



Dieter Haller. *Gelebte Grenze Gibraltar: Transnationalismus, Lokalität und Identität in kultur-anthropologischer Perspektive*. Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 2000. 394 S., 13 Abb. DEM 98.00 (paper), ISBN 978-3-8244-4407-6.

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## Gibraltar and the Frontiers of Ethnological Theory

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European borders have attracted considerable ethnological attention in recent years, not least because of the transformations in their political and everyday meaning in the course of progressive European integration.[1] Despite this upsurge in research interest, there are to-date few detailed ethnographic and ethnological studies of specific border regions.

Dieter Haller's book, based on fieldwork carried out between February 1996 and February 1997, breaks new ground here. Not only does it provide a well-founded and thorough investigation of his chosen case study, Gibraltar, it also locates issues raised within a broader European and global context. Moreover, the book is engagingly written, and, although a 'habilitation' dissertation (qualifying the candidate for a professorial appointment), it is accessible to the non-specialist with an interest in borders, national identity and ethno-history.

Haller's study should appeal to a wide readership, from fellow anthropologists to geographers and political scientists. It is also exemplary as a case study for advanced courses in contemporary area studies (British Studies, Hispanic Studies, and of course European Studies). And if this reviewer were to draw up a list of ethnological monographs that ought to be translated into English as a matter of priority, Haller's study would be pretty close to the top.

The book begins with an extensive two-part introduc-

tion that presents the fieldwork location from different perspectives and establishes the border as a conceptual vehicle for re-evaluation of anthropological categories. The remainder of the text is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 starts with a discussion of the myth of Gibraltar as, quite literally, the rock on which British identity rests, and then turns to a detailed examination of the history of Gibraltar's borders with Morocco and Spain. Chapter 2 puts the relationship between Gibraltar and its Spanish hinterland under the spotlight and highlights tensions between different ethnic groups and the discursive substitution of class for race in this context. Social order and control, and conflicts between individual and society, are themes of chapter 3. The discussion of these conflicts in the second half of this chapter, where Haller examines gossip, the local press, migration and the cultivation of the body, is one of the most fascinating and insightful sections of the book even though it may not hang together as well as the author may have intended.

The significance of 'being British', an identity constructed on the basis of a colonial relationship within a now crumbling and long 'disenchanted' Empire, is the subject of chapter 4. This is followed by an extensive and intensive discussion of nationalism and ethnicity in chapter 5. With reference to his fieldwork location Haller begins this chapter by reviewing ethnicisation and nationalisation processes and the invention of traditions through historiography. This is followed by a most intriguing section on culture contact and conflict that examines different ethnic groups in Gibraltar. The chapter

concludes with a section on the institutionalisation of national identity in the political domain.

At this point in his reading of the book, this reviewer wondered whether it might have been useful to subdivide the monograph into distinct parts that would each contain a number of chapters. For example, chapters 1-3 focus very much on 'setting the scene' presenting a cultural geographical and sociological context for the study and therefore could be considered, part one. Chapter 5 is really two chapters, and these could be grouped with chapter 4 under the current heading of chapter 5, 'nationalism and ethnicity' thus forming part two. The next two chapters are detailed investigations of specific identities, and could form a third part. Smuggling, as a historical pattern of relationships and as a (changing) way of life, is the focus of chapter 6, while chapter 7 charts the fundamentalisation and ethnicisation of the Jewish congregation in Gibraltar. Haller's reflections on his approach to the field in this particular chapter are riveting, and the whole section should be on the reading list of every course in field methodology.

In the final chapter 8, Haller evaluates his findings in terms of an ethnography of the border. Looking at what Gibraltar might tell us about the future of the nation state in Europe, Haller observes that there is no unidirectional tendency towards dissolution of the nation state. Both Spain and Great Britain have used Gibraltar in playing out their respective European politics, and thus as a means of propping up their nation-state status within the European Union. Haller's concluding reflections on national borders and the frontiers of (ethnological) knowledge connect with current international debates in ethnology and a number of other disciplines on the methodological and epistemological implications of globalisation, the difficulties of researching translocal issues and networks, the problematic of ethnological 'othering', and the historical location of the ethnographic 'snapshot' of a field studied primarily by participant observation. An informative postscript up-dates the reader on developments between the time of fieldwork and publication of the book three years later.

At the centre of Haller's narrative is a multi-faceted analysis of identity structures and processes. The overt self-image of Gibraltarian society as a tolerant multicultural society is shown as hiding rather subtle strategies of exclusion, linked to a process of defining a 'post-colonial' collective identity. Border situations in different parts of the world differ considerably, making generalisations difficult. Nevertheless, Haller's reading of the

Gibraltar case opens up new vistas on disputed borders, and on the everyday life structured around such borders, at least in Europe, and possibly beyond. His (self-)critical assessment of the insufficient adaptation of ethnographic practice to the reality of increased mobility and translocalisation of field sites demonstrates how localities are, at one and the same time, the important focus for our research, and need to be understood as a 'translocal field of relationships' (p. 348) that is no longer contained within the closed horizons of traditional ethnographic studies.

Despite theoretical advances in opening up the traditional mode of fieldwork [2], the practice of European ethnology and cultural anthropology has changed little—"fields" and "cultures" are treated as distinct, clearly delineated entities, and with few exceptions [3], settled and migratory groups are conceptually and practically separated. Forty years ago, long before we began to talk about the postmodern condition and all that came into view after it, Hermann Bausinger called for a re-orientation of empirical cultural studies/European ethnology/Volkskunde towards open horizons. Would that more of us had followed his call as courageously, innovatively and reflexively as Dieter Haller.

#### Notes

[1]. Recent publications with an ethnological/anthropological emphasis include Donnan H. and Wilson T.M. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. Oxford: Berg, 1999; Wilson T.M. and Donnan H. (eds.). *Border Identities: Nation and state at international frontiers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; and, O'Dowd L. and Wilson T.M. (eds.). *Borders, Nations and States: Frontiers of sovereignty in the new Europe*. Aldershot: Avebury, 1996. There is also a substantial literature in sociology and geography that often raises ethnological issues, including, for example, Anderson J. and O'Dowd L. (eds.) *State Borders and Border Regions: Special Issue. Regional Studies* 33 (7), 1999; Anderson M. *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1996; Paasi A. *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness: The changing geographies of the Finnish-Russian border*, Chichester: Wiley, 1996; and Van Houtum H. 'An overview of European geographical research on borders and border regions', *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 15 (1), 2000, 57-83.

[2]. See, for example, the debate in *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures* 6 (1997) 2 and 7 (1998) 1 under the title "Reflecting Cultural Practice: The Challenge of Fieldwork".

[3]. For example, see: Kockel, U. *Borderline Cases: The Ethnic Frontiers of European Integration*. Liverpool University Press, 1999. Liverpool: Liv-

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