*PA*rtecipazione e *CO*nflitto
** The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies*
http://siba-ese.unisalento.it/index.php/paco
ISSN: 1972-7623 (print version)
ISSN: 2035-6609 (electronic version)
***PACO*, Issue 13(1) 2020: 874-882**
DOI: 10.1285/i20356609v13i1p874

Published in March 15, 2020

SYMPOSIUM – REVIEW/5

"ESCHEWING THE TEDIOUS TERRAIN OF LOOKING FOR EUROPEAN IDENTITY" WITHOUT AVOIDING THE POLITICAL

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Everyday Europe: Social transnationalism in an unsettled continent, the subject of this symposium, is an innovative co-authored volume that is part of a welcomed and programmatic shift in sociology and political science from normative theories and prognoses of European society to empirical investigations of how Europe is socially constructed in the daily lives of its members. This important volume is a coherent and well-thought follow-up of previous work realized by the Pioneer project team (Recchi and Favell 2009).

Before turning at the content of the book in more detail, some explanation of the term of European 'social transnationalism' may be of use. This book takes explicit inspiration from the work of Steffen Mau *Social Transnationalism. Lifeworlds Beyond the Nation-State* (2010). Consistent with the focus on social transnationalism as everyday practices, Favell and Recchi delineate the term in the Introduction using examples from everyday life. "From ever growing intra-EU tourism, cross-continental transportation of goods and SME business trade, to the diversifying consumption of international music and food – to take specific dimensions evoked in this volume – what we call after Mau

(2010) 'social transnationalism' within and across Europe is a fact of everyday life" (p. 3). *Everyday Europe* explores European social transnationalism in terms of how "transnational behaviors (migration, travel, tourism, cross-border networks) and transnational consumption (both commercial and cultural)" structure the "subjectivities" of members of European society along three axes: identification, solidarity, and narratives (p. 19). The book's emphasis on identification, solidarity, and narratives will surely shape future literature on this issue, as, we hope, the focus on the transnationalization of non-mobiles will change our way of dealing with globalization and European integration.

When it comes to its methodology, as Favell and Recchi note, much research on European social transnationalism—as well as on European society more broadly—has been based on findings from the European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer (e.g. 7). More profoundly, however, is the way that the items from said surveys have structured the subsequent literature in contemporary political science and sociology on questions relating to European society and politics (p. 9). Crucially, the EUCROSS study is a key divergence from the literature that is based on key survey items from the European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer. Epistemologically, then, this means understanding European society in terms of practice in addition to attitudes (p. 14). This approach is anchored in the work of Juan Díez Medrano (2003, 2010) and Steffen Mau (2010).

To this regard, this volume masterfully highlights the strengths of the EUCROSS project. The EUCROSS project consists of the EUCROSS survey and the EUMEAN semi-structured interviews. Indeed, all of the contributions in this volume use the EUCROSS data set—a mixed methods project consisting of semi-structured interviews, as well as structured interviews (surveys) conducted with representative samples from Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Romania and the United Kingdom (p. 291). The study's sample consists of 1.000 citizens from each nation included in the study, along with 250 Turkish and 250 Romanian foreign residents in each nation included in the study. When it comes to its mixed-method research design, the chapter signed by Roxana Barbulescu, Irina Ciornei and Albert Varela focusing on the Romanian case is a must-read.

However, the theoretical notion of social transnationalism and the methodological approach of the book is, in our view, perhaps not the most significant inspiration that this book has taken from previous work. As it was underlined by Adrian Favell when reviewing Mau's book, the fate of the European project is obviously in the authors' mind – but the EUCROSS consortium "eschews the tedious terrain of looking for European identity, dominated as this is by European Union funding networks trying to produce evidence to halt the EU's apparently terminal decline" (Favell 2012: 782). The EUCROSS team members also eschew the tendency of the kind of project to produce a patchwork of contributions without consistent theoretical framework. The sixteen names co-authored book being the tip of the iceberg and the sign of the integration of the team

around a strong scientific project whereas under-sea part runs thorough the different chapters of the book. Each chapter in this volume makes indeed a notable contribution to the study of what can be call the 'everyday Europe' (Delhey et al. 2014; McNamara 2015), "underneath the stalled politics, faltering economy and stagnant legal development" (Recchi and Favell 2019: 2).

To give a more specific overview of the book, it explores the way the European social transnationalism has changed European ordinary lives on three dimensions: (1) Identifications understood as in terms of support and sympathy for international cooperative politics; (2) Solidarities defined as ideas and conceptions of community and shared destiny; and (3) Narratives encompassing personal views of how individuals see themselves in the world (p. 19). These interlinked themes are illuminated through a succession of thematic transversal chapters coupled with case studies.

Exploring the theme of Identification, the two first chapters – co-authored respectively by Mike Savage, Niall Cunningham, David Reimer and Adrian Favell on the one hand and Justyna Salamońska and Ettore Recchi on the other hand – offer a very rich and precise study of the national and social transnational practices. The first crucial point that these chapters make is how some European nations still have historically rooted relations with the rest of the world and visualizes a kind of stratification inherent in accessing these transnational practices. The second essential empirical contribution is to remind the reader that, at the micro-level, mobilities – physical and virtual – are markedly correlated with socioeconomic status as the better-off and especially the highly educated turn to cross-border practices significantly more (p. 81). From a very different perspective but building on these two crucial results, in the third chapter, Laurie Hanquinet and Mike Savage investigate the connection between cultural tastes and practices, transnational mobility practices, and sub- and supra-national European identifications. This contribution then brings the unique EUCROSS survey data to bear on the literature on cultural boundaries that has developed from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. Bourdieu 1979; Peterson and Kern 1996; Bennett et al. 2009). Richard Peterson's seminal works in this area (Peterson and Simkus 1992; Peterson and Kern 1996) define cultural capital in terms of taste. Hanquinet and Savage, via the EUCROSS data, extend the work of Bennett and colleagues (2009) by focusing on cultural tastes *and* practices. As the chapters' authors note, the provision of cross-national data collected with the same detailed measures of cultural tastes and practices is a major contribution of the EUCROSS data (p. 90). The chapter paints an interesting and rich picture of the fragmentation of highbrow culture that includes measures of transnational mobility (p. 111). Chapter four focuses specifically on the effects of European transnationalism on supranational identifications and is co-authored by Steffen Pötzsche and Michael Braun. This chapter push

even further the picture of a very fragmented continent as their result stress that, "*when the national populations are broken down by individual countries, few of the transnationalism variables remain significant in more than one country, and when they are significant, they have effects in opposite directions*" (p. 133). The analysis concludes that the explanatory power of transnational variables can thus be regarded as rather low.

This volume's exploration of the theme of solidarity can be seen in the fifth chapter, which was written by Juan Díez Medrano, Irina Ciornei and Fulya Apaydin. The starting point is the definition of solidarity as "people's willingness to help others" (p.140) and the authors argument that "[o]ne can best capture solidarity in action by examining a community's capacity to set goals for itself and to pursue these goals effectively, and by analysing the community's and the citizens' level of attention to its members' needs" (p.143). Díez Medrano and colleagues then operationalize this nuanced definition of "solidarity" as a dependent variable using three survey items: 1) Respondents' ranking of the importance of the "aims" of the European Union, 2) Respondents' opinion of who should help financially in the case of a natural disaster in their country's capital region versus an EU member nation, and 3) Respondents' approval of financial relief for debtor member states within the EU.

Broadly, the statistical results presented in this chapter confirm previous studies of European solidarity (p. 144). More specifically, the results do not provide evidence of a statistically significant association between "transnational background and practices" and solidarity (p. 152). The authors also discuss how the connection between transnationalism and solidarity is not observed in the semi-structured interview data (p. 160). These measures and findings are then key contributions to the literature on solidarity and transnationalism and pave the way for future work to interrogate this relationship further.

Finally, this volume investigates the connection between transnationalism and narratives. As an example, the sixth chapter in the volume authored by Adrian Favell, Janne Solgaard Jensen and David Reimer builds on Díez Medrano's (2003, 2010) pathbreaking work that set the stage for scholarship on EU integration as distinct from findings and survey items from the European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer. In this vein, the goal of the chapter is "disaggregation, and a focus on understanding qualitatively the positional variation of Europeans in a mobile Europe" (p. 171).

The authors use semi-structured interviews from the EUMEAN section of the EU-CROSS study in order to compare the relationship between transnational practices and attitudes of cosmopolitanism across social position and nation. The article's aim is then to provide an understanding of citizens' understanding of their own transnational practices by using their narratives on said practices. The authors find that transnationalism has become banal in the lives of the respondents and often intersects with geography,

cosmopolitanism, and national history (p.190). The fact that transnationalism has become commonplace in the lives of respondents serves as an indicator of its centrality to daily lives of EU residents.

As underlined, all the chapters are very convincing and the all project is very coherent, there is little doubt about this. Where the disagreement could however begin is as it is often the case when it comes to the interpretation of results and their normative implications. Considering the national rooted heritage and the social stratification of the European social transnationalism practices as described by the book as well as the relatively low impact that those practices have on identifications or solidarity for example, the reader could be taken by surprise. Indeed, in the Introduction Adrian Favell and Ettore Recchi describe the social consequences of an integrating continent as irrevocable (p. 2). They also stress that "European integration has set in motion patterns of changed behaviours and practices, driven by widening and deepening cross-border connections at all level of society and in all corners of Europe, that have their own evolution at least partly decoupled form politics" (p. 2). A goal of the volume is indeed to decouple politics and transnationalism.

To this regard, and as political sociologists, we see this volume, and the data it showcases, as fertile ground for the further exploration of European social transnationalism as political. Building on a rich tradition of European qualitative political sociology (e.g. Belot 2000; Díez Medrano 2003, Duchesne et al. 2013; Van Ingelgom 2014), we see this connection to the political as empirical rather than normative. Thus, we re-engage with questions that the introduction raises concerning political legitimacy (6-7). If we see the EU's legitimacy through the eyes of its residents, we can utilize EUMEAN to investigate if and how respondents' narratives of transnationalism legitimate regional, national, and/or supranational political power. From this perspective, we wonder whether respondents' narratives of their transnational practices—or lack thereof—are employed as justifications of their support of, or opposition to, the EU. In a broader perspective, then, such legitimations could be seen as "democratic linkages"—or "the various ways in which citizens can be connected in a structural and durable way to their political system" (Van Ingelgom and Dupuy 2017; Kitschelt & Wilkinson 2007).

Decoupling politics and transnationalism is a very valuable step in our understanding of current developments and the book demonstrates clearly how looking at this other Europe, the 'everyday Europe' is meaningful. However, besides the dominant positive picture of transnationalism that this co-authored volume fails to avoid and the irrevocable character of the social consequences of an integrating continent, one cannot not reflect on the fact that transnationalism could also result in a strengthening of nationalistic attitudes. Particularly when, as state by Steffen Pötzsche and Michael Braun in the

conclusion of their chapter on supranational identifications, "the total explanatory power of the transnational variables can thus be regarded as rather low" (p. 133). In our view, the Janus-faced character of this social transnationalism is essentially political. The weakening of the role of the nation-state, coupled with the inequalities characterizing this social transnationalism as described in the chapter analyzing the social structure of transnational practices, has also political consequences, as it has also political sources when it comes to narratives by political elites this time.

Ettore Recchi addresses this question in his very stimulating epilogue examining a key question of the sociology of European integration: Are we heading towards a fusion or a fission of European societies? To this regard, the recoupling of politics and transnationalism seems also a necessary step that could be undertaken by fostering a dialogue with political sociologists and political scientists as we are, perhaps in another EU-funding project that eschews the tedious terrain of looking for European identity without avoid the political. Indeed, using semi-structured interview data to study respondent legitimations qua democratic linkages contributes to the qualitative movement away from understanding EU integration and transnationalism in terms of survey items and instead investigating it as manifested in the narratives of citizens. This approach can then intersect with the EUCROSS data in important ways. For example, one may investigate citizens' narratives in conjunction with their transnational practices as legitimations of power. As such, this would help to synthesize the literature on legitimacy and democratic linkages with scholarship on European social transnationalism. The findings of such future qualitative work could then be used to formulate hypotheses about political legitimacy and transnationalism that supplement the literature and allow for explorations of whether associations observed in the EUMEAN semi-structured interviews can be generalized to national populations using the EUCROSS data. This dialogue between EUMEAN data and EUCROSS data has of course already been started by, for example, the contribution of Juan Díez Medrano, Irina Ciornei and Fulya Apaydin or the chapter from Roxana Barbulescu, Irina Ciornei and Albert Varela. We encourage future work to continue this synergy between qualitative and qualitative work on European social transnationalism—and European legitimacy more broadly. We would also invite – eventually formally – further collaboration to rebuild bridges between the social and the political dimensions of an integrating continent of which the political and social consequences may or may not be irrevocable.

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