

Jasna Čapo, *Dva doma. Hrvatska radna migracija u Njemačku kao transnacionalni fenomen* [Two homes. The Croatian labour migration in Germany as a transnational phenomenon], Zagreb: Durieux 2019.

Books on migration and mobility have been mushrooming in social sciences and humanities for at least several decades. This is also the case for publications written within the new paradigm of mobilities and transnationalism (Faist 2013), thus on transnational ways of living and belonging (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004), transnational family life and migrant generations. Thus, it is not easy to break through this jungle of books and papers, and find something that would amaze with a fresh perspective. Jasna Čapo's *Dva doma. Hrvatska radna migracija u Njemačku kao transnacionalni fenomen* does so without any doubts.

Dva doma is based on a long-time ethnographic research in Germany (Münich and Regensburg) and Croatia in 2002–2018 and over 70 ethnographic in-depth interviews. Through the narratives of people of various age, gender and origin (men, women, young adults and pensioners, people from the villages and cities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) Čapo reconstructs the history of Yugoslavia's *Gastarbeiter* movements, family reunions and life in two places or two homes. She looks for and tries to answer numerous questions: what is home and where is it? Is it possible to feel at home in more than one place? How is home related to the ethnic / national identity? How do the children of migrants define their home?

Jasna Čapo analyses the narratives of Croats – workers who migrated from then Yugoslavia and later Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of bilateral agreement of 'guest workers' with Western Germany and their descendents (called here *transnational generations*). It was a real mass migration – the data indicate that by the end of the 1970s there were around 1.3 million Croats living outside Yugoslavia (p. 9). Even though the popular image of the *Gastarbeiter* presents him as a young single, unqualified man, squeezed in one room with other migrants, Čapo argues that the Yugoslavs were better educated and qualified than the migrants from other countries, and it was a migration of both men and women who worked in virtually all sectors of the German economy.

Dva doma provides the readers with an analysis of three main issues: ideologies of the return and living in two homes; transnational family life and transnational

generations' practices and identifications. Jasna Čapo rightly argues that this kind of research requires a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995), and looking at the migrants' life not only from the perspective of the sending or the receiving society, but also inside the transnational social field that emerges through their mobilities (p. 172). Both Yugoslavia and Germany perceived the migration of guest workers as temporary. Migrants got temporary work contracts and it was assumed they would come back after their termination. In Yugoslavia they were called "our temporary workers abroad" (*naši radnici na privremenom radu u inozemstvu*) and Germany denied that it was an immigrant country and offered "incentive measures to return" for three decades (p. 140). In practice, however, many people used to prolong their stay and started to bring their families to Germany. At the same time, they assumed they would return to Yugoslavia (and then Croatia, Bosna and Hercegovina), so that they would organize their life *dvodomno* (in two homes). It means they would visit their home places (*dolu*) regularly, invest in building houses, land and agricultural tools or establish businesses. For a long time, many of them lived in Germany very modestly in small, simply furnished flats, while all their earnings they spent in the home town, preparing a place to go back there.

Furthermore, they had to organize the life and education of their children. Thus, some of them decided to entrust the children to the extended family's care, especially grandparents. *To je sasvim normalno bilo da dijete bude kod bake* [It was completely normal for a child to be with her/his grandmother] – says one of Čapo's interlocutors (p. 250), thus the decision about the overall migratory process was made by the extended family. For a long time many families have lived transnationally – one parent was in Germany, the other one in Croatia, or one brother in Croatia, another in Germany. While there are plenty of studies analysing the transnational parenthood, especially motherhood (e.g. Salazar Parreñas 2005), Jasna Čapo's important contribution relates to transnational brother- and sisterhood. Many young people have lived in two houses separately from their siblings, especially the older children living with their grandparents in Croatia / Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the younger children were with their parents in Germany. Some of them have lived in the two places, spending some part of the year in Germany and the other part in their parents' hometown. Some children would live for years in Croatia, and later spent a few years in Germany. This mobility has strongly affected their feelings of belonging and identity, and in addition has also caused many problems, e.g. at school. This issue can be seen in the narratives of young people who were raised in both places: they have to negotiate their identities between a Croat / German, a Croat from Germany and a German Croat. Living a life in-between is also visible in the language young people use: it is a mixed code (Blommaert 2013) of the standard Croatian language, the local Croatian / Bosnian dialects and German.

During the life course of one single family, the plans for a return were prolonging or changing. One of the most important conclusions of the book is that migration and return are not irreversible events and that migration may lead to a return, and

then a return can again turn into a (re)migration (p. 630). In the words of the author, “it turned out that stability and ambiguity should not be included in the return plan, but that plan of return is a dynamic activity that is constantly adapted to changing migration policies, economic and social circumstances in both countries, and to the specific moment and events in the migrant’s personal and family history” (p. 360). In other words, the migrants have long lived in “permanent temporality” (*stalna privremenost*) (Čapo Žmegač 2003).

Dva doma is a beautifully written book, empirically, methodologically and theoretically rich. It is a brilliant contribution to the migration and family studies, and a fascinating journey through history and contemporaneity of the Croats living in two places, their difficult identity choices, and family relations.

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Dr hab. Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska
Associate Professor, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
University of Warsaw
ul. Żurawia 4
00-503 Warszawa
k.bielenin@uw.edu.pl