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Promoting Traditions of Multicultural Communities as a Tool for Social Cohesion in Trieste, Italy

Eugenia Bitsani*

Department of Health and Welfare Unit Administration, Technological Educational Institute of Kalamata, Antikalamos, Greece

Abstract

We live in an interdependent world where boundaries are loose and people travel and move from one place to the other. This has as a result, societies to be consisted of many different groups, which live together in their everyday lives, are citizens and residents of one community, region, or city. These residents are a significant target group of the city and they need to be based on strong connections with the city. How can then this society operate successfully and promote its distinct characteristics in order to attract not only these residents but also promote its distinct identity so that visitors are aware of these specificities? We argue for the significance of building common elements mutually agreed by the parts involved in a community -place, region, city- in order to bring people together, strengthen multiculturalism while at the same time, retaining the distinct elements of each group that is part of this community. Based on third culture building (TCB) where different cultural groups come together to form a third culture -which incorporates all of them, is common for all and at the same time, these groups retain their distinctiveness-, we argue that this can be successfully implemented from the people involved in planning and management of the related city, place, region which incorporates these groups among its circles. Policy makers interested in planning and evaluating intercultural communication situations could employ those distinct elements, by making combinations that would be of interest to the groups involved, in order to bring these different groups together. What is of interest, is the creation of a shared environment where everyone understands it and is willing to participate in it, under mutual agreement where all sides take part on their own will. A new environment is then created, on common grounds mutually agreed, where the person or group finally decides to participate or not. In that way, the person and the people of the group are the co-creators of value, the person is the 'agential force'. Taking Trieste, Italy, as a case study, which has a significant number of minorities, Muslim and Christian were analyzed. We examined the relationships they build and particular attitudes they display towards each other. A survey type questionnaire covered half of both groups' families -the total number of Christian and Muslim families reached 560 families and the sample consisted of 150 Christian Orthodox families and 130 Muslim families-. It was found that people although belonging to different groups can be together attending activities that the outgroup members share as part of their culture while it was found that festivities and activities mainly associated with the culture and mainly religion of the ingroup, did not consist of a connecting bond among these different groups. Implications for local development policies from the host city which accepts the inflow of tourists, immigrants, residents are discussed

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +30-2721096675; fax: +30-2721096675.
E-mail address: ebitsani@gmail.com

promoting those elements that are distinct for the new third culture that can bring different groups together, building in that way, an intercultural community. TCB can be employed by practitioners (marketers, tourism policy makers and planners) to bring people who live in the same community and come from different social backgrounds together.

1. Introduction

There is emphasis on the distinctiveness and multiplicity of identities, all of which claim their position in society promoting their cultural distinctiveness (Kavoura, 2013; Kavoura, 2001). Nowadays, quality of life is associated with indexes, which refer to the dimensions of health, education, environmental quality, economy, social schemes and social security, social participation and personal satisfaction (Berg, 1986). Public security and discipline depend on the harmonious symbiosis of the different groups. They have specificities and different cultures; yet, they live in the same space. How can then different groups be together creating social cohesion? The aim of this paper is to examine how social cohesion and intercultural culture may take place and indicators, which may influence such procedure, taking the city of Trieste, Italy as a case study. There is an intercultural composition in Trieste, which exists with the presence of different cultural groups. The way social cohesion may take place since the city is consisted of different cultural communities into inter-cultural entities at the local level is examined.

2. Literature Review: Intercultural relations within a city

People are not only influenced by their culture but they construct it, build it, elaborate it with different strategies according to their needs and circumstances (Kiriakidis, 2008: 2013). Intercultural orientation consists of another way to analyze the cultural variety, not through cultural characteristics, which are considered to be independent situations and homogeneous entities but through interactions based on the logic of variety and complexity and not on differences (Balandier, 1985). Intercultural approach does not have as an objective aim to determine the 'other' confining him/her within a network of meanings, neither to create a series of comparisons based on an enthnocentric scale. Through such perspective, cultural differences and similarities are determined, not as objective standards with statistical character, but as powerful relations between two entities where one attributes meaning to the other (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986).

We argue for the significance of building common elements mutually agreed by the parts involved in a community -place, region, city- in order to bring people together, strengthen multiculturalism while at the same time, retaining the distinct elements of each group that is part of this community. A city's residents have a significant role to play in the branding and positioning of the city where residents need to be based on strong connections with the city which becomes reflective of their self-concept (Kemp, Childers and Williams, 2012). Festivities and cultural events may connect people from different groups, yet, first and for all, different communities living in a city, region, place, state, need to associate themselves with such festivities and traditions. International festivals may increase the vibrancy of the city and stakeholders may cooperate in order to unite the community and "bring about the common good" (Ooi and Pedersen, 2010; Bitsani, 2004: 220). Residents need to find attractive the place they live, either this is a city, a town, or a neighbourhood. Residents are an important target group, they are the 'insiders' to whom the city aims to promote its attractive and distinct elements that unite and bring them together (Cassel, 2008). Feelings about a place can be created from the residents of a community, a city, a region over time especially through enactment and participation in public rites -which may

leave, as literature has suggested, a small emotional trace, local public emotions- and local authorities have a word to say in such a procedure (Smith and Darlington, 2010; Bitsani 2004: 234).

3. The association of intercultural identity building in the case of Trieste, Italy

Nowadays, there are two models of management for cultural diversity: the British multicultural model which emphasizes the ability of every person to belong to a community different of that the state-nation and the orientation towards culture, which is inspired by French models. The 'intercultural' in French model, leads to an intervention, to an intention of managing the community, especially to issues that concern the 'undesirable results', which are brought forth from the meeting among agents of different cultures. The intercultural in the beginning was associated with the problems of migration. This focus on one type of diversity, which comes from migration, hid the other types of diversity: European construction, multiplicity of the international exchanges, globalization of everyday life, professional, local culture etc (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986). Cultures and the intercultural in this sense need to have reference to a historical process. It is necessary to emphasize the necessity of the historical investigation, which will lead us to the understanding of the procedures of the creation of cultural characteristics, the understanding of geo-historic and geopolitical creation, through the interactions, which come from big historic cultural tides. Although the countries' cultures nowadays are unique due to the multiple unique historic developments, it is necessary to refer to the historic framework of every social organization. Intercultural approach is in contrast to the objectivistic and structuralistic approach since it puts emphasis on the production of culture through the same subject, for the strategies, which are developed without the subject always to have awareness of such production. According to the phenomenological approach, on which intercultural depends, culture is not a social reality per se which we may understand in an objective way, it is a way of life, which we aim to rebuild its concept. We do not refer to the subject as a unit, on the contrary, we refer to the interrelational which is associated with the dialectic identity / otherness. We do not ignore the influences of the environment and the forms, but cultures exist only when they are treated from the active role of people who provide them with life and they may also transform them (Goffman, 1974). By focusing on the subject we do not aim to put emphasis on the individualistic theories but to consider the network of the subjectivities within which it is included. The concept of interaction is considered to be important for the specification of culture and cultural identity (Goffman, 1974, 1975).

Based on Casmir's third culture building which depends on the intercultural identity of the residents and the city -an active process whereby different cultural groups come together to form a third culture between them, incorporating all of them, is common for all and at the same time, these groups retain their distinctiveness, the new third culture may bring together all communities and parts involved; it is the one that will bring them together, incorporating elements from different cultures while at the same time, remains distinct (Hopson, Hart and Bell, 2012: 789). We argue that this can be successfully implemented from the people involved in planning and management of the related city, place, region which has these groups among its circles. Taking Trieste, Italy as a case study, we argue that the third culture building is based on the mutual exchange of cultural ideas, beliefs, activities, between Muslim and Christian Orthodox populations, under festivities that interest them more.

Third culture building is the most ideal solution for bringing different cultural groups together but not in the form of making cultural comparisons on a one to one basis. New but also original elements can form the third culture depending on specific situations each time (for example, migrations that take place in a country, a city, a region) depending on a middle ground position where the two subcultures equally contribute to the third culture (Hopson, Hart and Bell, 2012: 792). Third building culture is situation specific and aims for the cooperation of people based on ideals of democracy and fairness, participants are viewed as equals, and collectively work together so that cultural behaviours may be modified through a continuous process which is satisfactory for all parties (Hopson, Hart and Bell, 2012: 793). Extended contact could reduce prejudice; extended contact may well be sufficient to promote active voluntary exposure to, and discovery about, the outgroup culture. This is an

important outcome because such increased understanding is likely to reduce cognitive bases of prejudice, such as assumptions of outgroup homogeneity, and affective bases of prejudice that might follow from unfamiliarity (Eller, Abrams and Gomez, 2012: 639). Extended contact and familiarity may lead to the creation of a third culture. This third culture is based upon both original and new factor-combinations, a kind of situational subculture developed through the interaction of its members (Hopson, Hart and Bell, 2012). Culture building is a departure from adoption (the process of taking on the cultural mores of another) or adaptation (modifying one's cultural mores to better fit those of another) (Hopson, Hart and Bell, 2012).

4. Description of the area

The migration phenomenon and the formation of intercultural social and economic relations emerged in Italy in the 19th century and its practical and social implications can be seen in the 21st century (Bitsani and Kavoura, 2011). Nowadays, to these different culturally groups in regard to their ancestry, Muslims have also been added based on the contemporary migration phenomena that Europe is facing. The cosmopolitan element in Trieste, which still nowadays characterizes it and has existed since its foundation in 1719, allowed the maintenance of the distinct characteristics of the 'foreigners'-its residents. Greeks, Serbs, Jewish, French, German, Dutch, Austrian and Italians from other areas of the peninsula, co-created the cosmopolitan society of Trieste, which provides residents with a distinct relational denty, that the historian Attilio Tamaro would call: "Triestinita" (Bitsani and D' Arcangeli, 2009: 24). In 1802, the population in Trieste which did not change in percentages later on was as follows: 68,8% Italians, 16,09% Slovenians, 5,04% Jewish, 4,07% Greeks, 2,65% Germans, 1,49% 'Illyrians', 1,10% Swiss, 0,40% British. The reader of these percentages should not be quick to conclude to results 'Foreigners', although, a small number, consist of a powerful economic power, since their majority were associated with rich, commercial, financial, insurance businesses which were beyond the boundaries of Apsvurgian Monarchy and since the mid-19th century they were beyond the boundaries of Europe. This dynamic co-existence and the co-relation among different communities in terms of equality not only did they create the distinct identity of the city and made its image a brand name which is powerful nowadays all over the world, but also have created the intercultural identity of its residents and the identity of each one of these. This has as a result the identification of the 'foreigners' who finally acquire the sense of 'belonging' but also the acceptance and approval from those members of the community who were the first to inhabit the city. The promotion of a brand identity willing to accept multiculturalism and willing to see the 'significant other', as a beneficiary and a friend (Kavoura, 2013) is the success story for Trieste. In that way, dynamic synergies were created with multiple results for the benefit of all.

The distinction between Muslim and Christian minorities in their sociological features as two different status groups implies different communal identities. It is natural that members of each community harbor a feeling of solidarity that generates certain commitments towards their community. This triggers cultural consciousness or identity that becomes an orientation or a frame of reference through which each community interacts and perceives others. Consequently, the social distance from other multicultural groups will be determined by the nature of the relationships they build and particular attitudes they display towards others. Since inter-cultural relationships reveal major aspects of the social life of Muslims and Christians, it is pertinent to assess the nature of these relationships. This part studies the inter-cultural relationships of each minority vis-a-vis the cultural majority of the adjacent social milieu.

5. Research Methodology

Four major steps were followed in this empirical study: (1) preparing the questionnaire (2) sampling technique (3) administering the questionnaire by field workers (4) analyzing data on the computer. The questionnaire included questions about Muslims' and Christians' intercultural relationships with the adjacent cultural majority.

A survey type questionnaire covered half of both groups' families -the total number of Christian and Muslim families reached 560 families and the sample consisted of 150 Christian Orthodox families and 130 Muslim families-. The number of Christian Orthodox families is nearly 300 and Muslim families in Trieste around 260. The survey covered half of both families as the total number of Christian and Muslim families reached 560 families. To make this sample adequately representative we followed two steps. First, we asked the officials in charge at the mayor's house to provide us with unofficial lists of residents. This measure was central because the official lists included only those whose origin is in these areas, while the unofficial ones included those who are residents of these areas. Therefore, the sample consisted of the residents of the Christian orth. in Trieste and Muslim residents in Trieste. The second step was selecting the respondents from the available lists. A total of 150 Christian Orthodox families and 130 Muslim families in Trieste were selected after examining these lists with the headmen of the social service. The respondents of the whole sample were selected from different geographical locations, different occupations, different levels of income, and different educational levels. To be able to find respondents at home and not at work, Sunday was the day chosen for fieldwork. Every Sunday was a day of fieldwork for each community. We have visited the already selected families and interviewed the head of the family or any other available adult in the house. Delegates of the headmen accompanied us all during ours visits to facilitate the fieldwork. Questions were addressed to Muslims and Christians as two intercultural minority groups irrespective of sectarian subdivisions within each group. The data obtained from the field work concern two different cultural communities, namely, the Muslims Orthodox of Trieste and the Christians of Trieste. The overall percentage of Muslims was 54.22 per cent and Christians 54.35 per cent of the sample.

6. Results

The overall percentage of Muslims was 54.22 per cent and Christians 54.35 per cent of the sample as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Multicultural Composition of the Sample

Culture-religion	N	Total (%)
Greek Orthodox	38	15.77
Instrian Orthodox	14	5.81
Serbian Orthodox	57	23.65
Musulmani/Eur.Est	19	7.88
Musulmani Albanesi	112	46.47
Musulmani Bulgari	1	0.41
Total	241	100.00

6.1. National Integration

National integration involves the integration of different cultural communities into supra-cultural entities at the local and national level. At the local level the supra-cultural entities entail the integration of Muslims and Christians as two cultural minorities into their adjacent social milieu inhabited by another cultural majority. At the national level the supra-cultural entities entail the integration of Muslims and Christians as cultural minorities into the nation-state. National integration was measured in terms of participation of cultural communities in traditional religious feasts and ceremonies and the way this may contribute to the national integration. Such indicator of national integration implies voluntary actions taken with a freedom of choice. Respondents are free to choose to cooperate or not, to participate or not, in the religious feasts and ceremonies. Similarly, respondents are free to choose the scope of these inter-cultural relationships, and the means of promoting inter-cultural co-

existence. In addition, the indicator of national integration was selected according to inter-cultural relationships that result in permanent new supra-cultural entities. Participation in religious feasts is an example that produces permanent supra-cultural customary traditions. National integration is a complex whole that requires more than one of its parts to be attained. Inter-cultural relationships become a necessary part but not sufficient in achieving national integration. Therefore, for an in-depth understanding of national integration aside from the dialectics between inter-cultural relationships and national integration, the indicator of national integration in relation to participation of cultural communities in traditional religious feasts and ceremonies was examined.

6.2. Traditions

Traditions were examined in terms of the respondents' view of their own traditions. In response to an open-ended question, respondents specified their own traditions as a cultural community. Table 2 presents these traditions. Considering what the respondents described as traditions, we notice that both Muslims and Christians demonstrate a religious trait in their description of their traditions. Traditions, to them, are an echo of their confessions. Traditions and confessions coalesce in what we may call 'cultural traditions'. Table 2 also shows that Christians are more likely to share and participate in the Muslims feasts and ceremonies than Muslims, who tend to abstain from sharing these feasts and ceremonies with Christians. A percentage of 9.80 per cent of the Christians reported that they celebrate religious feasts of other cultural communities compared to a significantly lower percentage of 0.98 per cent of the Muslims. Other traditions that entail sharing feasts and ceremonies with others were also higher with Christians than with Muslims. For example, sharing moments of joy and sorrow was 29.41 per cent for Christians compared to only 13.73 per cent for Muslims. Similarly, 10.78 per cent of the Christians celebrate Christian feasts like Halloween, Cross Feast, Saydat AI-Bihar, Carnival Week, Palm Sunday, Virgin Mary Month while non of the Muslims celebrate Muslim feasts like Lesser and Greater Bairam, Ramadan, Ashoura, Prophet's Birthday and visiting shrines. This reveals that Muslims have more reserved cultural attitude than Christians who have a more moderate cultural attitude and more open to inter-cultural relationships.

Table 2. Traditions of the Cultural Communities

Traditions	Community				Total	
	Muslims in Jbail-Amchit		Christians in Tyre			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sharing moments of joy and sorrow	14	13.73	30	29.41	44	21.57
Joining feast reunions	9	8.82	16	15.69	25	12.25
Celebrating holidays like Christmas, Easter, New Year, Assumption, Epiphany	17	16.67	0	0.00	17	8.33
Celebrating Lesser and Greater Bairam, Al-Hijriya New Year, Imam-Ali Birthday	0	0.00	27	26.47	27	13.24
Roaming and Catering for special festivities like Halloween, Cross Feast, Saydat AI-Bihar, Palm Sunday, the Virgin Mary Month, Carnival Week	91	89.22	11	10.78	102	50.00
Fastbreaking, gathering and celebrating Ramadan's nights	0	0.00	20	19.61	20	9.80
Dressing in black and holding ceremonies in the commemoration of Ashoura	0	0.00	18	17.65	18	8.82
Celebrating Prophet's Birthday	0	0.00	10	9.80	10	4.90
Visiting shrines and sanctuaries during feasts	0	0.00	14	13.73	14	6.86
Conformity to the confession in manners and styles of dressing and choice of spouse in marriage and chastity of girls	5	4.90	6	5.88	11	5.39
Celebrating religious feasts of other cultural communities	1	0.98	10	9.80	11	5.39
Charity giving during feasts	3	2.94	10	9.80	13	6.37
Slaying sheep on Greater Bairam	0	0.00	4	3.92	4	1.96
Exposing the trousseau and participating in the festivities after the wedding	2	1.96	4	3.92	6	2.94
Total	102	100.00	102	100.00	204	100.00

In both cases Christians and Muslims reflect a traditional rupture between them as two communities. This does not help in building customary and national traditions that unify both communities. Hence, both communities do not move in the direction of a strong national integration. However, addressing these differences in attitude between Muslims and Christians from the perspective of national integration, we find that despite of these differences, both Muslims and Christians have perceptions that express national disunity. Both of them disregard common national and cultural traditions. They both perceive 'traditions' as a synonym to their own 'confession' rather than to shared national traditions. Besides, not only do both communities disregard the common national traditions but also avoid the religious ceremonies that are strictly specific to the other confession. All Muslims and most Christians abstain from the celebration of confession-specific ceremonies. The only social event that both communities exchange is sharing moments of joy and sorrow. This exchange, though important, is not the central and the highly cherished tradition of both communities.

7. Conclusion: Implications for policy makers and marketers

Social exchange is found to exist between the two groups in sharing moments of joy and sorrow. This exchange, though important, is not the central and the highly cherished tradition of both communities. Communities which live in Trieste managed to preserve their initial cultural heritage to a considerable degree since they realized that their culture is complementary and not opposite to the Italian culture and within this model they created not only a bilingual but also a double culture, the one which emerged from the interrelation between them and with the Italian culture creating in that way and building in the passage of time and from generation to generation their intercultural identity and the city's. Third culture building is based on this intercultural identity of all the communities, can be employed by practitioners with the further aim to plan and evaluate intercultural communication situations (Hopson, Hart and Bell, 2012: 792). Since research has shown that events such as the foundation of the city is an important event that brings people together, policy makers need to find and put emphasis on the communication and marketing of those events that join people together and they are willing to share with each other with their participation. These connecting bonds among people, may put emphasis on the supranational culture. Moving a step further, the realisation of the significance of these events may be combined with tourism policy strategies in order to make these events well known and make people realise the benefits they may have from such promotion. Thus, the role of local authorities and managers of a city is to contribute so that consensus among individuals who live there -regarding how they experience this city, how they feel about it as being its members- exists (Laaksonen, Laaksonen, Borisov and Halkoaho, 2006; Bitsani 2004). People may share activities of interest to them that they make them feel happy while festivities which are exclusively related to one community, cannot be easily part of all the people of the host community. The host community needs to take into consideration that the common denominator for connecting the minorities is the festivities of Trieste and emphasis should be put upon what unites people in an attempt to bring them more closely. Stereotypes within a society should not exist, diversity in terms of people may the case and within a state the inclusion of all is what everyone should aim at (Widler, 2007; Bitsani and Kavoura 2011). Trieste, Italy is a typical recourse for other areas of the Mediterranean where cultures and identities intermingle nowadays and migration and policy directions need to be implemented (Bitsani and Kavoura, 2011).

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