



Peter Jackson, Philip Crang, Claire Dwyer. *Transnational Spaces*. London: Routledge, 2004. 208 S. \$160.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-415-25419-9.



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Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (May, 2005)

P. Jackson (ed.) u.a.: Transnational Spaces

By its very nature, transnationalism as a research programme and approach could be distinguished from other perspectives by its focus and emphasis on the spatial dimension of reality. Meanwhile some other streams of investigation and discussion underestimate space as precondition and dimension of the social or even leave it out of account stressing (imagined) "spaces of flows", the (assumed) "de-territorialization" or "de-localization" of social phenomena, transnationalism is founded on the idea of still relevant and undoubtedly socially constructed spaces or spatially bounded units like nations, nation states and national societies, locales, regions, cities or neighbourhoods. Transnational phenomena in this sense are basically pluri-locally based and different socio-spatial units spanning phenomena. Thereby transnationalism holds that (first) spatial units only exist as socially constructed units, (second) social units always include a spatial dimension, and (third) social spaces and spatial spaces are not necessarily and exclusively arranged as "absolutist containers", as onion circles or as Russian dolls but could also combine in the way that one social space spans different spatial units or that different social spaces are piled up in one and the same spatial unit.

It is the explicit focus on space and on the "spaces of transnationality" (p. 1) which makes the book edited by Peter Jackson, Philip Crang and Claire Dwyer so interesting and stimulating. This idea is developed in the editors' introduction stressing mainly four aspects: first, that "within academia itself, different models of transnationality have been developed in different geographic spaces" (p. 1); second, that different transnational formations can be characterised by their specific spatiality (like victim-refugee-spaces, imperial-colonial-spaces, labour-service-spaces or trade-business-professional spaces); third, even if not directly "on the move", "more and more people throughout the world are experiencing different forms of transnationality" (p. 2); and fourth, "that transnationality is a geographical term, centrally concerned with reconfigurations in relation with place, landscape and space" (p. 4). The editors stress against the "hyperbolic equation of transnationality only with discourses of flow, movement, flight and smooth space the dialectical relations of the grounded and the flighty, the settled and the flowing, the sticky and the smooth" (p. 8).

After this introductory chapter there are six chapters

related in one way or another to the geographic region of Asia and (only) one chapter focussing on Europe. Chapter 2 analyses the emergence and stability of a transnational fashion spanning between Asia and Great Britain, chapter 3 treats the corresponding commodity chains and firms involved. Chapters 4 to 6 analyse the national immigration policies and politics for the transnational relations between India, Canada and Great Britain, Hong Kong and Canada in general, and Hong Kong and Vancouver in particular. Chapter 7 analyses the decomposition and/or reinforcement of traditional forms of patriarchy in the (business) migration between Singapore and China. The final chapter 8 looks for the (possible) emergence of an integrated European space of migration and mobility.

The book in general makes three strong points which seem to be related to the discipline of the three editors as geographers and to the historical background of the chapters (mostly presented at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in April 2000): First, it emphasises that 'space does matter' and it argues against fashioned 'de-territorialization' discourse (p. 5, 6, 120) and is also sceptical against simplistic 'transnationalisms from above and from below' (p. 8, 9). The editors' introduction is also strong in 'localizing' the different transnationalism and transnationality concepts following basically the arguments of Steven Vertovec (p. 8f.). The second strength is underlining the importance of artefacts like commodities and embedding commodities as preconditions, mediums and outcomes of societal transnationalisation and transnational social spaces (mainly and explicitly chapter 1 and 3). The third main forte of the volume is the sensitivity of quite all chapters for the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, of integrating and marginalizing which are on work in transnational social spaces just as in other types of social spaces; this last aspect is stressed especially in chapter 8: 'Intra-EU transnationalism would appear to be at the expense of extra-EU transnationalism.' (p. 178)

Besides these strengths the book reveals also some strong challenges to work on in the future. As underlined explicitly in the introduction, the book develops a very 'expansive notion of transnational space' (p. 3), where 'our approach to transnational space is much wider in scope than most existing studies of transnational communities' (p. 13). And the editors stress: 'Transnational space is, we argue, complex, multidimensional and multiply inhabited' (p. 3) 'but this is not so new, it was outlined already in the meanwhile classical transnational literature and also in the first volume of the Rout-

ledge Research in Transnationalism series. Pries, Ludger (Ed.), *Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, Aldershot 1999; Pries, Ludger (Ed.), *New Transnational Social Spaces*. International Migration and Transnational Companies, London 2001. In spite of 'practising, ordering or cataloguing the different meanings of transnationalism according to the state of the art literature the editors' chapter invites to a questionable widening and expanding of the transnationalism notion. After citing the remarkable 'conceptual guidelines' of Alejandro Portes et al. Portes, Alejandro; Guarnizo, Luis E.; Landolt, Patricia, Introduction. Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field, in: *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 22,2 (1999), p. 217-237; Portes, Alejandro; Haller, William, J.; Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo, *Transnational Entrepreneurs. An Alternative Form of Immigrant Economic Adaption*, in: *American Sociological Review* 67 (2002), p. 278-298. the editors state: 'Given our interest in mapping the wider spaces of transnationalism, there is something too prescriptive about such "guidelines". Rather than seeking to delimit the field of transnational studies, restricting analysis to the study of migration flows and diasporic populations, we seek to extend the field to encompass a wider range of other cultural practices and social processes.' (p. 15). But Alejandro Portes and others Levitt, Peggy; DeWind, Josh; Vertovec, Steven, *International Perspectives on Transnational Migration. An introduction*, in: *International Migration Review* 37 (2003), p. 565-575; Vertovec, Steven, *Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism. Towards Conceptual Cross-fertilization*, in: *International Migration Review* 37 (2003), p. 641-665. did not recommend to reduce the area of objects to study, however insisted in theoretical and methodological scrutiny and in developing concepts to study emergence, persistence and internal structures and processes of transnational social spaces as well as their interaction with other social spaces. When the editors 'wish to suggest that increasing numbers of people participate in transnational space, irrespective of their own migration histories or "ethnic" identities' (p. 2, italics in original) this focus goes too far when including everybody in transnational social spaces who is just eating a 'hybrid pizza' or a 'transnational Döner'. Following this 'broadening' or better: 'dissolving' of transnationalism, the concept would be at risk to become a new catch all term 'like globalisation in the 1980s.

Some ultimate comments have to be made on the time schedule as well as things and chapters not written for this book. In times of transnational communication technologies four and a half years (from April 2000 to Octo-

ber 2004) seem to be a long period for publishing a book. Most of the literature ends in 2000, additionally, chapter 1 and 6 are â in this context and price segment not completely understandable â reprints. The volume would have been even much more attractive including, first, more explicit comparison within the published chapters with other regions and research outcomes (e.g. comparing results of chapter 4 with the work of Robert Smith, of chapter 7 with the studies of Luin Goldring, of chapter

8 with migration systems study of Aristide Zolberg etc.) and, second, at least one comparative chapter for the regional studies especially between the chapters 2 to 7 and between chapter 8 and the others.

In spite of these critics, âTransnational Spacesâ is a theoretically stimulating and empirically rich book opening new research topics and regions to the ongoing and still fruitful transnationalism approach and research program.

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Citation: Ludger Pries. Review of Jackson, Peter; Crang, Philip; Dwyer, Claire, *Transnational Spaces*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. May, 2005.

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