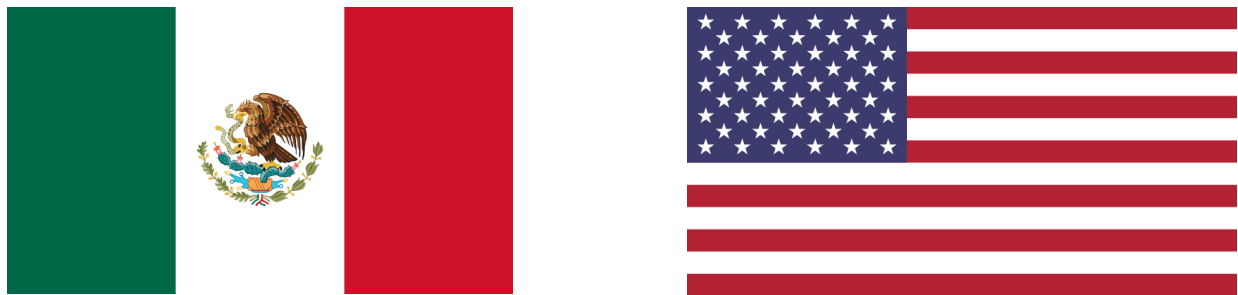


Between worlds

Guadalupe was born in the United States, studied in Mexico and has been shuttling between the two countries since then. Her home is where your family is and she cannot say exactly where she wants to grow old. Like some of her family members, she belongs to the group of so-called transmigrants. Migration researchers have found that their cross-border movements – compared to migration – have not decreased in subsequent generations. The locally stable life, in the sense of a nation-state at least, seems to be a historical anomaly.



Anyone who goes for a walk in New York City on a Sunday near the George Washington Bridge on the Hudson River, meets several of the 40 football teams, which play their unregistered league games. Only Spanish is spoken, because most of the players and spectators are Mexicans and other Latin Americans - many undocumented. Here you do not just kick the ball, you also meet compatriots and friends, you exchange information, job opportunities and work experience. You can, under certain circumstances, find the Mexican consul or a consular official there. The season officially opens with a game, and finally back to eat real Mexican tortillas and tacos.

Perhaps Doña Rosa is also there with one of her children or grandchildren, preparing the best Mexican dishes at their booth. Doña Rosa, who was born in about 1923 in her own words, comes from a poor family. She grew up in Piaxtla, a small village in the Mixteca Poblana in a barren area south-east of Mexico City. Doña Rosa first came to the United States at the end of the 1960s and worked as a domestic worker. Since then, she has crossed the border between the two countries many times, first undocumented, and later with an official residence permit. Now three subsequent generations of Doña Rosa's family live spread across various cities in the U.S. and in Mexico while some family members more or less permanently live in the U.S. or Mexico, changing their place of residence between two different countries.

For example, Guadalupe, Doña Rosa's daughter was married at age 13 to a Mexican migrant worker, accompanied him to the United States and returned after four years to Mexico with the family because they did not want their children to grow up in the U.S. Since 1980 she has regularly commuted back and forth between Piaxtla / Mexico and New York City. On being asked the question of where her homeland was, she replied: "Where my family is." She cannot say exactly where she wants to grow old.

The daughter of Guadalupe, Doña Rosa's granddaughter, is a typical transnational migrant. Although born in the U.S. and a U.S. citizen, she studied in Puebla / Mexico and still commutes frequently between the two countries. She has tried to be a "real American", but could not and would not give up her internalized Mexican history and culture. She finds different things in the U.S. better, others in Mexico. If some relatives say she must clearly decide where she belongs, then she replies, no one would be forced to opt for the father or the mother, so why should they decide between Mexico and the United States."

The social networks and spaces in which (trans) migrants operate are not necessarily associated with a geographic region. Rather they arise through everyday conversations by phone or internet between

several countries, through regular time spent in the origin and arrival communities, for example by reading certain newspapers or listening to certain radio stations, through the exchange of money, food or cultural products (such as CDs or DVDs creating a life "between worlds") between family members in the home and in the community but also by coordinating all relevant household and family decisions across national borders.

This type of communication and relations have of course existed since there have been nations and nation-states, but in recent decades they have been given a new meaning and intensity through improved transport and communication facilities.

Look at the diagrams of how Doña Rosa's family is distributed in the United States and Mexico. Look at what flows from where and where it goes.

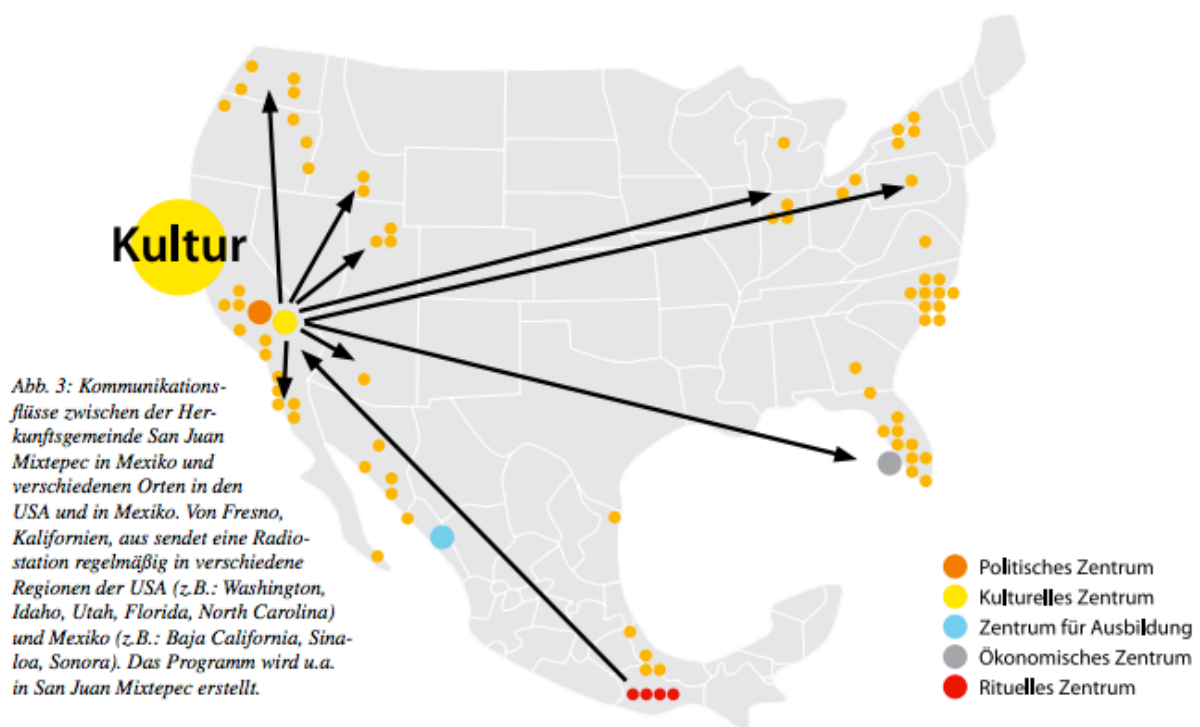


Abb. 4: Netzwerk der Aus- und Weiterbildung zwischen der Herkunftsgemeinde San Juan Mixtepec in Mexiko und verschiedenen Orten in den USA und in Mexiko. In Mexiko ist der Bundesstaat Sinaloa traditionell ein erster Anlaufpunkt für weiterführende Ausbildung von Migranten aus San Juan Mixtepec wie aus den USA (z.B. aus Ohio, Florida).

Aus- und Weiterbildung

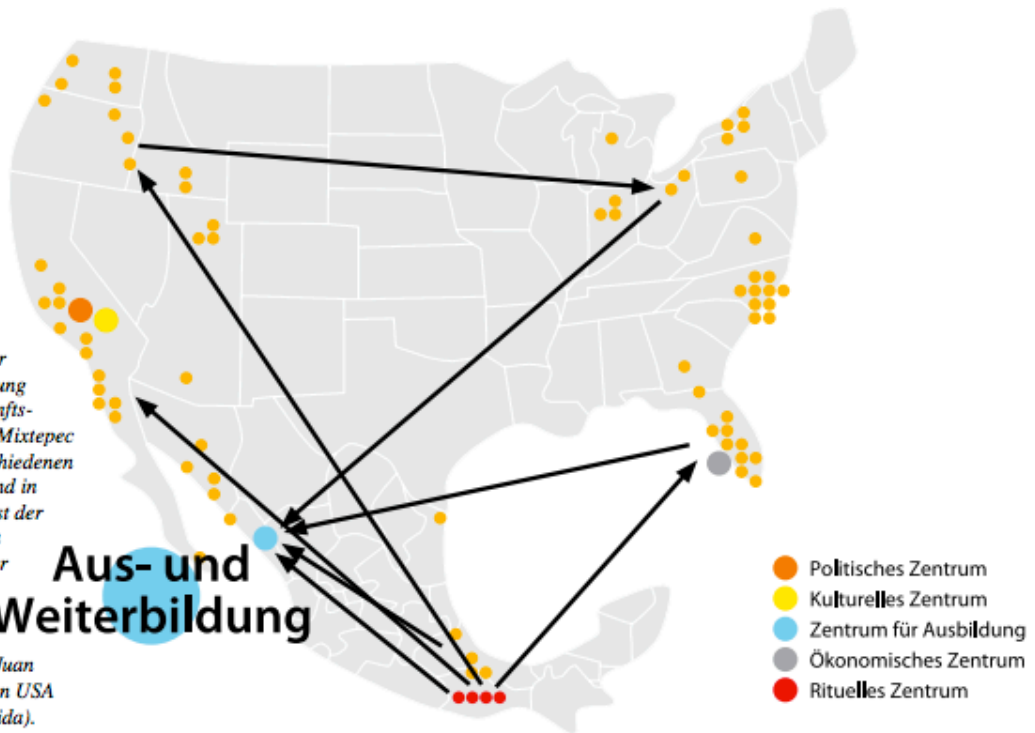
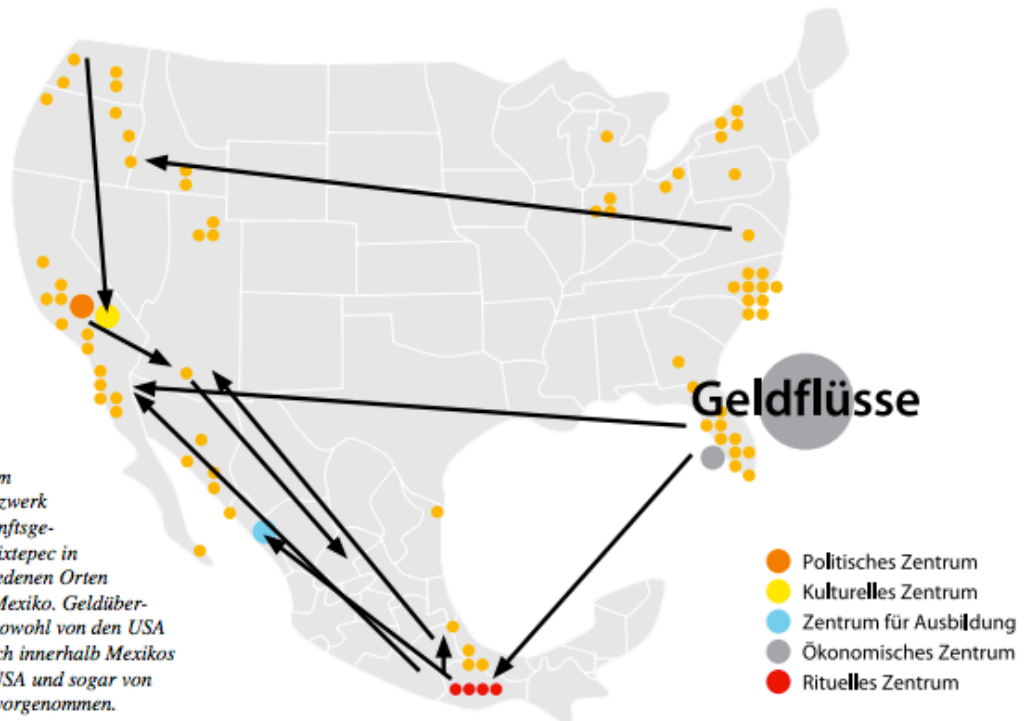


Abb. 5: Geldflüsse im transnationalen Netzwerk zwischen der Herkunftsgemeinde San Juan Mixtepec in Mexiko und verschiedenen Orten in den USA und in Mexiko. Geldüberweisungen werden sowohl von den USA nach Mexiko als auch innerhalb Mexikos und innerhalb der USA und sogar von Mexiko in die USA vorgenommen.

Geldflüsse



Sources

Pries, Ludger „Globaler Wandel und das Entstehen transnationaler Migration: Zwischen den Welten zu Hause“ in Rubin Sonderheft 2007, Universität Bochum