of critics, there are also various anachronic elements in Güeros left unnoticed, for instance, a scene at "Super K" minimarket, that is evidently anachronic (as this chain did not exist in Mexico City well into the 21st century) as well as the more notorious presence of smartphones in the hands of the attendees to a party that disrupts

the film's illusion that the film is faithfully representing 1999.

Beyond underscoring the strike's lasting significance and evoking nostalgia, these elements disrupt the illusion of 1999 and construct a contemporary aesthetic where classic Mexican cinema, turn-of-the-century props like Walkmans, and consumer practices from the film's production era (the 2010s) coexist. This collapse of temporalities shows that more so than pointing out a timely political intervention, the film is meditating on what it means to inhabit a temporal regime marked by technologization and immediate forms of communication that compress the notions of present and future at the least in the way modernity envisioned.

The film subtly portrays motion driven not by politics or history, but by the pervasive forces of mediatization and technology. In addition to the meta-filmic references and anachronistic gestures, mediatization is portrayed through the ubiquitous television sets that populate *Güeros* on which the same show is running. The images displayed on the screens belong to *Big Brother*, a reality whose first edition in Mexico was produced by television juggernaut Televisa and whose release coincided with UNAM's strike. The show's format consisted of gathering strangers in a house with cameras to track their activities 24/7. Footage of the program featuring, its rules, participants, as well as its development, appear in casual conversations and on the omnipresent TV sets in the various spaces in the movie, like in Federico's apartment, a clinic, and the *pulquería* where Epigmenio is found. A telling moment happens when, from the window of his apartment, Federico is showing Tomás a shutdown UNAM while *Big Brother* is running on the television. The chatter from the television in the film is interrupted by Tomás asking his brother, "¿es cierto que viven ahí?'" to which Fede responds, "¿qué no ves?" pointing to the occupied UNAM, to which Tomás replies, "Los del movimiento, los de la universidad." (00:19:10-00:19:25) Tomás's response is left unanswered, and silence lingers, but this lack of dialogue makes evident a semantic confusion between the students

and the participants of the reality show is taking place as both are having their everyday lives in prosthetic houses (UNAM and *Big Brother*'s house) that are broadcasted live.

During the early 20th century, Ernst Jünger proposed an understanding of modern society that still speaks to mediatized societies. For Jünger, industrial capitalism and technological advancements accelerated society and did away with traditional social structures and ways of life by putting into motion every single aspect of human life, either as part of the reproduction of capital or war. For Jünger, while bourgeois society operated under the pretense of eliminating all forms of contingencies that do not abide by the predictability of the market and liberal democracy (what I have referred to as the infrapolitical critique of the general equivalent), the experience of total warfare opens a window for something incalculable.

For Jünger, during 20th century the total mobilization of societies in the name of war (*Mobilmachung*)–described similarly to Schmitt's impolitical people put into motion–goes beyond a political or military movement (*Bewebung*). Jünger's description of modern politics is one in which not only boundaries between war and peace, but also between life and technology (the experience of being set in motion by the state and the market) are hard to pin down, but one in which everyone and everything is already set into motion. In Jünger's words "Total Mobilization is far less consummated than it consummates itself; in war and peace, it expresses the secret and inexorable claim to which our life in the age of masses and machines subjects us" ("Total Mobilization", 128). While Jünger's politics of pain and violence as a heroic prowess to flee from liberal societies is far from desirable or feasible, his work erodes the fantasy that mobilization is a tool for attaining political goals. Jünger realizes this when commenting how the mobilization of society is far more powerful than 19th professional warfare, as total mobilization encompasses:

> not only the entirety of human and material reserves in a unitary context, but

> it is also characterized by variability, by the malleability of the deployment of men and means… Just as the offensive no longer seeks to reach the fronts in the old sense of the word, but rather seeks, with various and not necessarily only military resources, to reach space in all its depth, with its systems and populations, so its specific measures no longer focus only on the army, but on the planned organization of the entire energy (*The worker*, 185)

The same could be said of socialist struggles, Jünger mentions its strength lies in including every subject voluntarily from all corners of society: "All the decisive orders of mobilization do not proceed top-down, but are formulated, far more effectively, as revolutionary goals. Women fight for their participation in the production process. The youth demands labor service and military discipline" (158). This raises the question of whether there is anything that is not already mobilized by the productivist forces of politics and the market in contemporary society. A question like this brings us back to the ending of *Güeros* as the car is stopped by a demonstration of UNAM students, which is followed by Ana joining the protest and Federico unsuccessfully chasing after her. The movie ends as Tomás yells to his brother as he is pulling away from the stranded car looking for Ana. Federico, who looks relaxed in contrast to his previously anxious self, eventually looks at the camera and has his picture taken by his brother as the sound of marching band plays in back (Figure 5). The ending prompts viewers to ask whether Fede's encounter with the *movimiento* frees him from anxiety–or simply turns him into another cog in the machinery of spectacular capitalism. This brings us back again to the question of whether there is anything in the contemporary world that exceeds the forces of politics and the market.

For this, let's return briefly to Epigmenio and his failed presence at the Avándaro rock festival, not by focusing on the musician's wasted potential but as a symbol of the troubled relationship between the counterculture and the student movement. The Avándaro rock festival has been interpreted

Figure 5: A photo taken by Tomás of a relaxed Fede amongst the demonstrators

by cultural critics like José Agustín as a corollary of Mexican rock and 1960s counterculture. Another important topic raised by Agustín is that while Mexican counterculture, the *hippitecas*, rock enthusiasts, and their literary avatar "La Onda" were often criminalized by the government and therefore perceived as fellow travelers of the student movement in their rejection of a disciplinary and traditional society, they cannot be lumped into the political movements of the sixties and seventies.

The lack of political commitment from the Mexican countercultural scene garnered them many critiques from different actors within the political spectrum. One of the most prominent ones was that of Carlos Monsiváis, who called La Onda and Mexican counterculture "antinacionalista, imitativa y apolítica" (234) as he deemed the movement more concerned about imitating American counterculture than truly forging a political movement that challenged Mexican authoritarian society. Monsiváis's demand to the Avándaro attendees to be mobilized for politics points rather to the fact that depoliticized hedonism and "relajo" could be read in two different keys. On the one hand, there is a shared diagnosis that the attack on democracy and the commons renders some, like Fede, in deep crisis and even depression,

as no aspect of life is free from market forces and an oppressive state. On the other, it reaffirms the expectation that political movements compulsively engulf every aspect of subjectivity and life, from personal relationships to love, arts, music, and literature to reach their goals.

Some, like the Avándaro festival attendees or Fede, resist this demand. Though they refuse to engage in politics, they are not entirely opposed to it–Fede calls this stance a 'huelga de la huelga.' Whether his anxiety fades because romantic, aesthetic, and political experiences transform him, enabling full integration into politics or the market, remains for the viewer to decide. Yet, as the film suggests, even as these forces surround him–students marching past the car, the swirl of mobilization–Fede's existence cannot be wholly reduced to them. In its final moments, the film invites us to glimpse a remnant of life beyond politics, however fleeting, captured through Tomás's and Ruizpalacios's cameras.

Notes

1 I thank Peter Szork for raising the question of *Güeros*'s similarities with the *slacker* sub-genre. Andrew O'Hehir labeled the film this way as Fede and Santos refusal to do anything "productive" to instead spend most of their time in their messy apartment strongly resonates with this sub-genre. Although Richard Linklater's *Slacker*, to point to a prominent example, also moves from private spaces to Austin's streets, *Güeros*'s narrative arc in which characters engage with experiences such as family, love, and politics that may (or may not work) as remedy for their nihilism. O'Hehir also notices *Güeros* similarities to the French New Wave and to Philippe Garrel's *Regular Lovers*. One could also think of Jan Ole Gester's *A Coffee in Berlin*. Although Güeros shares traits with Garrel and Ole Gester–black-and-white aesthetics, disaffected youth, and political confrontation–it engages more deeply with the nexus of politics and technological mobilization.

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