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# Local Attachments and Transnational Everyday Lives: Second-generation Italians in Switzerland and in Italy

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## Abstract

Many descendants of migrants grow up in the context of lively transnational social relations to their parents' homeland. Among southern Italian migrants in Switzerland, these relations are imbued with the wish to return among the first generation, a dream fostered since the beginning of their migration after the Second World War. Second-generation Italians have developed different ways of negotiating the transnational livelihoods fostered by their parents on the one hand, and the wish for local attachments on the other. Drawing on long-term, multi-sited fieldwork in southern Italy and Switzerland, this paper discusses how the children of Italian migrants have created their own cultural repertoires of *Italianità* and belonging within Switzerland and with co-ethnic peers, and how, for some, this sense of belonging evokes the wish for 'roots-migration', the relocation to the parents' homeland.

Viele Migrantenkinder wachsen im Kontext lebendiger transnationaler sozialer Netzwerke zum Herkunftsland ihrer Eltern auf. Unter süditalienschen Arbeitsmigranten in der Schweiz sind diese Beziehungen stark beeinflusst durch den Rückkehrwunsch der ersten Migrantengeneration, die nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg und bis in die 70er Jahre hinein in die Schweiz emigrierte. Italiener der zweiten Generation gehen sehr unterschiedlich mit den transnationalen Lebenswelten ihrer Eltern und ihrem eigenen Wunsch nach lokaler Verortung um. Gestützt auf umfangreiche Feldforschung in der Schweiz und in Italien diskutiert dieses Working Paper, wie Italiener der zweiten Generation ihre eigenen kulturellen Repertoires von *Italianità* und Zugehörigkeit in der Schweiz und mit anderen zweitgeneration Italienern entwickelt haben. Zudem untersucht es, weshalb dieses Gefühl von Zugehörigkeit bei einigen den Wunsch nach einer permanenten Niederlassung im Herkunftsland der Eltern hervorruft.

## Author

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# Contents

> You used to go down there [to Italy] every year, it was your second home (…) and I consciously say 'second home', because the first one is here [in Switzerland] for me, because I think what you experienced during childhood affects you the most.

Luca was born in Switzerland in 1972. His parents migrated from southern Italy to the German part of Switzerland in the 1960s, and although they had dreamed of returning since the beginning of their migration, they stayed in Switzerland for economic reasons. Luca and his parents maintain lively transnational social relations to southern Italy by way of visiting at least once a year and regularly speaking to relatives on the phone. However, Luca feels at home in the Swiss town in which he grew up. Despite his parents' dream of returning and the family's transnational everyday life, Luca cannot imagine living in southern Italy. While maintaining transnational ties, he feels a strong attachment to the Swiss town in which he grew up.

Luca represents the majority of my second-generation Italian informants in Switzerland who feel at home where they grew up and have no intention to relocate to southern Italy. However, some second-generation Italians decide to migrate to their parents' place of origin once they reach adulthood. They feel a similar nostalgia for the country of origin as their parents, and despite harsh economic and structural conditions in southern Italy, they see life in the southern Italian villages as an attractive alternative to their lives in Switzerland.

This paper discusses such diverging kinds of local attachments among members of the second generation[1] who grew up in lively 'transnational social fields' (Basch et al. 1994; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).[2] It asks why, despite similar cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, second-generation Italians have developed a variety of ways in which they relate to their parents' homeland or to Switzerland. For some members of the second generation being of migrant origin does not play an important role in their everyday lives and they have developed social networks dominated by people of non-Italian background (Wessendorf 2007b). In contrast, others strongly relate to co-ethnics and actively foster their transnational relations to Italy. Of those, the majority plan their lives in Switzerland for various reasons, ranging from professional opportunities to feelings of embeddedness within co-ethnic social networks in the towns in which they grew up. Some, however, decide to relocate to Italy once they reach adulthood.

This paper focuses on the latter two patterns, those second-generation Italians with co-ethnic social networks who stay in Switzerland, and those who move to Italy. The first part of the paper looks at the childhood and adolescence of second-generation

Italians. It looks at their transnational family lives and describes the formation of co-ethnic peer-groups in schools and neighbourhoods in Switzerland. Furthermore, it discusses how during adolescence, members of the second generation transformed their ethnic affiliations and their sense of integration in co-ethnic peer groups into a life-style choice, celebrating their Italianness. This ethnic reification and the creation of their own cultural repertoire was motivated by a shared cultural background and experiences of growing up in Switzerland, as well as shared interests in consumer culture, trendyness, style and fashion.[3]

The second part of the paper describes the tensions between transnational relations and local attachments emerging during adulthood. The integration into co-ethnic peer groups and the celebration of *Italianità*, Italianness, provided some members of the second generation with a strong sense of belonging and attachment to the Swiss towns in which they grew up. For others, however, the sense of belonging to the Italian social world in both Switzerland and, during holidays, in Italy, led to their wish to relocate to their parents' place of origin. They decided to leave Switzerland behind and start a new life in a place they are from, but where they have never lived and where, up until today, structural conditions are insecure and economic realities harsh. I shall conceptualise this relocation as 'roots-migration'. Importantly, the roots-migrants are only a small minority among second-generation Italians in Switzerland.[4] However, they are an interesting example of how the parents' nostalgia and longing for the homeland can be transferred to the second generation, especially in the context of transnational everyday relations during childhood and adolescence.

While much research on the second generation has originally focused on different patterns of socio-economic, political and cultural integration and assimilation in the country of immigration (Portes and Zhou 1993; Alba and Nee 1997; Heckmann and Schnapper 2003; Juhasz and Mey 2003), the second-generation's transnational relations to the parents' homeland have attracted increasing attention in recent years (Levitt and Waters 2002). Of particular interest are those studies which look at the interrelationships between transnationalism and integration and how one affects the other (Levitt 2002; Smith 2002; Vickerman 2002; Morawska 2003; Haller and Landolt 2005; Snel et al. 2006). Such studies have, for example, shown how different factors such as race, class and the life-course influence both patterns of integration and transnational activities among members of the second generation. Importantly, studies on second-generation transnationalism recognise how experiences in the parents' country of origin play an important role in the articulation of identity (Charsley 2004). This paper discusses this interrelationship of integration and trans-

nationalism in regard to attachment to place. Co-ethnic social networks can thereby have somewhat contrasting effects, motivating some members of the second-generation to relocate to the country of origin, while providing others with a sense of integration and attachment to the host country. By showing such differences among members of the second generation of the same origin, or in other words, the differences within one 'group', this paper seeks to draw a more differentiated picture of the second generation than research which has compared one second generation 'group' with another (e.g. Kasinitz et al. eds. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

The findings presented here draw on ethnographic, qualitative research carried out during 15 months in the south-eastern most region of Italy, the Salento (Apulia), and in the German part of Switzerland. Along with participant observation, twenty-three life-history interviews were undertaken with second-generation Italians who were born in Switzerland and had moved to Italy between the age of twenty and thirty-two. Furthermore, twenty-eight interviews were conducted with members of the second generation living in Switzerland. In contrast to a lot of research on the second generation which focuses on adolescents, the interviewees for this research were adults (between the age of twenty-five and forty) and reflected back on their lives, on their childhood and adolescence and the choices they had made during their lives.

## Growing up in Switzerland: transnational family lives and the dream of returning

Postwar Italian labour migration to Switzerland was part of European labour migration with tens of thousands of southern and south eastern Europeans moving to northern Europe to help build the booming postwar economy. By 1970, more than half a million Italians lived in Switzerland. The majority of them migrated from southern Italy to the German and the French speaking parts of Switzerland where most jobs were available. Due to return migration, numbers declined to approximately 300,000 by 2001, some 114,000 of whom were born in Switzerland (Niederberger 2003). For a country with seven million inhabitants in total, these numbers are considerable and Italians still form one of the largest migrant groups in Switzerland.

The majority of southern Italian migrants were farmers in search for better paid jobs. Their children generally integrated rather well into Swiss society in terms of social upward mobility. Thanks to the availability of apprenticeships and jobs, the

strong support of their families, and their parents' emphasis on education and socio-economic achievement, most second-generation Italians have reached higher socio-economic status than their parents and their Swiss peers of the same socio-economic background (Bolzman et al. 2003; Juhasz and Mey 2003; Mey et al. 2005).

Although approximately two thirds of Italian migrants have stayed in Switzerland until today, the vast majority of them saw themselves as sojourners and dreamt of returning to Italy. In fact, Italian migrants' nostalgia for the homeland has persisted for several decades, and it has evolved into what Ortner called a 'key scenario', embodying a 'vision of success' and standing for an ideal, common future (Ortner 1973, p. 1339).[5] Because of their dream of returning, Italian migrants maintained strong transnational relations to southern Italy, undertaking the fifteen to twenty hour train- or car-journey to their villages of origin at least once, but sometimes several times a year, together with their children. Most members of the second generation who participated in my research have positive memories of their holidays in Italy, enjoying the time spent with large circles of relatives. In fact, the holidays in Italy were seen as one of the most important periods of the year. This is summarised best by Annagrazia. She is a second-generation Italian woman, born in 1964, who lives in Switzerland and continues to go to Italy every year. When asked about how she liked the summer holidays in Italy, she says the following:

> Oh it was heaven! From March onwards, the holidays were the only thing we talked about, what we would take with us, what we would wear, it was a point of reference, also for my parents. When we returned to Switzerland … it was a bit like a new start, like the first of January, new objectives you know …, and then you worked, and then Christmas came …, and from January onwards you started saving money again for the summer. Yes, January 'till February was a bit of a sad time because the summer was still so far away, and then came March and then Easter and you already started preparing.

Thus, the summer holidays and the presence of the homeland in both discourse and practice among southern Italians in Switzerland formed an integral part of the second generation's upbringing. They spoke Italian at home, and weekends in Switzerland were characterized by visits of migrant relatives, the Italian Mass on Sunday, and extended Sunday meals with the family. These family networks provided some members of the second generation with a strong sense of embeddedness and belonging. Luca, for example, whom I have cited at the beginning of this paper, emphasizes that deep and sustained family connections distinguish Italians from the Swiss whom he describes as being much less family oriented. He asserts his Italianness by describing Italian family relations as different to those of the majority society, a phenome-

non which Purkayastha (2005), referring to Italian migrants in the United States, has described as 'doing family'. While the family provides some second-generation Italians with emotional security and stability, others experience it as restrictive and as 'golden cage'. This can lead to the disconnection from co-ethnics altogether and the decrease of transnational engagement among the second generation (Wessendorf 2008a).

However, for many second-generation Italians, as they grew older the affiliation to Italian social milieus was increasingly shaped not by the family but by peer groups in Switzerland.[6] Schools and the neighbourhood were crucial in the formation of such peer groups during adolescence.

## Italianità as way of life and as life-style: co-ethnic peer groups and belonging during adolescence

While second-generation Italians shared similar transnational lifestyles and Italian social networks of their families in Switzerland, their childhood and adolescence differed regarding the formation of social networks in schools and neighbourhoods. Since the majority of children in Switzerland go to the state school closest to their home, the ethnic composition of the schools is determined by that of the neighbourhoods. From the 1950s until the 1980s when second-generation Italians who participated in my research attended school only few urban neighbourhoods in Switzerland, for example in Zurich, Basle or Berne, were characterized by a high concentration of immigrants. Therefore, in most schools, migrant children formed a minority and Italian children developed friendships with children of Swiss and other national origins. However, in some urban areas with high numbers of Italians, school classes were dominated by Italian children. Depending on the composition of the school classes and the neighbourhoods, the opportunities for second-generation Italians to form social affiliations with co-ethnics differed. Some members of the second generation formed strong social affiliations with other second-generation Italians, while others developed friendships and peer groups with people of Swiss or other origins. Especially the latter began to question the ethnic and family ties which their parents sustained, as well as their parents' cultural values and practices. Some of them particularly criticized the strong family relations under which they felt pressured (Wessendorf 2008a). In this paper, however, I focus on those who formed social networks with co-ethnics.

Luca explains the reasons for the formation of friendships with co-ethnic peers as follows:

> (…) these people [people of Italian origin] were confronted with the same situation, (…) they actually have had more or less exactly the same life course as me, and in the end of the day I preferred being with foreigners and southerners[7] or, well also with Swiss, it's true (…) in school, too, there were many Swiss. But the friends were really always more foreigners, definitely. (…) It's different, many things are different, the way you act, the mentality, the mentality was really different, especially at the time. Now, of course, you grow up and get more mature and you communicate with other people, too. But at the time it was just the communication, the food maybe (…) and the Swiss were a bit colder and you could relate to them less. (…) I think it's just the interests you had, the same interests, and as I said, you are secondo, you are a foreigner after all, and then you look for contacts with these people, you know.

Luca's feelings of embeddedness among other 'secondos', referring to second-generation Italians, is representative of many of my informants' accounts of their experiences during their childhoods and in the context of the Italian social networks and transnational engagements of their parents. Their social relations, cultural practices and identifications are shaped by the transnational social networks in which they grew up and which continue to play an important role in their adult lives. They have not specifically fostered these networks, but have developed friendships with people of the same origin through school, work, leisure activities and family relations. What Luca and other second-generation Italians describe as 'the mentality' is captured by Bourdieu's (1977) concept of the habitus which refers to a system of dispositions consisting of durable and acquired schemes of perception, thought and practice. Luca's description of the shared mentality with people who have had 'exactly the same life course as me', referring to other members of the second generation with similarly transnational families, has also been described as 'transnational habitus' generated through migration and shaped by the parents' transnational relations (Guarnizo 1997; Vertovec 2001). Dispositions and practices evoked by a transnational habitus have 'substantial impact on individual and family life course and strategies, … the ordering of personal and group memories, patterns of consumption, collective socio-cultural practices, approaches to child-rearing and other modes of cultural reproduction' (Vertovec 2001:17). Importantly, members of the second generation not only refer to the 'mentality' when emphasising their *belonging* and emotional connections to co-ethnics, but also when describing their feelings of *disconnection*

from their family or co-ethnics because of diverging cultural values and practices (Wessendorf 2007b).

Luca, on the one hand, points to the mentality which links him to co-ethnics. On the other, he emphasizes the importance of shared interests which contribute to these social relations. By sustaining social relations and practices with co-ethnics as regular feature of everyday life, both locally and transnationally, he engages in what Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) conceptualize as 'transnational ways of being'. In addition, he also engages in 'transnational ways of belonging' by explicitly highlighting the ethnic elements of who he is by way of celebrating his Italianness (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Similar to Levitt and Glick Schiller's distinction between transnational ways of being and belonging, Vermeulen (2001) distinguishes between 'culture as way of life' and 'culture as lifestyle'. Culture as way of life refers to the values and practices that we learn and internalize in the socio-cultural context in which we grow up. Culture as lifestyle involves the use of specific symbolic markers such as music, consumer goods or clothes which serve to distinguish ourselves from others. Culture as lifestyle is related to the concept of ethnicity which involves the belief in common descent and a sense of belonging and which can be used as conscious differentiation from other groups (Van Niekerk 2001; Vermeulen 2001).

While some members of the second generation were integrated into co-ethnic peer groups and family networks without publicly emphasising their backgrounds, others transformed being Italian into a lifestyle choice. In fact, part of the attraction to co-ethnic peers was the development of a specifically Italian youth cultural style which could also be described as 'Latino cool' and which many second-generation Italians subscribed to.[8] This celebration of *Italianità* evolved into a trend and contributed to peer-group solidarity and feelings of belonging, expressed by the consumption of goods which are seen as specifically Italian such as Italian motor cycles, fashion and Italian cars. In her study on South Asian Americans, Purkayastha describes the emphasis on fashion, music and movies, or what she calls 'ethnic consumption', as the main signifier of ethnicity among the south Asians youths (Purkayastha 2005). Second-generation Italians in Switzerland also use consumer goods as ethnic identifiers to show their distinctiveness. They thereby create an ethnic youth culture which draws on mainstream consumer culture, but they add a specifically Italian flair to it by being particularly stylish, by using Italian fashion labels such as Giorgio Armani or Dolce & Gabbana, by displaying their Italian cars and scooters and putting stickers with the Italian flag on their clothes and other items.

Pasquale, born in Switzerland in 1975, is a typical example of this. He expresses the reasons why he publicly displays his ethnic background as follows:

> (…) you are not Swiss, you are not Italian, you are something in between, and it's still cool to, well it's like a trademark (…) with an Armani T-Shirt you show what exactly you represent, and with an 'Italia T-Shirt' I also want to show 'hey, look, this is how I am, this is my background and I am here anyway'.

This reification and performance of Italianness is not only based on the integration into co-ethnic peer groups through neighbourhoods, schools and other institutions in Switzerland, but also on the sharing of common interests with co-ethnics particularly in the realm of consumer culture, popular music and leisure activities such as football and clubbing. In fact, one of my informants described the sharing of both ethnic origin and common interests as 'double tie' [it. *doppio legame*] and emphasized that 'just being Italian' was not enough to sustain ethnic networks, but you needed a 'double tie'. With this metaphor of a 'double-tie', he points to the interplay of a shared ethnic background coupled with common life-style preferences. He emphasizes that a shared ethnic background alone is insufficient to sustain social relations based on ethnicity or to guarantee an ethnicized sense of belonging.

Wimmer (2004) describes these second-generation Italians as 'Casual Latins' because they emphasize a more spontaneous Latin art of improvisation as counter-discourse against what they see as 'petit-bourgeois' Swiss majority society, characterized by cleanliness and order. My research has shown that this counter-position against the Swiss majority society is also taken as reaction to discrimination and social exclusion which some second-generation Italians experienced in schools, a phenomenon also described as 'reactive ethnicity' in the North American context (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). According to Claudia, born in 1969, the reification of difference among second-generation Italians rooted in the fact that …

> (…) you also felt better [than others] because if you have lived as a minority for years, and at the beginning, as children, it was not all that positive, I guess you just want to sort of confirm: 'we are better', because we had been suppressed for years. (…) I don't know, but it is also alienating if you don't grow up where you are from.

However, the creation of co-ethnic peer groups with their own cultural repertoires was not only motivated by feelings of being different from the majority society, but also by feelings of being different from their parents. The second-generation Italian social milieu that is distinct from the social milieus of the first generation enabled members of the second generation to negotiate those values and cultural practices of

their parents which they found difficult to deal with, for example their parents' more traditional views on gender relations, without rejecting their Italian background altogether.

Importantly, engaging in an Italian youth culture is directly related to the life-course. While the second-generation Italians who participated in my research celebrated their Italianness as adolescents, this reification became less important over time.

Second-generation Italian popular youth culture is present in Switzerland's urban public space among Italian youngsters until today. In fact, an important aspect of this youth culture is the appropriation of public space such as street corners or public squares, and the creation of localities which are 'ethnically charged' and specifically defined as 'Italian'. While for some, belonging to co-ethnic peer groups, situated in specific places in the cities in which they lived, contributed to a sense of attachment to the Swiss towns, for others, it strengthened their wish to relocate to Italy, because they shared their transnational experiences with their peers, and because Italy played an important role as common point of reference.

## Transnational everyday lives and attachment to place during adulthood

In the previous sections I have described how members of the second generation shared both the transnational nature of their family lives characterized by regular visits to southern Italy, and co-ethnic peer groups in Switzerland characterized by the celebration of Italianness. Resulting from these transnational relations coupled with co-ethnic peer groups, members of the second generation developed different kinds of local attachments to either the Swiss town in which they grew up, or to the southern Italian region of origin. Such local attachments were shaped by factors such as the parents' nostalgia for the homeland and wish to return, adjustment problems in schools in Switzerland, or experiences with relatives in Italy.

### *Hometown attachments*

With 'hometown attachments', I refer to a sense of belonging and feeling at home in the town in which members of the second generation grew up. These attachments to what they describe as their 'hometown' are characterized by both social relations with

people living in the same town, as well as a sense of familiarity with the town. The importance of this familiarity is exemplified by Maurizio. He strongly identifies as Italian and visits Italy regularly, but he cannot imagine moving elsewhere, even within Switzerland, because it would imply starting all over again. After his difficulties of adjustment in different schools during his childhood, he enjoys the familiarity of his hometown, which he knows 'like his own trouser pocket'. He appreciates this familiarity and knowing his way around, which gives him security and allows him to maintain a stable network of both second-generation Italian and Swiss friends. This phenomenon of local attachments to the hometown was also observed among members of the second generation of various origins in New York for whom 'the tension of 'insider' and 'outsider' status 'makes them very much "New Yorkers" ' (Kasinitz et al. 2004:2).

Another factor which contributes to local attachments in Switzerland is related to experiences in the country of origin. Although second-generation Italians who engaged in Italianness as lifestyle in Switzerland during their adolescence immensely enjoyed the holidays in Italy, many of them developed a critical view of life in southern Italian villages as they grew older. This feeling was caused by an increasing awareness of the difficult socio-economic conditions in southern Italy, but also a growing discomfort with the cultural and social practices and values experienced during their holidays, especially gender relations, social control, clientelism and corruption. In this process, they realized that they had internalized different cultural values and practices while growing up in Switzerland, which made them different from their southern Italian relatives. Some second-generation Italians also felt that, during their visits, they did not really belong to the local community, and being called 'Svizzerotto' ('Swiss', jokingly, but also a bit condescending) by relatives in Italy strengthened this feeling of alienation even more. This further contributed to an awareness that home was elsewhere and that being Italian in Switzerland was different from being Italian in Italy.[9] In reaction to such feelings of alienation from the country of origin, and despite their discursive and symbolic references to Italy in their everyday discourse and practices, these second-generation Italians feel a strong attachment to the Italian social milieus within the town or region in Switzerland in which they grew up. *Italianità* thereby forms an integral part of living in Switzerland. Paulo, who grew up in the city of Basle, defines *Italianità* as follows:

> *Italianità* for me is: to be Baselian and to feel Italian, and to be Italian and to feel Baselian. I feel at home in Basle, as I said I actually am Baselian, but I am Italian.

The strong connectedness to a specific town in Switzerland is also emphasized by Annamaria, a young woman with southern Italian origins, born in Basle in 1976:

> I can say I am Baselian, I am born here, and after all, I have done everything in this town. In Italy I go on holiday, what shall I say, I'm from C [southern Italian town] (…) I don't even know these places, so I always said, hey, I am Italo-Baselian! (…) At the beginning I did it because, I went to Italy and was told 'no you are Swiss', and I went up to Switzerland and was told I was Italian, then I thought 'hello, I'm from nowhere wherever I go!' and then I thought my connectedness is Basle, and the rest is not so important (…) I got to this point because you are like a ping-pong [table tennis] ball, getting thrown back and forth, never knowing where you are (…) so I decided that I am 'Italo-Baselian', not Swiss, I wanted to fix it somehow.

Annamaria's identification with Basle as specific place is evoked by her experiences in Italy, but also by her strong embeddedness in co-ethnic peer groups. In fact, she describes this connection to Basle as her main reason to apply for Swiss citizenship.[10] She wanted to have the fact that she felt a Baselian officially recognized on paper.

The town and the social milieus in which members of the second generation grew up, informed transnationally, but clearly situated locally, transformed into what Olwig (1997) calls 'cultural sites', specific places which, as a consequence of highly transnational lives, gain symbolic significance of local attachment. While she describes the family land and house in the country of origin as cultural sites for first-generation migrants, for the second generation, the cultural site can shift to the country of immigration. For example, while Italian migrants invested all their savings into a family house in southern Italy, many of their children invest into property in Switzerland. Their sense of belonging to their 'hometown' could be explained as a reaction to their transnational childhoods and their parents' dream of returning. In the transnational social milieus situated in their hometown, they can share Italianness as way of life and as lifestyle. Despite this attachment to their hometown, most of these second-generation Italians continue to maintain their transnational relations to Italy by way of regular visits. Thus, their attachment to place is paralleled by transnational relations.

However, other members of the second generation do not feel this strong attachment to Switzerland. Rather, they feel drawn to the country of origin where they wish to settle down and build their future.

### *Roots-migration*

> I used to have two hearts. When I was there [in Switzerland], I wanted to be here [in Italy], when I was here on holiday, I wanted to be there.

Rosa is a second-generation Italian who migrated to southern Italy at the age of 34. Her memories of having had 'two hearts' before she migrated to Italy show how her transnational everyday life led to the wish to settle in one place. While the second-generation Italians described in the previous section feel at home in Switzerland and see Italy merely as a holiday place, for some second-generation Italians, Italy has always, or at some stage in their lives, represented an option for a life different from that in Switzerland.

Migration to the parents' country of origin has gained little attention in research on the second generation. Only recently some studies have focussed on second-generation migration to the parents' homeland, for example Greeks from North America (Panagakos 2004; Christou 2006), West Indians from Britain (Potter 2005), and second-generation Japanese from Brazil (Tsuda 2003). These studies describe the relocation to the country of origin as 'return'. Christou (2006:833) argues that the concept of 'return' 'reflects the participants' phenomenology of their agency which they themselves describe as return migration'. In contrast, my informants who now live in Italy emphasize that they could not 'go back' to a place where they had never lived.

Influenced by their parents' narratives of return and longing for the homeland, their migration to Italy has a nostalgic characteristic. Furthermore, it is shaped by the desire to settle for good and to cease leading transnational lives. Referring to their parents' indecision regarding the return, their migration could be interpreted as a counter-reaction to highly transnational childhoods and adolescences and to the narratives of belonging which accompanied their parents' deterritorialization and their 'sojourner mentality'. In fact, one of my informants who has migrated to southern Italy emphasized that she did not want to go through the same experience as her parents, which was to live in one place, but dream of the other. Rather, she wanted to settle in one place and live there for the rest of her life. This one place is also where she, as other second-generation Italians, sees her 'roots'.

The nostalgic character of the second-generation's migration resembles what Basu (2004; 2007) calls 'roots-tourism' to describe North American tourists who visit their ancestors' homeland in Scotland. This heritage-tourism is motivated by the search for one's roots and the quest for belonging and homecoming (Basu 2004:151). Simi-

lar to the roots-tourists, the roots-migrants are in search of a place which provides them with a sense of belonging. However, in contrast to the roots-tourists, their connections to the homeland are based on concrete transnational involvement as part of their everyday lives.

Although ideas of 'rootedness' have been contested because of implied notions of territorially bounded, fixed ethnic entities and identities (Clifford 1992), in the context of second-generation roots-migration, the term 'roots' not only reflects the roots-migrants' own interpretation of where they come from, but also their aspiration to settle in just one place and to cease leading lives characterized by mobility or 'routes' (Clifford 1994).

However, roots-migration is not only motivated by the parents' nostalgia for the homeland and the wish to end transnational lives, but also by the degrees of integration in Italy, by socio-economic considerations and by the choice of a partner.

For the participants of my research, positive experiences during holidays and a feeling of embeddedness within a network of relatives and friends in southern Italy are among the driving factors leading to roots-migration. Furthermore, professional opportunities play an important role in the decision to migrate. Gabriela, who migrated to Apulia in 1999 and who had previously worked in a factory prior to migration emphasizes that the decision to migrate really depends on your education and your job. Referring to second-generation Italians in Switzerland with white collar jobs, she simply asks 'why should they go to Italy, to do what?' The majority of the roots-migrants in my sample had worked in manufacturing and in the service sector prior to migration. Although they emphasize that they were satisfied with their lives in Switzerland prior to migration, the relocation to Italy opens up new professional opportunities such as opening a shop or a business.

Because of restricted professional possibilities, more women than men migrate to southern Italy, with male second-generation Italians feeling responsible for family income, while, in the southern Italian context, women have the option to become housewives should they not find work. Marriage is thus, a further important factor leading to roots migration. Ten of the women and three of the men who participated in my research were married or engaged at the time of migration, five of whom joined their partners in Italy, while the rest migrated with a second-generation partner. However, they emphasized that their decision to migrate was not, or only partly, influenced by their partners.

But what happens to their nostalgia and 'roots' once members of the second generation settle in Italy? There are two different patterns of roots-migration. One of

them is characterized by idealized images of the homeland and difficulties of integration after migration, related to professional difficulties and gender relations. The other pattern is characterized by more realistic images of the homeland and relatively satisfying integration in Italy. These two different patterns depend on the stages in the life-cycle when people migrate, the expectations regarding the migration, the financial preparations and marital status.[11]

Young women who migrate in their early twenties find the relocation from a Swiss city to a southern Italy village very challenging because of unexpected difficulties in finding a job, and because of the cultural values and practices of the communities in which they settle. They have difficulties to integrate into a society and a culture which they had until then perceived as their own, but which turns out to be very different when staying there for the whole year and not just for the summer holidays. Gender relations and social control in the villages are perceived as particularly difficult and have a major impact on the integration in the local communities. Many young women feel deprived of the freedom to move around as they wish and feel limited in their daily activities. They also struggle with the complicated Italian bureaucracy (Wessendorf 2007a). Although only few can afford to sustain their transnational relations, some of them develop a new kind of nostalgia for Switzerland, similar to the nostalgia their parents had for southern Italy. This phenomenon could be called 'reverse nostalgia'.

In contrast, those who migrate in their thirties and are married find it easier to settle in southern Italy because they have acquired enough savings to ensure financial security, and many of them manage to open a business. Furthermore, the women are less subject to social control because they are married and therefore have a well-defined status within the village community (Wessendorf 2007a).

Roots-migrants form a small minority among second generation Italians in Switzerland. Nevertheless, it is interesting to examine what determines roots-migrants' choices to live in the parents' homeland. These choices are on the one hand based on the attachments they feel 'for the inventions of their imaginations' (Anderson 1983), on the other they are motivated by concrete transnational ways of life during childhood and adolescence. Although before their migration, many of them were integrated into Italian social milieus in Switzerland and celebrated their Italianness, some of them only become aware of the differences of being Italian in Switzerland and being Italian in southern Italy once they settle there.

## Conclusion

Members of the second generation form various kinds of social affiliations, some characterized by references to the country of origin and by co-ethnic peer groups, and others shaped by non-ethnic forms of social affiliation characterized by, for example, shared interests or political ideologies. This paper focused on the former, second-generation Italians who have sustained social affiliations to co-ethnics, and who reified their ethnicity as teenagers and in their early twenties, creating their own popular youth culture. For the second-generation Italians who participated in my research, experiences within the family in both Switzerland and Italy and the composition of the school classes and the neighbourhoods are among the most important factors which contributed to creating and sustaining networks with co-ethnics and to the reification of Italianness. However, just as important was what one of my informants called a 'double tie', the sharing of common interests in addition to a shared ethnic background. Many second-generation Italians related to others of Italian origin not only because of what they describe as the shared southern European 'mentality', but also because of their shared interest in consumer culture, Italian popular music and bodily style. In the course of these relationships and shared interests, the reification of ethnicity evolved into a trendy and publicly celebrated Latino label which contributed to peer-group solidarity and feelings of belonging.

For some second-generation Italians, being integrated into a co-ethnic peer group led to their strong connection to the place in which they grew up. Despite or, in fact, as a reaction to their parents' dreams of returning and the lively transnational relations to the homeland, they developed attachments to their hometown in Switzerland. This local attachment was further enhanced by the awareness of the limited professional job opportunities in the rural areas of southern Italy, and by feelings of alienation on the grounds of cultural differences experienced during their holidays in the villages of origin.

In contrast, other second-generation Italians saw southern Italy as an alternative to their lives in Switzerland and decided to relocate. Their experiences during the holidays had been mostly positive and they felt strongly integrated into networks of kin in southern Italy. Furthermore, most of them had not been as upwardly mobile as other second-generation Italians and therefore hoped for better professional chances in Italy. Because their relocation was motivated by a similar nostalgia for the country of origin as that of their parents, but also because they refer to southern Italy as where their 'roots' are, I have called them 'roots-migrants'.

Roots-migration is a rare phenomenon among second-generation Italians in Switzerland. In fact, second-generation Italians who stay in Switzerland sometimes emphasise their inability to understand the roots-migrants' decision to live in Italy. To them, structural differences between southern Italy and Switzerland are simply too big for migration to be a realistic option. But even if, economically, roots-migration was easier, many second-generation Italians emphasize that home is where they grew up, and that they are not prepared to start anew in a different place.

The example of second-generation Italians in Switzerland and Italy shows how, in reaction to their highly transnational lifestyles during childhood and adolescence, many members of the second generation share their wish to live in one place without longing for the other, like their parents had done during so many years. Second-generation Italians have created their own cultural sites and local attachments within their Swiss hometowns, characterized by a range of ethnic and non-ethnic social affiliations and by various degrees of transnational engagement. Even though many of them continue to foster transnational relations by way of regular visits and contacts with family members, their lives are clearly located in one place. The same holds true for those who relocate to Italy.

The lives of members of the second generation are shaped by various forms of embeddedness and integration in the social milieus in which they grow up, some characterized by transnationalism and the parents' nostalgia for the homeland, and others anchored locally in Switzerland. They exemplify the parallel existence of transnational ties and integration (Snel et al. 2006), and they show how problematic it is to assume similar patterns of integration and transnationalism on the grounds of shared ethnicity.

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# Notes

[1] There is no agreed definition of the 'second generation'. In this paper, I use 'second generation' to describe the descendants of migrants who were born in Switzerland or who migrated during early childhood and attended both primary and secondary school in Switzerland.

[2] Conceptualizing migrant transnationalism, Basch et al. (1994) draw on Bourdieu's notion of 'social fields', defining it as 'a set of multiple, interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized and transformed'. A transnational social field connects actors across borders and includes those who do not move (Levitt 2004 p. 1009).

[3] This phenomenon of celebrating ethnicity with fashion, style and consumer culture has also been observed in other contexts, for example among South Asians (Hall 2002) and black youngsters in Britain (Alexander 1992) and South Asians in North America (Maira 2002; Purkayastha 2005).

[4] Unfortunately, no statistics are available regarding the actual number of second-generation Italians relocating to Italy, as there is no statistical differentiation between Italian nationals of the first or the second generation moving back to Italy. My information relies on long-term fieldwork and many conversations with Italian migrants and their descendants, which all confirmed the rarity of second-generation roots-migration.

[5] See also Wolbert's (1995) study of Turkish migrants in Germany and Brettell's study on the Portuguese migrants' nostalgia, the saudade (Brettell 1998; 2000).

[6] With 'social milieus' I refer to collectivities or forms of consociation such as an Italian regional association, a network of peers with the same youth cultural taste, or a loose network of people with the same political orientations who, for example, spend their time in the same kinds of bars and cafés, etc. Although social milieus are made up of various social networks, they often include people who are not known to ego. A social milieu is characterized by, for example, shared values and attitudes towards life, shared aspirations and, in some case, shared fashion styles and ways of carrying oneself.

[7] With southerners, he refers to people of southern European background from Spain, Portugal and Italy. Although smaller in numbers, second-generation Spaniards and Portuguese were often included in the second-generation Italian peer groups (see also Itzigsohn 2000 on 'pan-ethnicity').

[8] Importantly, this Italian youth culture which subscribed to consumer culture with an Italian flair also provided the framework against which other second-generation Italians who did not share this interest developed a counter position to what they saw as 'typically Italian' (Wessendorf 2007b).

[9] Such processes have also been observed in other contexts, for example among British Bangladeshis who feel 'more British' when they visit their ancestral homeland (Gardner and Shukur 1994).

[10] The children of migrants born in Switzerland do not automatically get Swiss citizenship. On Swiss citizenship and the second generation see Bolzman et al. (2003), Juhasz and Mey (2003), and Wessendorf 2008b.

[11] For a more detailed discussion of the settlement process after roots-migration see Wessendorf (2007a).

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