

Cross-Border Migrant Entrepreneurship

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Research Questions

- To what extent and under which conditions is spatial mobility an asset for migrant entrepreneurs?
- What kinds of spatialities and dependencies emerge through the entrepreneurial activities of migrants?

Methods

Qualitative case studies in **Switzerland, Spain, Colombia** (2019, 2020, 2022).

- 101 semi-structured interviews; geographic and mental maps
- Ethnographic observations
- Participatory and collaborative methods (*Minga* workshops)

Key Findings

- The cross-border engagement of migrant entrepreneurs often transcends **the home — host country binary**.
- Spatial mobility can only be considered an asset for migrant entrepreneurs if they are **in control** of their (im)mobilities, if such (im)mobilities match their socio-economic **needs** and personal **aspirations**, and if they can move **safely**.
- Persistent **place-based inequalities** and unbalanced **power geometries**: Social position, location in geographical space and strategies are three crucial dimensions to understand the ability of migrant entrepreneurs to transform their spatial mobility into social mobility.

- Diverse **strategies** (informal, digital, transmobilities) enable migrant entrepreneurs to overcome constraints and **expand their options** over time. Risks involved.
- The aspirations of migrant entrepreneurs are **not merely financially motivated**: personal fulfillment, reconciling family and paid work, aiding home countries or communities, resisting armed violence are important motivators.

Main Output

Sandoz, Mittmasser, Riaño, Piguet (2021) A review of transnational migrant entrepreneurship: Unequal spatialities. *ZFW*.

Sandoz (2021) Localising informal practices in transnational entrepreneurship. *Migration Letters*.

Mittmasser, Stingl (2021) Migrant counterspaces: Challenging labour market exclusion through collective action. *REMI*.

Mittmasser (2022) *Because you've lived in different places all your life.* – How mobility trajectories create cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities. *Geoforum*.

Riaño (2022) Migrant Entrepreneurs as agents of development? Geopolitical context and transmobility strategies of Colombian migrants returning from Venezuela. *JIMI*.

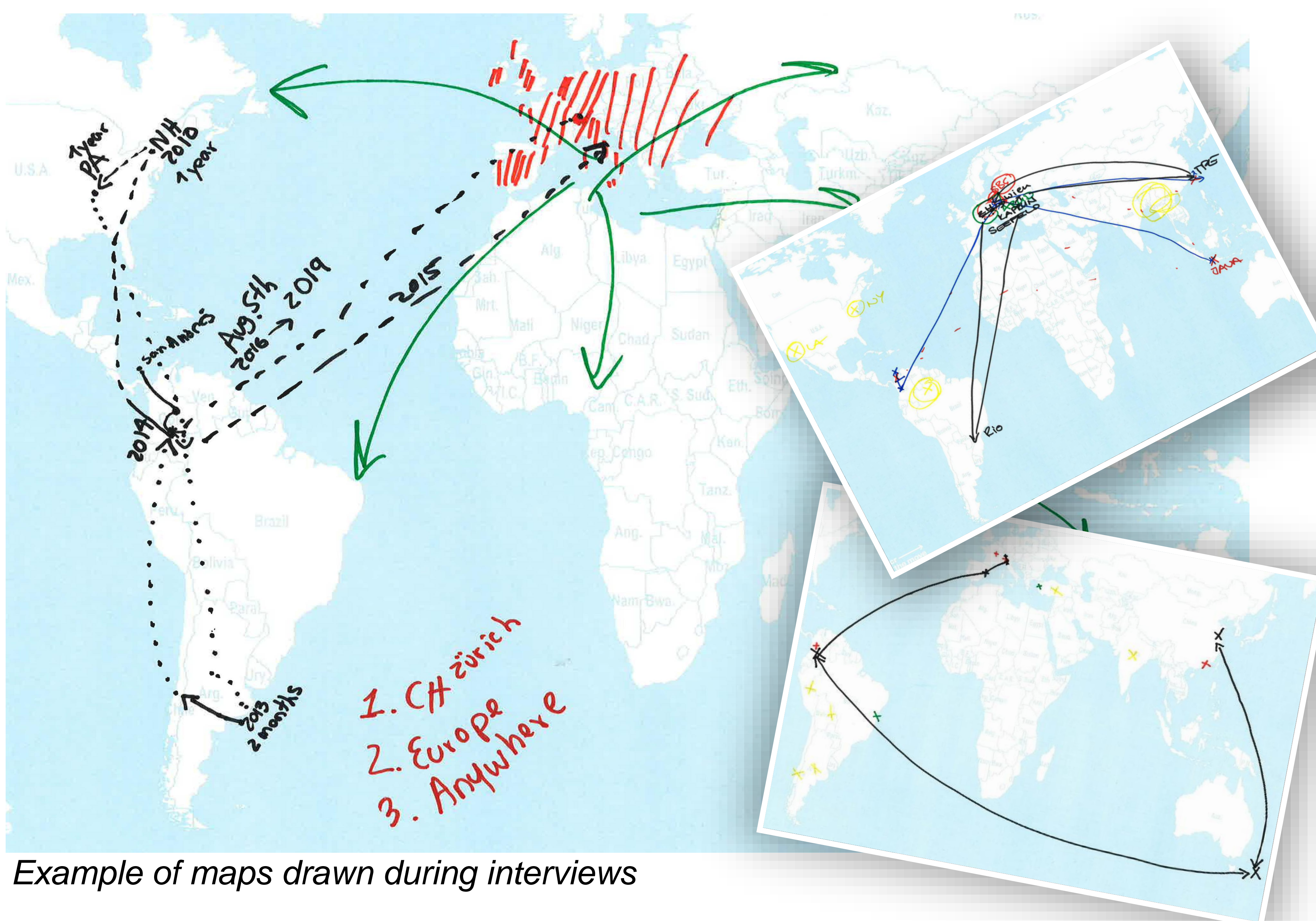
Riaño, Mittmasser, Sandoz (2022) Spatial mobility capital: A valuable resource for the social mobility of border-crossing migrant entrepreneurs? *Societies*

Sandoz, Mitmasser, Riaño, Izaguirre (in review) Migrant entrepreneurs building transnational businesses: Dependencies, fragilities, alternatives. *Globalizations*.

Dissemination

COMIC Migrant entrepreneurs in Switzerland: Beyond heroization and individualistic narratives. Design: *Les Savoirs Ambulants*.

DOCUMENTARY Return migrants' struggles (Colombia-Venezuela border). *FronterasSobrevivientes*.



Example of maps drawn during interviews