

lamiento voluntario en Bolivia y luego, a partir del caso de los totobí-gosode (ayoréode) de Paraguay, reflexiona sobre las consecuencias negativas supuestas por las situaciones de contacto mal planificadas o no deseadas por los indígenas. Riester procura introducir algunas reflexiones generales sobre la producción de documentales antropológicos sobre los pueblos indígenas de las tierras bajas de Bolivia y, bajo forma de anexo, ofrece una completa lista preliminar de las principales producciones fílmicas sobre los indígenas de esta zona. Por último, Peña Hasbún sintetiza las principales publicaciones sobre los pueblos indígenas del departamento de Santa Cruz a partir de 1982 y expone los principales aportes bibliográficos existentes en los campos de la antropología, la historia y la arqueología, realizando una clasificación tanto en función de los pueblos indígenas como de las temáticas tratadas.

La perspectiva comparativa y de larga duración, la diversidad de los temas, la buena calidad de imagen de las fotografías y mapas, así como la propuesta general, matizada por un tono crítico y riguroso, de repensar el clásico enfoque de “área cultural” – acaso más próxima a la realidad de una región como las “tierras bajas de Bolivia” –, buscan desmontar aquellos armazones rígidos que han aislado demasiado tiempo “lo alto” de “lo bajo” y, al mismo tiempo, rescatar la riqueza ambivalente de los enlaces, las mediaciones, los contactos y la complementariedad. En suma, la exploración de este libro será una tarea enriquecedora para todos aquellos que deseen toparse con una obra que introduce las nociones de complejidad y heterogeneidad en términos amplios (metodológicos, analíticos y reflexivos) generando por el momento más preguntas que respuestas acabadas.

Gala Coconier

**Vora, Neha:** *Impossible Citizens. Dubai's Indian Diaspora.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. 245 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-5393-5. Price: £ 16.99

Based upon years of fieldwork among Indians of various generational and subject – position, albeit of generally middle class, backgrounds in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Neha Vora's “Impossible Citizens” is an accomplished and even exemplary piece of anthropological writing, weaving a sophisticated theoretical framework with keen observation and a sensitive feeling for a place and its people. If, moreover, as James Fernandez once put it, good ethnography is about carefully listening to people's voices, then “Impossible Citizens” also succeeds as an exercise in sensitive listening. While I would certainly recommend this book for scholars, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates, this does not go far enough. For “Impossible Citizens,” more than any other work I have encountered, succeeds in bringing a generally neglected (when not denigrated) region to a central place in anthropological theory, in this case theory about citizenship and governance.

In the concluding chapter Vora claims that her interlocutors' narratives “showcased how Dubai was both rather non-exceptional and could teach us about many other parts of contemporary world with which it might at first

seem incommensurable” (190). One of the strengths of the book is to challenge stereotypes both about Dubai and its Indian residents by capturing the diversity and nuances of the lived realities of Indians, and by also rereading and critiquing dominant historiographical and ethnographic approaches to the Gulf region. All of this shines a new and unexpected light on the city-state, its population, and its urbanism, and will advance conversations about the region within regional studies scholarship. But more interestingly and skillfully, Vora shows how such critical attention can leverage ethnographic knowledge about a place and time into a rethinking of social and political theory, and this is what ultimately elevates this text to the level of a must-read not only for regional scholars but also for scholars in postcolonial studies and political anthropology.

Broadly, the argument is organized around key terms such as identity, citizenship, and governance, and the conclusion presents a fascinating reflection on the category of democracy, influenced by the thought of the political philosopher Etienne Balibar. As is well-known, Dubai presents in arguably extreme form the so-called demographic imbalance (as dominant Arab nationalist voices maintain) that Arab Gulf societies generally exhibit, namely, the fact that the majority of their populations are foreign, and the majority of these foreigners in places like the UAE and Qatar are from South Asian countries. This has led scholars, journalists, and lay people to assume that these are “peculiar” societies in which “local” people or national citizens are “overwhelmed” by alien cultures. Vora incisively shreds this stereotype, showing: 1) that the neat division between citizen and (in practical terms, a racialized South Asian) noncitizen is a binary produced and naturalized by various state practices and state and corporate institutions in Dubai; 2) that the category of Indian is far from homogeneous, with differently situated Indians defining citizenship, their relationship to Dubai, and their stakes in particular kinds of politicization based upon these in significantly different ways; and 3) that Indian expatriates are in important ways key actors in the coproduction of Emirati national identity and the UAE nation-state. Rather than conflating Dubai's Arab identity with the “indigeneity” or “authenticity” of the city-state, and seeing Indian identity as a passive, structurally excluded subject position or absolute other, Vora argues that “foreign residents participate in the production of the legitimacy and sovereignty of the nation-state from the site of exception ... They are, therefore, *impossible citizens*. Their modes of citizenship and belonging occur not despite but through the very legal structures and technologies of governance that prevent them from naturalizing and that produce their temporariness ...” (175).

These are among the more effective arguments of the text, which it has to be said, does at times present the reader with an overabundance of concepts and assumptions which the author invites us to rethink. Indeed, one of the areas in which the book might have been improved is in the editing, both in terms of rendering more coherent the theoretical apparatus, which can be overcomplex at times, and in the more prosaic sense of copyediting. But these are minor issues.

While I am enthusiastic about “Impossible Citizens,” I do wonder, however, about the limits of the arguments Vora makes. First, for a book that (generally successfully) questions how discourses of citizenship, sovereignty, and democracy reinforce or produce exclusions, the argument that Indians are Dubai’s “quintessential citizens” (1) risks proliferating its own exclusions. What, for example, is the significance of the official Arab(ic) discourse of the emirate? Is it not “quintessential” in some way? Is it an invented tradition or somehow otherwise arbitrary? This is not clear from the text. What of Dubai as a Persian city? Emirati citizens who are of Dubai background are predominantly ethnically Persian, and the Persian Empire / Iran has been traditionally as important as India in exerting “non-Arab” influence on the emirate: Dubai food, its “traditional” architecture, its merchant ethos, and one of its main dialects are either in significant ways Persian or of Persian roots. Second, while Vora’s critique of the rentier state (8f.) articulates a justified skepticism of ideal-typing in political science discourses about the state along with the teleology of discourses on state-formation in the social sciences more generally, are we throwing out the baby of teleology with the bathwater of Western ethnocentrism? “Questions about the legitimacy of such states and the possibilities of rights or civil society in the region actually recuperate certain teleological ideas about progress and success, those which privilege Western forms of development and thus risk defining Middle Eastern states ... as illiberal nonmodern outgrowths of primordial tribalism ...” (9). But do they always? What about “indigenous” forms of “teleology,” such as the antimonarchical and anticolonial movements of the 20th (and 21st?) century, in which places like Dubai played an interesting and much overlooked role, or the more recent demands by Gulf citizens, Bahrainis especially but also citizens from the UAE to Oman to Saudi Arabia, for democratic reforms in their countries? As exemplified most famously by the exiled Saudi dissident Abd al-Rahman Munif, reformers and other indigenous critics of the Gulf monarchies have often articulated discourses of progress, in which “questions about the legitimacy of such states and the possibilities of rights or civil society” were key demands. This might problematize the equation of teleology and Western ethnocentrism.

These are cavils, however. In short, “Impossible Citizens” is a work of tremendous accomplishment and sophistication, and I very much look forward to Vora’s future research on the Gulf.

Ahmed Kanna

**Wessendorf, Susanne:** Second-Generation Transnationalism and Roots Migration. Cross-Border Lives. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. 174 pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-4015-4. Price: £ 55.00

I partly accepted to review this book during the summer because we had planned our summer holidays in southern Italy’s Salento. And this is precisely the region of origin of the migrants whose children are object of study in Wessendorf’s book. While reading about the Italian Swiss, around us on the beach I could hear this Swiss

second generation and their children who were also on holiday. They would sometimes talk in Italian, but most of the time in Swiss with their children. Fragments of the stories and encounters with families that Susanne Wessendorf brings to life in her book so vividly sometimes were acted out for me in restaurants, parking lots, or while taking a stroll on the main streets of villages like Salve.

I read the ethnography of Susanne Wessendorf with great joy, but also with a bit of sadness. Her book gives an incredibly rich picture of the Italian second generation in Switzerland, connecting important topics like integration with transnationalism and gender and social mobility studies. This sort of study takes years of continuous fieldwork and the commitment to stay in touch with people over time. All this makes it a classic study to read for young anthropology students who have the ambition to do a study like this, which is great. It makes me, however, sad because my guess is that there will hardly be studies like this in the future. PhD students will not be given the time anymore to do this sort of extensive fieldwork studies and they will be pressed to make articles rather than such a splendid monograph.

The importance of Wessendorf’s book lies not only in the superb fieldwork; it also gives us important new insights of how integration and transnationalism relate to each other and how gender plays a pivotal role in this complicated process. Wessendorf connects the dots that so far have been lacking in much of the research done in these two fields of study. For many researchers who study integration processes, transnationalism, at the best, is one of the indicators for integration – or lack thereof. At the same time, researchers who study transnationalism, also because of their focus on the first generation, often do not connect their findings to integration processes. This study, however, shows how valuable this connection is. Wessendorf distinguishes basically two groups in her study. There is the group she describes as the “true Italians” and the group that she labels “Swiss Italians.” The “true Italians” use typical markers like Italian scooters, music, and clothes to distinguish themselves in Swiss society as Italians. The second group, although they do not dismiss their Italian roots, more often emphasize that they are Swiss and fully belong in their homeland. Wessendorf’s quest is to understand how one gets to belonging to either one of these two groups, while their parents originate from the very same region in Italy and belonged to the same social strata in society. Wessendorf answers this question mostly by relating it to the type of integration process the youngsters experienced. This begins with whether they grew up in a town or neighborhood with co-ethnics and/or if they went to school with co-ethnics. But it also relates to their experiences during holidays in Italy and positive or negative experiences they had there. Next to these structural and family factors Wessendorf also points to individual characteristics that determine someone’s pathway. However, almost equally important, especially for those young second-generation adolescents that eventually migrate to the region of origin of their parents – the *roots migrants* – seems to be gender. When on page 139 Wessendorf summarizes all the factors of importance to explain differenc-