

INTRODUCTION

Media Diversity in an ‘Indigenous’ Community

*Approaches to the Dynamics
of Media Spaces*

Jump Start

Berlin, June 2012. Carlos Pérez Rojas, a young Mexican indigenous filmmaker, had arrived from Lyon to present his prize-winning documentary *And the River Flows On* (*Y el río sigue corriendo*) to my course at the Freie Universität Berlin.¹ Discussing films of the indigenous media movement in Latin America with filmmakers, colleagues, and students is part of my everyday working life—not unlike many of the visual and media anthropologists who teach and conduct research at film schools and universities throughout the world. University courses and the numerous international festivals with special programs displaying indigenous media, such as NATIVE: A Journey into Indigenous Cinema at the Berlinale, demonstrate the international impact of this cinematic current.² On this particular June evening, course participants were emotionally stirred. They left the seminar with a sense of solidarity with members of the Nahua social movement of Guerrero whose active opposition to the construction of the La Parota hydroelectric dam threatening to flood their land was shown in the movie. I was also impressed by the professional quality of Carlos’s documentary. He not only operated the camera, but also edited the film. When we sat together afterward for a beer on the terrace of the restaurant next to our institute, I asked him where he had learned the craft of filmmaking. His answer came as a surprise, since I had expected him to refer to a film academy in some major city. Instead, he replied, “My apprenticeship in film was in Tamazulapam Mixe, working with my cousins Genaro and Hermenegildo Rojas.” Immediately, scenes began to race across my mind. I recalled the moment I had met both of Carlos’s cousins over twenty years ago in 1993 in a then remote Ayuujk village in Oaxaca. Along with several other young

men, they had launched TV Tamix, the first local television station in an indigenous community. I remembered how Manfred Schäfer and I had filmed this innovative project with our 16mm equipment and then returned to Germany to meet the television editor at the WDR broadcasting company for which we worked. He rejected our report on Mexico's indigenous filmmakers, deeming the subject to be "too unusual" for German viewers.³ And I suddenly remembered that we had never had a final screening for the people, as was our wont in the past with our other documentaries. On the contrary, we stowed the film rolls away and left them to their fate.

Jump cut: Tamazulapam, August 2012. Two months after these unexpected memories first appeared, I traveled to Tamazulapam to present the digitalized film version there and hand over a copy to the local mediamakers. Carlos had already told me he was planning to shoot a documentary about TV Tamix and needed my "lost film rolls"⁴ to complete it. This was not my only motivation for returning to the village in the Oaxacan Sierra Mixe after so many years. A further driving force was the sense of having a common point in history with these filmmakers, although we had only met for a day more than two decades earlier.⁵ Shortly after I arrived in Tamazulapam, current and former members of the local television station met at the home of Hermenegildo Rojas to watch my historical documentary from 1993. The group shared vivid memories, some of them sad, and some even painful. TV Tamix was in operation for eight years and can look back on an eventful and paradoxical history: despite its distinction as a shining example (*caso estrella*; Cremoux Wanderstok 1997: 10) of indigenous media in Mexico and its ranking as tremendously creative and productive, the General Assembly of the village decided to withdraw its support in 2000. It was convinced that the young men in charge had abused the community media project by accepting and benefiting from funds from US foundations. They were also accused of having clearly overstepped their authority. Some former members like Hermenegildo and Genaro still work sporadically as filmmakers, usually on their own personal projects. After this pensive film evening, I remained in Tama (as the village is popularly called) for the fiesta in honor of Santa Rosa de Lima—a gigantic festival lasting up to seven days and attracting thousands of visitors—that had just gotten underway. It is famous in the entire region for its Copa Mixe basketball tournament, a sports event organized on an ethnic basis, which I noticed was enthusiastically documented with camcorders.

One morning in the midst of the many market stalls surrounding the festivities I discovered a knot of people around a large television set resting on the open bed of a pickup truck. At that precise moment there

was a showing of the dance from the previous night. At first, I failed to recognize that the scenes had been shot in Tama, since the dancers were not wearing ethnic clothes and the music was cumbia music sung in Spanish. But then videographer Jesús Ramón García from the Zapotec village of San Pedro Cajonos joined me. A larger-than-life festival vendor, he explained why the spectators were having so much fun. They were amused by some of the dancers—many of whom were well-known town residents—and the way they danced, and the constellation of couples, who had either just become acquainted or were long-standing spouses. These comical scenes, *lo chusco*, are extremely popular. Jesús Ramón remarked that he had edited the ninety-minute film we watched the night before and had burned it onto a DVD in the early morning hours. Noticing my disbelief, he drew back a curtain to reveal the interior space of his pickup truck, which contained his traveling studio: a PC with an editing program, a CPU tower for burning several DVDs at once, and a color printer to produce DVD covers. Jesús Ramón sells his films on the spot to fiesta visitors as fresh merchandise. The films have brief titles like *Tamazulapam Del Ezpiritu Santo 2013: Recivimiento* (which deals with the fiesta reception) with occasional spelling errors due to their hasty production. In addition, once the celebrations are over, Jesús Ramón uses a local delivery service to send the DVD series of up to ten discs to Tama's satellite communities. Among the migrants from Tama who have settled in northern Mexican cities like Guanajuato, Celaya, and Guadalajara—as well as in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Milwaukee in the United States—there is a growing demand for images of their now distant home village. As migrants without documents in the United States, these expatriates are—contrary to their desire—unable to return to their hometown for a short visit. Approximately four hundred people from Tama now reside in Los Angeles.

As the days went by, I realized that Jesús Ramón was not the only fiesta videomaker working in Tama and other villages of the Sierra Norte region. Several family enterprises in Tama have gravitated to this trade, including that of Óscar, a cousin of the Rojas brothers, and his wife, Jaquelina. During a subsequent stay, I went to their shop with Carlos, who commented with a sense of combined irony and approval, "This is the real Video Indígena." (*Aquí está el verdadero Video Indígena.*) The irony stems from the fact that Carlos and others have belonged to a circle known as Video Indígena since the 1990s and see themselves as politically active communicators (*comunicadores*)⁶ who promote the aims of the community without remuneration in the realm of what is called *medios comunitarios*. They generally draw a sharp line of distinction between themselves and entrepreneurial mediamakers, alleging that prac-



Figure 0.2. Watching a fiesta video at the Tama market, September 2015. Photo: Ingrid Kummels.

tioners in the field of *medios comerciales* are mainly out to make a profit. They also criticize their films for the supposed absence of a narrative and the inability to stimulate reflection on social processes as their primary objective is to please the audience. It occurred to me then for the first time that fiesta videographers might well be excluded for more serious reasons. Perhaps, as the film scenes of the cumbia dance suggest, it was because they focused their lens on motifs that were less “ethnic” and “political,” at least what others understand as such. Consequently, they failed to meet the expectations an audience outside the community—such as the Video Indígena circuit or a university seminar in Berlin—might have of an “indigenous film.”⁷

The discovery of this local industry of fiesta videos with their “unpolitical” subjects and their transnational audience, none of which are shown at indigenous media festivals or mentioned in media anthropology scholarship, only increased my doubts about a master narrative. So far, the appropriation of audiovisual media, in particular of video, in Mexico’s ‘indigenous’ villages has been studied mainly from the perspective of the so-called Video Indígena. According to the respective master narrative, it is assumed, first, that the decisive impetus for indigenous communities and movements to engage with audiovisual media

emanated from the Mexican government's *indigenismo* policies. Hence, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI)⁸ and "Transferencia de Medios Audiovisuales a Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas," the program it introduced in 1989 to provide indigenous communities with training, equipment, and organizational structures, was what allegedly motivated indigenous people and movements to adopt a particular concept of audiovisual mass media. Second, current research suggests that film production in indigenous communities is basically synonymous with the Video Indígena movement, which later broke away from the INI. On the whole, this approach draws a homogeneous picture of audiovisual practices and representation strategies in villages and urban settings. From this perspective indigenous media practices are essentially politically motivated: collectively organized teams make documentaries with the sole intent of giving a uniform voice to the local needs and demands of indigenous collectives.⁹

In contrast to this account, however, I discovered a far more diverse media environment in Tama with regard to the use of photography, radio, video, television, and the Internet. Indeed, some of these media have expanded and continue to do so today without any close relation to media initiatives associated with the indigenist policy framework of the Mexican government. I focus on Tama and its approximately 7,000 inhabitants as exemplifying many of the 570 municipalities in the state of Oaxaca that pursue an independent cultural, social, religious, and political way of life and are externally perceived as 'indigenous' Mexican villages.¹⁰ An additional 3,000 to 5,000 inhabitants from Tama live in cities in Mexico and the United States and continue to foster ties with their hometown. Despite their geographical dispersal, they clearly position themselves as members of their village of origin and as Ayuujk ja'ay (frequently referred to by the exonym Mixe).¹¹ It was the local inhabitants who first alerted me during my stay to the importance of self-determined media for transnational social relations and the historical depth of village media practices and representations. Even before Video Indígena initiatives were launched, local actors had engaged in photography and videography, adapting them to their daily needs. Toward the end of the 1980s, several village photographers, radio show producers, and videographers acquired skills autodidactically or at vocational colleges, which allowed them to specialize in this type of work. One of the media enthusiasts was Alberto Pérez Ramírez, the father of one of the members of TV Tamix and the first professional photographer in the village.

Since then, a number of media actors have been active as small-scale entrepreneurs in commercial photography and videotaping of commu-

nity social events including patron saint fiestas and family celebrations such as christenings and weddings. In the course of their engagement with mass media, particularly with video, these actors created new genres that focus on the patron saint fiesta and other events. Since genres such as the *videos de fiestas* stem from and represent the community, some videographers characterize and advertise them as *videos de comunidad*.¹² Diverse purposes are pursued via media and range from the political to business, art, and entertainment interests. One popular motive is the transnational village's main political organization, the civil-religious cargo system (colloquially referred to as *el cabildo*) and its annual change of officials on 1 January. This election proceeds according to the self-determined political system (now denominated *usos y costumbres*)¹³ that has since been officially recognized by the Oaxacan state government. Photography and videotaping have become an integral part of this governance system and are used, for example, to document agrarian disputes with neighboring villages. Yet another cultural-specific use of audiovisuals pertains to Tama's youth movement, whose members employ sound technology, digital photography, and video in the field of art (*arte*)—reggae, rap, rock, heavy metal music, graffiti, painting, and documentaries—for a range of purposes, including identity politics. The Colectivo Cultura y Resistencia Ayuuk (CCREA), for example, founded by students of the local high school, takes advantage of several media forms to articulate, spread, and negotiate an avant-garde and hybrid version of Ayuujk identity that embraces Rastafarian philosophy, socialism, and anarchism. Hence, diversity in the village media landscape corresponds to the individual actor's perspective in terms of age and—as will be shown—gender, education, social class, migration experience, place of residence, and political orientation. The media produced are disseminated locally but also circulated, marketed, and consumed in a transnational context by migrants from Tama who have established satellite communities in Mexico and the United States.

Hence the starting point for this study is the diversity, intensity, and historical depth displayed in the cultural-specific use of photography, radio, video, television, and the Internet in Tama and one of its diaspora communities in Los Angeles. One of the assumptions in this book is that people in and from Tama have appropriated mass media for their own purposes based on self-determined concepts of development in the course of migration. They notably use video for transnational community building and as a means of overcoming the restrictive political border between Mexico and the United States. In the course of my multi-sited ethnographic research in Tama and Los Angeles between 2012 and 2016, I gradually realized that the transnational village's so-

cial relations and mass communication have been interconnected and realigned in this process, an aspect still largely unexplored for Mexico's 'indigenous' communities. Cultural practices, social events, and organizational forms considered characteristic of this Ayuujk community are highly mediatized.¹⁴ My approach is informed by perspectives in media anthropology and cultural studies that see the actors themselves as the primary triggers of change and innovation in the means of communication. Spurred by local and cultural needs, they adapt media technology and invest it with such cultural resources as their narratives and aesthetics, thereby contributing to its development in and beyond the community, and ultimately to a general transformation of the media (Dowell 2013; Kummels 2012; Williams 1974). This study focuses on practices, that is, on what people do and say in relation to media (Couldry 2004) and conceives these practices as differentiated and as including discursive practices such as "practices of knowing, explaining, justifying and so on" (Hobart 2005: 26, quoted in Postill 2010: 5). It argues that the intertwined processes of transnationalization and mediatization were set in motion by, among other things, people's desire to extend their scope for action through school education, a factor that sparked migration in the 1960s. Here, village actors were inspired to overcome obstacles such as the visual divide (see below) by creating innovative media works and opening up new media spaces both in a geographical, practice-oriented, and imagined sense, for the most part on their own initiative and with great vitality. These processes were and remain part of their search for new, modern forms of subjectivity according to their own standards and thus for ways of reinterpreting community/'home,' ethnicity, and (trans)nation. Hence my basic research questions are as follows: What needs and desires inspire village actors to use and shape mass media? Which practices and media representations do they resort to? How do the latter influence ongoing relations between indigenous peoples and the Mexican nation? How and in what direction do media actors forge a specific sense of collective identity and belonging? How and to what extent can they (re)position themselves and their demands through media with respect to relevant contexts in the community (the hometown and satellite community), the officially defined multicultural Mexican nation, and, finally, the United States as the target destination of migration?

Researchers who have up to now explored the appropriation of mass media in Mexican indigenous communities from the perspective of state initiatives (for example, the launching of radio stations in 1979 by the INI or its "Transferencia de Medios" program in 1989), emphasize the external agency and patronage of the state and the decisive influ-

ence of nonindigenous filmmakers and anthropologists who worked in these programs (see, for example, Castells i Talens 2011; Cremoux Wanderstok 1997; L. Smith 2005; Wortham 2004, 2005, 2013).¹⁵ At the same time, they frequently delve into emancipation processes that indigenous actors initiated by teaming up with nonindigenous advocates to appropriate media for their own purposes. These researchers emphasize this movement's political success at the national and international levels. Similar to other ethnic minorities across the Americas (Alia 2012; Dowell 2013; Himpele 2008; Salazar and Córdova 2008; Schiwy 2009), Mexico's indigenous peoples have been protesting against their disadvantaged social position as Others since the 1990s. In Mexico this was due, on the one hand, to forms of social exclusion that had been reproduced since the colonial era and, on the other hand, to a unifying mestizo nation model that up to the 1970s officially promoted the idea of de-indigenizing and assimilating ethnic minorities. They began to pursue their own media projects as a method of overcoming their discrimination in the area of political participation and access to the national public sphere. In addition to achieving full citizen rights, indigenous movements throughout the country sought to assert their cultural rights as *pueblos originarios* (first peoples) in a Mexican state that was subsequently redefined constitutionally as multicultural. When the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or EZLN) emerged in Chiapas in 1994, not least due to its use of the Internet, it became the movement with the greatest international visibility and impact. Along with these political efforts, indigenous people from several regions began to train as film directors, camera operators, and sound engineers, and make (analog) video documentaries, which they then disseminated to solidarity groups and NGOs and presented at international festivals. One of their primary objectives was to decolonize the standard portrayal of indigenous people as exotic Others and passive subalterns by replacing these images with self-determined representations (Kummels 2010: 51). The media movement became known as Video Indígena¹⁶ and it gave indigenous people a face as political actors, while the use of audiovisual means provided a sounding board for their political messages, which were now beginning to reach Mexico's national public sphere.¹⁷ In response to these developments, the Mexican government granted the country's indigenous populations the constitutional right to their own languages and forms of social organization.¹⁸ In Oaxaca, the appropriation of mass media played a pivotal role in the broad social movement that rose up against the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) governor Ulises Ruiz and corrupt federal and state structures in 2006.¹⁹ In spite of its political impact, however,

the notion of Video Indígena itself has remained disputed over the years because of its origins in Mexican state patronage and the connotations of *indígena* as an othering term (Kummels 2011: 271–72).

In contrast, this book looks beyond explicitly political indigenous media activism to more diversified practices of photography, radio, film, television and the Internet in Tama as it expanded transnationally to the United States. It also considers the autonomous driving forces that were harnessed to reinvent these mass media. As the vignette at the outset indicates, the visual landscapes and soundscapes created by Ayuujk people on their own terms as producers and consumers feature prominently in the emerging identity of Tama as a transnational village, and connect it with several transnational circuits. These include the fiesta videographer trade, radio stations bearing the names “La T Grande de Tamazulapam” and “Yin Et Radio,” the youth movement that organizes photographic exhibitions and film screenings, and the documentaries produced by established members of TV Tamix and their young successors that circulate worldwide at film festivals. Numerous actors engage in several of these categories simultaneously and employ diverse audiovisual languages. The present study traces media actors and their practices and thus focuses on the explicit use of photography, radio, video, television, and the Internet for political purposes as well as in the interests of business, art, and entertainment. I contend that this particular approach is fundamental to coming to terms with the dynamics of local and transnational appropriation without the bias that has predominated so far. The study also traces how Tama’s media genres and highly varied forms of production contribute to forging relations between the state and the indigenous peoples of Mexico, which have undergone radical change since the first half of the 1990s, largely due to the influence of the EZLN movement. At the same time, these relations have also clearly been redefined in the context of international migration to the United States, a phenomenon that intensified toward the end of the 1990s. In this book, I argue that Tama’s mediatized social relations and transnationalized media have been an integral part of both processes.

In the course of accompanying Ayuujk mediamakers and their audiences, I constantly encountered debates on the role assigned to village media in highly relevant aspects of social life, such as fiestas, entertainment, Ayuujk culture, and community politics. Problems, worries, and unresolved matters of a personal or political nature, referred to in Ayuujk as *jotmäj*, are the centerpiece of religion, politics and social life in Tama. Many discursive media practices unfold in the context of debates, as in the case of whether local media should serve nonprofit communal purposes exclusively or be permitted to embrace commercial goals. In

the face of transnationalism, expectations are evolving as to what constitutes a “good” communal way of life, a principle to which everyone refers. Actors involved in media work, particularly *comunicadores*, adhere to the concept of *comunalidad* formulated in the 1980s by Floriberto Díaz (1951–1995) and Jaime Martínez Luna.²⁰ Díaz was an Ayuujk intellectual, anthropologist, and political leader from the neighboring village of Tlahuitoltepec. His work bears witness to the Sierra Mixe as a site of self-determined forms of knowledge and their constant development and transmission. *Comunalidad* refers to the principles of communitarian living as practiced in real life in the broader Sierra Norte region, among them voluntary service as an official of the civil-religious cargo system and participation in communal labor (*tequio*).²¹ Ayuujk people consider grassroots self-administration and democratic practices fundamental to the equal distribution of political power in their villages and see it as the basis of their autonomy vis-à-vis the Mexican state.

Participants in debates who emerge as *comunicadores*—and therefore community mediamakers—have an idealized conception of audiovisual communication that is shaped by the notion of *comunalidad*. They understand this kind of media as endorsed by the entire community and equipped with a funding structure that is independent both of the state and the private mega media conglomerates. Nevertheless, this degree of independence is hard to achieve, since the state offers financial support for media projects via institutions such as the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI). In addition, the use of an indigenous language and a focus on local cultural knowledge are considered as defining community-run media in indigenous villages. That said, the demise of TV Tamix in 2000 exemplifies the fact that villagers in general mistrust private or state-sponsored projects and question communal media projects whenever they see their independence jeopardized. Debates in Tama on whether community-based media conform to ideals of autonomy both mirror and influence wider discussions in Mexican society, which challenge the neoliberal state’s privatization of the media and the duopoly of the two main television channels, Televisa and TV Azteca, and their effect on public opinion.²² A range of village media initiatives have, for example, refused to permit the involvement and publicity of Mexican political parties in their purview and have put forward an alternative model. By the same token, they provide space for topics of local and regional interest otherwise ignored by mainstream media in Mexico.²³

Yet many village debates on the proper implementation of the communal way of life involve other media enterprises as well, even some that at first glance may seem unpolitical. The production, marketing, and

consumption of social event photographs and patron saint fiesta videos are perceived in particular as being somewhat at odds with the ideal image of indigenous media as synonymous with a political commitment to collective cultural rights and community-based autonomy. Given this ideal, local small-scale entrepreneurs in Tama and the surrounding villages, who earn their living with videotaping, are singled out by the *comunicadores* as merchants and practitioners of commercial media. These entrepreneurial videographers are viewed skeptically because they allegedly seek personal gain and commodify communal motifs understood to be cultural assets. Although this is accurate, their films—not unlike community-run media projects—use the Ayuujk language (as part of the original sound), depict village culture, and are operated by Ayuujk *comuneros/as*.²⁴ Conspicuous in the context of migration is the emergence of locally produced series, including up to ten-part DVD documentation of the patron saint fiesta. These fiestas in Tama are held in honor of two important religious village icons, el Espíritu Santo (the Holy Spirit; on Pentecost) and Santa Rosa de Lima (on 30 August). The vast number of activities at these celebrations are organized to a large extent by the residents of Tama and *paisanos/as* (compatriots) living abroad in their function as *comuneros/as*. Fiesta participants are either serving in their capacity as officials or carrying out a specific task assigned by a village official; others choose to contribute by partially financing the fiesta. Activities include church celebrations, philharmonic band performances, sports competitions such as basketball and *jaripeo* (Mexican bull riding), and the provision of free meals for the many fiesta participants and visitors. On the whole, the fiestas have traditionally served as a platform for the entire community to enjoy the commercial and cultural products produced collectively throughout the year. Hence they demonstrate Tama's hospitality as well as its economic and political power in a wider regional—and now transnational—context. Videographers recording the celebrations in Tama or its neighboring villages have now become a common sight. They have established the fiesta videos as a specific village genre in close alignment with their customers. While these movies are available locally, their principal clientele are the *paisanos* and *paisanas* living in the United States.²⁵ In fact, small-scale entrepreneurs based in Tama produce most of the video films in response to US customer demands and purchasing power.

As a result of international migration, the debate on *comunalidad* has now been expanded to include the question of what it means to be a *comunero/a* in times of geographical dispersion and the role that self-designed media should play in the cultural and social relations of this transnational village. Villagers who seek higher education in the Mexi-

can capital, open taco restaurants in northern Mexico, or cross the border between Mexico and the United States without documents in search of work in construction or as housekeepers are prevented by their absence from participating in the cargo system of their village of origin. Although many of them, notably those of prime working age, leave for extended periods of time, they succeed in upholding ties with their relatives and friends at home in a variety of ways. Their remittances have become a key source of capital for their home village. Despite their precarious situation due to lack of legal status in the United States, migrants generally have more money at their disposal than people who remain in Mexico. They send some of their earnings to their families back home and even invest in the home village itself. Remittances continue to foster new desires there. Migrant donations are invested in communal necessities and village institutions such as the patron saint fiestas, which have enjoyed a major boost in this context.

As part of these new developments, the allegedly unpolitical fiesta videos play an increasing role in current debates on the future of the communitarian way of life. As an extension of the patron saint fiestas, the videos themselves are now perceived as new spaces of representation for the transnational village—as popular versions of “the communitarian,” *lo comunitario*. A debate, which initially appears to be unpolitical, centers on the controversy surrounding the audiovisual portrayal of “incorrect dance couples” in fiesta videos. Public dances, where couples dance to cumbia and *norteño* music, are filmed as part of the patron saint fiestas. In a transnational setting, these recordings frequently give rise to disputes between spouses, for example, when a husband residing in the United States sees his wife dancing with another man at the public dance in his home village. In this context, not only the couple in question, but also the larger transnational community audience discusses basic questions dealing with gender roles, transnational households, and the upbringing of children in a transborder marital situation. Film scenes like these also provoke controversies about more complex issues, such as morality and social norms and, by extension, the preferred version of Ayuujk culture and identity to be depicted in the village media. Meanwhile, differences have arisen between people living in the village of origin, who simply want to enjoy the public dances “in peace” (that is, without being filmed), and residents of the satellite community in Los Angeles, who rely on the fiesta videos as a means of controlling their partners and other relatives from a distance. Ongoing debates in the transnational village would suggest that community-based entertainment genres such as fiesta videos do in fact have immediate political implications for the social life of the local and transnational population. For this reason, the

study concentrates on the mediatization of these social relationships and their respective political dimensions.²⁶ The research term “mediatization” refers to how “core elements of a cultural or social activity (for example, politics, religion, language) assume media form” (Hjarvard 2007: 3, quoted in Couldry 2008: 376).

Finally, debates sparked by the youth movement *Colectivo Cultura y Resistencia Ayuuk (CCREA)* and its use of media have had a wider social and political impact. Drawn to new experiences, the movement tightly interweaves local elements with globally circulating countercultural discourses. Young people in the village are highly visible as a result of their appearance—like dreadlocks in combination with emblematic Ayuuk clothes such as woven sashes and woolen *gabanes* (ponchos)—and of their organization of concerts featuring local bands that blend reggae, rock music, and Ayuuk lyrics. By displaying unconventional versions of Ayuuk culture, they essentially modify and modernize what it means to be Ayuuk ja'ay. The majority of adults in the village take a critical view of this subcultural or countercultural appropriation of their heritage, as a deviation from more “classic” forms of *lo comunitario*. At the same time, young people are actively engaged in community politics. As an age group with an interest in claiming its own rights, they articulate political demands for their official participation in the village's General Assembly and its cargo system, whose hierarchy has traditionally been determined by seniority. Although the media expressions and political concerns of the youth movement have been recognized with reluctance, they are nonetheless in the process of conquering new spaces within the community. Besides, youth media initiatives have turned out to fit well with Pan-American manifestations of indigenous culture performed at the media summit *Cumbre Continental de Comunicación Indígena del Abya Yala*, which took place in October 2013 in Tama's neighboring village of Tlahuitoltepec (Tlahui for short). As demonstrated at this international event, the directions taken by the youth movement impact current perceptions of what is meant by “the Ayuuk way of life” that go far beyond the village itself.

New Media Spaces and Audiovisual Decolonization

The following introduces theoretical approaches that shed light on these debates and on the autonomous drivers of village media produced and consumed in a transnational context. The vignette at the beginning of this introduction indicates how ‘indigenous’ mediamakers operate on local and transnational terrain, a terrain that includes visual and

audiovisual media forms and has long been marked by asymmetry. Tracing structures of inequality and the strategies to overcome them, the book draws on the concept of “media spaces” as conceptualized in my own work (Kummels 2012) and in that of other scholars like Michelle Raheja (2010), and particularly in the vernacular theories of Ayuujk media theorists.²⁷ This approach allows for the identification of spaces that have been characterized from the outset by uneven access to media technology and organizational structures, circumstances that have severely limited actor opportunities for self-determined representation. At the same time, the concept of “media spaces” refers to spaces that actors have been able to extend beyond their marginal positions in terms of geography, practice, and imagination, as well as their interstices and interrelations. It emphasizes both types of actor intervention “from below” (Smith and Guarnizo 1998), as in the practice of appropriating media knowledge and technology “autodidactically” (or more precisely with self-fashioned standards of professionalism) and transmitting them between generations and within the community. When these actors open media spaces they simultaneously anchor them in local knowledge and practices as a means of converting them into something of “our own.” To cite one example, Tamazulapam’s Ayuujk name, Tuuk Nēem, appears after logging into the website of a local Internet café to check e-mails or Facebook accounts. The name Tamazulapam (in Nahuatl, “place of the frogs”), which is the official designation of the village, was imposed by the Aztecs and adopted by the Spanish colonialists, whereas the local term, Tu’uk Nēem (in Ayuujk, “place of one water”) was eventually relegated to colloquial use. Today, however, this hierarchy in the nomenclature has changed: the old, more intimate village name of Tu’uk Nēem now publicly refers to the new communicative space used by the transnational media community that extends between Tama and Los Angeles, among other places, and defines this space in terms of Ayuujk ethnicity.

Given Tama’s current vibrancy as a mediatized transnational community, it may come as a surprise to learn that audiovisual mass media reached the village quite late, with photography adopted locally in the 1960s and videography in the 1990s. A defining characteristic of Tama’s historic course as an Ayuujk community has been the unequal access to mass media technology, organizational structures, and knowledge. This, on the one hand, is closely linked to the colonial and neo-colonial use of photography, video, and television in ‘indigenous’ regions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, for example, anthropologist Frederick Starr used photography to racially stereotype Ayuujk people (Nahmad Sittón 2012). On the other hand, self-determined media now have to

contend with the disadvantages and exclusions perpetuated by nation states in the context of Mexico and the United States, with the latter enforcing a highly restrictive border regime that paradoxically excludes Mexican migrants at the same time that the US economy heavily relies on them. To analyze these situations I introduce the concept of a visual divide, in line with the more familiar term digital divide, in order to capture in a similar manner the uneven access to audiovisual media technology that resulted from educational disparities, geography, social class, ethnicity, race, and gender (compare Macnamara 2010: 80). Those who are able to bridge the divide as a result of the wider distribution of media technology at a lower cost, nevertheless access it with a time delay. Appropriating audiovisual media in their case means investing a singular effort to make up for being latecomers. The concept of a visual divide refers to the comprehensive structures of inequality that people categorized as indigenous have to face in this field: inequality is not inscribed only in representations, but also in the materiality and social practices of audiovisual media, in media training, and in the organization of work. I therefore use the term visual divide to facilitate analysis of the cultural values that are attached to media technology, knowledge, and practices as a result of the coloniality of power (Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000). In line with the dominant geopolitics of knowledge, 'indigenous' peoples have been perceived and represented as the opposite of "Western modernism." Modern audiovisual technology is understood as late capitalist technology and clearly identified in terms of ethnicity, race, social class, and gender. As several scholars have criticized (see Kummels 2011: 271; Schiwy 2009: 40; L. Smith 2010), 'indigenous' according to this matrix is perceived as adverse to progress, having no affinity with modern audiovisual media, and therefore assigned to a different period of time: the premodern era.

Actors in Tama's realm of media production, circulation, and reception see themselves forced to combat these hegemonic evaluations, even in their local milieus. They, too, have internalized them to some degree, a phenomenon that leads to their occasional disparaging of their own contributions to media development. Besides, they are not in the privileged position of being able to seamlessly develop and refine photography, radio, television, video, and the Internet from comparable technology-based audiovisual precursors. As a rule, however, they take a critical stance on such hegemonic appraisals in order to consciously circumvent, dispute, and transform them. The book gives special attention to the new media practices and languages of representation they invest in to this end. Tama mediamakers resort to traditional media such as oral tradition, pottery, costume, live music, and dance performance and

combine them with appropriated mass media in global circulation, such as photography, video, television, and the Internet, transforming them in the process. In specific locations such as Tama and Los Angeles, these actors set new priorities by means of media practices, forms of collaboration, and self-fashioned representations. They therefore reposition themselves in terms of collectivity, social status, ethnicity, and gender in a way that exceeds simplistic dichotomies and binary codes (compare Kummels 2012: 9). Comprehending these processes of appropriation calls for extending the notion of media beyond telecommunication and mass media, and conceiving it instead in the broader sense of communicative devices beginning with the human body and gestures and leading up to the Internet (Kummels 2012: 14; Peterson 2003: 3–8). Older media traditions and their forms of organization do not disappear but are preserved and combined with new media (Macnamara 2010: 22–29; Stephen 2013: 13–17).

In these marginalized media spaces, actors utilize their expertise and creativity to overcome physical borders and social hierarchies, and thus widen their scope for action in terms of geography, practices, and imagination. The locally and transnationally crafted genres they create, such as fiesta videos, officeholder films, land dispute dramas, and political documentaries, are examples of this. When faced with a similar context, Arjun Appadurai (1996: 35) coined the term *mediascape* to describe deterritorialized, albeit stable, landscapes centered on image-based narratives and based on pre-electronic or electronic hardware, which viewers relate to despite their global dispersion.²⁸ Unlike Appadurai, however, this book places greater emphasis on the local anchoring of comparable media processes. The imaginative space they open up becomes an additional driver to surmount geographical, societal, and political borders in social reality. In Tama's case, actors who choose educational and work migration as a self-determined path to development also engage as producers and consumers of mass media. They have created spaces of representation in the fields of entertainment, art, and politics, and continue to do so. Simultaneously, they have localized media practices and representations, as demonstrated by the fiesta videos. Notwithstanding their increasing mobility, people from Tama are considerably invested in developing an emotionally satisfying social relationship to their village of origin as a specific place, thereby anchoring their sense of belonging there (compare Morley 2000; Pries 2008: 78).

The actors themselves and Tama intellectuals such as Hermenegildo Rojas, Daniel Martínez Pérez, and many others, have long-held theories on this process of decolonization, which they have generously allowed me to share in this book and will be dealt with more extensively in chap-

ter 2. As part of their discursive practices they reflect on and constantly discuss the importance of the appropriation of mass media for their society and its institutions in the process of decolonization or, more specifically, what I term audiovisual decolonization.²⁹ They seldom use the specific term “decolonization,” but rather conceptualize the inhabitants of Tama (and the Ayuujk people or Ayuujk ja’ay) ideally as a people who have never been subdued, as expressed in the self-designation of “those never conquered” (in Spanish, *los jamás conquistados*; in Ayuujk, *kamapyë*). In addition, they distinguish between the practices and representations they define as “our own” (in Spanish, *lo propio*, in Ayuujk, *këm jä*) and those they consider to have been imposed upon them. Ayuujk ideas and practices regarded as “our own” are those actively connected to earlier traditional forms and that they have been able to develop in a self-determined manner. This includes oral history, artistic practices of representation, and the religious beliefs associated with the land. Thus “our own” is not an essentializing concept that refers to a static cultural core. On the contrary, it underlines the autonomous way of doing things, while at the same time conveys openness to the new, as expressed in the idea of progress and self-determined development (in Ayuujk, *mëjk’ äjtün*, literally, “to be strong, energetic-life-health”).³⁰

In the context of novel media uses, Ayuujk practitioners and intellectuals have articulated the bridging of dichotomies and openness to new ideas in concepts such as sacred space (*espacio sagrado*), convivial space (*espacio de convivencia*), and opening spaces (*abrir espacios*).³¹ These concepts serve to convey processes of appropriation, such as when transmission airspace is used for the first time or the spiritual practices of the Ayuujk people are extended to urban spaces or those beyond the Mexican nation state itself. Mediamakers partly elide existing media conventions and at times radically break with audiovisual standards acknowledged elsewhere. Yet they also adopt these conventions and deliberately combine them with local traditions, transforming them in the process. In my view, these space-related terms are preferable to other concepts dealing with the appropriation of media in ‘indigenous’ communities, for example, “Indianizing film” (Schiwy 2009: 12–13). In agreement with Freya Schiwy’s approach, the present study focuses on the cultural aspect of video and film production as a technology of knowledge, where actors pursue their own aims by acquiring epistemic power despite continuous structural oppression. That said, I have chosen to refrain from using the term “Indianizing” since, from the perspective of my research subjects, the terms “Indians” and “indigenous” have problematic connotations as a homogenizing supracategory. The concept of media spaces allows for full comprehension of the diversity of the local and transnational media

actors involved in this process and the fact that they are driven by divergent needs when grappling with and transforming the visual divide in terms of gender, age, education, and other categories of differentiation. Furthermore, the dimension of space makes it possible to examine the simultaneous use of a variety of media. In the particular case of Tama, this applies to the combination of traditional primary media (transmitters and receivers do not use technical appliances) with modern tertiary media (both transmitters and receivers use technical appliances; compare Hepp and Krotz 2014: 8–9). At the same time, these spaces are constituted by discursive practices, through which the participating actors continuously reflect on their actions and occasionally alter their perspective. In Tama, these heterogeneous actors have common points of reference such as the concept of *comunalidad* or the more popular ideals of *lo comunitario* and Ayuujk ethnic identity. In their discourses and practices—also in exchange with actors from outside the community—they constantly renegotiate Ayuujk collectivity and what it means to belong to Tama, while at the same time examining the very notion of community. As a result, the particular challenges that women and young people face in this field and the generation gap that contributes to media diversity uses will be explored here in depth.

A telling example of this empowering process is Tama's history of photography (see chapter 3). The huge investment that photography required in the first half of the twentieth century led to a pronounced visual divide in the state of Oaxaca between social groups that could afford the necessary technical equipment, film material, and prints, and those that could not. Up until the early 1960s, the people who took photographs or filmed in remote regions such as the Sierra Mixe were almost exclusively anthropologists, government officials, missionaries, or travelers, while local inhabitants had to be content with their role as photographic subjects. The first generation of Tama rural schoolteachers bridged the visual divide when they began to acquire small, affordable, easy-to-use Kodak Instamatic cameras with a cassette film system. Committed to cultural work, they organized music and dance performances in schools. These performances had been used by regional political leaders in the 1930s as a means of uniting Ayuujk *ja'ay* for the first time on an ethnic basis (see chapter 2). The teachers enriched the performances with photography, seeing it as the best medium to record and modernize these creative efforts.

The time delay in appropriating photography has been recouped with multiple creative processes. An example is the time-honored practice of banning the photography or recording of occult rituals of the

village religion to safeguard their power and efficacy, in particular rituals dedicated to *la Diosa del pueblo* (in Ayuujk, *Konk ëna'*). Although villagers venerate the central deity and Catholic saints with equal fervor, the latter are considered to have been imposed by the Spaniards. According to Daniel Martínez Pérez, an Ayuujk intellectual, the deliberate destruction of autochthonous religion and local knowledge during the colonial period led to a counter-strategy of concealing the veneration of *la Diosa del pueblo*. She is represented in the traditional medium of a stone statue, which to some extent is regarded as an antidote to the medium of photography, since both are believed to have a similar characteristic: the ability to bring their representations to life (see chapter 2). Some contemporary village mediamakers, however, claim the right to visualize former occult cultural practices and to represent and distribute them via audiovisual mass media. They explicitly engage in this effort in order to reassess their own cultural values and extend them into the new media spaces, a process that some describe as “globalizing Ayuujk culture.” Other creative processes deal with the reconstruction of visual memories. Unlike their parents, children and adolescents now grow up with photography and videotaping as standard components of contemporary memory culture. Tama’s villagers are therefore appropriating old passport photographs and portraits of family members taken by anthropologists keen on portraying “representatives of the Mixe ethnic group” for their family albums. By curating and presenting historical photographs taken by local practitioners for the first time in public, members of the youth movement CCREA are increasingly co-determining the visual history of their community.

One example of the impact of media actors combining local traditions with new, fresh ideas are the novel professions and consumer patterns that have developed within the scope of the patron saint fiesta video genre. These videos are by no means specific to Tama. On the contrary, professional videographers specializing in documenting social events such as weddings and village festivals are part of a global trend. The wedding videography business, for example, was established in the United States as early as the 1980s with the advent of affordable video cameras (Moran 1996). Yet as communities have distinctive needs, the social event genre (known as *eventos sociales* in Mexico) had to be reinvented in places like Tama, where it has been adapted to meet local and transnational requirements and has become a standard item since the beginning of the 1990s. The fiesta videos consumed locally and transnationally on DVD give villagers the opportunity to see themselves and their community on television—something denied to them

by hegemonic television images. Feature films and telenovelas on Mexican television continue to portray indigenous characters stereotypically either as folkloric representatives of an ethnic group or as servants.³² By circulating and screening self-styled DVDs, people in Tama seize the opportunity to present and see themselves and their community's culture in the Ayuujk language in a version that is neither folkloric nor discriminatory.

Tama's fiesta videos unreservedly combine the cinematographic conventions of documentaries that portray "foreign countries and people" (and stereotype indigenous people) with local performative motifs such as "comical scenes" (*lo chusco*) traditionally enacted in fiesta dance performances (see chapter 4). With the village genre of fiesta videos, the media actors involved have created ways of seeing that are culturally specific and encourage their audiences to make sense of the images they absorb according to these particular visual languages (compare Berger 1990). Karen Strassler (2010: 18–19), who has analyzed appropriations of photography in Indonesia, cautions against using two opposing approaches. First, technological media essentialists claim that certain media technologies produce universal, standardized, and thus predetermined effects. This not only applies to aesthetics, which the essentialists understand as inherent in the material properties of a specific media apparatus, but also refers to the perception and behavior of human beings who live in the age of a dominant medium.³³ Second, contrary to this view, constructionist media approaches overemphasize the malleability of globally circulating media techniques and genres when they are adjusted to local matrices.³⁴ They stress that non-European societies mold media practices, aesthetic sensibilities, and semiotic ideologies according to their own needs, thus altering even the material properties of means of communication. In this book I follow Strassler's suggestion of steering a course between these theoretical stances, since Tama's media practices are not only characterized by an autonomous approach but also bound up with globally circulating left-wing political ideas and flows of capitalist production and trade.

This book sees a number of village genres, such as fiesta videos, as part and parcel of local and transnationalized media history in the course of which the Ayuujk people have appropriated communication technology such as video for their own purposes based on self-determined concepts of development in the context of migration. So far, remarkably little research has been done on specific histories of the means of communication in 'indigenous' villages, their autonomous dynamics and transnational dimensions following migration. Significantly, one of

the few authors to explore this aspect is Purhépecha filmmaker and artist Dante Cerano, who is himself from an indigenous community. His master's thesis, "Purhépechas vistos a través del video: Comunicación y nostalgia en ambos lados de la frontera," addresses the emergence of a new professional field in his hometown of Cheranastico, namely, that of local videomaking (Cerano 2009). In the course of massive migration to the United States since the 1980s, these filmmakers (locally referred to as *videopitaris*) were instrumental in mediatizing and transnationalizing family celebrations such as christenings and weddings (see also Kum-mels 2011: 274–277). In their film *Cheranasticotown* (Cerano and Tomás 2005), Cerano and his coauthor Eduviges Tomás reveal how songs by village music groups dealing with migration to the United States are disseminated via the Internet and foster a sense of transnational belonging. Cerano's thesis traces the origins of the first video cameras in the town and the migrants who made local media history by introducing them. This particular development occurred prior to the involvement of INI and its "Transferencia de Medios" program in the Purhépecha communities. Several visual and media anthropologists, among them Louisa Schein (2002), have shown how new self-made media formats were created in the course of migration to the United States with a view to cultivating transnational contacts, as in the case of the Hmong from Southeast Asia. With reference to the Andean village Urcumarca in Peru and its diaspora communities in Washington, DC, and Maryland, Ulla Berg (2011) examined the *videos de fiestas* genre, which records patron saint fiestas and constitutes an "itinerant video culture." Conflicts arise when immigrants in the United States use these videos as a means of "ocular control" (Foucault 1994) of the hometown residents (see also Berg 2015). Focusing on the Zapotec Sierra town of Yalálag, Alicia Estrada Ramos (2001) studied the use of video for legal purposes, while Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera (2007) explored the affective dimension of circulating videos between the community of origin and Los Angeles. Rebecca Savage has investigated the mediatization of, among other things, marriages in the central Mexican town of San Francisco Tetlanohcan, whose residents regularly migrate to the United States. Her study offers insights into how subjects and the town of origin are imagined and constructed, chiefly by way of locally produced films.³⁵ Laura Cardús i Font (2014), Argelia González Hurtado (2015), and contributions to a volume edited by Freya Schiwy and Byrt Wammack (2017) recently highlighted that Mexican video initiatives by indigenous peoples were not exclusively or even chiefly motivated by state intervention and showed that migratory subjectivities also generated audiovisual practices and representation.

The present study extends these approaches by investigating the multiple ways in which actors create and inhabit media spaces, carving out their own, at times conflicting, visions and debates on development, modernity, gender, and the meaning of ‘indigenous’ in the twenty-first century. It essentially portrays and analyzes mediamakers in their cultural and social positioning as *comuneros* and *comuneras*—in other words, as people who participate on a daily basis in the local and now transnationalized web of culture, religion, economics, politics, and migration, and actively use media as a constituent aspect of these activities. Fiestas are a good example. Community life in the village of Tama—which has been transnationalized to embrace its satellite communities such as the one in Los Angeles—is the principal source from which videographers draw their contacts, expertise, basic material, and particularly their cultural forms of expression, and thus it represents the cornerstone of their work in the media field.

Media production in transnational Tama, however, not only addresses the community from the inside. As the introductory vignette demonstrates, its scope is transnational in a twofold way. In the context of Video Indígena, actors like Carlos exploit these practices to claim cultural and political rights on behalf of Mexico’s indigenous population, rights that extend beyond the confines of the nation state to include other global regions such as Europe. When crafting films as a director and editor, Carlos systematically establishes links to an international documentary film sphere: he draws his inspiration from the ranks of international documentarists such as the German Harun Farocki and Mexican Nicolás Echevarría, and places his films strategically on the festival circuits. As an immediate consequence actors like Carlos shape indigeneity through these intercontinental networks. In the case of patron saint fiesta videos, Tama residents and those of numerous satellite settlements interact in a new transnational audience space between Mexico and the United States. Although this space has emerged as a result of disseminating fiesta videos, it already began to take shape during the production process. The sponsors of these videos, who frequently make substantial and ostentatious donations to the fiestas, live either in Tama or one of its diaspora communities. This book examines the extent to which the media community is able to subvert exclusionary forces emanating from the nation states in order to enlarge its alternative space—in the geographical sense, among others—by opening up new dissemination paths on its own terms. One premise of the current study is that actors in this media community extend media spaces by anchoring their products and messages in the many places, practices, and imaginaries of the transnational context.

Negotiating Ethnicity and Indigeneity in the Audiovisual Field

The previous examples suggest that the audiovisual field cannot be understood in isolation from mediatized social relations and that it serves as a negotiating space for different collective identities and belongings in terms of youth, for example, or the transnational community. The interplay of these dimensions of belonging is part of a more complex social reality than Mexico's standard ascriptions to "indigenous" ethnic groups would suggest. According to such ascriptions, Mexico is divided into sixty-eight ethnolinguistic groups each of which allegedly have a common language corresponding to their culture and territory and consequently a joint political stance. The country's *pueblos indígenas* currently constitute almost 10 percent of the population.

This division into *grupos étnicos* influences the hegemonic understanding of what is perceived as "being indigenous." I will briefly sketch its long history, since it has prevented the recognition of village media practices and genres such as fiesta videos, officeholder films, land dispute dramas, and political documentaries, a topic addressed in detail in the next section. This conceptualization was first and foremost a component of the assimilation policies that targeted *indígenas* in Mexico of the late nineteenth century. Although officially recognized by the state as citizens after independence, *indígenas* were treated as Others and only acknowledged as full citizens following a process of *castellanización*, a public educational policy that for many decades privileged teaching exclusively in Spanish. The Mexican state persisted with this policy of assimilation in the twentieth century within the scope of *indigenismo*, an ideological current based partly on modernization theory. As late as the 1970s, and in response to the heavy pressure of indigenous movement demands, the government officially abandoned its aim of "integrating" (or more precisely of de-indigenizing; Bonfil 1990: 79) indigenous people into a nation envisioned as a homogeneous mestizo entity. For the first time, the government officially recognized Mexico as a multicultural nation state, whose diversity was essentially based on the country's native peoples, a process that was intensified in the 1990s after the state had signed the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 and adopted a neoliberal view of multiculturalism.³⁶ The indigenous movement, which included key Ayuujk organizations, insisted on greater political participation and the autonomy of indigenous communities. The Mexican government, however, responded to their demands by conceding cultural diversity to the country's indigenous population rather than effectively promoting access to political participation. Ayuujk organizations with a stronghold in Tama's neighboring

village of Tlahui, such as the Committee of Defense and Development of Mixe Natural and Human Resources (CODREMI), the Assembly of Mixe Authorities (ASAM), and later Services to the Mixe People A.C. (SER), reached out to regional and national audiences by using self-determined media to spotlight their political demands for control of local industries such as coffee cultivation and mining (Cremoux Wanderstok 1997: 114–19, 125–30, 143–60).

As part of Mexico's multicultural reforms, the INI began pursuing a progressive multicultural media policy toward a segment of the population they perceived as an important clientele. In 1979, noncommercial radio stations were set up at INI branches (coordination centers) in the indigenous regions. These stations broadcast in indigenous languages and, owing to their immense popularity, were gradually taken over by professionals from the communities themselves (Castells i Talens 2011). In the 1980s, INI publicly declared its support of indigenous peoples' engagement in the field of mass media and their efforts to adapt programming to their own cultural needs. State multicultural media policy, however, was a contradiction in itself: as state employees, the operators of INI radio stations were de facto prohibited from voicing their own opinions and pursuing a cultural agenda that deviated from state guidelines. It was thus primarily the indigenous actors themselves who battled for new freedoms while working as employees at these government-run radio stations. Among other things, they ran them with a more communal orientation. During the mid-1990s, for instance, their radio programs took a critical stance against the repressive government policy toward the neo-Zapatista movement and its demands for regional autonomy (Castells i Talens 2009). It should be noted, however, that in Mexico the sphere of indigenous media was and continues to be heavily influenced by the state. This, in turn, has compelled indigenous actors to frequently advance their own objectives and to carry out reforms from within government media institutions.

Evidence of this approach can also be found in the "Transferencia de Medios" program, which was established in 1989. The then director of INI, Arturo Warman, a former member of the dissident group *antropólogos críticos*, introduced the program to encourage indigenous people to take control of institutional resources (Wortham 2004: 364). At the same time, this media project was financed by the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad, a neoliberal anti-poverty program launched during Carlos Salinas de Gortari's presidency. "Transferencia de Medios" was essentially run by nonindigenous professionals like Alfonso Muñoz, an anthropological photographer and filmmaker who worked at INI, and Guillermo Monteforte, an Italian-Canadian documentary filmmaker still active in

indigenous media. As stated in the founding manifesto of 1990, the program sought to rectify the unfair access of *indígenas* to mass media and to support their empowerment (Anaya 1990). Hence “Transferencia de Medios” was by no means fully compliant with INI’s hidden assimilation policies or its asymmetrical power structure (Wortham 2013: 60–65). On the other hand, the management structure of the “Transferencia de Medios” program was itself asymmetrical insofar as indigenous people were not involved. The instructors who defined the political aspirations of the trainees at the first Video Indígena workshops (that is, eight-week crash courses on video technology, including the goal of developing “their own visual language”) were primarily nonindigenous.³⁷ The ambition of the program partly relied on false premises, such as the assumption that indigenous people were socialized outside the influence of mass media and thus remained untouched by the audiovisual codes of television and cinema, as Guillermo Monteforte later self-critically remarked.³⁸ The instructors’ intention of facilitating the emergence of an “open” visual language soon proved to be impractical and incompatible with the idea of circulating the videos on the international festival circuit, which included showing them to a nonindigenous audience. They ultimately resorted to showing anthropological documentary films produced by INI as far back as 1978 as a model for their trainees to emulate. The trainees were thus taught a conventional documentary visual language, which had originated in a cinematic perspective external to indigenous people.³⁹

Genaro and Hermenegildo Rojas from Tama are a highly instructive example of local actors who grafted their interests onto this state media program. The brothers are key representatives of Tama’s community-based media field and now take a skeptical view of the ‘indigenous’ filmmaking efforts of the past and the discrepancy between local and national interests at the time. As members of Tama’s Casa del Pueblo, the brothers had been active in community media before their invitation by INI Video Indígena staff to one of their workshops.⁴⁰ Due to this early involvement, TV Tamix rapidly became a showcase for the “Transferencia de Medios” program (Cremoux Wanderstok 1997: 10). Indeed, this village collective had a profound effect on the program during its early years. As mentioned above, I encountered TV Tamix in 1993: Manfred Schäfer and I, both visual anthropologists, had decided to do a feature on Video Indígena for German television, as we supported the media empowerment of the ‘indigenous’ people of Mexico. At the INI Audiovisual Department, we interviewed Guillermo Monteforte and Javier Sámano. As the latter remarked, “Video is a tool, or a weapon as some of them [the trainees] call it, to communicate their needs, their problems,

their anxieties to the rest of society.”⁴¹ Monteforte recommended that our documentary also feature the first ‘indigenous’ television channel in Mexico. On the spur of the moment we decided to travel to Tama for a day’s filming and recorded how the TV Tamix collective produced its weekly television program for the village. Around this time, it had begun to make documentaries that were subsequently disseminated in the Mexican Video Indígena circuit and at Latin American film festivals. The film *Fiesta animada*, which documented the fiesta in honor of Espíritu Santo in Tama in 1994, is particularly striking because its style and concise editing bear no resemblance to the patron saint fiesta videos produced autonomously today. In an interview in September 2013, Genaro and Hermenegildo spoke to me about the gap between the expectations of Video Indígena practitioners and the needs of Tama villagers:

Genaro: The problem outside our village was that we used to bring the *Fiesta animada* film along with us, since the fiesta was our biggest thing. Celebrating a large and genuine fiesta made a lot of sense to us. But when we took the video to the Video Indígena film festivals in which filmmakers from Ecuador and Bolivia participated, they didn’t appreciate it. They asked us, “But what on earth are you fighting for? That’s just partying!” They, on the other hand, had made films about demonstrations, blockades, violent conflicts with the police ...

Hermenegildo: and respect for sacred sites.

Genaro: They were into the very different discourses that were going on. They were into real struggles, while we were in a process of cultural revival and living through our most significant times as an Ayuujk culture. This made sense to us. And we tried to explain it, but failed to find a point of entry into their discussion, because they were more interested in talking about “fighting for a cause” and “autonomy” and, well ... they were into a more elaborate discourse.

Hermenegildo: That was because they clearly saw video as a tool for the defense of indigenous territory, for the defense of indigenous dignity. Well, video was seen as a weapon. It was certainly established as such. “This is a weapon; we must use it to defend ourselves against the intrusion of the external world.” In our region, Video Tamix did not experience struggles of that kind because of the regional characteristics. There was no heavy aggression against us from outside. That’s why we dealt with the everyday lives of the people in our region, the fiestas, the people themselves. Because of the geographic region and the way of life, there was no enemy to struggle against. That’s why the organizations and the indigenous filmmakers saw Video Tamix as an undertaking that did not serve indigenous causes. And we even filmed a lot of funny things. Like

a few drunken guys dancing beneath the *castillo* ("castle") fireworks. Or guys staggering drunk in the streets and making fun of each other. Other indigenous filmmakers and anthropologists thought that we portrayed indigenous people in a discriminatory manner, since they have often been degraded and portrayed as drunk and ignorant. That's why we had to explain: "That doesn't bother us, because that's the way we live. We have no malicious intentions. And it's not our intention to portray our people in a negative way. That's just the way they live." These were tough debates and we had to defend ourselves ...

Genaro: And we had to justify what we did using a political discourse. I remember how in one debate I told them, "Well, celebrating a fiesta is also a form of fighting for a cause."⁴²

Here Genaro and Hermenegildo identify two different perspectives on indigeneity. The affiliates of Video Indígena based their political struggle on the alleged homogeneity of indigenous interests, neglecting the diverse experiences of those taking part in the program in general. Some, for example, were affected by state military operations and state violence, depending on the region. Video Indígena initially failed to recognize that its trainees might choose to portray their living conditions and collective identities in manifold ways (compare Castells i Talens 2010: 84). Its activists were not alone in stereotyping indigenous people, however. Along similar lines, their target audiences called for dignified, solemn portrayals and a markedly political representation of the indigenous movement. Films shown on Tama's TV Tamix/Canal 12 program counteracted this stereotype and, in accordance with local taste, occasionally depicted community people in popular comic (*chusco*) situations, for example, drunks quarrelling or village eccentrics wearing threadbare clothes (see chapter 4). TV Tamix was forced to defend its style with political arguments and as a result developed the concept of *espacio sagrado*. Here the fiesta meeting place was viewed as a sacred space and, moreover, seen as a blueprint for the TV Tamix method of filmmaking and visual language. These multifaceted, ambivalent, and situation-oriented notions of indigeneity had a more difficult time within the framework of Video Indígena than the dominant purist and essentialist versions. TV Tamix nonetheless set its own priorities and carved out a niche with films that diverged from mainstream indigenous media. This channel is thus a significant example of how village media and their grassroots approach impacted on the Video Indígena movement in general. As a village-based media concept, *espacio sagrado* has furthermore had a strong influence on relations between indigenous peoples and the state above and beyond Tama (see chapter 2).

Tama's media fields are equally assertive when it comes to the construction and reinforcement or challenging and modifying of indigeneity, where villagers have clearly tended to oppose state *indigenismo*. Very few people in Tama use the expression *indígena* in everyday life to connote the positive political and militant stance of an indigenous movement. Many, in fact, flatly reject the notion of *indígena* and indigeneity due to its implication of a colonized subaltern status, and virtually no one would describe him- or herself as *indígena*. On the contrary, the term is commonly used in the spirit of hegemonic discourse, namely, as the opposite of *civilización* and therefore pejoratively for anything considered uncouth and backwards.⁴³ By the same token, village mediamakers have subverted this dichotomy, since the ascription *indígena* could well be used to belittle their performance in the field of contemporary media. Consequently, they prefer to engage in media spheres that are beyond the confines of Video Indígena. Romel Ruiz Pérez,⁴⁴ a village videographer, explained why he understood the association of *indígena* with Video Indígena as essentially demeaning. He first pointed out the origin of the misnomer *indígena*:

Romel: Well, to my knowledge the term *indígenas* originates from the discovery of the Americas, since the first conquistadores claimed that we came from India ...

Ingrid: What do you think of the term Video Indígena? What does it mean?

Romel: Well, I think it refers to us, doesn't it? But Video Indígena is like giving you one point less on the scoreboard, like debasing someone a bit. In the sense of: "They who dared to hold a camera" ... To me, it's something highly derogatory. I think other words should be used. Even the people who defend the rights of the Ayuujk people and other populations always use that word *indígena*. And I think they're making a mistake, too. I've no idea why they don't realize that this simple word has diverse meanings, you know what I mean? It offends us in certain ways. But people are not aware of this; they even use it in the affirmative sense of: "I am indeed an *indígena*." I think this should be expressed differently. Because *indígena* even removes us from our own territory ... I hadn't got to know Mexico City yet at the time but when I arrived in Guanajuato, the first thing someone said to me was, "Ah! You're not from here, you must be from Oaxaca. So you're an *indígena*."⁴⁵

For Romel, the term Video Indígena implies "they who dared to pick up a camera," as if the combination of indigeneity and handling modern technology were fundamentally incompatible. This would make their concurrence a rare achievement and, consequently, a surprising

phenomenon. Indeed, my own scholarly interest in Tama and Tlahui's self-styled media was repeatedly met with the suspicion that I only found them noteworthy for this reason—in short, that I was misjudging their activities as a “peculiar path of the underprivileged,” failing to understand them simply as participating in a wider, more complex realm of communication means. Faced with this dilemma—and notwithstanding their partly open support for the movement, as in the case of the members from TV Tamix—village mediamakers took a highly critical view of the Video Indígena circle. They criticized what they saw as a prevalent attitude in the nonindigenous world, namely, that an indigenous person holding a camera was instantly romanticized as an artist. The men I spoke to believed that this type of “positive discrimination” applied in particular to female indigenous filmmakers.⁴⁶

There are, however, specific instances where media actors from Tama identify and align themselves with the broad Mexican and Pan-American circle known as Video Indígena or Cine Indígena. They ally themselves with media organizations such as Ojo de Agua Comunicación in Oaxaca City, Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas (CLACPI) in Latin America and many others. In so doing, they constitute a united front against the contradictory policies implemented by the Mexican state in the field of audiovisual media. Up until now, Mexico has perpetuated gross inequalities. In 2006, for instance, the neoliberal state government introduced a series of amendments to the *Ley Federal de Telecomunicaciones*,⁴⁷ which granted private mega media conglomerates such as Televisa and TV Azteca, already in control of 80 percent of the market, advantages of such proportion that the amendments were soon coined “Ley Televisa.” Privatization of the media sector led to the introduction of auctions for frequencies in the Mexican radio and television spectrum. Already disadvantaged, communal radio and television stations found themselves with an even greater handicap in terms of license acquisition. Prior to 2006, government radio stations of the state indigenous institute CDI—and its predecessor the INI—had a clear advantage over community-run radio stations when it came to acquiring licenses (McElmurry 2009: 4). July 2014 saw the passing of the *Reforma a la Ley Secundaria de Telecomunicaciones*, regulatory laws that formed part of the flagship telecommunication reforms of the Enrique Peña Nieto PRI government. Community-run media organizations pushed through a number of improvements to curtail the media monopolies but were ultimately unable to alter the dramatic imbalance of power between state, private, and local media.⁴⁸

As a result of ongoing restrictive state policies, actors from Tama's local and transnational media fields have been coerced into a marginal-

ized position in the informal communication sector. In general, only a small percentage of local radio and television stations have government permission to broadcast. Significantly, no media outlet in Tama has this privilege. Indeed, one of the demands on the agenda of regional and Pan-American indigenous movements is guaranteed access to more attractive transmission airspace via a quota system of frequencies for local media free of charge. Given the role of the alternative media sector in addressing social aspects and key points of interest deliberately ignored by mainstream media, this issue is gathering momentum. Mediamakers in Tama voice criticism of government policies as a matter of course by virtue of their self-determined, illegalized activities in the field. Those with an explicitly political agenda, such as Collective for Ayuujk Culture and Resistance (CCREA), use alternative strategies to counteract the prevailing paths of cultural diffusion and the dominant indigenous images of hegemonic discourse, thereby adopting a critical stance on state power. These media activists choose topics and aesthetic means that are tied to local manifestations and supralocal global youth cultures. An outstanding example is the case of the Cultural Fair for Pulque (Feria Cultural del Pulque), which has been organized by CCREA since 2008. This novel festivity revolves around *pulque*, the traditional local drink and icon of communal self-sufficiency. The drink is now deemed sacred and imbued with ethno-political significance around the concept of Ayuujk sovereignty. In 2013, the festivity also focused on *chicha* from the Andean region, a beverage that is enjoying a revival in the context of the political idea of Good Living (*Buen vivir*).⁴⁹ In the neighboring community of Tlahui, Radio Jēnpoj (*jēnpoj*, literally wind of fire) was launched in August 2001. It continues to broadcast in Spanish and the Ayuujk language in a region that extends well beyond the nineteen municipalities (*municipios*) of the Distrito Mixe and encompasses parts of the adjoining Zapotecan Sierra Norte and Valles Centrales. This local radio station adopted a critical position on national issues such as the controversy over education reform, a further flagship project of the Peña Nieto government.⁵⁰ These examples demonstrate how village media initiatives deal with and intervene in national policies and, in the course of taking action, explore globally circulating left-wing ideas.

This book is interested in how Tama's media actors align themselves with national and Pan-American indigenous organizations, while simultaneously adopting positions of their own. Tlahui has been a pioneer and bastion of the ethno-political movement of the Ayuujk people since the late 1970s, when CODREMI was founded and Floriberto Díaz became a central political figure. It was against this backdrop that a media summit of the Pan-American indigenous movement, the second Cumbre Con-



Figure 0.3. Second Continental Summit of Indigenous Communication of the Abya Yala, October 2013. Photo: Ingrid Kummels.

tinental de Comunicación Indígena del Abya Yala, was held in Tlahui in October 2013. Over a thousand representatives from community-run media, indigenous organizations, and NGOs from Chile to Canada convened at this mass event. Over the course of a week, they debated the need for enhanced access to various mass means of communication and on their alternative cultural and political orientation. The media summit, however, was clouded by an internal conflict that stimulated a lively discussion in the press organs and websites of the indigenous media themselves and among solidarity groups such as Servicios en Comunicación Intercultural (Servindi, based in Peru). The crux of the matter, which had emerged shortly before the Pan-American meeting, was the amount of independence that community-run radio and television stations should maintain—particularly in financial terms—vis-à-vis the current Mexican government. Franco Gabriel Hernández, a Mixtec professor and head of the media summit, had arranged the financing of the event with the Secretaría de Telecomunicaciones, a ministry notorious for its aggressive policy of closing down community-run radio stations that had no government permit.⁵¹ In 2002, the ministry had shut down Radio Jënpoj, the local Tlahui station, with the help of the military. In addition, Franco Gabriel had invited the controversial Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto to open the summit, leading to the division of *medios comunitarios* into two camps. Guillermo Monteforte, a non-indigenous founding member of the influential regional media organization Ojo de Agua Comunicación with headquarters in Oaxaca, rejected

this proximity to the government and appealed for the exclusive use of “legitimate” funding sources.⁵² Ojo de Agua Comunicación and several other media organizations from the Americas boycotted the summit, holding Franco Gabriel responsible for their decision. A number of other organizations such as the Colombian Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC), which had organized the first summit in 2010, carried on with it. Indigenous representatives, such as Franco Gabriel, who were active in the United Nations, also pleaded for continuation of the summit. The split impacted the media fields in Tama and Tlahui, where the question of legitimate funding at the local level had been a frequent topic of discussion. Furthermore, despite claims that all village media initiatives in the Sierra Mixe would be included, videographers categorized as engaging in *medios comerciales* were not invited because of their entrepreneurial approach. These episodes at the summit are analyzed in this book since they indicate the alliances that local actors enter with national and international indigenous-related networks and organizations as a result of their own divergent interests and positions, thereby opening up media spaces in a variety of directions.

The Emergence of Locally and Transnationally Crafted Video Genres

Certain media genres open up a window of understanding for local and transnational forms of appropriating mass means of communication. In this context, it is useful to remember Jesús Martín-Barbero’s (1987) concept of *mediaciones* (which he developed with reference to television). He interpreted these “mediations” as sites of production and reception all in one, where viewers actively contribute to generating the meanings of media products through their own culturally defined sensory perception. Stuart Hall’s (1973) notion of the encoding and decoding of images as simultaneously unfurling processes also refers to this interrelationship. Yet how is it even possible to identify a locally and transnationally crafted media genre? This is not an easy task, particularly in my case, where socialization did not include these genre-specific “sets of social practices, aesthetic conventions, and ‘semiotic ideologies’” (Strassler 2010: 18). I was initially unaware of the numerous Tama genres, since I had not been socialized by them and therefore not conditioned to this way of seeing. Having stayed in the region for an extended period, however, it became hard to ignore the increasing popularity of these genres and their success in the commercial sector. In Tama’s neighboring community of Ayutla—“The Port of the Mixe” and a key administrative center—a stroll around the market, for example, reveals not



Figure 0.4. Fiesta videos at the Ayutla market, June 2013. Photo: Ingrid Kummels.

only fresh fruit and vegetable stalls, drugstores, pharmacies, stationary stores, and flower shops, but also the typical stalls found all over Mexico containing a vast selection of illegally copied DVDs and CDs. In addition to the film genres familiar throughout Mexico—for example, *comedias*, *románticas*, *nacionales*, *suspense*, and *policíacas*—Ayutla also sells *fiestas* (patron saint fiesta videos). Their color-print covers sealed in plastic bear brief titles such as *Ayutla la Fiesta 2014*, *Calenda Infantil*, *Recepción de las Bandas*, or *Visitantes*. Fiesta videos are also sold in Mexican shops and by distributors, who make cold calls and sell door-to-door in US cities such as Los Angeles, where a large number of Oaxacan migrants live and work—notably from Mixtec, Zapotec, and Ayuujk ‘indigenous’ communities.

In addition to fiesta videos, there are at least five other locally and transnationally crafted genres. For the purposes of this study, I identify them as family rite-of-passage videos, officeholder videos, land dispute documentaries, artistic experimental videos, and “classic” documentaries. Each of these genres is produced, and frequently circulated and consumed, in a distinctive way. Land dispute documentaries, for example, are intended for viewing in more intimate settings, while fiesta videos are widely disseminated via face-to-face viewings in Tama and Los

Angeles homes and across the Mexico-United States border through social media (for example, Facebook).

This book explores six (audio-)visual genres in the field of photography, videography, television, and the Internet:

1. Patron saint fiesta videos (*fiestas*) document celebrations in honor of the village patron saint. They are made by professional filmmakers (*videoastas* or *camarógrafos*⁵³) and sold in the village at market stalls or shops and in the surrounding communities. They circulate in the satellite communities of Mexico as well as those of the United States. Other village social events recorded and marketed in a similar way are school graduation celebrations.

2. Family rite-of-passage videos (*eventos sociales*), which are likewise made by village videographers, show christenings, *quinceañera* festivities, and weddings. In this case, however, the clients who sponsor them have exclusive rights to the audiovisual material they finance in advance. They determine when and with whom (mostly family members and friends) they will share their film.

3. Officeholder videos record activities that Tama *comuneros* and *comuneras* carry out as officials of the civil-religious cargo system, the primary locus of governance in Mesoamerican ‘indigenous’ communities. In the course of their service they fulfill important administrative functions in the municipality associated with the infrastructure endowment of the village (school construction, annexes to the existing market building, water-supply measures, road building, church renovation, and village beautification work), and contribute to village fiestas as officials. They commission photography and filmmaking or perform the work themselves, since recordings serve to legitimize their activities.

4. Land dispute documentaries (*luchas agrarias*) are commissioned either by the affected parties or by the officials in charge of solving the dispute in question. In the case of disputes over land and/or water resources between villages (such as those that arose between Tama and the northern neighboring community of Tlahui from 1996 to 1998 and between Tama and its southern neighbor Ayutla in 2004 and again in 2015), Tama authorities commissioned both professional and amateur videographers to record the proceedings from the Tama perspective. The films were produced in an observational style or as emotionally charged partisan accounts (as land dispute dramas) and were used politically to mobilize the members of the community against the neighboring village. On the other hand, in the case of internal land conflicts (*conflictos de terreno*), an affected minority group within the municipality may also employ local photographers and videographers to document evidence of their adversary trespassing on parcels they claim for them-

selves. In this instance their adversaries are also Tama villagers. Visual evidence can be used by either party to defend his or her claims before the *presidente de bienes comunales*, the official responsible for settling land disputes. The intention in the above cases is to show the visual material at Tama's General Assembly, the supreme village body, or as part of presentations to a government ministry or an NGO.

5. Experimental artistic photographs and videos (*fotografía y video artísticos*) are produced by young mediamakers who use graffiti, mural and canvas painting, photography, video, and the Internet to document countercultural expressions (for example, reggae, rap, rock, and heavy metal music) as well as aspects of village and regional life from a fresh perspective. In new media spaces such as the Feria Cultural del Pulque, Tama's youth culture movement displays experimental (for example, abstract) and historical photographs in village exhibitions. The genre also includes explicitly political films that address topics such as the school system (critiquing, for example, the absence of additional assistance for schoolchildren with special needs) and environmental problems (brought on by urbanization, which is suspected to have caused the devastating landslide in Tlahui in September 2010).

6. Documentaries (*documentales*) deal with affairs of a cultural or political nature in a "classic" documentary style, that is, with the claim of documenting real life; they also adhere to an internationally shared visual language of realism. Actors engaged in this field self-identify as *comunicadores*. They adopted and to a certain degree have modified the work and aesthetic standards taught since 1989 at the film workshops of the INI "Transferencia de Medios" program, later at the Centros de Video Indígena (CVI), and by Ojo de Agua Comunicación, which separated from the INI in 1998.⁵⁴ In 2012 there was a paradigm shift in indigenous media in Mexico, when national film institutes such as the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) and Ambulante A.C. began offering inhabitants of rural areas professional film courses that had no ethnic dimension specifically aimed at indigenous peoples.⁵⁵ The new documentary style imparted at these workshops focuses on individual protagonists and portrays them with emotional appeal in a dense filmic code. Documentaries are produced by highly qualified collaborative teams that work to contemporary professional standards.

A sense of group belonging—to the youth community, the village of Tama/Tu'uk Nēēm, or the Ayuujk ethnolinguistic group—is not only forged and reinforced or, alternatively, challenged and ultimately transformed at the level of audiovisual representation. Actors also socially engage in defining collective identities within the framework of the actual practices of media production, diffusion, and consumption. Patron

saint fiesta videos exemplify how the process of crafting this genre serves to visualize and highlight certain horizons of identity. Many of the five-to-seven-day festivals revolve around the concept of being a good *comunero* or *comunera*. In practice, being a *comunero/a* implies ownership of communal land and, as part of the civil-religious cargo system, the commitment to voluntarily serve in it every six years. These communal commitments profoundly shape the lives of the individuals concerned. At the same time, they are seen as crucial to maintaining the grassroots political system of the village and ensuring civic equality. It is thus taken for granted that all of Tama's inhabitants contribute in the form of work and financial donations to the fiesta, which the village in turn uses to showcase its strength to the surrounding region. Self-styled fiesta videos help to create this impression of regional power, since they depict Tama people as active participants of community life and constitutive of the greater collective. The sense of being a *comunero/a*, however, is not confined to the level of representation. The video filmmakers themselves make an effort to act as good *comuneros/as* while working in the field. Videographer Genoveva Pérez Rosas, for instance, wears traditional dress while filming and in this way reconciles private enterprise with the communal practices of her village. Migrant members of the village take part in the fiesta from afar by means of financial donations. Fiesta videos and their DVD distribution constitute a medium that renders visible participation as a *comunero/a* in the transnational context of the hometown and the satellite communities. Hence the local and transnational video industry is inextricably bound up with broadening the horizon of what it means to be a *comunero/a* in a new media space of transnational outreach. The mediatization of the fiesta and its entanglement with village governance serves to perpetuate these community-based dimensions of collective identity, albeit in their modified mediatized and transnationalized versions. The fiestas and the cargo system are the backbone of the semi-autonomous democratic organization of this 'indigenous' village, as well as of other communities throughout Mesoamerica. Upholding these forms of self-government of a *longue durée* is on the one hand a form of resistance to efforts to integrate indigenous people as one of Mexico's clientelistic populations. Despite subscribing to multiculturalism, the Mexican state continues to implement contradictory measures that are more in line with the old indigenist policy of assimilation (for example, the 2014 telecommunication legislation reforms described above). On the other hand forms of self-government are an important cultural and political asset for counteracting fragmentation and exclusion promoted by US migration policies.

Land dispute videos are another example of how priorities set in Tama diverge from the ethnic concept promoted by the Mexican state. Tama productions in this genre address the protracted border disputes with the neighboring villages of Tlahui and Ayutla, using a “visual-warfare” style to mobilize the villagers. Similar disputes about land and water are common throughout the Oaxacan Sierra Norte and partly instigated by cargo officials as a means of social control and of strengthening the fabric of the community (Chassen-López 2004: 444). The fact that the antagonists in these conflicts come from the same ethnic group, in this case the Ayuujk ja’ay, contradicts the ethnicizing logic of the state. Accordingly, land dispute documentaries are designed purely for internal consumption in the village. Indeed, conveying the dispute in a “politically correct” form for a wider audience within the scope of Video Indígena is virtually impossible due to the latter’s assumption of indigenous collectivity and solidarity. As a result, these films are rarely in circulation, remaining instead in the private video libraries of village inhabitants. Bearing this in mind, I will briefly analyze the first video in this genre, which I saw in August 2013 when Hermenegildo was in the process of digitalizing the TV Tamix archive. The recording in question was a spontaneous act by TV Tamix in 1996 during a land dispute that had once again flared up with the neighboring village of Tlahui. The landowners on the Tama side appealed to TV Tamix for help as their community mediamakers when Tlahui residents erected cement boundary stones at a controversial municipality border. A crew of three from this local television station arrived at the site and documented the fresh landmarks in war-coverage style. In line with local “visual warfare” tradition, people from Tlahui began cutting down the trees on a wide strip of land at the controversial borderline to enhance their claims, which the film carefully documents. Vicente Antúnez López from TV Tamix gives a running commentary on camera as though he were a war reporter at the front, accusing the Tlahui cement landmark “commando” of recklessly disregarding the natural environment. Shot at the remote village border, the film was screened at the General Assembly, where it whipped up sentiments against Tlahui. Today, Hermenegildo sees this documentary in a more critical light: along with others I spoke to in Tama, in retrospect he still endorses Tama’s commitment at the time, seeing the rivalry with Tlahui positively as a power struggle “between brothers.” On the other hand, he is concerned that village documentaries of this kind could be interpreted negatively by outsiders as showing discord among the Ayuujk ethnic group and thus be harmful to their image and legitimate political demands.

Both of these examples illustrate that beyond the Mexican state's conceptualization of the country's indigenous peoples as ethnic Others, there are more complex horizons of identity and dimensions of belonging that are negotiated through and shaped by village media.

Structure of the Book

This book traces the history of media production and consumption in transnational Tama and analyzes their current situation. Tama stands for Mexican 'indigenous' communities that have primarily been investigated from the perspective of the Video Indígena movement, which carries with it the implication that the advent of mass media in this village was due to a tight interplay with the media initiatives of the Mexican state. My research, in contrast, focuses on the autonomous, partly endogenous driving forces that were harnessed to reinvent photography, radio, film, television, and the Internet in a village that has meanwhile expanded transnationally to the United States. The desires that motivate Tama inhabitants to migrate on their own initiative and in the interests of modernizing village life are one such driver. New media practices, innovative genres, and debates evolving around them simultaneously serve to redefine belongings within the Ayuujk village of Tama/Tu'uk Nēēm, the relationship between indigenous people and the Mexican state, and the bond with the United States as a target destination of migration.

Chapter 1 gives an insight into the mediatized social life of the transnationally extended community of Tamazulapam–Los Angeles. Its visual landscapes and soundscapes are created by male and female professional photographers and filmmakers, political activists, small-scale entrepreneurs, and by adults as well as youth. Tama played a prominent part in the Ayuujk indigenous movements, which used media at an early stage to spotlight demands for political self-determination. Mass media had in fact been used in a number of contexts even before this development. Community-run, commercial, youth-activist, and artistic media fields are now distinguished, with diversity stemming from the different perspectives of villagers in terms of age, gender, and educational and migration experience. A common feature of the various media fields is their use as a forum for intense debate on wider societal issues. Many current concerns in Tama are associated with the ideas and practices of its people pertaining to the village and the communal way of life (*lo comunitario* and *comunalidad*) during this period of international migration. They open up media spaces that challenge both the restrictive

policies of the United States vis-à-vis job seekers from Latin America and the PRI government policy of fostering private media conglomerates and their top-down control of public opinion. By closely examining the cargo system and its mediatization, I trace the endeavors of the hometown in the state of Oaxaca to incorporate Tama migrants in its communal structures and migration's synergistic effects. The hometown is thus able to maintain a central socio-political position despite the growing geographical dispersion of its population. By mediatizing social life, community members—including those living in Los Angeles—attempt to put into effect their own grassroots and democratic political understanding.

Chapter 2 takes a detailed look at theories that village actors have developed in the field of audiovisual communication. Villagers engage in photography, radio, television broadcasting, videography, and social media with a view to their belonging to the Ayuujk ja'ay, an independent ethnolinguistic group whose way of life is based on precolonial traditions. At the same time, they reconfigure this awareness from several perspectives. Tama intellectuals interpret the current expansion of practices and representations through mass means of communication in their own terms in part by integrating the political ideas in global circulation. They developed the concept of holy space (*espacio sagrado*), of convivial space (*espacio de convivencia*), and of opening up spaces (*abrir espacios*) to encompass these novel media spaces. According to these intellectuals, Spanish colonization denied Ayuujk people their own representations and epistemology. As a result, they resorted to the counterstrategy of concealing vital cultural goods and banned even locals from viewing them. Part of this strategy involved a strict ban on photographing the village's prime deity in order to safeguard "our own" knowledge. Recently young media activists have begun to question this legacy of the colonial era. Specifically, they engage in audiovisual decolonization by developing proper media production standards and applying them to themes of village interest. Media productions by members of the Colectivo Cultura y Resistencia Ayuuk, which are displayed at novel communicative spaces at the center of the hometown, for example the Feria Cultural del Pulque, tend to adopt controversial positions in these debates. These audiovisual media practices and representations modify and modernize what it means to be Ayuujk, challenging conventional understandings within the transnational village, while interweaving them with globally popular countercultural discourses such as Rastafarianism, socialism, and anarchism.

Chapter 3 first explores Tama's migration patterns and their diversity. Since the 1960s, villagers have augmented their cultural, social, and

economic capital by means of study and work in places far from their hometown. In doing so, they tread a largely self-determined avenue of development. Migration became a key arena for the emergence, diversification, and advancement of audiovisual mass media, as well as their translocal production and consumption. In the course of migration, people in and from Tama developed new desires for communication and community building across vast geographical distances. Secondary education nurtured a new stage of life, that is, adolescence, which in turn gave rise to new recreational habits. Notably return migrants to the hometown introduced novel media services: they engaged in writing, set up a traveling cinema, and introduced new forms of recreation. One prominent example was the “Ayuujk Olympic Games” initiated by teachers; the games were held at the same time as the patron saint fiesta. Over a number of decades, Tama youth movements have epitomized the interplay between appropriated means of communication, novel patterns of recreation, and shifting social relations—the latter now mass mediated. Photography was the first visual mass media form to be professionalized by the villagers on their own terms, thereby overcoming the visual divide. A valuable use of self-styled photography and videotaping occurs in the context of agrarian disputes with neighboring villages or in Tama itself. Here, it is especially apparent how and to what extent village politics have been mediated. One illustration of this is the *lienzos*, or maps of communal land that were drawn on cloth during the colonial period. Since the 1990s, this medium has been replaced by photography and video, which are used first and foremost to document boundaries and their transgression. Even within the transnational village, being a *comunero/a* is essentially (re)defined in terms of land ownership in the hometown. Within the wider frame of mediated community politics, pictures and films serve as visual legal evidence or as an element of “visual warfare” when negotiating land disputes. Photography, videotaping, and their dissemination via social media have thus become vital fields of activity for village governance within the context of geographic expansion into the United States.

Chapter 4 addresses the communal and commercial versions of videography in Tama, whose media products are consumed in local, national, and international contexts. First, the case of TV Tamix demonstrates how the production and consumption of audiovisual media are part and parcel of wider debates on critical social matters. At the heart of the dispute that led to the demise of TV Tamix in 2000 was the channel’s unprecedented intervention in the political sphere of the village. At the same time, TV Tamix participated in the broader Video Indígena movement, albeit on its own terms. The local TV station un-

covered the discrepancies between Video Indígena's audiovisual language—one that satisfied the demand of external audiences for “indigenous authenticity”—and that of the village, which is geared to the desire of its audiences for “communal reality.” Second, migration to the United States at the end of the 1990s was accompanied by the emergence of a new village media genre: patron saint fiesta videos. Private entrepreneurs, mostly family businesses, made films that were classified for the first time as *medios comerciales* and for a number of reasons made efforts to reconcile business rationale with communitarian ideals. In essence, they act as *comuneros/as* and entrepreneurial videographers in one. Indeed, stressing the legitimacy of their new trade and distributing the fiesta videos locally and in the United States as an iconic product is their only method of securing the reproduction rights in negotiations with cargo officials. The popularity of this village genre has sparked important debates in the transnational audience. They deal, on the one hand, with mundane issues such as the risk of being exposed to ridicule in *chusco* scenes or of eliciting suspicions of infidelity in footage that shows them dancing with someone other than their own spouse. On the other hand, these debates serve to redefine gender roles, transnational family relations, and what it means to be a *comunero/a* in times of geographical dispersion.

Chapter 5 analyzes Tama's village media from the perspective of a specific section of their transnational audience: the Pan-American indigenous and alternative media movement. In October 2013, the Second Continental Summit of Indigenous Communication of the Abya Yala, a weeklong media summit of indigenous organizations from all over the Americas, was held in Tama's neighboring village, Tlahui. Before the summit had even begun, a heated debate arose on the degree of independence that alternative media and notably their umbrella organization should maintain vis-à-vis the Mexican state, in particular financial independence. This same issue is at the center of intense disputes on the commodification of village culture by entrepreneurial videographers, the co-optation of community-based media by the state, and financial subordination to the federal government's interests. Quarrels, both prior to and during the summit, highlight the search in local media for ways to mobilize resources for media production, dissemination, and consumption that comply with the political aims of autonomy within the nation state. The tension triggered by the summit revealed the divergence between communal and commercial media fields, on the one hand, and between Ayuujk municipalities, on the other hand, as in the case of Tama and Tlahui. Both communities are aligned with national and Pan-American indigenous organizations, while simultane-

ously adopting positions of their own. In the struggle for recognition of their ethno-political demands, Tama and Tlahui set different priorities when it comes to the role of village media and the transmission and promotion of Ayuujk culture. Yet by mutually referring to their communal projects, they ultimately contribute to enhancing the uniqueness of Ayuujk media spaces at national and Pan-American levels.

Notes

1. The film *And the River Flows On* was produced in 2010 and won the Alanis Obomsawin Award for best documentary at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in Canada the same year. The university course in Berlin, which was organized in cooperation with Florian Walter, discussed “Media Spaces: Culture and Representation in Latin America” (*MedienRäume: Kultur und Repräsentation in Lateinamerika*).
2. Media production in indigenous languages frequently uses amateur video formats. Only a minority of indigenous media practitioners engage in professional formats that target global cinema audiences. The Berlin film festival has become a hub of this international movement. In 2013 the special program “NATIVE: A Journey into Indigenous Cinema” was integrated as a regular sidebar.
3. The Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) program had agreed to broadcast our television report. When we returned to Germany, however, the editor in charge had been replaced. As it turned out, his successor did not share his level of interest in the subject of the film.
4. With this expression Carlos jokingly referred to the case of the *Rollos Perdidos de Pancho Villa*, which Rocha Valverde and Gregorio Carlos (2003) had dealt with in a documentary.
5. The unedited footage, we archived as “Transferencia de Medios,” is in itself evidence of the exchange between Mexico’s indigenous mediamakers and Manfred Schäfer and me as anthropological filmmakers.
6. The explicitly community-oriented mediamakers prefer to self-identify as *comunicadores*, not as *camarógrafos* or *videoastas*, because the term *comunicadores* avoids reference to current technology alone. Instead, it emphasizes the historical continuity of the use of media by indigenous people for social ends and free of charge (Servindi 2008: 11–12).
7. Some of media anthropology scholarship points out that different audiences have been instrumental in shaping the messages and images of indigeneity conveyed by indigenous media. With reference to the documentary *Dulce convivencia* (*Sweet Gathering*) Laurel C. Smith (2012) analyzes how the different expectations of audiences such as those at film festivals, transnational advocacy networks for indigenous peoples, and the author with his own interpretation (in this case Ayuujk filmmaker Filoteo Gómez Martínez from Quetzaltepec) impact the reception of the film. I basically agree with her approach of mapping these interferences, which contradict a single scholarly interpretation of the video. She refers in particular to Donna Haraway’s cyborgian concept of “diffraction.” Smith, however, does not deal with local community reception, since *Dulce convivencia* was never shown to an Ayuujk audience in Quetzalte-

pec because Gómez Martínez was afraid of “getting in to trouble” following a political conflict that involved his family (Wortham 2013: 217). Gabriela Zamorano Villareal (2012, 2014) investigated the many different ways in which indigenous mediamakers and audiences engaged with images of indigeneity in self-determined Bolivia film productions during the first period of Evo Morales’ presidency. She pays special attention to circulation and consumption dynamics, which are also highlighted in this book with regard to the reception and interpretation of videos produced in Tama by the transnational village and the Video Indígena circuit.

8. The INI was founded in 1948 and absorbed by the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI) in 2003.
9. The filmmakers Juan José García (quoted in Wortham 2004: 365) and Carlos Pérez Rojas (2005, quoted in http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/esp/rose/efrain_c_interview.htm, accessed on 6 June 2013) endorsed this communal orientation. As Erica Wortham (2013: 9) explains, “Video Indígena [is a] specific media categor[y] that [was] deliberately constructed in institutional settings in the 1990s.” Although dealing with Tama as a case study, Wortham does not focus specifically on its media production as part of a wider and diversified media field that at first adopted mass media independent of INI and was later co-opted as part of Video Indígena.
10. The unusually large number of municipalities (570) in the state stems from its linguistic and cultural diversity. In addition to the group of Spanish-speaking mestizos and indigenous people who have recently migrated to Oaxaca, the population is divided into sixteen ethnolinguistic groups, of which the Ayuujk ja’ay (endonym) or Mixe (exonym) with 120,000 people is average in size. The Ayuujk people mostly settle in tightly knit communities in a region northeast of Oaxaca City (Maldonado Alvarado and Cortés Márquez 1999; Torres Cisneros 2004: 47). ‘Indigenous’ is written in simple quotation marks to remind readers that the term is problematic. It unduly homogenizes people according to the historically constructed ethnic category of colonized inhabitants of the Americas and elides much more varied self-conceptions that include differences in gender, age, profession, and locality. In the course of this book, the term indigenous will not always be written in quotation marks, but it should be kept in mind that the inhabitants of Tama widely reject this term as their self-designation. The word indigenous, however, has been appropriated as a political term by some stakeholders and redefined as a positive self-reference. Today, politically engaged actors prefer to self-identify as *pueblos originarios*, “original people.”
11. In this book, I primarily use the term Ayuujk ja’ay, meaning “Ayuujk people” as a term of ethnic self-designation. When the spoken language is Spanish, the Ayuujk people tend to use the exonym Mixe as a term of self-reference. As a rule, they see it as erroneous rather than discriminatory. Mixe may well have been coined by the Spaniards who derived it from the Ayuujk word for young man, *mix*. Ayuujk translates as “language” or “flowery language,” and ja’ay as “group” or “people” (Martínez Pérez 1993: 334). The literature shows diverse notations of Ayuujk like “Ayuuk.” The Tama variant is “Ëyuujk.”
12. Interview with Leonardo AVALOS Bis, Yalálag, 29 April 2016. He characterized *videos de comunidad*, among other things, as a genre that captures “reality” (*lo real*) as perceived by its audience, such as by recording events in real time. For

this reason village videographers desist where possible from editing or manipulating images through animation.

13. The demands of indigenous movements in Oaxaca and those of the neo-Zapatista EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) in Chiapas in 1995 pressured the state government of Oaxaca into legally recognizing the cargo system as so-called *usos y costumbres* (literally: traditions and customs). The new legislation granted municipalities like Tama the right to self-government according to their own principles, without the onus of complying with the Mexican party system. According to the understanding of *usos y costumbres* in Tama, each village member is obliged every six years to serve for a year as an official of the *cabildo* on a voluntary basis. The officials concerned are expected to invest their own money in the one-year term of office (see chapter 1). The alternative to this system involves engagement in the national political parties (that is, the PRI, PAN, PRD or Morena). Conflict and division abide in many villages in Oaxaca between *comunelistas* who back *usos y costumbres*, on the one hand, and supporters of the political parties, on the other. So far, this has not occurred in Tama. *Usos y costumbres* is a contentious term, not least because it characterizes a vital civil-religious institution as static “customs.” Numerous scholars prefer to call it an “internal normative system” (*sistema normativo interno*). Nevertheless, *usos y costumbres* is the term people in Tama adopted for the most part, equating it with their notion of *comunalidad*.
14. Mediatization is used here as a “catch-all term to cover any and all changes in social and cultural life consequent upon media institutions operation” (Coul-dry 2008: 378).
15. The Video Indígena movement in Mexico during this period of the 1990s has meanwhile been well researched from a media anthropology perspective. For greater detail see Alexandra Halkin (2006), Ingrid Kummels (2010, 2011), Carlos Gilberto Plasencia Fabila and Carlos Monteforte (2001), and José Rodríguez Ramos and Antoni Castells i Talens (2010).
16. Similar to the terms *indio* and *indígena*, “Video Indígena” was later appropriated and resignified by the actors involved with a view to their own political interest in self-determination (Wortham 2013: 9–10, 62).
17. An example of this is the use of modern media technology by the EZLN in Chiapas at the beginning of the 1990s. The “cyber guerilla” owed its prominence to the appropriation of technology and the discursive strategies it developed in its Internet communiqués, allowing them to mobilize left-wing activists around the world for their political aims. As a result, the Mexican government saw itself forced to negotiate with members of EZLN at the “Dialogue of San Cristóbal.”
18. In 2001, Article 3 of the Mexican constitution was amended. The amendment affirms that the pluricultural composition of the Mexican nation is based on the specific social, economic, cultural, and political institutions of the indigenous peoples. In 2003, indigenous languages were officially recognized as national languages.
19. Sparked initially by the Oaxaca teachers’ trade union Sección 22 (Local 22), a branch of the national Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Educación (SNTE), and its demands for higher salaries for teachers in 2006, the social movement subsequently became a much broader alliance. Over three hundred organizations representing teachers, indigenous peoples, women, students, peasants, and urban neighborhoods joined forces in this movement (Stephen 2013: 3).

20. The extensive oeuvre of Díaz and Martínez Luna has been published in recent years. See Jaime Martínez Luna (2010, 2014) and Sofía Robles Hernández and Rafael Cardoso Jiménez (2007).
21. Alejandra Aquino Moreschi (2013) collected important contributions on this topic in an issue of the journal *Cuadernos del Sur*. She emphasizes that since *comunalidad* refers to the principles of conviviality practiced in the Sierra Norte villages, it even surpasses Guillermo Bonfil's (1972) then progressive formulation according to which *pueblos indígenas* are not defined by essential cultural traits, but by the condition of colonization (Aquino Moreschi 2013: 10–11). Several Ayuujk linguists and anthropologists have elaborated on the concept of *comunalidad*, among them Marcelino Domínguez Domínguez (1987) of Cacalotepec.
22. In the timeframe of my investigation, a movement organized by students of the Universidad Iberoamericana of Mexico City emerged in 2012 and was known as #YoSoy132. Its members used social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a brand new form of participation in the national public sphere. Following the visit of presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto to the university on what was subsequently referred to as "Black Friday," numerous protests took place against his denial of responsibility for injustices in Atengo. The misrepresentation by mainstream television of their massive protest prompted students to establish an influential "deliberative audience" via virtual networking (see Villamil 2012).
23. The critical debates following the educational reform implemented by the Peña Nieto government are one example of this. At the national level, the arguments of teachers organized in Sección 22 of the SNTE were increasingly challenged as purely protective of their own political group (that is, the teachers). Radio Jênpoj broadcast extensively on Sección 22's long-range demands for education. Unlike most mainstream media, they interpreted the demands as part of the teachers' legitimate struggle to adopt professional standards to meet local needs and to fight against the privatization of education envisioned by the reform project. In 2016 Radio Jênpoj formed part of the alternative media that essentially informed on the events in Nochixtlán on 19 June, in which Mexican federal police fired at civilians in the context of ongoing teacher opposition to Peña Nieto's educational reform. Seven people were killed.
24. Individuals identify with the village of Tama based on their ownership of communal land and compliance with obligations, including voluntary service as an official. In such cases, they are generally recognized as a *comunero/a*.
25. *Paisanos/as*, a Spanish term for compatriot, is mainly used to designate community members living in the United States. Fiesta videos certainly enjoy a large international distribution, something I was able to verify with random sampling in Los Angeles and New York, where ethnic shops for Mexicans specialize in offering CDs and DVDs with video clips, fiesta videos, documentaries, and feature films produced locally in Mexico.
26. The definition generally applied in anthropology conceives the political in terms of processes that are public and at the same time target-oriented. These processes involve preservation, displacement, and reconfiguration of the political power structure of the group involved (Swartz, Turner, and Tuden 1966: 7). Chantal Mouffe's and Kirstie McClure's concept of "quotidian politics" also supports this understanding (Rodríguez 2001: 20–21).

27. Michelle Raheja (2010: 70) uses Edward Soja's concept of Thirdspace with regard to North America and conceives the so-called virtual reservation as a "more creative, kinetic space where Indigenous artists collectively and individually employ technologies and knowledges to rethink the relationship between media and Indigenous communities." With help of the term trialectics Edward Soja (1996: 65) describes Henri Lefebvre's *espace perçu* (perceived space), *espace conçu* (conceived space), and *espace vécu* (lived space) as interrelated spatialities and identifies with them productive thinking that transcends binary models.
28. Faye Ginsburg (1994: 366) is among the visual anthropologists who adopted Appadurai's concept of mediascape to "take account of the media practices with the local, national, and transnational circumstances that surround them" with reference to Aboriginal media in Australia.
29. Arjun Appadurai (1997: 7) applied the term "visual decolonization" to indicate the wide use of backdrops for "experiments with modernity" for photography in postcolonial settings. Similarly, I extend this term to include the various applications of mass media in Ayuujk society for self-determined development.
30. *Mëjk' äjt'in* is a common expression in the context of sacrificing and praying in the Ayuujk religion.
31. Actors use Spanish terms to convey their space concepts to the wider Spanish-speaking, non-Ayuujk audience.
32. One example of the latter is the Televisa telenovela from 2012, *A Refuge for Love (Un refugio para el amor)*, in which the Tarahumara protagonist works as a household maid.
33. With regard to modern visual and audiovisual media technology such as photography and film, early communication scholars like Marshall McLuhan (McLuhan and Fiore 1967) and visual anthropologists like Edmund Carpenter (1972) advanced the understanding that it promoted first and foremost the semantics and viewpoint of the "Western" world.
34. Faye Ginsburg's (1994: 368) concept of "embedded aesthetics" emphasizes the local mediamakers' inclination (in this case in Australia) to judge media work "by its capacity to embody, sustain, and even revive or create certain social relations." That is, the concept refers to the conscious effort of embedding new media in existing communicative traditions.
35. See <http://www.docwest.co.uk/projects/rebecca-savage/>, accessed on 19 April 2015.
36. With regard to the pitfalls of neoliberal multiculturalism in Mexico see Gledhill (2012).
37. Daniela Cremoux Wanderstok (1997: 70) remarks critically that the initiators of the program had the illusion that "modern technology and a crash course would make it possible to formulate ideas and promote an audiovisual language imbued with the most profound idiosyncrasies of the Mexican people" (my translation).
38. Interview with Guillermo Monteforte, Oaxaca, 21 August 2008.
39. These documentaries were emulated by INI trainees. See also Cremoux Wanderstok (1997: 129).
40. Although INI employees were aware of Tama's Casa del Pueblo mediamakers, they did not invite them to their first workshops. They were afraid it might be interpreted as taking sides with Tama at a time when it engaged in an intense land dispute with the neighboring village of Tlahui. It was not until 1992 that

- several members, among them Victoriano Guilberto, were invited to a Video Indígena workshop in Tlacolula. Interview with Guillermo Monteforte, Oaxaca City, 21 July 2013; see also Wortham (2013: 66).
41. Ingrid Kummels and Manfred Schäfer (1993). For this concept, see also Köhler (2004).
 42. Camcorder interview with Genaro und Hermenegildo Rojas, Tamazulapam, October 2013. All interviews cited in this book were recorded and translated from Spanish by the author.
 43. Ayuujk individuals sometimes use *indígena* in the derogatory sense of backwards, as in the following sentence: "Yesterday, I was in a village that was really indigenous (*indígena de a de veras*). There was no cell phone signal there."
 44. Romel, born in 1988, works in the family enterprise Video Tamix, which specializes in documenting social events audiovisually. This commercial enterprise should not be confused with TV Tamix, the local TV station in operation until 2000 and seen as a community-run media project. The name Romel (with only one "m") itself subverts simplifying dichotomies. Romel's father named his son after a Mexican political leader in the Movimiento Antorchista Nacional, a progressive movement that combats poverty and was founded by rural Mexican teachers in the 1970s.
 45. Interview with Romel Ruiz Pérez, Tamazulapam, 31 October 2013. Romel has experience as a migrant to the northern Mexican city of Salamanca, where he worked in a taco restaurant.
 46. Over a period of two decades, men dominated the Video Indígena movement despite the pioneering role of Teófila Palafox from San Mateo del Mar with her film *La vida de una familia Ikoods* (1988). It was not until 2008 that numerous women were trained as mediamakers in the workshops of Ojo de Agua Comunicación, one of the most important alternative media organizations in Mexico.
 47. The constitutional reform that introduced the Ley Federal de Telecomunicaciones in 1995, promoted privatization of the former state monopoly on radio and television.
 48. When the "Pact for Mexico" (*Pacto por México*) between the political parties PRI, PAN, and PRD was dissolved in April 2012, the federal government re-established former agreements in favor of Televisa. See the interview with Aleida Calleja quoted in Bräth (2014).
 49. *Buen vivir* or *Vivir bien* (*Sumak kawsay* in Kichwa and *Suma qamaña* in Aymara) are presently key concepts in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia and refer to an alternative form of development based on indigenous epistemologies. These terms are also used by Ayuujk activists who prefer to promote their own, locally based concepts of development.
 50. The emergence of the neo-Zapatista movement was accompanied by increased circulation in the public sphere of indigenous epistemologies from different areas of Mexico. One concept used by Ayuujk movements is *Wëjen kajën*, a typical Ayuujk dual expression that derives from Ayuujk education epistemology and translates as "to know and to develop."
 51. Franco Gabriel Hernández is an indigenous movement leader and politician who has been well-known since the 1980s. He presided over ANPIBAC (Alianza Nacional de Profesionales Indígenas Bilingües A.C.) for many years (consult Gutiérrez 1999: 127–132), was president of Mexico's Comisión Nacional de Seguimiento of the CNCI (Congreso Nacional de Comunicación Indígena), and

assumed the position of General Coordinator of the Media Summit between 2010 and 2013.

52. Ojo de Agua Comunicación split from INI's "Transferencia de Medios Audiovisuales" program in 1998. It is now an independent organization that provides support to the radio and video operations of indigenous communities in Oaxaca. It also produces its own films.
53. Not only is *videoasta* rarely used as an emic term, there is no other comparable term for the profession in the Ayuujk language. This is consistent with the general view that videography basically requires little time and effort and that, on the contrary, it is the images themselves that capture social reality.
54. See the explanations of *comunicadores* Genaro and Hermenegildo Rojas, who participated in these workshops. The anthropological films that later appeared in the DVD series *El Cine Indigenista* set the standard for instruction and were emulated by the trainees. The realism filmic code expanded in the 1980s to include the observational mode approach, for example, that replaced the omniscient voice-over ("God's voice") with original conversations and comments of the protagonists.
55. In Oaxaca, these novel film courses were organized and conducted in close cooperation with Ojo de Agua Comunicación.