The Cosmopolitan Mediterranean: Myth and Reality
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The Cosmopolitan Mediterranean: Myth and Reality

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Abstract. The unity of the Mediterranean as a cultural region has been discussed in anthropology exclusively by means of structural characteristics. The question if "the Mediterranean" means anything at all to our informants has hardly entered the discussion. The focus of this article is threefold: first, the discursive use of the Mediterranean as cosmopolitan, both in the fields of political ideology and local identifications is envisioned. Second, cosmopolitan forms of local social organization are analyzed. It argues that the current boom of the term "Cosmopolitanism" in academia is discussed as stripped off its cultural and social embeddedness. Using the Mediterranean the article shows that as lived identification and social organization, cosmopolitanism is not necessarily opposed to local ways of living.

[Mediterranean, cosmopolitanism, ethnicity, fundamentalism, politics]

Characterising the Mediterranean region as cosmopolitan is closely linked with a central question of anthropology, namely the unity of cultural regions. For the Mediterranean, it has been answered with two opposing positions, one stressing the connecting instances (Braudel 1949; Goitein 1967–68; Horden/Purcell 2000) and the other on the differences (Herzfeld 1989) between the individual coastal cultures. Both approaches have been extensively discussed in Mediterranean anthropology, by means of structural characteristics in the fields of culture, politics, topography, religion, economics, and society (Wolf 1969; Peristany 1976; Davis 1977, 1984; Boissevain 1979; Herzfeld 1984). In contrast, actor centricity, the significance ascribed to the Mediterranean region on the level of identification and the degree to which it is relevant in terms of practical behaviour have not yet undergone sufficient ethnological investigation. Given the shift in anthropology from structure and function to agency, this is all the more astonishing – and probably specific to other culture areas as well.

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Today, actors in various cities have made use of the Mediterranean as cosmopolitan to bestow identity. On the one hand, politicians, creative artists, and businessmen do so on a local level to position themselves against the control of and dependence on the political metropolises of their respective nations; on the other hand, likewise on a local level, intellectuals and portions of the secular middle classes do so to counter restrictive and fundamentalist versions of their respective national cultures and/or religions (Fabre 2001; Zubaida 1998). On a transnational level, the identity founding function of experts from the EU and the Mediterranean region are used to readjust their positions in terms of European unification.

The Mediterranean region has numerous meanings appearing in these contexts, but they can basically be reduced to a few central components: cosmopolitan orientation and a strong urban ethos of ethnic and religious tolerance; mutual cultural enrichment and development of hybrid forms of expression; an orientation to openness out to sea; the historical depth of Trans-Mediterranean interconnections in the realms of trade and demography (Fabre 1996), particularly in port cities.

But to what extent do these references remain stuck on the merely nostalgic and banal level of the discursive creed? Which deeper seated identifications and forms social organization do they recur to? To what extent do these discourses and images go beyond political statements of intent, tourist advertising, and creative artists? What practical effects for action do they demonstrate on the day-to-day level? The article deals with these questions. In the first part of this article, I shall examine the component parts which make up the images of the cosmopolitan maintained in recent political statements, advertising, other texts and films on the Mediterranean region from an anthropological point of view.

Images of the cosmopolitan Mediterranean are not developed in a vacuum, they rely on lived or narrated experience both past and present. In fact, life in many cities of the Mediterranean is deeply shaped by a local ethos and self-identification as cosmopolitan. In some areas, this local ethos has become ideologized and a basis to political programmes and action. In the second section, I will introduce this differentiation between lived cosmopolitan structures and identifications on the one hand and cosmopolitanism as a political and ideological concept on the other.

Identification with and narratives of cosmopolitanism often borrow elements of local social history. From a historical perspective, the third part focuses on the Mediterranean region as a reservoir of some central elements of cosmopolitanism, such as specific local institutions, port culture, and other forms of social organisation.

The recent concern with Mediterranean cosmopolitanism is embedded in wider political processes, such as the transformation of the nation-state, Europeanization and the rise of narrowed versions of ethnic and religious identity. Fourth, I would like to explore the connection between the Mediterranean's identification as cosmopolitan with these new transnational and national ways of political organization.
In conclusion, I shall discuss the much more general question as to whether the increasing emphasis on transregional (here Mediterranean) identities in the ethno-disciplines are an indication that "ethnicity" is slowly being submerged as a master discourse, similar to the development 20 years ago when "society" and "class" as master discourse were submerged by "ethnicity".

1. Components of the Cosmopolitan

Recently, the term "cosmopolitan" has been increasingly discussed in the social sciences, especially the extent to which globalization is connected with the creation of cosmopolitan environments (Featherstone 2002; Beck 2002; Venn 2002). This trend is linked to the increase of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity within Europe, which has led politicians, artists and intellectuals likewise to look for answers in referring back to multiethnic colonial and imperial (Roth 1999; Bialasiewicz 2003) entities, often in the form of colonial nostalgia, the mourning for a lost past (Mullins 2002). I do not wish to begin with a historical review of the numerous shifts in meaning that the term cosmopolitan has undergone (Nussbaum http; Kleingeld 1999). I am also not interested in determining cosmopolitan individuals, places, environments, ideologies, and religions, for example, from an analytical perspective (Zubaida 1998). From an anthropological point of view, it is more appropriate to begin with the local and everyday usage of the term.

Outside academia, the term cosmopolitan and its derivatives are used in various genres and in inconsistent manners: for example, in political statements, in literature collections (Sartorius 2001), in semi-documentary (Bonan 1997) and documentary films, in movies (Whittaker 1996), in advertising, in newspaper interviews (Spreng 1999), in art and leisure articles (Schmitt 2003), in tourism, and in book reviews (Mosebach 2001). There, cosmopolitan is usually used as a synonym for multiculturalism in the sense of an ethno-plural determination of local origin. Typical is the

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1 This romancing serves Europeans born after the times of colonialism to work through the discredited colonial involvement of their fathers, similar to the strategy of embellishment that has been detected by Welzer et al. (2002), who focus on the narratives of the children and grandchildren about the involvement of their families in Nazi-Germany.
3 E.g. by IES Barcelona, where the city is described "as a cosmopolitan city that looked outward to the Mediterranean, rather than inward to Spain." http://www.iesbarcelona.org/program/his-3.php
4 E.g. the description of Marseilles on an internet site: "You will enjoy a walk through the picturesque old port of this cosmopolitan city rich in history, culture, and folklore". http://www.travel-guide-greece.com/Cruise-greece/greek-islands-mediterranean/treasures-of-Mediterranean-Genoa.asp?cruiseID=16
uncommented simple listing of ethnic and religious groups living in a given city. Thus, in the semi-documentary "Mittelmeer - Mosaik der Völker" (Bonan 1997), a “commerçant Monsieur Grégoire” mourning for a lost past, lists “Armenians, Greeks, French, Englishmen, and Maltese” as evidence of the cosmopolitan character of Alexandria and then adds that he himself speaks French, English, Italian, Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and a little Spanish. The Mediterranean here appears to remain on the level of “banal Mediterraneanism”, which is characterised by the simple nostalgic reference to tolerance, openness, and a cosmopolitan orientation, which consists of the following components:

- **Harmonisation, equalisation and de-socialisation:** One primary component is emphasis on similarities of groups and the mutual tolerance which enables peaceful coexistence as a counter model to fundamentalism and ethnic restrictions. Typical for this is the stressing of characteristics promoting similarities and the failure to mention conflicts. Exemplary of this are interview passages with a male informant from Tangiers, former police commissioner Luis Tanger from the Jewish community (Bonan 1997). The ex-commissioner points out that Jews, Christians, and Muslims celebrate Passover, Christmas, and Aid el Kebir together and that those from the respective other religion bring certain foods to the festival. On whose experience the reference to a mutual life of goodwill is based remains unknown. We only learn that there have been “no” conflicts and that “one” understands each other. Closely linked is a blurring of social borders and the implicit transfer of the cosmopolitan to all classes. Thus, anyone hearing the interview with ex-commissioner (Moati 1999) may understand “we” as the ethnic and religious groups named, while the interviewee himself perhaps only meant a very concrete circle of acquaintances.

- **Nostalgization:** Another component is the transfiguration of the past as “perfect”, most often with literary means, but sometimes also through film representations, whereby fictional and documentary, or quasi-documentary, genres play a central role. Also significant here are views of the cities in old woodcuts, sepia-tone photos, etc., as well as accompanying the pictures with background music that seems to come from scratchy old records.

- **De-historicization:** An additional characteristic is reference back to cities from the past, usually to those mythologized in literature and films. In the interview with ex-commissioner Tanger, time horizons are so confused that it is unclear whether the informant is talking about the past or the present: once he says “earlier”, another time “yesterday evening”, there was a celebration.

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5 Here, I am paraphrasing the term “banal globalism” (Urry 2000).
6 See also Haller (2000: 306) for Gibraltar and Driessen (1992: 105) for Melilla.
Exoticization, comfortabilization, and sensualization: Frequently, the cosmopolitan is represented by a series of exotic stereotypes which the visitor can take on, a stroll through winding alleys, for example, culinary diversity, and the – simple – experience of “customs”. In a travel agency’s description of Tunisia, that sounds like this: “Tunisia’s (...) cosmopolitan mixture is a delight for visitors: the romance of African souks and bazaars, mosques, fortresses and casbahs, and the sophistication of French cuisine, manners and customs” (http://www.travelinstyle.com/tunisia/). One could describe any North African or Levantine city with those words, even if “French” had to be replaced by “Ottoman”, “British”, or “Italian” as the case may be. Also among these stereotypes is the reference to intense sensory perceptions by the tongue, ear, genitals, eyes, nose, and skin. Thus, the literary enthusiasm for Alexandria is described as based on the “multilingual vocal confusion, corruption, erotic permissiveness, sandstorms, clouds of incense, the cry of the muhadin, and jazz” (Mosebach 2001).

Literary and cinematographic processing of the city plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the cosmopolitan myths. Thus, the myth of Tangiers lives in texts by Paul Bowles and others; the cosmopolitan Alexandria of the colonial period is brought alive by the literature of Konstantinos Kavafis, Lawrence Durrell, and by the films of Joussef Chahine; the myth of Trieste would be unthinkable without the texts of Italo Svevo and Claudio Magris.

2. Local Narratives and Ideology

Images of urban life in literature, other texts and films are both bearers of collective memory and cultural representations (relating the identity of a city). The mythologisation and symbolisation of each city as unique and characteristic city tales is to be found in countless genres containing both imaginary and real components at once. The image of a city is thus simultaneously fact and fiction; it contains fantasies about the city and likewise reproduces real social and economic experiences. For example the city Tangiers in Morocco became an object of literary and film fiction as a site of intercultural encounters between Occident and Orient, in which the real and the fantasised were amalgamated into an identity-producing narrative.

On a text level, we can distinguish between the political and ideological use of cosmopolitanism and local identifications. Cosmopolitanism as an ideological concept lends consciousness to experienced cosmopolitan relations and formulates them as a positive value for the social order. In a completely general way, this movement focuses on the human in general and in concrete historical contexts on individual groups/nations/ethnos. In its Greek origin, cosmos indeed meant both “world” and “order”, and polis originally meant “fortified castle” and only later “city-state”; in the Hellenic...
Age, however, cosmopolites already meant as much as “world citizen”. Frequently, the cosmopolitanism of bourgeois middle classes and the secular intelligentsia is marked by nostalgia and political intentions likewise. In Alexandria e.g., the intentions of the Heritage Preservation Trust to save architectonic relics from pre-Nasser times and the discourse entwining the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the new library, which was opened in October, 2002, are examples of the elite’s evocation of the cosmopolitan and Mediterranean character of a city, which distinguishes it markedly from the political centre, Cairo (Hassan-Gordon 2002; Halim 2002).

That cosmopolitanism today is a sort of “political coin” precisely in the Islamic Mediterranean region is something El-Sayed Selim (1995), Elias Khoury (2003) and Joussef Chahine (Spreng 1999) refer to. Chahine designates the Arabic-Mediterranean version of Islam as a “counter movement” to the fundamentalist version of Saudi-Arabia and thus formulates a contrast necessary for the cosmopolitan ideology. This goes back to Egyptian patriotism of the 1930s, with which Chahine’s terminology and those who praise Alexandria are in one line with, and demonstrates a decidedly Mediterranean orientation which only received a pan-Arabic imprint through Nasserism (Zubaida 1998). Not surprisingly, the contrast is the “Saudis”. This is reminiscent of the sort of Orientalism Said (1978). Yet here the categories are reversed, as fundamentalism bears the characteristics that the Occident has in Orientalism: both, the Saudis for Chahine and the North for Said, are equally characterized by living in the “wilderness” of inhospitable regions (the cold north or the desert), by blind rationalism inimical to the senses and renunciation (Protestantism or fundamentalist Islam).

Voices from the Muslim world such as Chahine’s are under violent fire these days, which is a bitter experience at this precise moment. I am writing this in November 2003 after the bombings of two synagogues and a bank in Galata, widely interpreted as an attack against Turkey’s laicism and especially Istanbul’s cosmopolitanism that enables a peaceful coexistence between religions.

Here, too, ultimately lies the answer concerning the link between the ideological and medial cosmopolitanism, to everyday life and the consciousness of the people. Cosmopolitans such as Chahine are not constructing an opposition to fundamentalism out of nothing, but can frequently rely on local resources, such as:
- the widespread consciousness of coastal dwellers to distinguishing themselves from the inhabitants of the landlocked interior;
- the frequent verbal reference to “the” Mediterranean people at other places with whom one has something in common and shares something;
- the idea of geography (above all, the sea itself) generating a unique common lifestyle;
- the awareness of historical membership in multi-ethnic and multi-religious pre-national empires.

The Mediterranean does indeed convey an identification resource for various actors. In Gibraltar (Haller 2000) and in Melilla (Driessen 1992, 2001), cosmopolitan...
Mediterranean is used for identification in order to overcome ethnic and cultural differences. For the Sephardim of Gibraltar "the Mediterranean" is the implicit reference point to delineate an ultra-orthodox Jewish traditionalism, by focusing on coexistence with other groups (Haller 2001a). People in Barcelona and Malta use the term to assert self-confidence and independence in confrontation with Castilians or the European Union (Driessen 2001).

To what extent does the level of ideology and of locally experienced identifications remain stuck on the merely level of discursive confession? Are they linked to forms social organization, and if so, how? Do they have any relevance for people outside these circles? And if so, in what areas of life? Which lived experiences does it refer back to? What social and cultural sounding-board does it have?

If we are to believe film documentaries, brochures, movies, political statements, poems, and novels, the narratives are reflecting something that actually exists in the real, everyday world of real people: the art of peaceful and tolerant coexistence and – at times – a consciousness of it. Examining whether this really applies is one of the most basic tasks of ethnology. Unfortunately, there are no ethnographies available of the Mediterranean region which describe and analyse the cosmopolitan as experienced and meaningful life. Alongside text and film representations, we are greatly dependent on investigations conducted by colleagues from related disciplines: literary scholars, historians, economists, sociologists, political scientists, etc.

3. Cosmopolitan Structures in the Mediterranean

In outlying areas such as Gibraltar (Haller 2000), Melilla (Driessen 1992) and probably also Ceuta, still today colonial territories, cosmopolitan forms of social organisation – demographic, social, economic, and cultural structures such as the peaceful coexistence of Catholics, Jews, and Muslims, and even of Hindus and Protestants – can still be observed. These examples point to something that seems to be lost in most Mediterranean port cities of today, to something more than just the discursive level of local identifications and politicised versions of it: it is the lived experience of social structures, of institutions, of networks, and of multi-ethnic and multi-religious proximity and coexistence. These social structures, characteristic of cosmopolitan communities, have only seldom been maintained up to the present in the Mediterranean region, of which they were typical in the Colonial Age. Svevo's Trieste, the Tangiers of the International Zone, and other cities have been subsumed into nation states and thus subjected to the homogenisation efforts of nation states. Today, xenophobic and racist experiences appear to be more typical, as for example reflected in the electoral success of the MSI in Trieste and the Front National in Marseilles, Nice, and Toulon, in Barcelona's passionate regionalism, in the fundamentalization of Oran, Algiers, and Alexandria, in the Cypriot and Lebanese civil wars, and in the bombing of Dubrovnik. Secular
enclaves, such as the Beyoglu entertainment district in Istanbul, are being often settled by poor and religiously conservative migrants from he backcountry (Zubaida 1999).

To understand the transformations of cosmopolitan social structures, it is necessary to draw into consideration political history – such as the decay of Empires and nation-building –, and infrastructural developments – such as the transformations of ports. Today, in most cities which were characterised as cosmopolitan until the middle of the Twentieth Century are no longer present. In the course of Nasser’s policy of nationalization, for example, Alexandria was reduced to a provincial metropolis in 1952 and subordinated to a central governor. Most ethnic and religious groups (Armenian, Lebanese, Jews, Greeks, French, Italians, British) left the city. Tangiers was provincialised in a similar manner and lost its international status, after subsuming it to the Kingdom of Morocco in 1956, when the Europeans, Jews, and Americans left the city. Many cities thus lost their, perhaps differently weighted, cosmopolitan imprint and their trans-Mediterranean orientation in the course of individual nationalization policies.

Independent of political, religious and cultural breaks, the Mediterranean represented a region of contact and communication well into the Nineteenth Century, characterized by the trans-Mediterranean trade and demographic networks of Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Lebanese, Italians, and others as well as by the imperialistic and/or colonial empires of the Austro-Hungarians, Ottomans, British, and French. A reduction to ethnicity or religion in these empires was neither the only or always dominant cultural identification form nor the only or dominant political organisation pattern. Class-specific, linguistic, religious, economic, personal, ethnic, dynastic, and territorial forms of loyalty overlapped in numerous ways. This applied to empires, feudal systems, and colonial regimes. In the latter, the dichotomy between members of the colonial administration and of the military and the local societies dominated (Barth 1981 (1969)). Thus, confessional and ethnic differences have up to the present remained of secondary importance for the treatment of the multi-ethnic civilian population through the colonial establishment in the British colony of Gibraltar (Haller 2000, 2001b). On the basis of the class antagonism – dominating the colonial system – between the (British) military and the (local) civilians, an ethos of mixing and mutual tolerance developed among the latter group as well as common institutions (in the areas of education and business), hybrid forms of cultural expression, such as the Yanito idiom in Gibraltar or the trade language Sabir (Corre 2003) in the entire Mediterranean, and interethnic as well as inter-religious personal and family relationships which, though they may not replace ethnic and religious loyalties, do indeed balance and supplement them.

To generalize, many Mediterranean port cities of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries were structurally characterized by multi-ethnic composition. In those days, these groups were more often called “nations” and lived in their own districts, frequently with special rights and their own legal status as well as the right to resolve internal conflicts themselves.
This especially applied to the situation of Non-Muslims in Islamic cities. The "nations" had double loyalties, on the one hand to that state in which they lived, and on the other hand to the state which embodied their "nation" and was frequently represented by a consulate in their individual city. The "nations" or some of its members were often under the protection of a European country, for "it was customary for the European power to issue a certificate granting the non-Muslim agent the privileges of a resident foreigner: exemption from most taxes and jurisdiction under consular courts" (Commins 1999).

In the consular order, the "nations" as a whole – the French community in Beirut, for example – or the protected individuals served as arbitrators, brokers, and translators between the countries involved – the Ottoman Empire and France, for example. These 'nations' owed their special rights mainly to their economic (trade) function for the state, whereby the different groups often covered highly specific sectors. In the Nineteenth century in Morocco, for example, many Jews served foreign powers, whose consulates were restricted to the city of Tangier. The consuls regarded them as "proteges", to whom they guaranteed extraterritorial rights such as exemption from paying taxes and from prosecution, as vital intermediaries in the liberalization of trade in the country.

Locally, the "proteges" were often driving forces of modernisation and involved in the development of the entire city, which led to the emergence of a specially localistic ethos (Rémy 1990; Leontidou 1993), that emphasised the common local identity of the civilian, independent of the religious-cultural differences between the particular groups.

It may well be appropriate to use the term "third space" (Bhabha 1994: 37ff.) for the contexts in which these values and forms prevail, since there, encounter, exchange, and novelty may arise. Such a "third space" was indeed established in many cities through the double loyalty of the "nations" since they were not foreigners, but autonomous, as expressed in the construction of a common local ethos. Alexandria was a city that owed its cosmopolitan character above all to "third spaces" such as the ethnicity and religion transcending institutions in education (e.g. the Collège St. Marc and the Victoria College), administration, and society (Ilbert 1997). Similar forms of socialisation have been confirmed for Tangier (Vaidon 1977; Finlayson 1992), Ragusa (Kaser 2001), Beirut (Khalaf 1987), Smyrna (Schmitt 2003), and other port cities.

More than merely the administrative and educational institutions, it is the ports themselves, and the port districts, that can be regarded as "third spaces", as they function as sites for the exchange of goods, people, capital, and ideas, as well as for communication. According to scientists (Braudel 1949; Fritze 1986; Roding/Lex 1996; Rudolph 1980; Smith 1977), writers (N.N. 2003), and media (Bonan 1997, Moati 1999).

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7 Of the 6,000 proteges in all of Morocco in 1890, most of whom were Jews.
1999), this function created a certain socio-cultural atmosphere, that has often been
characterised as cosmopolitan, open, tolerant, dynamic, and multicultural (Hilling
1988: 24). In the ports, businessmen and shippers, seafarers and fishermen, dock
workers and suppliers interacted with each other. With industrialization, those industries
specialized in the further processing of imported goods also were established in many
port cities on the Mediterranean Sea. Port district thus became a living space not only
for the workers in the harbour, but also for those processing goods or preparing them
for further transport in harbour proximity and for their families.

Although as “Gates to the World” the large port cities of the past today still harbor
an aura of internationalism and cosmopolitanism, the function of ports as places of
communication and exchange has dramatically changed. Due to industrial growth
(especially of oil refineries), the introduction of containers, and the larger land areas
used, many ports have been moved out of the cities since the middle of the Twentieth
Century (Montanari 1988; Hayuth 1982), which has had an impact on the character
of the port district and port cities on the whole.

- The commercial trade business has no longer been linked to the physical presence
  of the trade-bourgeoisie; it takes place at global exchanges without the businessman,
  the broker, and the sea-captain ever having to see each other.
- The significance of seafarers for the port city has also been reduced. Usually hired
  in cheap-wage countries, the seafarers, if, with ever briefer mooring periods, they
  go on land at all, primarily live in container colonies and are, at least within the
  EU, subject to the restrictions of the Schengener border stipulations.
- Work in the harbor is carried out by a few specialists whose work processes have
  been thoroughly rationalised, such as that of the crane operator, whose effective
  work with loading and unloading makes the presence of port workers carrying
  goods on their shoulders superfluous. Thus, the associated common forms of social
  organization also disappear, such as the political organization in port worker unions,
  once strong and significant in port city life, or the common leisure time in the
  harbor district.
- The decline of the proportion of industrial production in national economies and
  rationalization have also had an impact on the cities themselves. Today, the
  processing industries are often no longer present. This affects the harbor region’s
  secondary infrastructure devoted to fulfilling the needs of the workers and their
  families: small shops, bars and cafés, bordellos, and handcrafts.

The, frequently unsuccessful, reorientation of the cities on new economic activities
often results in the social and physical decay of harbour districts, which frequently
become the living area for the poor and for illegal immigrants and thus a site for the
social problems accompanying them (unemployment, prostitution, criminality, drugs).
In some cities, as in Barcelona in the wake of the 1992 Olympics, the harbour districts,
here Barceloneta and Barrio Chino, have been redeveloped and, like the ports
themselves, turned into commodities (tourism, gentrification, waterfront architecture, promenades, new bars and discotheques).

To summarize, the networks of exchange (trade, demography) constitutive of a possible trans-Mediterranean unity have been reduced with the support of technological developments, and the port cities on the whole have thus lost their cosmopolitan character as the harbors have become more and more exclusively dominated by the function of exchanging goods but no longer by communication and contact (Hayuth 1982; Hoyle 1988).

Two limitations have to be considered here. First, we know that in the cosmopolitan order of Mediterranean port cities, openness was accessible for some (mostly wealthy) status groups, but not to the downtrodden. Local cosmopolitanism thus has a strongly class and culture specific tone (Massey 1994; Buzard 1993); it is constituted to the exclusion of poorer, less mobile groups whose perspectives are then slandered as fundamentalist (Urry 2000). Many portions of the population have frequently been excluded, such as the Muslims in the International Zone of Tangiers and the Spaniards in Gibraltar. For the excluded, the cosmopolitan order has often represented a disadvantage to which they have reacted with hostility. In the Golden Age of Alexandria, native Muslims of the underclass, especially migrants from the inland, experienced marginalization as messengers, civil servants, and prostitutes. It is not surprising that the Muslim Brotherhood was founded in nearby Isma’iliyya in 1928 with the goal of protecting Egyptian youth from moral corruption by the Alexandrians (Zubaida 1998).

The second reservation concerns the “third spaces” that transcend ethnicity and religion. Interaction in ports, for example, does not automatically lead to cultural interplay. In what respect have seafaring and trade contacts, for example, and the encounter with foreignness and foreigners led to cultural diversity and cultural hybridization? We do not know, for example, who, besides dragomen (translators/brokers), innkeepers, suppliers, and whores, came into contact with seafarers. We know very little about the arrangements of status, power, and hierarchy within these “third spaces”. We still lack anthropologically informed studies about the communication and exchange that took place in the port quarters, or between students from different backgrounds in colleges, whether and in which ways the encounters in such “third spaces” were hierarchically structured.

4. Fighting for and against: Politicizing Cosmopolis

Recent ideological attempts to identify the Mediterranean as cosmopolitan are connected to wider political processes such as increased transnationalism on the one hand and the renaissance of restrictive versions of ethnic and/or religious identities on the other.
The transformation of Europe into a supranational entity has activated initiatives to advance Trans-Mediterranean links, especially through the Barcelona Process (1985), which belongs to a series of efforts designed to alleviate the socio-economic gaps arising on the Schengener outer borders. The aim thereby is essentially to found a zone of stability and prosperity, including EU and Non-EU countries, from a European point of view to alleviate the danger from the south, from the levantine perspective to participate in the wealth, through projects concentrating on nurturing and promoting a consciousness of a common Mediterranean culture, of “bringing the peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean closer together”.

In and around the Barcelona Process, attempts to re-imagine and revitalise a cosmopolitan past have been established in many places. Yet they are facing a difficult trial by fire; this is demonstrated by the situation of the coexistence of cultures in Granada, for example. Since the 1980s, the city became a symbol of the successful symbiosis of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages: A European-Arabic university was founded to link up with the myth of Al-Andalus; tourist advertising placed the multi-ethnic past ever more in the foreground; Muslims settled and thus transformed the former ruins of the old city district, the Albaicín. But since September 11, these developments have suffered a setback. Since Osama Bin Laden publicly regretted the Muslim loss of Andalusia, the parade on the anniversary of the conquest of Granada by the Christians in 1492 on January 2 is again accompanied by a military band and soldiers (this had been abolished in the post-Franco era).

A second reason for the rise of cosmopolitanism as an ideological project is the increase of restrictive versions of ethnic and/or religious identity around the Sea and beyond, following the end of the Cold War. Increasingly, social and political conflicts are being interpreted in ethnic and cultural terms. Paradigmatic for this is the effectiveness of ideas such as those of Samuel Huntington in “The Clash of Civilizations” in the media and public opinion.

Europeanisation and fundamentalism are linked together. Researchers from various disciplines have rightly pointed out that ethnicization is inextricably linked to the development of the nation state (Armstrong 1982; Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1994), for a state entity only then develops into a nation state when the existence of a population with a certain identity is formulated which dominates its territory and when that identity is articulated on the political level. This “own” identity, frequently with reference back to historical images, is usually formulated by cultural experts (e.g. local historians, folklorists, writers) and exiles. The nation is then the (desired or realized) form of state in which politico-

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8 This aim is expressed in the Euromed Heritage Programme, a regional program for the support of the development of the common European-Mediterranean cultural heritage (http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/med_mideast/intro/gac.htm).
territorial unity should be congruent with cultural-ethnic unity. The demand for congruence of policy/territory with ethnicity/culture arises from the structural necessity to organise economically mobile populations into a society (Gellner 1983). In the nation state, the hegemonic identity becomes the standard against which the cosmopolitan becomes synonymous with decadence, corruption, and moral decay in general (Zubaida 1998). All this we can assume is known.

Now, ethnicization and nation building were transformation processes for the creation and strengthening of we-groups which, on the one hand, ignored economic contradictions and, on the other hand, promised stability above and beyond all measures of time (McDonald 1993). With economic globalization and with European unity, the binding power of nation-state structures has begun markedly to disappear. Ethnicization, fundamentalism and ultra-rightist views represent reactions to the loosening of the connection between nation, state, and society, because they support that very linkage with a strengthening of culture understood in terms of ethnicity or religion, a phenomenon sufficiently investigated in recent years. Yet among other groups, and this has not yet been broadly investigated, this has led to an emphasis of older, transnational patterns of identification which stand in contradiction to ethnicity and nation.

These contradicting trends of opening/coexistence, and closure can be particularly well observed in Mediterranean cities. As I have demonstrated with the examples of the national movement (Haller 2000: 175 ff.) and the inner Jewish conflict (Haller 2001a, 2001b) in Gibraltar, some are bloodless and harmless disputes. However, the siege of Sarajevo in the Mid-90s, the attack on the Synagogue in Jarbah in 2002 and the Galata bombs in 2003 are paradigmatic of this struggle: it was not simply a matter of murdering and intimidating the civilian population, but also and above all the destruction of the city/the synagogues as symbols of a peaceful coexistence.

Fundamentalist positions stress ethnic homogeneity and difference and turn against local traditions stressing cultural ties. Ideologies of openness and connection represent a danger to them and even a betrayal of loyalty to ethnically or religiously based communities. Certain groups, especially the Jews, have again and again been accused of cosmopolitanism (in the sense of “world citizenship”), implying that anyone who is a citizen of the world cannot be a loyal citizen of a nation state.

The logic of the unequivocal places those groups with double loyalty under such suspicion of betrayal, a point of view implicitly supported by those intellectual theories that consider cosmopolitanism above all a custom that accompanies deterritorialization (Hannerz 1992, Appadurai 1990, 1991). This approach has been criticised by Tomlinson (1999: 199–200), according to whom cosmopolitanism is characterised precisely by the ability to be ethically at home in both the global and the local contexts. This includes a comprehension of one’s own local context as well as the ability to understand it in connection with other local contexts and to be open for a global world. A transformation from localities to glocalities is needed for the construction of
a cosmopolitan ethos. Yet this view is too exclusively dependent on the structural, artifactual, and symbolic penetration of the local and thereby neglects the question as to the meaning of these processes for the identification of concrete people in the everyday world.

Ethnographic findings from the Mediterranean provide a powerful challenge to Appadurai and Hannerz, and a useful completion of Tomlinson, for both non-ideologized as well as ideologized cosmopolitanism in the region are characterised by strong local ties, indeed by a connection of transregional predispositions and practices with simultaneously strongly marked local identifications. The Mediterranean region represents a space in which intensive exchange relationships, demographic and economic mobility do not contradict the construction of cosmopolitan structures and a cosmopolitan ethos on the local level. Alexandria, Smyrna, and Tangiers may have been cities open to the world, but not to the detriment of a strong local ethos.

5. Conclusion

In many realms of everyday use, the reference to the Mediterranean as “cosmopolitan” remains stuck on a merely nostalgic and banal level of the discursive creed. However, these references often recur to deeper seated local identifications and social structures, especially in Mediterranean port cities; identifications as “cosmopolitan”, that today have become ideologized political coins to refer to local and transnational forms of identification directed both against the political centres of the nation states and against narrow forms of ethnic and religious identity.

This development is paralleled by the trend in the ethno-disciplines to increasingly emphasize on transregional identities, a trend becomes apparent in the popularity of concepts such as hybridity, Diaspora, networking, transnationalism – and -Cosmopolitanism. This development is not only based on the increasing disintegration of identities in the lived world, but also on the discomfort of many scientists with the fact that precisely the theories of ethnicity and culture they themselves developed and nourished have been so brutally misused over the last 20 years in the political world, by such terminology as “ethnic cleansing” and “Leitkultur” for example and by rendering Islam terrorist.

While for at least 30 years hardly any serious ethnologist has used culture or ethnicity in an essentialist meaning, precisely this version has achieved hegemonic effects in political language and media portrayal. There seems to be some need to culturalize societal developments in a naturalizing manner and to reduce them to simple components. The complex theories of ethnologists are in that sense only disruptive. Hereby, reference is made back to essentialist ideas which make culture, ethnicity, blood, and soil synonyms. Considerations of the interdependence of power, identity positioning, and legitimation are ignored in all this. The culture-relativistic approach,
stripped of its progressive context, thus serves the foundation of an ethnopluralism, a sidebyside existence of separated ethnic groups.

In both the social debate and academia a change of paradigm has taken place under economically motivated labels which has elevated the bio-disciplines to the position of guiding science. Thereby, the danger is exacerbated of inextricably linking culture, ethnicity, and biology to each other and conceiving of them as an inescapable fate for the individual person. Indeed, fundamentalism not only exists in the practical, livedin world, but also in the academic landscape.

In a certain respect, the increasing preoccupation with hybridity, diasporic, and cosmopolitanism are counter theories to the hegemony of the perfect, the closed, the secured, and the fundamental, and thus in many respects similar to the cosmopolitanism of many Mediterranean citizens, for both in part arise out of frustration towards unfulfilled promises - in the ethno-disciplines, the misuse of their very own best findings; in the ideology of cosmopolitanism, the secular nation state’s largely unfulfilled promises of democracy, wealth, peace, participation, and equal opportunity.

It is striking that precisely those classes that promoted and bore nationalism in the southern Mediterranean region in the 1950s reverted to fundamental restrictive salutary versions of ethnicity, culture, and religion in the 1980s and 1990s in reaction to nationalism’s failure to fulfill its promise of progress. But those promises were also not fulfilled, at least as far as political and economic participation for broad portions of society are concerned, not even to mention peace, even if tons of cultural balm were smeared into the wounds instead. There is today hardly any democratic state in the Islamic region, peace is farther away than ever before for many parts of the Mediterranean region, and economic participation has been pushed off into the distance.

On the level of ideology - and also on the level of political action, as the mass protests in Istanbul following the bombings of November 2003 have shown - parts of the bourgeois and secular middle-classes in many cities are today going down another path by linking up with the idea of the tolerant, cosmopolitan, and prosperous Mediterranean region. No matter how marginal this ideology may be, it could indeed hold the potential to displace restrictive forms of ethno-cultural order.

But even if the ideological crusades between “the West” and “Islam” today encourage the erection of battle fronts on both sides and force mediating ideologemes such as that of the cosmopolitan Mediterranean region onto the defensive, a penetrating ethnological analysis can not allow itself only to deal with the images, representations, and texts of the propagandistic material battle. For precisely in the Mediterranean region it is possible to link up with historical experience, with the power of images nurtured by literature and film, and with local identifications, structures, and processes which also anchor cosmopolitanism in these practical lived-in worlds. Researching this anchoring with a focus on the inclusions and exclusions of cosmopolitanisms in practice is an as yet unfulfilled task for ethnology.
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