

Managing Cultural Diversity in the Mediterranean Region

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Edited by

Moha Ennaji

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A FESTCHRIFT FOR JILALI SAIB

PREFACE

We are delighted to dedicate this book on Managing Cultural Diversity in the Mediterranean Region to a festschrift celebrating the life and work of Jilali Saib. We come together to honor Professor Saib for his many contributions to the field of language and culture, and in particular, his analysis of the relationship between language and identity among Moroccan Berbers (Imazighen), including the Amazigh cultural movement, and civil society organizations, as well as the international protection of linguistic rights as human rights. He was a pioneer in the study of the Amazigh language through critical linguistic theory (generative phonology), has played an important role in raising awareness among students, teachers, educators, civil society leaders, and decision-makers, about the role of language and culture in development, and has been a leader in opening the Linguistic Society of America to Amazigh studies.

—Moha Ennaji

INTRODUCTION

MOHA ENNAJI

For the last two centuries, we have been witnessing radical transformations that encompass all aspects of human life. Everything has become complex and accessible in a linked and interdependent world, with news reaching every part of the globe. Tribes, kingdoms and empires have become nations with drawn borders, raised flags and anthems passionately joining together individuals with the same citizenship. This new form of collective identity is also one of the most recent transformations known to humankind. Today, belonging to a religious community, an ethnic group, or a tribe, ranks second after belonging to the nation or homeland; nothing seems to be superior to national identity. Peoples are governed by constitutions and laws, and the new world is driven by a unified system. Nowadays, travel has a passport, identity has a card, and family has a code. If a person from the previous centuries had returned and found out that man flies, and that animals have gardens, he or she would inevitably lose his/her mind, and would never believe it was a reality.

But has the consciousness of peoples developed as much as the development of science and knowledge? Have modern values and concepts been able to change the entrenched old ideas and beliefs? Can the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, erase the inherent intolerance of race, color, religion, citizenship, or tribe? Can modern societies coexist in peace despite our multiple sub-affiliations, ideas and beliefs? Will religion be seen as food for thought that edifies ethics, or will it continue to be used for arbitrary purposes in silly and sometimes violent ways? Will citizenship really become a significant societal culture, or will it remain merely a line in our identity papers or an article title in a newspaper? Such questions arise from our social reality, characterized by astonishing scientific and technological innovations that have never been seen before; it is like the birth of a new world with an old memory.

In this new world order, the universal prevails over the specific. Even the wars between conflicting forces today have become global wars. The peoples of the world have realized that they can no longer continue their old struggle for control and domination, and that their political union

and organization in an international system is their only way to survive. Although the current model of the United Nations has not yet reached the level that guarantees the rights of all States in a fair and equitable manner, at least it helps them to avoid a new world war. No matter how the demolition forces try to drag the international system into this moldy swamp, the remnants of the two world wars in human memory will keep resisting these attempts.

On the other hand, some societies have learnt their lessons from previous destructive wars and now pursue the option of unity and coexistence. They have adopted diversity as a means of achieving progress, distinction, growth, and well-being. Consider the situation of the European peoples today; no one can imagine the enmity and hatred that they had for each other in the previous centuries, and how this geographical space was once a battleground. Other societies have kept the feelings of hate and enmity, rejecting diversity and differences, which has led to rivalry, violence, and civil wars. This is the situation in the Middle East, where societies are living in transition, trying to adapt with the modern times. They call for coexistence but still hesitate to implement it.

This is also the case of North African countries with a single religious authority, which at the same time, opted for modernity and universal adherence to the new international order, but proclaims their commitment to the international covenants and agreements that guarantee respect for human rights and freedom of expression, while an important part of their laws in essence contradicts all things they have committed to. The best example of this is the personal status laws which are subject to the provisions and instructions of one religion, but apply to all citizens without exception. It means that the State compels its citizens to comply with certain religious provisions, even if they choose a different religion or prefer to be atheists, which is an implicit indication of society's rejection of difference.

The same observation may apply to educational curricula that include exclusively religious education and historical information related to the religion of the State, but are imposed on the children of all citizens, with different faiths. This is not only contrary to freedom of belief, but also contributes to the creation of a fanatical generation which rejects differences and values of coexistence. In social terms, the peoples in these countries suffer from dualism between the manifestations of modernity and openness, on the one hand, which some may describe as degeneration and depravity, and religiosity, on the other hand, which others often describe as extremism. When it comes to freedom of thought and belief, they stagger between calling for atonement, murder, and exclusion, and

the call for tolerance and ensuring the rights of minorities. But it never amounts to the level of a serious debate about real coexistence between citizens who are equal in rights and duties.

It is time to realize that co-existence is an urgent necessity and is no longer a mere slogan. The concept of the larger Arab-Muslim nation, or *umma* in Arabic, is obsolete,¹ for it is supplanted by a more comprehensive concept, which expresses a unified humanity. It is no longer possible to divide people into believers and infidels, as all are citizens and all are equal before the law. It is not enough to tolerate those who disagree with us, because being different is not a sin or a crime. Perhaps the time has come to stop acting fanatically, and to see the beauty of our diversity and the strength of our unity within our different ideas and beliefs. It is not only the enactment of laws and legislation that guarantees all fundamental freedoms and rights, but also our hope that coexistence will indeed become a community culture. This can only be achieved through an open education and an integrated progressive educational system targeting all age groups.

The Berber (Amazigh) culture in North Africa has, for example, always hosted other cultures with a spirit of openness and generosity. The choice of the theme “Managing Cultural Diversity in the Mediterranean Region” sounds logical in an international context marked by an escalation of violence and terrorism, especially in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, Mali, Tunisia, Pakistan, Nigeria, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, etc. We are in a dire need of educated and progressive people, enlightened theologians and goodwill civil society actors, motivated by the same desire for peace, tolerance, and openness.

Democratic societies are witnessing a growing controversy on the ways to integrate multiculturalism in their principles and behaviours, taking into account the cultural rights of individuals and groups (Habermas 1987, Kymlicka 2009 1996). After two centuries of modernity dynamics which were blind to cultural differences, it is time to recognize identities and establish dialogue and alliance between cultures and religions the world over.

Cultural pluralism and democracy are some of the concepts that have fueled a lot of discussions since the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the third millennium in particular (Fairclough 1989, Geertz 1973). Cultural pluralism and democracy, being two concepts that are still ambiguous for many researchers and experts, scientific debates have

¹ *Umma* refers to the larger Arab-Muslim nation which involves countries sharing the religion of Islam and the Arabic language.

become opportune, since the political arenas have become filled with public discussions which oppose supporters of universality and cultural privacy to advocates of the integration of the social roles, as the principle of democracy does not contradict the respect of cultural diversity (Brown 2017, Giddens 1991).

The debate is enriched with other questions such as: How could the universal dimension deal with the particular aspect of cultural specificities and religious references? What do the concepts of tolerance and respect for diversity involve? What is the threshold of tolerance, and what are the boundaries of cultural difference? What are the ways of cultural and religious alliance and solidarity for peace and human development? All these questions must lead to substantial discussions.

One of the main goals of this book is to discuss an integrated approach to the role of cultural and religious dialogue in the consolidation of peace, modernity, and democracy, an approach that emphasizes the human and social dimension, because at the heart of the issue of culture is a human and socio-economic dimension. The book also aims to open up new avenues of thought and perspectives to move to another phase of the debate on cultural differences that would seek to link the political orientation based on cultural difference, democratic politics of social justice, and lasting peace.

The goal is also to deepen knowledge about the cultures of Islam and their relations with the West, to contribute to the dialogue of civilizations and religions, and underscore the importance of a good management of cultural diversity for democracy and peace.

The strongest side of this initiative is the emphasis on the historical, social, and civilizational significance of the alliance of cultures and religions of the world for peace. The book focuses on the interdependence of cultures and intercultural and interreligious dialogue and the role of culture in the process of democratization and peace building.

The book is an attempt to unfold the positive impact of multiculturalism on modernity, democracy, sustainable development, and the preservation of heritage. It seeks to highlight the positive impact of diversity and modernity on social and cultural development.

Besides discussing the various facets of Amazigh culture, and North African culture in general, the book aims to emphasize the historical, social, and cultural role of the alliance of Mediterranean cultures and religions for peace. It focuses on the blending of cultures and interreligious communication and the role of culture in establishing

coherent strategies to consolidate intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and democratic culture.

The discussion centers on the interconnectedness between culture, politics, religion, gender, race, and class. To promote a fruitful exchange, the book discusses the following axes that integrate the social, economic, cultural, religious, and political dimensions, and question the theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of multiculturalism: insights into aspects of the Amazigh culture, overview of the cultures and religions of the Mediterranean region, managing diversity and minority rights, the place of education and globalization, the role of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and the urgency of the alliance of cultures and faiths.

The authors also discuss issues relating to history, modernity, cultural specificities of the region, and their role in the consolidation of peace, democracy, and development.

The chapters

Alberto Tonini's chapter underlines how it is impossible to encapsulate the Mediterranean world in one culture, one civilization, or one identity. It argues that Mediterranean history and the current experience show the opposite: liquid identities, inter-influence, and exchanges have always characterized individuals and the peoples living around the Mediterranean. The author claims that intercultural roots, plural narratives, and shared social patterns have forever enriched the cultural heritage along the Mediterranean shores. He then provides the main features of these common values: openness to diversities, communitarism (as opposed to individualism), warm hospitality, family links, and the search for an equilibrium between tradition and modernity. According to the author, all these values are deeply rooted among all the peoples living around the Mediterranean, regardless of their nationality, culture, language, or religion.

Moha Ennaji's chapter shows the important role of the Amazigh movement in the strengthening of civil society and democracy in Morocco. However, this movement is, according to the author, characterized by ambiguity, because its aims and strategies for the future are unclear. He wonders whether its leaders are struggling to use cultural rights as a platform to put the Amazigh question on the public stage, and to legitimize power through the notion of cultural diversity, or the movement is using language and culture as a façade before claiming political representation and political rights on the basis of a political party,

in order to achieve power. The author asserts that, in officially recognizing the Berber language and culture for the first time since independence, Morocco has reaffirmed multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of North Africa.

Fatima Sadiqi discusses the historical role of Amazigh women during the resistance against colonialism, patriarchy, and hegemony, and highlights their fascinating contribution to the protection and preservation of the Amazigh culture and tradition. Their art is attested in poetry, carpet-weaving, body tattooing, and face/hand/feet henna decoration. Sadiqi argues that Amazigh women's oral literature and art make for a genuine knowledge and symbolic empowerment. Although absent from official histories, Amazigh women's rituality, orality, and art, are genuine forms of knowledge production.

Moha Ennaji and Fatima Sadiqi discuss the secular and religious dimensions of the Amazigh culture. They show that within a predominantly Muslim North African society, the Amazigh movement for cultural and linguistic rights has a strong secular tendency, and activists often present secularism as an important value in Amazigh culture. In a context where Islamization is linked to a post-independence process of Arabization, emphasizing a particular concept of secularism functions as a political step to resist Arab-Islamic ideology. In so doing, activists draw on Amazigh values and philosophical frameworks of modernity to develop a locally-specific Amazigh concept of secularism. The chapter seeks to understand the philosophy of this discourse and its sociopolitical context. An interrogation of the ideologies and expressions of an Amazigh type of secularism brings a new perspective to the concept of the 'secular' in a global context, as well as to social movements, including the feminist movement.

Khedija Arfaoui argues that the Tunisian people do not know much about the history of the Tunisian Berbers. Yet, Tunisian Amazighs emerged after the Revolution of 14 January 2011, demanding recognition for the significance of their culture, and of their language, many words of which are being used in the Tunisian dialect. The chapter sheds light on a small and ignored part of the Tunisian population that wants to stick to their language, culture, art, and philosophy, while being completely embedded in the Arab culture; not only that, but they also demand its recognition as a significant part of Tunisia.

Bouthaina Ben Kridis provides an overview of the Amazigh and Jewish minorities in Tunisia, suggesting the modalities, as well as the guidelines for ensuring a future built on diversity, partnership, and

pluralism by way of inclusion of minorities in the post-revolution Tunisian society. Considering the Tunisian political and social context, and measuring its ability to accept and work for a true diversity, the author suggests answering the following questions: Focusing on the case of the Tunisian Jewish minority, what are the practical modalities to cope with the diversity challenges and to achieve smooth pluralism? What can be learned from the successful example of the Ghriba pilgrimage? To answer these questions, the author uses an analytic framework coupled with a synthetic approach, while providing a roadmap to achieve true pluralism. She presents the Ghriba pilgrimage as a hopeful example of Tunisia's battle for tolerance and coexistence.

Ines Kohl examines the situation of the Tuareg in the Sahara. She explores the circumstances that have led to the recent situation in the Sahara and the Sahel, and what is needed to establish human rights, democratic basics, and peace in the Sahara. She explains potential political, and socio-economic strategies, and argues that intercultural dialogue and peace is impossible unless minorities are respected and fully accepted as members of nation states, and not marginally posed at the edge of society.

Johan Goud explores how Christian theologians from the age of enlightenment onwards have dealt with influential critiques of religion in Europe. The efforts of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, and Karl Barth, to integrate these critical, often ironical, theories within their own reflections on faith have been revealed to be serious contributions to peace (in the interreligious as well as the political and societal senses). Their theological projects could inspire all seekers for peace between the different Abrahamic religions: Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Keith Martin and Deborah Martin Erickson debate how Morocco is a mosaic of the cultural elements of family, education, religion, and hospitality. These elements all contribute to peace in Morocco and other Muslim North African countries. The interaction of these elements is examined with personal experiences, reviews of government actions, and responses by a select group of respondents. The authors provide a brief comparison of Moroccan education with personal experiences of education in the states of Utah, Idaho, and California. It is concluded that interaction of family, education, religion, and hospitality, with the country's languages, helps to create diversity and preserve peace in Morocco.

In his chapter, Kevin Dwyer explores a number of instances of such traits in the social sciences, focusing particularly on the field of anthropology, where investigators are in direct contact with their

interlocutors – what is commonly known as ‘fieldwork’ and ‘participant observation’ – and where the question of ‘ownership’ has generated significant controversy in recent years. Several examples from Morocco are examined, and among the issues addressed is the nature of ‘ownership’, whether this notion needs to be reconceived, and how disputes over ownership and conflicts over values might be attenuated, if not eliminated.

Mohammed Yachoulti and Anna Jacobs analyze the political and social realities behind the 2014 regularization programme of sub-Saharan undocumented migrants in Morocco. They recommend that the government should guarantee the rights of these migrants and ensure their access to legal aid in order to bridge the gap between legal protection and the harsh reality on the ground.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE POSITIVE LEGACY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CULTURES

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I would like to start this chapter by mentioning a little event that took place in Tunis on July 15 2016. In the main garden of the Italian embassy in Tunis, the Italian and Tunisian authorities inaugurated the first Garden of the Righteous among the Nations, dedicated to the memory of Arab and Muslim people.

In this commemorative garden, new trees have been planted to remember and to honor the memory of Muslim individuals, who risked – or lost – their lives to save and protect non-Muslim people. Among the Righteous Muslims who are commemorated in this new garden is Faraaz Hussein, the Muslim student who was killed in the Dhaka terror attack in late June 2016, because he refused the terrorists' offer of escape, choosing to stay and die in the restaurant where he was dining with two non-Muslim friends. All three were murdered by terrorists.

Beside him, a new tree has been planted in memory of Hamadi ben Abdesslem, the Tunisian tour guide who saved the lives of 40 Italian tourists, by driving them through underground passages and out of the Bardo Museum, during the terrorist attack in April 2015.

Next to theirs, a tree was planted to commemorate Khaled Abdul Wahab, who, in 1942, during the Nazi occupation of Tunisia, hosted and hid 40 Tunisian Jews on his farm, putting his own life at risk in order to save others. These are moving examples of shared memory, common values, cross-cultural virtues, and behaviors. This is the Mediterranean we like, and we work for.

If we take these events and people as a point of departure for our reflection, it is tempting to reduce the Mediterranean world to a few common features; to define the Mediterranean as a single entity; to search

for the existence of a Mediterranean civilization. But, in my opinion, rather than search for unity, we should note and underline diversity. The Mediterranean basin, indeed, is probably the most vigorous place of interaction between different societies on this planet.

To quote Anthony Molho (2004,3), “The Mediterranean world provides an ideal point of observation from which to study how communities of diverse religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural traditions interacted with each other over a long period of time.”¹ Indeed, the Mediterranean is a sea different from other seas and oceans, because it carries with it the problem of the relationship between different identities, and their necessary coexistence. It is a multitude of peoples and languages that no power, religion, or empire, ever managed to make an individual stable unit.

The Mediterranean's frontier position should make it the privileged place of intercultural dialogue and 'measure' ('measure' was a word cherished by Camus),² and the Mediterranean, as such, has never been monotheist. Venice itself, which dominated the Eastern Mediterranean for five centuries, was the homeland of tolerance for religious and philosophical views and offered shelter to liberal ideas and political emigration. The Ottoman Empire was never the obscurantist repressive regime depicted by 19th century Europe: it was a complex, sophisticated polity that, in religious matters, often showed itself more liberal than many European countries.

As is well known, Arab scholars were the first ones to absorb the legacy of Greek philosophy and science. The great texts of Hellenic wisdom came to Western Europe through the translation and mediation of great Arab philosophers - not theologians - such as Al Farabi, Al Kindi, Avicenna (Ibn-Sina) and Averroës (Ibn-Rush). As Franco Cassano (1996) states, Europe's identity rests on transfers from one shore to the other, on transits and arrivals, on exchange, hybridizations, contaminations, translations and impurities: its hero is Ulysses, a hero of short-range navigation, the man of departure and return, taking ten years to come back to Ithaca.³

Keeping away from ethical universalism and religious dogmatism, Mediterranean modernity should be inspired by a tolerant and inclusive ethical-religious ‘pluriversalism’. Universalism divides men, because it denies diversity and complexity at the very moment that it seeks universal

¹ Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet), *Focus on the Mediterranean*, vol. 1, Stockholm 2004, 53.

² Cf. A. Camus, *L'Homme révolté. Essais*, Gallimard, Paris 1951.

³ F. Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 1996, 48.

consensus. Monism, be it philosophical or theistic, tends by its very nature to fundamentalism: intolerance, racism, cultural colonialism, and the missionary syndrome, lie at the heart of its spirit.

But - most importantly - we are not simply dealing with archaic religious fundamentalism. There is the fundamentalism of modernity, too: it is the fundamentalism of those political and cultural elites who see nothing but barbarism, obscurantism, oppression, and repression, outside of modernity. In the Western world, there is a consumerist and acquisitive fundamentalism dominated by competition, productive efficiency, and speed. It is a world without heart and without beauty, where the development of economy and technique finds no resistance because it is the only sacred element of man's domination over nature.⁴

Its opposing shores are close enough to permit easy contact, but far enough apart to allow societies to develop distinctively under the influence of their hinterland, as well as of one another. The unity of Mediterranean history thus lies, paradoxically, in the diaspora of merchants and exiles, in the people hurrying to cross its surface as quickly as possible. Those who cross its surface are often hardly typical of the societies from which they come, but their presence and experience have a transforming effect on these different societies, introducing something of the culture of one continent into the other (Abulafia, 648).

It is widely recognized that the historical interactions between the peoples surrounding the Mediterranean Sea have largely contributed to the drawing of the cultural, political, and religious, civilizations of the region. The Romans, the Islamic 'golden age', the Middle Ages, the Ottomans, and the Modern Era, testify to a long, complex and original history that is indispensable to consider in order to comprehend the present situation.

It is worth mentioning here that the Mediterranean is not composed of a single and static identity. Indeed, we need to think in terms of multiple identities, as a person from the Mediterranean can belong to different social groups without losing his or her own cultural specificity. In fact, many identities can develop and expand, especially if one works on breaking down this dominant North-South dichotomy and the Christian-Muslim opposition. We should look at the reasons behind such a separation, and try to solve it by learning from past-mistakes, as well as giving new dynamics to the region by emphasizing the foundations of a peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.⁵

⁴ R. Escobar, "Appartenenza e libertà", in G. Gozzi (ed.), *Islam e democrazia*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1998, 165.

⁵ A. Rim, "Unity and Diversity in Euro-Mediterranean Identities", in *International Journal of Euro-mediterranean Studies*, vol. 2 (2009) n.2, 187-200.

In many respects, European and Arabo-Islamic societies are characterized by different cultures, religions, and norms, but this does not imply that they cannot get along with each other. These differences have to be examined in order to break down stereotypes and to improve mutual understanding of each other. In a time when movies and media dominate the world's perceptions of the others, the Arabs are, in reality, little understood. The dominant images in the West of the oil-rich Emirs, the belly dancers, and the scary terrorists, do not absolutely reflect the diversity of the present Arab society or the richness of Arab history.

As we all know, the Arab majority in North Africa, for instance, has resulted from past substantial movements of people in this area. Berbers and Copts, who existed there long before the arrival of Arabs, are now considered as minority groups inside the Arab nations. Their numeric inferiority has pushed them to adopt some of the dominant aspects of the Arabo-Islamic culture. Indeed, "the Copts in Egypt adopted the Arabic language while resisting Islam, while the Berbers did the opposite by maintaining the Berber language while adopting the Muslim faith."⁶

However, it is well-known that, in the Mediterranean region, no civilization has ever managed to prevail over another. Indeed, the Mediterranean Sea is the meeting point of three continents and the shared nest for three monotheistic religions; its position has always made it a privileged place of intercultural dialogue. In fact, the Mediterranean has always been "the place where, in spite of Catholic and Islamic holy wars, crusades, the *reconquista*, the Ottoman siege of Vienna, the sad history of colonialism, and the bloody wars of colonial liberation, no universalism or fundamentalism was ever permanently established."⁷

In this complex environment, expanding political elites tended not to transform or displace conquered peoples, but merely to overlay the societies that they came to dominate. There were movements which tended to initiate cultural transformations, but these came about gradually. The net effect was that the Mediterranean became a zone of ethno-religious interpenetration, characterized by a high degree of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious variety. Thus, communication and collaboration among distinct groups became a pre-requisite for economic viability and political survival. This was facilitated by the common cultural foundations

⁶ R. Dellolio, "North African Ethnic Minorities. A comparative analysis of the Berbers and the Copts", Paper presented at George Washington University, December 2008, quoted by Rim, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁷ D. Zolo, "Towards a dialogue between the Mediterranean cultures", in *Jura Gentium. Journal of Philosophy of International Law and Global Politics*, vol. 1 (2005), n. 1: www.juragentium.org/topics/med/tunis/en/zolo.htm

of the various groups, including Abrahamic religion, Roman-influenced institutions, and Perso-Hellenic social and philosophical orientations. Hence, the Mediterranean became a zone of mutual intelligibility, wherein polyvalent identities were common, and cultural synthesis and hybridity resulted naturally as a consequence of socio-economic integration. It was these circumstances that endowed the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages with the capacity to so dramatically transform the European, African, and Middle Eastern societies that bordered it.

Further, the fusion between different cultures of the Mediterranean has made people advance in several domains. For example, the contact between Spanish people and Arabs has produced a mutual influence which encouraged cooperative studies and a prosperous civilization in the Middle Age Iberian peninsula. Later on, we will mention that the Spanish people and Moroccans or Algerians have many shared habits, such as being joyful people who like chatting and partying. Food customs could also be a symbol of the Mediterranean. Indeed, the people in the Mediterranean basin, “whether Turkish, Greek, southern Italian or Spanish, share a common Mediterranean civilization of olive trees, bay leaves and fish.”⁸

Thus, by thinking of the commonalities, even though they are not relevant to the contemporary political agenda, we start breaking down barriers and imagine a possible reconciliation, based on the simple things of life, such as tables where a Moroccan, a Libyan, an Italian, a French person, and a Turk, can share food.

How can culture and identity contribute to peace?

On the one hand, the risk is that culture and identity in the age of globalization can become a tool of Western hegemony. People in Northern Africa and the Middle East are deeply suspicious of Western attempts to impose on them ‘a common regional identity’. As George Joffe argues, power relationships across the Mediterranean are profoundly asymmetrical. A forced common identity grounded in asymmetrical power relationships can only exacerbate conflict. The European Union is in a position to impose its interests on its Mediterranean neighbors. Therefore, many in the Arab world view the European insistence on ‘common identity’ as a neocolonial machination, as the Western call for a ‘common identity’ may end up as a pure export of Western values and models. And this does not

⁸ B. Toprak, “Prejudice as social science theory. Huntington's vision of the future”, in *Perceptions*, vol. 1, n. 1 (March 1996).

belong to the history of the Mediterranean, where bilateral exchange and mutual influence have been the most effective experience.⁹

In addition to this factor, during the last two decades, the issue of culture in the Mediterranean has been progressively displaced from concrete cooperation between cultural operators in fields such as performing arts, music, and dance, towards the much vaguer field of intercultural dialogue. The tension between these two approaches is still at work today. On the one hand, cultural circles, often with young, independent artists at their heads, have created spaces, festivals, platforms, and networks, in order to work together; on the other hand, public institutions, ministries of Cultural or Foreign Affairs and the mass media have produced a generic discourse on the need for dialogue among cultures in the face of the temptation of isolationism and rejection of the 'other' in the Euro-Mediterranean Region. But among the most fervent advocates of 'dialogue' were the official representatives of authoritarian regimes and predatory actors of the South Mediterranean, a factor that has contributed to discrediting this overly consensual incantation.

The theme of dialogue, thus, is not effective enough to mobilize professionals of culture, due to its indeterminate nature insofar as content, especially since the Arab revolts have revealed the wide gap existing between the societies of the two shores in terms of inequality of material conditions of cultural production. The demands expressed by the young revolutionaries have allowed the concrete needs of the region to be measured, not only in terms of freedoms, but also as far as infrastructure, training, and employment in the cultural sphere are concerned.¹⁰

The method and practice of dialogue cannot be tailored to the European agenda, if it has to be a dialogue that goes beyond symbolic gestures and takes the necessary risks in order to construct common political spaces. The European side should be cured from its inferiority-superiority complex, so as to gradually get rid of its historical *hubris* and recuperate a pragmatic orientation to the 'other' as a neighbor and partner in dialogue. A real practice of dialogue should make sure that Western values and models do not become Trojan horses for neo-colonial projects of cultural penetration and political domination.

As for the other side, we should ask whether the new and most open-minded movements that proliferate in the contemporary Muslim

⁹ G. Joffe. "European Union and the Mediterranean," in M. Telo, ed., *The European Union and the New Regionalism*. Burlington, Ashgate 2001, p. 215.

¹⁰ G. Tanzarella, "Culture in the Mediterranean and the Arab Spring", in *Culture and Society*, European Institute of the Mediterranean (Iemed), Barcelona 2012, p. 292.

world might be able to draw energies and inspiration from a time-honored tradition of assimilation, translation, and appropriation of heterogeneous axial legacy, not thwarted by postcolonial resentments or identity obsessions. The dire alternative would be that these movements will be bound to reproduce, on the other shore of the Mediterranean, the unilateral vocation, and the will for power that sustained European modernity.¹¹

On the other hand, it must be underlined that a future of peace and coexistence is worth all our efforts to transform the discourses and practices of the region, from a ‘clash of civilizations’ to a ‘convergence of civilizations’. By this notion, ‘convergence of civilizations’, I do not allude to what in the European discourse is generally regarded as ‘cultural cooperation’, for example, well-intended meetings between the clergy of the three major Mediterranean religions, or cultural contacts involving music, theater, and literature, however important they may be. Rather, I primarily mean the creation of a process aimed at generating shared normative and epistemic understandings and meanings about political, economic, and social life; for example, about the social order, the rule of law, human rights, social and political justice, peace, and security. Most important, however, by ‘convergence of civilizations’ I mean the creation of a Mediterranean shared narrative, built on the notion that the Mediterranean has always been the meeting place of different civilizations and religions. On the basis of this shared narrative, multicultural traditions, dispositions, identities, practices, and policies, may thus be recognized, valued, recovered, and eventually established.¹²

In any case, we cannot ignore the income gap between the North and South Mediterranean, as this is probably the driving force that contributes to a condition of chronic political instability, weakening regimes because populations experience a sense of relative deprivation that further undermines the legitimacy of their governments. Highly visible social and income inequalities lead to intermittent political crises, giving rise to mass migration northward. As these migrations are perceived as too disruptive in Europe, the long-lasting Mediterranean history of free people movement and exchange may be neglected, in favor of closing EU borders. Migrants from the south shore of the Mediterranean are increasingly securitized, and seen as potential “transmission trains of

¹¹A. Salvatore, “From tension to dialogue? The Mediterranean between European Civilization and the Muslim World”, in M. Michael and F. Petitto, *Civilization Dialogue and World Order*, New York 2009, pp. 234-35.

¹²E. Adler, F. Bicchì, B. Crawford, R. Del Sarto (eds.), *The Convergence of Civilizations. Constructing a Mediterranean Region*, University of Toronto Press 2006, p. 33.

violent ideologies of conflict.”¹³ Javier Solana (former Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs), for example, pointed out that “the Middle East is increasingly present in our cities’ centers, not just on the other side of the Mediterranean. Violence and instability in the Middle East has knock-on effects on the streets of Europe.”¹⁴ This leads to a tension in Europe, between two different understandings of European identity: an essentialist, exclusive, and static approach, and a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of the European present and future.

The myth of unitarian, national identities

As a last contribution to this analysis, I would like to introduce some considerations around the meaning of ‘identity’. Each individual has his/her own identity, that is the result of his/her personal experience, family tradition, set of values, friendship networks, ambitions, expectations and ideals. But it is our common experience that this individual identity is always changing, reacting to external or private and personal inputs. We are not the same person we were five or ten years ago. We do not maintain the same identity throughout our life.

So, if this is our personal experience in terms of individual identity, how can one, rigid, homogeneous, identity exist in association with one nation, one people, or one community? What is the meaning and value of the so-called European identity? Or Arab identity? Is it really possible that all the people living in Europe share the same identity? To really have a common identity, they should share the same opinions and behaviors about family, love, sex, success, money, employment, mercy, God, friendship, loyalty, honesty, and many, many other things. But this is not the case. And this is not the case for the Arab people either. They can live in the same country; they can speak the same language, but this is not enough to affirm they are identical, or that they share a common identity. However, Europe has shown a tendency to perceive Islam and the Arab world as monolithic, and Islam has historically been the ‘other’ for Europeans, first through the Arabs, then through the Ottoman Empire. This shaped the Christian element in European identity, being perpetuated

¹³ G. Joffé, “The European Union, Democracy and Counter-Terrorism in the Maghreb”, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 46, n. 1, p. 159.

¹⁴ Mr. Solana intervention at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 2005, quoted by D. Huber, *Democracy Promotion and Foreign Policy*, London 2015, p. 125.

in part by some Muslim groups, who themselves construct a unitary Islamic landscape.¹⁵

The study of the development of medieval culture and its relation to religious identity poses questions that echo throughout later periods of history, down to the 21st century (Bredero 1994, Van Engen 2004). Modern prejudices and political agendas, which can be seen at work in a number of recent books, and politically-sensitive notions such as national and European identity, are often bound up in myths that emphasize an originality and uniqueness that is simply incompatible with the reality of cultural development. The established narrative of the emergence of modern culture, for example, portrays the West as the receptor of ancient Greek intellectual traditions that had been 'preserved' by the Arabs, while avoiding any influence by Islam, thus reaffirming the notion of Europe's singularity and distinctiveness (Sylvain Gouguenheim 2008).

But none of these perspectives is satisfactory: on the contrary, in the last twenty years, scholars have investigated the collaborative and cumulative process by which Western culture emerged, evoking a nostalgic age of medieval scholars who, regardless of their identities as Christians, Muslims and Jews, lived in a state of innocent *convivencia*, as they labored to translate Islamic and Jewish texts and ideas to the Latin West.¹⁶

So, the truth, probably, is that, yes, Europeans are different, but not in the sense that they are different from the Arabs or from the Muslims. Not in the sense that the main divide runs across the Mediterranean, where the North would be different from the South. On the contrary, we are all different: the people living in Europe are different among themselves, one individual from the others, as well as being different from the people coming from other parts of the world.

Is there a higher degree of diversity, related to the physical distance between our respective regions of origin? I don't think so: it is not geography that draws our identity, it is not geographic proximity that determines our affinity with other individuals.

Any Italian citizen certainly shares a portion of his/her identity with many other Italians, in terms of family patterns, political culture, social behavior, kinship relations, and so on. But he/she probably also shares a portion of identity with other individuals who have grown up in North Africa or the Middle East, even if they were born and grew up in different

¹⁵A. Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn*, Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 89.

¹⁶H. Peregrine, and N. Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Malden (Mass.), Blackwell 2000, p. 134.

contexts. Geographical differences between Europeans and Arabs on both sides of the Mediterranean do not reflect the reality of their human experience.

Conclusion

If diversity and similarity don't run along political or cultural borders, it may be that a future of peace and coexistence around the Mediterranean is worth of all our efforts: it's a matter of transforming the discourse and practices of the region, from a 'clash of civilizations' to a 'convergence of civilizations'. These efforts imply the recognition of shared narrative, multicultural traditions, dispositions, identities, practices, and policies.

In addition to this point, we should also keep in mind that people can live together in peace not because they share the same, common identity, but because they respect each other, know how to deal with diversity, and how to make their diversity an opportunity and not a problem. And this is, probably, by far the most valuable legacy of Mediterranean history.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE AMAZIGH MOVEMENT IN MOROCCO: FROM CULTURAL TO POLITICAL RIGHTS

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Introduction

Since its official recognition by the State in Morocco in 2011, the Berber (Amazigh) language has changed status, as it is no longer only the language of privacy, family, or rural areas, especially after its introduction into the education system.¹ In the past, marginalization has impacted on the Berber conception of self, as well as on attitudes toward Berbers, for whom tensions between tradition and modernity create social stress. Because society emphasizes Arabic, modernity, and development, following the Western model, Berbers (Imazighen) seek to become modern, developed, and connected with the global economic community, while at the same time preserving their cultural heritage and lifestyle. The Amazigh movement in Morocco has been pushing for greater rights and recognition of Berber identity through peaceful means (mainly protests, demonstrations, media reports, etc.). Consequently, since 2002, the Berber language has made great headway, especially with its introduction in primary schools. Discourses and attitudes toward Berbers have also improved over the last two decades. Today, most politicians and decision makers have started to include Berber as a means for fostering diversity

¹ Throughout, the term ‘Berber’ will be used interchangeably with the word ‘Amazigh’. The natives prefer the latter because it has positive overtones (Amazigh means free man, plural: Imazighen), whereas the term ‘Berber’ is considered derogatory because it stems from the Roman term ‘Barbari’ (Barbarian) referring to the people that the Romans had conquered. However, the term ‘Berber’ is so commonly used today that it has become neutral.

and democracy. The official inclusion of Berber communities is, thus, an essential (and much-demanded) step in Morocco's efforts to strengthen its democratic credentials.

The Amazigh movement plays an important role in the strengthening of civil society and democracy in Morocco. Until now, it has been peaceful, as it does not call for violence, and operates within the rule of law. However, this movement is categorized as ambiguous, because its goals and plans for the future are vague. One may ask the question whether its activists are using cultural rights as a basis to put the Amazigh cause on the public scene, and to seek power through the idea of cultural diversity, or the movement is exploiting language and culture as a cover-up before demanding political representation and political rights with the creation of a political party, in order to reach power. In officially recognizing the Berber language and culture in the 2011 Constitution, for the first time since independence, Morocco reaffirmed multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of the country. Today more than ever before, pluralism remains an essential component of national identity in the region.

This chapter argues that language, ethnicity, and identity, are affected by the context in which they are shaped. Following Fishman (2010), I illustrate how language, ethnicity, and identity, are erratic and unstable. I view Berber linguistic minority and ethnic identity through the lenses of sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, politics, and economics.

The data for this chapter was collected on the basis of my own readings of the literature, documentary research, official statistics, mass media products, diaries, letters, and government reports, in addition to historical and contemporary records. The chapter is organized as follows. The first section provides a historical background of the Berbers in North Africa. The second section debates the reasons for, and effects of, the social and political exclusion of Berbers and their culture. Section three discusses the ramifications of this exclusion for Berber language and identity. The last section discusses the inclusion of Berbers through development and identity formation.

I adopt the theory of intersectionality, which underlines the intersection of domains of domination, such as class, politics, gender, religion, language, ethnicity, education, media, etc. (Kimberlé Crenshaw 1989, Patricia Hill Collins 2000, Marie-Claire Belleau 2007). Using the intersectionality theory, history and a comparative approach, I analyze the causes and consequences of and the interconnection between marginalization and demands for the preservation and promotion of Amazigh cultural identity.