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**“No Pizza without Migrants”:
Between the Politics of Identity and
Transnationalism. Second-Generation
Italians in Switzerland**

Susanne Wessendorf

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“No Pizza without Migrants”: Between the Politics of Identity and Transnationalism: Second-Generation Italians in Switzerland¹

Abstract

This paper discusses the interrelationship between transnationalism and integration among the second-generation. With the example of post-war Italian labour migration to Switzerland, it engages with different reactions of the second-generation to political and economic insecurity during childhood and adolescence and, at the same time, strong transnational family networks. By bridging theories of integration and transnationalism, it highlights the interrelationships of political exclusion, discrimination, transnational social networks and identity formation, and it shows the different ways in which the second generation creates new identities and ways of belonging.

Keywords: Second generation, integration, transnationalism, politics of identity, European labour migration

Author: Susanne Wessendorf is a DPhil Student studying Anthropology at the University of Oxford. Email: susanne.wessendorf@anthro.ox.ac.uk

¹ This paper gives the preliminary findings of an ongoing research project.

Introduction: integration - transnationalism - *Italianità*

The family Ambrosetti from Puglia (southern Italy) lives in Switzerland. The parents migrated to Switzerland in the 1960s. They have three daughters, all born in Switzerland in the 1970s. The three daughters have very different orientations towards their parent's homeland. Every summer and Christmas, the whole family went to Puglia for holidays. Graziella (26) continued to visit Puglia every summer until last year when she went there to stay. Her boyfriend comes from the region. By contrast, Marina (30), the oldest, does not go back to Puglia anymore, not even for a holiday. Her friends in Switzerland are from various national backgrounds and she has lived in Paris for a while. The youngest of the three, Barbara (24), spends every summer in southern Italy, though not only in Puglia but also in Sicily, her boyfriend's region of origin. He was also born in Switzerland and still lives there, and they both have many Italian friends in Switzerland.

Some of their friends are involved in a new political movement called the *Secondo* Movement. Together with members of the second generation of various national backgrounds they protest against the rigid Swiss citizenship policies based on *jus sanguinis*, and with slogans such as 'No pizza without migrants' they have achieved a great deal of public attention. In contrast, other second-generation Italians are active in organisations which emphasise their Italianness, *Italianità*.

Why are there such different patterns of identity and community formation among second-generation migrants? How do we understand these diverse trajectories of integration? And what kinds of anthropological tools can be used to explore these patterns of group formation and intergroup relations? This paper is concerned with these diverse forms of identity and community formation of the second generation, some characterised by transnational linkages, others by political engagement and yet others by self-essentialisation.

Despite the substantial literature that is available on transnational communities, research on second-generation transnationalism has only gained importance during the past few years. This research has been dominated by North American and British scholars (Levitt and Waters 2002b), while the second generation of immigrants in Europe has mostly been analysed with models of integration. This differing development of migration research not only reflects

different approaches within social science, but also the separation of the two major research fields in migration studies: the context of the host society, dominated by research on integration and assimilation processes; and the transnational context, dominated by research on the links between the country of immigration and the country of origin. But how do integration and transnationalism work together? The aim of this paper is to link these approaches and contribute to the current theoretical debates on how integration and transnationalism influence one another (Joppke and Morawska 2003; Menjivar 2002; Morawska 2003; Smith 2002). Discourses on diaspora and diasporic forms of identity formation are an important part of these two theoretical strands (Hannerz 2002; Werbner and Modood 1997). This paper aims to move away from the overemphasis of either fluidity or fixedness inherent in discourses on diaspora or assimilation respectively, to show that even if first-generation migration trajectories are similar, second-generation integration, identity formation and transnationalism can vary considerably.

These processes will be discussed with the example of Italian post-war labour migrants in Switzerland. Italians are a long established immigrant group which facilitates the historical analysis of the migration process and of the context in which the second generation grew up. Because of Italian migrants' wish to return and regular travel back and forth between Italy and Switzerland, second-generation Italians grew up in transnational social fields which strongly influenced their integration in Switzerland.

All in all, they integrated well into Swiss society in terms of economic upward mobility, despite the difficult economic, social and political circumstances in which they grew up. Therefore, they have become somewhat invisible in Swiss society, until recently, when members of the second generation from various national backgrounds founded a new movement called the *Secondo* Movement to claim facilitated access to Swiss citizenship. The movement managed to draw major public attention with various campaigns. At the same time, other second-generation Italians have formed organisations in which they emphasise their Italianness, *Italianità*. They organise cultural events, have formed music-bands and represent themselves on various web pages. By emphasising Latin spontaneity and '*art de vivre*', they represent what Wimmer (2004) calls a 'Latino counter-discourse' against the Swiss majority culture which they see as petit-bourgeois and narrow-minded. However, many second-generation Italians

are less visible and do not emphasise their being a member of the second generation or having Italian origins, and there are also some second-generation Italians who decide to live in their parents' village of origin in Italy, a place where they have only spent their holidays. This paper describes the variety of these forms of integration, transnationalism and belonging.

Theoretical framework: second-generation integration and transnationalism

Two subfields of migration scholarship have emerged during the past decade. One body of scholarship is concerned with processes of immigrant incorporation, sometimes disregarding migrants' connections to the homeland. The other body of research focuses on transnational connections. While this second strand only started to be concerned with the second generation during the late 1990s, scholarship on second-generation incorporation has long been important in social sciences.

Researchers in this field are interested in processes of second-generation incorporation into the host societies and in the reasons underlying difficulties of structural, social and cultural integration. While until the 1990s most European studies assumed that being of immigrant parents is problematic per se (e.g. Cesari Lusso and Cattacin 1996; Giannetti 1996; Niederer 1974), these assumptions have been critically examined and it has been shown that being of immigrant background, and belonging to two cultures is not necessarily an obstacle to integration (Eriksen 2002:137). Today, most researchers point to the dynamic aspects of bi-cultural belonging. They particularly question the assumed connection between socio-economic integration and cultural assimilation and they criticise approaches which consistently focus on negative stereotypes of immigrant youth, disregarding the actual achievement of many of them (Alexander 1992, Alexander 2000, Bolzman, Fibbi, and Vial 2003a, Chamberlain 1997, Hall 1995).

Sociological and anthropological studies on second-generation integration in Europe identified several general phenomena. First, that a certain amount of acculturation in terms of values and general orientation has taken place; second that there is often tension between them and their parents; and third, that

boundaries preventing full integration are constructed from within as well as from outside the group (Eriksen 2002).

North American researchers have become sensitive to such issues in the context of rapidly accelerating immigration into North America from Latin America and Asia during the past two decades. Children of these new immigrants are sometimes doing worse than their parents (Rumbaut and Portes 2001). This realisation has led to a general questioning of traditional straight-line assimilation models, also in regard to earlier immigrations (Perlmann and Waldinger 1997), and to the search for theoretical models to explain the heterogeneous patterns of second-generation incorporation today. For example, theories such as Portes, Rumbaut and Zhou's concept of 'segmented assimilation' differentiate between acculturation and integration into the white middle class; downward mobility and acculturation into the underclass; and economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrants' cultural manifestations (1993). Later, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) identified three trajectories of integration, differentiating between those members of the second generation who adapt to the host society's ways, while their parents do not move as quickly (dissonant acculturation); those who adapt to the host society at the same pace as their parents (consonant acculturation); and those who are embedded in an ethnic community that supports their parents (selective acculturation).

To European scholars, the conclusions North American scholars drew from research on the 'new second generation' did not come as a surprise because integration and identity formation of the second generation in Europe had been treated as complex for many years (Bolzman *et al.* 2003a). However, the theories developed in the context of the 'new second-generation' are very useful also in the European context. The most important outcomes of both European and North American studies have been a critical examination of the assumptions that being of immigrant parents is inherently problematic, and the questioning of the connection between socio-economic integration and cultural assimilation (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a).

However, researchers have only recently started to integrate a transnational perspective into the analysis of the second generation. Scholars working on the second generation were increasingly interested in how migrants' transnational connections influenced their children.

Three areas of research are at the core of these studies. First, they examine different factors leading to transnational activities, such as race, class, and life-course. Second, they look at the varieties and characteristics of transnational involvement such as political transnational engagement or economic activities such as sending remittances; and third, they examine the impact of transnationalism on integration processes in the host country, or, in other words, the interrelationship of transnationalism and assimilation (Kasinitz et al. 2002; Levitt 2002; Levitt and Waters 2002a; Menjívar 2002; Smith 2002; Vickerman 2002; Wolf 2002).

This last area of research is probably the most promising since integration and transnationalism cannot be treated separately. After all, as transnationally engaged as people may be, they are still professionally, socially or culturally involved with the place they live in and with the people surrounding them. To interpret the interrelationship of integration and transnationalism, Morawska (2003) calls for a detailed analysis of the different factors influencing the two. She shows how highly context-dependent the combination of the two is, and lists 40 different factors which influence integration and transnationalism. The main subgroups are characteristics of the sending and the receiving country such as spatial proximity or the local conditions in both countries, and characteristics of the individual immigrants, for example their socioeconomic position and cultural capital.

Morawska's emphasis on interpreting integration and transnationalism in such detailed and differentiated ways calls for further research of these processes. Although studies on the comprehensiveness of transnational networks and the social and cultural factors influencing them have contributed to a better understanding of second-generation transnationalism, these need to be further advanced by integrating other important factors such as citizenship policies and political exclusion. These factors should also be analysed regarding their importance during specific periods of individuals' lives. Furthermore, the role of inter-group relations in the country of settlement as described by Baumann (1996) could be analysed in terms of both their influence on transnational involvement and the politics of identity. Here, theories concerned with second-generation identity formation should be integrated equally (Hall 1990; Hannerz 2002; Vertovec and Cohen 1999; Werbner and Modood 1997).

In order to do so, the various approaches to research on the second generation should be linked to a greater extent. This would call into question the images created by researchers who see transnationalism everywhere and those created by researchers who reject transnationalism altogether (Foner 2000). And most importantly, politics of identity, transnationalism and integration should not be regarded as mutually exclusive, but as complementary strategies or reactions of migrants to the challenges of and tensions between mobility and settlement.

A historical perspective on first-generation migration trajectories helps to create a better understanding of how members of the second generation cope with the challenges of growing up as a member of an ethnic minority and in transnational social fields. This will be done in the following part of this paper.

Italian migration to Switzerland, integration and the emergence of a second-generation counter-culture

Historical background of Italian migration to Switzerland

Although transnationalism has most often been described as a phenomenon of the 1990s, post-war European labour migration was characterised by lively transnational connections between the countries of origin and the host countries. Italian labour migrants in Switzerland are a typical example of this. They maintained their ties with their *paese*² because they did not regard their migration as final and the majority of migrants planned to go back to their homeland as soon as possible (Braun 1970). Also, Italians encountered economic, political and social difficulties in Switzerland which were not conducive to integration but fostered and reinforced the wish to return (Grassi 1980:41-44).

The majority of Italian migrants emigrated for the simple reason that, after the Second World War, they could hardly nourish their families. Most of them were landless farmers from the south of Italy, where living conditions were particularly harsh. But even those who had enough food to survive emigrated because they saw no realistic chances of economic improvement, education and

² The Italian word *paese* means, 'country', 'village' and 'home'. Italian migrants usually refer to their homes as *paese*, meaning the village community.

secured income for themselves and their children (Behrmann and Abate 1984:39-40, Braun 1970:71-2).

Once emigration had begun, even if economic survival was not at stake, people left because social relations in the villages slowly started to dissolve. Friends and relatives had left, religious and traditional festivities were becoming smaller and smaller and visiting emigrants talked about the many possibilities abroad (Schneider 1990:63). 'I left home because everybody was leaving' is a common explanation for emigration among southern Italians.³

Until 1964, about 70% of the Italians migrating to Switzerland were men because Swiss immigration policies did not allow immigrants to take their families with them. Chain migration was the norm and the majority of migrants was helped by their families to arrange a work contract before coming to Switzerland or on their arrival (Braun 1970:41). From 1964, when new Swiss immigration policies allowed family reunification, more and more women followed their male compatriots, although even before, some women individually migrated to the North.

The strong support of family and friends in Switzerland greatly facilitated migrants' actual decision to go to Switzerland. They did not need substantial money reserves to leave Italy and most of them did not have clear plans of how long they would stay in Switzerland. They 'just went to see what it's like' (Braun 1970:79). But their goals were quite clearly defined: they wanted to build a house in Italy and acquire some land. Hence, Italian migration to Switzerland was strongly characterised by ideas of temporary settlement.

From 1946 until 1975, about 2.5 million Italians went to Switzerland. Two million returned to Italy because they only had seasonal work contracts (Cesari Lusso 2001:140). From 1975 numbers started to decline, and until 1990, the number of 370,000 permanent Italian residents was relatively stable. From 1990, this number slowly started to decline because of return migration (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics).

The migrants' plans and expectations dramatically contrasted the political and economic realities they encountered in Switzerland. Economically, they did not manage to return to Italy to settle in as short a time as they had planned,

³ According to Seiler, in some villages in Puglia, a region in southern Italy, 90% of the working population left their villages during the 1950s and the early 60s (Seiler 1965). While a lot of Pugliese went to Switzerland, a large amount of Italians also went to northern Italy, Germany and other northern European countries.

while politically, they did not receive the status which would allow them to settle in Switzerland. The Swiss government treated immigration as short-term phenomenon, and recruitment of foreign labour was conditional upon work contracts and regarded as a cyclical buffer. These so-called 'rotation politics' had as its main instrument the seasonal permit which only allowed for a stay of nine months a year and prohibited bringing one's family to Switzerland (Spescha 2002:27). When economic growth continued during the 1960s and foreign workers were needed permanently, rotation policies lost their significance and the government set as its main goal the assimilation of foreign workers and their families. Assimilation was seen as the most important requirement for permanent residency (Braun 1970:17-18). The distance and difference between local culture and immigrant culture(s) was emphasised and interpreted as failing which should be corrected (Niederberger 2003:104; Wicker 2003:47).

While demanding that immigrants assimilate, Switzerland's citizenship policies were very exclusive and many immigrants saw restricted access to citizenship as an obstacle to integration. Up until today, Swiss citizenship is based on *Jus sanguinis*. Immigrants can apply for citizenship after living in Switzerland for 12 years, but the naturalisation procedure is a complicated and expensive process. It can take several years and cost between CHF 500 and 20,000 (ca. € 13,000) (Marxer 1997:85-89). The complicated and expensive process has discouraged many immigrants from applying for citizenship, and particularly children born in Switzerland to immigrant parents regard Swiss naturalisation laws as humiliating. The debate on citizenship led to initiatives (referendums) for 'Facilitating Naturalisation' in 1983, 1995 and 2004⁴; all were rejected by the majority of Swiss voters despite the government strongly promoting the revision of 2004 with slogans such as 'who feels Swiss in belly and head should become Swiss on paper'.

Although citizenship policies have had and continue to have an important influence on integration processes, the living conditions migrants encountered in Switzerland also played a major role regarding integration and the persistence of transnational networks. Two thirds of Italian immigrants worked as unskilled labourers in the various industries, others in the service sector and in hospitality

⁴ Facilitated access to citizenship includes the possibility to apply for citizenship between the age of 14 and 24 if one has a residency permit and been to school in Switzerland for at least five years. It includes reduced costs and naturalisation procedures only on the level of the canton (district) (www.auslaender.ch/einbuengerung/revision).

(Braun 1970:83). The change from agricultural to industrial work meant a complete change in terms of life structure, sleeping habits, recreational time and diet. Migrants accepted these difficulties, thinking that it would be a sacrifice for a limited period (Braun 1970:119; Schneider 1990:72).

During the first years of their stay in Switzerland and up until the late 1960s, many Italians lived in barracks or communal houses provided by their employers. The barracks were shared either by single men or several families which took turns with cooking and other household tasks. Italians found it very difficult to get their own apartments due to discrimination on the housing market and high rents. But living in communal houses also helped to save as much money as possible for their return. Many migrants described their living conditions as miserable and humiliating, but accepted it because they believed their sacrifices would only be temporary. As they extended their stays in Switzerland, they increased their efforts to find apartments where they could lead more private lives with their families (Boscardin 1962; Braun 1970; Seiler 1965).

The transformation from temporary living to aspirations towards more comfortable housing stands for the changes of Italian migrants' original intentions and expectations of their migration. Confronted with the realities of life in Switzerland and with ongoing economic instability in southern Italy, the plan to earn as much as possible in a short time in order to go back home slowly transformed into plans to establish a secure basis of existence in both Switzerland and Italy (Ley 1979:56).

Since the 1980s, when new immigrant groups from other parts of the world who are perceived as 'more different' began to arrive, Italian immigrants and other European immigrants of the immediate post-war period have been widely accepted as part of Swiss society (Niederberger 2003:103).

'La casa' and the dream to return

Despite living in Switzerland for more than 30 years, many Italians continue to dream of returning home, although the majority of migrants have stayed in Switzerland, because they see a return prior to economic achievement as failure. Also, as the years passed, other considerations besides the financial ones became important such as their children's education. Hence, they continued to extend their stay in Switzerland while at the same time dreaming of return. One

of the most powerful symbols for the wish to return is the construction of a house in Italy. *La casa*, the house, represents all the hard work, sacrifice and economic achievement of the migrant labourer. It is a tangible, lasting object that reinforces the connections to the homeland and transforms the repeatedly postponed dream to return into a realistic and credible option for the future (Korte 1990:246; La Rosa 2003:293).

In Fibbi's research on retired Italian migrants in Switzerland, 19% of interviewees planned their return, while 39% wanted to stay in Switzerland and 42% wanted to commute between Italy and Switzerland. While the men preferred to go back to Italy, the women would rather stay in Switzerland because they found it particularly difficult to leave their children behind (Fibbi 2003:245-246). During the 1990s, an average of 11,500 Italians returned to Italy every year (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics).

Those who decide to stay in Switzerland continue to spend as much time in Italy as possible. Since they first came to Switzerland, their yearly summer holiday in their home village in Italy was seen as well-deserved reward for the hard work and sacrifice in Switzerland. In the summer, they go 'home' to spend time with their relatives in their newly built houses. While most migrants inherited or built a house in their home village, in the coastal areas of southern Italy, many of them also acquired an additional house or apartment close to the sea. In addition, those who could afford it also bought property for their children. During the past ten to twenty years, this has led to the transformation of whole villages and landscapes and sometimes to the emergence of new villages by the sea (La Rosa 2003:293). One of the villages of my research in Puglia is inhabited by only twenty families throughout the year, while 20,000 people spend the summer there. The whole Ionian coast of Puglia has seen these changes. Ploch (2000) observed similar developments in Calabria.

These new villages represent an important aspect of migrant culture: they stand for the extent to which all the people of these areas are involved in and affected by post-war labour emigration. The new houses and villages and the seasonal 'invasion' of thousands of returning migrants represent the long-term impacts of post-war emigration and have immediate economic, social and cultural effects on local life. Not only the migrants themselves, but also those who did not migrate orient their lives towards the migrants' transnational mobility, economically, socially and culturally.

The extent of transnational mobility between Switzerland and Italy is manifest both in southern Italy's transforming landscape consisting of concrete houses along the coast, and in the highways and railways that connect the two places. In fact, the rail lines between Zürich and southern Italian cities are famous for being fully booked every night during summer. Every evening, the same spectacular scenes take place at the train stations of southern Italian towns and in Zürich: hundreds of people push and shove big suitcases, boxes of Swiss sausages and empty canisters of olive oil into train compartments when going south. And, when going north, they carry heavy canisters filled with olive oil and boxes of coffee or pasta. Platforms are crowded with people, old and young, who say their farewells and wave as the train departs. Despite the frequency with which people undertake these journeys, the farewell scenes and the scenes taking place inside the trains resemble dramatic performances acted out time and again, year after year. Once the train leaves, people start unpacking their sandwiches, offering them to each other, and on each journey, stories are told of how different and less comfortable the journeys used to be some thirty or forty years ago. These 15-20 hour-journeys are intense moments in which the destinies and life-histories of many migrants are being talked about and dealt with time and again.

These transnational connections between Switzerland and Italy, the frequent visits to Italy and the dream of returning all have an important impact on Italian migrants' children. Going to Italy for the summer holidays and sometimes for Christmas, and growing up in a context in which the parents were always on the move in terms of future plans was an important part of their lives.

The second generation of Italian immigrants in Switzerland

The children of Italian immigrants are the largest second-generation group in Switzerland (Wimmer 2004:13). Until the late 1980s, studies on second-generation Italians in Switzerland focused on socialisation problems such as children's or adolescents' difficulties in schools or their language problems (Cesari Lusso and Cattacin 1996; Giannetti 1996; Niederer 1974). This was due to the visibility of those who had integration difficulties as opposed to those who integrated well, and to the focus of most studies on adolescents who had not yet settled into more stable adult lives (Cesari Lusso 2001:290-1). Researchers such as Meyer Sabino (1987) pointed out that, compared to Swiss children, Italian

children needed more extra-scholastic support, had to repeat school years more often and were less likely to enter higher education. However, during the time of her research, social scientists generally interpreted it as problematic to be children of immigrant parents. In contrast, studies conducted in the 1990s emphasised the dynamic aspects of being of immigrant origin and focused on various forms of second-generation identity formation (Cesari Lusso 2001; Giannetti 1996; Juhasz and Mey 2001). The most important recent studies are Bolzman *et al.*'s sociological research on the Italian and Spanish second generation's socio-economic integration, citizenship and identity formation, and Cesari Lusso's psychological study on integration challenges of the second generation (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a; Cesari Lusso 2001). These studies examine various factors that influence second-generation integration, such as experiences in school, the political climate in Switzerland and the role of the family.

The second generation between family and school

During their childhood and adolescence, second-generation Italians' integration was characterised by a tension between political and economic instability, discrimination in schools and among peers, the parents' wish to return, and stability in the context of the family and the Italian community in Switzerland (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a; Cesari Lusso 2001).

Concerning socio-economic integration, in comparison to Swiss children of the same socio-economic background, Italian children followed similar professional careers. They continued their parents' goal of upward mobility and the majority of them took up white collar careers rather than manual jobs (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:52). However, many of them made experiences of exclusion in school. Hence, while schools provided the means to professional integration, they were also places where most experiences of discrimination and exclusion occurred (Cesari Lusso 2001:274).

Today, most second-generation Italians are economically well integrated. Bolzman *et al.*, and Cesari Lusso credit this success to two major factors. First, Italian parents transferred their aspirations for upward mobility to their children and always motivated them to work hard in school and to acquire a good education. Second, Italian children were embedded in strong social networks within their families, relatives and friends (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:57; Cesari Lusso 2003:231). However, while many Italian families helped their children to

integrate on a professional level by emphasising the importance of education, at the same time, they contributed to notions of only temporary integration by continuing to foster their dream of returning to Italy. But the return was always conditional upon children's education and their being established and financially independent, or, as they say, *sistemati* (economically established).

In my research, many adult members of the second generation emphasised the sense of belonging, support and loyalty provided by their families. They appreciate the sacrifices their parents made and describe their parents' migration as courageous undertakings that effectively helped them to get out of a situation of desperate poverty. However, there seems to be a certain idealisation of the family by adult members of the second generation. Earlier research on second-generation adolescents often recounted conflicts between the generations. Girls felt especially pressured by their parents' strong social control (Allemann-Ghionda and Meyer Sabino 1992:138-9). This was confirmed in my own research. Allemann-Ghionda and Meyer Sabino (1992) speak of the emergence of a certain 'myth of the Italian family', fostered by immigrant Italians themselves. They explain this as result of the many separations from their kin because of Swiss immigration policies. This disruption of the families led to 'being together' (*essere uniti*) as one of the key symbols of the Italian community in Switzerland, the family house built in Italy being the symbolic space of the united family (Allemann-Ghionda and Meyer Sabino 1992).

But it was not only the families that offered the second generation a sense of belonging and community during their upbringing. The many institutions Italians founded such as Italian private schools, the Catholic Mission School and Italian language classes proved to be important to increase the children's knowledge of their culture and language of origin and to create a sense of community among them (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:213; Cesari Lusso 2001:277). At the same time, full-time Italian primary schools and high schools also led to segregation, and some of the children who went to Italian schools experienced difficulties to integrate into higher education within the Swiss schooling system. However, the majority of second-generation Italians went to Swiss schools. They grew up in two worlds: that of their family and the large Italian community, and that of Swiss schools and peers.

To summarise, for second-generations Italians, growing up in Switzerland was characterised by a tension between security on a personal and family level

and insecurity on an economic and political level. Economic and political insecurity during childhood and adolescence was mostly felt in the context of discrimination and discussions of return by parents. Once second-generation Italians reached adulthood and achieved economic security and social integration, once they were *sistemati*, for some of them, political exclusion as well as their own decision-making regarding where to live became important issues.

Identity and decision-making processes in adulthood: living in Switzerland or Italy

There has hardly been any research on second-generation decision making processes regarding emigration to their parents' country of origin. In this section, I will therefore mainly refer to Juhasz and Mey (2001) who made qualitative life-history interviews with adolescents of Italian origin in Switzerland, and to my own findings. Although return⁵ is a theme that often comes up in life-history interviews with second-generation Italians, only a minority of them go 'back' to Italy (ibid.).⁶

The wish to live in the country of origin has often been interpreted as a reaction to integration difficulties and structural disadvantages (Hämmig and Stolz 2001). While some second-generation Italians who wish to live in Italy confirm this and hope to find a better life in their parents' country of origin, others point out that the return has been planned by their parents since the beginning of their migration and that they would therefore go 'back' even if life in Switzerland was satisfying. These adolescents see their life in Switzerland as temporary, and belonging to Italy had always been and would always be important to them (Juhasz and Mey 2001:219).

Many members of the second generation are indecisive about where they want to live, either because they feel they belong to both Italy and Switzerland, or to neither of the two cultures. The former are generally economically successful and keep their options open, while the latter are mostly in difficult economic, social or psychological situations. They do not feel integrated in Switzerland and are at the same time critical towards Italy. Many interviewees

⁵ The term 'return' or 'going back' is rather problematic: while some second-generation speak of 'return' when talking about going to Italy, others say that there's no place to 'go back' to because they have always lived in Switzerland.

⁶ No statistics on second-generation 'return migration' are available in Switzerland.

report that they have long been planning their return but at a later state changed their minds as a reaction to their experiences of exclusion in Italy or the experiences of returned relatives who were disappointed by their return.

According to Juhasz and Mey (2001:222-4), those who clearly want to stay in Switzerland can be divided into two groups. The first group includes the economically successful who see Switzerland as a country where they can fulfil their dreams of upward mobility and success. They emphasise their Swissness and often distance themselves from other members of the second generation. At the same time, they still do not feel that they fully belong to Switzerland. The second group consists of those who do not distance themselves from their compatriots but neither think that Switzerland is the ideal place to live. They actively try to integrate both the Swiss and Italian part of their upbringing, and they consciously relate to other persons with similar experiences. A third group of people emerged in my own research: some of my informants are economically successful and at the same time very much emphasise their Italianness, but they would never want to live in Italy because they think that they cannot fulfil their professional aims in Italy.

Members of the second generation whose parents go back are confronted with a difficult decision. For them, staying in Switzerland implies a clear affirmation of life there. One of Cesari Lusso's informants recounted that his parents' return led him to make a definite statement of where he belongs by defending his decision to stay in Switzerland and to not join his parents (Cesari Lusso 2003:301).

Juhasz and Mey (2001) emphasise that decisions about the place of residence as well as degrees of socio-cultural integration and identification with Switzerland or Italy cannot clearly be linked to socio-economic positions. Thus, relatively low structural positions do not necessarily lead to unhappiness in Switzerland, while economic success does not automatically lead to cultural and social integration in Switzerland. Other factors such as gender, experiences of discrimination and exclusion also play an important role. While these factors certainly influence decisions about the place of residence, the majority of my informants who have decided to live in Italy had been in low professional positions when still living in Switzerland.

One experience that influences integration and decisions about where to live is political exclusion in Switzerland. This will be discussed in the following section.

Identity and decision-making processes in adulthood II: Citizenship

Some members of the second generation perceive the restrictive citizenship policies as humiliating and as an obstacle to full integration. The acquisition of citizenship is a good indicator for second-generation identity formation. In interviews with members of the second generation, questions surrounding citizenship can lead to rather emotional discussions about exclusion and inclusion. Although since 1992, dual citizenship is possible, many second-generation Italians have not applied for Swiss citizenship.⁷

Several reasons related to identity, profession or policy regulations play a role in the decision to apply for citizenship. Some of Bolzman *et al.*'s informants acquired citizenship because of their identification with Switzerland (17%), while others sought political participation (16%) and some wanted the same rights as Swiss citizens, perceiving Swiss citizenship as advantage on the job and housing markets (14%). In general, children of better-educated parents and those with longer schooling are more likely to become naturalised. Furthermore, those who spent their whole childhood and formative years in Switzerland are more likely to apply for citizenship compared with those who spent part of their childhood in Italy (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a). This has been clearly confirmed in my own findings.

Those who do not want to become Swiss citizens argue that to be naturalised would not change anything except having the right to political participation. Some do not want to do the compulsory Swiss military service (18%), while others find the procedure to become naturalised too long and too expensive (12%). According to them, one should not have to pay or apply for citizenship and Swiss citizenship should be automatically granted to the second generation. Having to ask and pay for naturalisation is perceived as a symbolic and actual act to exclude people who feel integrated. However, some argue that

7 There are no statistical data of the naturalisation of second-generation Italians, but only of the whole Italian community of which, between 1986 and 1996, a yearly average of 0.8 % was naturalised (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:23-4). Of the 402 informants Bolzman *et al.* interviewed, 57% did not acquire Swiss citizenship, 14% of which are planning to apply for it. The remaining 43% have acquired citizenship, and most of them also keep their Italian nationality (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:221).

they do not want to become citizens because they do not feel Swiss (11% of Bolzman *et al.*'s interviewees) (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a). One of Cesari Lusso's informants differentiated between citizenship and political participation. While he does not care about obtaining the Swiss passport, he would like to have the right to political participation (Cesari Lusso 2001:273). This shows that identificatory and political reasons for acquiring citizenship must be interpreted separately (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:183).

To summarise, most of those who acquire citizenship give as main reasons the right to political participation or their identification with Switzerland. The main reasons against acquiring citizenship are the compulsory military service for men, the complicated procedure one has to go through and the feeling of humiliation that comes with this process (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003a:189; Cesari Lusso 2001:229).

According to Bolzman *et al.*, the selective naturalisation procedures prevented many members of the second generation from full integration and slowed down processes of identification with Switzerland (Bolzman, *et al.* 2003b:477).

This political exclusion has led to the political mobilisation of some members of the second generation from different ethnic backgrounds, most of them with higher education.

The Secondo Movement: 'We are here because we are here'

The *Secondo* Movement was founded in 2002 after the annual May Day demonstration in Zürich. This demonstration always ends with street fights between mostly young protesters from the far left and the police. While every year the media report on what is described as the general decay of youth, in 2002, a completely new angle emerged. The police deputy publicly ascribed the destruction caused by the protesters to members of the second generation, and one of the largest Swiss newspapers pointed to the strong presence of 'young immigrants with gel in their hair, those who are commonly called *secondos*'.⁸ Several members of the second generation were shocked by this open stigmatisation and reacted to it by founding an organisation called *IG Secondas* (*Interessengemeinschaft Secondas* / Interest Group Secondas). They wanted to offer an information platform for the second generation and fight against the

⁸ NZZ (Neue Zürcher Zeitung), 2.5.2002.

negative image ascribed to them. They designed and sold T-Shirts bearing the word *secondo* (for men) and *seconda* (for women) as a way to communicate their pride in being members of the second generation, and to show that even if you do not look like a foreigner, you might well be of immigrant origin.⁹ In addition to the successfully sold T-Shirts, they created a webpage and organised cultural events and public discussions on second-generation issues.¹⁰ Their aims are: easier access to Swiss citizenship for the second generation; the right to political participation for all members of the second generation; and automatic citizenship for the third generation. The media has written excessively on this new movement which is considered to be very successful. With their campaigns, the movement was working towards the voting in 2004 on the revision of naturalisation laws, which was rejected.

Out of the movement was born a political party in Zürich called *List 15*, made up of naturalised members of the second generation. They see themselves as representatives of the 1.6 million immigrants and the half million members of the second generation in Switzerland. Their main goals are fair naturalisation processes, enhanced integration policies, joining the European Union and increased state support for childcare. With slogans such as 'Nothing works without us', 'No pizza without migrants', 'No old-age pension without migrants', 'No successful national football team without migrants' and 'We are here because we are here', the party claims that the Swiss finally have to accept that Switzerland is a country of immigration and that it must actively begin to include immigrants because it simply needs them.

These forms of politics of identity, migrant claims-making (Koopmans and Statham 2003) or 'panethnic mobilisation' (Itzigsohn 2000) are a new phenomenon in Switzerland. Members of the second generation are now powerfully claiming to be united on the grounds of political exclusion. Instead of basing their claims on cultural specificity or difference, they consciously try to gain a voice by pointing to unity in diversity. Their engagement stands in stark contrast to other immigrant youth reactions to exclusion and discrimination and to movements which engage in essentialist notions of cultural and religious

⁹ This positive use of the term 'secondo' is comparable to the positive revaluation of the term 'black' in the context of the black-power movement in the US. However, some second-generation Italians distance themselves from the term 'secondo', emphasising that they do not come second but first.

¹⁰ See www.secondas.ch, but also: www.secondo.net

identity.¹¹ As opposed to Werbner's (1997) description of hybridity as a threat to the moral integrity of a group, the *Secondo* Movement threatens notions of cultural purity with its emphasis on the positive and indispensable contribution of the 'cultural hybrids' to Switzerland.

The *Secondo* Movement's public representation resembles a pattern of self-representation of second-generation Italians whom Wimmer (2004:13) describes as the 'casual Latins' and which also includes other second-generation southern Europeans. These *secondi* take up a counter-position to what they define as mainstream Swiss working-class values such as order and cleanliness. They have 'developed a strong self-confidence, which is expressed in their own subculture and in an explicit and well articulated group identity' (Wimmer 2004:13):

Disorder, with its attributes of uncontrolled, indecent, conspicuous, maladjusted, etc., is revalued as a positively connoted, Latin art of improvisation, spontaneity, and cordiality. In opposition to the narrow-minded culture of the petit bourgeois Swiss, they invoke the freer, more communicative, and more pleasure-oriented way of life of Southern Europeans.¹²

This discourse is similar to the one used in the *Secondo* Movement, although in the political movement, not only southern Europeans are included, but members of the second generation of all different backgrounds.

Although these different, newly emerging groups share the celebratory nature of their self-representation, when analysing them, it is important to include socio-economic factors. For example, most members of the political *secondo*-movement have acquired higher education. Cesari Lusso shows that her professionally successful second-generation Italian informants positively assess cultural heterogeneity and differentiate between two groups: 'us', the lucky ones who made it, who speak several languages perfectly and who can go everywhere in the world and integrate, and 'the others' who are awkwardly bilingual, who do not feel at home in any place and who emphasise their Italianness. These

¹¹ See for example Schiffauer (2001).

¹² The conscious creation of a Latino culture that includes *secondi* of various different southern European background is comparable with what Baumann (1996) describes as the forging of an 'Asian post-immigration culture' in Southall which includes south Asian youth of various backgrounds.

upwardly mobile members of the second generation consciously demonstrate their pride in their 'multiple cultural competences' (Vertovec and Rogers 1998) which enable them to be worldly in various cultural contexts. Their negative assessment of emphasising one's Italianness and their interpretation of it as compensation for some kind of failure is remarkable. Also, it is somewhat counter to the general positive perception of *Italianità* among members of the second generation and Swiss urban professionals represented in various organisations and music groups.¹³

In fact, in addition to the political *secondo* organisations, there is a growing number of associations of second-generation Italians who publicly demonstrate their pride of their *Italianità*. These people in no way feel that they have failed to integrate and most of them are upwardly mobile in Switzerland. One such group is called *Gentediaare*.¹⁴ The name is Italian and means 'People from the Aare', Aare being one of the main rivers in Switzerland. This group is comprised of *secondi* who are born in Switzerland to Italian parents, and who live in the same region within Switzerland. The highly localised emergence of such a group is very interesting. *Gentediaare* maintain a webpage, regularly organise cultural events and design T-Shirts. While, as the political *secondo* organisations, they have T-Shirts bearing the word *secondo*, they also design T-Shirts with English writings saying: 'made in Italy', 'made in Napoli', 'Italians do it better', '50%', 'made in Switzerland', 'bastardobeatbrother', 'prosciutomoltocrudo' (very raw ham), 'realität ist da, wo der pizzamann herkommt' (reality is where the pizza-man comes from) and 'New York, London, Mittelland'¹⁵. These slogans include various messages: first, they stand for the pride in being Italian, half Italian, but also Swiss, and they express the symbolic choice or ability to be all of it by wearing any one of these T-Shirts according to mood. Hence, they use essentialist notions of what it means to be Italian (pizza, ham, etc.), but at the same time ironically deconstruct them. Second, they show that Switzerland needs Italians or, in other words, that the pizza-man is a reality the Swiss have to deal with; and third, they express their global and local connectedness by

¹³ The term *Italianità* is used among both Swiss and Italians to express certain features associated with 'Italianness' such as cordiality, openness, enjoying life, etc.. While during the 1950s and 60s, Italians were subject to open discrimination and stigmatisation in Switzerland (Seiler 1965), perceptions about Italy and 'Italianness' among the Swiss population have gone through significant changes. *Italianità* has become a positively assessed aspect of modern, urban culture among the Swiss middle class.

¹⁴ www.gentediaare.ch.

But see also: www.dettofattogroup.ch; www.caffecorretto.ch; www.thevespariclan.ch/

using the English language, referring to global metropolises, but also to the region in which they live. *Gentediaare* are a good example of how members of the second generation create and claim their own social and cultural space and how they refuse to be put into clear-cut cultural categories by the majority population. Choosing a T-Shirts with an 'ethnic label' on it depending on one's mood, exemplifies that...

ethnic minority youth ... are not just adopting and adapting some (singular) new course which is neither that of their immigrant parents' origin nor that of their ethnic majority peers. Rather, such youths are illustrating their skills at combining, maintaining and serially selecting facets of all of these lifeways. They demonstrate multiple, cultural competence (Vertovec and Rogers 1998:6).¹⁶

All these discourses, the *Secondo*, the Latino, and the Italianità-discourse, stand for what Baumann calls a demotic definition of community, used to undermine the dominant discourse which 'equates ethnic categories with social groups under the name of "community"' (Baumann 1996:188). The ways in which discourses and public representations of the second generation such as the 'Latin' and the 'proud Italian' are reflected in their every-day life will need further investigation.

Despite the public visibility of the *Secondo* Movement, the Casual Latins and the *Gentediaare*, it is important to note that these expressions of identities only examples within a variety of forms of belonging and group formation. The political secondo movement is impressive for its well developed public representation and its visibility. It is therefore tempting for a researcher to focus on. However, it should not be mistaken as representative of all members of the second generation. In fact, most of my informants who were not involved in the movement did not even know about it. Hence, the public visibility of such movements should not be overestimated in terms of being representative. The same holds true for those groups emphasising their Italianness. Many second-generation Italians do not actively engage in their being a *secondo* or being Italian. This does not mean that their Italian background plays a less important role in their every day life, but that they do not feel the need or wish to

¹⁵ Mittelland is the region in Switzerland where the river Aare flows through.

¹⁶ See also Alund (1991) who uses the concept of bricolage to describe these processes.

emphasise it. Further research is needed to tackle the reasons for such a variety of forms of identification and group formation.

Summary and conclusion

The historical overview of Italian post-war labour migration to Switzerland has shown that transnational connections between Italian migrants and their communities of origin have long been part of their everyday lives. The maintenance of these ties was strongly motivated by conditions of economic insecurity, political instability and the dream of returning to Italy. The difficult situation in Switzerland and the persistence of this dream led to what Bolzman *et al.* (2003a) call 'bilateral references' to both Italy and Switzerland.

This unstable settlement process is the context in which the second generation grew up. While parents actively supported their children's economic integration and upward mobility by way of education, they emphasised the importance of their Italian background and they kept their social and cultural affiliations to their *paese*. This led to second-generation integration characterised by successful socio-economic integration in terms of education and work, selective integration in terms of certain cultural characteristics of local culture such as language, and the preservation of certain characteristics of the culture of origin such as a strong sense for the family. In this 'integration in difference' (Bolzman *et al.* 2003a) socio-economic integration does not necessarily parallel cultural integration.

However, the impact of transnational links to Italy on the second generation's transnational involvement is still unclear. Despite similar experiences of transnationalism and discrimination, only some second-generation Italians continue to go to Italy regularly and only a minority decides to live there. This may be due to a certain degree of what Breton (1964) calls 'institutional completeness'. The Italian community in Switzerland still offers a great variety of social and cultural institutions which make it possible to limit one's spheres of social interaction to it alone. While this space is strongly influenced by transnational connections, it is unclear in how far it undermines the second generation's wish to engage in cross-border activities. Hence, some second-generation Italians who emphasise their *Italianità* may feel ethnic without

engaging in transnational activities. At the same time, others who do not emphasise their Italianness lead lives characterised by actual transnational social, political or economic activities.

The multiplicity of Italian second-generation integration processes, identity formation and transnational activities represents the varieties in which integration and transnational practices can work together, and it shows how one affects the other. This confirms Morawska's (2003) claim that both integration and transnationalism cannot be explained as the result of a single conscious decision but as the cumulative effect of many small decisions. It also confirms that politics of identity, transnationalism and integration should not be regarded as mutually exclusive, but as complementary strategies or reactions to the challenges of and tensions between mobility and settlement.

The very diverse ways in which members of the second generation have integrated and formed their own identities and communities, from *Italianità* to Casual Latins to politics of identity or transnationalism and return, calls for an extension of concepts which describe fragmented second-generation integration trajectories as simply 'bicultural', a concept which reconfirms older stereotypes of the second generation 'between two cultures' (Watson 1977) and which is, again, based on ideas of bounded cultural entities. Biculturalism excludes other forms of belonging and ways of claiming one's own social and cultural space, represented by the Casual Latins, the *Gentediaare* and the *Secondo* Movement. These new spaces can neither simply be called 'transnational social spaces', because they are clearly embedded in the political, economic and socio-cultural realities of the nation-state in which they emerge. Rather, they are counter-hegemonic attempts to deal with both a national legal system and, sometimes, the nostalgia for the homeland. What all these representations of belonging and identity have in common is the creation of a space not imposed on them from above by the state or parents, but the self-ascription of identities and belonging from below, spatially and culturally in the case of *Gentediaare*, culturally in the case of the 'casual Latins', and politically in the case of the *Secondo* Movement. However, to only look at these new forms of identities and communities would give a limited picture of the second-generation. Hence, the less visible members of the second generation and those who decide to live in the parents' country of origin have to be equally included in future analysis.

Further research is needed to better understand the long-term effects of political exclusion, discrimination and economic instability during immigrant settlement processes and the reasons why transnational connections continue to be important for some individuals, but not for others. Also, comparing different immigrant groups in various contexts could help to find out why some individuals emphasise their ethnic background, while others celebrate their belonging to several cultures or become politically active, and yet others wish to merge into the majority society. Or, as Baumann puts it, we need to understand 'why, when, and how the people we study may reify in some contexts what in others they are aware of creating themselves' (Baumann 1996:203).

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