

Juggling currencies in transborder contexts

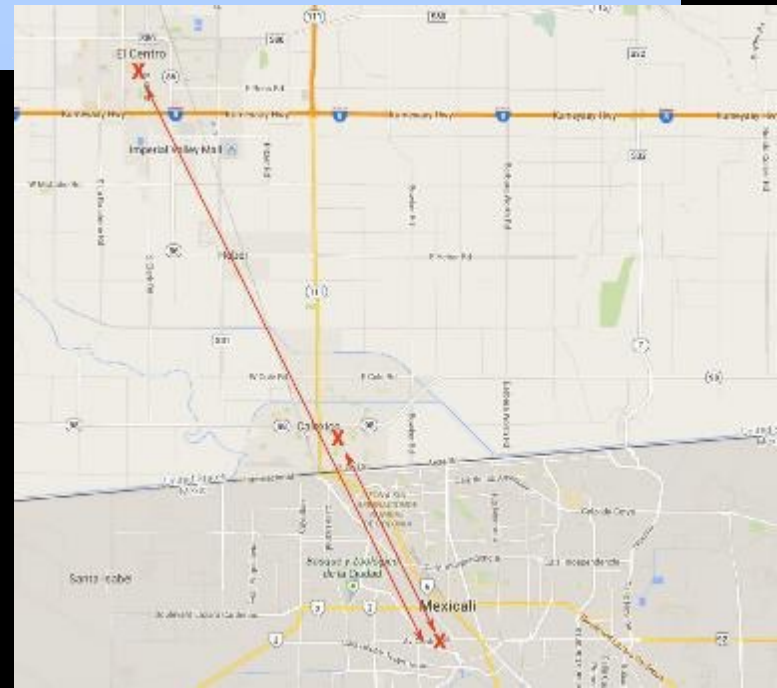
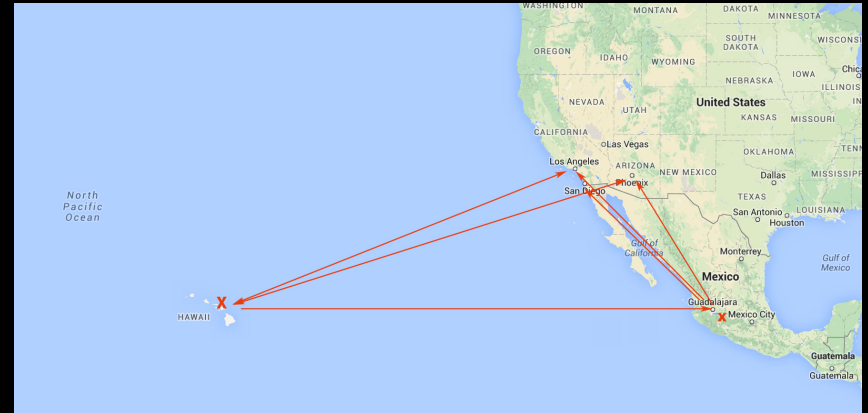
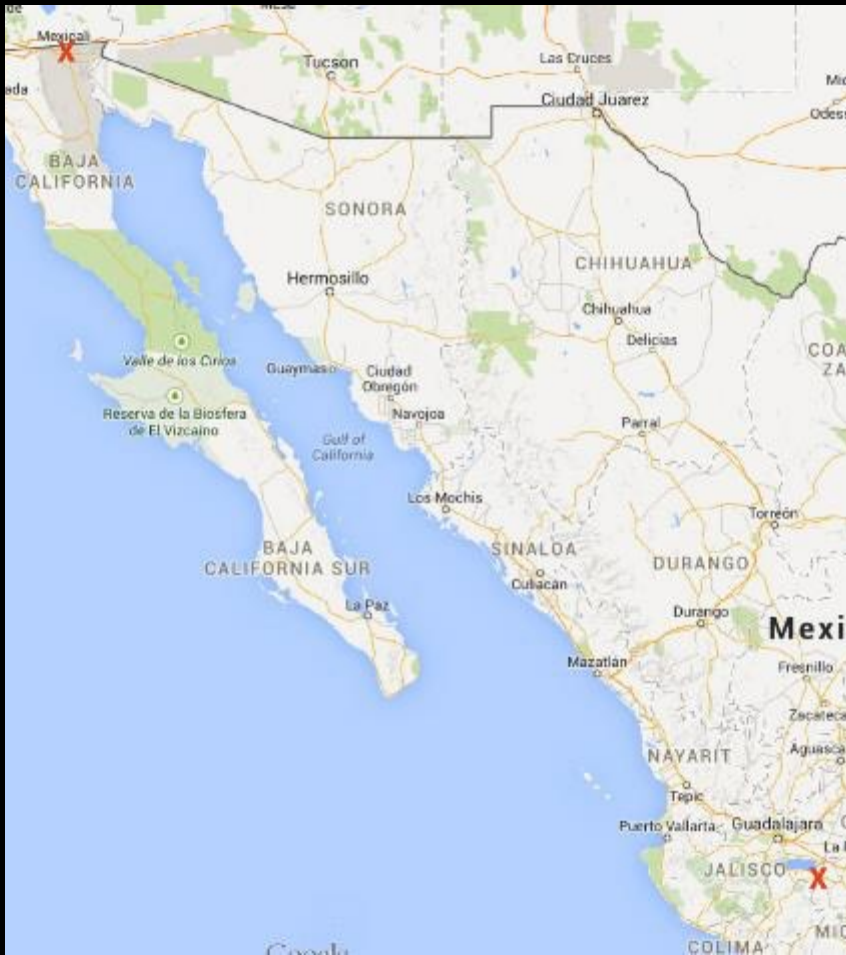
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- Mexican or bi-national commuters at the US- Mexico border (Mexicali- Calexico)
- Mexicans or bi-national workers from Sabinilla in transnational contexts (Hawaii)
- Signification and valuation of currencies
- In the intertwining of economies, cultures, normativities and practices we tend to conceive as different and disaggregated

Areas of study



Crossing the US-Mexico borderline

- Family
- Workers
- Wages
- Debts
- Taxes
- Savings
- Investments
- Insurance
- Social benefits
- Social Security Numbers



Calculations



- Measurement of risk
- Perceived potential
- Prediction of costs
- Social differentiation
- Value considerations
- People faced with need to juggle currencies:
 - Two national monetary languages
 - Social and cultural values attributed to different coinages within distinct spaces of interaction

- Inquire into multiple meanings , expectations and normative frameworks associated with forms of money and economic resources.
 - Family arrangements and the capitalization of resources
 - Translation of values from one currency to another
 - Need to accommodate to particular procedures and practices at the interstices
 - Need to calculate and transact in monetary, but also social and symbolic currencies
 - Social and cultural experiences, expectations and desires

Case of Calexico- Mexicali

- Transnational men and women
 - Work in US and live in Mexico
 - Commuters
 - Live in the US and livelihoods in Mexico
- Work in rural and urban areas
 - In Mexicali, 44% of those in US work in agriculture
 - 32% in services
- Domestic workers, care-related jobs, commerce (formal and informal)
- Hit hard by crisis
 - Many have their money in US banks
 - Sub-prime mortgages
 - Credit card debts, department store debts
 - Many sold properties in Mexico to pay US mortgages
 - Others borrowed from Mexican friends or family
 - Still others returned to Mexico after having lost their homes
 - Yet most of them maintain links to the US, to carry out business, look after children, etc.



Mexicali- Calexico





The Sabinilla Case: A Transnational Ranch in Central Mexico



CHARACTERISTICS

POP: 81

ALT: 6000 FT

CENTRAL WEST MEXICO

Remote
mountainous
Rocky soil



and since 1968 ... more than 100 villagers
have migrated to Hawaii



Families in transnational relationships



Careful look at household assets and
how they obtained them
as well as access to distinct types of
resources



Traditional sources of income



Alternative sources of income



La Bala sells his labor and works with his wife and children



While Bacho returned from the US and bought the former hacienda



Juggling currencies

- Working with debt
- Managing multiple frameworks of calculation
- Capitalizing in parallel economies
 - Anticipation of potential value
 - Mobilization of resources
 - Operate networks, information and double standards
 - Exploit ambiguities and respond to opportunities
- Managing identities

