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under the Global Condition

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Maras as Producers of Translocal Spaces of Violence: Theoretical Model and Structure of Argument

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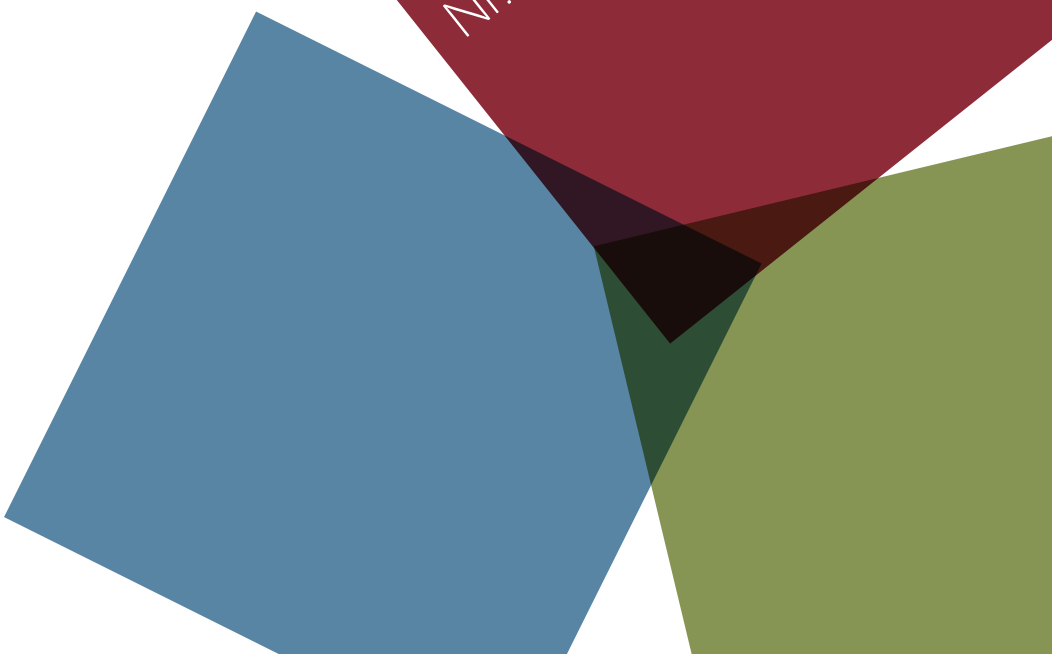

Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 1199
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Content

Introduction

This working paper presents the basic concept of a research project that is part of theCollaborative Research Center (SFB) 1199. Section and that focuses on the spatial format produced by Maras.

Maras are a form of particularly violent youth gangs, primarily associated with El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala as well as the United States. While Maras do not encompass drug cartels, in the form of petty drug business (*narcomenudeo*) they do cooperate with cartels and mafias. They maintain a subordinated role in this cooperation and generally play a minor role in the drug business (see Wolf 2011: 68; Ward 2013: 170).

What we investigate is the question if areas of expansion beyond the established areas of Maras can be detected in the Americas (Canada, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Argentina) and in Europe (Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom). It will further focus on finding out if, and (if so) why, the respective adjacent states (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Belize, Panama, Colombia, and Peru as well as Portugal, France, and Germany respectively) appear to be unaffected by Mara presence. The project examines how, due to which interests, in which external and internal dimensions, and within which boundaries and borders actors of criminal violence—in this case Maras—produce space. The project hypothesizes that the Mara spaces are a form of translocal spaces of violence—a spatial format that requires further specification.

Due to the limited literature on the spatial localization of Maras, this project cannot utilize existing theory-based literature. For this reason, the research has to depend on general models of spatial philosophy and sociology to develop a spatial conceptualization of the Maras. On the one hand, this research undertaking wants to comprehend the process of creating spaces, that is to say the space production by the Maras. Just as social agency does in general, so does the agency of Maras in particular entail a dimension of spatialization. On the other hand, this investigation of the Maras' spatialization agency aims at identifying their privileged spatial format. To this end, several perspectives on spatiality and spaces will be applied and the resulting different—internal and external—spatial dimensions will be placed into a relational matrix.

The theoretical contributions of this research are, first, the application of the process tracing method in order to close an existing gap in the literature between space-producing agency and space produced as a result of this process. Second, it shall compare the collected empirical evidence on space production by Maras with the theoretical literature on spaces of violence. By connecting both the processes of de- and reterritorialization as well as flow and space, the project will advance these theoretical contributions. It will further deviate from a certain literature on spaces of violence and on globalization which focuses primarily on deterritorialization and dissolution of borders in general and of violent spaces in certain situations in particular.

The project assumes that by migrating between different locations the members of the Maras, the Mareros, create a space that stretches transnationally. The ensuing Mara space is at the same time translocal in nature. As a diaspora community, the Maras move with this space as well as within this space. This diaspora community promises Maras shelter as well as a home and a sense of belonging. It is this migration and diaspora that eventually "marks" the borders of the Mara space of violence.

The principal investigator and author of this working paper is a political scientist specialized in International Relations (IR). In this working paper, the author seeks to combine the insights of her own discipline with those from philosophy, sociology, political economy, cultural studies, and geography in order to locate the topic within the framework of the area studies.

Starting Points

Using the example of the Maras, this project addresses the question how spatial formats are created from social conditions through the agency of space-producing actors. In this approach, and in contrast to more conventional approaches, space (production) has not been applied to explain social phenomena. Instead, it

follows an opposite direction and explains space as a consequence. This project suggests that space "never exists per se, but points to the other" (Belina / Michel 2007: 18, with reference to Lefebvre 1991) because its role depends on other social processes through which it becomes relevant in the first place. Arguing that this "otherness" can only be transformed into space through agents, this project understands space as "human output" (following Rothfuß / Dörfler 2013: 9). By explaining space through human agency, the "fetishization" of space can be avoided. The research approach subscribes to the agency turn in human geography, whereby "people do not only make their own history, they also create their own geography—or rather: their own geographies" (Werlen / Lippuner 2011: 699).

The project understands spaces as a contingent result of the interaction and negotiation of diverse actors within a meshwork of relations (Agnew 2013) as well as a dialectical interplay of de- and reterritorialization (Middell / Naumann 2010). To this end, the project strives to prevent the essentialization of space as well as the essentialization of the space-producing subject. At the same time, this research undertaking addresses a central puzzle piece of the SFB—the production of space by actors apart from state and economic elites. With Maras, the project locates space-producing actors outside the realm of legality *and* politics. The Maras are violent criminal actors who are, in contrast to a guerrilla, not concerned with an intentional struggle for "liberated" territories, together with the objective of political change in the country.

As the author has shown in previous publications (e.g. Zinecker 2014: 228-289), Maras are a relatively persistent, resilient, hierarchically organized, border-crossing, and highly militant form of youth gangs who engage occasionally with the drug business. They are not considered "short-lived gangs" that are shaped by simple peer group dynamics; rather, they are "long-standing gangs" according to White's (2002: 5) typology, determined by "long-standing cultural and socioeconomic factors". Local specialists attribute about 30% of all homicides in the "Northern Triangle" of Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala) to the gangs, an area where spaces of violence are clustering (on the discussion of this topic, see Zinecker 2014: 218f). The Maras direct most of their violent confrontations against each other; for example, MS-13 and Barrio 18 are two gangs that in a violent struggle against one another (regarding the differences and the label Mara for Barrio 18, who rejects the term for itself, see Ibid.: 2014: 233-260).

Without a doubt, gangs, including youth gangs, are not a new phenomenon in the world nor in Central America. That being said, the "new" aspect of the Maras in a historical comparison with other Central American gangs is their specific translocal dimension (on translocality see Freitag / von Oppen 2010; Greiner 2010: 131-161), a feature they have maintained since their emergence. In contrast to street gangs , the Maras do not only have a local but also a transnational radius. While the former aspect could help in insulating themselves from the global condition, the latter completely subjects them to it because they cannot withdraw from the world without jeopardizing their own competitiveness vis-à-vis the state as well as other violent actors. Maras are part of the transnational organized crime word, albeit not belonging to that type of organized crime that is dealing drugs, cars, humans or organs but only cooperating with these types of crimes occasionally.

The project examines three waves of spatial expansion and perpetuation in Mara history. The first wave considered occurred at the end of the 1970s, with the parallel establishment of local Mara spaces in the US and Central America. The second wave emerged at the end of the 1990s, in connection with the genesis of a transnational Mara space via the perpetuation of a multidirectional flow of (violence) migration). The third wave began at the end of the 2010s, and continues today, with the expansion to South America and Europe.

The **first wave** saw the emergence of two originating and subsequently core regions of the Maras, which formed more or less simultaneously and initially rather separately. The project hypothesizes that one of the two origin-and-core regions is located in relation to the Latino youth gangs in the USA and, in an actors' perspective, in those members who have been deported from "their" US diaspora (Falkenburger / Thale 2008: 48) to their home countries. The youth joining the Maras, especially in California (and later in Washington DC, Nashville, New York City, and Houston), were children of Mexican and Central American immigrants, the latter having frequently fled the civil wars in Guatemala and El Salvador. In the framework of Ronald Reagan's refugee policy, they were denied refugee status, so they started their lives in the US as undocumented aliens. After entering the US, Central Americans were primarily interested in finding work. Since the parents of the Mareros had to make a living under the aggravated conditions of an undocumented status, their children were frequently left to themselves in a foreign surrounding and therefore sought support in a group of peers—the Maras.

At first, the (initially Mexican) Barrio 18 formed in the US in the 1960s and is older and larger than MS-13. Today, Barrio 18 consists mainly of Central Americans. MS-13 established itself in the 1980s, initially as a splinter group of the 18. The Barrio 18 gang, initially a *clika* of the Clanton Street Throw Aways, integrated the *cholos*, that is to say *those* Mexicans who were rejected by the other gangs for being "insufficiently pure". MS-13, on the other hand, integrated the Salvadorians, who had not been accepted by the 18. While developing originally as a hedonistic rocker and stoner gang to a militant Mara (Ward 2013: 75). MS-13 belongs to the Sureño gangs, the Hispanic street gangs of southern California, and is also associated with the Mexican mafia prison gang. La EME, as the mafia is called, incorporated the MS-13 as one of their *pandillas* (gangs).

The author locates the second of the two origin-and-core regions of the Maras and their members around Central American gangs in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The emergence of this particular space has its own domestic causes. These countries were first confronted with gangs that emerged in the context of athletic competitions (*barras*). Stemming from these *barras*, the Northern Triangle experienced the rise of (a) Maras in high schools as well as universities, beginning in the 1970s, who identified with their campuses and fought Maras of other educational institutions, and (b) street Maras who identified with their respective neighbourhoods (*barrios*). Still in the 1980s, they considered themselves a group of friends rather than street gangs. Back then, they were still nomads lacking territorial interests or ambitions (Ibid. 76ff).

In El Salvador, the roots of the autochthonous Maras go back to the 1940s. From gangs that formed in the context of athletic competitions (*barras*) emerged the student Maras of the 1970s (*Maras estudiantiles*), who identified with their respective institutions and fought with Maras from other institutions, as well as the street Maras (*Maras callejeras*), who identified with their respective *barrios*. Up until the mid-1980s, these Maras still called themselves Mara Salvatrucha Stoners (MSS) (this Mara later dropped the word "stoner"), had long hair, wore ripped jeans and T-shirts featuring Iron Maiden or other heavy metal bands, smoked marijuana, dabbled in satanic ritual, and considered themselves rockers with a fondness for heavy metal music. By the second half of the 1980s, when MSS became MS, they had abandoned this style. Again, they adopted the culture of their US sister organization, which now displayed the *cholo* style, with wide-leg pants, bracelets and necklaces, music (rap), tattoos seen as a record of their experiences (although they largely forego them now), graffiti in their own alphabet, and sign language–like gestures in their own language. They also kept some satanic symbols from their time as stoners. Previously, the MSS Mareros (the number 13 was not added to the name until 1993) and their encounters with their Barrio 18 peers resulted in rocks being thrown or, at worst, knives being brandished. Back then, guns were absent (Savenije 2011: 52f); however, that was all to change. With the emerging civil war, which neither Mara in El Salvador were involved in (Savenije 2009), the clashes between the local Maras were only temporarily overshadowed but not ended (Savenije / Beltrán 2005: 24). By 1990, long before the Salvadorian public security sector had identified the Maras as a problem, newspapers were writing articles about them.

The (new) Maras later came to Honduras: first MS-13 in 1987, and then Barrio 18 in 1993. These were also Mareros who had failed in their attempt to immigrate to the US and were now trying to establish a branch in the country. Today, Honduras is the country with the most widespread Mara population in Central America. The origins of the older, local Maras date back to the 1960s, when the Stompers and the Armados created uproars in the city of San Pedro Sula (CEDOH 2004: 9). During the Cold War, right-wing youth gangs also emerged in the city, fighting against left-wing youth. In the 1980s, there were already between 60 and 80 youth gangs in Honduras, but each had no more than ten members. At that time, their actions were still uncoordinated. Their concentration and criminalization did not occur until the end of the 1980s, with most of it occurring in the second half of the 1990s under the influence of members of MS-13 and Barrio 18 deported from the US. Many existing youth gangs also transformed into Maras (ERIC 2005: 44). From then on, they were no longer young individuals loitering on street corners, they were groups that had become structured, organized, and criminalized.

In Guatemala, oppositely, it was both (new) Salvadorian and Honduran Mareros who established MS-13. Today, however, Barrio 18 is the more visible Mara in Guatemala. Here, too, migrating Mareros were able to link up with autochthonous *pandillas*, which had begun to develop in the late 1970s and continued through the mid-1980s in the wake of protests against the price of public transportation. Specialists place the origins of the Guatemalan Maras in the middle of the 1980s (Merino 2001: 113). As the case with El Salvador and Honduras, they started as rival street or student gangs that provided excellent infrastructure for new arrivals from the US. Here, a well-developed autochthonous gang culture had formed prior to and during the civil war. Within the gang culture, there was an element of protest against the violence of the military dicta-

torship in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as against Ronald Reagan and the Christian Democratic President Vinicio Cerezo, in large part out of disillusionment with the left (Levenson 1988: 35). These gangs were influenced by political student movements, basketball fans, Mara students, and delinquent street gangs—the final mélange of which did not identify with the political left. These gangs called themselves Los Guerreros but were called Los Guerrilleros by the army, which fought against them. Notwithstanding, in Guatemala the number of members per gang and their relative importance is probably less than that in the other two countries in the Northern Triangle (Ranum 2011: 73).

It is noteworthy that these Maras did not establish themselves in either Costa Rica (see Zinecker 2014: 158-164) or Nicaragua (Ibid: 466-479, Zinecker 2012). The Mara as a violence flow stopped, or was stopped, at the borders of these countries. A comparable situation can be assumed for Panama and Belize, although with less certainty.

The **second wave** initially involves the stabilization of migration and violence flows between the two core regions beginning in the 1990s. This stabilization commenced when migration and remigration of Mareros between the two regions became constant, thereby creating a solidified transnational space. Only then did these once loosely affiliated, locally operating Central American street gangs based upon peer group characteristics turn into the powerful, brutal, hierarchical, and transnational Maras as they are known today. At this point, Maras became a translocal phenomenon.

Decisive contributing factors to this development entail the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IRIRA) of 1996 in the US and eventually the USA PATRIOT Act in 2001, which exacerbated the IRIRA rules. From then onwards, Central American migrants were deported due to minor transgressions, including for being undocumented. This meant that the mere act of immigration was criminalized (see Coleman / Kocher 2011: 230). This triggered the chain of remigration. Arriving at their Central American home countries from the US, the Mareros not only failed to integrate into the local economy and political situation but also frequently failed at (re)integrating into their local families. Only through "their" Mara could they properly integrate (see Zinecker 2014: 228-246). The Central American countries did not have the option to deport the Mareros (see Zilberg 2007: 47-49). It is open for speculation if the absence of the deportation option had an impact on the chain of re-remigration. That being said, there is evidence that the lack of political and economic ties as well as the *mano dura* (firm hand) policies in Central America had a boosting effect on the emergence and perpetuation of the Mara migration flows from and to the USA.

Regarding the **third wave**, the deportations of the Mareros from the US to Central America experienced a similar increase through the classification of the MS-13 under the label "Transnational Organzied Crime / TOC" by the Obama administration in 2012. Furthermore, this wave entails the alleged expansion of the Mara space to Europe (at least Spain, then Italy and maybe the United Kingdom) and to South America (at least Peru, Chile, and Argentina). This expansion remains to be verified (for initial information on this claim, see Insight Crime 2013; Farah / Philipps Lum 2013). If this enlargement of the Mara space can be confirmed, this would represent a field of enquiry that has been is virtually absent from empirical research today. Moreover, the questions if and why these specific countries—and not the adjacent ones like Portugal, France, and Germany as well as Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador respectively—became destinations for the Maras can only be addressed during the research process itself. The author's current information on the contemporary state of the Mara extension is displayed in the following figure:

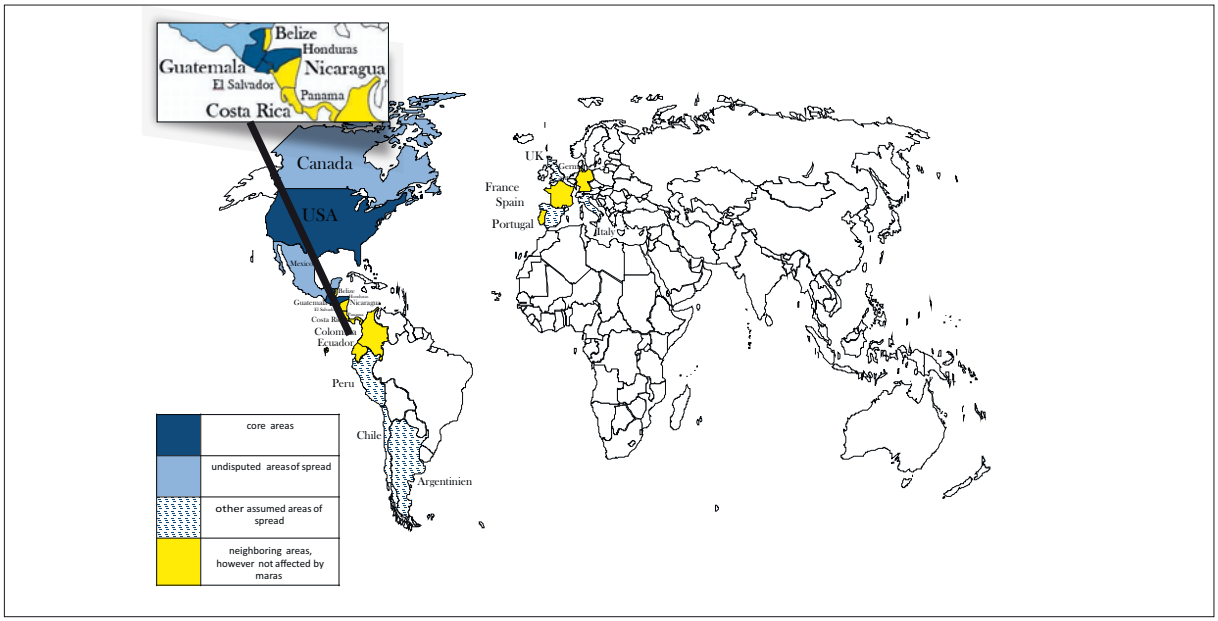

Figure 1: The Spread of the Maras

The project reasons that Maras are neither "vagabonds" nor "transnational tourists" nor (necessarily) "local patriots" but are translocal players (see Reguillo 2005: 78). Translocal players are characterized by a *simultaneous* local and transborder presence, with neither dimension being dominant. The local and the transnational are not considered to be "fixed" or "delimited" but to be "produced" (see Freitag 2005: 5-6). Being gangs in transnational spaces, while Maras distinguish themselves from the more common domestic street gangs, at the same time they remain important local actors. Thus, they already have to be classified as transnational for the mere fact that they are present in so many local places, that is to say up to eleven countries on two different continents. They constantly overcome spatial distances and boundaries and hence become producers of translocal spaces.

The space they create is territorial, relational, and symbolic (see also Moreno Hernández / Sánchez González 2012: 50-78). Moreover, this produced space could be understood as a ropeway. The ropeway stretches transnationally across and connects different places, with the Mareros moving back and forth between them. The ropeway cabin travelling between the different points of Mara presence represents the movement of this space. Or, put in other words, it is the movement from one space and to another space, where the overarching space of constitutes the deployment of one space (of violence) to a new space (of violence) upon arrival.

Nevertheless, the soundness of this dialectic is affected by the fact that Maras display a stark asymmetry regarding their transnational and local organizational structures. On the transnational level, they are neither ruled through a single chain of command (UNODC 2007: 59) nor in federal or transnational structures (Jütersonke / Muggah / Rodgers 2009: 380). On the regional level, they are also only loosely organized (Bruneau 2011: 3, Franco 2010: 5f), whereas they are very hierarchical on the local level. Transnationally, their leadership is of a rather symbolic nature but locally it is clearly defined. The Maras make profit mainly through "taxation" and use it predominantly for their own consumption or respectively for their family members or their fellow Mareros in prison. In contrast to crime organizations, the profit is usually obtained locally instead of transnationally. Thus, Markusen's (1996) claim applies here, too: the space is "slippery" and the place is "sticky". All these contradictions are (spatially) "fought out" and sometimes negotiated.

State of the Art: Empirical Research on Maras

A considerable amount of literature already exists on the Mara phenomenon. There is also a number of well-researched empirical contributions based either on grounded theory (with specific reference to Wolf, Savenije and—for Maras and *pandillas* in general—Rodgers and Rocha) or on survey methods (Demoscopía

2007) and multifactor approaches (see the comprehensive oeuvre of Cruz, e.g. 1997 and 2010). Notwithstanding, so far there has been very little theory-guided and comprehensive comparative research on these gangs. Likewise, contributions investigating the culture of the Maras are rare (exceptions being Nateras Domínguez 2007: 127-156 and 2010: 87–108; Urbina Gaitán 2009 / 10: 25-31; Reguillo Cruz 2005: 70-84 and Reguillo Cruz 2007: 30; Valenzuela Arce 2007: 33-62; Zúñiga Nuñez 2008: 131-156; Queirolo 2008: 125-138).

In addition, there is only a few investigations that focus on Maras as producers of space or of de- and reterritorialization in the framework of recent globalization processes (exceptions being Gutiérrez 2013 and 2012: 168-170; Feth / Müller 2011: 79-81; González 2006: 882-885; Koonings / Krujit 2007 and 2009, published with a specific focus on urban spaces). While this literature review does not overlook a general body of literature on spatial configuration of contemporary violence in Central America, which entails the Maras, this literature does not examine them in relation to their spatiality (most recently, e.g., Ingram / Curtis 2015: 245-284). Furthermore, although there are atlases of violence (e.g. FUNDAUNGO 2010) available, they do not focus on Maras in particular.

Theory-guided analysis of Mara spaces is also virtually absent. That being said, literature concerning Maras through other theoretical prisms make statements on the spatial aspects of the Maras, in particular regarding the significance of the (local) micro space and the (transnational) macro space. Two dominant positions[1] can be identified in this existing literature. In contrast to this project, however, both of these positions are based on the assumption of fixed and reified spaces (which will be commented upon later).

According to the **first perspective**, Maras were tellurian (following Carl Schmitt's 1963 terminology), that is to say rooted in and connected to their *barrio*, only in their first generation. In the second and third generations, they had ceased being tellurian, although they were still located in the *barrios* (Farah 2011: 104; Manwaring 2007: 4; Fernández Menéndez / Ronquillo 2006: 135; Rodgers / Jones 2009: 7; less pronounced, but pointing to a similar direction: Savenije 2009: 150ff; Savenije 2011: 58-60; for Nicaragua, where gangs exist but not as Maras, see Rodgers 1999). In time, Maras became "transnational players", (an) "informal transnational network(s) of violence" (Cruz 2007: 13) or "transnational crime enterprises" (Diaz 2009: 34), demonstrating "una tremenda cultura global" (Moratalla 25 February 2012). Through this development, this perspective concludes that they had dropped their territorial interest in the local micro space and focused on the transnational space. Transnational reterritorialization of a new Mara generation would eventually come along with a nearly complete deterritorialization of the local level. By losing their "natural" relation between culture as well as geographic and social territory, the local Mara spaces had dissolved into the transnational space.

The **second perspective**, which is less prominent in the current literature than the first, considers Maras still as local "protection racket[s]" (Cruz 2010: 393) with a tellurian character, which are closely connected especially to their local micro space (Demoscopía 2007, 26-28; for Nicaragua: Sosa / Rocha 2004: 136; Llanes 2006; Liebel 2002: 43; Hagedorn 2008; Wolf 2010: 264). Their graffiti proves this point since they have delimited their local realm of power through symbolic and visual practices. Occupation and defence of the local space of violence and, even more so, its economic, political, administrative, and cultural control still represent the primary objective of the Maras. The Maras "tienen un '*nombre* transnacional' [...], pero sus actividades son *predominantemente locales*" (Hagedorn 2008: 3, emphasis added). The Maras' contemporary and by now also transnational orientation on the maximization of surplus, which is linked to the transnational drug economy through *narcomenudeo*, does not jeopardize the local focus of the Maras: despite their transnational extension, they are simply a network of locally operating *clikas* that are only very loosely connected to the transnational echelon and that only share certain symbols and norms (Wolf 2012: 76). In this sense, the Mara resemble a "cárcel cultural" (Rocha 2000).

Considering these two perspectives and regarding the territorial level, our project will test on the one hand if a mediated or combined position between these points of view is beneficial to understanding the Maras. On the other hand, it shall sublate the dichotomy by exploring the local and transnational Mara space, including their entanglements and relational transitions.

State of the Art: Space and Spatial Concepts

As stated above, the project cannot make use of any theory-guided reflections in the Mara literature, especially regarding the spatial localization of Maras. In order to develop a spatial conceptualization of the Maras, the research endeavour has to depend on general models of spatial philosophy and sociology. The SFB 1199 in general and the project A04 in particular are committed to the task of conceptualizing spatial formats. In order to do so, the term "space" has to be defined. Several restrictions make this task more difficult than it might first appear.

On the one hand, space is "under-theorized" (Gotham 2003: 723). On the other hand, there are numerous and very different spatial imaginations and terms of space competing in the literature. Due to the breadth of terms, this paper limits the discussion to a preliminary typology of the most relevant spatial concepts. The three most relevant ones will be referred to as (1) Euclidian / Newtonian / Hobbesian / Simmelsian "container space"; (2) relational space (of order) according to Einstein, Giddens, and Foucault; and (3) Kantian "imagined" (or constructed) space.[2] What is called the spatial turn oscillates often between the second and the third type.

Project A04 engages in an empirical-analytical investigation, meaning that it cannot assume a radical constructivist position in which the world only exists in the imagination. Meta-theoretically, the project has several aims. First, the project takes up middle positions. Epistemologically, this requires that the "frequent dichotomization of the manifold epistemological positions in 'positivist' [considered somehow wrong] and 'post-positivist' [considered somehow correct] [...] is not helpful" (Risse 2003: 103). Ontologically, this implies assuming the mutual influence (see "mutual constitution" in Risse: 105–106) of structure and agency. Ideas (of space) are rendered exogenous in so far as the author assumes that only structural shifts lead to their genesis and transformation but without claiming that a specific structure always implies specific ideas. Spatial ideas are rendered endogenous in so far as the author assumes that there is neither automatism nor determinism.

Second, in accordance with these reflections, the project follows Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Martina Löw (2001) in considering that (social) space has to be understood in several dimensions. These dimensions can penetrate, reinforce, and contradict each other, but they are always simultaneously effective (as summarized in Löw 2010: 617). If Löw cannot imagine that there could be several spaces at the same physical place, this does not present a logical contradiction to the position defended in this project since this concerns only different, but analytically separable, dimensions of one and the same space and the respective switch of perspectives.

Of the three dimensions of space introduced above, the project does not disregard any of them, not even the first one. Rather, this first dimension of space will be modified more thoroughly than the other two. All three perspectives will be applied to the Mara space. The Mara space, that is to say the respective specific spatial format, therefore emerges from its (external) dimension through the combination, or rather the mutual negotiation, of all three dimensions of space. Regarding the first perspective, the presented project maintains that the territorial, material approach to space does not have to focus solely on the container space. This so-called "container approach" considers the geographical position of a country to be the decisive factor and treats space as "land, territory, or most explicitly, as empire" (Kjellén 1924: 45). The "container approach" towards space, except for the physics aspect, can be found in the writings of Machiavelli and Montesquieu, and later on in those of Hobbes or Simmel, thereby obtaining a particularly prominent position in *classic* geopolitics and political geography (see Dicke 2002: 2012). It is well known that modern new geopolitics (Ó Tuathail) and meta-geopolitics (Al-Rodhan) work with very different assumptions, which are themselves one-sided in one way or the other (see Kleinschmidt / Strandsbjerg 2010).

Despite their frequently diverging perspectives, the "conservative white male imperialists" (Ò Tuathail 1998: 4) of classic geopolitics like Friedrich Ratzel, Alfred Mahan, and Rudolf Kjellén (which are rightly labelled geographical determinists), as well as Halford Mackinder, Carl Schmitt, Karl Haushofer, and Nicholas Spykman, actually employ the "container perspective". However, the term *Geopolitik* was not used by Ratzel and Mahan as it was coined later by Rudolf Kjellén. Nonetheless, these representatives of the "classic" *Geopolitik* cannot be accused of applying a concept of fixed territory. After all, their "imperialist" perspective (Lebensraum) requires expansion and thus requires a dynamic space. In turn, Mackinder and Mahan developed their maps not only with a geographical dimension but also with a sociological meaning by organizing them according to their (most dubious) "civilizational values" and "subjectivities". Accordingly, the authors who are commonly believed to operate with a container-space perspective have an understanding of dynamics,

subjectivity, and also sociology of space. Probably it was exactly this that made the politically disastrous Nazi claim to Lebensraum appear more than just being bluntly territorial because the claim was loaded with a strategic and ideological discourse. It is precisely this combination of geographic determinism as well as the expansion and sociological and ideological amelioration of space that has made this concept so dangerous.

Max Weber and Georg Jellinek—with their state-centered and territory-oriented political models, and sometimes even the discipline of International Relations,—are frequently subsumed under the label of "methodological territorialism" and "methodological nationalism"[3]. Max Weber is labelled as such because he ties his monopoly on violence to a particular territory and Jellinek is as well because he defines state territory as a constitutive feature of statehood, including state people and state power. Be it Chantal Mouffe's (2007) model of "the political"—instead of politics, polity, or policies—or the regime-theory institutionalism of Joseph Nye or Robert Keohane, or the social constructivism of Alexander Wendt, they all show that neither political science in general nor IR in particular have been stopped in utilizing these fixed and reified perspectives.

Claims regarding the question if the Westphalian state system, being based on the principles of sovereignty and political territoriality, is already a thing of the past are certainly controversial. As a matter of fact, while that system appears to be unravelling, globalization has not yet swept the states away (Newman 1999: 908). Assuredly, and rightly so, political space is understood in broader and more flexible terms than only the nation state. Even (neo)realism in IR does not preclude the (indirect) influence of transnational globalization on international politics since it affects the capabilities of the state and hence the capacity to expand power (Schirm 2002: 48). This influence occurs regardless of the fact that (illogically) it is exactly the "constructivists of the space" who assume that globalization impacts politics like a force of nature, in contrast to their usual insistence that social phenomena are constructed.

Moreover, the "territorial trap" that was deplored by John Agnew in 1994 is far from being unchallenged in IR, as Philip Liste (2016: 220) points out. Yosef Lapid (1999: 895-900), Harvey Starr (2005: 387-406), and Jochen Kleinschmidt and Jeppe Strandsbjerg (2010) show this also for IR. Additionally, the contributions by other political scientists like Stuart Elden (2007: 101-116), Daniel Elazar (1999: 875-886), Ian Lustick (1999: 901-904), Philip Ethington, and Jason McDaniel (2007: 127-142) contribute to the the spatial turn, albeit with different perspectives. Considering the many perspectives, this project can also make use of these approaches in regard to theoretical conceptualizations. However, completely dropping the concept of territory and its boundaries together with the "container-space perspective" is considered a grave error for the project.

The project defines space in a broader sense, and includes territory therein, because what else can territory be than space, and how could space as a "visible material world" (Reichert 1996: 15) be comprehended otherwise? Since the discipline of political science and IR is still inscribed with the distinction between "internal" and "external", territorial borders cannot be ignored. As is demonstrated by the current refugee problem within the European Union, as well as older borders and walls like the one at the Gaza Strip or the other one between the USA and Mexico (which is particularly important for this project), borders, fences, and walls cannot only be torn down but also (re-)erected. "Political territoriality", which is based on the sovereignty of the state, might be in a process of transnational dissolution, but it is still "there". And where territorial borders weaken and decrease, "functional definitions of boundaries" can replace them (see Behr 2002: 59-78). Terrestrial territory—and thus the state—are still topics of conflict for IR, be it in the context of separatism (Scotland), annexation (Crimea), or in the struggle for liberated territories (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) in Colombia).

Acknowledging this container space concept does not mean succumbing to a "methodological territorialism" or "nationalism", which has to be overcome, but to promote a "factual territorialism". Factual territorialism has nothing to do with the essentialization of space since this project does not consider territory with ontological priority but understands territory as being influenced and revised by the other two spatial concepts. This is the first difference to the container space. Likewise, working with territorial specialization does not necessarily imply succumbing to geographical determinism as happened to the "hysterics of the territorial" (Löw 1994: 456), such as the classic geopolitics.

By suggesting that space can be produced in absence of genuine spatial interest, hence with very different interests, this project displays a second important difference to geographic determinism and to the "container-space perspective". In accordance with Henri Lefebvre (1991) and also his admirer Edward Soja (1989), this project distinguishes between space as "given" and space as "produced"—or "socially appropriated". Socially appropriated spaces are social spaces.

Territories can be social spaces too, and therefore are not necessarily natural givens.[4] This is the third difference to the "container-space perspective". "(B)oundaries, of states and other entities, are neither permanent nor perfectly fluid", asserts Ian Lustick (1999: 903). Even the boundaries of a territorial and accordingly (in a substantialist logic) determinable space, e.g. those of a state, are not set in stone and therefore not necessarily fixed and immovable but flexible and volatile (see also Starr 2005: 392), which is quite different from the suggestion of the "container space perspective". This is also reflected in the frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner. Humans are able to appropriate and defend (new) land from nature with an axe in their hand. This is the fourth difference to the "container-space perspective".

In short, it is possible to avoid the container model of space without excluding territories—among them state territories—as one of many possible spatial variances. "Factual territory" is influenced by the constant process of reterritorialization, which is challenged by deterritorialization, and vice versa. Boundaries are dynamic and alterable. Also in relation to territories, not only can something concrete be dissolved, but something fluid can also solidify into something stable, hence into stable territories and spaces. The project also suggests for the territorial level the idea of "fluid spaces" with dynamic borders.

While Löw (2001: 64) criticized place-oriented and territorial concepts of space—which would tear apart space and agency because space would be considered as a (separately) existing foundation that either is structured by agency (space as explanandum) or itself structures agency (space as explanans)—this criticism does not apply to the concept of "factual territory". After all, space in this project is not the explanans; therefore, related determinism does not apply anyway. Moreover, space is the explanandum only in so far as its format is understood as the result of agency and then only analytically separated from the interwoven aspects of agency.

On a theoretical level, factual territory is neither state-centric nor does it exclude the state. On the empirical level, the state is of secondary importance since Mara space is not state-approved or state-defined space. However, the Mara space can be placed within and in relation to a state's space and boundaries when discussing the spatial extension of Mara spaces. This point is preceded by the simple reflection that newly emerging or appropriated spaces are mostly produced on the matrix of pre-existing spaces that have been produced by other actors. Specific space-producing agents do not have to be the first ones who obtain social space in a given area. Therefore, the spaces of newly established translocal actors like the Maras can and must be placed onto the—already existing—space of states or parts thereof. Notwithstanding this process, these spaces are not identical to the state spaces.

The second of the three dimensions of space introduced above is the "relational space". Here, it is defined in accordance with Löw as the "relational order of beings and social goods at given places" (Löw 2001: 272). Before, Abler, Adams, and Gould (1971: 82) emphasized a similar relativity of social spaces. They consider that the relativity consisted of "relative location" and "relative distance" as "new kinds of stretchable, shrinkable spaces". Just as Löw, they too combined space and time into a whole by applying an Einsteinian perspective.

In this sense and in a second step, the Mara "relational space" can be projected *onto* their "factual territory". Löw's relational definition of space is largely upheld but modified at its fringes: with her Einsteinian understanding of space-time, she defined space as mobile after she had criticized the absolutist space concept because this would not allow moving spaces to be grasped (albeit accepting movement within space) (Löw 2001: 65). But, considered a meshwork of mobile elements (Certeau 2006: 345), space is, mobile in itself. That means that even solidified space remains fluid (from which it emerged anyway), and that even "factual territory" is mobile itself because it is volatile at its limits. However, for Löw (1997: 455), any attempt to transform the rigidity of space into movement is an effort of human construction that depends on the reference system of the observers. But what about the space producers themselves? They are not only observers but simultaneously—and from the perspective of this project most prominently—are space producers. The space producers have to "flow" (swim or float) within their space and yet, at the same time, they have to rise above it to produce new space and in order to be able to actually "see" it in order to tell it apart from the previous spatial background. In this process, the Mareros are migrants. That means they are floating not only with their space, as do the sedentary space producers, but they also leave the space when they migrate (see Cresswell / Hoskins 2006) to settle in a new space. In that way, they connect or merge different spaces into one space. This last process would not be made visible if the actors, as in Löw's perspective, were "immanent" to their space and simply "disappeared" when they leave it. In this project, mobility of space is understood in an even broader way than Löw asserts. Mobility and space are "doubled". From the external observers' position, the Mara space displays two spaces (or two systems of reference): the normal

one of the (flowing) space itself, and the space-circumventing one of the migration. From the perspective of the migrating space producers, there is only one space—the one of the migration.

This project differentiate itself from Löw's approach in certain aspects. On the one hand, the subjects are interwoven in the space, but they have to rise above the space when they produce space. At least then they have to be analytically distinguished from the space. Löw (2008, 2013) formulates a justified criticism against Benno Werlen (2000) since he detaches the space production, that is to say the space-making by agents from space itself, and positions it above. To the contrary, in Löw's approach, space production, that is to say the making of space, disappears and is considered action in space. We label the cognitive perspective on space "imagined space". It is "layered" above the other two spaces. Here, too, a comparison is necessary: in how far do the spatial imaginations of the space producers actually match their territorial expansion and their internal space relational references (between themselves, the people and actors, and the social goods). The project suspects incongruences for both..

"Imagined space" is not understood in line with Immanuel Kant, and the narrow post-structuralist spatial turn, who denies any material reality of space and sees it as being entirely constructed through imagination. Instead, space is understood as a cognitive accomplishment that is relatively independent from the material aspect. For Maras, this project rather postulates that they produce space based on other interests than genuine space-making intentions. However, imagination can also be relevant after the space is made in the form of symbolization or even of stigmatization. This applies, for example, to the memory of space-making (*tours* or "travel reports") and in particular to the symbolic demarcation of produced spaces. With both forms of action, space is appropriated, but now on the cognitive level.

These three perspectives on space (territory, relational and imagined space), which all are dimensions of space at the same time, shall be layered on top of one another in the project. We follow the position of Kleinschmidt and Strandsbjerg (2010: 6), who claim that, in particular when discussing space, one-sided "pre-theoretical preferences" are not helpful. Rather, complementarity is required, which allows the binary form of "the textual and the physical, the natural and the social, agency and structure, dynamics and permanency" to be superseded.

Our project mobilizes all three meta-theoretical perspectives on space mentioned above without excluding a single one.[5]

Initially, the degree of overlap between the three external spatial dimensions of the Maras has to be determined. Then they will be linked to the internal dimensions or spatial orders or subspaces (see below) of the Mara spaces. The project will then deduce the Mara-specific spatial format[6] from the emerging matrix.

Interests and Space-producing Action

Understanding space as socially produced space, and thus as the result of the space-producing action, is not a new approach (Lefebvre 1991). With this approach, it is possible to circumvent spatial determinism while avoiding both a complete dematerialization of space (see Belina / Michel 2007:11, also Löw 2011) and a mere reduction to its materiality. This is in line with Lefebvre's position that space neither simply exists ontologically nor exists independently of society. Space can be created by action. Or at least, according to Lefebvre, in one of its dimensions: the "spatial praxis".

The conceptualization of spatial action, that is to say the process of making space, is still at a preliminary stage (e.g. see Brenner / Jessop / Jones 2008 or Agnew / Corbridge 1995). Lefebvre, as well as Löw (2001, 2008 and 2013), obscure (spatial) action in the space. In this project, spatial actions shall be made visible. With Werlen (1987), there is another author who is (like Löw), influenced by Giddens' theory of structuration, and who explicitly introduced agency into human geography. Therefore, he is acknowledged as the founder of agency-oriented human geography, which explicitly addresses the "geography-making of the subjects" (Kemper 2005: 164). However, in contrast to Lefebvre and Löw, Werlen obscures space in agency. Although he is the geographer among the two, he refrains from defining space, and uses it only as a point of reference for agency (as criticized by Löw 2013: 50). This project wants to overcome both of these obscurations and aims at extracting space from agency as well as agency from space.

Lefebvre (1991) also uses the term interest, although not in the context of producing space. In his writing, action and interest remain obscured in the "space as capitalism". In order to meaningfully combine conditions for space production and space-making agency, interests are the crucial link. However, as proposed by our

project, it does not require genuine interests in space, which relate to space production. Space production can be the by-product of pursuing entirely different interests. Therefore, space production is not only to be analysed as intended spatial action but also as unintended because spatial action can occur from totally different (see Lefebvre 1991: 27), and in so far not self-chosen, conditions.

To sum up, this project is confronted with at least five problems when it comes to spatial action. First, spatial actors are often neglected in spatial theory. Second, space and agency have not yet been theoretically assembled even in those cases when spatially active actors are in focus. Third, even when reflecting on space and agency, agency is understood as "using space" (Gotham 2003: 729) rather than "producing or doing space". Fourth, which concerns a general deficit of agency theory, agency cannot be found in the action process but only in the result of the action. Fifth, it remains still obscure what exactly spatial interest is.

In order to meet some of these problems head on, the project will elaborate upon the term "space-making" by not only placing spatial action in the context of three perspectives of space ("factual territory", "relational space of order", and "imagined space") and referring to it, but also by emphasizing agency in all three dimensions of space and by positioning agency for the time of space production above the space. The project is devoted to making agency visible as well as the insight that agency—even if driven by other interests than space production—creates the space and not that space creates agency.

Flows and Control Flows

This part details the category of interests, which actually set the process of space production and space agency in motion. The project presumes that the process of space-making is optimally represented as flow, and in the case of the Maras as a flow of violence. Put in other words, the interests eventually lead to the production of space. However, before the carriers of these interests can finally appropriate this space, these interests have to trigger the motions, that is to say flows, by which the space is sketched, or rather "marked", in its area and boundaries.

It is the (re)migration of the Mareros and thus of the potential violent actors that makes the translocal violence flow, and therefore makes the ropeway cabin move, before it can connect different spaces to "the one" Mara space of violence. I'M not aware of any source that would discuss the violence flow as an independent global flow that hinges on the migration flow. Flows of violence in general can be subsumed under global illicit flows, which are extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., see Andreas 2014: 1), at least if illicit flow as a category is not restricted to an economically exploitable flow (like drugs, antiques, humans, etc.). At least since Thrasher (1927 / 2000), it is common in classic gang literature to explain the emergence as well as the ebb and flow (Decker / Van Gemert / Pyrooz 2009: 398) of gangs with immigration (for the migration in the context of Latino gangs, see Vigil 2006: 3-8, 16-18). The fact that violence does not only flow in time (for macro history, see Pinker 2011; for micro sociology, see Hassner / Itchner / Kliper-Gross no date) but also in and as space has been revealed by space specialists who present relativist arguments.

Processes of globalization—when understood as the interplay of flows and controls—cause deterritorialization of non-global spatial references. On the one hand, transnational flows (of labour, surplus, communication, and knowledge) break up those flows of social relations with a more narrowly defined regime of territorialization (deterritorialization). On the other hand, these processes of globalization trigger efforts by actors who do not want to leave space to the space-dissolving force of globalization. For example, they might aim at regaining national sovereignty that was lost to deterritorialization processes (reterritorialization). However, even if the latter is not applicable—as is the case with the Maras—the dissolution of non-global concepts of space can be prevented through reterritorializing forms of organization that are not located on the level of the nation state but actually reject the nation statehood as localization (see Brenner 1999, 2005; Middell / Naumann 2010). In particular, this entails flows that cannot operate on the level of the nation state since they jeopardize statehood by being non-state flows of violence. In contrast, the control flows are not only shaped by local, regional, or transnational configurations, but are also comprised of strategies and political implementations through the nation state.

If the substance of a flow is violence, then flow and control flow represent a zero-sum game. This does not apply to flows of trade or migration. Here, positive-sum games are possible. Concerning flows of violence, the control flows—in the form of competing non-state violent actors, flows of the state, or flows of

the non-violent civil society—define the limits of the flow of violence. If a flow of violence aims at becoming a control flow itself, it has to achieve reterritorialization rather than deterritorialization. As Max Weber (1980: 28-29) states, orders and their guarantees are territory-based authorities (*anstaltsmäßige Gebietskörperschaft*). Although the fact that there could be spaces or orders of violence, which compete with the nation state on its territory, does not fit *sensu stricto* into Weber's conceptualization of the state as having the monopoly on violence, it is factually true (regarding non-state orders of violence, see Hanser / von Trotha 2002, or regarding quasi-states, see Bakonyi / Stuvøy 2006).

However, if the nation state is not considered the central point of references, as in Mouffe's (2007) "the political", then flow and control would drift apart anyway since it is totally "normal" that several orders or flows of violence coexist and a single flow does not necessarily have to establish itself as control. Although this project does not share Mouffe's rigidity in this matter, the project avoids placing the nation state at the centre since the Maras are not organized on the level of the nation state; additionally, the extension of the nation state is regarded as being determined by internal struggle and processes of negotiation. Nevertheless, this project can refer back to Weber in order to understand the social organization of the flow of violence. The Maras' flow of violence is non-state and at the same time quasi-state in nature.

The term "flow" is adopted from anthropological literature. A prominent writer is Arjun Appadurai (1996: 27-47). He conceptualizes the nature of the "global flows" as "chaotic" and in opposition to the stable, solidified and congealed spatial order, thus he achieves a dichotomy of a "processual geography" and a "geography of space" (for a critique of this position, see Heymann / Campbell 2009, who also call for a more diverse set of flow variances). This flow concept, as criticized by Geschiere and Meyer (1998; also see Brenner 1999), suffers from a tendency "towards closure and fixing at all levels" (Geschiere / Meyer 1998). This project attempts to avoid this tendency. In contrast, Castells (2004: 138-149), with his "space of flows", has included this time-related, dynamic momentum more thoroughly. He does so by juxtaposing his "space of flows" with the static "space of places". While the project utilizes the dynamic element of Castells, it does not want to describe a general transformation of the "space of flows" to the "space of places" as Castells does, nor does the project even suggest a dichotomous distinction between the two.

Using flow as the theoretical concept for the movement of and within spaces is particularly helpful in the case of the Maras. The translocal Mara space is not the result of contagion and in particular not a "hierarchical contagion" from neighbouring territories, where "larger, more visible, and generally more respected units are the first to engage in a behavior actively and then the less highly ranked units imitate that behavior", as Midlarsky, Crenshaw and Yoshida (1980: 272) describe for the "spread of terrorism". If the term can be applied at all, contagion occurs exclusively through the Maras as mediators or carriers for the expansion of the translocal space of the Maras. Since the core regions of the Maras are not adjacent, and therefore not spatially dependent, there can be no (automatic) spatial correlation between them and their violence through contagion. Instead, it requires the flow and the floating Marero migrants as carriers, who connect different spaces of violence to a (larger) space of violence.

Likewise, the Mara space does not represent a "mimetic interaction" as a "colonial mirror of production" (Taussig 1993: 66) because, in the Mara case, there is no colonizer and no colonized. Hierarchical structures usually do not emerge from differences in local origin. Accordingly, the Mara cannot draw a line between the "us" and "them". Even the hostility between MS-13 and Barrio 18 unfolds transregionally. Originally, both Maras formed next to each other. Additionally, the contemporary relations between the US and Central America are generally no longer colonial in character. In fact, with "mimetic interaction", Taussig does not actually refer to imitation but to "assimilation into one another". Given the "punctured porous border", the "us" and "them" lose their polarity and swim in and out of focus (Ibid.: 246 and 251). Certainly, Taussig's concept of assimilation is superior to "contagion" and "imitation", but it still does not do the trick, at least not on its own. First, in both core regions the conditions for the emergence of the Maras have been independent from each other and are still different. Second, the flow of migration is necessary to explain the mutual reinforcements that give birth to the overarching Mara space.

If the flow would not possess any self-sustaining mechanism, it would virtually dissolve and thus would be unable to become space. Therefore, the description of the Mara flow requires further components to demonstrate how the flow congeals to space despite the fact that the space still flows and even—through migration to another space—can be circumvented. These required components can be described using the metaphor of the ropeway. The components are the pillars, representing the different space from where the Mareros leave as migrants, and the ropeway cabin, which moves but has a stable shell, a shell of a relative-

ly closed community. The space and the identity of the Mara as a violent group or community are closely connected because their spatialization is not only of a physical but also of a symbolic nature (Demoscopía 2007: 26).

Diaspora as a Link between Flow of Violence and Space of Violence

The Mara community, which is mobile, but is at the same a stable, relatively closed community that is attached to the ropes moving forward and backward, is the diaspora. As a consequence, the Mara diaspora community becomes a space-constituting agent by serving as the link between multidirectional and repetitive migrations on the one side and space production on the other side. Diaspora can account for three different aspects: preserving the flow of migration as a community; bringing the flow to a halt and thus creating the relatively stable Mara space; and simultaneously marking this space.

When looking at the state of the art of contemporary Mara research, we realize that researching Maras with regard to diaspora as well as researching diaspora with regard to the Maras is even more unusual than analyzing its translocal-spatial localization. I'm not aware of any theory-guided literature that would even pursue one of the two directions in a systematic manner. But diaspora has been labelled as a "space" before (e.g., Brah 1996). Likewise, the idea that criminal communities and networks can be subsumed under the term "diaspora" is present in the literature (see Faist 2010: 9-34). "Diasporas are the exemplary *communities* of the transnational moment" (Tölölian 1991: 4, emphasis added). Here the link to the concept of communities of violence is obvious.[7]

If Maras can be framed as a diaspora depends on the diaspora term itself. It would be impossible to apply a narrow (Jewish) diaspora concept that focuses on the desired return to the Promised Land (Eretz Yisra'el) where the homeland is constructed as a "collective memory" or "vision or myth" (e.g. Safran 1991: 83-89, also see Cohen 2008: 17). However, it is possible that "the term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain" (Tölölian 1991: 5); accordingly, "diaspora includes practically anybody with a migrant background who contributes to the development of the home country" (Weinar 2010: 78).

Starting with this broad understanding of the diaspora term, it is necessary, for the purpose of this project, to find a definition that includes the community criterion but which neither requires a mystified homeland nor which corresponds to Brubaker (2005: 12), who explicitly avoids "groupism" and nearly denies the real-world character of the diaspora by expressing it "not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim". It is James Clifford (1994: 304) who provides a conceptually interesting option by considering that "diasporas also connect multiple communities of a dispersed population" within transnational networks, and that:

> *the term diaspora [...] a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movements, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement. (Ibid.: 308)*

Clifford adds:

> *Whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. They are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms. (Ibid., emphasis added)*

Clifford does not qualify nationalist cultural forms as being crucial to diaspora, explaining that diaspora "may" still be based on "attachment" and "accommodation". Undoubtedly, even for Clifford, the transnational overwhelms the local and, in his opinion, the local is only now being carved out. Notwithstanding, even he comes bearing the idea that the (local) "place of attachment" may not be "simply left behind":

> *Diasporic discourses reflect the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as simply left behind, but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity. (Ibid.: 311)*

This point will be strengthened here beyond Clifford's own assertions and given equal weight with and even permanently integrated into the embedding of diaspora in transnational networks. Thus, the Mara is to be understood as a diaspora between a transmigration that is often portrayed as all too mobile and, just as often, as all too stationary. It should be acknowledged that those youths who eventually join a Mara begin as mere transmigrants, and only become part of the (gang) diaspora after joining. Mareros are thus exactly at the centre of tension between local immobility (community) and transnational movement (transmigration): They start as (children of) transmigrants, and therefore as deprived victims, entangled, among other things, in the game of remittances. However, when they proceed to seek a stable community and sense of belonging, they find this only between the worlds—and not in a nation. Their case is clearly one of diaspora. On one hand, Mareros do not wish to return to their homelands, and they do not mythologize it, but they are typically forced to return by means of deportation or extradition. On the other hand, they cannot find a homeland, either in their countries of origin or residence, or elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, due to the home they carry with them, they are at once transnational *and* telluric, regardless of whether they are located in their countries of origin, return, or residence.

While for the Jewish diaspora the home is the homeland, and for the global Muslim umma the home is only imagined (Faist 2010: 12), for the Mara the home is not the homeland but it is also a real-world phenomenon, which is not only imagined. If one now goes beyond Clifford and assumes that, unlike the homeland, the home, while no less stable than the homeland, can be "carried", it becomes possible even for a nomadic community that might have nothing to do with any nationally defined hom*eland*. Thus, "dwelling" does not preclude "solidarity" and stable "connection"—even outside of a single place or a single nation. Instead,

> *[t]he empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling here assumes a solidarity and connections there. But there is not necessarily a single place or an exclusivist nation (Clifford 1994: 322, emphasis in original).*

This idea is markedly relevant for Maras. They too enjoy real, not perceived, solidarity and connections just like those typical of communities. Taking these ideas into consideration and reinforcing them allows one to avoid that "semantic broadening of 'diaspora'" that causes the category to diffuse entirely (Baumann 2000: 325-326) and to profile diaspora as an "analytical category" (Ibid.).

Two more of Clifford's ideas are central to the characterization of the Mara as diaspora. First, he points out (1994: 312) that economic marginalization can also lead to the kind of new solidarities that can unite *diverse* nationalities in a diaspora. Here, he lists Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians living in France. The US Maras that unite members of different Central American nationalities are also proof of this. Second, Clifford's presumed ambivalence of the diaspora term also allows it to include "illegal practices of crossing and communication" (Ibid.: 304), "a sense of superiority to other minorities and migrant populations" (Ibid.: 315), and "violent results" (Ibid.: 308). In this sense, his idea of diaspora is also normatively open, and is thus also applicable to the Mara.

Moreover, Dahinden's (2010: 52) diaspora model is helpful in achieving two objectives at once. It enables space and flow to be brought together on the one hand as well as homogeneous also local tellurian diaspora groups like the Maras with their violent space to be brought together on the one other hand. In addition, it connects both aspects through a conceptual bridge. Dahinden starts with the claim that there is locality in every form of mobility. In his four-cell matrix with the dimensions of low / high and mobility / locality, the Mareros (not discussed by Dahinden) would represent the type of "localized mobile transnational formation" that displays high mobility and high locality (ibid.: 53).

In this project, locality is not *equated* with space. Rather, it is *associated* with it. Space not only encompasses places but also reaches beyond them. As another difference to Dahinden, the connection of mobility and spatialization refers to a very specific space of immanent violence with its own internal logic—the space of violence.

Space of Violence

It is the movement of the already mentioned ropeway cabin that "hosts" the Mara diaspora and carries its members from some places to other places (of residence and violent actions). It is also the movement of

this cabin that marks the one overarching space, which is referred to a "space of violence" in this project. While the term "space of violence" is already established in the literature, its advocates[8] have not paid attention to Maras so far. However, the concept they propose is the most prominent, if not the only one, which considers violence as space *and*, at the same time, refers to violence in a physical sense. Alas, the central term—space—is not clearly defined. It is conceptualized vaguely as a "space of enabling and empowerment" in which "the rules of social communication which apply in peace are suspended" and where "the behavior of people is predominantly a response to the presence of violence [...] when there is no opportunity to flee the violence" (Baberowski 2012: 25). Understood this way, a space of violence is defined exclusively by the presence of violence without resorting to an overarching concept of space. No further specifications like boundaries and other features of these spaces, beyond the existence of violence, are provided. Baberowski understands the space of violence simply as "situations" in which violence triggers itself and has no cause beyond itself. Baberowski's "situational" approach circumvents the "fetishization of locality as the 'genuine' place for experience and social proximity", a general objective of the SFB as a whole. Baberowski's space is indeterminate and henceforth only a flow (of situations) that is completely lacking (spatial) orders.

The research project agrees with this general description of space of violence; however, it goes further by not only looking at space from this perspective but also by considering it, at least in its core, as an actual battlefield. Therefore, the space of violence is not only embattled from outside but is also violent in itself on the inside. The project postulates that in particular that violence can overcome the situational fluidity of this space, thereby perpetuating and densifying it as an (internal) order of violence. Moreover, "spaces of enabling and empowerment" are not without boundaries since the space is physically limited by competing spaces of violence and (successful) violence-containment spaces (in the form of spatialized control flows), which function as "spaces of prevention" (Zinecker 2014: 47; Zinecker 2015). Despite the more order-oriented "drives" in this project, the space is not "reified". The successful avoidance of reification becomes evident since this project applies several perspectives on space and considers the space of violence as floating on the "transnational". Certainly, Baberowski would not object to the "flow of the space" and its relationality. However, he probably would not like to acknowledge "factual territory" as a perspective on space, although even "space of enabling and empowerment" ought to have limits. At least, these limits have to exist where violence is not "enabled" anymore. Finally, the project goes beyond Baberowski's position by considering the space of violence of the Maras, carried by the diaspora, not only locally but also transnationally.

However, some problems remain: Does Baberowski consider the space of violence only as a space of enabled violence or as thoroughly violent? Or is there no difference? How to deal with the possibility that the space of Mara presence might not be identical to the space where Maras actually commit their violent acts? And how can this challenge be reflected in the three (external) perspectives on space, as they are emphasized in this project? Both spaces—the space of presence of violent actors and the space where they perpetuate violence—do not have to match. A place characterized by Marero presence might concurrently lack their relational positioning "towards" violence (as the related social good) and thus might lack the respective space-constituting momentum. After all, space-making in this project only occurs through violent action. This question challenges Löw's model of relational space, which is one of the three spatial dimensions.

Implementing the Chain of Argument

Up to now, the chain of argument has been developed only on the theoretical level. Therefore, it is important to demonstrate how the already available empirical data on Maras can be applied. This presentation will be direct and brief, and preliminarily restricted to the first and the last link in the chain.

Interests and Unintended Production of Space

The project is founded on the claim that the genesis of Mara space is due to unsatisfied interests, which are not genuinely spatial in character. They are based on concrete conditions in the realms of political economy and culture. Three interests are believed to be crucial. (1) The first is empowerment of local labour—so that access to the labour market and to income is guaranteed—and, due the failure of this interest, the subsequent interest in substitutes to compensate for this failure (e.g. remittances), which also eventually fail. Furthermore, these interests include (2) the equally failed desire for belonging and hospitality in both the country of origin and of destination. The frustration stemming from the failure to accomplish both objectives points towards violence as an easily available "substitute for the substitutes" (Zinecker 2014, with reference to Merton 1938 and 1968). The struggle for, and sometimes the negotiation for and the reproduction of the Mara space and its subspaces depend on (3) if this Mara space of violence reproduces itself endlessly through recurring violence and recurring interests in violence. The project maintains that this mechanism is present due to the perpetual violent confrontation between the two Maras (MS-13 and Barrio 18).

The following section will discuss these three interests in detail:

The first interest **(1)** is rooted in the observation that violence acts as a substitute. Following Robert Merton (1938 and 1968), this substitute closes the gap between highly valued goals—whether in the form of economic income or political inclusion—and the lack of legitimate means (in this context, full employment in a market economy and a fully established as well as functioning democracy), which are necessary to achieve these goals. If these means are lacking, the argument of opportunity costs holds true. Following this argument, indirect but stable incentives for seeking an alternative access to economic welfare as well as democracy, apart from job opportunities as well as political participation, are created, particularly among the poorer middle strata. These incentives are even stronger if otherwise compensatory means (such as new rents as well as political and war-related violence) have proved to be unsuccessful. Criminal violence, then, appears as a quick and easily available as well as innovative substitute. In short, "[w]hen people are treated badly, they get upset and engage in crime" (Agnew, R. 2001: 16). The Maras as agents of violent crime are categorized as such. The potential, unrealized substitute that they themselves substitute with violence are most noticeably the remittances.

Remittances mitigate, cushion, subsidize, or cover marginality; however, they damage the empowerment of local labour and therefore reinforce the basic mechanisms of rent economy instead of promoting capitalist development. Despite that, remittances are expected to act as substitutes for lacking full employment and corresponding local employment opportunities. At the same time, and this is the crucial issue in explaining criminal violence and Maras, they fail to meet these expectations. Thus, this generates even more frustration than before. Under these circumstances, according to Merton, another and a new substitute, or a "substitute of substitutes", is required: In these situations, criminal violence is a last option and a final compensation without additional prerequisites.

Unquestionably, the remittances themselves do not account for the formation of Maras; nevertheless, the relative deprivation (see Runciman 1966; Crosby 1976: 85-113) occurs because these youths are somehow excluded from the benefit of the remittances. Relative deprivation implies social strain and frustration, which eventually lead to violence. This violence might be instrumental, that is to say applied to acquire the substitute-substitute benefit, or affective, that is to say to relieve frustration. However, Maras do not only become a "substitute for the substitute"; at the end of the day, they become an "otra gran remesa social y cultural" (PNUD 2005: 372) or a "gang-social remittance" (Cruz 2010: 384).

In order to acquire the mentioned substitute-substitute benefit, Mareros initially committed petty theft and robberies (e.g. bags, phones, sneakers, etc.). Later, they aimed at stabilizing the flow of profit through "taxation" (Flores 2 February 2007). Maras started focusing on taxation / extortion in the *barrios* by preying on bus conductors and taxi drivers as well as small business owners (Aguilar / Carranza 2008: 23ff). This stable interest in taxation in the *barrios* gave way to an interest in small-scale control—not occupation—of local territories. However, the merger of the taxing "state", in a Weberian sense, and domination of a territory only applies locally, not transnationally; the nation state has little concern for the Maras and ranks at the bottom of the Maras' "scalar hierarchy" (Brenner 2001: 606).

For now, it remains uncertain if their spatial behaviour still represents the "*defensive* localism" (emphasis added) that Adamson (2002) claims to be typical of gangs. It might indeed be more aggressive by nature although it does not yet display the characteristics of territories under the control of a guerrilla. However, once the Maras have also spatialized transnationally, then this spatialization is not bound to territories but relies on much looser networks. These networks are similar to those typical of organized (drug) crime, but they are not the same. Organized crime also contributes with drug money to the local revenues of the Maras. There is a contradictory concomitance when it comes to Mara interest. On the one hand, there is the important local (primary) struggle for profit, partly in the form of taxes, which follows a secondary struggle for territories and their local foundation (reterritorialization). On the other hand, there is the pronounced desire to form transnational—interestingly more than national—networks.

■ The second interest **(2)** relates to the observation that the Mareros fail in their need for belonging / hospitality in both their country of origin and destination. Culturally, Mareros are classified as foreign upon their return to the homeland, even more so than other immigrants. Only their Mara removes this classification. The young remigrants feel no identification in terms of a homeland with either the country of origin (and return) or the country of residence. It is also clear that frustration is felt more keenly in the country of origin and return than in the country of temporary residence.

Not even the frequently raised advantage of bilingualism displayed by diaspora remigrants (for example, in King / Christou 2010: 167ff)—in this case the mastery of both English and Spanish—applies to the Mareros. They are far more likely to have mastered neither language and thus use an unintelligible Spanglish characterized by elements of Malespín and of the Russian-based Nadsat, or other gang slang. For the Mareros, it is also the "lack (of) the linguistic and cultural competence necessary for acceptance as co-ethnics in their ancestral homeland" (Tsuda 2009: 327) that makes them "aliens" in homelands to which they return. Not only do remigrant Mareros fail to enjoy the advantage of bilingualism, but, for them, the other constantly asserted advantage of the experience of multiple cultures (Berchem 2014) has long mutated into the experience of multiple incidents of violence.

The particular problem of a diaspora of people feeling alien upon returning to their *home* countries has been observed by anthropologist Elana Zilberg (2004: 761) in Mareros who have returned to El Salvador. Zilberg first cites Bulldog following his return, who explains:

> *Shit, homes, I've never been here. I mean, I know I'm from here, homes, but I've never been here.*

Another Marero, Weasel, says:

> *It was like they were sending me to Mars or something. I hadn't been to the country for twenty something, twenty-two years. And then I come back and I'm completely lost, man. (Ibid.: 767)*

Mars is a metaphor for the remigrating Mareros' sense of being generally "lost in space". Only those Mareros in the Mara domiciled in both the country of migration and the country of origin do not feel lost, and only they can bring those Mareros, who would otherwise wander around as "Martians", back to earth. Because other communities reject them, or because the Mareros feel rejected, only this established community is reliable across state borders and can "cure" them of their feeling of being lost and alone.

■ The third interest **(3)** concerns that the perpetual reproduction of the Mara space depends on the existence of an enemy that makes the use of violence "indispensable". Now, where could the Marero find his enemy? The answer being in the other Mara, one which acts and thinks just like the first and which is the de facto and symbolic competitor. In order to legitimize its own continued existence as a violence culture, each Mara needs the other more than it needs civil society, to which it must ultimately remain connected some way or another due to its telluric community radius. Circular reasoning is enough of a motive for violence—the fact that a person belongs to the other Mara and that one has already sworn to fight the enemy Mara because it is an enemy Mara. The Marero's frustration is not directed at those at the top because they are too far away. It can only be directed at his peer Mara, thus at the (one) Mara that questions his own right to be the only violent substitute.

It is clear from the statements of the Mareros from both Maras that it is always the other Mara that is at fault, and never one's own. According to Barrio 18, MS-13 is lacking in organization, planning, and concentration, and its members are still just sloppy rockers who wear their hair long like women. According to MS-13, Barrio 18 is unnecessarily aggressive and violent.

Since the members of each Mara cannot name any real differences between themselves and the members of the other Mara, which would explain their mutual hostility, they "create" these differences with attributions and sets of subcultural symbols. But these ascribed differences disappear when a common enemy appears on the horizon, like a third gang (but not the police), and / or when members are in prison (Ward 2013: 151); then Maras fight side by side.

The interest in violence is reproduced through the constant construction of the enemy. In that way, the interest in violence, which precedes the space of violence-making, "surfs" on interests (1) and (2) and leads to space production only in the combination of these interests.

All three interests have to come together for the Maras to emerge and expand transnationally. And logically, interests (1) and (2) have to precede interest (3). That means that there is no separate, autonomous interest in space, or at least it is secondary to interests (1) and (3). Our research project suggests that since the Maras primarily pursue these three interests instead of genuine spatial interests, they produce their Mara space as a by-product.

Mara Space(s) of Violence: Dimensions of a Specific Spatial Format?

As stated above, this project claims that the Mara-specific forms of spatialization consist of three external and four internal dimensions of space and their negotiation or (non-)synchronization. The three perspectives on space and its external dimensions have been introduced on a theoretical level and discussed above. The four internal dimensions of space will be discussed in the following section and will be linked to the external dimensions. These internal and external dimensions of space can be assembled into a matrix..

External Dimensions

Regarding **"factual territory"** as one of the three external dimensions of space, this project is primarily concerned with the empirically observable territorial expansion of the Maras, first in the two core regions (USA and Central America, here being El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala). Moreover, it scrutinizes if there are additional areas of expansion of the Mara space and where exactly those spaces are located. The areas to be tested for Mara presence are in the Americas (Canada, Mexico, Chile, Peru, and Argentina) and in Europe (Spain, Italy, and the UK). The project also wants to explain why some of the adjacent states (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Belize, Panama, and Colombia) have been spared from Mara presence. Using this dimension of space, the project wants to analyze how and within which boundaries the Mara produce their own territorial space and how this space stands vis-à-vis territories (among them states) generated by other actors. Where do they match, where do they overlap, and where might these spaces be totally unrelated?

Regarding the **"relational space of order"** as a space in the sense of a "web of relation(s) of positions and locations of artefactual phenomena", this project also aims at relationalization, localization, and regionalization, and therefore clustering (for another context, see Benecke / Branovic / Draude 2008: 16) in mobile spaces. The ropeway metaphor captures this aspect of the analysis. But how are the Mareros positioned towards each other, towards other people, and towards social goods (especially regarding violence)? Which interactions occur? How do these interactions develop a space-constituting substance? When and where have they risen above this space and thus able to create new space? Maras are both sedentary and nomadic (for the terminology, see Deleuze / Guattari 2006: 434-436). Under which conditions do Maras actually remain sedentary? Where, when, and how do they switch into a nomadic mode and move with and within their own space?

Regarding the **"imagined space",** the research mainly concerns the way how Maras imagine, symbolize, and construct their space. The imagination of space is examined first before the production of space (as

planning or prescribing) as well as after the production of space (as a symbolic demarcation). The project expects that the Maras symbolize their space when they demarcate their "factual territory" as a "'territorio simbólico.' El graffiti sirve para demarcar el territorio" (Demoscopía 2007, 30). Additionally, "travelogues" and "travel routes" (*tours*) can be recorded that the Mareros create by "citing places" (see Certeau 2006: 348).

However, transnational spaces are not enclosed by walls and fences, and hence not by graffiti. Nevertheless, there are similar patterns of graffiti that can be found at different locations throughout the world. The original *barrio* of the Marero migrates with him to new, transnational spaces in the form of a code tattooed under his skin. Transnational space is also represented by the transcultural Spanglish. Gang and gangster slang (Cholo, Malespin, or Nadsat, nested in Spanglish) or written *willias* contain local as well as transnational components. Fashion as an identity and space symbol can be transnational (such as certain sneakers or Nike apparel) or regional across countries (Cholo style). However, are the more specific symbols like typical Mara hand signs or their alphabet identical across borders (see Valenzuela Arce, Nateras Domínguez, Reguillo Cruz: 2007 and Vigil 2006)? And how are the different internal and external spatial dimensions of the Maras reflected in these signs of transculturation? Can the suggested sequence of interests (spatial interest as a lower-ranking interest) be detected in the relation between space and imagination ("space first, then imagination")? Are there specific spaces that only exist in the Maras' imagination but have no reference to any reality?

The project assumes that imagined spaces of violence are usually believed to have the same extension or go beyond the extension of physically marked space. They are rarely smaller. This holds certainly true regarding the imagination of victims and the security forces (i.e. the control flow). Frequently, these institutions describe the Mara spaces larger than they are in reality. There is a particular interest in doing so for the moral entrepreneurs among these flows, who use stigmatization or, in the terms of criminology, labelling to frame even low-intensity violence as a security threat and thus instigate "moral panic". Although the author is quite critical when it comes to these "enlarging-spatial perspectives", she does not deny that "space-enlarging labelling" can have effects on the actual space producers, here the Maras. And the Mareros: will they boast about these territorial gains and exaggerate them? Or do they tend to reduce the territory in their narratives since they do not intend to occupy space and / or because they want to appear more restrained in order to avoid "heat"? Or are they actually "realistic" in their spatial imagination?

Internal Dimensions

As any space, the Mara space does not only possess external dimensions, as discussed above, but also internal dimensions. These internal dimensions are not restricted to the local and transnational, which is encompassed by the translocal anyway. The local and the transnational realm display different configurations and dissolve into one another. In this process, the two realms become connected to a spectrum or continuum of several internal subspaces, or subscales respectively.

One end of the "Mara space of violence" is represented by the **"shelter space".** Here, a Mara represents this "shelter" for their members through their own community. It is the Mareros' habitat. This subspace can be locally grounded or rooted, for example as a "*destroyer*" (gathering place and hang-out) or as a Mara-designated group cell in prison. This subspace then has a local and fixed territorial dimension. However, this space can have a transnational and mobile dimension when it represents the "cabin" that transnationally floats with the Mara diaspora community.

Where is the smallest local-spatial unit if the *destroyer* is considered too dangerous and the *mirins* (assemblies) are held by phone? Where is the shelter space of the Mareros then? Or is it not necessary? Could the shelter space be transferred to the Mareros' homes and their families? Has the *destroyer* been marked symbolically, and if yes, for how long? After all, due to security concerns, the spot for gatherings might not have been abandoned, but maybe they just stopped marking the place symbolically. And what about the family homes where the Mareros meet? Are they claimed symbolically? And how is the relational space of the homes configured in contrast to the *destroyer*? After all, there are not only Mareros present in this space, but also their families. Are the family members part of the order and positioning in the space of violence? Is it possible that space does not constitute a coherent area even inside these houses, on a very small surface area, because the house also entails the room of the entirely peaceful *abuelita*? And how is the other "shelter space" in the moving cabin to be discussed?

Next in the continuum is the **"control space",** which remains rather local in character**.** In many ways, it resembles an "occupied", although not liberated area that can even be taxed and where the Mara holds a limited form of monopoly of violence, e.g. in the *barrios* or *comunidades / colonias*. After all, many gang members equate gang with neighbourhood (Vigil 2006: 116, also see 152-154). But how to explain that despite increasing transnationalization the physical control over *barrios* becomes even more important? Regarding representations of the "imagined space", they are particularly concentrated in the "control space". This could be in the form of graffiti, frequently displaying the *barrio* code, which can be seen as a demarcation. The name of the *barrio* is also worth to be paraded in the form of tattoos. The relational dimension in the control space is much more complex than in the "shelter space" since the Mareros have to engage in interaction with the population of the *barrio*. Accordingly, the local community *can* have a protective role.

This subspace is succeeded by the more mobile **"space of violent action"** in which the Maras exert their violence. This space is spotted with bodies of the victims of the Maras. But how far does this space actually extend? Is violence actually committed everywhere where Maras are present? What if the bodies of the victims are moved from the crime scene to another place? Would these piles of corpses on dumpsters still belong to the "space of violent action"? If defined simply as a space where violent acts are perpetrated, then the "space of violent action" emerges not as a contiguous territory. Some of the (immaterial) links that bind together the last of the four spaces—the "transnational-relational space of circulation, transfer, and communication" (see below)—might already be in effect in this space. However, the "space of violent action" is not yet the space where the ropeway actually moves. So what binds it together? Already for the narration of this space, tours and maps could become important, although their space producers are not (yet) nomads, but still sedentary. If imagination, understood as the planning of space, actually occurs in the Mara space, then most likely it does here as well, but probably only in the context of planning crimes and violence (and not of space as such).

Finally, at the other end of the spectrum, the Maras "mark" a **"transnational-relational space of circulation, transfer, and communication"** as their "turf" using their "scent marks". They do so initially as nomads and then, after the period of migration is over, as residents. This transnational space is not only particularly mobile and flexible but also the most fluid and undefined at its boundaries: among the four subspaces, it remains most *flow*. This subspace is transnational, but not ubiquitous, and accordingly has boundaries. However, these boundaries are not borders, which define the limits of the two previously mentioned subspaces. For the ropes of the transnational ropeway are not limitless but closely fixed to place. While this space is embattled and rivals are not tolerated, violence occurs on a lower level. In this sense, it points back to the "shelter space" as the other end of the spectrum where Maras exist but where they commit relatively few acts of violence.

For the "transnational-relational space of circulation, transfer, and communication", it is difficult to symbolically demarcate the space. Instead, mobile symbols like tattoos, language, and sign or body language are transnationally conveyed and communicated. In the imagination of this subspace, planning does not seem to be relevant because Mareros do not (or at least only very rarely) migrate due to an order but instead because of individual economic or legal reasons. This subspace appears to be particularly relational. Identifying typical features in the form of typical "positions of people and social goods" might be very difficult. Methodically, this would require some type of (figurative) tracking device to follow their routes and to expose the space-making process by linking these routes together to obtain an area-space. In order to examine relationality, it would also be possible to track networks by contact frequency analysis. However, the access to data beyond the narratives of individual Mareros is difficult and doesn't allow for a systematic investigation.

To sum up, the conceptualized "total Mara space" as a whole will always be space of violent actors. However, when looking at actually occurring physical violence, its quality as a space of violence is less pronounced at its ends and most intense in the third subspace. The circle between "transnational-relational space of circulation, transfer, and communication" and the "shelter space" is closed because a transnational dimension exists. This transnational dimension exists in both spaces, in the case of the "shelter space" *and* in its manifestation as the transnationally floating diaspora community.

Borders are not only surmounted on a transnational level but also on the subnational level. The research project has to investigate in which substate regions within the Mara countries the Mareros actually exist. In order to connect the three elements of the subspaces or the internal spatial orders of the Maras, as well as flow and space and further the transnational and the local, this research project will rely on the metaphor of the ropeway described above.

Conclusion

This project pursues several objectives. First, the project wants to formulate an interest-driven theory of action model of spatial production, which is not primarily space intentional. Subsequently, this model will be applied to the Maras as a research prism. That way, it aims at closing the gap in the literature between space-producing agency and space. Conceptual process tracing will be employed to trace the process from interest via flow control and diaspora to space and spatial format. This will enable the author to sketch a dialectic model of relation between spatial fluidizations and congealed-perpetuated spatial formats and at the same time to challenge the alleged dichotomy of de- and reterritorialization. These objectives will be realized without essentializing the reterritorialization, as can be shown in the ropeway metaphor.

Second, the project will show how the agency of the space-producing actors and the process of space production can be conveyed into the new spatial format. The project will demonstrate how the interaction of the internal and external dimensions of the Mara space leads to the creation of a specific overarching spatial format. Through this demonstration, the project addresses not only the process of the genesis of the spatial format but also the result of the process and hence consolidates agency and structure again. Ideally, every single one of the seven spatial dimensions could be traced back to a specific form of spatial agency.

This leads to the third objective of the project. Here, the empirically observable *real type* of the space of violence of the Maras will be reconsidered as a potential corrective to the hitherto designed *ideal type* of the space of violence in order to provide, if possible, groundwork for a more open and more dialectic theory model of the space of violence that is more receptive to the relations between flow and order. As an example, it could be expected that "hybridity" does not capture the spatial order that results from the space production of the Maras because the dialectics of flow and external boundaries cannot be properly reflected. However, the Mara space of violence is not assumed to be so "vague" and "ramified" that it would qualify as a "rhizome" (Deleuze), in particular since it is clearly hierarchical in its local points by the respective organizational structure. Since the space congeals to spatial, albeit still transforming order, it is more than just "flow" but cannot be captured with the term network either. Since it is migrating and displays unstable boundaries, it is not solid and reified.

The fourth objective of the project aims at demonstrating through the case of the Maras that even transnational spaces are not ubiquitous since they have boundaries where even the most recent globalization flows have come to a halt despite the *global condition*. The standstill occurs not only because they are kept in check by competing (control) flows but also because there are spaces where the potential producers of spaces of violence cannot embed themselves. The territorial establishment of respective (violent) space producers fails if other actors succeed in establishing translocal violence-*control* flows as the ubiquitous spatial format instead of translocal flows of violence. In fact, in the case of Islamic State, as well as in the case of the Maras, there is the risk that non-state spaces of violence as spatial formats expand beyond many country borders, manage to establish translocal roots, and eventually superpose or even supersede other spatial formats (among them the ones investigated by the other projects in the SFB).

There are indeed quite a number of transnational gangs as criminal organizations that share some traits with the Maras, e.g. committing violent crimes using the same label in different countries. However, according to preliminary research, none of the other gangs appear to share all the characteristics of the Mara; accordingly, just the Mara can be properly described with the ropeway metaphor. In this paper, these characteristics haven been broken down as follows: (a) there is re-(re)migration and members commit crimes in more than one country; (b) the flow of transnational movement occurs within a diaspora community; (c) it is indeed the same criminal organization that is active in different countries; (d) membership in the organization implies (as a cause or consequence) that the member is a pariah in the overarching diaspora community; and (e) membership in the organization provides the member with a desired feeling of family and belonging (lacking alternative options), that is to say gang affiliation provides a home and is not just a profession.

Some of the other well-known crime organizations are simply not part of migration flows (e.g. outlaw motorcycle clubs, see Barker 2015; Bjørgo 2015). Furthermore, most do not provide the organization a substitute for a failed experience of belonging (for the Chinese triads, see Chu 2000; Zhang / Chin 2008; Lo / Kwok 2012). And some are organized in very small, more personal, clannish-style groupings and therefore do not need the gang symbols as a brand and identity marker (e.g. Nigerian, Albanian, and other groups frequently

labelled as some kind of "ethnic mafia"). In other cases, local indigenous gangs simply adopt symbols and labels without any actual affiliation with the claimed mother organizations (e.g. the foreign presence of Bloods and Crips, see Starbuck et al. 2001; Descomiers / Morselli 2011). In the case of the Yakuza, there is a strong cohesion within the organization and they display a considerable transnational activity, but the Yakuza is closer to a corporate-style organization in contrast to a street gang. They are quite hierarchical and their transnational criminal activities are driven by investment decisions similar to the Japanese legal economy. In fact, they float on the flow of Japanese foreign direct investment and Japanese tourism rather than labour migration (Kaplan / Dubro 2003).

Appropriately, it seems reasonable to consider that the Mara space of violence is a unique spatial format when compared to other transnational gangs or even other criminal organizations. Based on these reflections and strategies, while maintaining a comparative perspective on other violent organizations, it should be possible to enrich the typology of spatial formats announced by the SFB with a Mara-specific type of spatial format. This is certainly a question of conceptual integrity, and, moreover, it is of eminent political-practical importance.

References

1 A third position is defended by Jütersonke / Muggah / Rodgers (2009: 380). According to their point of view, "neither gang is a real federal structure, much less a transnational one" and the "transnational character" of the Maras is merely "an imagined social morphology (rather) than a real phenomenon". The author does not address this position in detail. First because it is a minor position in the literature and second because it is apparently not aiming at the actual geographical extension of the Mara, but rather at the fact that there is no organizational structure on the transnational level. The author agrees with this latter point.

2 Martina Löw differentiates between (1) and (2), i.e. absolutist and relativist perspectives on space (Kajetzke / Schroer 2010: 192–203). By distinguishing herself from absolutist conceptualizations of space as place or territory, she grounds her definition in the relativist and processual space perspective. According to Löw, this space would not only be social (and symbolic) but also material. At the same time, Löw does not agree with "phenomenologist" imaginations of space. She points out that these conceptualizations would follow the entirely subjective perspective according to which space would be non-material and existed only in perception and imagination. Henceforth, her rejection of (3) is implied. The SFB 700: "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood" distinguishes between Löw's relational space of order as an assemblage of position and location of material phenomena and the extended spatial concept of a constructed space and lastly of the "container space". Only the last type is excluded heuristically by the SFB 700, while Löw insists on the "relational space of order". She understands it as a "relational order of beings and social goods at given places." Her space is also constituted by place / locations in order to arranging cognitive processes, i.e. by spacing (positioning) and synthesis (processes of perception, imagination, and remembering). Therefore, the distance to the spatial type, which is classified in this working paper under (3), is ontologically significant because space is conceptualized in a material form; however, it is not epistemologically significant. A similar relational perspective as defended by Löw is favored by Doreen Massey, David Harvey, and also Neil Brenner and Bob Jessop. Of course, a list of relevant spatial typologies has to entail Henri Lefebrve. He distinguishes three (mutually influencing) spatial dimensions: (1) *spatial practice*, which is based on a material production of space and which excludes space as a construct, while avoiding reification or a proximity to the container-space concept since it is defined as everyday practice; (2) *representations of space*, which refer to a conceptualized space, i.e. conceiving of and cognitively aiming at space (which has nothing to do with the perception of space); and (3) *spaces of representation* as lived spaces, which refer to something (else) (Lefebvre 1991, also see Fehlberg 2013: 112) and do so with complex systems of symbols: "They [spaces of representation] do not refer to themselves, but point to a third" (see Fehlberg 2013: 112). For Lefebvre "space [is] a mental *and* a material construct" (Elden 2007: 110, emphasis in original). This approach shall be adopted in the project even if it is obvious that none of Lefebvre's three dimensions of space is identical to the three dimensions of space considered in this working paper. Beside his basic approaches already mentioned, Lefebvre will have a major role when this project will elaborate upon a more fine-grained version of the preliminary spatial types discussed above.

3 In the 1970s, the "methodological territorialism" opens up space to the even more problematic "methodological nationalism", by merging state, nation, and society into one inseparable whole within stable borders.

4 If spaces can exist independently of production, appropriation, or experience of humans is not relevant for the presented project, although it cannot be discredited in a completely unexplored and constantly expanding universe. If human appropriation is actually considered a necessary condition for space, then unexplored spaces would require another terminology. Nevertheless, this would not solve the underlying philosophical problem. However, this issue is not addressed by this project.

5 This is in contrast to the SFB 700, which also defined one perspective differently from the one in this paper. However, just like the SFB 700, the paper does not want to play one perspective against another one (Benecke / Branovic / Draude 2008). Again in contrast to the SFB 700, it does not want to match specific research questions to specific spatial perspectives, but shall address one problem from several spatial perspectives.

6 This then shall correspond to the definition of spatial format as discussed in the grant application of the entire SFB 1199: spatial formats are not only understood as entailing several scales of territoriality (from subnational regions to the nation state to the supranational units) but also connections between different places to trans-national spaces (e.g. of migrants) as well as networks of transactions that connect several places over long distances.

7 See the DFG-funded research group "Communities of Violence" chaired by Winfried Speitkamp, which investigated the practices, patterns, and internal logic of violent behaviour as well as the demarcation, inclusion, order, and self-description of violent communities (for the results, see Speitkamp 2013a und b).

8 Most prominently are Baberowski (2015) and Baberowksi / Metzler (2012); on Latin America, in the same volume, see Riekenberg (2012); also see the project "Urban space of violence" at the Centre Marc Bloch, here in particular the works of Bake and Beck, and other publications, in particular in urban studies.

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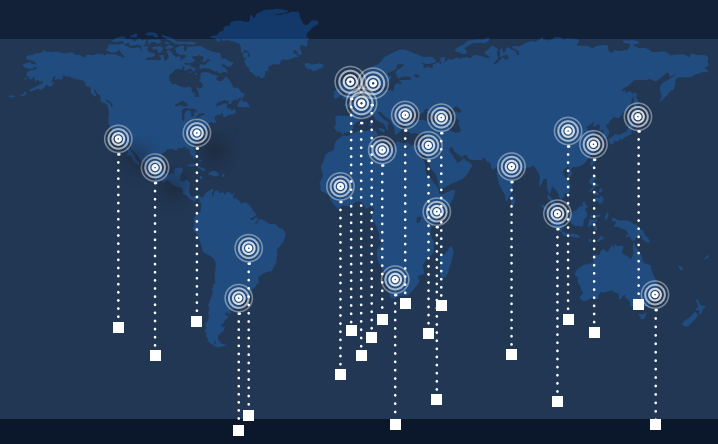

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