Under the influence of an intensified globalization process, we are witnessing a rapid increase of international migrants worldwide. Among them are so-called “second-generation immigrant children”, who are defined as individuals who were born and raised in a host country and have at least one foreign-born parent. In the United States today, they make up a significant proportion of the population, increasing the society’s ethnic and racial diversity more than ever before. Successful integration of second-generation children to the mainstream educational system and labor force has become a major political concern. These societal changes and concerns have led many scholars in sociology, anthropology, and education to focus on the adaptation processes of second-generation immigrant children since the 1990s.

In line with this burgeoning literature, this book explores how 1.5 and second-generation Asian American immigrant youth, living in a multi-ethnic suburb of a metropolitan area in the United States, negotiate the often incompatible cultural values of the country of origin and the host society and struggle to construct belonging and identity in a marginalized environment. The author, Tokunaga, does an excellent job in presenting the complex worldview and nuanced feelings of nine working-class Asian American girls, whose ethnicities include Chinese, Indian, Filipina, and Vietnamese. Through her fieldwork at an afterschool program at Maple High in which the girls participated, and by interacting with the girls in and out of school, Tokunaga was able to capture the minute details of the girls’ life in-between. The book successfully reveals the ways in which the girls interpreted and strategically negotiated the contradictions from an insider’s perspective.

In addition to a rich body of ethnographic data, Tokunaga’s ambitious use of the Japanese concept *ibasho* offers fresh insight into the often neglected in-between lives of immigrant youth. Drawing on various Japanese literature, Tokunaga introduces the *ibasho* concept as “places where they feel at home and where they could be themselves” (8), and having “a practice-oriented aspect”, “focuses on the processes of ‘creating *ibasho*’ (*ibasho zukuri*) rather than assuming it is a fixed and passive condition”(9). Guided by this *ibasho* concept,
Tokunaga brings the agency of the immigrant girls to the forefront and delineates the various ways in which these girls carve out an inclusive alternative space where they can feel a sense of belonging and generate self-respect.

Such multivariate forms of immigrant girls’ agency are presented from Chapter 2 through Chapter 6. Before digging into the girls’ strategic practice of creating *ibasho*, Tokunaga, in Chapter 2, demonstrates the struggles of Asian American girls who maintain cultural, emotional, and imaginary ties to both their countries of origin and the United States. She reveals how the girls understood their in-between positioning as offering both possibilities and constraints for their lives, thus attempting to balance the pulls from both countries to get the most out of having two homes across national boundaries.

Chapter 3 delves into the underworld of Asian American girls at Maple High, focusing on membership and activities of what the girls called “Basement Group.” Feeling out of place in the mainstream, the girls cooperatively created a hybrid cultural community in the corner of the school basement hallway during recess and lunchtime.

Chapter 4 depicts how *ibasho* was created through the after-school program of a community-based organization. Led by the organization’s goals to empower Asian immigrant children, this program became “an alternative site of learning “ for Asian American youths, where “the girls were empowered to construct sites of belonging and foster Asian American identity” (85). The importance of this after-school program is not only that it offered an alternative space of belonging, but that it also supported the girls’ construction of “Basement Group” in daily school hours by acknowledging them as “cultural innovators and mediators” (85). Through this institutional support, the girls were able to exert agency in their school life, otherwise dominated by the mainstream culture.

Chapters 5 and 6 present new perspectives about the agency of these immigrant youths by focusing on their appropriation of consumer culture and social media to form a collective “Asian” identity.

Chapter 5 reveals how Asian American girls actively created “Asianized” *ibasho* in their neighborhoods by using commercial goods that symbolize Asian cultures. The girls were particularly fond of Japanese and Korean goods, marking them as “Asian”. By discovering, purchasing, discussing, and wearing these “Asian” goods, the girls constructed identities and formed a group solidarity with “being Asian” at the core. The chapter also highlights the intersectionality between race and gender identities, arguing that the girls created a hybridized femininity in which American cultural standards of beauty (natural girlhood) and Asian cuteness (*kawaii*) are mingled.

Chapter 6 goes a step further to investigate how the girls used consumer culture and media to form virtual *ibasho*. One of the important findings is their creative use of social media. The girls created social and emotional ties with people they had never met, constructing a “virtual diasporic community” in which Asian pop culture was shared and their Asian identities were affirmed.

Overall, this book greatly advances our knowledge of second-generation immigrant youths’ individual and collective power to navigate in-between spaces, their complex interpretation of multiple homes and values that transcend national boundaries, and their ability to construct hybridized cultures, identity, and alternative spaces of belonging. The ethnographic description is detailed, and the author’s message is clear, yet the analysis seemed a bit repetitive. It might have benefited from greater focus on the structural constraints imposed upon
the girls, such as their working-class family backgrounds, scarce ethnic resources at school and in the community, racial hierarchy among peers, Asian American stereotypes and unequal educational opportunities.

Nevertheless, this book is an important contribution to literature on second-generation immigrant children’s liminality, acculturation, and identity formation in transnational social spaces. The theoretical and practical implications drawn from this study may also be applied to Japanese society and education, which are now facing increased ethnic diversities with the influx of immigrants. The book is highly recommended to anyone interested in how society and education can support immigrant youths’ construction of *ibasho* and empowerment.