

# New York's Corner Stores (Bodegas)

By Isabelle Ma



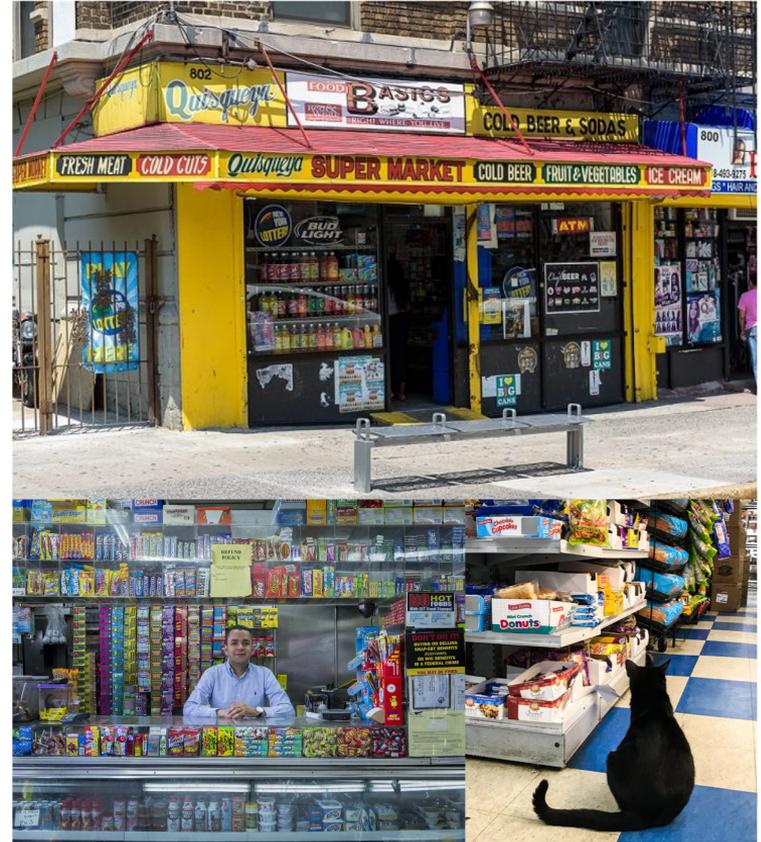
# Why are you interested in this artifact?

At first glance, bodegas may seem like any corner store, but they're so much more. They're a place where you can go to grab a quick bite or have a chat with your neighbors. Bodegas are cultural institutions that add to the neighborhood's character.

As a kid, I was always in awe at all options that were available. They almost seemed limitless because they had everything I would need, ranging from household supplies to chips and sandwiches. And during my trips to my local bodega, the owner would always initiate a conversation and ask about my week and family. These little interactions are what makes bodegas special and an integral part of the neighborhood.

# How does the artifact relate to the themes we have discussed in class?

This artifact relates to the themes of space. Bodegas were initially opened by Puerto Rican, Caribbean and Latin American immigrants after World War II and are now owned by other immigrants and people of color. They began as a space for convenience, but have developed into a place to meet other residents, a place tied to cultural backgrounds, and a place people can call home and feel comfortable in. Like the community gardens we discussed about in class, these bodegas became a space for the local residents to gather and enjoy each other's company. It became a place for the community.



# In what ways does this artifact contribute to your understanding of urban life?



This artifact contributes to my understanding of urban life because bodegas are not only convenient, but are also community centers. Owners make an effort to get to know their customers and create a safe space for their customers to gossip, tell jokes, and discuss personal problems. Some even provide protection for their communities. Bodegas have become an important part of New York.