

based on its patrilineal ancestry. Consequently, these communities transformed their ethnic identity long before their cultural practices transformed correspondingly.

A second period, from roughly 1730 to 1915, constituted the "long route" of identity transformation. Most plains Aborigines who had not declared themselves Han earlier had nevertheless adopted "Han" culture by this time. They remained classified as non-Han, a designation which remained until the Japanese colonial regime banned foot-binding in 1915, wiping away the last visible ethnic marker distinguishing the two, thereby leading to the incorporation of the plains Aborigines into Han status. In this case, cultural modification occurred before the identity itself changed. Ironically, within current political debate, the short-route Han, who were the least "Han" culturally at the moment of their transformation, are deemed "authentically" Han. But the long-route Han, who were virtually indistinguishable from the Han culturally, are conveniently re-classified as plains Aborigines in order to illustrate Taiwan's cultural and ancestral distance from China.

Brown compares her analysis of Taiwan with the experiences of the residents of Hubei, China, many of whom identified themselves as Han prior to the 1950s but were re-classified by the PRC as Tujia. This was a transformation justified by the intermarriage historically of Han men and non-Han women, but completely at odds with the rationale leveled at the Taiwanese. Indeed, Brown criticizes both Taiwan and China for their unwillingness to acknowledge the political nature of identity, and for their zeal in advancing culture and ancestry to mobilize their nationalistic agendas.

Brown develops her own theoretical framework from her case studies and combines numerous perspectives from across the "postmodernism-science divide." While her framework is sophisticated, she could have deepened it by incorporating perspectives from gender studies since much of her data (on migration and intermarriage, for example) clearly illustrate the gendered meanings and implications of these identity processes. Given the nature of the subject Brown tackles and the striking historical and contemporary linkages between the two societies, this impressive volume will inevitably generate

controversy. Consequently, while her conclusions are persuasive, the author might have provided a more thorough elucidation of her methodological assumptions to secure the scholarly authority of her conclusions and to stave off accusations that any political agenda guided her selection of these particular case studies. Finally, given its historical correspondence to earlier trends and its importance to the contemporary debate on Taiwan-China relations, Brown could have devoted greater attention in the section on policy implications to the complexities and challenges posed for her formulations by, for example, the ever-increasing exchanges between the two societies of Taiwanese investment in and migration to China, and of Chinese wives journeying to Taiwan.

In the final analysis, perhaps, Brown's work suggests that the response to her query, "Is Taiwan Chinese?" must always be situational, fully contingent on ever unfolding social events that have little relationship to the thread-bare dogma of culture and ancestry. This theoretically informed and empirically rich work directs our attention to the complex processes of identity formation and their relationship to international politics, and will be useful to scholars working both on Taiwan-China relations and on culture, migration, and minority politics.

Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions, edited by **Thomas Faist** and **Eyüp Özveren**. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004. 248 pp. \$94.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-7546-3291-1.

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Over a very short period of time the debate on transnationalism has produced a vast array of studies and research. Its interests span from migration to the border-crossing activities of non-state agencies, organisations and institutions. Among this multitude of works a number of authors have been questioning—at the theoretic level—the relationship between transnational phenomena and space. Current processes of globalisation, in

fact, have lead to a worldwide extension of the movement of capital, information, goods and people crossing national and regional boundaries, therefore challenging the centrality of nation-states as natural settings for social research. This book focuses on new ways of understanding the relationship between social phenomena and the multiple spaces in which they take place through reference to the concept of *transnational social space*. Setting off from a definition of the concept, the book pushes itself further into its operationalisation and applies it to empirical case studies taken from the German-Turkish context.

Transnational social spaces are "relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across the borders of sovereign states" (p. 3). Such a notion of space goes beyond a mere geographic dimension, to embrace also a relational one. The concept captures both physical space and the social relations within and beyond it. Networks and the nature and contents of their ties become the new focus of analysis. Not only are networks embedded in localities, but localities themselves are related to each other through social and symbolic ties.

The book is rich in examples providing further insight into the operationalisation of the concept of *transnational social spaces* and its applications in research. The case studies presented are extremely varied, ranging from cases of first and second generation migration, to media broadcasting, to social and political movements, to transnational entrepreneurship. Though it's noted that the editors themselves recognize that the book offers insight on the regionally specific German-Turkish case, the variety of the examples provided go in favour of the generalisation of its results.

First, the book offers the elements to place the individual case studies in context. In the first chapter the general framework of international relations and supernatural agreements between Europe, Germany, and Turkey is sketched out, within which all transnational relations considered in the empirical chapters take place. Furthermore, the essays are tidily organised into separate categories (politics, entrepreneurship, everyday social life), for each of which the general setting for their action is introduced and a panorama is offered of the main actors

involved. Only after the reader has picked up these elements does (s)he move into the detail of single case studies in the chapters that follow.

It should also be added that reading through the book one appreciates the fact that there is much more to it than a mere patchwork of case studies around a common theme. All contributors follow a common theoretic framework and share the same language. While providing insight into their individual case-studies, they also fill the theoretic guide with contents and examples.

Secondly, the book is skilfully organised along the lines of the three above-mentioned macro-themes, so that the diversity of the single chapters falls into a simple and clear overall structure. The latter prepares the ground for the recognition of the common features of very different transnational spaces such as those of social and political movements, economic actors, migrants. The richness itself of the examples provided in the book becomes fundamental for a typology of transnational social spaces to be suggested, constructed along the dimension of their durability and degree of formalisation.

Within the transnational space considered, the book integrates views coming from the German and from the Turkish side, looking at the impacts of transnational ties in both local contexts. Some of the chapters have engaged in fieldwork across countries, others configure themselves as one-sided studies, yet transnational relations between the two countries are placed at the centre of their attention. Thanks to this approach, the book altogether represents an original way of engaging in multi-sited fieldwork, which is traditionally associated with transnational research.

As a whole, this collection of essays based on qualitative and ethnographic methods of enquiry makes up a rich picture of the effects of long-lasting exchanges between the two countries.

In conclusion, one may note that the contributions gathered in this book take the concept of transnational social space fully into the field. Research is grounded in places, and within the single localities, the focus is on existing relations with other locations. Transnational spaces are therefore localised, but local spaces are also placed in relation to the wider transnational context.