

CHAPTER 2 CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

Nükhet Sirman
Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

The delimitation of a particular geography as a focus of study in the social sciences has created serious methodological, theoretical as well as political problems. In spite of the proliferation of academic institutions which define their specialty as area studies and in spite of the new emphasis on multidisciplinary, a lot of work is still needed if these fields of study are to produce new approaches and concepts that can adequately deal with the problems faced in a fast changing and globalizing world. In this brief and necessarily partial review of the academic work on Southern Europe, I shall attempt to make a plea for more cross-fertilization not only across regional boundaries of academic specialization, but between academic disciplines as well.

A review of the critical material published within the domain of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean as bounded fields of study indicates that the work of analyzing and questioning how scientific practice creates and fixes its boundaries went in tandem with its establishment as a field of academic specialisation. Two rather different perspectives seem to be at work in prompting these critical views. On the one hand, processes of globalization have directed attention to the linkages between local/regional processes and changing economic and power relations at a global level. On the other hand, the turn toward reflexivity within the social sciences has provided concepts to permit us analyse the power nexus within which academic knowledge is constituted.

However, neither globalization nor reflexivity promise to be unqualified blessings. In anthropology at least, it has been argued that reflexivity might in fact turn out to reinforce ethnocentrism as well as narcissism by going out to study the 'other' only to find a projection of the self. Indeed, the recognition of the self as an object constituted through historically specific discourses has at times led to attempts to "let the other speak", thus eschewing analysis; or to narcissistic projects that concentrate on the process of writing that use the 'other' only as a backdrop to the more pressing question of exploring the self (Harris 1986; Llobera 1986).

Globalization as a paradigm has not only underlined the new forms of capitalist restructuring that have affected most societies, but it has shown that

along with capital, cultural products also cross national boundaries. Indeed, the recognition that national boundaries get increasingly porous has brought with it the realisation that their very constitution through nationalism was itself a global phenomenon. Yet, too much emphasis on globalization may lead to the description of endless flows of culture and/or capital in a borderless and unstructured world that end up simply in the celebration of the hybrid, thus eschewing the necessity of grounding such dynamics in concrete social and cultural contexts (Öncü and Weyland 1997).

I shall, in the following, attempt to address some of the conceptual issues that have been raised with regard to academic fields of study in and around Europe. The area that has been variously designated as Southern Europe and the Mediterranean is one where issues of boundaries have been seriously debated over the past twenty years. A recent review of anthropological studies in the area by Goddard, Llobera and Shore (1994) forcefully indicates the extent to which political anxieties of the post war era were salient not only in setting the agenda for the kind of studies to be undertaken, but also in the very delimitation of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean as objects of scientific inquiry. The authors argue that a combination of the modernization paradigm and fears of the spread of communism led to the demarcation of countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece as the "soft underbelly" of Europe where the worst fears of the dominant powers might be realised.

Thus, Southern Europe emerged in the 1950s and the 1960s as a distinct specialisation within economics and political science where the issue at stake was whether or not these areas would integrate successfully into mainstream European economic and political processes. In other words, the main questions asked in political science were whether or not political institutions engendering democratic liberalism could be expected to establish themselves in these not-so-European parts of Europe, while economics concentrated on whether actors able to behave according to the maximising rationality characteristic of neo-classical economic theory would emerge. Political science produced material which showed that rather than voluntary associations based on contract between individuals exercising free will, Southern Europe was characterised by the domination of primordial loyalties that took the appearance of clientelistic politics under predominantly authoritarian regimes. At the level of the economy, the same absence of free will was seen in the domination of the family unit especially among the demographically predominant rural populations.

The dominance of the family and of primordial ties in establishing economic and political relations, and the institutions that regulated these, were contrasted to the dominance of the state-individual nexus in northern European societies. The geographical areas on the immediate periphery of Europe whether in the east or in the south became the object of an academic specialisation designated as rural sociology which directed its attention to the

study of peasant societies and their prospects of transformation. In spite of a number of criticisms that have been leveled at the definition of the concept of peasantry, this specialisation had effects that were not altogether negative. On the one hand, this rubric allowed comparative studies between Europe and other areas characterised by so-called peasant societies, especially those in Latin America. Secondly, it also enabled academic cross-fertilisation between sociology and anthropology, as well as other social science disciplines.

Nevertheless, disciplinary lenses created important differences in the way peasant societies were analysed. While sociology emphasized change and sought to explain specific processes of transformation through the unfolding of what it assumed were the contradictory pulls of tradition and modernity, anthropology remained largely concerned with the unchanging, often dangerously flirting with the essential and the exotic. Thus, in spite of the fact that the anthropology of the Mediterranean shared sociology's concern with the backward and the rural in and around Europe, its notions of culture-area led to the creation of a field of study bounded by a static and reified concept of culture.

This attention in anthropology to culture and values as the main explanatory tools that explained the differences between northern Europe and its Mediterranean shores led to the identification of honor and shame and patronage as key values that defined the cultures of the societies in the region; and on the basis of these values, the unity of the Mediterranean was constructed. Apart from one or two exceptions (Tillion 1983; SEGRG 1992), Muslim societies on the southern shores were not included within the specialty area delimited by the Mediterranean despite what could be seen as comparable societal features (e.g. the salience of kinship as a form of social organisation, the absence of strong states, patterns of subsistence in various combinations).(1) It was well after the discovery by feminist anthropologists that hierarchies based on gender defined not only the societies they were studying, but also the conceptual grid provided by the disciplines within which they had been working that discussions of honor in the Mediterranean began to direct their attention to the practices of veiling in the Middle East which had hitherto been framed within the completely different discourse of what Abu-Lughod calls "harem theory" (Abu-Lughod 1989).(2)

One line of critique leveled at these attempts to fix societal types according to values has come from within the anthropological discipline itself, through the detailed ethnographies that were produced within the very conceptual and institutional terms set by the anthropology of the Mediterranean (Herzfeld 1987a, 1987b). Critical scrutiny revealed honor and shame and patronage, the very categories that were used rather tautologically to prove the unity of the Mediterranean, to be not analytical concepts but actor's representations of social relations (Gilsenan 1977, 1990; Goddard 1987, Herzfeld 1987b). As such they had been constituted through power relations and their uncritical use

served only to perpetrate these power relations, which now included the anthropologist as well as the global divisions of power that allowed him to practice his/her anthropology. Indeed it was the Anglo-Saxon tradition of anthropology that was largely responsible for the signaling of honour and shame as the problem in the Mediterranean, while other local, national traditions of anthropology and sociology brought to the fore completely different issues which were largely ignored by the former (Llobera 1986). (3)

Indeed the vicissitudes of the concept of 'honor and shame' indicate pretty accurately the new lines of development that attention to power and reflexivity has brought. Honor and shame were deconstructed to reveal the power dimension between men and women on the one hand and between men and other men on the other. Reformulating the problem of honor and shame in terms of gender relations and conceptualising these as codes of social practice or a 'doing' of gender and power in the sphere of everyday life has helped to redirect critical thinking. Rather than rules and laws that determine behaviour, culture has now come to be understood as a not so tightly organized or harmonious ensemble of codes. Honor and shame in this new light become codes for inclusion and exclusion, for establishing social intimacy and distance, identities and collectivities. Moreover, these codes systematically analysed within a particular sphere of social life such as dance, rhetoric of violence, poetry, or performances of manhood, are understood as being dependent on context, and as creating meanings that may or may not be actualised in the way desired by the user (Abu-Lughod 1986; Bourdieu 1977; Cowan 1990; Gilson 1994; Herzfeld 1985; Lindisfarne 1994).

In spite of the serious concern that too much attention to meaning can detract from concerns with power, the incorporation of notions of culture developed outside the field of anthropology, notably in the work of Gramsci, Hall, Foucault and Joan Scott has allowed the production of new analytical ethnographies and has also led to a search for both the continuities as well as the differences between southern Europe and the Mediterranean on the one hand and Europe on the other. The extent to which these redefinitions of culture that now include the notion of power as a constitutive aspect of any understanding of culture will seriously challenge practices of anthropology in the Mediterranean region is still not clear. Descriptions of power as in some of the studies dealing with manhood can easily be read as celebrations of power, of exoticism or both (e.g. Herzfeld 1985).

The analytical inseparability of the analyses of Southern Europe from the sociological enterprise in the rest of the continent has been underlined much more forcefully by a second line of critical thinking within anthropology. This approach evident in a number of attempts to reconceptualise history stemmed from a critique of the centrality of fieldwork in defining anthropological practice (Llobera 1986). This kind of critical appraisal of the constitution of the Mediterranean as an object of anthropological study was very much influenced

by a careful reading of Braudel and his understanding of history as the long *durée*. It urged for an incorporation of history into anthropological studies not merely as a backdrop as it often happened in the case studies produced through fieldwork, but as part of the very processes constituting observed social relations and cultural meanings. Studies of change in village communities of Southern Europe by anthropologists (e.g. Rogers 1991) and the problematization of change and history in the very design of anthropological monographs (e.g. Tonkin, McDonald and Chapman 1989) have taken up that challenge. They have also shown that if fieldwork is conceived as providing answers to problems whose origins are situated in contexts that are much broader in time and space than the local, then it becomes indispensable to a study of change. Such formulations have now enabled anthropologists to take up ethnographic research in urban areas and to understand change as a response by actors themselves to the challenges posed by the exigencies of everyday life (Goddard 1994; Mandel 1994; Yalcin-Heckmann 1994).

Change and process have of course been formative in constituting the discipline of sociology and historical sociology as a sub-discipline. Sociologists have been involved in analyzing long-term flows of people, money and ideas across Europe for some time and did at times consult anthropological references and used anthropological methods. Studies of migration are a case in point. These studies have proliferated since the 1970s and have sought to understand flows of labour through the perspective of assimilation or what anthropologists at one point used to call 'acculturation'. In cases where labour migrations involved the crossing of international boundaries, studies have often been accompanied by short stretches of fieldwork in the migrant communities' country of origin. Nevertheless, the extent to which these studies prompted a more effective dialogue between anthropology and sociology is debatable. Often, rather than influencing the design of the project as a whole, anthropology was a resource to supplement information about "people without history" to fill in the gaps of a model constituted within sociology.

The use of fieldwork within sociology as a way of understanding deviations from expected processes of change was with a few exceptions (e.g. Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame 1981) confined for a long time to the study of rural communities. The displacement in sociology of the modernization paradigm in its Marxist or liberal variants through a critical rethinking about modernity itself seems to be leading to a new appreciation of interpretive methods in sociology. Attention to matters of culture within sociology (Bourdieu 1989) prompted by the recognition of the intricate relation between knowledge and power have led to a reformulation of interpretive methodologies and to the adoption of fieldwork as a way of writing ethnographies of the everyday (Saktanber 1995). These new trends along with the emphasis on the urban

and on change in anthropology provide the possibility for a convergence in issues and concepts that anthropology and sociology have to deal with.

It is largely in the study of identity with its attention on the constitution of collectivities that many of these trends are most apparent. Although sociology has traditionally specialised in analyses of collectivities larger than the local, sociologists tended to take the nation as the more or less natural context within which they carried out their research. But with the redefinition of the nation as an essentially cultural phenomenon by Anderson, both sociologists and anthropologists as well as practitioners of disciplines further afield such as literature took on the study of the nation as an invented community. This also went hand in hand with a new attention to textual practices in all the social sciences as the 'literary turn' of the social sciences began to spread (Scholte 1987).

In 1987 Herzfeld presented his study of anthropology and Greek nationalism as an "ethnography of concepts and identities, not of institutions" (1987a, p.4). The recent proliferation of studies on identity is of course partly explained by the new social and political movements of identity that have global dimensions both in terms of rhetoric and organisation. Within sociology and anthropology, new concepts such as personhood (Jacobson-Widding 1997), and moralities (Howell 1997) seem to bear the promise of developing new ways of analysing the question of identity. These concepts provide the means of searching not only for similarities and differences in processes of identity construction right across Europe and its periphery, but of situating these processes in a dialectic and dialogical framework that indicates the interconnections between forms of identity construction within Europe and the Mediterranean.

But the extent to which institutionalization (rather than institutions as such) can be ignored in such ethnographies remains a problem. Mardin's work on religion and change in Turkey (1989) develops the notion of the "personalistic society" to describe a society where personal ties forged between people in specific social statuses constitute a well-understood system of social relations that have been institutionalized to varying degrees both within and outside the formal state structures. The complex system of interdependencies that result, along with the cultural modes of explaining and accounting for such a system, are shown to constitute the 'self-evident' or in Mardin's terms the cultural idiom through which society is perceived and understood. It is only through a recognition and analysis of such cultural sub-strata that it becomes possible to talk about change meaningfully. With a similar emphasis on change as taking place over the underlying basic assumptions that a society operates with, Gingrich (1997) elaborates his notion of 'haramization' to show that Islamic scripture does serve to undergird and institutionalize notions of morality that at one level remain contingent on context. The work of critically refining the concept of identity seems already to be under way.

The study of national identities in and vis-à-vis Europe was prompted in a round-about way by the problems created by large scale labour migration. The last twenty years have been witness to social and political upheavals in a Europe that since the end of the Second World War has come to see itself as finally having closed the era of violent conflict. Processes ranging from the movement of populations as a result of poverty, political repression or wars to the dismantling of European welfare states has prompted a critical re-examination of many of the paradigms that have been informed by this rather glib self contentment. For example, an examination of the constitution of collectivities within Europe itself is mounting a critique of looking at migration as a problem for the migrant. Although attention was first turned to culture and religion as obstacles to the assimilation of migrant populations, it is increasingly becoming apparent that labour migration as well as other forms of border-crossing such as tourism create new zones of contact between Europe and its periphery that require reflexivity as well as attention to the dialogic nature of these encounters.

Recent studies have shown that new agents such as migrants, the tourism industry and governments themselves are now involved in the production of what often turns out to be conflicting views of local, regional and national identities. If it was nationalism that had invented the people and their history in the nineteenth and early part of this century, now they were being invented, re-invented and contested on tourist brochures, on news broadcasts, on the streets of Solingen or London, or indeed in the European Parliament involved as it is now in a process of enlargement. To the extent that Europeanness is valued positively in the forging of modern cultures in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey, issues of identity come to be re-interpreted, tapping on anxieties regarding religion, history and political culture (Keyder 1993).

The very exigencies of governing Europe seem to be urging a crossing of boundaries in academic disciplines. As concepts such as modern and traditional, culture and identity become re-negotiated in a public space largely structured by the mass media, academics discover these to be actors' representations of social processes that are and had always been codes at the service of power relations. Thinking of the nation as just another imagined collectivity can bridge the distance established between Europe and its others, as well as between nations and other forms of imagined communities such as families, ethnic groups and regions. Feminists have drawn attention to the way the gendered nature of difference helps create hierarchies in all imagined collectivities, not just in the family and the household (Cowan 1990; Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991; Saktanber 1995). The issue at stake is whether or not these can be turned into insights at the service of not just governance, but also of populations who live in and around Europe.

Crossing boundaries to show and analyse the hierarchical relations that such boundaries establish is a project that is now seriously tackled in the social sciences. The proposition of a sociology/anthropology of Europe to replace notions of the Mediterranean or Southern Europe as a unit of study (Goddard, Llobera and Shore 1994) may serve quite well the development of such critical perspectives. The consolidation of the EU is indeed affecting economic and political flows in the region as well as framing issues of identity and its boundaries. A critical sociology/anthropology of Europe is therefore much needed. But a word of caution seems justified. The consequences of "fortress Europe" (Mandel 1994) and the rise of exclusionary practices in Europe warn against repeating the mistake of reification that the other proposed units of study were found to be guilty of. Projects funded by the EU or other agencies trying to come to terms with ethnic stereotyping, with forms of religiosity among migrant populations, or indeed with issues of honor and shame are increasing in number. It is only a critical stance with regard to this new unit of analysis that will finally decide whether the scholarship produced in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean will be taken up and produce work that is relevant to the understanding of social and cultural confrontations that shape the world of Europe today.

Notes

(1) I would like to thank Mike Gilson who corrected my rather glib assumption that notions of honour and shame were concepts that bridged the gap between the otherwise segregated specialty areas of the Middle East and the Mediterranean within anthropology.

(2) I should also mention that it is women anthropologists who are still concerned with such boundary-breaking theorizing.

(3) I would like to thank Luciano Li Causi for bringing this point to my attention.

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CHAPTER 3

MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: THE ISRAELI CASE

Eliezer Ben-Rafael

Tel Aviv University, Israel

Basic Aspects of Multiculturalism

Contemporary societies experience cultural diversity through the simultaneous presence of a variety of sociocultural groups (Garmadi 1981; Sankoff 1980). By sociocultural group, one means individuals marked by cultural features that, in one respect or another, contrast with the rest of society (Ben-Rafael 1994). This reality is multifarious. Taking inspiration from the sociolinguistic concepts of subtractive and additive bilingualism (see Beebe and Giles 1984; Lambert 1977 and 1981; Romaine 1989), one may speak, for instance, of subtractive multiculturalism as opposed to additive multiculturalism. Subtractive multiculturalism should refer to a social and cultural situation where individuals forget their original culture and language at the measure that they acquire the society's mainstream culture. Additive multiculturalism means that the acquisition of the mainstream culture does not prevent remaining individuals of a given entity to remain faithful to their own. Though, even then, the very exposure to the mainstream culture of a particular culture should lead to the crystallization of what might be called, again under the influence of the sociolinguistic concept of interlanguage, an *interculture*. By *interculture*, one then designates cultural patterns and modes of behavior that represent a transformation by new influences of elements of an original culture. An example is the language of a given group that is altered by its contact with the legitimate language of the group's new environment. These alterations consist in the absorption of words, expressions and patterns of speech pertaining to the legitimate language, the use of which by members of the group may vary in intensity and systematization, according to situations and locutors (Adjamian 1976). Interlanguages and interculturalities (Myers Scotton 1983) mark collective boundaries and measure the extent that groups remain, vis-a-vis the rest of society, *culturally contrastive* or, when viewed from the other side of the coin, resistant to *acculturation* and to their becoming increasingly less *different*. At the limit, one will speak of *assimilation* when acculturation comes to include social identity (Orans 1971; Oizak 1983; Ben-Rafael 1994).

It is from this perspective that, following the literature of the field, one may discuss the impact of three basic forces that sociological models of