

To Come and Go: Transnational Life Between Mexico and Alaska

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In this presentation, I examine the experiences of place and patterns of transnational mobility of three generations of people who have been living between Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán, Mexico and Anchorage, Alaska, USA for several decades. Based on long term ethnographic research, I analyze the experience of Acuitzences (people from Acuitzio) at several levels: as they encounter frictions in their movements across the continent; the practices of multigenerational family units who build lives in both Anchorage and Acuitzio; the uneven and situated habits that generate a transnational class formation, and the ways in which Mexicans in Alaska re-conceptualize their senses of place. My analysis reveals that Acuitzences in Alaska orient their lives to the transnational social field as a whole as they live, work, and imagine their futures across the continent. Acuitzio, Anchorage, and the experience of mobility between the two are thus necessary to feel at home in the world. Despite policy restrictions to migration, the lives of transnational Acuitzences who come and go show how the United States and Mexico are profoundly coproduced geographies.

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