I am honoured to have been invited for this workshop organised by the new Chair Anthropology of Contemporary Europe here, directed by Prof Marc Abélès. One of the reasons why I accepted was that I once read his book Les nouveaux riches: un ethnologue dans la Silicon Valley (2002), which I very much enjoyed, and so the invitation gives me a chance to meet Marc in person. I also welcome the initiative to foster circulation and networking between academics, postdocs and students from various parts of Europe, which you are trying to achieve through these workshops. I think it is an excellent format to have regular meetings on European topics, gathering a small group of participants during one day.

Of course, the topics that is being discussed here is of great interest or concern to me. The focus on the infra-politics of ‘Europe’, the consequences of globalization, issues of cultural and religious diversity, of diverging and contrasting traditions and practices, which may lead to discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance, are all topics that I have been dealing with for a long time, basically since I started to do fieldwork as a young anthropologist in the former Yugoslavia, which we all know has a celebrated but also troubled legacy of cultural and religious diversity, which fell prey to nationalism and ethnic violence in a not so distant past.

Although I am still dealing with topics like these, in particular the Bosnian war and the Srebrenica massacre (I am writing a new book under the title And then they killed them all: A microhistory of the Srebrenica genocide), I have also moved into the new territory of urban studies or urban ethnography, where --through a ‘kaleidoscopic’ ethnographic portrait of the post-socialist city of Bucharest-- I hope to contribute to a better understanding of questions of citizenship, growing social inequality and the threat this represents to the urban fabric and social cohesion of contemporary cities in Eastern Europe. Already for quite a few years I have taken a break from studying ethno-religious conflict and genocide, moving to what I think may in fact be equally divisive issues such as income inequality and growing wealth disparities.

The success of the European project, which I see as preventing wars on European soil through forms of economic, political and cultural integration, depends not only on addressing issues such as cultural and religious diversity (for example how to deal with migrants and refugees) but also on the dangers posed by mounting inequality, the precariousness and insecurity of people’s life and income, which have immediate repercussions for how they feel about accepting ‘others’ or ‘foreigners’ in their midst, for accepting these others as citizens having the same rights as the ‘host’ population, etc. I think that Brexit can be seen as the worst-case scenario that comes to mind of
what this can lead to. Much of the resentment that has been simmering in the UK for years has to do with this feeling of having lost out in a ‘unfair’ globalized competition with ‘others’ (particularly East Europeans) who work for less money, take away ‘our’ jobs, drive up rental prices, flood ‘our’ health services and put pressure on or even abuse ‘our’ social security provisions and services. It is quite salient and relevant that the loathing of foreigners (spawned by British tabloids) was not primarily targeted against Syrians or other ‘non-Europeans’, but rather against other Europeans such as Poles, Bulgarians and Romanians, who entered the UK after EU accession.

It is clear that ‘Europe’ failed here, that the EU did not succeed in convincing the economically deprived segments of the UK population that they were better-off in Europe, in --what we should not forget-- is a country with deep class divisions, huge income and wealth differentials, a long-standing and deepening rift between the haves and the have-nots, and extreme inequality in terms of access to schooling, higher education and the job market. So I would like to turn the attention away from so-called ‘ethnic’ issues, having my doubts whether the problems the EU needs to address lie in a coexistence or plurality of cultures, in multiculturalism (this now much deplored term), as the call for this workshop seems to suggest, but more importantly, to take growing disparities in wealth and existential security (on a national and global scale) much more seriously. I have certain issues with the use of the phrase ‘multiple coexisting cultures’ in the call, from a fundamental anthropological point of view, as I thought we have stopped by now thinking in terms of clearly-bounded and contained ‘cultures’, but let’s leave that aside.

These were some introductory remarks. So since this workshop focuses on the Danube region, bringing together several researchers who have carried out work on the river from an ethnographic, anthropological and ecological perspective, I tried to gather my thought on this. I will try to meet the special request made to me to anchor my presentation in the field of urban anthropology, and talk about post-socialist transformations in Central European towns and cities located along the Danube, use ethnographic examples and mobilise my expertise in urban anthropology to describe the life and representations of the inhabitants of the banks of the river. Since I am now based in Regensburg, a pretty medieval town and World Heritage Site located at the northernmost point of the Danube [slide], I will also refer to this town through the teaching and fieldwork I have done with students. I do hope to be able to show that the Danube is a fundamentally a ‘European’ river (one of the questions being asked here), although it is quite different than the Rhine for example in terms of its economic importance and imaginary.

I can’t claim to have done extensive anthropological research on the Danube, as others present here. However, I have carried out quite a bit of teaching on the topic, both in London (where I was until 2014) and Regensburg (since 2014). I would like to mention some of that here briefly, i.e. courses and summer schools with a ‘Danube’, ‘Globalisation’ or ‘Contemporary Europe’ element, which I have taught myself or with
others, as this may be interesting and relevant to you, and perhaps lead to some discussion about how to teach ‘Europe’ from an anthropological angle. I will be referring to some of these courses in more detail during my talk:

- London: the UCL Global Citizenship Programme -- *The Danube Summer School / Danube on Thames*, at University College London UCL, from 2013: ([https://danubeonthames.wordpress.com/](https://danubeonthames.wordpress.com/)) [slide with some info]
- The Danube course *Von Regensburg zum Schwarzen Meer: Weltoffenheit und Abschottung entlang einer großen europäischen Verkehrsader / From Regensburg to the Black Sea: cosmopolitanism, contact and closure along a main European traffic route* (which I taught during the Summer terms of 2015, 2016 and 2017) [slide with some info]
- The Europe course *Culture and Identity in Eastern and Southeastern Europe* (which I taught during the Winter Terms of 2015-16 and 2016-17) [slide with some info]
- And an ethnographic fieldwork exercise focusing amongst others on (migrant) night shift workers from Eastern Europe, titled *Nightlaboratory Regensburg Nachtschichten / Nightlaboratory Regensburg Night Shifts* (which I taught during the Summer Terms 2015 and 2016) [http://nachtaspekte.tumblr.com/](http://nachtaspekte.tumblr.com/), see also [https://nightlaboratory.wordpress.com/](https://nightlaboratory.wordpress.com/) [slide with some info]

After having briefly presented these teaching activities, I would like to give you an overview of my presentation, by making some programmatic points that I hope to elaborate on in the rest of my talk.

§1 A major river or traffic route such as the Danube can provide us with an appropriate metaphor to study processes of globalisation and its counteracting tendencies, aspects of which we can observe in cities, towns and other localities along the river.

§2 When talking about cities and urban studies, I would like to make the point that in urban studies we focus far too much on large localities and capital cities, forgetting the difficult predicament of smaller towns, especially in the former socialist world.

§3 Contact and closure, or globalisation and cosmopolitanism versus closure and intolerance are simultaneous processes that can be observed in any locality.

§ 4 I will finish with an ethnographic vignette about the so-called ‘Dult’ (Regensburg version of the Oktoberfest) as an ethnographic example, where both these elements combine

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**The Danube as a metaphor for ‘Flow’ and ‘Friction’**

In this part of my talk I will be reflecting on the process of ‘globalization’. We will discuss the contradictory aspects of and responses to globalization with the help of the key concepts "flow" (a liquid metaphor often use for processes of globalization)
and "friction" (which pertains to the problems and tensions created by globalization, including the parochial interests or attempts to ward off such influences, to control and channel them and defend local interests). My key reference here is Anna Tsing’s book *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (2005). Another book I would like to mention is *Post-cosmopolitan cities: explorations of urban coexistence*, edited by Caroline Humphrey and Vera Skvirskaja (2012), which has an East European and urban studies or urban history focus [slide].

Now, what can we observe when taking a closer look at the Danube map. First, the Danube seems to be the prime example of a European river on its way to conquer the "new Europe" in the former eastern or socialist bloc. With its length of almost 3000 (2860) km, it traverses ten states - Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine and Romania - and thus more European countries and landscapes than any other river in the continent. It forms the spine of an EU process of ‘Europeanisation’, of an expanding and enlarging EU with states along the Danube being absorbed into the European project. Slovakia and Hungary became member of the EU in 2004, Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, and Croatia in 2013. Serbia, Moldova and the Ukraine are in the process of accession or have already signed an EU Association Agreement. One of the important ‘soft’ instruments of EU integration is the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, which was pronounced in 2010.

A more doubting view that one could take is that the Danube is a river that gravitates towards Europe’s periphery, to “the other Europe” or the Balkans, with all its negative projections and stereotypes of stagnation, backwardness, populism etc. It is different than the Rhine, for example, which although half the Danube’s length (1230km) and passing through ‘only’ four European countries, is economically far more important, ending at the largest port in the world Rotterdam. At the end of the Danube, where the river flows into the Black Sea, there is only the underdeveloped, isolated small town of Sulina, the radical opposite of Rotterdam. The Danube is, at it were, a Rhine in reverse, the latter’s negative mirror image. While going East instead of West, it becomes more marginal the closer it gets to the Black Sea, with the town of Sulina as the symbol of this utter peripherality. The most important cities at the Danube (Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade) are located at the Upper and Middle Danube, roughly in the first 1800 km, whereas the lower stretches of the river seem to be an economic backwater, in spite of all nice EU policies. This is partly a legacy of the division of the continent during the Cold War, where after passing by Vienna, the Danube crossed the Iron Curtain, flowing into the socialist bloc. Even though the Danube has been a trade waterway for centuries, it has had little chance to develop, because of Great Power rivalry and the Cold War but also the natural features of the river, which have hampered commerce and shipping. During the nineteenth century Western powers such as Great Britain and Russia competed about who controls the Black Sea trade and the Danube delta.
However, the situation was not always so blunt as during the Cold War, especially when during Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) times, the Danube formed the main axis of a large European empire, also lending its name to it: the Danube Monarchy. After the close of the Crimean War in the middle of the 19th century, as a consequence of the growing trade between the West and the Romanian principalities the Danube was internationalized to allow trade and commerce to flow as smoothly as possible, an endeavor in which competitor Russia was largely excluded. With the creation of the European Danube Commission Russia’s influence on the Delta was diminished, rescuing Southeastern Europe and Turkey from growing Russian domination. I assume that from a current Russian perspective, EU’s Danube Strategy is seen as a similar attempt to once again push back Russian influence in the region. NATO and the EU have now drawn most of these countries under their own Western, European and Cross-Atlantic political and military umbrella. Vienna is trying hard to revive its former imperial grandeur in Southeastern Europe by large investments and cultural activities. It does not come as surprise that it plays a key coordinating role in the EU Danube Strategy.

When we put aside these historical and political observations, and focus on the positionality of cities and towns located at the Danube, we may characterize them as follows. On the one hand there are the Danube port cities, which have a history of being open and cosmopolitan, as they formed the nodal points in cultural, political, economic and trade networks. For a long time they were part of large-distance trade networks facilitated by the multi-ethnic (Ottoman and Habsburg) empires (John W. Cole). Populations in these cities were very diverse, the main groups being: Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Germans, and Jews. For you the less well-known examples of such cities may be the cities on the Lower Danube, such as Ruse (Bulgaria)\(^1\), Brăila (Romania)\(^2\) as well as the Black Sea ports of Constanța (Romania)\(^3\) and the iconic

\(^1\) **Ruse (Bulgaria):** It is the most significant Bulgarian river port, serving an important part of the international trade of the country. It was one of the main Ottoman towns on the Danube. Ruse was a cosmopolitan city with a very diverse multi-ethnic population, which continued after Bulgaria gained autonomy from the Ottoman empire (1878) (43% Bulgarians, 39% Turks, 7% Sephardi Jews, with smaller groups of Armenians, Germans, Greeks, Vlachs, Russians, Roma, and people of other nationalities). Ruse was a key cultural and economic center, with close connections to other cities along the Danube. In Bulgaria it was at the forefront of developments: many of the first modern innovations were introduced here, including: the first railway link (1867), the first privately owned bank (1881), the first chamber of commerce and industry (1890), the first movie projection (1897). The Nobel prize winning author Elias Canetti was born in Ruse and spent his childhood years in the city (from 1905 to 1911) about which he writes in his childhood memoirs *Die Gerettete Zunge* 1977 (*The Tongue Set Free*).

\(^2\) **Brăila:** During the nineteenth century, Brăila became one of the three important Danube ports in the Romanian principalities (Wallachia). The city’s greatest period of prosperity was at the end of the 19th and early 20th century, when it was an important port for most of the merchandise coming in and going out of Romania (particularly grain).

\(^3\) **Constanta:** In 1878, Constanța and the rest of Northern Dobrudja were ceded by the Ottoman Empire to Romania. The city became Romania’s main seaport and transit point for much of Romania’s exports. In the interwar years, the city became Romania’s main commercial hub, so that by the 1930s over half of the national exports were going through the port. Currently, the Port of Constanța is the largest on the Black Sea and the fourth largest in Europe.
‘cosmopolitan’ city of Odessa (Ukraine).⁴ Many of these cities have lost their ethnic and religious diversity during the twentieth century, that is, they have been ethnically ‘unmixed’ from World War I onwards --‘the end of empire’-- when the creation of nation states led to processes of national homogenization, still continuing during socialism and into the post-socialist period (in the case of the former Yugoslavia accompanied by brutal forms of ethnic cleansing during the 1990s).

That’s why Humphrey and Svkirskaja call cities in this part of the world ‘post-cosmopolitan’ cities. In important ways, ‘Europeanisation’, that is the rise of the model of the modern European nation state from the 19th until the end of the 20th century (in the case of Yugoslavia), put an end to this traditional ‘Balkan’ mixture. Some of the latest examples of ‘post-cosmopolitan’ cities can be found in the former Yugoslavia, such as Belgrade, Sarajevo, Mostar, Skopje, and Prizren. This process if ethnic un-mixing is still ongoing. It’s an irony to realize that cities along the Danube and in the rest of Southeastern Europe have thus been ‘Europeanizing’ while West-European cities are in the process of being ‘Balkanized’.

Still Danube port cities can be seen as being in more intensive and permanent contact with the outside world, open to flows of goods, people and ideas, which has made them often suspect in the eyes of nation-state building elites and the other more ‘closed’ political regimes of the twentieth century which have attempted to control flows and put up boundaries. With the rise of the nation states in the region (in the 19th and 20th centuries), these port cities sometimes have become rivals to political centers, particularly capital cities which are not located at the Danube (like Sofia, Bucharest, or Kiev). Nevertheless, in their history, they sometimes were given special status, made into free trade zones for example, with a relaxed taxation and jurisdiction of the country in which they were located. Attracting many foreign traders the inhabitants of these cities characterized themselves by their polyglot identities: urban public and semi-public spaces were often multi-lingual or hetero-glossic, and cultural and linguistic code-switching was the norm. The population still has the reputation of being witty, shrewd, astute, and opportunistic (Constanţa is a good contemporary non-Danubian example: a seaward perspective, a maritime view).

The ethnic (rural, peasant, traditional) hinterland of these cities was usually mono-ethnic, in contrast to the mixed composition of the cities. The contrast between port cities and their hinterland may have been even more pronounced than that of other cities. Because they were open and mixed, the rural population often saw them as threatening their traditions and the national culture, as centers of foreign economic

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⁴ Odessa: The city of Odessa was founded by the Russian Empress Catherine the Great in 1794, who invited traders and refugees from across Europe to settle in the city. It became home to a diverse population of Albanians, Armenians, Azeris, Bulgarians, Crimean Tatars, Frenchmen, Germans (including Mennonites), Greeks, Italians, Jews, Poles, Romanians, Russians, Turks, Ukrainians, and traders representing many other nationalities. From 1819 to 1858 Odessa was a free port. During the Communist period it was the most important trade port of the Soviet Union.
and cultural domination, nodes through which cultural transfers happen or influence and forces of economic and political domination pass. Port cities thrived on porosity, openness and connectivity, and they formed the hinges between empires, trading blocs and nation states. Still this porosity is an intrinsic quality of port cities: water, rivers and seas can be seen as facilitating communication, and the port city is a hub in a dense network of maritime and fluvial connections.

Then there are of course the smaller towns (and villages) that are located at the Danube. They may not have such a lively exchange and intricate relationship with the river, where the Danube may be seen as a source of food and irrigation, but also as a natural threat, floods and the more. This aspect of fear for natural catastrophes may be present for the larger cities too, as is the case for Vienna for example, which has always had an ambivalent relationship with the Danube (although the river also did help to facilitate the creation of an empire). Vienna’s city center is located at some distance from the river, and some have characterized Vienna’s relationship with the Danube as a marriage of convenience: on the one hand Vienna keeps its geographical distance (to escape the dangers of floods etc), turning its back to the river as it were. On the other hand the Danube was the main channel through which Austria’s imperial power spread during the times of the Habsburg Empire. Also other cities and political centers on the Danube demonstrate these kind of ambivalences, which may be historically defined: in the case of Belgrade, for example, the Danube was for long periods a fortified border. Those who controlled the city (the Turks, then Serbs) defended themselves against enemies.

The popular anxiety and mood turning against the force of water, against flows, can be understood first of all also in natural terms. In Regensburg, for example, I can tell you that this fast river can look at times as an imposing and intimidating natural phenomenon, especially when there are floods such as happened in January. So rivers both represent opportunity and threat, and the only way to control the threat is the tame and channel the river, which has happened most radically in the Upper part of the Danube, in Germany and Austria.

At a more abstract level, however, flow always implies friction, the river needs a bed to be able to flow, like a car needs a road or ground underneath to be able to move, and so there can never be flow without friction. That brings me to Anna Tsing’s ideas on ‘flow’ and ‘friction’ in the context of globalization. As she argues, globalization is not just about flow but it is also about friction. It is not a single program driven by a transnational capitalist logic, but rather a very complex entanglement of multiple, unstable, overlapping, and contradictory global processes or globalisms “rubbing up against each other awkwardly”, which Tsing calls ‘friction’. This notion of ‘friction’ undermines the idea of unimpeded ‘flow’ which is so dominant in the literature on globalization. There is never unimpeded ‘flow’, but always ‘friction’ as well. “Friction refuses the lie that global power operates as a well-oiled machine” (2005, 6).
Globalization is not simply something that imposes itself from outside: it also includes processes of negotiation, hybridization, and co-constitution that involve global and local actors of all sorts. As such it never obliterates the local. Global ‘flows’ can be very real and tangible, ‘touch down’ locally, being global and local at the same time. This also means that flows are usually channeled or facilitated, regulated or resisted at the local level. Therefore, globalization encompasses all sorts of contradictory (political, economic, cultural) movements, which “all seem wrapped up in the same energetic movement” (2000, 332). It has its positive and negative, light and dark, sides, and it can mean very different things in different places, and at different moments. So it has unique outcomes in different localities. Interaction or friction may occur for example between ‘predatory business practices’ and forms of ‘local resistance and empowerment’ (Tsing 2005), and they may involve collaboration, misunderstanding, opposition, dialogue, and rough encounters between various kinds of people. ‘Culture’, Tsing writes, is co-produced in these frictional interactions and involves the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference (2005, 4). So forget about national culture :)

§2 In urban studies we are focusing too much on big localities and capital cities, forgetting the predicaments of smaller towns.

Of course it is usually the larger cities, and above the port cities that are most affected by these processes. But I would very much argue against ignoring the relevance of these processes in smaller towns, or even in villages, a key point I have tried to bring across in an edited volume on Bulgaria: Global villages: rural and urban transformations in contemporary Bulgaria (London: Anthem, 2013). Also in a more recent volume that I published with Ben Campkin, Engaged Urbanism (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), we have made the case: we need to stop concentrating on the usual reference cities of globalization, such as London, New York and Tokyo, and explore other urban sites and localities, for example in the global south or in Eastern Europe. We follow the work of the geographer Jennifer Robinson, a former colleague at UCL, who has formulated an influential post-colonial critique of urban studies.

So we should not always focus exclusively on the large cities such as Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade. Let’s not forget about the smaller towns along the Danube, as Claudio Magris has done for example in his famous book. Let’s have a brief look at some of these places. Regensburg I will discuss later. I need to give all the credit here to my students (most of them non-anthropologists) who have explored many of these places, in the framework of the course that I have taught in Regensburg. All of them choose a locality and identify processes of globalisation, its manifestations and the reactions against it through concrete examples in their site, which they present in class and through a portfolio of materials.

So here are a few examples:
Paks (Hungary): a small town 100 km south of Budapest and home to the first and only operating nuclear power station in Hungary (with 4 reactors), which was built between 1974 and 1983 by Soviet engineers. The plant is still the largest employer in the town. The small town came into existence as a result of this power plant. It is an old plant which environmentalists consider dangerous, and its renewal is carried out by a Russian state corporation, Rosatom, which struck a deal with the Hungarian government. The aim is to soon cover 50% of Hungary’s electricity needs through this plant, which means that Orban will make Hungary utterly dependent on Russian know-how and interests to increase their grip on the European energy market. One could argue that this town is a key example of ‘globalisation from the East’.

Galati (Romania) is the largest port on the Romanian stretch of the river. It became a major economic centre, based on trade (especially grain exports) to the West, including Britain and Germany. It was a free port for part of the 19th century, and home to many (vice-)consulates of western countries (including the US). After the Crimean War (1854–1856), Galați became a seat of the Danube European Commission. Between 1900 and the beginning of World War I, Galati continued its trade in grain and timber. One third of its inhabitants at the time were foreigners, such as Greeks, Turks, Armenians etc. Nowadays the city is almost completely Romanian, the city has been homogenised. Yet now investments are taking place in the shipyards and in the port, where Chinese interests are paramount, Galati being the first port on the (maritime part of the) Danube coming from the Black Sea. It is set to become a node for trade with China. The Dutch have invested in shipyards (the largest Damen shipyard in the world) and steel giant ArcelorMittal in steel production (the largest steel plant in Romania).

Giurgiu (Moldova) is a small port in the Republic of Moldova, with only a few thousand inhabitants. It has enormously increased its importance as the only port of Moldova connected to the Danube and the Black Sea, which was initially built with large investments from Azerbaijan, which main interest was to develop it into an oil terminal. The port is in foreign hands, and has been, and its director is the German Thomas Moser. Even though Moldova itself does not reap much of the benefits of the port, on the basis of an agreement between Romania, the Ukraine and Moldova, it got access to the Danube and the Black Sea. Giurgiu became an International Free Port (free economic zone) in 1998.

§3 Globalisation and cosmopolitanism and its opposites in terms of closure and intolerance are simultaneous and competing processes that can be observed in any locality.

The materials my students have gathered show that any particular place exhibits elements of both tendencies at the same time, and that some small places can be very globalized whereas larger cities can be home to the most vocal opponents to
globalization and pursue the most radical politics against multiculturalism (Belgrade 1990s, Budapest now).

In each case the local situation is influenced by the predominant ‘politics of cultural difference’, which decides what tendencies prevail. If diversity is celebrated, it exists because it is facilitated and protected from above, embedded in a political system (or a state) that allows for, protects, and guarantees this cultural diversity, that protects the specific ethnic niches in what is often quite a complex division of labor between groups (as was the case in the Ottoman empire). That does not change the fact that multi-cultural coexistence is always a delicate balance, usually not a melting pot, but rather a complex and intricate coexistence of groups with many cross-cutting ties. In the urban context this can be gleaned from the fact that residential ethnic clustering is the norm, not intermingling (the melting pot idea).

What binds these cities perhaps together is residential segregation on the one hand and intermingling in everyday life, in cafes, clubs etc., especially amongst the elites, who often have a strong sense of their own shared urban identity. Humor and ethnic stereotyping are widespread (Odessa and Sarajevo being good examples) which is an important tool to calm down, decrease tension, and relax the situation. Toleration means to some extent also indifference. This ‘living apart-together’ is often fraught with ambiguity, life oscillates between ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’, as Humphrey and Skvirskaja have called it, and violent outbursts.

What can rip these cities apart are power differences and sudden demographic and power shifts between the different groups. It may lead to the tilting of relations from benign to hostile, and result in pogroms, as Humphrey has shown for Odessa. The role of rumors is paramount. Marginal and socially deprived groups (workers, the urban poor, peasants from outside the city) are often the source of these conflicts, which make a sudden end to this everyday cosmopolitanism. That’s why this delicate balance can only exist when it is protected, secured, guaranteed from above, by the state and supra-state institutions. The state has a responsibility in terms of avoiding and suppressing violence, create a balance and guarantee security from above.

Nevertheless, political regimes have a tendency to change. In the region the paradigms have shifted from empire to the nation-state. The rise of nationalism has led to the demise of cultural amalgamations in cities, whereby the homogenous hinterland and the peasantry hostile to cities were mobilized. Cities were seen as corrupted, as sources of cultural contamination, insecurity, danger, and threat, which was brought to bear in politics. This rural animosity towards cities is still an important force in the region. Cities are seen as centers of political and cultural domination (or global forces) which exploit and extract the economic surpluses produced by the countryside. This has formed the basis for strong populist and anti-urban sentiments in most of Southeastern Europe, which have challenged the economic and cultural hegemony of urban elites. Until the present day one can clearly observe these types
of conflict in countries such as Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. These populist and find their support in the countryside, in provincial towns, and amongst the deprived social classes in the larger cities, which is one of the reasons why we should study small places.

Yet in this era of globalization, the overall trend is one of growing mobility and ethnic and religious diversity: it is just a matter of time before new global migration flows will start to change the ethnic composition of cities. These globalizing tendencies lead to new connections and forms of 'mixing', which are altogether of a different quality: they are less stable and more transient, subject to the vagaries and pressures of global flows of capital, goods and people. Increased global connectivity goes with growing disconnections and fragmentation at the local level (Smart & Smart). It leads to the paradoxical situation that even though cities have become ethnically more homogenous, the social fabric is eroding as a result of neo-liberal restructuring. So ethnic homogeneity does not necessarily lead to social cohesion, because social inequalities have grown and the place of minorities has been taken by transient workers and traders, commuting across Europe.

In this context, it is interesting to look at Odessa. Vera Skvirskaja and Caroline Humphrey write about the demise of ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ in the socialist backyards of this city and its replacement by the concept of ‘tolerance’. They provide a description of the ‘actually existing (or lived) cosmopolitanism’ in the backyards of Odessa. The impression one gets is of an ethnically diverse environment, where everybody knows each other, and interacts with one another subscribing to a shared code of conduct. There is a kind of ‘village’ feel to it, with all the positive and negative elements and qualities attached to it: at the one hand the embrace of difference, which is the hallmark of cosmopolitanism, but also aspects of social control, envy, and surveillance, and at times denunciation and treason.

While everyday cosmopolitanism is characteristic of the closely knit and ethnically mixed ‘parochial’ community of the socialist housing estate, the new concept of ‘tolerance’ belongs to the post-socialist and neo-liberalist context, where relations are instrumental and anonymous (primarily based on utilitarian and commercial exchanges) and people do not know and also tend to avoid each other. Whereas the old ‘cosmopolitanism’ was not just about recognizing difference but also about enjoying and valuing diversity, the new ‘tolerance’ is a negative concept in terms of ‘tolerating’ difference without embracing it, in the absence of real communication beyond the economic transactions of the market place. Yet, I am not completely convinced that ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘tolerance’ belong to two different periods altogether, and that the latter has now replaced the former. They probably exist simultaneously, bleeding one into another and having their own particular niches in different spheres of the urban landscape (i.e. the backyards versus the boulevards in the case of Odessa).
Yet it seems undeniable that there has been a shift in the relative importance of the two, something of the true and proverbial conviviality of Odessa has been lost. Therefore, paradoxically, it seems that everyday cosmopolitanism can only exist in the parochial sphere, and that it will encounter its demise as soon as globalization kicks in, as the case of Odessa seems to demonstrate: the city has become an example of a ‘trans-local’ city, a hub of global movements, global flows and diasporas, which produces growing fragmentation and disconnections at the local level, creating ‘localities without community’ and ‘cultures without locality’. Everyday cosmopolitanism is replaced by tolerance, which seems to be a less stable and sustainable form of co-existence. Relations are apparently more instrumental and anonymous. There is however a clear longing for this lost multi-cultural world, a nostalgia which can be gleaned, for example in the way many cities in Central and Southeastern Europe brand themselves as ‘multicultural’ and ‘cosmopolitan’, for example in the framework of the European Capital of Culture Program, even though Jews, Germans, and other groups have gone.

§ 4 Regensburg / The ‘Dult’ as ethnographic example, where both elements combine

At the end I would like to present an ethnographic vignette from Regensburg, which I have explored with my students in the framework of the Nightlaboratory Regensburg Night Shifts course. As part of my attempts to teach them something about fieldwork, participant observation and ethnography, I take them to the ‘Dult’, a Bavarian beer festival something similar to the Oktoberfest in Munich. They need to walk around, talk to people and document this event through sound and image, whereby I ask them specifically to focus on the people who work at this fair, the majority of which are East Europeans. I try to teach them to perceive this event, which they may visit themselves with friends for leisure, with different eyes, by exploring at who works at this fair, operates the machines, does the tidying up and cleaning and disassembling of machines at the end of the day, when the festival closes down at around midnight. It is a look behind the scenes of a so-called ‘traditional Bavarian’ beer festival, where it is compulsory for visitors to walk around in traditional costumes, leather pants for boys and Dirndls for girls. Even though the owners of the boots, the attractions, and the beer tents are Germans, many staff is of East European origin (Romanians, etc.), especially when it comes to the difficult and hard physical work.

[more about this during the presentation]