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'Roots-migrants':
transnationalism and 'return'
among second-generation
Italians in Switzerland

Susanne Wessendorf

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Abstract:

It is common for members of the second generation to have nostalgic relations to the parents' place of origin, particularly if they have grown up in strong transnational social fields. This leads some to actually migrate to the place where their parents are from. They expect to find an ideal homeland which had provided them with a strong sense of belonging during their transnational childhoods and adolescences. This article develops the concept of 'roots-migration' to describe the migration of the second generation to the parents' homeland. Drawing on second-generation Italians in Switzerland and expanding upon theories of transnationalism, it examines the transformation of highly translocal everyday lives to the settlement in the parents' country of origin. It describes how the second generation deals with the discrepancies between their images of the homeland prior to migration and the actual realities they meet once they settle there. Furthermore, it explores how notions of belonging and 'roots' can be constructed and reified by nostalgia for another place, and how 'roots' can be lost when this other place is transformed from imagined to real.

Author:

Susanne Wessendorf is a DPhil student at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford. Email Susanne.wessendorf@anthro.ox.ac.uk

Introduction

Transnationalism as an important factor of current and past migrations is now common place in the literature on migration (Glick Schiller 2004; Vertovec 2004). While largely neglected until the late 1990s, the second generation[1] has become an important focus of research on transnationalism in recent years (Levitt and Waters 2002). Different factors such as race, class and life-course, which lead to and influence the transnational activities of members of the second generation, have been examined. Of special interest are studies which look at the impact of transnationalism on integration processes in the host country, or, in other words, the interrelationship of transnationalism and assimilation (Haller and Landolt 2005; Kasinitz, et al. 2002; Levitt 2002; Levitt and Waters 2002; Menjívar 2002; Smith 2002; Vickerman 2002; Wolf 2002). Particularly important in the work on second-generation transnationalism is that, in addition to the focus on the host society and the migrant community, it acknowledges the addition of a third space for the articulation of identity, the parents' country of origin (Charsley 2004).

This article focuses on how, as a result of highly transnational everyday lives during childhood and adolescence, second-generation Italians from Switzerland migrate to their parents' country of origin. The article develops the concept of 'roots-migration' to describe the migration to a place where members of the second generation are originally from, but where they have never lived. Migration to the parents' country of origin has been largely understudied in research on the second generation. Only recently have there been some studies focusing on children of transatlantic migrants such as Greeks from North America (Christou 2002; Panagakos 2004) or Caribbeans from Britain (Potter 2005) who 'return' to the parents' homeland.

For Italian migrants in Switzerland, translocal activities have been the norm since the beginning of post-war labour migration, migrants travelling to their home country at least once, if not several times a year.[2] Hence, the second generation grew up in lively translocal social fields and most of them spent their childhood travelling back and forth between the parents' homeland and the host country. While today, second-generation Italians in Switzerland engage in a whole range of different patterns of translocal connections, this article examines the extreme case of those who have decided to migrate to their parents' homeland. It analyses the processes which have led them to live in a region where they had only spent their holidays and where, up until today, structural conditions are insecure and economic realities harsh. The article describes how notions of belonging and homeland can have a powerful influence on the choices members of the

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[1] There is not a common agreement on how to define the 'second generation'. Here, I will use 'second generation' to describe people who were born in the host country with immigrant parents, and those who came to the host country during early childhood and attended school in the host country.

[2] The connections Italian maintain to their homeland are translocal rather than transnational. Italian migrants' relation to place is localised in that they usually travel between the town of settlement in Switzerland and the village of origin in Italy. Most of them feel a strong connection to these places rather than to the nation-states.

second generation make regarding their place of residence, choices that go beyond simply identifying with the ethnic community they grew up in. These feelings of belonging, fed by the parents' nostalgia for the homeland and their dream of returning to Italy, radically change once members of the second generation settle there and are confronted with the realities of everyday life. Thereby, securities of 'rootedness' come into question, and the homeland dissolves or evolves into a more differentiated picture.

The findings presented here draw on ethnographic research carried out during one year in the southeasternmost region of Italy, The Salento (Apulia) and in Switzerland. Along with participant observation, twenty-three life-history interviews were undertaken with second-generation Italians who 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 are adults and reflect back on their lives, on their childhood and adolescence and on the choices they have made during their lives.

The Salento, the region in south-eastern Italy where the research was conducted, is characterised by economic underdevelopment and unemployment. It is one of the geographically remotest areas of Italy where, during the 1960s and 70s, 90% of the working population emigrated to northern Italy or northern Europe as a result of extreme poverty. Although modernisation has entered this remote region in terms of technology, communication, transport and, especially, tourism, life in the villages continues to be characterised by the pressure to conform to cultural expectations which are changing much slower than in other, more urbanised regions of southern Italy. This is particularly the case regarding gender relations. Many families, especially in the villages, are still characterised by patriarchal structures with strict gender roles, compulsory heterosexuality and a considerable responsibility for kin relations. In a lot of anthropological literature on the Mediterranean, such patterns of gender relations have been described with concepts of honour and shame as gender-based division of labour and morality (e.g. Schneider and Schneider 1971; Goddard 1987). These concepts have been deconstructed and criticised in a whole body of literature (e.g. Giordano 2002; Greverus, et al. 2002). However, in the interviews for this research and in the many informal conversations with both, local women and women with a migrant background, discourses of gender relations based on expectations of honour and shame played a dominant role, and female roots-migrants experienced gender-related cultural expectations and practices as one of the main challenges of integration in Italy.

In the first part of this article, the historical background of Italian labour migration and the translocal context in which the second generation grew up will be summarised. In the second part, the concept of roots-migration will be developed on the basis of theories of transnationalism, return migration, and the concept of 'roots-tourism' (Basu 2004). In the third

part, the processes leading to roots-migration and, in particular, the patterns of integration in Italy will be described.

Italian migration to Switzerland, translocal relations and the dream of returning

Italians in Switzerland have been a long established group of migrants. They went to Switzerland during different periods, the first migrants arriving during the second half of the 19th century from northern Italy to build the alpine tunnels (Halter 2003).

The majority of Italian migrants, however, went to Switzerland in the post Second World War period. They formed part of post-war European labour migration with tens of thousands of southern and southeastern Europeans moving to Western Europe to help build the booming post-war economy. By 1970, more than half a million Italians lived in Switzerland. Due to seasonal work contracts and return migration, by 2001, numbers had declined to 314,000, and 122,000 of these are members of the second generation (Niederberger 2003).

For a country with seven million inhabitants in total, these numbers are considerable, and despite immigration from other parts of Europe and from overseas, Italians still form the largest migrant group in Switzerland. During the time of immigration, from the 1950s until the 1970s, Italian migrants in Switzerland were confronted with rather restrictive immigration policies in terms of residency permits and laws of family reunion, and many Italians encountered discrimination on the labour market, the housing market and sometimes in schools. Hence, settling in Switzerland was politically and economically rather difficult. Although these conditions have improved with time and the vast majority of Italians now have permanent residence permits, access to Swiss citizenship continues to be restrictive for both the first and the second generation born in Switzerland. Becoming a Swiss citizenship is a long and expensive process and many Italians have been discouraged to even apply for citizenship.

The majority of Italian migrants were landless farmers from the south who intended to come to Switzerland for a few years to earn enough money to acquire some land and build a house in their village of origin in Italy. This dream of returning, the building of a house in Italy and strong familial relations were the main motivation for their strong translocal connections. Italian migrants visited their village of origin at least once and sometimes twice a year, together with their children. This trip from the northern, German-speaking part of Switzerland to the far south of Italy, a distance of about 1600 km and a train-journey of fifteen to twenty hours, was both physically exhausting and a considerable financial investment. Nevertheless, migrants undertook this journey regularly, thinking that as soon as economic means would allow it, they would stay in Italy for good.

For financial reasons, but also because they wanted their children to complete their education, most Italian migrants ended up staying in Switzerland. Those who did eventually

return, about a third, left Switzerland when their children were already adults and established in professional life in Switzerland (Bolzman 1993; Fibbi 2003).

However, the two thirds of migrants who have not yet returned continue to spend as much time as possible in Italy. Time spent with their relatives in their newly built houses *al paese*[3], in the homeland, is perceived as a well-deserved reward for the many years of hard work and sacrifice in Switzerland.

The extent of translocal mobility between Switzerland and southern Italy is manifest on the highways and railways that connect the two countries. For example, the nightly rail line between Zürich and Lecce (Apulia) is famous for being fully booked every night during summer. Every evening, the same spectacular scenes take place in Lecce and Zürich: hundreds of people push and shove big suitcases, boxes of Swiss sausages, chocolate and empty canisters of olive oil into train compartments when 'going down', to Lecce. And, when 'going up', to Switzerland, they carry heavy canisters filled with olive oil and boxes of coffee and pasta. Platforms are crowded with people, old and young, who say their farewells and wave as the train departs. And, 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-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.

The majority of second-generation Italians have positive memories of the yearly summer holidays in Italy. The holidays were characterised by big family gatherings, spending time by the sea, being outdoors and promenading at the typical Italian central square, the 'piazza'. Their families in Italy did their best to please their relatives from Switzerland, and they enjoyed being together with their sisters, aunts, cousins and grandchildren who lived so far away. In fact, 'being together' (essere uniti) has become one of the key symbols of the Italian community in Switzerland as a result of the experience of being separated from ones family because of restricted laws of family reunion during the post-war period (Allemann-Ghionda and Meyer Sabino 1992).

The importance of the yearly holidays is shown in Annagrazia's account. She was born in Switzerland and, up until today, continues to go to Italy every year together with her own children.

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[3] The Italian word paese means, 'country', 'village' and 'home'. Italian migrants usually refer to their homes as paese, meaning the village of origin.

How were the holidays for you?

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, we got set up again, a bit, it was like a new start, like the first of January, new objectives you know (…), and then you worked, and then Christmas came (…), and from January you started saving money again for the summer, yes, January until 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, and we were lucky because we could go for 5 weeks because my dad worked extra hours.

What did you bring with you?

Well chocolate for the relatives, and then, as a preparation, well, clothes, you went down, you are from Switzerland, you have to dress nicely… (Annagrazia, 36).

The translocal relations during childhood and adolescence strongly influenced the second generation's identity formation and integration in Switzerland. The majority of second-generation Italians grew up in a tension between structural integration and translocalism. Parents actively supported their children's professional integration and upward mobility by way of education. Therefore, in spite of the difficult economic, social and political circumstances, the second generation integrated successfully in Switzerland in terms of social upward mobility. However, while stressing the importance of education and integration into the Swiss labour market, parents also emphasised the importance of their Italian background and they kept their social and cultural affiliations to their *paese*. Hence, the parents' dream of returning, coupled with difficult access to citizenship, strengthened the cultural and social references to Italy and the Italian community in Switzerland among many members of the second generation (Bolzman et al. 2003). This parallel process of structural integration and cultural and social references to the ethnic community and the country of origin has also been called 'selective acculturation'(Haller and Landolt 2005) or 'integration in difference' (Bolzman et al. 2003).

Importantly, parents did not consciously convey their dream of returning to their children. They were aware of the economic constraints in Italy and emphasised that their children were better off in Switzerland because of more secure economic conditions. Nevertheless, everyday translocal experiences during childhood and adolescence, and the nostalgia for the homeland fostered in the Italian community were crucial for the second generation's perceptions of Italy. It seems as if their parents longing for, and fantasies about, Italy had been transferred to the next generation. For example, today, many second-generation Italians publicly celebrate their Italianness and they continue to visit Italy regularly.

While for many members of the second generation, this nostalgia forms part of their diasporic identity within Switzerland, a minority of second-generation Italians have taken the ongoing translocal connections a step further and have decided to live in Italy. In fact, some of the roots-migrants said that they did not just want to dream about going to Italy, as their parents had

done during all those years, but they actually wanted to do it. They did not want to make the same painful experience as their parents, which was to live in one place but dream of the other.

This imaginary construction of the homeland, fed by the dream of returning and fostered by everyday translocal connections, has been theorised in various studies, particularly in relation to first generation migrants. In the following section, theoretical concepts on return migration, transnationalism and the formation of collective identities based on ideas of 'roots' will be linked and taken a step further to develop the notion of 'roots migration'.

Conceptualising second-generation 'roots-migration'

> 'No, no, cutting your roots doesn't work. You know, I have tried it, and I felt tossed around from here to there and up and down. No, you can't cut your roots' (Emanuele, 38).

Studies on second-generation migration to the country of origin describe the second-generation as 'returning' to the home country (Christou 2002; Panagakos 2004; Potter 2005). The use of the concept of 'return' in this literature probably mirrors the second generation's own perception of their transfer to the country of origin. However, second-generation Italians living in Italy emphasised that they could not 'go back' to a place where they had never lived. Although they had spent at least one month a year in Italy during all their lives, they did not perceive their transfer to Italy as return.

How can we find adequate terms to describe second-generation migration directed at a seemingly known place where they have never lived but somehow come from? The lack of a precise term not only reflects the scarce literature on this subject, but also the different ways in which migrants and their offspring relate to place and the ways in which they experience home and belonging.

The literature on second-generation transnationalism has captured various forms of second-generation transnationalisms, but it has primarily focused on the host country. Similarly, literature on return migration has covered a variety of issues such as the motivations for return and re-integration in the country of origin, but it primarily focused on the first generation of migrants. However, both bodies of literature are useful to conceptualise the migration of the second generation to the country of origin. Thereby, it is important to look at both, the transnational experiences and practices as such, and the images of the homeland influenced by the parents' wish of returning.

Already during the 1970s and '80s, research focusing on first-generation return migration looked at the social ties between the country of origin and the country of immigration (Behrmann and Abate 1984; Braun 1970; Cerase 1974; King 1978; Thomas-Hope 1985). These ties were later called transnational connections. Early studies on return migration distinguish

migrants for whom return is part of the initial migration strategy, and those who aim for permanent settlement in the host country and decide or are forced to return for economic, political or social reasons. It has been shown that in most cases, the main reasons for return are not economic but rather connected to strong familial ties (Gmelch 1980). This is especially so for the 'sojourners', those who migrate with the idea of return and thus keep strong ties to their homeland in order to facilitate the return (Brettell 2000; Foner 2000).

The dream of returning is a particularly important characteristic of sojourners' identities. It is closely related to a strong nostalgia for the homeland as an overarching key metaphor of sojourners' communities. Italian migrants in Switzerland are a typical example of this. The plan to return was an integral part of their migration and was accompanied by nostalgia for the homeland. Already in the 1960s, studies on Italians in Switzerland called this strong wish of returning 'nostalgic syndrome' or 'nostalgic illusion' (Braun 1970). Even if actual return was not possible because of a lack of jobs in Italy, the wish to return continued to be a dream to hold on to and, particularly, an important element in the construction of a collective diasporic identity. Talking about return and the dream in itself became a 'key scenario' (Ortner 1973), it embodied a 'vision of success' and stood for an ideal, collective future.[4] The Italian 'nostalgia' has persisted in the diaspora during several decades, and there has even been a song called *Nostalgico Emigrante*, the Nostalgic Emigrant, written by an Italian migrant in Germany (Greverus 1965).

The Nostalgico Emigrante as part of a narrative of belonging in which the homeland is constructed as welcoming, ideal place, also played an important role in the creation of 'sites of belonging' in Switzerland such as, for example, regional associations, Italian churches, sports clubs and Italian schools. In these sites, Italianness and the nostalgia for the region of origin were produced as integral part of Italian émigré identity and passed on to the second generation.[5]

A typical example of how narratives of belonging and the nostalgia for the homeland were transferred to the second generation is a song composed and written by a migrant mother from the Salento. The song was to be sung by her three daughters at one of the many social events of their regional Apulian association. It formed part of a children's song competition, and the three girls were wearing clothes in the colours of the regional flag of Apulia:

Noi siamo piccole Puglesi	*We are little Apulian*
Nate qui su questa terra (a Basilea)	*Born here on this land (Switzerland)*
Ma Puglesi vogliam' restare	*But we want to stay Apulian*
Per sempre ritornare.	*And go back for ever*

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[4] See also Wolbert's (1995) study on Turkish migrants in Germany and Brettell's study on the Portuguese migrants' nostalgia, the *saudade* (Brettell 2000; 1998).
[5] Fortier has described similar processes among Italians in the UK (Fortier 2000).

In addition to such narratives of belonging passed on to the second generation, children were taken on holidays to the village of origin every year, and the houses migrants constructed in the homeland were intended to be passed on to the children. Owning property in Italy not only legitimised the return as a strategically possible, final conclusion of the migration plan, but it also provided a symbolic site for the (re)-united family and an investment that linked the future generations to the country of origin.

Transnational practices such as building a house in Italy, composing songs about the homeland, and engaging in regional associations in the diaspora all form part of what Glick Schiller calls transnational 'ways of being' and 'ways of belonging' (Glick Schiller 2004). While transnational 'ways of being' refers to the actual practices and social relations individuals engage in, 'ways of belonging' refers to emotional connections to persons or localities that are elsewhere, and practices that signal a conscious connection to, or identification with, a particular group. Thus, individuals can engage in transnational ways of being in their social relations and every day practices. However, only those who highlight the transnational elements of who they are express transnational ways of belonging. As described earlier, first-generation Italians engage in both, transnational ways of being and belonging, by maintaining strong social networks with other Italians and by creating cultural sites where Italianness is consciously celebrated and where narratives of nostalgia play a crucial role in the creation of a collective identity.

Such practices were an integral part of the second generation's childhoods and adolescences and had an important influence on their own transnational ways of being and belonging. The vast majority of second-generation Italians continue to have social relations with co-ethnics during adult life, be it the family, relatives or friends, and thus engage in transnational ways of being. However, only some individuals continue to engage in transnational ways of belonging. This is strongly determined by peer-group formation with youngsters of either the same or other ethnic backgrounds during adolescence, by profession, and, particularly, by the degree of feeling integrated in the Italian community in Switzerland and in the village of origin during the holidays. Among the second-generation Italians who continue to engage in transnational ways of belonging and feel particularly strong about the 'homeland', are the roots-migrants, those who decide to live in their parents' place of origin. This is only a minority of second-generation Italians because economic and social conditions in southern Italy remain precarious even today. Although they do not 'return' to their parents' homeland (they have never lived there), they move to a place which has always been part of their identity and their every day lives, and their migration is strongly motivated by nostalgia.

The nostalgic characteristic of this movement resembles what Basu (2001; 2004) calls 'roots-tourism' to describe North American tourists who visit their ancestors' homeland in Scotland. This heritage-tourism is motivated by the search for ones roots and the quest for belonging and homecoming. The roots-tourists' journeys to their ancestral homeland are seen as

pilgrimage and experienced as a 'journey of discovery' and a 'life changing experience' (Basu 2004:151). Similar to the roots-tourists, the roots-migrants are in search of a place which provides them with a strong sense of identification and belonging. However, in contrast to the roots-tourists who have been away from the country of origin for two or more generations, Italian roots-migrants' connections to the homeland are based on everyday translocal ways of being and belonging during their childhoods and adolescences. While Basu's roots-tourists consciously reaffirm a collective identity and celebrate a shared heritage, for Italian roots-migrants, the parents' homeland has been an integral part of their lives based on concrete translocal involvement and activity.

Ideas of 'rootedness' have been contested because of implied notions of territorially bounded, fixed ethnic entities and identities. However, in the context of migration, the nostalgic and emotional relations migrants maintain to a specific place or homeland has been observed in various contexts and explained as a counter-reaction to deterritorialisation and highly mobile life-styles (Olwig 1997). Second-generation roots-migration could be interpreted as a reaction to such intensely translocal childhoods and adolescences. 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 to lead lives characterised by mobility. This somewhat contradicts the contestation of the 'rootedness' of identity in social sciences and confirms that 'modern individuals continue to "centre themselves" in a notion of home which is itself centred on the specific spatial and temporal coordinates of the homeland' (Basu 2004:169).

But what happens to these roots once individuals have settled in the place of origin, once the transnational ways of being and belonging are transformed into local realities? What happens to the securities provided by a collective sense of belonging to an idealised homeland once this far-away homeland becomes home? When second-generation Italians actually do go to Italy, the realities they find there sometimes differ considerably from these images. But the process of settlement in Italy is not only shaped by the nostalgia and the images created before the migration, but also by structural and social factors leading to roots-migration.

Social and structural factors leading to roots-migration

Although there are many and various personal reasons for roots-migration, some general patterns can be identified. These patterns are related to pre-migration legacies: the degrees of social integration in Italy during the holidays, the degree of cultural and social integration in the Italian community in Switzerland, and the degree of structural integration in Switzerland. These experiences in both Switzerland and Italy shape the nostalgia for the homeland, and the ideas and expectations of life in Italy play an important role in the decision to migrate to Italy. During their many visits in Italy, southern Italian life seemed more relaxed, and roots-migrants emphasise how, prior to their migration, they had enjoyed being part of a big family during their holidays. They

felt very integrated in Italy during their visits, especially within kin networks. As Pamela (21) describes, the degree of social integration in Italy is a crucial factor influencing roots-migration:

> *Did you expect a lot before you left [Switzerland]?*
> Hm, I didn't think many things would be like this. One reason to go was also because there were my uncles, my cousins. There [in Switzerland] I had no one, I had no relatives, you know, because, we grew up being all together, but there you are alone. For example, you couldn't say "hey mom, I am going to visit my auntie. Or, hey mom, I am going out with a cousin", you know. So I came here, also because in the summer the cousins are always together. And then I came and it wasn't like that.

In addition to this strong sense of being part of a big family in Italy, the degree of integration in Italian social networks in Switzerland plays an important role. Most roots-migrants migrate from the Italian diasporic community in Switzerland to Italy, and they therefore expect to find a similar life-style in Italy with the same cultural norms and expectations.[6]

However, decisions to migrate are also related to the economic and social context in Switzerland. While, according to the roots-migrants, political exclusion with restrictive laws of citizenship did not impact on their decision to migrate, structural integration in Switzerland played a far more important role in their decision.[7] As described earlier, the vast majority of second-generation Italians in Switzerland come from working-class backgrounds. Although many of them now have white-collar jobs, sixteen of the twenty-one roots-migrants worked in the service sector prior to their migration (e.g. hair-dressers, nurses, mechanics, tailors), and only five of them had white-collar jobs, two of which are men. It is not surprising that only a minority of roots-migrants had white-collar jobs before their migration. Both female and male second-generation Italians who have been socially upward mobile and work in white-collar jobs in Switzerland are rather ambitious to follow their careers. Even if dreaming of life in Italy, they do not see any real chances for professional upward mobility in Italy and therefore stay in Switzerland. When talking about professional possibilities and social upward mobility, one of the second-generation Italian interviewees in Switzerland said that 'the dreams are in Italy, but reality is in Switzerland'. This is a realistic judgement of the career prospects in southern Italy.

Of the roots-migrants with white-collar jobs prior to their migration, only the two men managed to continue working in this professional strata after their migration, one of them as architect with the right personal relations, and the other one as insurance salesman with ongoing

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[6] Although parents returning to Italy facilitate the roots-migrants' decision to move to Italy, only two of the roots-migrants interviewed for this research went to Italy because their parents had returned, and both of them emphasised that they would have gone to Italy anyways. More than half of the interviewees' parents still live in Switzerland.
[7] Political exclusion is an important issue for those second-generation Italians who want to spend their lives in Switzerland, but not for those who decide to live in Italy. However, it is unclear how far restrictive access to citizenship hinders social integration and reinforces cultural and social affiliations to the country of origin. In fact, there has been a movement of members of the second generation of various backgrounds claiming facilitated access to Swiss citizenship for children of migrants born in Switzerland (Wessendorf 2005).

connections to the Swiss company he had worked for prior to migration. The three female professionals who went to Italy gave up their white-collar jobs. One of them opened a bar, and the other two became housewives.

The professional possibilities in Italy are also reflected in the gender distribution of the roots-migrants. Of the twenty-five interviewees, only seven were men. Italian migrants' sons in Switzerland are expected to be professionally upward mobile, preferably in white-collar jobs. This is difficult to realise in southern Italy. In contrast, daughters are less expected to aim for a professional career, and especially those who conform to Italian cultural expectations and who are very integrated in the Italian diasporic community in Switzerland choose traditionally female occupations in the service sector, for example as hair-dressers or tailors, professions that can also be found in southern Italy.

The fact that the majority of roots-migrants worked in the service sector prior to migration is directly linked to their motivation to migrate. Although the roots-migrants emphasise that they were satisfied with their lives in Switzerland prior to migration, the movement to Italy opens up new professional possibilities for them such as, for example, opening a shop. This is very difficult to realise in Switzerland because of high costs. All men and three women opened their own small business (as hair-dressers, mechanics or shopkeepers). Five women found work in the service sector as hair dressers and tailors (although they were very unsatisfied with the salary), while the remaining women got married, four of them joining their husbands businesses.

Importantly, roots-migrants emphasise that their decision to live in Italy was *not* motivated by feeling socially or culturally excluded in Switzerland, and they explain their migration with the attractiveness of southern Italy rather than the negative aspects of life in Switzerland. However, fifteen of the twenty-one interviewees primarily socialised with other Italians prior to their migration. This is also reflected in the marriage patterns of roots-migrants which play a major, although not the primary role in the decision to migrate.

Ten of the women and three of the men were married or engaged at the time of migration, five of whom joined their partners in Italy. The rest of them migrated together with their husbands or wives who were members of the second generation of the same background, or who were migrants from The Salento but had lived in Switzerland for nearly a decade. Although the regional origin and the connections of the partners to The Salento is important, participants of this research stated that their decision to migrate was not, or only partly, influenced by their partners' wish to live in Italy. They emphasised their individual decision and their personal wish to go to Italy.

Marital status plays a major role in terms of integration processes in Italy, single women finding it more difficult to adjust to local expectations of gender relations, an issue discussed in further detail below. Closely related to marital status is age. There are two groups of roots-

migrants: those who go to Italy in their early twenties, and those who migrate in their early thirties. The two age-groups differ regarding their motivations for going to Italy and the integration process in Italy. The older roots-migrants are both male and female and are married. They went to Italy with a clear idea of how to establish a business there, and with a certain financial coverage. The younger, female migrants went to Italy with less realistic ideas of how to establish themselves there. This link between motivations for roots-migration, expectations of life in Italy and integration in Italy will be discussed in the following section.

Settling in: finding a home or losing ones roots

Differences regarding experiences of settlement and integration in southern Italy are related to expectations and knowledge about life in Italy prior to migration, the economic position after migration, and the social positions of the individual migrants in terms of marital status and age at the time of migration. Although there are differences between the older, married and the younger, single roots-migrants, all of them share difficulties regarding the structural conditions in Italy. These difficulties are primarily based on the contrast between economic and social security in Switzerland with reliable incomes and a functioning welfare system, and the southern Italian, very precarious labour market characterised by black labour, unreliable incomes and little to no social security. Although southern Italian locals complain about these structural conditions, they grew up with them and are used to finding strategies to secure an income from day to day, often supplementing their daily needs by small farm subsistence. Roots-migrants with their 'Swiss mentality' of security and their expectations of a functioning welfare system have major difficulties in compromising with the harsh southern Italian structural realities.

However, roots-migrants in their thirties have fairly realistic ideas of what to expect of life in Italy, including the economic insecurity, the chaotic bureaucracy and corruption. They are therefore well prepared to set up a new life. Antonietta (38), for example, had always dreamt of living in Italy. In Switzerland, she primarily socialised with other Italians and met her husband within this network of friends. He had migrated from the same area as her parents at the age of 18 and wanted to save enough money to set up a new life in Italy. They got married when Antonietta was 21 and immediately started saving money and built a house in Italy. After eleven years of preparations, they moved to Italy, together with their two sons, and opened a stationary shop. Although the beginning was financially difficult, Antonietta quickly adjusted to the different conditions in her new home:

> I knew how things worked here, I knew that, for example when you go to the post office or to the bank here, things are different, but I adapted to it, …., at the beginning I got a bit nervous, but I found ways to negotiate it. If you want it, you get used to it, you just need a bit of patience.

As for Antonietta, for the older roots-migrants, it is of particular importance that with their savings from Switzerland, they can set up their own business, an opportunity not open to them in Switzerland. After living in a rented flat and being an employee in Switzerland, the personal independence and freedom of owning a business in southern Italy makes up for the structural precariousness. Furthermore, even if compromising with hard work and low incomes, their savings allow them to own their own house, either built prior to migration or inherited from the parents. Their migration to Italy enables them to take their lives into their hands to a higher degree than in Switzerland.

To take control over one's life and to own a house and a business is, in fact, the fulfilment of the parents' initial aim of emigration from Italy. The roots-migrants fulfil the aspirations of independence and personal freedom fostered by their parents and the many Italian migrants in Switzerland.[8]

Most of the older roots-migrants are happy about their decision to live in Italy. Despite difficulties with the structural and bureaucratic situation, and despite economic struggles, they are financially covered for potential losses and prepared to lead more modest lives in Italy. Importantly, they migrate with their partner and some of them with small children. For women, marital status and having children is fundamentally important in the villages in The Salento. It heightens the degree of acceptance in the community and lessens social control. Hence, married couples have a well-defined status within the village community in which they settle. Also, having their own family and a certain financial independence facilitates their settlement because it lessens the pressure to integrate.

This becomes particularly manifest when contrasting the older roots-migrants to the young, female ones. The younger roots-migrants are mostly surprised and disappointed about the conditions they meet in Italy. Prior to their migration, they had expected to start a whole new life, full of possibilities. Once they settle in Italy, their dreams of living in the parents' homeland are revealed as somewhat naïve in confrontation with both the economic conditions and the social and cultural expectations posed on women in southern Italy. They did not go to Italy with savings to set up their own business, and they only become aware of the restricted professional possibilities in southern Apulia once they are there, wages being as low as 10 Euro a day. They find it very difficult to find work, especially without the right personal relationships. Also, most available jobs are not registered and do not include social security or a pension.

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[8] The 'hunger for land and houses' *(fame di terra e case)*, i.e. the wish to own property, was one of the main aims of Italian mass emigration. During the post-war period, structural conditions in Italy were still characterised by the feudal latifondo-system with a land-owning aristocracy that had controlled property for centuries, and with dependent, landless farmers who lived at the mercy of the landowners. Major land reforms after the Second World War did not better the farmers' situation, since the plots of land given to them were too small to nourish a family (Zimmermann 1982; Behrmann, 1984). The main goal of their emigration was to get out of this situation of dependence by earning enough money to acquire property.

In addition to the professional struggle they encounter, the young roots-migrants do not expect to be caught into overarching social control. Since it is not acceptable for young women to live on their own, they live with their relatives. Within the family and with the neighbours, they often encounter a degree of social control that they experience as limiting and rigid, and they describe and perceive gender relations in southern Italy as very traditional and patriarchal. Although within the Italian community in Switzerland, seconda women were confronted with similar expectations of gender roles, there was nevertheless a certain degree of flexibility. In southern Italy, they feel constantly controlled by their relatives, and gossip in the villages is described as terribly suffocating.

Pamela (21) went to Italy at the age of nineteen. At the time of the research, she had been living there for two years, but planned to return to Switzerland:

> 'the people are too bothered about others people's business, they like to know everything. They want to know about your whole life and then tell it to others. Here, you never have your private life, a life that is just yours. There are people who wait for you in the night to see when you come home, at what time you go out, and what you wear…'

Such difficulties are certainly characteristic of the transfer from an urban to a rural context in various parts of Europe. However, there is a larger degree of traditional ideas and expectations of gender roles in remote areas of southern Italy. As both local women and women with a migrant backgrounds recount, the essence of these hierarchic gender relations is often related to physical or psychological violence and economic dependence.

Simona's experiences are a typical example of this. Interestingly, she decided to live in Italy partly because she wanted to escape her parents' control in Switzerland. At twenty-one, she moved to Italy with the expectation of finding more personal freedom there:

> *What did you miss about Italy when you were in Switzerland?*
> Everything, the sun, the sea, the food, you know, going out, because in Switzerland I couldn't go out, only here in Italy could I go out in the evening from about 8.30 until 11. There [in Switzerland] this would have been illusionary. There, I went out in the afternoon from three 'till five on Saturdays, and that was it for Saturday, and on Sundays I also went out from 3. At 6 I had to be home.
> *Also when you were 20?*
> Yes, also when I was twenty. So I never had a boyfriend there, how could you have a boyfriend with these timetables? But here I could. Yes, because here no one goes out at three in the afternoon, it's too hot, so people always go out in the evenings, so when they went out [the parents], what could they do with me? Thus I could go out, too, and there were boys… (Simona, 33).

Simona's example shows how seconda women position themselves in 'gendered geographies of power' (Pessar and Mahler 2003) and how they actively engage in finding ways to

negotiate different expectations of gender roles in different places. Resulting from experiences within Swiss society, in the Italian community in Switzerland and in the village of origin in Italy, Simona courageously decides to migrate to the country of origin in order to achieve greater personal freedom and independence. However, once in Italy, the constraints Simona is confronted with while living with her relatives and in a small village disappoint her to a degree that after a year, she moves back to Switzerland. Shortly after her re-settlement in Switzerland, her parents return to Italy and leave her behind. She can live at her uncle's place and begins to study to become a nurse. When gossip that she 'comes home late in the evenings' spreads to Italy, her father forces her to join him and her mother in Italy and threatens that otherwise, she would never see her family again. Simona moves back to Italy, a step that up until today, ten years later, she regrets.

Simona's example shows how thin the line between constraints and opportunity can be, and how expectations within the family can hinder individuals to take control over their own lives, also as adults.

The stories of the young roots-migrants have in common that even though they had spent a lot of time in Italy during their upbringing, the realities they encounter differ considerably from their expectations. Strangely enough, many of their stories are characterised by losing one's roots. While still in Switzerland, an important part of their identities was based on the longing for, and belonging to, their parents' homeland. Once in Italy, they lose this feeling and feel trapped in a place which they once hoped to be their homes, but in which they feel like strangers.

Yet, with time, most of them find ways of negotiating the good and the bad of their place of settlement and get used to those things which they disliked most at the beginning of their stay, social control being one of the main factors. Also, once they get married, their status within the community changes and gets more stable. As married women and potential mothers, they are respected to a higher degree. Furthermore, being part of a bigger family with parents in law offering financial support in situations of crisis, contributes to more material security.

Hence, age and marital status are important for the degree of satisfaction after roots-migration. Although the older roots-migrants are confronted with the same cultural expectations in Italy, they have less difficulty to integrate because they have a well-defined status as women over thirty who are married and have children. They are therefore less subject to social control and gossip. Male roots-migrants did generally not mention gender-relations as constraint.

Despite the integration difficulties in the face of the harsh economic realities and the unexpected cultural expectations, only three of the roots-migrants, two young, unmarried women and one married women in her early thirties, returned to Switzerland. The three women emphasised that they did not only return because of structural conditions, but also because of social control, a lack of personal freedom, and, simply, boredom in the rural context of The Salento.

However, the majority of roots-migrants stay in Italy because they establish social relationships, be it marriage or other family relations, that tie them to Italy. Also, they are surrounded by people who cope with the difficult economic realities, and they are dedicated to establish a new life in the place of which they had dreamed for so many years. With time, and despite difficulties of integration, most of them manage to enjoy the positive aspects of southern Italian life such as the climate, the hospitality, the spontaneity and the food.

The example of second-generation roots-migration is the extreme end of a continuum of different relations members of the second generation have to the parents' homeland. It shows that integration in the host society cannot be analysed separately from the context of origin, because in the eyes of many members of the second generation, the host society is mirrored in what they experience in the country of origin, and the other way around. Thus, the perception of a place should be viewed in connection with the imagined or real 'other' place. Roots-migrants' experiences show how the connectedness and the relation to a place change when a life-long dream becomes real and the nostalgia is replaced by a sometimes harsh reality.

Conclusion

Roots-migration is based on both cultural and economic considerations. On the one hand, roots-migrants go to Italy with the hope of professional opportunities they could not realise in Switzerland. On the other, they search for a life-style based on nostalgia for the homeland, created in the imagination of the diasporic community and confirmed during the summer holidays in the home country. These images of the homeland are central for the group identity among Italian migrants and their children in Switzerland. Italy is thereby pictured as leisurely, sunny place where warmth, spontaneity and hospitality prevail and things are taken a bit less seriously than in Switzerland. The local food, provided by the (home-) land, *la terra*, and shared with the relatives and neighbours, plays a particularly important role in these accounts and stands for the physically and spiritually nourishing nature of the village of origin, the *paese*. This counter-discourse to the 'colder' Swiss life-style and the seriousness of life in Switzerland dominated by order and cleanliness resembles what Gardner (1993) describes as *desh* among Bangladeshi migrants in Britain, meaning the spirituality and the fertility of the homeland in Bangladesh, in contrast to *bidesh*, the economic and political power found in the host country. Not only the migrants themselves, but also their children born abroad have to negotiate these two views during their childhood and adolescence and find ways to balance ambivalent feelings of belonging. The longing for the 'other' place, or the homeland, *desh*, provides many members of the second generation with a strong identity and a sense of rootedness, even if these roots are elsewhere.

For the roots-migrants who decide to give in to their nostalgia and settle in their parents' country of origin, the transformation of the homeland from imagined to real can be shocking and uprooting. In Italy, roots-migrants become aware of their idealised images of the homeland and

struggle to integrate into a society and a culture which they had until then perceived as their own. This shock is caused by existential fears of economic and social insecurity, and by the cultural expectations of the communities in which they settle. Gender relations and social control are perceived as particularly challenging and have a major impact on the integration in the local communities. The 'gendered geographies of power' (Pessar and Mahler 2003) in which female roots-migrants find themselves are shaped by a complex interrelationship between experiences in Swiss society, in the Italian community in Switzerland, and the local community in Italy. While the roots-migrants' mothers and fathers were confronted with different ideologies of gender when settling in Switzerland, their daughters experience this process in their migration to the homeland. As a result of their migration, these women find themselves in gendered power structures which are known to them, but the consequences of which they were not aware of before their migration.

Male roots-migrants do not recount difficulties regarding gender relations when settling in Italy, and, in fact, they do not even mention them. However, some of the second-generation Italians staying in Switzerland distance themselves from Italy because during their holidays, they found it difficult to deal with local expectations of manliness and machismo. Hence, the perceptions of the 'other place' or the homeland are strongly determined by the experiences in the locales where second-generation Italians grow up, be it the family, the diasporic community or the host society. But also, and just as important, the perceptions and expectations about the place of origin are strongly influenced by experiences made there during the holidays. The more someone feels integrated in Italy during the holidays, the more likely he or she is to migrate.

Second-generation roots-migrants are an extreme case on a continuum of translocal practices. Although a minority, 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 hand, they are motivated by transnational ways of being and belonging during their childhood and adolescence.

However, other members of the second generation who grew up just as translocally may not continue to foster these attachments and detach themselves from both the ethnic community and the country of origin. And yet others may emphasise their ethnic background and enact transnational ways of belonging, but not necessarily continue their transnational relations to the country of origin (Wessendorf 2005). Hence, there are different modes, intensities and scopes of how to engage with the transnational, or, in other words, there are many differing transnationalisms (Charsley 2004; Vertovec 2004).

Despite the continuing, lively scientific discourse on various ways in which migrants foster transnational connections, it is yet unclear why some people or places are more transnational than others, and what determines the continuity or the disappearance of cross-

border social practices (Rogers 2005). Italians in Switzerland, and particularly the second-generation, are one of many examples of such continuities and disruptions. Despite very similar migration histories in terms of structural, political and social conditions, but also regarding the hopes and dreams related to migration among the first generation, the children of migrants develop different notions longing and aspirations of belonging. Hence, second-generation Italians have developed a whole spectrum of relations to the host country and the country of origin, from roots-migration, to ethnic ties within Switzerland, to detachment from the ethnic community and the withering of transnational ties.

It is crucial to describe such variations of individual trajectories of settlement and transnationalism within one group and across generations, especially at a time when migrant groups continue to be essentialised and problematised as too different to integrate, and differences between groups rather than within groups dominate public discourses.

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