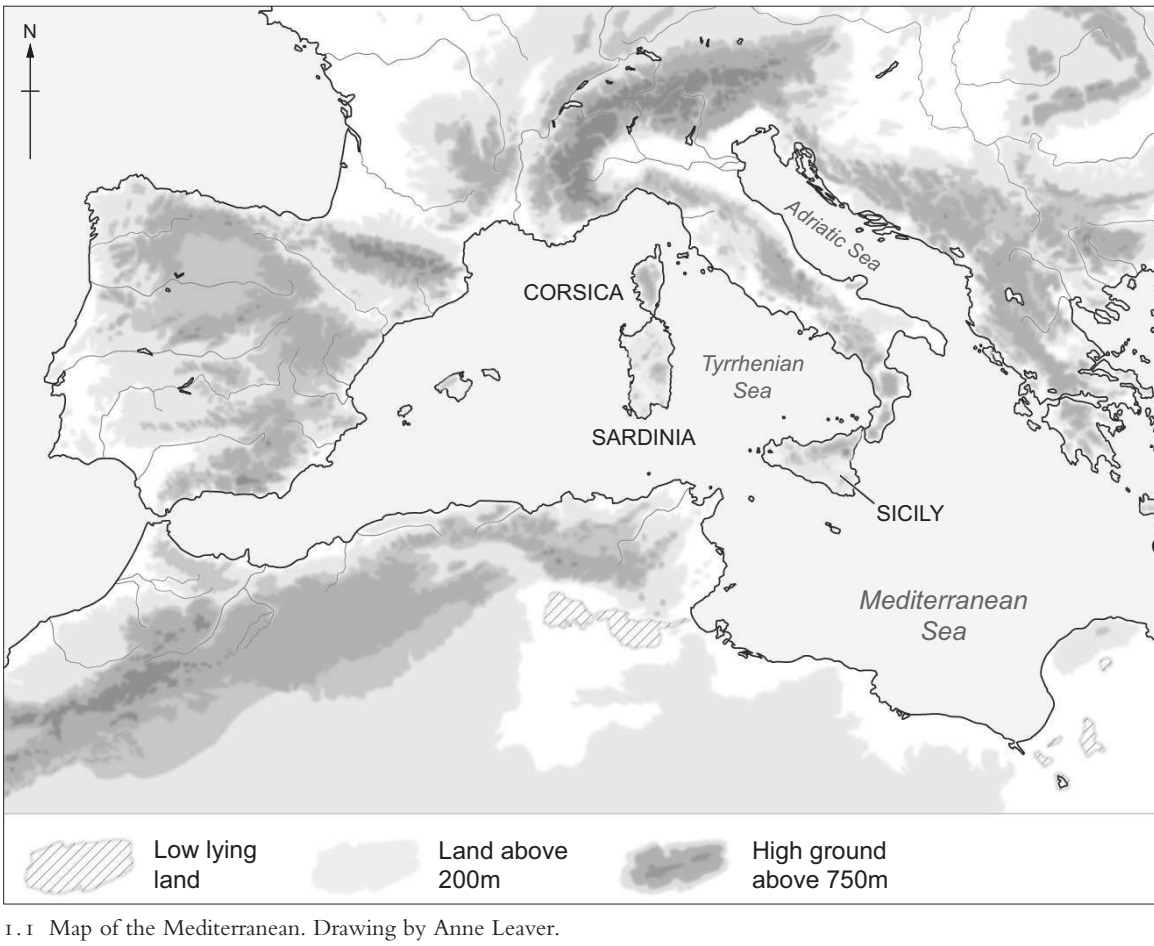
ONE

INTERPRETING THE MEDITERRANEAN

1.1 DEFINING THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mediterranean is both simple and challenging to define. It is an inland sea where the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa meet (Figure 1.1). It is bounded by a coastline that extends from the shores of modern day Syria, Lebanon and Israel in the east to Morocco and Gibraltar in the west, and it is ringed by mountains for much of its perimeter. This is particularly true along its northern edge, where the environment mutates between high, wide mountainous ranges, fertile upland plateaux, and lower-lying plains. Along its southern littoral, there are sharply defined landscapes of fecund hinterlands and desert expanses. The sea itself is often considered an open, uniform expanse between landfalls that is described by its surface conditions, currents and wind patterns.[1] Its islands may be regarded as stepping stones across the expanse of water and, indeed, have been used by people in this way throughout its inhabited history. Collectively, these present a kind of unification to the definition of what the Mediterranean is. But such a singular conceptualisation can break down when one recognises that the Mediterranean comprises the sum of many seas, such as the Aegean, Adriatic and Tyrrhenian,[2] each of which possesses its own character, and as a result requires its own distinctive navigation methods and sailing crafts.

The Mediterranean is also defined by its climate and vegetation. This has led to the characterisation of a Mediterranean world with hot, dry summers



1.1 Map of the Mediterranean. Drawing by Anne Leaver.

followed by mild, wet winters, and with certain shared floral species, notably olive and grape.[3] Along the northern areas, winters are cold and summers less arid, while the southern and eastern regions are more desert-like. As a result, crops will grow at higher altitudes the further south one moves in this zone. There is again considerable diversity within such an overarching depiction, however. For example, the Mediterranean zone contains both the driest and wettest locales in continental Europe.[4] Adjacent islands may have completely different geology and endemic flora and fauna, such as Corsica and Sardinia.[5] Thus, a singular definition of the Mediterranean based upon its physical and environmental traits is difficult to achieve.[6]

To manage these variabilities, scholarship has relied upon the notion that a landscape is something conceived and constructed by its inhabitants as much as its physical nature. In defining the Mediterranean, this concept brings in not only the relationship between people and the Sea, but also the duration and histories of this relationship. Fernand Braudel was one of the first to draw up this perception in his study of the Mediterranean world during the sixteenth century CE.[7] One of the leaders of the *Annales* school, he emphasised the long duration of human geography. His model frames a series of competing polarities, such as mountain vs plain, town vs country, hinterland vs coast. These oppositions are used to argue for the fundamental differences between the cultures that developed in each such region, and at the same time to emphasise the enduring features of Mediterranean societies. For Braudel, therefore, even ancient Mediterranean history displayed a unity of repetition and recurring cycles from which permanent geographic and social values could be detected; to him, these are what define the Mediterranean.[8] For example, nomadism and transhumance defined the regular movement of people and flocks, regulated by the Mediterranean's two clearly defined seasons of summer and winter, and served as among the most distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean world.

Yet within each of these polarities and across the zone that we regard as Mediterranean, there are still variations and differences. These are so numerous, in fact, that more recently Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell have used these localised irregularities to demonstrate that any sense of unity in a definition of the Mediterranean remains precarious.[9] In response to Braudel's characterisation, therefore, they argue that we cannot understand the human and physical landscapes that constitute the Mediterranean until we recognise the variety and diversity of environments, rather than their constants.[10] In other words, they suggest that 'the minutely subdivided topography bound by a vastly ramified complex of seaways constitutes a geographical expression'.[11] Cohesion may be evidenced by the fact that there is such microdiversity across the Mediterranean.[12] Focusing particularly on the two millennia either side of the dawn of the Common Era, they observe that the natural environments

of the Mediterranean created uncertainty for human activity. Responses to these uncertainties lie in geographical and socio-cultural connectivities that the Mediterranean has accorded throughout its lived history. For Horden and Purcell, therefore, consistency can be found in the recurrence of ecological changes, such as alluviation; the connectivities between regions; and human social reactions to environmental and ecological changes. They argue that such happenings should not be viewed as infrequent, drastic events that had long-standing impacts upon populations, but instead form part of the recurring features of Mediterranean history.

Horden and Purcell's distinction between interactionist perspectives, which emphasise the ease of communications, and the ecologising approach, which focuses on the physical features, are not mutually exclusive, for each shaped and was shaped by the other. This is, perhaps, one of the fundamental differences between their perception of the Mediterranean and Braudel's. Whereas Braudel saw the enduring, relative isolation of mountains and their respective communities as one of the Mediterranean's unchanging characteristics, marked by seasonal migration between mountains, plateaux and plains, Horden and Purcell regard such areas as zones of communication and thus connections through, to, and with other regions.

Cyprian Broodbank builds upon Horden and Purcell's trinity of fragmentation, uncertainty and connectivity in his temporally expansive study of the Mediterranean, spanning from its earliest evidence of human engagement until the era of Classical Greece in the middle of the first millennium BCE.[13] His deep time presentation of our interactions with the landscapes of the Mediterranean demonstrates how truly fragmented the micro-ecologies of the Mediterranean are. Connectivities between regions of diverse scale enabled groups of people to circulate across and around the seascape. As Broodbank explains, 'It is remarkable how early a combination of the Mediterranean's "provocative" geography ... and the changing play of human interactions across it created central places that then drew further connections towards them, and how often these locations shifted as conditions moved on'.[14] Nevertheless, the scale of connections remained dramatically different, with some areas significantly less tied to other regions. Alongside this, environmental changes created uncertainties that necessitated social practice developments in response. Indeed, such uncertainties 'created the regime of interdependency that has dominated the basin'.[15] The manifestation of this interdependency is seen on micro-regional scales, and with varied intensity. Nevertheless, collectively, they shape Mediterranean history.

What Braudel, Horden and Purcell, and Broodbank all demonstrate clearly is that the human landscape of the Mediterranean cannot be separated from the physical, and that a definition of the Mediterranean must encompass both. The movement of people thus becomes another unifying feature of the

Mediterranean. As a result, decentring, mobility and connectivity now characterise any definition of the Mediterranean, especially when considering the ancient world.[16] Such a perspective also reminds us that it is the sea itself that facilitated communication and connections between micro-regions, transforming the communities and populations that lived not only around its waters but also in the territories that connected to those areas. As Shaw has observed, the general direction and movement of the waters themselves limit – indeed, one might argue determine – the rate, pace and direction of mobility, and hence connectivity, around the Mediterranean at any given time.[17] Directions and seasonality of winds also play a role, much more than the waters themselves. In short, to live in the Mediterranean region is to be in symbiosis with the Sea.

Nevertheless, the Mediterranean still remains difficult to define, because the human-geographical borders of the Mediterranean zone are frequently fuzzy, unfixed diachronically and multiple, such as when a socio-cultural group expands to non-contiguous areas. Therefore, what demands further emphasis is the role that socio-cultural identities play in defining a human-geographical Mediterranean landscape. These identities can be multiple and intended to address different audiences concurrently. They may be geographic in nature and also pertain to culture, religion, status and life-stage, for example. Thus, they may vary according to audience, performance context or aims. In other words, the idea of the Mediterranean is a culturally constructed one: while it is physically, geographically and globally specific, it is also regionally vague.[18] The Mediterranean as a construct has meaning only when given a socio-cultural context, and such contexts will vary from region to region, and group to group. This perspective, and recognition of its variabilities, is the emphasis of the present volume and one of the features that distinguishes it from other pan-Mediterranean studies.

In fact, it could be argued that the concept of the Mediterranean of any period is perhaps more a social one than a physical or climatic one (although they cannot exist without each other). The significance of the lived experience of the Mediterranean was recognised even in antiquity, when geographers and commentators discussed the idea of the Mediterranean as one centred on the position the sea played in shaping the land, and celebrated its role and relationship with those living around its shores. Strabo notes, 'it is the sea that delineates precisely the layout of the land, creating gulfs, sea-basins, traversable narrows and, in the same way, isthmuses, peninsulas and capes; in this the rivers and mountains also play their part'.[19] Mankind's ability to move around the Mediterranean, such as through those traversable narrows, thus shapes Strabo's definition. The human role in defining the Mediterranean is even clearer when Plato famously situates in the voice of Socrates its social inhabitants as 'living round the sea like ants and frogs round a pond'.[20] This particular metaphor encapsulates not only the relationships between the people living

around the Mediterranean but also their relationships with the interior territories of the lands that circumscribe the sea. As Knapp has observed, people's knowledge and perception of the sea as a facilitator or barrier to communications, as well as source of natural resources, vary in space and time.[21] As a result, an individual or group's perception of its relationship with the sea will draw upon memory, experience, inherited knowledge and place-naming.[22]

The present work specifically examines the social, cultural and material exchanges between communities and cultures living around the Mediterranean Sea, with its period of focus on predominantly the early centuries of the first millennium BCE. It finds harmony with Horden and Purcell's, and Broodbank's emphasis on the socio-cultural networks that connect the Mediterranean. Indeed, it puts these at the fore of discussion. More specifically, its particular focus looks out from the Mediterranean to the landscapes and peoplescapes that surround it. It does so by centring the interconnectivities between those living and moving around the Mediterranean, drawing explicitly upon modern theories of globalisation to do so. This particular approach is what distinguishes the present volume from other works on this era of Mediterranean history. To appreciate why using globalisation thinking is vital to understanding the complex connectivities of the ancient Mediterranean, it is first necessary to review how scholarship has previously approached this past history.

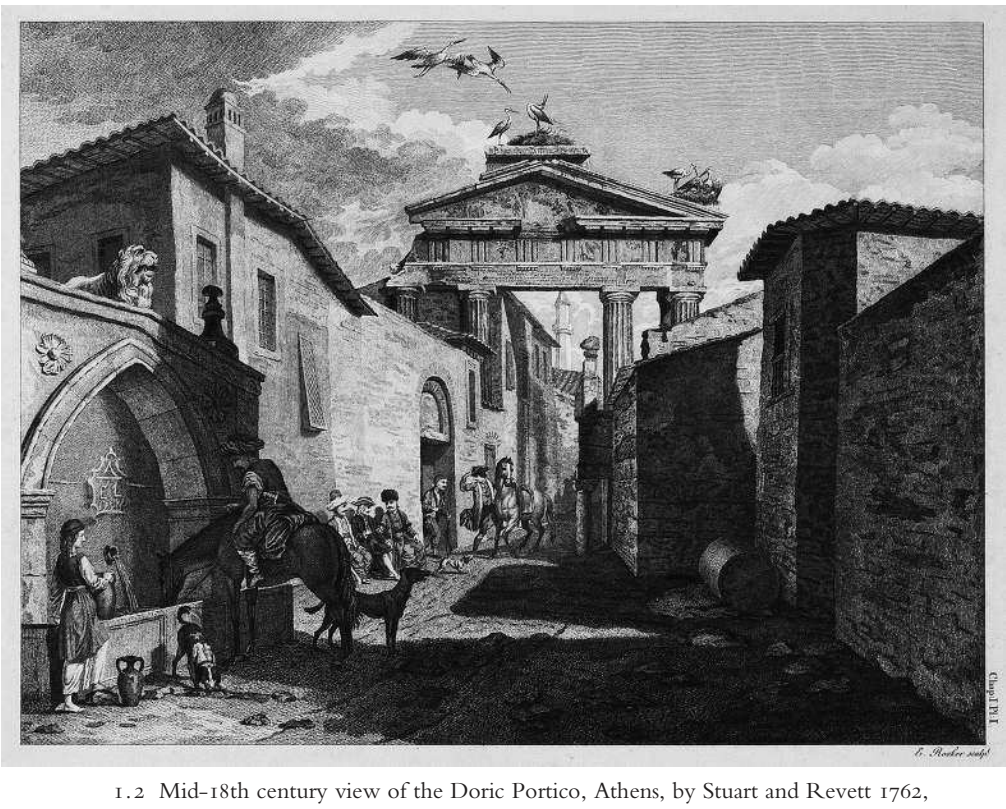
1.2 HISTORIES OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGIES

The centuries between the collapse of various powerful civilisations in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean towards the end of the second millennium BCE, and the period of Athenian and Carthaginian hegemony and conflict from the middle of the first millennium BCE were among the most dynamic of Mediterranean history, the tale of which will unfold in the following chapters. Our understanding of this period today has been reached through evolving interpretations, however. The history of archaeological scholarship of this period may be characterised by the idea of fragmentation just as much as the conceptualisation of the Mediterranean itself. In fact, our understanding of the evolution of Mediterranean archaeology is best viewed as a series of histories. We really should speak of Mediterranean archaeologies. These diverse and sometimes competing archaeologies have contributed to some of the difficulties in discussing the Mediterranean as a whole, particularly for the period under discussion in the present volume. To put it briefly, the works of Greek and Latin authors dominated the political education of Europeans from the dawn of the Renaissance. They also prompted interest in the archaeological exploration of the pasts they discussed, particularly the Mediterranean's Greek and Roman eras. In this lies the origin of the discipline we have come to call Classical Archaeology. With the emergence of nationalism across Europe

over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, a series of regional archaeologies evolved in partial combat against the dynastic authorities that had hitherto ruled. Some of these drew upon the Classical Tradition, yet others explicitly rejected it. These have contributed to our fragmented understanding of the Mediterranean today.

Scholarly interest in the ancient Mediterranean past originated in the fifteenth century, when the cultural centres of Europe discovered the ancient world of Greece and Rome, notably their art, architecture and epigraphy. From the rediscovery of Vitruvius's architectural treatise in 1414 and Pausanias's *Description of Greece* shortly after, artists and architects of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries imitated classical forms and scenes in their buildings, paintings and sculptures, following in the footsteps of Ciriaco de' Pizzicolli.[23] In Spain, for instance, the systematic collection of ancient objects began at this time, when it was particularly Roman sculptures that were used to adorn noble houses as a means of reinforcing social status and shared values with other European elites (Morán and Checa 1985). By the eighteenth century, these interests evolved into an explicitly neo-classical movement, developed by Johann Winckelmann (1717–1768), which synthesised and theorised paradigms for understanding classical art, including the centrality of the Hellenic aesthetic. Such ideals were codified in education by the *Altertumswissenschaft* of Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1842), and exemplified by the development of the Grand Tour as an integral part of a nobleman's education and development, necessitating travel to the heartlands of antiquity to see, sketch and obtain art and architecture of the classical world. James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804) produced the first record of the monuments of ancient Athens in 1762, for instance (Figure 1.2).

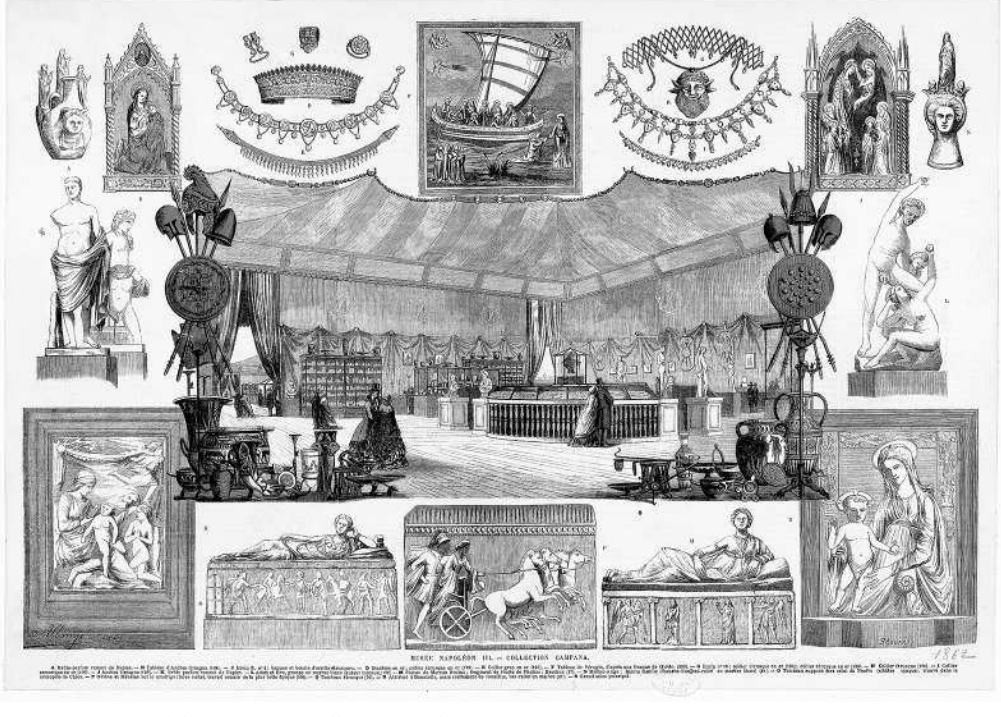
Interest among European elites in the ancient world reached a degree of commercialisation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, centred around the Papal State and the Vatican diplomatic corps. Knowledge of Greek and Latin had been institutionalised by university entrance requirements in Germany, France and England, and entry into their respective civil services required competence in these ancient languages. Thus, European diplomats of this era shared an educational background in the language, literature, history, philosophy and arts of the classical world, creating 'an exclusive common bond of tastes, values, and implicit cultural references lodged in esoteric access to an idolised and idealised ancient culture'.[24] This was regarded as possessing direct relevance to the common European cultural heritage that had emerged during the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Around the Vatican, a mania for collecting developed to feed the neo-classical expressions of status among Europe's elite. As a result, a kind of service community arose in Rome, in which many foreigners as well as Italians served as hosts and negotiators for those wishing to sell antiquities and even conduct their own excavations.



1.2 Mid-18th century view of the Doric Portico, Athens, by Stuart and Revett 1762, chapter 1, pl.1.

Etruscan archaeology finds its origins in this context. The defeat of Napoleon in 1815 had restored the territorial integrity of the core Papal States. By supporting archaeology in Etruria, the Papal States could strengthen their historical and ideological connections with neighbouring regions. The formal sponsorship of the excavations at Vulci by the Papal State illustrates this. Such activities also led to private collecting, especially among the new papal rich. This is represented most ostentatiously by Giampietro Campana (1808–1880), director of the papal financial lending institution, Monte di Pietà. He had a particular interest in Roman and Etruscan antiquities. Many of his objects came from his own excavations, undertaken through his connections with the papal court, at sites such as Ostia, Cerveteri and Tarquinia (Figure 1.3). At the height of his success, Campana's collections included 531 sculptures, 4000 Etruscan and Italo-Greek vases, 600 ancient bronzes, 2000 classical terracottas, and a plethora of glassware, jewellery and coins, all of which were prominently displayed in his villa in Rome, which included recreated archaeological complexes, such as a columbarium and an Etruscan tomb.[25]

Greece itself emerged as the focal point of European cultural core values in the years leading up to and during its War of Independence (1821–1832).



1.3 Engraving of the Campana collection at the Louvre Museum in 1862.
Photo © Musée de Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Philippe Fuzeau.

Preservation from revolutionary unrest was cited as retrospective justification for Lord Elgin's (1766–1841) appropriation of sculptural work from the Parthenon between 1801 and 1812.[26] In reality, this appropriation is also grounded in a sense of anti-orientalism amongst Europe's elite, which had already played a role in the Greek revolution, and which is famously symbolised by Lord Byron's (1788–1824) participation at Messolonghi. Nevertheless, the marbles' acquisition by the British Museum in 1816 heralded a new era of collecting that favoured Greek originals over Roman copies (Figure 1.4).[27] In addition, with release from Ottoman control, the new Greek state began to create a national identity that drew from Hellenic origins. This included the prevention of antiquities export, and laws were passed to protect sites and control excavations. As a result, antiquarian attention turned further east, to the western coast of Anatolia, under Ottoman control, where the likes of the adventurer Sir Charles Fellows (1799–1860) and civil engineer Carl Humman (1839–1896) were able to continue to acquire ancient monuments for their European states.

The purpose of this exposition is to provide the backdrop against which regional archaeologies developed around the Mediterranean basin. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nationalism emerged as a counter-

1.4 View of the old Elgin room at the British Museum. Museum number 1838,0113.1. © Trustees of the British Museum.

narrative to the dynastic rule that had otherwise dominated European politics. Archaeology was used to document and interpret specific past peoples to enable the reconstruction of national histories for the newly independent European states.[28] Archaeology also enabled these new nations to associate themselves with former imperial successes, the most prominent of which was the Roman empire. Within each nation, however, a different dialogue developed between the Classical and indigenous pasts.

In Spain, there has been a long history of tension between unitarists and federalists, and archaeology has been manipulated by both sides. The Celts and Iberians were cited as early as 1850 as underpinning the Spanish character, with archaeological support following soon after.[29] Nationalistic perspectives alternated between Celtic, Iberian and Catalan origins during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[30] Under Franco's regime, ethno-national ideologies were underpinned by an emphasis on Spain's Roman era as a previous period of unity, and the Franco regime promoted a unified cultural origin of the Spanish people, including the Canary Islands.[31] This subsequently gave way to a resurgence of more fragmented identities of autonomous social