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Frontier Hybridisation or Culture Clash? Transnational Migrant Communities and Sub-National Identity Politics in Andalusia, Spain

Gunther Dietz

In this paper, ethnographically focused on the southern Spanish frontier region of Andalusia, the intercultural support activities of local voluntary associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are analysed in the context of ethnicised islamophobia. Currently, the recently emerging islamophobic actors, which tend to combine narrowly localist and Spanish nationalist identity horizons with an emphasis on Catholicism as a decisive ‘ethnic marker’ of Spanish-ness, are being countered by Andalusian regionalist strategies of islamophilia, which claim that a ‘return of Islam’ and/or the pluri-religious legacy of Al-Andalus will empower the region’s ongoing search for a supra-local, but sub-national and non-Castilian common identity. The specific context and problematics of migrant community formation are illustrated for the Andalusian region, and then contrasted with the ‘identity politics’ of the non-migrant Andalusian host society and its struggle for regional autonomy inside the Spanish state. Finally, the increasingly important role of Andalusian NGOs as intercultural mediators and spaces of cultural hybridisation is analysed with regard to its socio-political as well as theoretical consequences for the study of identity politics.

Keywords: Identity Politics; Regionalism; Hybridisation; Islamophobia; Andalusia

Even before the 9/11 attacks on New York City’s World Trade Center, increasing xenophobic and particularly islamophobic tendencies were observable inside Western societies. Are these tendencies mere reactions to external ‘menaces’ supposedly linked to migration from Muslim countries, or is there a causal relation with the host societies’ own struggles over identity, inclusion and exclusion? What alternatives to the often boastfully predicted ‘clash of civilisations’ (Huntington 1996) are emerging in the encounters, interstices and overlappings between ‘host’ and ‘guest’ identities and cultures?
These questions, which relate directly to the host societies’ dominant identity politics, tend to be dealt with in a national scope: existing approaches focus either on the nation-state’s normative ‘philosophies of integration’ (Favell 1998) or on its underlying ‘unconscious anthropological systems’ (Todd 1994). Empirical, ethnographic studies on the regional and/or local interrelation between ‘native’ identity politics and migrant community formation processes are still scarce and concentrate on particular integration policy domains, such as Verlot’s comparative research on Flemish versus Walloon educational policies towards migrant pupils in Belgium (Verlot 2001).

The particularity of the southern Spanish region of Andalusia, chosen for the present case study, resides in the rare coincidence of both ‘native’ and migrant identity struggles. On the one hand, Andalusia is undergoing a hasty process of sub-national identity building, which is motivated by an ethnicised tug-of-war of asymmetrical devolution and federalisation. Simultaneously, however, Andalusian regional society de facto is quickly ‘multiculturalising’ and pluralising in religious terms; this is mainly induced by North African immigration and the immigrant-support activities of local civil society movements and organisations. Before analysing both of these processes and their mutual confluences, contradictions and conflictive reinforcements, the dilemma of current dualised identity theories is sketched; this functions as a point of departure for the case study of Andalusia.

The ‘Top of Africa’ or the ‘Bottom of Europe’?

A striking gap exists in the contemporary academic and political debate on migration, identity and integration processes currently taking place inside the European Union. Both political decision-making and social science theorisation seem to agree that two different phenomena are challenging the classical European nation-states.

On the one hand, there are obvious trends towards an economically and technologically driven supranational or transnational integration of the once-nationally confined and defined societies.¹ The social impact of this trend is not limited to the often nostalgically deplored loss of regional or national cultural peculiarities in the course of the so-called ‘McDonaldization’ of European societies; it is also international migration towards Europe which is interpreted as part and direct consequence of an ongoing process of transnational integration (King 2000). In this sense, willingly or not, European national societies are multiculturalising in recent decades as a result of non-European immigrant settlements. According to decision-makers throughout the continent and the political spectrum, this kind of multiculturalism challenges national as well as European identity policy ‘from the outside’ (Sassen 1999).

On the other hand, a supposedly different phenomenon is simultaneously challenging the European Union and its member-states ‘from within’: the rediscovery and/or creation of sub-nationally articulated identities which are currently emerging on a regional level in different parts of Europe (Hettlage 1996). A new wave of regionalism is defying the nation-state’s monopoly on territorially bounded,
exclusive identities and its insistence on constructing European-ness as a shared sum of national identities. The increasingly popular project of a ‘Europe of Regions’, which may be complementing or even substituting the still hegemonic official insistence on a state-driven European project, is questioning the nation-state’s legitimacy. With its renewed emphasis on the autochthonous character and the ethno-regional ‘rootedness’ of sub-national identities (Guibernau 1999), regionalism is also challenging the very notion of an all-encompassing, civic (not ethnic) European citizenship.

Reflecting these political and societal distinctions of multiculturalist versus regionalist phenomena, several of the pioneer authors who theorise national/regional and migrant identity have insisted on the conceptual necessity of distinguishing two completely different forms of ‘ethnogenesis’, i.e. of ethnic identity formation processes, arguing that there is a fundamental difference between national/regional (native) ethnogenesis and migrant (minority) ethnogenesis (cf. Holton 1998; Leman 1998; Myhill 1999). By stating a fundamental difference between autochthonous and migrant identity, ‘dual tracking’ in identity policy runs the risk of being legitimised scientifically (see Verlot and Dietz 2001). The following analysis of the intertwining of migrant and non-migrant identity politics for the Andalusian case will question this political-cum-academic tendency towards ‘dual tracking’.

Product of multiple waves of immigration and emigration, alternatively serving throughout history as target and as origin of different conquests and re-conquests, the southern Spanish region of Andalusia is well-suited for studying this inter-relation between an identity project relying on territoriality and ‘aboriginality’, on the one hand, and migration-based ethnogenesis and community formation on the other. As will be analysed in detail in the next sections, Andalusian identity has always been tempted to bridge the Mediterranean divide. Oscillating throughout different epochs between identifying itself as the ‘top’ of the African and/or Oriental world or the ‘bottom’ of the Occident, its still recent integration into the European Union and its subsequent role as a European ‘gate-keeper’ at the margins of the continent is ambiguously re-defining the region’s self-perception. As will be shown, at least for the Andalusian case, multiculturalism and regionalism, and migrant ethnogenesis and autochthonous ethnic movements, are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing phenomena.

**Tariq’s Return? The Formation of Transnational Migrant Communities**

In the last 15–20 years, Spain has experienced a remarkable increase in its immigrant population (Arango 2000; Cazorla 1995; Colectivo IOE 1999; Cornelius 1994; Izquierdo 1992). Although the situation is—quantitatively speaking—not comparable to that of other EU member-states, by 2002 there were already more than 1.2 million foreigners living with a residence permit in Spain. (Nevertheless, there are still more than 2 million Spaniards living abroad; Gil Araujo 2002). In addition, the current migrant phenomenon is very heterogeneously patterned. Firstly, among the Spanish emigrants living and working in Northern Europe, there is a new generation of rather well integrated, but hyphenated Spanish-Germans, Spanish-French etc.
who cultivate an identity characterised by a diasporic longing for their ancestors’ Mediterranean roots (Ruiz Garzón 2001). Secondly, those Spanish guestworkers who migrated to Northern Europe and who did not succeed in definitively integrating into the host society tend to return to their regions of origin once they retire. Thirdly, retirement migration is not limited to Spanish guestworkers, but dominates the intra-European migration towards Spain as well (Jurdao Arrones and Sánchez 1990). Finally, non-European immigrants are increasingly choosing Spain as a transit or destination. On the one hand, the composition of this last kind of immigration reflects the post-colonial links which still exist between the Spanish peninsula and its formerly dependant Latin American as well as North African territories. However, on the other hand, immigration is starting to diversify; as a result of Spain’s EU integration and its participation in the Schengen Treaty, the country’s southern shores are also strategically chosen as a point of entry, not only to Spain, but to the EU Schengen territory as such (Arango 2000).

Having in mind these heterogeneous migration patterns as well as the problems of accuracy and reliability which affect all official data on migration issued in Spain, an overall broad tendency towards becoming an immigration country is evident (Colectivo IOE 1999; Gil Araujo 2002; Izquierdo 1996). This general tendency is also perceivable in the case of the southern Spanish region of Andalusia (García Castaño 2001). Due to the lasting importance of the Mediterranean Costa del Sol for EU retirement migration (O’Reilly 2000), Andalusia is one of the regions where Europeans still comprise around 50 per cent of the total immigrant population. Nevertheless, from the Andalusian host society’s perspective, intra-EU immigration is not perceived as part of the migratory phenomenon at all, but as a by-product of the regionally important tourism industry. Moroccan immigrants, on the contrary, are often associated with a threatening scenario of North African ‘re-conquest’, i.e. the return of Tariq, the historical leader of the 711 ‘Muslim invasion’ of the Iberian peninsula.

The integration of non-European immigrants into the Andalusian economy and society broadly reflects the main characteristics of a distinctive ‘southern European model of immigration’ (King 2000). Similar to other Spanish, Portuguese, Italian or Greek regions, Andalusia’s role in immigration has been profoundly transformed over the last two decades. Originally, the (mainly Moroccan) non-EU immigrants had been using Andalusia only as an entry and transit route region in their journeys to the Spanish urban and industrial centres of Madrid or Catalonia or to their French, Belgian and Dutch final destinations. Nowadays, on the contrary, the region itself has been chosen as a temporary or permanent destination for immigrants. During the same period of time, the demographic profile of the immigrants has changed: the Moroccan, but also the Senegalese and other sub-Saharan African immigrants are increasingly younger, more formally educated and of urban origins in their home countries. Although still male-dominated, the percentage of female migrants is increasing (García Castaño 2001).

Another rather commonly ‘southern European’ feature of immigration to Andalusia concerns to the migrants’ integration into the labour market. Reflecting the
predominance of the primary (above all, export agriculture) and tertiary (mainly tourism-related) economic sectors in the region, the large majority of non-EU immigrants are precariously employed in agriculture—in the intensively cultivated vegetable plantations in the province of Almería and during the olive and strawberry harvest periods in the provinces of Jaén and Huelva—and in tourism-related industries and service sectors such as construction work, hotels, restaurants and bars. Apart from the tourism sector, the most important source of employment for immigrant women is domestic services delivered in urban middle- and upper-class households.2

Both men and women share the same conditions of employment, which are extremely ‘flexible’, ‘informal’ and subject to profound seasonal variations. An ethno-national segregation of particular economic activities is beginning to take place, for example Moroccan-dominated construction work, or the informal urban markets mainly controlled by Senegalese street-vendors (Dietz and Peña García 1999). In addition, pluri-occupational strategies and internal migration cycles, which oscillate between plantation work in Almería, harvesting in Jaén or Huelva, informal street-trading in Granada and/or periodic construction work in Málaga or on the Costa del Sol, emerge as new forms of labour market integration.

The parallel process of migrant community formation, which in the case of the immigrants in Andalusia has just begun, is deeply shaped by this highly precarious and seasonal nature of labour market integration. As shown throughout the interviews conducted in the course of this study, the decision to definitively settle down in a particular town or village has to be continuously postponed. This instability in the settlement patterns reflects a corresponding profile in the social composition of the migrant population, still characterised by mostly young, male and unmarried persons or by married men whose wives remain in the country of origin. Family regrouping is not only made difficult by the economic precariousness of employment, but is also hindered by the legal status of many migrant workers living in Andalusia. In the course of their migrant histories, most of the interviewees experience frequent oscillations between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ phases of residence and/or labour circumstances (Calavita 1998).

As non-EU immigration is still a relatively recent phenomenon in the region, contrary to other European destinations of contemporary immigration, Andalusia cannot offer any previous, migration-related community infrastructure. Whereas Moroccans currently emigrating to industrial regions of Spain or to the former guestworker countries will always find some pre-established social, religious or trade union institutions on which they may rely in the beginning of their integration process (Moreras 1999), in Andalusia this social infrastructure does not exist. Thus, the loss of family and kin ties, which is characteristic of any initial migratory phase (Vertovec 1999), cannot be compensated by a weakly-knit migrant community network, with its newly-emerging ‘religious infrastructure’ of mosques, community meeting points, and stores which offer halal food as well as products from the region of origin.
This sense of loss is exacerbated by the surrounding social context. Members of the Spanish and Catholic majority society are frequently reported to show rejection, complete ignorance and a lack of interest when interacting with Muslims. The absence of social networks created by earlier waves of immigrants deepens the precariousness characterising work-related living conditions (Dietz and El-Shohoumi 2002). As a consequence, the migrant populations recently appearing in Andalusia do not integrate into the local, urban or rural settings of the host-society neighbourhoods, but into the ethno-national networks which enable them to survive in the unstable continuum of legal and illegal economic activities. Migrant communities in Andalusia are thus increasingly established through ethnic segregation and transnational networking. Although these communities are still locally very weak and poorly visible to the Andalusian host society, they articulate community membership throughout a strong territorial dimension: from its very beginning, the ‘trans-Mediterranean migratory space’ (Borchardt 1996) generates a long-distance type of transmigrant community (cf. Glick Schiller et al. 1999; Pries 1999; Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

The orientation towards trans-Mediterranean instead of local Andalusian issues, which sometimes is claimed to be characteristic of a first phase of integration (Casey 1996), is often perceived by the host society as an obstacle for integration. NGOs as well as public institutions frequently criticise the lack of stability, continuity and accountability shown in the daily work and the functioning of the few already-existing migrant community associations. In their view, as expressed by the local representative of the Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado, these associations ‘appear and disappear’ constantly, often using ‘different names and different addresses’ for the ‘same few people meeting each other’ and ‘discussing their typically Moroccan mix of politics and kinship issues’.3

This criticism is often extended to the religious field. Frequently, public institutions issue calls for all Muslims, migrants as well as Spanish converts, to unite in a single association, which could be formally recognised and subsidised as their institutional counterpart. For example, in the Albayzín neighbourhood of Granada, one of Spain’s most visible historically Arabic and currently recovered ‘Muslim’ quarters, the social worker who is coordinating the neighbourhood’s social services centre complains about the Muslim communities’ organisational diversity, which according to her means:

There is no point of confluence among them, well, yes, their only point of convergence is Allah, they say, but I tell them ‘What’s Allah to do with this mess? Forget it!’ That’s why I know exactly, they will never be able to achieve anything until they choose, until they strategically choose a common path, in order to become real counterparts of ours.

Nevertheless, the diversity of Muslim communities emerging in southern Spain is not simply reducible to internal divisions and sectarianism. The main distinction that still divides Muslims in Andalusia is that between migrants from Muslim societies of origin, on the one hand, and Muslim converts, on the other hand. The converts are of Christian background and are either Spaniards or incomers from other Western countries who are ‘in search of Islam’ and its legacy of tolerance, as
symbolised by the ‘myth of Al-Andalus’. Cities such as Granada and Córdoba, and inside these cities above all their historically Muslim or Muslim-Jewish neighbourhoods are becoming ‘poles of attraction’ for conversion-related north-south migration.

Most converts implicitly distance themselves from the North African immigrants by distinguishing two kinds of Islam: the culturally and regionally rooted ‘traditional’ Islam and the ‘universal belief system’, shared by the transnational umma of all fellow-Muslims. A convert from Seville, however, states that the migrants are the ones who tend to segregate from the converts and who only reluctantly accept people who lack the cultural and linguistic background of Arab Muslims: ‘for them, Islam is part of a race, it’s like a race, so if you are not Arabic…’.

Whereas the migrant Muslims give the impression that they want intense community relations, the convert Muslims have succeeded in building up strong and stable, although rather small communities. This difference seems to be related to the process of conversion itself, which takes place not only as a personal revelation, but as a ‘voyage’ of initiation into the midst of a community of already-initiated ‘fellow-travellers’. These convert communities may be locally rather small, but they are integrated into transnational networks of fellow-converts who share the same schools of interpretation and sometimes also the same religious ‘leaders’. While Muslim migrants tend to identify themselves in ethnic or national terms—e.g. as Moroccans or as Amazigh—the converts turn to the umma as their broad identity ‘horizon’.

As a consequence of this process of enclosure and community building, many migrant Muslims completely lack relations with the converts. When asked about their relation to the local host society, most of the migrants express a strong general desire to deepen their interaction with the non-Muslim local population in the neighbourhood, at school, at the workplace or during leisure activities. Only those who have to cope with serious Spanish language difficulties feel that they are completely isolated from their local surroundings. By contrast, those young Moroccans from urban middle- and upper-class backgrounds who study at southern Spanish Universities—most of them choose the University of Granada, due to its historical ties to the educational system of the former Spanish protectorate of northern Morocco—are the ones who feel best integrated. They enjoy the openness of Spanish youth and try to participate in their leisure activities (González Barea 2000).

Whose Legacy? Andalusian Sub-National Identity Politics

Paradoxically, the recent and precarious character of migrant community formation in Andalusia parallels an apparently completely different phenomenon of identity formation: the struggle for ‘regaining’, ‘maintaining’ or ‘inventing’ Andalusia’s own distinctive identity vis-à-vis the Spanish nation-state. Since the final accomplishment of the nationally mythicised reconquista, the ‘re-conquest’ of Granada from the last Muslim dynasty in 1492, Andalusia has been subject to an intense pressure of
‘nationalising nationalism’ (Brubaker 1996) exerted by the central state in order to ‘castilianise’ the region and to assimilate its ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse inhabitants to the Catholic, Castilian mainstream Spanish population. From the ‘ethnic cleansing’ measures undertaken by the Santa Inquisición against the region’s Muslim and Jewish communities until the ideology of ‘national Catholicism’ of Franco’s dictatorship, Andalusia was not allowed to develop any kind of distinctive, regional identity (Stallaert 1998).

This homogenisation pressure, legitimated by a supposed common Spanish-Castilian identity in order to economically and politically integrate the feudal structures into an emerging nation-state (Vilar 1990), was finally abolished in the course of the post-Franco process of ‘transition’ and democratisation. Since Franco’s death in 1975 and throughout the elaboration of a democratic Constitution in 1977–8, the country’s traditional centralism is gradually, but entirely transformed. The oldest European nation-state is redefined by the 1978 Constitution as a ‘state of autonomous communities’, whose competencies are passed down through a slow process of administrative decentralisation, which de facto ends up federalising the state as a whole.

Nevertheless, from its very beginning this federalisation is not performed on equal terms, nor are inter-regional compensation or exchange mechanisms included. Instead, the Constitution distinguishes two kinds of region: those shaped by ‘historical nationalisms’ and their distinctive cultural and linguistic features, on the one hand; and those regions lacking their own cultural idiosyncrasies and/or ethno-nationalist identities, on the other hand (Constitución Española 1991). As the ethno-nationalist argument goes, this constitutional distinction is justified by the persistence of differentiated, mostly linguistically expressed, non-Spanish national identities (Strubell 1998). Others, however, stress the economic and political importance of regional bourgeoisies not only in the process of decentralisation, but also in the origins of regionalist-nationalist discourses as such (Solé Tura 1974, 1985).

As a result of the negotiations between centralist and regionalist elites in the formulation of the Spanish Constitution, an asymmetrical and ethnically biased process of devolution from Madrid to certain regions is initiated at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Immediately, this official distinction between ‘fast-track’ versus ‘slow-track’ regions starts ethnicising the sub-national conflicts and negotiations on devolution and delimitation of competencies between the different levels of government.

Accordingly, not only in Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country, but also in the case of Andalusia, the newly-emerging regional elites adopt a strategy of ‘pragmatic radicalism’ in order to justify their claims-making. In the course of this process, Andalusia finally succeeds in obtaining recognition as a ‘historical’ region of fast-track devolution, but its ruling elites remain trapped in a constant necessity of justifying the region’s ‘historical singularity’ in order to be able to expand their competencies at approximately the same pace and rhythm as their Basque and Catalan counterparts, already governed by regionalist-nationalist parties and not—as
In its attempts to justify the singularity of ‘Andalusian-ness’ and to distinguish it from shared ‘Spanish-ness’, regionalist identity politics have to face a particular challenge which is completely absent from the Catalan, Basque or even Galician cases: the cultural features which are supposed to be distinctively Andalusian, first of all have to be ‘de-colonised’ from their past appropriation by Spanish nationalism, in general, and from the dictatorship’s culture and tourism policy, in particular. By deliberately exploiting stereotypes of Andalusian popular culture such as bull-fights, *flamenco* music and religious festivities and by presenting them to mainly European mass tourism audiences under the topic of ‘Spain is different’, Andalusian culture had been successfully ‘nationalised’ under the Franco regime. Thus, Andalusian identity politics have had to combine political devolution with ideological de-colonisation from Madrid (Moreno Navarro 1993). Three different sources have been used since the 1970s by Andalusian regionalist actors in order to construct—or reconstruct—the Andalusian-ness of regional culture:

- the ‘*fiesta* legacy’ of mainstream Andalusian popular Catholicism, which is based on local and regional patron saints whose worship is channelled through membership in religious fraternities as well as through participation in annual processions and pilgrimages (Gómez García 1991);
- the ‘*gitano* legacy’ of Andalusian music, symbolised through different originally gypsy *flamenco* styles and schools of guitar playing, dancing and singing and disseminated nationally as well as internationally since the nineteenth century in the course of a romanticised, non-gypsy interpretation of ‘gypsy way of life’ (Quintana 1986);
- and finally and more recently, the Maghrebian or ‘*moro* legacy’ of the region’s supposedly multicultural past as *Al Andalus*, which historically denominates the Muslim dynasties residing north of the Strait of Gibraltar, but which symbolically expresses the claimed common heritage of co-existence and tolerance among the three monotheist religions (Driessen 1992).

Although taken together these three sources of Andalusian-ness have been rather successfully used by the regional government for its claims *vis-à-vis* the central state as well as the other ‘historical nationalities’ of Spain, internally all of them have been heavily contested by newly emerging, non-hegemonic regional actors. The ‘*fiesta* legacy’ of supposedly Andalusian Catholicism is being called into question by ever-more-powerful localist religious and political movements, which reflect the still-parochial nature of identity politics in the region and which use the mobilising potentials of the local fraternities for intra-regional rivalries. Ever since the top-down political decision to choose Seville as the region’s administrative capital was made at the beginning of the 1980s, inter-city rivalry, above all between Seville as the Andalusian ‘capital of bureaucrats’, on the one hand, and on the other the informal ‘capitals of intellectuals’ (Granada and Córdoba) as well as the ‘capitals of
entrepreneurs’ (Málaga and Almería), has weakened any attempt at constructing and officially promoting an all-encompassing Andalusian identity.

Similarly, the officially-claimed de-colonisation of the ‘gypsy legacy’, formerly instrumentalised by the dictatorship, and its re-interpretation as an ethnically distinctive Andalusian gypsy culture is being questioned by the nascent, but very influential Roma movement. According to their own identity politics, Andalusian gypsy culture and music forms are part neither of Spanish nor of Andalusian heritage, but are an expression of a European-wide, pan-gypsy identity, which has to be reconstructed from five centuries of nationalist oppression, segregation or assimilation.

Finally, the ‘Moorish legacy’ of Al Andalus, which in the last few years has been successfully used by the regional government not only in educational policy—introducing a distinctively regionalist interpretation of officially taught history at school—but also in tourism promotion, is by far the most controversial of all issues regarding Andalusian identity. By emphasising the region’s Muslim past and the historical Muslim rulers’ tendency to tolerate Jews and Christians under their reigns, the Andalusian government has to face criticism by a large variety of actors. The Catholic Church and its lay organisations stress the region’s pre-Muslim, Visigothic roots of Christianity. On the other side, the Andalusian Muslim converts reject the instrumentalisation of Islam by non-Muslim politicians, and challenge the leaders of the emerging Moroccan immigrant communities and of local immigrant support NGOs, who campaign for official Andalusian government recognition of the ‘particular’ historical ties which the region’s natives and immigrants alike maintain with the southern shores of the western Mediterranean.

Towards a ‘Culture Clash’? Ethnicised Conflicts in Intercultural Settings

Mutually reinforced conflicts are starting to appear in relation to these struggles over the region’s ‘Moorish’ or Muslim legacy. Compared to other European cases of so-called ‘culture clashes’, i.e. of ethno-religious conflicts between migrant and non-migrant populations (Lacomba 2001), in the Andalusian arena the most striking feature of these conflicts is their ambiguously overlapping, religious, ethnic and racialised nature. Whereas in other European contexts—not only in the case of the French ‘prototype’ of secularism, but also in the British and German debates on the public presence of Islam—it is the gap between Western secularism versus non-Western, religiously integrated cosmologies which dominates the negotiations over the divide between the public and the private sphere (Modood 1997; Rex 1997), the complexity of the Andalusian case stems from a coinciding, but contradictory ‘double dichotomy’ to which not only the Muslims, but also the regional society and its institutional framework are exposed:

• As the institutional representatives frequently state, the ‘return of Islam’ to the Iberian peninsula challenges the process of secularisation which the Spanish state and society are currently undergoing; in this perspective, a fundamental
contradiction resides in the relation between an all-encompassing, comprehensive world view—formerly Catholicism, nowadays Islam—on the one hand, and Western meta-religious laicism on the other hand.

- This perspective, however, is constantly contradicted by an ancient rivalry which has been constitutive of the emergence and shaping of Spanish national identity (Stallaert 1998), but which persists still now inside the Spanish and Andalusian majority society and culture: the perceived antagonism between Islam, on the one hand, viewed as ‘Arabic’ or ‘Moorish’, and Catholicism, on the other hand, identified with the predominantly Castilian ethnicity.

It is in this broader societal context that the question of the ‘Moorish legacy’ directly relates the specific phenomenon of Muslim migrant community-building in Andalusia to the issue of regional identity politics. Through non-immigrant converts as well as through immigrants from Muslim countries of origin, Islam is perceived by the host society as ‘returning’ to the peninsula after five centuries of religious, cultural and ethnic homogenisation policies. As a consequence of the century-long tradition of conceiving Roman Catholicism as a quasi-official state religion, neither for the whole of Spain nor for Andalusia are there census data available on membership in religious communities. According to unofficial estimates, however, based on the predominant religion of certain immigrant populations, approximately 400,000 people, or around 1 per cent of the total resident population of Spain, identify themselves as Muslims (Abumalham 1995; Moreras 1999).

As to their regional distribution, the Muslim population of Spain is concentrated in the urban centres of the Madrid and Catalonia autonomous communities (López García 1996), with Andalusia emerging as a third focus of Muslim population. As a further key feature, only in the case of Andalusia and particularly the cities of Córdoba and Granada, are converts to Islam an increasingly important sector of the overall Muslim population (Rosón Lorente 2001).

Two different factors, the above-mentioned recent nature of immigration to Spain and the trend towards religious pluralisation, determine the situation of Muslim communities in Spain. On the one hand, after the slow beginning of family regrouping, immigrant communities made up of mainly Moroccan foreign workers are appearing in recent years; these seldom identify themselves in public as distinctively Muslim communities, but as foreign workers’ associations in labour contexts and/or as parents’ associations in school environments. On the other hand, religious pluralism is a rather recent feature both in legal terms and in daily practice (Moreras 1999; Solé Tura and Ciaurriz Labiano 1984). Above all in cities such as Granada and Córdoba, Moroccan students as well as the growing group of Andalusian, Spanish or non-Spanish converts start to build up a tiny, but publicly rather visible minority of Muslim intellectuals who are overtly challenging the implicitly Catholic common sense of the Andalusian host society.

As Stallaert (1998) shows in detail, the Spanish nation-state project has been founded on a mixture of ethnically-based ‘arabophobia’ and religiously motivated ‘islamophobia’. The construction and imposition of a common Spanish-Castilian
hegemonic identity has always legitimated measures of inquisitorial religious persecution as well as of ‘ethnic cleansing’, implemented since 1492 through ‘laws of blood purity’ which constantly blur biological, ethnic and religious terminology. The confusion and/or mixing up of ethnic, religious and phenotypical differentiations persists and is particularly striking in the case of the Muslim converts. All of them tell curious anecdotes which show how stereotyped and historically-rooted the dominant perception of the West’s paradigmatic ‘other’ still is.

I have often been congratulated: ‘For a Muslim, your Spanish is rather good’. And I tell them that of course I can speak Spanish, as I’m from here! For them Islam is Morocco and it should never, never come back to Spain.

Despite the important efforts not only of democratising, but also of decentralising and federalising the Spanish nation-state, this long-lasting identity politics of the centralised Spanish state is still observable in the ethnographic present. Generalised ‘anti-moro’ attitudes which reflect the combination of ethnic, religious and national dimensions of discrimination prevail in large sectors of the majority society. As the Catalan novelist Juan Goytisolo (1978) recalls, these xenophobic *topoi* are reinforced by the Spanish colonial heritage as well as by the use Franco made of Moroccan mercenary troops to fight the Republican government. These persistent *topoi*, however, are often ambiguous and contradictory: the colonial image of the ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ moro allows for both rejection and identification, thus still reflecting the polarised and traumatic perception of violence during Spanish colonialism in North Africa and during the civil war (Balfour 2002; Morales Lezcano 1986, 1988).

Data are not only scarce on the presence of Muslims in Spain or Andalusia, but also on attitudes and ideologies of islamophobia expressed by the host society. A recent major quantitative study, conducted under the auspices of the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (ASEP 1998), for the first time tries to break down the diverse elements which make up anti-immigration attitudes in Spain. On the basis of these statistical data, collected through scalings of ‘positive’, ‘negative’ and ‘indifferent’ opinions about certain minorities—different nationalities, ethnic minorities such as *gitanos*, racialised terms such as *negros* and religious classifications such as *judíos* and *musulmanes*—it is possible to detect elements of deeply-rooted and historically transmitted stigmatisations of ‘the other’.

Despite the variations observed in the study according to the educational level of the Spanish interviewees and the degree of contact they maintain with minority populations, these stigmatisation processes reflect a shared, implicit ethno-religious hierarchy of common ‘others’. In this hierarchy, the lowest position is still ascribed to the Spanish gypsy community, followed by a generalised negative attitude towards people of Arab origin and/or Muslims, a label which is ranked worse than the opinion about ‘immigrants’ in general. The comparison of attitudes towards ‘others’ prevailing in high-immigration versus low-immigration regions of Spain shows that arabophobia and islamophobia are historically shaped and do not merely reflect recent immigration trends (ASEP 1998). The native population of regions with
nearly no immigration show an ‘index of xenophobia’ which is similar to that of regions affected by immigration.6

Accordingly, the intercultural relations which are being established between native Andalusians and mostly Muslim immigrants in local neighbourhoods, the labour market, at school and inside other public institutions, are still shaped and determined by these deeply-rooted images, attitudes and stereotypes of the ‘historical other’. The stereotypes guiding the perceptions of the local majority society are constantly feeding discriminatory attitudes and interaction with people perceived as Muslims and/or Arabs. Sometimes it seems difficult to distinguish between real ignorance, ‘mere’ joking and actual, explicit stigmatisation, when Muslims in Andalusia are permanently asked about their ‘desert way of life’, about ‘how many camels their fathers own’, about their childhood growing up ‘among tents and bedouins’ etc. When looking for a flat or applying for a job, Moroccan immigrants face stereotypes about the ‘hideousness’ of Moroccan men and the ‘lasciviousness and eroticism of Arabian belly-dancers’, about supposed customs of ‘Arabic revenge’, ‘moros cutting off each others’ heads in blood-feuds and about the risk of employing Moroccans because of their high percentage of ‘criminals’ and ‘child kidnappers’. An Amazigh woman from the Rif region in north-eastern Morocco, who cleans private homes and does child-caring in Catholic Spanish families, recalls a whole complex of stereotypes that were used against her when she was employed for the first time for child care:

I have always dressed like this, before coming here, but they think I’m hiding my chilaba! They ask me about my camels and tents. … Yes, I’m proud of being Muslim and Moroccan, my roots are there, my blood, but they are scared. When I got this job, everybody told the lady whose child I’m caring for now ‘Be careful, she may steal it, they are so mean, so envious!’

Another stereotype which Muslim immigrants or Andalusian converts to Islam frequently have to face when interacting with Catholic Andalusians is the supposedly huge quantity of children borne by Muslim women. As part of the above-mentioned generalised and historical islamophobia and arabophobia, rumours are spread that ‘the moros’ are trying to reconquer the ‘Spanish shores’ by sending their pregnant women illegally to the peninsula. The old fear of the moros en la costa, the ‘Moors who are back on our coast’, seems to be combined with a sexist variant of the ‘Trojan horse’ metaphor, according to which the supposedly high fertility rate of Muslim women would be consciously exploited and promoted for a strange kind of geo-strategic ‘invasion’. Several immigrants (as well as converts) remember situations when—‘in strict confidence’—they were asked by local Catholic neighbours ‘how much they would be paid’ by these strange forces for giving birth to ‘so many moritos’.

The only interviewees who directly perceive not only personal but also institutional and structural forms of discrimination are the Spanish converts to Islam. In their view, the dominant Spanish and Andalusian mass media nowadays reproduce old phobias and stereotypes such as the rumour about being paid for having lots of
children. The converts perceive these generalised discriminatory attitudes not as a simple expression of stereotypes, but as a new form of reproducing the structurally rooted historical phobias. For them, the military terminology of ‘invasion’, a remnant of the reconquista jargon, is re-signified in the course of Spain’s official migration policy. The continuity which is connoted between the Arab-Muslim ‘invasion’ of 711 and the contemporary ‘Muslim illegal immigrant invasion’ serves as a supposedly fixed ethnic boundary: it generates a bipolarity and enables a clear-cut distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’. From a structural and historical point of view, conversion to Islam is thus perceived as ‘disloyal’ and ‘betrayal’.

From the personal experiences with stereotyping and ethno-religious discrimination shown by the local host society towards converts and immigrants, five dimensions of distinction, inequality and supposed superiority emerge:

- the supposed religious and/or ‘civilizational’ division between Muslims and Christians/Catholics, i.e. between ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’;
- the ethnic distinction between ‘Arabs’ and ‘Castilians’, which reflects historical connotations of ‘them’ and ‘us’;
- the racialised perception of a supposed phenotypic bipolarity between ‘non-whites’—either ‘Semites’ or ‘blacks’—and ‘whites’;
- the national and citizenship-based distinction between ‘aliens’ or ‘non-Spaniards’ and ‘Spaniards’ or ‘nationals’, which is already materialised in the Spanish Constitution; and
- the dividing line drawn by public opinion between ‘immigrant’ minority communities, who are supposed to be problematic per se, and the ‘non-migrant’ or ‘sedentary’ host majority society, which is in charge of solving these migration-related problems.

In comparison with other European regions shaped by a Christian majority religion and nowadays ruled by secularised institutions and public opinion, in Andalusia so far there have not been any major public conflicts around the issue of the headscarf. Nevertheless, the first conflicts involving ethnicised religious differences in Andalusian cities such as Córdoba or Granada are appearing—not in relation to Moroccan immigrant communities specifically, but with regard to the increasing visibility of Islam, in general, and conversion to Islam, in particular. In several cases, these conflicts arise from the officially secular, but implicitly Catholic orientation of the region’s public school system. This ‘false secularism’ is criticised above all by Muslim converts, who claim either a de facto confessionally neutral education, where Catholic instruction is pluralised towards a comprehensive inter-religious education, or a ‘pillar model’ inspired by Dutch experiences, where each confession would have the right to maintain its own, governmentally sponsored, but faith-specific educational system (Dietz 2003).

In interviews conducted both with Muslims and with institutional representatives dealing with education and training issues, a wide gap is perceivable between both points of view. In the first place, school authorities tend to equate and confuse the presence or absence of migrant children in their classrooms with the necessity or lack
of necessity of adopting specific measures broadly defined as ‘intercultural education’. In this sense, only very few schools, located in neighbourhoods with a certain ‘visibility’ of migrant communities, include any particular activity supposedly targeted at the minority of migrant pupils. The intercultural character of these activities is highly dubious. For example, the headmaster of a public primary school in the Albayzín quarter of Granada claims that his school does have an ‘intercultural curriculum’ because it exceptionally includes other religions when commemorating festivities such as Christmas, which according to him ‘promotes mutual tolerance and inter-religious understanding’. According to the same headmaster, no further activities of adapting the official curriculum to the migrant and/or convert Muslim pupils are required at his school because—in contrast to other neighbourhoods with high percentages of ‘problematic groups, such as gypsies or Moors’—the Albayzín quarter has always been a transit place as well as a ‘melting pot’ of different cultures.

Apart from the issue of schooling and inter-religious education, it is above all the public presence of Islam in local contexts which crystallises ethnicised conflicts. In the course of the process of community-building, immigrants as well as local converts start concentrating in inner-city neighbourhoods which formerly have been depopulated by the suburbanisation of the native middle classes, but which since the beginning of the 1990s are regaining attraction through trends towards gentrification and exploitation by city tourism (Latiesa Rodríguez 2000). As these old neighbourhoods are still characterised by their formerly Arabic architecture and their morisco urbanistic heritage, their positive orientalist flair is consciously beginning to be rediscovered and re-appropriated by an emergent elite of Moroccan immigrant as well as Muslim convert community leaders, activists and intellectuals.

Paradoxically, both the traditional, deeply-rooted islamophobia as well as new islamophilic coalitions appear inside these gentrifying inner-city neighbourhoods. This is due to the fact that the search for similarities between mostly Catholic Andalusians and Muslim migrants frequently focuses on this ‘orientalist’ legacy. Thus, neighbourhoods such as the Albayzín in Granada are becoming highly heterogeneous meeting points for Maghrebian migrant communities, Spanish and European Muslim converts and islamophilic Spaniards and foreigners claiming to search for the common roots of Al-Andalus (Rosón Lorente 2001).

This particular kind of urban development is perceived rather ambiguously by the Muslims themselves. Whereas the converts and some of the migrant community leaders and intellectuals welcome this encounter as a long-awaited opportunity for concentrating the rather weak community infrastructure of mosques, religious schools, halal food shops etc. in a single urban quarter, others feel somehow ‘instrumentalised’ by orientalist tourism policies. In the words of an immigrant from Pakistan:

It still is funny anyway, the same people who don’t like Muslims, who reject you in other places, when they show up in this neighbourhood they say ‘How exotic, look at their headscarf, here they really fit into the picture!’ It’s a little bit like living inside a store front-window and being observed from the outside.
The islamophobic sectors in these neighbourhoods, however, tend to perceive the ‘return of Islam’ as a potential threat not only to their own religious identity, but to their neighbourhood’s ‘quality of life’. In the case of the Albayzín quarter of Granada, local resistance focuses on the project of constructing an architecturally well-adapted mosque near the neighbourhood’s central and most touristically attractive plaza (Rosón Lorente 2001). Throughout the last decade, representatives of local Catholic parish churches, religious fraternities, cultural heritage foundations as well as ‘associations of consumers and housewives’ have been successfully lobbying local politicians to block the creation of the mosque.8 The construction work has been interrupted for years, officially because archaeological findings had been made in the future building’s basement; unofficially, however, the anti-mosque activists claim that a Muslim community centre in the middle of their neighbourhood would ‘attract lots of criminals, illegal immigrants, homeless people and all these hippies hanging around here’, as a Catholic Albayzín resident stated.

Islam, in either its Moroccan migrant or its convert variant, increasingly serves as a dividing line which separates arabophobic and islamophobic sectors of the local population, on the one hand, and Muslims and islamophilic and pro-immigrant activists on the other (Rosón Lorente 2001). These divisions originate and are employed first on a rather localised terrain of contested space in the context of speculation, gentrification and a shift in the region’s tourism policy towards ‘internal’ and/or ‘cultural tourism’.

Nevertheless, as the case of Granada illustrates, they quickly go beyond the limits of one particular neighbourhood. Already more than 15 years ago, a group of non-Muslim, but islamophilic ‘local celebrities’ from academia, the arts and a few politicians issued an ‘Occupation Day Manifesto’ (Colectivo Manifiesto 2 de Enero 1988). In this document, they demanded a substantial reform of the city’s main festival, 2 January, the ‘Occupation Day’ or Día de la Toma, which commemorates the definitive 1492 conquest of Granada by the ‘Catholic Kings’ of Castile and Aragón. Since their public appearance, an increasingly heterogeneous local movement is proposing changes to demilitarise, secularise and ‘multiculturalise’ the political-religious reminiscences of Franco’s ‘national Catholicism’ which still shape this festival. In order to institutionally channel the debates between Granada’s localist and nationalist sectors, who defend the ‘immutable nature of our commemoration of this epic historical achievement’, and their mainly Andalusian regionalist and multiculturalist opponents, who struggle for replacing ‘Occupation Day’ by an inclusive Fiesta de la Tolerancia,9 the municipal authorities of Granada have created a consultative council which assembles representatives of all the associations, NGOs and religious entities involved. Although rejected by the most traditionalist and nationalist sectors of the local civil society, this so-called Foro de las Culturas has been slowly, step by step, successfully integrating the adversaries into a common discussion circle on local and regional identity politics and their manifestation through civic public rituals (García Castaño 2000). Besides its programmatic shift towards concrete suggestions for modifying the localist and regionalist identity markers, the main achievement of this consultative body lies in its decisive
contribution to publicly acknowledging the matter-of-fact presence of Islam in Andalusia. In the course of the debate between islamophobic and islamophilic sectors, the local Muslim communities found themselves forced to strategically unite into a Consejo Islámico de Granada. Created ad hoc, this council is still rather weak and is not fully representative, but in the near future it may evolve towards becoming an officially recognised counterpart and intermediary of the public institutions.

Civil Society Beyond the Nation-State? Non-Governmental Actors as New Intercultural Intermediaries

Islamophilia is becoming a strategic meeting-point of a highly mixed alliance of regionalist politicians, pro-immigrant NGO activists, Moroccan migrant community leaders and Andalusianist converts to Islam. Despite their discursive similarities, the main difference between the explicitly islamophilic activists and the NGOs is related to their practice. In the course of their struggle for generating their own Andalusian identity politics, the Muslim convert and the islamophilic sectors of the local civil society stress the religious divide, thus implicitly acknowledging the islamophobic Islam-versus-Catholicism topos. The non-governmental immigrant support activities, on the other hand, although politically similar to the islamophilic discourse of the buen moro, in practice are clearly evidencing a bridging character between the native host society and the migrant population.

In order to adequately judge the causes and consequences of this bridging function performed by mainly non-migrant Andalusian NGO activists and volunteers, the particularities of the non-government movement in Spain have briefly to be sketched. As in many other parts of the world, in the course of the last 10–15 years a remarkable ‘boom’ of NGOs and voluntary action associations has occurred within Andalusian civil society. Whereas throughout many decades these voluntary associations and NGOs had always been considered as ‘peripheral’ or ‘subsidiary’ actors in the politics of social integration and of development cooperation, in the last decade these actors are gaining a completely new role. As many scholars state, the NGO boom coincides with the ‘crisis of the welfare state’, and with the gradual withdrawal of government agencies from domains of social politics which are thus handed over to non-governmental entities (Korten 1991; Morén-Alegret 2002). In this international context, the NGOs and their shared horizontal networks are currently targeted by representatives of the increasingly transnational political and economic establishment and of their multilateral agencies, who discover NGOs as their future ally in their projects and politics not only of ‘slimming’ public expenditure, but also of maintaining and strengthening the highly fragile framework of regional security in North–South relations (NGLS 1996).

In the Andalusian context, however, and particularly in the case of pro-immigrant and pro-minorities activism, there are certain features which distinguish these movements from the general international panorama. In comparison to other European scenarios (cf. Melucci 1995; Rucht 1994; Touraine 1981), a delay is perceptible in the Spanish ‘new social movements’; the generational ‘68-rupture
coincides with a still-clandestine, but strengthening anti-Franco political dissidence, articulated at the margins of, but often sheltered by, such institutions as the post-Vatican II Council Catholic Church, underground trade unions such as Comisiones Obreras and the public universities (Pérez-Díaz 1993). Accordingly, the existing NGOs still maintain close links both to the omnipresent network of Catholic associations, fraternities and religious orders, and to the political parties which appeared or reappeared in the transition process and whose elites are closely related to trade union leaders as well as to academic representatives (Morén-Alegret 2002; Watts 2000).

Furthermore, whereas in other European regions NGOs often feel instrumentalised in order to justify a neoliberal retreat of the old, Keynesian-style welfare state, in Andalusia this all-encompassing kind of welfare state never existed. Thus, NGOs do not substitute, but grow side-by-side with the relatively weak and poorly developed system of social service provision. Although this process in the short run stabilises and empowers NGOs, in the long run their lack of independence of action could transform them into mere sub-contracted service-deliverers for inefficient regional or local governmental agencies, i.e. into ‘prisoners of the state’ (Tarrow 1994). Andalusian NGO activities are thus highly specialised in development cooperation, migrant support activities, social work for gypsy communities and integration measures focused on other marginalised groups. However, even this process of specialisation reflects Andalusian NGOs’ lasting dependence on governmental resources and policy priorities, which themselves have been splitting up into the above-mentioned ‘target groups’ (Dietz 2000).

As a consequence of these particularities, their own activists and volunteers perceive and suffer an increasing gap between highly specialised service-delivery, on the one hand, which in the field of immigration is much more developed and professionalised than any public institutional practices, and the need of maintaining and promoting advocacy activities as a distinctive, political agenda, on the other hand. In their daily practice, immigrant-support NGOs—ranging from highly institutionalised actors such as the Catholic Cáritas and the Spanish Red Cross to the more grassroots-oriented pro-immigrant network Andalucía Acoge and local human rights associations—are dealing with all facets of legal, educational, social and health service provision. Such activities range from taking over from the migration authorities certain ‘contingents’ of immigrants in order to temporarily accommodate them, to special projects of intercultural education and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the host society in general.

Despite their political weakness and institutional dependence, however, in many local contexts these NGOs have been successfully bridging the divide between a very weak migrant community infrastructure and the host society’s ignorance, lack of interest and/or hostility. Whereas most of the recently-appearing migrant associations are still more focused on the context of origin or on the international migratory spaces of their transmigrant constituencies, the pioneer achievement of several local NGOs consists of offering intercultural spaces and of serving as meeting points where different religious, cultural and ethnic discourses and practices are
being articulated, negotiated and projected to the outside world. Thus, the intercultural dimension is two-fold: firstly, at the level of day-to-day practice, intercultural conflict, learning and exchange take place inside the NGO among its native and migrant activists and constituencies; secondly, on the level of discourse, through their campaigning, networking and mobilisations NGO members and constituencies start to share processes of delimitation against local arabophobic and islamophobic movements.

Pro-immigrant NGOs are not substituting for migrant and/or ethnic associations, but are often—willingly or not—acting as their ‘incubators’. All those immigrants who are currently participating in the establishment of their own associations and community institutions have already passed through a rather long process of working—on a contract basis or as volunteers—in Andalusian NGOs specialised in supporting and advising migrants. In the course of their encounters and exchanges with volunteers from the host society, both sides tend to agree that in the long run the native-dominated associational spaces for encounters should be supplemented by the migrants’ own associations. Despite shortcomings in local immigrant representation and participation, in the context of recent increasing tensions surrounding the issue of migration and identity politics, the combined NGO focus on service delivery and intercultural exchange is successfully beginning to transform their original status of being mere agencies of specialised migrant action. Paradoxically, it is the weak character of the migrant community facilities, together with increasingly explicitly anti-immigrant and islamophobic sentiments and attitudes, which forces NGOs to evolve towards their own, alternative and intercultural mission.

Both the lack of integration into the host society and the lack of possibilities for establishing strong and self-segregating ‘ethnic colonies’ (Heckmann 1991), together create an institutional hybrid which tries to bridge the religious, ethnic and/or cultural migrant–native differences through a common, inclusive identity politics. Through this shift towards complementing service-provision with multicultural activism, the Andalusian NGOs now enter the local debates between islamophobic and islamophilic or Muslim convert sectors. Due to their excellent relations with both the governing political elites and the local Catholic representatives, combined with their proven expertise on migration issues, NGO activists—natives and migrants—succeed in de-ethnicising the dangerously widening gap in the essentialist debate about ‘us’ and ‘them’.

There are two trends in contemporary immigrant support activism which overtly engage NGOs to de-essentialise sub-national identity politics:

- In the first place, the immigrants who fully integrate into the local NGOs as activists or volunteers and who thus successfully cross the divide between service-deliverer and recipient constituency, tend to have a rather ‘relaxed’ and secularised vision of Islam, which is lived as routinised practice, not as an identity marker.
- This trend is complemented by another tendency, evident both for migrant activists and amongst native NGO members. Through their daily routine and their mediation practices between migrants, their contexts of origin, and local, regional
and national governmental institutions concerned with immigration, NGOs are gradually becoming ‘strategic’ intermediaries. This occurs not only on the domestic level. The unifying pressure exercised by the EU through its Schengen Treaty, as well as the increasingly transnationalised migratory spaces established by the migrant population, necessarily promote the internationalisation of the local voluntary activities carried out in support of the migrant population. Contacts and relations are established not only with other European immigrant support initiatives, but also with Moroccan NGOs, associations and community networks. Thus, the NGOs are beginning to form part of ‘transnational social movements’ which from the organisational point of view start resembling the transnational communities they try to support (Cohen 1998).

Thus NGOs’ interpretation of Islam as just one more ‘matter-of-fact’ customary religious practice, comparable to most contemporary Andalusians’ secularised attitude towards Catholicism, and NGOs’ integration into transnational, EU-wide as well as trans-Mediterranean organisational networks, help to de-essentialise the alleged ‘culture clash’ between mutually exclusive identity discourses and to hybridise the Andalusians’ as well as the non-Andalusians’ cultural practices.

**Conclusion: Towards Trans-Mediterranean Frontier Hybridisation**

The theoretical and empirical relevance of these new localised, but increasingly transnationally integrated non-governmental coalitions and spaces arises from their intercultural potential: the Andalusian host society’s NGOs and islamophilic movements, as well as the Muslim and/or migrant communities themselves, are facing the challenge of promoting innovative intercultural and cross-religious encounters between actors bearing culturally diverse heritages and ethnically heterogeneous identities. In order to assess the future role and impact of these new actors, we must finally identify the intercultural processes taking place in the region. As my analysis has shown, the Andalusian struggle for inventing or re-appropriating a distinctive identity occurs in a highly contested terrain. Apart from the parallel debates on the Andalusian versus pan-Roma features of the region’s gitano legacy and on the localist versus regionalist identity horizon of popular Catholicism, the supposedly Muslim legacy of Al Andalus has proven to be by far the most polemical aspect of the region’s identity politics. Thus, the intercultural potential of NGOs does not derive from any nostalgically invoked and retrospectively projected Andalusian ‘heritage of tolerance’. Nor does the slow, immigration-driven, step-by-step ‘multiculturalisation’ of public entities such as schools, municipal authorities and official discourses of identity necessarily result from any particular ‘Andalusian-ness’. On the contrary, the trends towards hybridising and transnationalising spaces inside local civil society are mainly provoked and promoted by the challenge of overcoming the increasingly conflictive ‘us-versus-them’ ethnic and religious dichotomies.
In this arena, it is the young and innovative pro-immigrant NGO spectrum of activities and platforms which transforms the potentially ethnicised and exclusive discourse of islamophilia into concrete, routinised intercultural ‘modes of interaction’ (Soenen 1998). It is this day-to-day practice, not the ethnogenetic discourse of *Al Andalus*, which is starting to integrate migrant and non-migrant political activists, mainly Catholic volunteers and Muslim constituencies of non-governmental entities, into a new, culturally ‘hybrid’ collective actor. Compared to other hybrid cultures arising from diverse forms of colonial or post-colonial trans-border exchanges (Bhabha 1994; García Canclini 1989), its distinctive hybridity stems from the deliberate combination of two different levels of intercultural modes of interaction (Dietz 2003):

- On the one hand, in order to articulate a coherent self-image as a specific collective actor, the internal organisational spaces of NGO activism have to integrate culturally diverse traditions and forms of habitualised practice into an internally shared ‘intra-culture’, spatially confined to the face-to-face interaction of its heterogeneous, but mutually ‘communalised’ members, who share a ‘concrete utopia’ beyond each of its particular idiosyncrasies. This ‘intimate culture’ (Lomnitz Adler 1992), resulting from an inward orientation, consciously retains and cultivates its hybrid origins as distinctive markers of an emerging identity.
- On the other hand, the NGO sector develops and expresses an outwardly oriented ‘inter-culture’, a ‘culture of social relations’ (Lomnitz Adler 1992) directed towards other—often islamophobic or islamophilic—local or regional actors, most of whom focus on exclusively ethno-religious identity markers.

By contrasting and combining a hybrid intra-culture, which is conceived as a commonly constructed ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1988) of natives and trans-border migrant ‘nomads’, with an actively promoted inter-culture of negotiations, which aspires to bridge the divisions fragmenting and dis-empowering Andalusian civil society, the pro-migrant associations and organisations are shaping a complex re-definition of the host society’s underlying syntax of inclusion and exclusion, identifying the sub-national logics of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in an increasingly trans-national context of migration. Both the recent rallies against the reform of the Spanish immigration law and in favour of the legalisation of ‘illegalised’ immigrants, and the emerging local presence of Muslim councils and inter-religious platforms and NGOs, seem to prove that a hybridising Andalusian civil society is slowly starting to articulate its demands inside the regional and national political arena.

In conclusion, ethnogenesis, nationalism and transnational migrant community formation are not conceptually different phenomena. The Andalusian case reveals that the ‘dual tracking’ of supposedly opposite processes of native versus migrant ethnogenesis and identity politics is in itself the result of a solely *emic* and thus biased academic perception, which remains limited to the actors’ own distinction between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. Migrant as well as non-migrant groups, majority host societies as well as autochthonous or allochthonous minorities, use the same strategies of history and geography to legitimise their particular claims-making (Alonso 1994; Dietz 2003). It is precisely the structural coincidence of these shared
strategies of identity politics which generates and deepens the conflictive potential of ethnogenesis.

As part of this task, finally, the consciously hybrid, Andalusian pro-immigrant, islamophilic NGOs, coalitions and movements promise to open new paths to the policy and practice of minority integration. The intercultural encounter between migrants and natives, originally borne out of the lack of strong intracultural alternatives, generates new kinds of ‘imagined communities’ which challenge the essentialising mechanisms which traditionally dominate both autochthonous and migrant ethnogenesis. By stressing its double function not only as a ‘hinge between the system and the life-world’ (Habermas 1981: 581), but also as a hinge between the micro-level, communal intra-culture and the macro-level, societal inter-culture, the NGOs which I have studied contribute to the integration of minorities not just into the host society as such, but into the local and regional civil society, which they simultaneously strengthen and empower through this hybrid integration process.

The future success or failure of this alternative, ‘bottom-up’ integration approach will depend on the participating actors’ ability to transcend not only national and geo-strategic borders, but also cross-cutting religious, cultural and ethnic frontiers. The successful result of the ongoing frontier hybridisation of Andalusian civil society would ideally be a localised, but transnationally bridging identity politics. Such an outcome could integrate the thus-far mutually opposed sub-national protagonists of ethnogenesis into a common space of ‘regio-genesis’, a plural arena of ethnic discourses and cultural practices whose regionally shared inter-culture would always be more than the mere sum of its mutually contesting but overlapping and cross-hybridising intra-cultures.

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Notes


[3] All following quotations are from ethnographic interviews conducted in Andalusian cities in 2000; the translations of these quotations are mine.

Unfortunately, the mentioned study fails to suitably distinguish ethnic and religious classifications, e.g. by asking the interviewees to rank árabes y musulmanes as one minority group (ASEP 1998: 23).

The latest opinion polls, published through monthly ‘barometers’ by the governmental Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, show a dramatic increase in anti-immigrant attitudes, but unfortunately do not split up the data regionally (CIS 2001).

For an example of a literary treatment given in the Spanish transition period to the topos of ‘national betrayal’ through religious conversion to Islam, see Goytisolo (1985).

These local spatial conflicts on the visual presence of Islam also appear in other Spanish cities (Moreras 1999), but in those cases they do not interfere with positively attuned ‘orientalist’ tourism policies.


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