

Second-Generation Transnationalism and Roots Migration: Cross-Border Lives, by **Susanne Wessendorf**. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. 174pp. \$109.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781409440154.

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Across Europe, countries that once described themselves as racially and ethnically homogeneous are struggling to come to grips with the fact that they are not. These are not “settler societies,” like Canada, Australia, and the United States, where the national narrative has always included something about being a country of immigrants. Rather, the former colonial subjects who now live next door or the guest workers who seemed to outstay their welcome in France, Germany, or the Netherlands, for example, can no longer be treated as an unfortunate mistake, and the nation must redefine itself in response. What’s more, it is not just the immigrant generation that is involved. Oftentimes, it is the second, third, and fourth generation that have been living in a type of permanent limbo and second-class citizenship who must now also be repainted into the portrait of the nation.

That is why books like Susanne Wessendorf’s *Second-Generation Transnationalism and Roots Migration* are so important. They shed light on the experiences of the children of immigrants who often end up doing the hard work of social inclusion. An added wrinkle here is that while much research now acknowledges that immigrants frequently maintain strong economic, political, and social ties to their homelands as they become incorporated into the places where they settle, the assumption is still that their children will not. A second important contribution Wessendorf makes, then, is to show that this is not the case and to specify and explain different kinds of cross-border lives.

Wessendorf writes of adult second generation Italian immigrants raised in Basel, Switzerland. Most of these young people grow up embedded in thick transnational social fields, made up of dense, interlocking relationships, practices, and collective identifications, linking Switzerland and a group of villages in the

southeastern tip of Italy. They lived in houses permeated by a “sojourner mentality,” where life in Switzerland was deemed provisional, sometimes characterized by economic insecurity and illegal status, and an eventual return to Italy was the dream. Everyday life included regular contacts with Italy and frequent visits home. Their parents transferred this nostalgia and impermanence to their children. They lived modestly, acquired only rudimentary German language skills, were raised to value family unity and loyalty, and often stayed within the ethnic enclave. Why, then, do some as adults, continue to live in this Italian milieu, maintaining strong ties to their ancestral homes and feeling rooted in Switzerland, while others create an alternative Italian-Swissness and cut off ties to Italy? Why do some even “return” to live in Italy, and what happens when they get there?

Second-Generation Transnationalism and Roots Migration models a powerful methodology for understanding cross-border livelihoods. Wessendorf conducted extensive interviews and carried out in-depth participant observation in Switzerland and Italy. She adopts a process approach that captures how the activities and orientations of the parent generation shape what their children do and just how much children’s orientations shift over time. School and community strongly shape the trajectories of future social and geographic attachments. Kids who grow up in neighborhoods and schools surrounded by other kids of Italian origin tend to stay within that milieu, while kids who, at some point, come into contact with more Swiss peers, are more likely to be less Italy-oriented. Moreover, the “idealized” united Italian family that is held up as the norm is, for some, a fountain of satisfaction and support and, for others, a source of social control and gender inequality.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of this book is that it distinguishes between different types of transnational experiences produced by the cultural context, social ties, language acquisition, and neighborhood effects young people grow up with. Wessendorf describes three. *Typical Italians* have strong social networks with co-ethnics in Switzerland and tend to be actively involved in their parents’ communities of origin as well as in

other parts of Italy. As adolescents, these young people participated in a youth culture that celebrated Italianness through fashion and style. They, therefore, felt firmly embedded in the transnational social field that connected them to Italy but also feel connected to Switzerland, albeit a Switzerland that is often experienced through an ethnic lens. In contrast, *Swiss Italians*, who have developed strong ties to non-Italians, reject what they consider to be Italian cultural values, and do not share a similar interest in all things Italian, thereby distancing themselves from their co-ethnics and engaging in limited homeland involvements. In fact, their strong sense of integration into Switzerland led some members of this group to form a political movement aimed at obtaining Swiss citizenship. Finally, there are the *Roots Migrants*, who actually return to live in their parents' region of origin. Motivated by their strong social ties, and the idealized visits they experienced throughout their childhood, many returnees are disappointed, finding that daily life is quite different from the remembered paradise of summer vacations and holiday visits.

What does this mean for the future of a united, integrated Europe? Wessendorf assures us that enduring homeland ties do not thwart social integration. All of her respondents feel Swiss. The fear about "parallel lives" emerging from the British context, she argues, is not an issue here. Because they are upwardly mobile and structurally integrated, "being Italian is not an issue." This is a very positive prognosis, which one would like to believe, despite reports of rising xenophobia and economic precariousness across the Continent. To make it stick, we would need to learn more about how this case compares to others like it. What is it about the institutional and geopolitical contexts in Switzerland and Italy that might make this a model others could follow? What can we take away about the second generation's prospects more generally from this case?

Space of Detention: The Making of a Transnational Gang Crisis between Los Angeles and San Salvador, by **Elana Zilberg**. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 344pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780822347309.

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The term "gang" is always nebulous because a gang is too complex an entity to specify its nature based on a few indicators. Nevertheless, a youth gang is typically understood as a local territory based small delinquent/criminal group with a few exceptions of larger sized gangs with greater geographical ranges. Even these exceptions, which include claims that some gangs had migrated to expand their territory to become a national gang or engage in sophisticated illicit drug businesses, have been well scrutinized by academic gang research, which concluded that gang migration was mainly due to the avoidance of law enforcement crackdowns, and most youth gangs were not capable of operating as sophisticated illicit drug syndicates, like drug cartels. Rather, the widespread gang violence has resulted from the impact of media hype that promotes sensational gang crime cases and/or gang culture, as well as copycats of locally self-emerged youth gangs. Thus, the gangs are generally distinguished from organized crime or transnational criminal groups, including terrorist cells.

This book, *Space of Detention*, traces the current obsession with the so-called transnational youth gang crisis through multiple methodological approaches, mainly ethnographic field research, in convergence of or divergence from time and space between Los Angeles and San Salvador. In fact, the author, Elana Zilberg, debunks the popular beliefs or misconceptions about transnational gangs, which were believed to operate as sophisticated transnational criminal organizations with modern communication technology and networks beyond national boundaries. The author does so by employing with "the dialectical image, a construction of seemingly opposite or contradictory elements" (p. 16). to bring into question the