RESCUING THE INTIMATE BUT AWKWARD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COSMOPOLITANISM AND URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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> [C]osmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It entails an intellectual and aesthetic openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity … [C]osmopolitanism can be a matter of competence … There is the aspect of a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting. And there is cultural competence in the stricter sense of the term, a built-up skill in manoeuvring more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings and meaningful forms.
>
> Hannerz (1990: 239)

If one pays close attention to the above landmark quote in the literature of cosmopolitanism, what Hannerz is essentially defining is an anthropologist, or at least a romanticised version of them. In light of the all-encompassing force and scale of modern globalisation, in the 1990s cosmopolitanism effortlessly made its way to the forefront of debates in urban anthropology. Yet, with the same ease the term soon raised questions about its usefulness as an analytical framework (see Skrbis et al. 2004; Skey 2012). The common features between the enterprise of anthropology and cosmopolitanism, however, should make anthropologists particularly wary of eroding or even disqualifying cosmopolitanism as a productive

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framework for empirical analysis. This is especially relevant as debates on "a cosmopolitan anthropology" and "methodological cosmopolitanism" periodically emerge within the discipline (Kuper 1994; Khan 2003; Beck 2007; Wardle 2010; Rapport 2007 and 2014).

While in political theory debates traditionally focused on the conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism as a moralising – and often utopian – project (see Fine 2003; Appiah 2006), anthropology contributed to the literature by empirically grounding the term's abstract precepts, primarily to address pervasive forms of cross-cultural sociability. This shift seemed particularly apt in the context of the global city where everyday life came to be seen as 'banally cosmopolitan' (Beck 2006: 133). While this interpretation of cosmopolitanism contributed to the democratisation of the term, it also brought about theoretical confusion on what cosmopolitanism is and can do as an empirically grounded notion. The term soon became a 'fluffy concept' (Parry 2008: 329) and an overstretched category applicable to most aspects of urban life in which cultural and material interactions with and across difference are somewhat inescapable. With this in mind, with specific reference to the study of life in global cities, this paper is concerned with the way the empirical shift in the literature might have unintentionally disempowered cosmopolitanism as a useful framework in anthropological writing.

My intention here is not to claim the universal validity of a particular definition of cosmopolitanism. Rather, I call to establish stronger conceptual foundations for the flexible employment of the framework in different urban contexts. To this aim, instead of starting from one of the rather vague definitions found in the literature (see Hannerz 1990 and 1996; Held 1995; Beck 2002; Vertovec and Cohen 2002), I will work backwards by looking at the merits and demerits of ethnographies attempting to explore urban life through the lens of cosmopolitanism. I will particularly focus on the emphasis of the literature in describing cosmopolitanism as *openness* towards diversity and a form of cross-cultural *competence*, as Hannerz's quote already illustrates. By moving away from discursive interpretations and everyday usages of the term, I will argue that cosmopolitanism is more productively looked at as a relational practice that

acts as a form of social capital grounded in people's situational dispositions towards diversity. Since people's behaviour is contextual and ever-changing, I will claim that urban ethnographers must engage with the *doing* of cosmopolitanism rather than unproductive searches for stylised, cosmopolitan "types."

The first section of the article will both appreciate and problematise some of the theoretical and empirical cornerstones of the relationship between cosmopolitanism and life in global cities. In the subsequent sections of the paper, I will explore the way cosmopolitanism is operationalised as a framework by drawing from ethnographies in different global cities. I will primarily look at the working-class cosmopolitanism of New York's pigeon flyers (Jerolmack 2009); at the symbolic political economy of cosmopolitanism – both on the consumption side in a street market in Philadelphia (Anderson 2004) and on the production side through a study on Turkish-German entrepreneurs in Berlin (Pécoud 2004); and at the potential limitations of cosmopolitanism as a framework through Brink-Danan's (2001) article on the Jewish community in Istanbul. In doing so, I will deliberately focus on ethnographies that contextualise some of the critical aspects that cosmopolitanism has traditionally come under fire for: cosmopolitanism as an elitist (western) project; as conspicuous consumption removed from its original moral ethos; and as being exclusively contained within western liberalism. Apart from giving space to the "sedentary glocals" (Skrbis et al. 2004) and "stay-home-cosmopolitans" (Werbner 2008) that have long been missing from the literature, this will offer a further opportunity to critically discuss and potentially rescue cosmopolitanism by showing that the issue with it might lie within the biased focus of academics rather than the biases of the framework *per se*.

Cosmopolitanism and the global city

It should go without saying that global cities do not hold the monopoly on cosmopolitanism, and indeed they are often home to heated racial tensions and discriminatory acts of violence. However, by bringing diverse peoples together, urban spaces excel at fostering opportunities for cross-cultural

interactions and for the development of multicultural awareness (Warf 2015). The urban and the cosmopolitan thus find themselves in an intimate but often awkward relationship in anthropological writing, contributing to the ambiguity around cosmopolitanism as an analytical framework.

Vertovec (2007) coins the term of "super-diversity" to highlight the escalated level of human diversity in Britain and, more specifically, in its most iconic global city, London. According to the author, the contemporary *diversification of diversity* – largely connected to migration and mass urbanisation – is characterised by the interplay of complex sets of variables defining the public and private life of city dwellers (ibid., 1025). In this light, Vertovec calls for greater attention to the geography of these variables across the city space, which can highlight issues of spatial discrimination and urban segregation. This seemed particularly relevant after the publication of the Cantle Report (Home Office 2001), which highlighted the shortcomings of multiculturalism in Britain by showing that neighbours belonging to different cultural groups largely conduct "parallel lives." While it would be naïve to think that the mere exposure to Vertovec's super-diversity could be enough to guarantee integration, the encounter and negotiation with difference is often inescapable in large urban areas. Scholars have suggested that sustained and banal confrontations with difference might mutually mitigate the dehumanising discourses of racial discrimination (Binnie et al. 2006) and set the ground for the development of cross-cultural understanding (Wise and Velayutham 2009).

This perhaps too optimistic picture of super-diversity is what allows the global city to be mapped out in the common imaginary as the place where cosmopolitanism is most expected to reside. Amin (2002) argues that "micro-publics" (shops, workplaces, schools, sport clubs etc.) are where cross-cultural interactions are most likely to take place in the city. They represent prosaic spaces of interdependence, engagement and negotiation calling for the ethnography of the "micropolitics" of mundane interactions (ibid., 969). To this aim, Wessendorf's (2013) ethnography explores how residents of the London Borough of Hackney are expected to interact across difference according to an unspoken code of conduct dominating public life in the neighbourhood – what she calls the "ethos of mixing." Building on

Vertovec's notion of super-diversity, Wessendorf develops the concept of *commonplace diversity*, 'referring to ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity being experienced as a normal part of social life and not as something particularly special' (ibid., 407). In other words, while the local community holds a positive view of mixing, people take little interest in diversity. For instance, new residents who speak with an accent or dress in 'ethnic' clothing are rarely asked about their origins (ibid., 411). The author explicitly distinguishes this attitude from the idea of cosmopolitanism which, in Wessendorf's words, would 'involve taking deeper interest in other people's life worlds' (ibid., 408).

Wessendorf's idea of "commonplace diversity" as distinct from "cosmopolitanism" can represent a useful starting point to understand why the urban and the cosmopolitan often sit together uncomfortably in anthropological writing. If we were to look at Hackney residents who allow, but not necessarily seek, regular interactions with diversity through the lens of cosmopolitanism, most instances of ordinary life within the ubiquitous global dimension of the city would automatically fall under the cosmopolitan umbrella. In that case, cosmopolitanism would represent a merely descriptive term and bring little added value for the study of social life in the global city, especially when sided by existing terms such as transnationalism, multiculturalism and even globalisation. In a comparative ethnography of different cities historically celebrated for their cosmopolitanism, for instance, Werbner (2015: 584) rather unhelpfully refers to London's pluralism as "descriptive cosmopolitanism" to indicate the condition of different people living side by side. According to the author, this cosmopolitan setting (which seems no different from Vertovec's super-diversity) can 'lead to creative, "real" intercultural conviviality alongside everyday taken-for-granted forms of cosmopolitanism' (ibid., 570). The latter, which Werbner terms "real cosmopolitanism," remains unqualified, vague and ill-defined. In the same way, Beck (2002) tends to conflate the term with transnational experiences such as migration, or with the mere symbolic or material encounter with difference, for instance through consumption.

To this confusion in the literature, the association between cosmopolitanism and urban life in popular culture adds another layer of ambiguity. Substantial research (Çaglar 2002; Skrbis and Woodward 2007; Müller 2011) suggests that cosmopolitanism as a discursive formation in popular culture portrays city-dwellers as *a priori* cosmopolitans. In parallel, city branding significantly contributes to the marketing of the urban atmosphere of the global city as "cosmopolitan," regardless of the actual politics of difference on the ground. Mandel's (2008) ethnography in Berlin, for instance, sheds light on the way different stages of the branding campaign for a "cosmopolitan" Berlin often clashed with the tensions around notions of identity and belonging among the local Turkish community. The marketing of cosmopolitanism together with the common usage of the term to refer to urban clichés of eclectic coffee drinkers and eccentric sushi eaters (see Young et al. 2006) often ends up colouring the literature on cosmopolitanism. In this regard, it is opportune to emphasise that this article is concerned with cosmopolitanism as a framework and not as a narrative or discourse. However, the conflation of cosmopolitanism as a rigorous academic term and the stereotyped concept of popular culture often limits the employability of the framework in anthropological writing.

Cosmopolitanism and the working-class

Traditionally the literature on cosmopolitanism focused on members of the progressive vanguard who embrace globalisation as a lifestyle (see Nowicka and Kaweh 2009; Kennedy 2004; Molz 2006; Tarrow 2005). Alternative approaches contrasted the naturalised association between cosmopolitanism and the western, "frequent traveller" (Calhoun 2002a) of the urban upper-class by looking at cosmopolitanism among the lower steps of the socio-economic ladder (e.g., Werbner 2006; Notar 2008; Kothari 2008; Parry 2008). With reference to this research trend, I will now engage with Jerolmack's (2009) study on the development of social ties among working-class pigeon flyers in Brooklyn, New York. This example will help highlight some of the core features of how a cosmopolitan framework is employed in the literature and kick off a discussion on some of its strengths and limitations for the empirical study of life in the global city.

Pigeon keeping is the timeworn tradition of breeding and flying domestic pigeons originally "imported" to the rooftops of New York by Italian immigrants at the end of the 19th century. With the gradual dispersion of the Italian community across the city, this long-standing practice came to almost disappear. Today a new breed of pigeon flyers has emerged among Puerto Rican and African American young men. The paper follows the story of new and older pigeon keepers; among those, Carmine, an Italian American man who is one of the oldest and most respected breeders in Brooklyn. Almost everybody in the new league of breeders was initiated into the hobby by an older Italian man like Carmine – the mentorship of newcomers is valued and embraced by the pigeon flyers. The men primarily socialise at one of the few remaining specialised pet shops in the city, but their interactions go beyond the store: they visit on each other's roofs; breed others' pigeons as a favour; bond over common enemies (i.e., falcons and complaining neighbours); take an interest in each other's family and work life (ibid., 350-351). Through these interactions and the inter-ethnic succession of the tradition of pigeon keeping, the study claims that "cosmopolitan ties" are formed between these working-class men.

From this account, cosmopolitanism emerges first of all as a *relational* concept, referring to the establishment of meaningful relationships with *others*. This dimension of relationality acts on two different levels: experiential and epistemological. The former refers to the relationship built among pigeon keepers as a lived experience that ultimately 'deemphasises historical and kin-based ties' (ibid., 438). The second refers to a cognitive interaction with difference through which pigeon keepers gain cultural awareness about both the *self* and the *other*, while simultaneously building bridges between the two. In Jeromack's words:

> Through tales from past and present, whether truthful or 'bullshit', the men build bridges - with pigeons as support beams - that establish a continuity between experiences of the white old timers and the younger blacks and Puerto Ricans. (ibid., 451)

This form of cultural awareness and social capital translate into an actual skill or competence to navigate through fluid cultural boundaries. The men, indeed, are highly aware of their different cultural positioning on the city's racialised map and employ this awareness to socialise across ethnic boundaries. As a way of example, similar to Sanchez (2016) and Sherman (2009), Brooklyn's pigeon flyers – who half-jokingly self-proclaim "lowlifes" – resort to racial humour to exorcise potential tensions and bond through "competitive sociability" (Jerolmack 2009: 438). This ability to switch from a cultural milieu to another is at the core of a cosmopolitan framework in anthropological inquiry. However, as I will further explore, this should be treated as only one aspect of it.

Despite their fervid involvement in an ethnically mixed hobby, the pigeon flyers do not exhibit unprejudiced behaviour at all times, even on the rooftops where they gather every day. The author, for instance, catches a group of white breeders privately talking about local crime and complaining about the 'niggers' they assume to be involved (ibid., 452). Jerolmack refrains from calling Carmine or anyone else a "cosmopolitan," successfully representing the pigeon flyer as a socially complex *person* rather than a fixed *persona*. Only in one passage does the author fall into the trap of reifying cosmopolitanism by the hands of another dualism, he states: 'For the most part, the men are provincial rather than cosmopolitan' (ibid., 453). Despite this example of dichotomous thinking directly opposing the cosmopolitan and the provincial, the ethnography largely deconstructs the essentialist categories usually associated with cosmopolitan literature. In this regard, while Skrbis et al. (2004: 127) maintain that scholars need to 'distinguish cosmopolitans from non-cosmopolitans,' I would argue that we need to distinguish cosmopolitan practices from non-cosmopolitan ones. Attempts to fix the "who" of cosmopolitanism would only leave us with more questions than answers: *How much diversity does one need to engage with to be a true "cosmopolitan"? For how long? And why?* Of course, the contextualisation of cosmopolitanism in terms of "by whom" is crucial, but it would be misleading to assume that people maintain and exhibit "cosmopolitan" attitudes at all times.

Jerolmack does not exalt the men's engagement with diversity as evidence of their all-round progressiveness; exclusionary gender roles and ideas of masculinity, if anything, are reproduced rather than contested through their interactions. After all, the men in the study are far from intellectually celebrating or even discursively framing their engagement with diversity as "cosmopolitan." Since Carmine started breeding pigeons, for instance, the demographics of the neighbourhood have significantly changed leaving him nostalgic about his gone local community. While pigeon flying offers him the opportunity to forge new social ties across ethnic groups – an opportunity that he is keen to grasp – if given the choice, he would probably prefer for the tradition to stay with the Italian Americans. The paper thus portrays cosmopolitanism as a situational and largely unintended practice (see Appadurai 1996; Beck and Sznaider 2006). Yet, unintended is not the same as unintentional. The men actively seek interactions with the *other* through pigeon keeping. Here, a cosmopolitan framework is more than a witness to Wessendorf's "commonplace diversity." It enables to productively engage with the social life of these working-class New Yorkers rather than noting mere conditions of conviviality in a diverse urban context.

Political economy of cosmopolitanism: Consumption

Jerolmack's analysis builds upon a relational model that emphasises cosmopolitanism as 1) a form of cultural awareness, strategically deployed to interact across difference and 2) an attitude of openness towards diversity developed in virtue of a common passion for pigeon flying. This interpretation of cosmopolitanism as *competence* and *attitude* is central to the literature. With these two elements in mind, by focusing on Anderson's (2004) ethnography in Philadelphia, I will show how the urban consumption of diversity can be meaningfully investigated through the lens of cosmopolitanism.

According to Nagle (2009), the cosmopolitan brand of the global city is dependent upon the presence of the economy of difference that ethnic

minority groups bring along. The urban "ethnic village" is often marketed as the place *par excellence* where the idea of cosmopolitanism is packaged, sold and consumed. Scholars (see Fish 1996; May 1996; Hage 1997) have largely associated the urban commodification of diversity with the project of the metropolitan elite re-inscribing colonial and orientalising patterns of "labouring," "ingesting" and finally "spitting out" the *other* (hooks 1992, Yu Zong 2016). In his study of ethnic restaurants in Cabramatta – a suburb in Sydney and Australia's largest non-Anglo-Celtic commercial hub – Hage (1997) describes this process as "cosmo-multiculturalism," namely the shallow engagement with diversity as a form of conspicuous consumption. According to the author, Sydney's food adventurers are more interested in the performative act of consuming difference as a status marker than in difference *per se*. This research trend, however, tends to problematically portray on the one hand a homogeneous, cannibalistic, white consumer; on the other, a passive, ethnic subject whose diversity is implicitly tested against a white background (see Heldke 2003). The non-white consumer is also hardly taken into consideration. Such emphasis on the staging of the "cosmopolitan spectacle" often obfuscates the value of further investigating the social meaning of encounters with difference that occur through the market. In other words, the sentencing of cosmopolitanism as a consumerist practice prevents cosmopolitanism to be taken seriously as an empirically grounded framework.

Leaving aside *a priori* anti-market biases, anthropologists should pay attention to the nature of the social interactions that consumption instigates and the context in which these occur (Jackson 1999). To this end, Anderson (2004) looks at the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia as the setting for everyday cosmopolitanism. Far from being a spot for sole tourists, the market attracts residents from the various ethnic enclaves of the city. Like in most large metropolitan centres, people in Philadelphia are generally wary of strangers and differences in skin colour can constitute an additional, visual barrier among strangers (Anderson 2004: 15). However, the market's convivial atmosphere has traditionally represented a "protective umbrella" where city-dwellers can let their guard down and enjoy each other's company (ibid., 21). As a black man, the author is surprised by the casual interactions with strangers that he entertains at the market, among which

an inhibited conversation about race and diversity with a white man with white-supremacist friends. In this context, the "cosmopolitan canopy" is depicted as more than mere lack of racial harassment; it is about a humanising experience of cross-cultural interactions. This is reflected in the geography of the market. The stools at the counters are spaced so close that diners cannot avoid rubbing elbows and shoulders. Consequently, greeting upon sitting is common practice and from there people feel licensed to engage in conversation (ibid., 19). From this angle, cosmopolitanism is not unconscious or unintended like in the case of the New York's pigeon keepers; it is socially demanded. The visitors are expected and even pressured to embrace an attitude of openness and to seek diversity as they enter the canopy. This makes the framework of cosmopolitanism particularly powerful in this context.

According to Anderson, cross-cultural interactions in the market are facilitated by the feast of ethnic foods on offer. The article, however, focuses less on the consumption of the food *per se*, as most of the literature does, but more on the atmosphere of conviviality that this creates:

> When diverse people are eating one another's food, strangers in the abstract can become somewhat more human and a social good is performed for those observing. As people become intimate through such shared experiences, certain barriers are prone to be broken. (Anderson 2004: 17)

Ethnic consumption becomes an opportunity through which people come together, and not a symptom of the type of relationship they will establish – this seems to be a productive way to look at cosmopolitanism as a contextual practice enabled, but not *per se* represented, by the consumption of diversity. What is missing from the literature on the consumption of difference is an appreciation of the role of food in shaping encounters with the *other*. In this regard, Highmore (2008: 391) explores the way eating curry might produce xenophobic or welcoming sentiments according to the specific register of the relationship between the consumer, the producer and the food being consumed. By reinstating the concept of cosmopolitanism as competence and attitude, Highmore brings attention to the agentive role of

chilli in mediating interactions across difference and, potentially, in shaping cosmopolitan agencies:

> Argument won't persuade the taste buds to enjoy or dislike unfamiliar foods: here taste or distaste is not simply a matter of cultural capital, but of the body's orientation and disposition towards specific sensorial orchestrations. (ibid., 396)

As Narayan (1997) emphasises, the "carnal relish" of ethnic food might be as important as other forms of knowledge about the *other* and can allow for a "thick" engagement with diversity.

Going back to Anderson's paper, while racial relations are recognised as somewhat salient in the market, they remain largely understated (2004: 18). With reference to cosmopolitanism as social capital, the display of racial awareness may be intentionally occulted by adopting a strategy of "indifference to difference" (Donald 1999) as both an ethical and effective way of socialising – this represents a more refined form of self-reflexivity and cultural skill. In this regard, the market comes together to both acquire and test understandings of, and competences with, diversity. By taking us back to the analogy between anthropology and cosmopolitanism, Anderson calls this "folk ethnography":

> cosmopolitan canopies allow people of different backgrounds the chance to slow down and indulge themselves, observing, pondering, and in effect, doing their own folk ethnography, testing or substantiating stereotypes and prejudices. (Anderson 2004: 25)

Such encounters with people that they would not normally observe up-close ultimately leave market visitors with the impression that they learned, and engaged in, something meaningful. This entangles cosmopolitanism as a skill and as an attitude in a mutually reinforcing relationship giving further force and coherence to the framework.

Political economy of cosmopolitanism: Production

The demand for diversity on the market brings economic opportunities to ethnic minorities and contributes to the social configuration of the migrant in the global city (Grossberg 1995). The prospects of profitability of ethnic entrepreneurs, however, are deeply embedded in racialised social contexts (Narayan 1997). Within this academic debate, this section looks at Pécoud's (2004) ethnographic work on German-Turkish business owners in Berlin. I maintain that the author's exclusive focus on the entrepreneurs' ability to cross, and benefit from, multicultural spaces represents a weak foundation for the adoption of a cosmopolitan framework, which would require a further engagement with subjective attitudes and orientations.

From the beginning of the article, Pécoud sets out an interpretation of cosmopolitanism as the 'combination of mental and concrete skills' (ibid., 13) that German-Turkish entrepreneurs deploy to run their businesses. The author thus describes his cosmopolitan framework as 'relatively modest and down-to-earth' (ibid., 13). In the paper, cultural diversity is seen as inseparable from the way business owners define their identity as entrepreneurs and the nature of their entrepreneurship. They are aware of their cultural specificity and strategically calibrate the extent to which their "identity" is to be incorporated in their business activity. The majority of Pécoud's research participants define strategies to grasp the opportunities and cope with the difficulties that their ethnicity brings along. They draw from multiple networks and communities to, among other things, search for business premises, hire staff and target customers from one cultural group or another. This competence is identified by Pécoud as an instance of cosmopolitanism that allows entrepreneurs to run their business successfully in a culturally mixed context. This emphasis on cosmopolitanism as social capital deriving from practical rather than intellectual or moral concerns contributes to the democratisation of the framework. This represents, in the author's words, a type of cosmopolitanism that moves in 'non-elite, practical and half-conscious dimension' (ibid., 3). Nonetheless, the paper falls short on its premises by almost uniquely focusing on cosmopolitanism as a competence that could be

most simply defined by hybrid, multicultural or transnational identity patterns.

In the paper, the "mental skills" that entrepreneurs employ supposedly as a form of cosmopolitanism seem to be associated with mere business strategy, rather than a disposition to develop a positive engagement with diversity. One might wonder whether the "openness" of a business owner to hire ethnically diverse staff and cater to a diverse clientele is enough to qualify as cosmopolitanism. This goes back to the point raised in the previous section wherein the consumption of diversity can create opportunities of cosmopolitanism but does not represent cosmopolitanism *per se* – the same goes for production. The ethnography fails to qualitatively investigate the sociability of the entrepreneurs beyond transactional issues of profitability. The privileging of concrete skills over mental dispositions is, of course, not unique to Pécoud's account. In a paper on cosmopolitanism and transnational identities among economic migrants, Werbner (1999) describes the experience of middle-class Pakistanis visiting relatives in the UK. By noting their disregard for the "high culture" of the West, she states: 'Cosmopolitanism is thus very often, in my observation, a matter of expertise in material culture, acquired by visitors in the many long hours they spend browsing through Marks and Spencer or John Lewis, big British department stores' (ibid., 26). It is not a surprise, then, that the paper attempts to distinguish, but simultaneously conflates, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism throughout the analysis. The account of cosmopolitanism as *all-skills-and-no-attitude* determines the applicability of the framework to most transnational urban lives. Like Werbner, Pécoud fails to show how (any indefinite level of) competence in navigating through cultural diversity actually translates into cosmopolitanism. Afterall, possessing an ability does not tell us what one will do with it.

Finally, in this article the use of the term cosmopolitanism at times slips into being the vague and western-centric concept of popular imaginaries. For instance, Pécoud illustrates that German-Turkish entrepreneurs are wary of marketing a strong "Turkish identity" that may inhibit a non-Turkish clientele. Consequently, some entrepreneurs opt for an atmosphere that is 'as cosmopolitan as possible' (Pécoud 2004: 9). In this quote the term

cosmopolitanism refers to a less Turkish image, by implicitly equating non-cosmopolitan with "ethnic" or "immigrant," and cosmopolitan with "western." Similarly, while Notar's ethnography (2006 and 2008) of local café owners in Dali – a Chinese borderland town targeted by lonely-planet world travellers – is often mentioned for disrupting some of the assumptions underlying cosmopolitan literature, she remains trapped in the same logic as Pécoud. Notar (2008) maintains that "borderland cosmopolitanism" in Dali derives from the ability of the café owners (who are described as the true "cosmopolitans") to recreate a "cosmopolitan" ambience in their cafes: European-style breakfast, Abba or the Beatles playing in the background and copies of New York Magazine laying around. These examples go to show that cosmopolitanism is far from being comfortably employed without resorting to western-centric biases and outlooks. However, this should not disqualify cosmopolitanism as a framework; on the contrary, it should be one of the anthropologist's main endeavours to keep such biases in place.

Cosmopolitanism and its enemies

While there is merit in looking at cosmopolitanism as a form of social capital, this ought to be combined with an in-depth engagement with people's dispositions and attitudes. So, I now turn to Brink-Danan's (2001) work to reflect on some of the potential limitations that a cosmopolitan framework might bring about. By looking at the Jewish community in Istanbul, Brink-Danan advances a proposal for a revaluation of cosmopolitanism that diverges from the one appreciated thus far in this paper. Yet, some of the reflections made by the author can highlight the need for more rigorous definitions of cosmopolitanism and more productive ways to employ it as an empirical framework in urban anthropology.

Istanbul's cosmopolitanism is widely celebrated in public narratives as part of a local project of city and nation branding. The Jewish-Turkish community is often called upon as witness to Turkey's attempt to re-brand as a liberal and democratic country (ibid., 442). The article, however, highlights how fears of anti-Semitism in the city push Jews not to make

display of their culture, progressively leading to the public erasure of difference – what the author terms "dangerous cosmopolitanism." Brink-Danan argues that this scenario complicates the popular notion of cosmopolitanism as requiring the public performance of culture (which indeed it does not). She makes the example of the *mezuzah*. While orthodox interpretations of Jewish laws require for the *mezuzah* to be put outside the home and be visible to passers-by as a way of keeping the house safe, many Turkish Jews prefer, or are even instructed, to place it inside the home ironically due to safety concerns. According to the author, decisions on where to place the *mezuzah* represent a form of cosmopolitan knowledge that 'acts as an interpretive superstructure around social rules about when to perform or disavow one's cosmopolitanism' (ibid., 447).

Stuck in an ambiguous theoretical loop, Brink-Danan maintains that 'cosmopolitanism is sometimes observable only by accounting for knowledge of what should be kept private' (ibid., 447). In other words, the placing of the *mezuzah* represents a form of cultural competence, which she largely equates to cosmopolitanism as a whole. However, I argue that the "dangerous cosmopolitanism" described by the author does not qualify as cosmopolitanism in the first place – it is multiculturalism at best. The article ambiguously starts from the assumption that an initial condition of cosmopolitanism derives from the Jewish community itself: Turkish Jews are "cosmopolitan" in virtue of both the cultural competence and identity they acquired through a collective, diasporic experience. The author maintains that the literature on cosmopolitanism commonly fails to consider collective experiences of diaspora as constituting a cosmopolitan entity as well as the repository of cosmopolitan knowledge. However, just as this article found unproductive to treat the figure of the "cosmopolitan" as a category of analysis, I also do not see the empirical value of treating an entire community as a useful category for the study of urban diversity through cosmopolitan lenses. Moreover, "diaspora" clearly does not equal "cosmopolitanism" and, if it did, we could then abandon the notion of cosmopolitanism all together.

What is missing from this picture is not only the intention of seeking cultural diversity but the very opportunity to do so in light of fears of

persecution. This leaves us with the following question: *What happens to cosmopolitanism in intolerant contexts?* So far, I have emphasised a model that empirically engages with the "doing" of cosmopolitanism. This is due to the fact that this article is primarily concerned with the anthropological study of urban life, whereby limiting its scope to lived moments of cosmopolitan sociability rather than those that could have happened but did not. This may considerably restrict investigations in contexts where cosmopolitanism lacks the opportunity to emerge as a social practice. In this respect, another point of reflection that Brink-Danan's paper offers concerns the coexistence of cosmopolitanism with nationalism or other parochial affiliations. The author remarks: '[C]ertain folks will be labelled cosmopolitans even against their vehement claims of patriotism' (ibid., 442). It would be anachronistic and factually incorrect to assume that people's cosmopolitan outlook excludes or even conflicts with parochial identities (Nussbaum 1994; Beck 2002). By drawing from his personal life, for instance, in *Cosmopolitan Patriots* (1997) Appiah describes the overlapping ideological beliefs held by his father, a prominent Ghanaian politician involved in the local struggle for national independence: 'My father was a Ghanaian patriot. He once published a column […] under the headline "Is Ghana Worth Dying For?" and I know that his heart's answer was yes' (ibid., 617). Yet, in a note to his children found after his death, he writes: 'Remember that you are citizens of the world … Deep inside of me [I have] a great love for mankind and an abiding desire to see mankind, under God, fulfil its highest destiny' (quoted in Appiah 1997: 619).

Scholars have increasingly problematised the assumed opposition between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, wherein the latter is excessively romanticised (Calhoun 2002b; Brett and Moran 2011; Latour 2004). Once again, it seems rather important to move beyond investigations of the cosmopolitan "type" as this shift can drastically help defeat the binary oppositions common in the literature of cosmopolitanism – i.e., cosmopolitan *versus* nationalist, cosmopolitan *versus* provincial, cosmopolitan *versus* ethnic, cosmopolitan *versus* working-class, cosmopolitan *versus* local, etc. Attempts to contrast these ethnocentric biases and dichotomies largely constituted the reason for the multiplication of "cosmopolitanisms" that led to theoretical and empirical ambiguity in the

first place, such as vernacular (Werbner 2006), banal (Beck 2006), mediatic (Yilmaz et al. 2014), working-class (Werbner 1999), provincial (Notar 2008), or feminist cosmopolitanism (Werbner 2008). However, cosmopolitanism as a situational practice and with no further appellation can already transcend such social boundaries and provide a valid framework catered for studying the social complexity of life in the global city.

Conclusion

By drawing on ethnographic examples from different global cities, this paper explored and critically assessed the strengths and shortcomings of cosmopolitan frameworks as employed in urban anthropology. If, on the one hand, the wide applicability and flexibility of cosmopolitanism as a framework makes it catered to the multiplicity of human experiences in the global city, on the other hand its adaptation to most aspects of globalised urban lives has often made the concept an overstretched and unhelpful category of analysis. The considerations put forward in this article highlight the importance of distinguishing cosmopolitanism from concepts such as transnationalism and multiculturalism. I bring attention to the need of the framework to shed light on attitudes of openness as opposed to mere cross-cultural competences or conditions. A cosmopolitan framework should ultimately be defined by the empirical assessment of the nature of the intercultural practices that these dispositions and competences might lead to. This analysis thus calls for a focus on the *doing* of cosmopolitanism rather than on the figure of the cosmopolitan, whose ever-changing dispositions and behaviours should not – and in fact cannot – be fixed.

To conclude, the proposed analytical and methodological shift in cosmopolitan literature would help anthropologists move beyond categories of binary thinking and biased approaches to the study of life within and outside the global city. On a meta-epistemic level, this would ultimately represent a *cosmopolitan* shift in the anthropology of cosmopolitanism, by hopefully helping reconcile their common endeavours and, more broadly, set the ground for a truly cosmopolitan anthropology.

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