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A Singular International Area: Border and Cultures in the Societies of the Strait of the Gibraltar

By Francisco Oda-Ángel

Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid

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Border Societies and Border People

When we refer to Border we are not solely referring to the demarcating line or to the imaginary limit drawn and arisen from diplomatic negotiations or as a result of wars. In addition to including this bordering area, borders have their own characteristics which determine and give sense to the day to day life of those societies which are at one side and at the other side. Border societies and border people share features which make the border a movable and flexible concept or category of thought, involving a great diversity of hybrid cultural expressions which are not exempted from inherent contradictions in their own nature. The border eases a series of determinations and ambiguities which jointly involve punishments for some and allow transgressions for others. Maybe due to the fact that for the border individual, the idea of border dissipates and disintegrates to the extent of disappearing and defines the border area as exclusive, beyond and above the respective rules and values at each side. Border people do not perceive the border in the same conditions as those at each side who do not hold such a condition. Therefore, the border is not regarded as being at one side and them at the other, but as an area open to co-operation and not an abyss which divides people, but a community with its own energy, direction and future. Border identity is caused by those who live within those societies settled in the different parts of the border and the former are capable of going beyond the view of border that those who are outside it have. It is also true that we could outline many kinds of borders which go from the traditional, historical, political-administrative, linguistic, cultural, economic, maritime, fluvial, to those borders which are more intimate and refer to thought, collective imagination or mentality. Borders that are born and die or even border people who, for different reasons, the border has crossed over without their having moved from their territory, and have passed to form part of the other side without any intention on their part. Such is the case of, inter alia, the “twin cities” of Gibraltar-La Línea-San Roque, El Paso-Ciudad Juárez, Laredo-Nuevo Laredo or San Diego-Tijuana.

Perception of the other in border societies.

¹ Sociologist, Lecturer of Sociology at the Faculty of Legal and Social Studies in the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos and graduate in International Studies by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It is necessary to introduce ourselves into the border world being aware of the fact that, in most cases, changes in perception and attitudes are more frequent amongst border people and non-border people of the corresponding sides, than amongst border people of one same area. Wrong perceptions on the border region amongst non-border people are very common. The latter very often use stereotypes. In the present case, the general perception in Spain towards Morocco and towards the border region is very negative and seriously inadequate; Morocco and its people are too often considered just as a burden for Spain, without taking into account the richness of its culture, the resources it has to offer and the wealth, in general, that they can provide to the aged Spain of the 21st century. Nonetheless, on the border, this perception is substantially different, perception of the other is more supportive and more empathetic where neighbourly relationships bring as result a multicultural society with values of understanding and respect towards those cultures present on the border. Notwithstanding the fact that, as stated by Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, multiculturalism or the emergence of multicultural areas of co-existence constitutes a phenomenon of special significance in the changeable modern society which arises strongly in some great metropolitan areas², it is also true that this is not a new element on the border. In the societies of the Strait of Gibraltar, multiculturalism has been and is a multidimensional phenomenon of great complexity which has affected mentalities, migratory habits, legal practices and religious beliefs.

In antiquity, border societies were formed by communities that were prepared for danger, obscurity and marginalization, organised for war and confrontation with the other, but have also been identified with an area of freedom and initiative. Well-known experts in Public International Law such as Carlos Fernández de Casadevante³ is right when he explains that more than a notion, the border constitutes a value that does not cease to bring controversies and actions, but besides being a barrier and a ditch, it is also a bridge, a union and co-operation link.

Sociology of borders and the Strait of Gibraltar

Sociology contributes to the study of the social aspects of border societies and to prove realities that, far from being known by non-border people, determine the day to day activities of those individuals who live in a territory characterised by its differences. Up to now, there have been studies on each one of the elements which affect the border reality, which take place in border societies, but which have been carried out from different disciplines as if we were facing independent issues. In fact, there are not many studies focused towards the border explaining its historical, political, social, economic and religious genesis, the development and contribution to the better understanding of the other border. Sociology of borders considers the mental configuration of the border barrier as the causer of contradictory values, breaking perceptions, but also of the consensus and recognition which arises in those processes opened in the relationship amongst the main characters of these territories. Here, different social representations are proved in a complex return mechanism which has an influence on co-operating decisions and which affect the motivation towards reciprocity, incentive structure and communication amongst the parties which is capable of opening hopes towards the promotion of a certain sense of joint group identity. Sociology of borders is centred in the identification and analysis of those events which are characteristic of border societies and assesses the particularities thereof in each border as, notwithstanding the fact that they have elements in common, the specific social reality of each one of them making them substantially divergent.

² Lamo De Espinosa, Emilio (edit), *Culturas, Estados, ciudadanos. Una introducción al multiculturalismo*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1995.

³ Fernandez De Casadevante Romani, Carlos, *La frontera hispano-francesa y las relaciones de vecindad*, Kursaal, Donostia, 1989.

Sociologically, the border has been a place where identity may be a “compatible identity” generating its own process of knowledge with features which are very far from exclusions. An identity which is used to this continuous movement forward, with a high degree of social commitment together with a skill for work and the cultivating of dialogue. Therefore, the identity of the border individual is comprised of that which is specified by collective values which, at the same time as differentiating them, join them together. More than a member of a territory, they feel they are citizens of a moral and ethical space. Perhaps, the strategic situation determined by being the door to Europe and Africa together with history itself have made it possible for these border societies to be inclined towards exchange and agreement, understanding and seeking of joint actions. This is the case herein.

The transit position of the Strait of Gibraltar has made it possible for the territory at both sides to receive fundamental influences which have contributed to a global sociological assessment. The city which gives name to the Strait has its etymological precedents in each one of the different cultures and civilisations which passed through this geographic enclave in the South of the Iberian Peninsula. The word Calpe makes Pomponio Mela⁴ certainly think that it is an “excavated” “hollow” mountain, from here comes the Phoenician denomination Calpe, from the Phoenician verb Calph, excavate. Pomponio Mela⁵ referring to the Hollow Mountain stated: “From the two mountains that form the Strait, most of Calpe is in the sea. The latter, prodigiously hollow, opens, nearly in the middle, one side on the part that looks at the sunset; and entering from there, there is a cave where with little difference it is possible to transit the entire space where the mountain is extended”. The most famous cave registered in the Rock is Saint Michael opening its entrance at 360 meters above sea level and the most interesting, not solely for its extension, but also for its geological characteristics⁶. This is the cave to which Pomponio Mela refers to, looking to the sunset located in the South-East of the Rock. Mela’s justification in his etymological proposal, takes other authors to find in the word Calpe other very different meanings.

López de Ayala⁷, following Hernández Portillo’s⁸ idea, states that in the vicinities of the Rock there were many autochthonous mares⁹, adapted to the pastures and waters, being fast and agile, to such an extent that the Greek, when they celebrated their competitions, cheered the ardour and braveness of these mares shouting Calopes, Calopes! (beautiful light hoofs). And we must suppose that Calpe is a reduction of this word.

Since the Arabs arrived in the Peninsula, the name of Calpe was re-baptised with the name of Djebel Tarik, and at the end of the Strait, Tarifa rose, named after the first Berber chief that Muza appointed with 1070 soldiers to explore our coasts. Gibraltar includes two words: first, Djebel, meaning Mountain and that does not admit any other supposition, being accepted by all philologists¹⁰; second,

⁴ Pomponio Mela, geographer, born in Carteya in the first century of our Era and one of the most consulted authors of antiquity in works regarding the descriptions of the coasts of Andalusia.

⁵ Sit.Orb.Lib.II, c.6: “Is mirum in modum concavus, ab ea parte, qua spectat occasum, medium ferè latus aperit, atque inde ingresis totus admodum pervius, prope quantum patet, specus”.

⁶ José Carlos de Luna “Historia de Gibraltar”, Madrid, 1949, pages 8-11.

⁷ López de Ayala, Ignacio: “Historia de Gibraltar”, Madrid, 1782.

⁸ Hernández Portillo, Alonso: “Historia manuscrita de Gibraltar”, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

⁹ Certainly, it was a kind of mare which draw the attention of the first Arabs who visited the Peninsula. The Arabs who disembarked at the banks of the bay’s main river did not hesitate to call in Guadarranque, “mare river”.

¹⁰ Sobh, Mamad; “Libros”, Madrid, 1998.

Tar, from the Arabic verb *Thar*, to divide; but also *Tar* or *Tur*, meaning tower or something high. In this way, Gibraltar would be divided mountain or high mountain, giving an answer to any of these possible denominations by which Arab settlers knew Calpe. Amongst all these possibilities, that which has indisputable logic is that proposed by the writer from Granada, Ben-Hazil¹¹ who understands the name of Gibraltar as Mountain of Tarik, referring to the Captain that Muza appointed in the area and who “fortified himself at the top of the mountain taking his name”. According to José Carlos de Luna¹², the same was written by the well known Iben-Alkhatib-Ben-Katib-Alcatalami in his Chronology of Caliphs. Miguel Asín Palacios¹³ establishes the latter making clear that Gibraltar etymologically comes from the Arab Djebel Tarik “Mountain of Tarik”. All the efforts towards understanding the etymological origin of Calpe or Gibraltar take us to the irrefutable fact of characterising this mountain as “the most prestigious one throughout all the generations of the Earth...constantly changing its look when crossing the Strait, filling it with earth”. The academician Julio F. Guillén reveals his surprise and admiration when, for the first time, when he was very young, he crossed the Strait and saw the Rock “...but, above all, there was Gibraltar. I thought it the other way round, with its cliff dipping in the sea, threatening the African coast, and not as it is, with the Tip of Europe (Europa Point) in decline, as if submitting itself to the border continent; more than a milestone, like a soft invitation to invade the coast which sheltered the oldest western civilisation”.

We discovered, in this first approach, that we are entering into one of the areas of Spain with most history. The latter is proven by the remains found in Gibraltar, from the Neanderthal and those found in Los Guijos (Algeciras), together with “Tajos de Bacinete” cave paintings in Los Barrios¹⁴. In the northern slope of the Rock, lieutenant Flint discovered what is known as Gibraltar’s Skull, considered to be an exceptional sample of the Neanderthal man. This is the sole human vestige of the prehistoric period proving the presence of the first settlements in the Rock. Nonetheless, later research support the theory which referred to the Rock as being uninhabited until the arrival of the Arabs in the Eighth Century, who used Gibraltar as a stirrup to jump on the entire Peninsula. Until this moment, the most important city of the area was Carteya (Nowadays, within the municipality of San Roque) founded by the Phoenicians in the year 940 B.C., Carteya was reached by Greeks (year 630 B.C.), Carthaginians (year 230 B.C.), Romans (year 190 B.C.) and, with the fall of the Roman Empire, Carteya was invaded by the Barbarians (years 409/411 after J.C.), destroying it. Carteyan geographer Pomponio Mela himself wrote on his home city: “Calpe...further ahead, there is an inlet and there is Carteya, former Tartessos (as some think), where the Phoenician brought from Africa live, and where I am from. Then, in the narrows of the Strait, Melaria, Belon and Besipo, on the coast before reaching Juno’s promontory”. This writer and Plinio¹⁵ also locate Carteya in the centre of the bay. Melaria, the primitive name of Tarifa’s settlement, certainly corresponds to the narrowest part of the Strait. Fifteen kilometres to the West of Tarifa, Belon where nowadays we place Bolonia. Estrabón¹⁶ related the extension and quality of the great city of Bolonia and its port, which was very frequently visited. Following the line of the coast towards the West, one finds Besipo, on the plains of the Meca Tower, being the Cape of Trafalgar, Juno’s old promontory. Therefore, the most important thing that can be extracted from Mela’s text is the verification of the fact that in Calpe bay there was no population but

¹¹ Casiri Bibliot. A.H., T.II, p.326.

¹² José Carlos de Luna, loc. cit. p.8.

¹³ Asín Palacios, Miguel: “Contribución a la toponimia árabe de España”, Madrid, 1940, p.108.

¹⁴ Velarde, Juan: “El Campo de Gibraltar: una economía deprimida”, Ariel, Barcelona, 1971.

¹⁵ Plinio was Pomponio Mela’s biographer. Thirty years younger than his master, he was born in Gades, where he was a civil servant, a naturalist and a historian. Many of his stories have the same style and order to those of Pomponio Mela.

¹⁶ Great Roman historian, but who never visited Hispania.

that of Carteya¹⁷. Estrabón¹⁸ relates on Carteya: “Calpe mountain is on the right of those who sail outside our seas, and 40 stadia from it, the memorable old city of Carteya, founded by Hercules”. The Greek attribute the foundation of the city of Kartheia to Hercules because the Phoenicians, when they founded it, called it Melkartheia, city of God, as it was Melkarth, God of Tiro, who was substituted in the Greek Mythology by Hercules, Jupiter’s son. This fact involved, during the Greek zenith, the city being known as Heraclea, though it would soon recuperate its primitive name.

The Phoenician hegemony (Tiro) extended from the year 1100 until the year 600 B.C. In the year 630 B.C., the Greeks reached the coasts of Calpe and settled in Kartheia, continuing with their commercial and cultural flowering. Herodotus¹⁹ gives us an exceptional testimony in this sense: “A ship of the isle of Samos, commanded by the pilot Coleo, returning to his country from Egypt, hounded by the storms, sought shelter in Platea bay, in the isle of Libya. From here, Coleo set course to the coasts of Egypt, but shortly after leaving the isle, there was a furious east wind that threw him, despite his efforts, beyond the columns of Hercules, without the wind having eased off until reaching Tartessos”. During this time, Kartheia reached its maximum splendour; mining and fishing industries were famous, and this is estimated to have taken place around the year 400 B.C.

The exact date on which the Carthaginians reached the Spanish coasts to conquer the country is not precisely known, though some data²⁰ outline the date of the year 273 B.C., when they started to subjugate the whole of Andalusia. Kartheia continued being, under Carthaginian power, a prosperous and great city with significant commercial activities that from Calpe bay furnished the entire Mediterranean. But the Punic Wars would not go unnoticed for the future of the city.

The military clash between Romans and Carthaginians for the power of the known world plunged Kartheia into the worst possible miseries. The Strait of Calpe was a silent witness of the battles which inclined the balance in favour of Rome to the detriment of Cartage. In this way, around the year 190 B.C., Kartheia fell under the power of Rome, which from this moment and in as many Roman inscriptions as are known, was called Carteya. With peace imposed by Rome, the city saw a notable flowering again, nearly in the same conditions as in past times. Estrabon states to this extent that “its merchant navy was so numerous that it exceeded all the navies in the ports of Africa put together”. Nonetheless, this would not remain like this for very long as the Barbarians threatened the status quo of the Empire and Carteya did not escape from the vicissitudes of this new course. The destruction of the municipality of Carteya took place with the invasion of the Barbarian people of the North and Centre of Europe; Vandals, Swabians and Mastiffs reached Spain and shared out the conquest of the entire territory and put an end²¹ to the existence of the city of Carteya at the beginning of the Fifth Century.

¹⁷ It would be wrong to continue without stopping, though solely briefly, in a city of less significance located very near the latter. Barbesula, located in the mouth of the river Guadiaro, another of the important rivers flowing into the bay, did not reach the greatness of its neighbour city, in such way, at least, it has been stated in different historical stories, even being excluded by many of them.

¹⁸ Book III.

¹⁹ Book III, quoted by Larcher, Herodotus’s translator.

²⁰ Dureau and Yanosky: “Historia de Cartago”, p. 148.

²¹ Some writers like, for instance, César Pemán in “Memoria sobre la situación arqueológica de la provincia de Cádiz”, 1940, p.29, make Carteya the episcopal see of Hiscio or Hesiquio, though other place this see in Asido (Medina Sidonia). Right or not, there is no doubt about the fact that this area, for its proximity to Africa, must have been the first and main door of Christianity in Spain. Archaeological studies prove that Christianity reached Spain through Africa. The remains of the old basilicas show unmistakable traces which identify them with African basilicas.

Spain and, in general, all the Iberian Peninsula, has been throughout history an example of how the border means a key element for the determination of the events that, around it, have formed the socio-cultural, political and economic reality of what we are now. J.A.Maravall stated that for more than eight centuries the sole permanent thing about the borders of the different Hispanic kingdoms was their lack of permanence, their continuous movement forward²². Certainly, we can state that for many years the border between Christian kingdoms and Al-Andalus was something plastic, movable, having as a result the co-existence of different ways of understanding the world.

Internal borders, external borders.

Nowadays, border areas have fallen into a deep changing process in those societies comprising the European Union. Everyone has agreed, through several agreements such as the Schengen Treaty, on the suppression of internal borders allowing their citizens to have freedom of movements which, up to now, was absolutely unknown. This has been possible due to the express commitment of creating an internal security area in which everyone is responsible for mutual reliance between States. Nonetheless, this internal opening process has caused a reinforcement of external borders which gives the entire Union a new role in the international scene. Schengen Agreements, currently in force since the twenty-sixth of March, 1995, of which Great Britain is not part and ratified by member countries of the European Union, like Spain, have witnessed, in this Southern border area, an undesired situation for communities like the Moroccan residing in Gibraltar. The Schengen Agreement, though it establishes the principle of free movement on behalf of European citizens who are nationals of one of the signing parties together with the progressive elimination of internal controls within the European area of Schengen countries and, Gibraltar being a British colony, and, therefore, a non-Schengen community territory, all the measures which are applied at the Gate must be compulsorily fulfilled²³. Nonetheless, the strange situation created by the legal enforcement for this

²² Maravall, J.A., *El concepto de España en la Edad Media*, Madrid, 1981, pp.272-273.

²³ The latter is a border which we cannot call as such if we are abided by recent historical events determining the development of the contentious of Gibraltar. Strictly, the border would be that delimitation resulting from the ratification of the Utrecht Treaty in 1713 and not the current delimitation of the territory called Gibraltar which includes a strip of land in the North of the Rock which was occupied by the British after Utrecht and which is claimed by Spain. The transfer of Gibraltar to the United Kingdom was limited to the City and the Castle, together with the port, defences and fortifications; nonetheless, United Kingdom quickly occupied a territorial extension beyond what was agreed in Utrecht. Therefore, in 1714, just a year after the signature of the Treaty, the English occupied the buildings of the Devil's Tower and the Mill and, in 1723, the territory located within shooting distance of the cannons; the latter carried out pursuant to a supposed right of defence. Construction by Spain of the fortifications of Santa Barbara and San Felipe at both sides of the isthmus –and the defending line that joined them, the Line of Gibraltar- caused what is known as neutral area which extended itself from said fortification to the limits of the Rock. From this moment British presence in the neutral area starts to consolidate; denominated in such way not because it being land of no one, but for being a militarily neutralised territory. With the Napoleonic expansion throughout Europe, a Hispanic-British alliance was necessary in order to stop the French troops. Due to such alliance, in February 1810, the British military engineers of the Rock destroyed the fortifications built by the Spanish in order to avoid them being used by the French army to attack Gibraltar. All of this, together with the weak position of Spain in the international scenery in the nineteenth century, caused the widening of the legal limits of Gibraltar. In 1815 and 1845 Spain allowed, for humanitarian reasons, new British settlements. The reason was two epidemics of yellow fever which made the Spanish sensitive, allowing the English to settle sanitary camps outside the city of Gibraltar. When epidemics were a sad memory, sanitary camps became military camps, reinforcing the British position in the occupied territory. Territorial limits of these illegal settlements were confirmed in August 1908 with a landing strip which was subsequently extended in 1938, when Spain was in a Civil War. In 1941, many works were carried out in the airport definitely reaching the waters of the bay and again violating areas of Spanish sovereignty. There starts a new controversy on the maritime limits of the Rock. Spain, regarding the waters adjacent to the isthmus, has refused to examine the issues in terms of controversy as it does not comply with the Utrecht Treaty and states that when said Treaty refers to the transfer of the port of Gibraltar, it does it referring to the waters that bathe the base of the border and to the maximum extension that Great Britain may claim according to the

group resident in Gibraltar, but nationals of a third country alien to the Union, forced the Council of Cadiz and the Government of Gibraltar²⁴ to sign a Convention, in November 1999, to draw attention to this issue. Representatives of both administrations echoed the difficulties which the Moroccan workers of Gibraltar were facing, as they could not leave the Rock to visit their families in the North of Morocco, due to the lack of appropriate means of transport and to the impossibility of crossing the Gate, as they had been doing before the enforcement of Schengen. Maritime service between Gibraltar and Tangier was stopped and flights between these cities were very expensive for this group, and the latter prevented them from leaving the Rock with the regularity to which they were used.

The Strait border

Spain is being affected by the increasing worries caused by the serious social phenomenon of immigration. More often, public opinion in our country understands that the Union's Southern border requires special attention considering the thousands of people who are dying trying to cross the few kilometres separating Europe and Africa. In this Strait, the border of hope for many, there is an overlap of two worlds, that of survival of the people who abandon their lands and families seeking better standards of life and that of the developed world which closes up trying to stop the human flow. The province of Cadiz, the communication door between continents and a cross-road where thousands of people of different races, cultures and social conditions converge²⁵, is faithful to its own history as this has been the role given to this land since ancient times, as aforementioned. Therefore, we must suppose that it has been the organisation process of the European Union itself that has reinforced this migratory phenomenon, which has been a historical constant, and not the latter which has caused the closing of the Union as if facing a medieval fortification. We, Southern Europeans, are learning to co-exist with a vocabulary which has easily integrated terms such as, inter alia, illegal immigrants, small boats (pateras), organised mafias devoted to trafficking in people, immigration laws, traffickers (matuteras). Words which have a taste of border. For many of those trying to reach our coasts, the border makes them illegal citizens excluded from the framework of rights and privileges which are inherent to the fact of holding the title of Spanish citizenship. They must face another level of illegality with social dimension and arising from the condition of legal and absolute defencelessness of the illegal against the potential abuse on behalf of "legal", inadmissible from an ethical, social and political point of view in a developed industrialised society. And another aspect which we cannot forget is involved with the unfair individual situation of the illegal individual in order for him to be fully integrated within the receptor culture, due to his ignorance and difficulty of access to the necessary elements for the normal development in day to day life such as, inter alia, language, educational level, access to consumer goods. A situation which separates the illegal individual from reaching a real integration amongst the "legal".

It is a fact that current Europe presents a heterogeneous human profile very distant from that which we used to face in the 70s and 80s. The Moroccan community is the oldest and most numerous

stipulations of the Treaty. The British publicly confirmed, on the 12th of July 1966, their sovereignty on the isthmus, but it will not be until 1981 when the British, in a communication to the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recognise that the isthmus is subject to controversy, but the territory of the isthmus was never transferred by any agreement whatsoever. Therefore, and though this territory causes the specific characteristics of a border society, officially, it is a Gate.

²⁴ A joint declaration and a collaboration agreement between the Council of Cadiz and the Government of Gibraltar signed by the President of the Council of Cadiz, Honourable Mr. Rafael Román Guerrero and the Prime Minister of Gibraltar, Honourable Mr. Peter Caruana. Text recorded in the Council Files.

²⁵ Román Guerrero, Rafael, in the work of Fernández Palacios, Jesús (coord.), *Estrecho: una poética de la solidaridad*, presentación, Diputación de Cádiz, Cádiz, 1999, p.12.

of those settled in Spain and it was in the 70s when they penetrated in the Peninsula, most of them with three fundamental points of attraction, Madrid, Barcelona and Andalusia, in particular the province of Malaga. On the other hand, Algerians have traditionally migrated to France. Nonetheless, the tendency changes towards Spain and Italy during the 80s. In these years, Algerians abandon their lands and settle on Spanish soil without suffering the entrance restrictions that they currently suffer. The socio-economic crisis which Algeria is suffering together with the problem of fundamentalism are some of the elements that have contributed to the impulse of emigration. Nonetheless, the Sub-Saharan community is the one that has grown the most in the last few years. The latter are never a majority in any of the countries of the Union but constitute another group formed by Gambians, Senegalese, Nigerians and Guineans, as a result of the existing colonial links between Spain and Equatorial Guinea. Most of them had Spanish nationality, therefore being a differentiated community and with characteristics which are very different from those we are referring to herein.

The “Campo de Gibraltar” and its multi-border society.

An exemplary and singular feature of border societies of the South of the province of Cadiz is the great diversity of phenomena arising thereof and deriving from its incomparable geographic origin. Against other border societies, the present can be qualified as the multi-border society of the Strait, where different types of border categories converge with different levels in its genesis and development. In the last years, the region of the “Campo de Gibraltar”²⁶ is witnessing a new definition of one of its borders, becoming the European gendarme of clandestine immigration. The other border, Gibraltar, consolidates a very different body of relations.

This multi-border society has seen how the mass media have shown the sad scenes of immigrants who have died trying to cross the Strait and how, in parallel, a sophisticated system of electronic sonars which detect any violation of our territorial waters has been installed. This society is multi-border because there are several sceneries within it, each one of them with specific peculiarities. The “Campo de Gibraltar” has been and is a witness of historical vicissitudes which have seriously affected, in one or another way, the history of Spain. Throughout these southern lands, the Arab incursion of the eighth century started and it was in the seventeenth century when the British reached our coasts and when the subsequent conquest of Gibraltar took place. Therefore, in a reduced geographical area we see the peculiarities of all the border sides of the “Campo de Gibraltar” with Gibraltar, of the “Campo de Gibraltar” with the Strait and immigration, of the Strait of Gibraltar with Ceuta, of Ceuta with the rest of Africa, of Gibraltar with the “Campo de Gibraltar” and of Gibraltar with the Strait. The combination of so many borders on each side, has the Strait of Gibraltar as a reference in common, but each one of the latter describes us a heterogeneous and very complex social, political, economic, cultural and religious reality. Consequently, a maritime and territorial border which is very conditioned by the decisions which are taken in Brussels, Madrid, London and Rabat: What a scenery! Here, clandestine immigration is experiencing a certain mafia organisation which is

²⁶ The “Campo de Gibraltar” is the most southern region of the province of Cadiz comprising seven municipalities which have around 250,000 inhabitants most of them located in Algeciras and La Línea. Bathed by the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, this region is the southern door of Europe, being –knowing so much about migrations- the guardian of Amsterdam and Schengen’s United Europe. This privileged geographical situation also requires a preferential attention on behalf of the State, given the affluence of people crossing the Strait seeking new opportunities and better standards of Life. The “Campo de Gibraltar” does not have the appropriate premises to face the massive arrival of immigrants as the Police premises are thought for the population of the place where they are settled and have not yet been adapted to the new situation which greatly goes beyond the capacity of the aforementioned premises.

trafficking with the hopes of the most disadvantaged. Not only in Morocco but also in Spain gangs have been organised which falsify the necessary visa documents and control the flow of the “pateras” (small boats). These groups have seen their significance strengthened, parallel to drug dealers. There are boatmen who force some “wet backs” –those without any resources to pay the trip- to carry drugs, undertaking all the risks and without any other profit than that of changing continents²⁷. As the journalist Juan José Téllez has stated, the Strait of Gibraltar is, nowadays, the biggest communal grave of the planet in which thousands of individuals lose their lives in their attempt to conquer the European dream. In this way, the region of the “Campo de Gibraltar” becomes an area of multiple fractures which become points of instability subject to causing different types of conflict and, at the same time, a multi-ethnic area in which communities of people of different cultures and traditions co-exist in greater number.

Migrations and their contribution to Gibraltar’s socio-religious richness.

This was what also caused the emigration towards Gibraltar of thousands of immigrants who, due to the business arising in the British colony during the nineteenth century settled in the Rock coming from very different parts of the planet and creating a micro-cosmos still very visible nowadays and which enriches this multi-border society. Gibraltar has also been characterised for its very strict immigration laws which comprehensively limited the presence in the colony of those elements which could threaten British military stability. It is since the nineteenth century that the composition of the population of Gibraltar has been enriched with the presence of groups that came from Geneva, Malta, Greece, India, etc. and who were added to the Spanish, Jewish, Dutch and British population settled in the Rock since shortly after the British conquest in 1704. The constant number of foreigners in Gibraltar and the reduced space forced the authorities, in many occasions, to limit settlement. Nowadays, and as a result of this entire historical process, six socio-cultural communities may be outlined as having a strong presence in the Rock –Catholic, Anglican, Jewish, Hindu, Islamic and Methodist- and the presence, nearly symbolic, of small groups of individuals integrated in other faiths such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Evangelists, Mormons, Bahaists and Buddhists, must also be outlined. The latter without forgetting that we are referring to a total population in Gibraltar of around 30,000 inhabitants.

The confluence of these communities in the configuration of Gibraltar’s social structure has had a decisive weight in the definition of border identity. With different influencing degrees, socio-religious communities have carried out throughout time a series of rules and values which directly influence the idiosyncrasy of the inhabitants of the Rock and, to another extent, the societies of the Strait. Though the Catholic community is the most numerous –76.9% of the population- and the one to have caused a major influence within the social scope, the Jewish community –2.3%- has enjoyed a position of social privilege and stability. Within the social framework, the Jewish community carries out a fundamental role not only in the performance of the internal discourse defining Gibraltarians but also in the formation of the perception on the Strait’s border societies.

Christian Communities: Catholic and Anglican.

The community of Catholic believers in Gibraltar is the most numerous of those which may be found in the Rock and of its history we find references in Spanish writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the city was under Spanish sovereignty. Nonetheless, the corresponding

²⁷ Téllez, Juan José, “Últimas reflexiones sobre el fenómeno migratorio”, en la obra de Fernández Palacios, Jesús (coord.), *Estrecho: una poética de la solidaridad*, Diputación de Cádiz, Cádiz, 1999, p.14.

studies carried out on the Catholic presence in the city mainly centre themselves in the events which took place there after the taking by the British in 1704. From this date, the development of Gibraltarian Catholicism started to be separated from the hierarchical ecclesiastic structures which joined it to the Diocese of Cadiz to where it belonged, therefore starting its own way with sui generis characteristics which had as a result the creation of the Catholic Church of Gibraltar. Its development, for nearly 300 years, separated from the supervision of the Diocese of Cadiz and its gradual links with British Catholicism within a local church with its own rules, has caused it to be called a “particular” Church, according to the terminology used by the Second Vatican Council. A local church created by a few Spanish families which chose to stay in the Rock after the massive exodus in 1704 and others which started to arrive under the British garrison’s protection.

In the History of Gibraltar written by Ignacio López de Ayala in 1782, one can see one of the most notable aspects of the place, the religious character. He relates the vicissitudes of a square which was occupied for a longer period of time by people of other religions than by Spanish Catholics, constantly referring to the crusade character of the reconquest by the Arabs and then the protestant enemy. Such was the duty of the priest of the Church Santa María la Coronada, Juan Romero de Figueroa, born in Gibraltar in 1646, who remained in the Square after being taken in order to “take care of the divine cult and of Christ’s sheep...and the Bishop of Cadiz, as it is shown by the letters which are in my power, has approved it as good, saintly and heroic”. To this extent, López de Ayala adds that “the priest Don Juan Romero remained in Gibraltar taking care of the church, communicating with his bishop when he had the opportunity; and because some emulators showed their resistance in the square, pointing out the reasons and what had been done was approved”. With this priest, the particular Catholic Church of Gibraltar started to grow, and soon cut its links with Cadiz, due to activities of this religious power in complicity with the Spanish political authorities.

In 1713, after the signature of the Utrecht Treaty, the religious statute of the square was very clear: on the one part, the new presence of two Christian faiths, that is to say, Protestant, formed by the Anglican and the Puritan for the British residing there, and Catholic, for the Spanish who did not abandon the city or for the new faithful of this religion in the future.

The Anglican Community of Gibraltar is fundamentally associated to the civil and military British citizens arriving at the Rock and residing there for some years before leaving to other destinations. The characteristic of a floating population does not prevent this community from being linked to the most traditional image of the metropolis, nor does it prevent its members from being aware of the fact that they belong to an “official” community, representing the interests of the Crown. Anglicans have historically enforced military power and have comprised the biggest pressure group as they held the power. Since the occupation in 1704, there have been many clashes with the Catholic and Jewish communities facing the fear that the latter grew without limits and threatened the established authority. There are many Governors who tried to prevent, depending on the historical moment, the gradual growth of the Catholic and/or Jewish civil population for those problems of internal order which they could have caused the garrison.

The Anglican community is one of a backward movement, surviving from the old Protestantism orders and struggling to keep its position untouched. Nowadays, the Anglican community is the fourth, regarding the representation of its members, in the whole population behind the Muslim which is solely surpassed very slightly in percentage, though its specific weight, as it is linked to the Governor and those close to the latter, is still very important, and certainly exceeding the Muslim.

According to the last census in 1991, there are a total of 1841 Anglicans in Gibraltar, representing 6.8% of the Gibraltarians. This figure from the census is approximate as we must not forget that it is a population comprised of civil servants who normally live there from two to five years

and then leave. Native Anglicans in the city are very few and for years there has not been any conversion from the Catholic faith which was normal at other times. The tendency has been inverted and more and more many Gibraltarian Anglicans have been converted to Catholicism.

The Jewish Community.

At the same time, the history of the Jewish in Gibraltar is linked to the definitive British occupation in 1713 and very linked to the development and growth of the civil population of the city under the commercial empire in which Gibraltar became from the eighteenth century. But a year after the taking in 1705, the Jewish coming from the North of Africa settled and consolidated positions.

The key element to understand the history of the Jewish settlement in the colony is found in the terms in which Article X of the Utrecht Treaty was drafted, which expressly forbade the residence of the Moors and Jewish in Gibraltar. After nearly 300 years this is still a decisive factor in the perception of the Gibraltarian Jewish towards Spain who, as we shall see below, have an image of a hard and intransigent country, nearer Inquisition times than current times, based on the democratic principles of a State of Law.

The Utrecht Treaty, which constitutes the city of Gibraltar under British sovereignty, is the referent of contemporary history of those who live there nowadays. Personal biographies of Jewish yanites, most of them of Sephardim origin, are mentally established with this historical event as the first starting point of what nowadays are the descendants of those first individuals who arrived to meet the needs of the British military garrison. Moreover, if possible, the Jewish community is affected by the Utrecht Treaty which makes express reference to this community:

“And Her British Majesty, at the official request of the Catholic King, consents and convenes that Jewish or Moors will not inhabit for any reason, nor have domicile in said city of Gibraltar, and that no entrance or shelter is given to the warships of the Moors in the port of that city, with which communication to Ceuta is possible, nor the Spanish coast be infested by the Moors; and there being Treaties of friendship and liberty, and frequency of trade between British vassals and some regions of the coast of Africa, it must always be understood that it is not possible to deny entrance to the port of Gibraltar to the Moors and their ships which solely come to trade.

Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain also promises that the inhabitants of said city of Gibraltar shall be entitled to freely use the Roman Catholic Religion”.

Before signing the Treaty and during the first days of the British occupation, the relationships with the authorities of the current Kingdom of Morocco were very cordial, the latter becoming the furnisher of provisions for the new authorities settled in the Rock. This took place because all the communication by land with Spain was interrupted after the occupation. Difficulties to obtain provisions was the greatest problem and one of the most important factors in the configuration of the recent history of Gibraltar. The latter made Morocco a faithful ally at the most difficult moments, making it possible, at the same time, for Jewish and Moorish traders of this country to enter into trading relations with the new English colony. Therefore, from 1705 to 1712, one can find the first references of this community’s ancestors.

Until 1712, relations between the British authorities of Gibraltar and the Sultan of Morocco had been cordial and fluent, but the latter deteriorated with the ratification of the Utrecht Peace, in which Great Britain was committed to expelling the Jewish and Moors from Gibraltar, subjects of the Sultan, which logically aggravated and deteriorated the situation. But British diplomacy played, to its own

benefit, with a double language in its actions. On the 2nd of July, 1713 the latter ratified the Utrecht Treaty and on the 22nd of July, 1714 it closed a “Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Trade” with Morocco, which established the basis for the definitive agreement on the 13th of January, 1721, article VII provided that “the subjects of the Emperor of Fez and Morocco, Jewish and Moors, residents in the dominions of the Kingdom of Great Britain, must fully enjoy the same privileges as those granted to the British residents in Berberia”.

Nowadays, the Gibraltarian Jewish are qualitatively very important in all the scopes of the day to day life of the place, from politics to culture, though their presence in numbers is reduced if we compare them to other religious groups present in the Rock. The consolidation of the Jewish population was significant after their participation by Great Britain’s side during the Spanish sieges where they proved to be an integrated part of the joint garrison, making their settlement possible. The number of resident Jewish continued to increase and in the middle of the eighteenth century they were more than 1000. During the nineteenth century, the community continued prospering and the Jewish, together with other residents, had already organised their social structures receiving more respect and status. Therefore, in 1819 all the elements of religious discrimination in Gibraltar which mainly affected the Jewish and the Catholics were eliminated. In the twentieth century, the Jewish have continued carrying out their activities within an atmosphere of complete liberty and equality, derived from their position of privilege, fully integrated and taking an active part in the aspects of the life of the city, meanwhile preserving their own identity as a religious community.

The Islamic Community.

But also in Gibraltar, the Islamic community is that which lives the most disadvantageous situation. The presence of the current Islamic community has its origin in the years in which Spain decided to close Gibraltar’s Gate. From this moment, Moroccan labor is required to substitute the numerous jobs that up to that moment were carried out by the Spanish who went daily to Gibraltar to carry out their work. Therefore, the first groups of Maghrebis came in 1966 and, little by little, they strengthened their presence until reaching a figure of approximately 7,000 workers in the years subsequent to the closing, after 1969.

Nonetheless, the way in which the emigration of these people was allowed has created a community with its own characteristics, which separate it from the rest of the religious communities present in the Rock. The profile of these people is that of workers, generally of very low qualifications, with a very low educational level and with very low income who are forced to emigrate from their country as a way of surviving. When they reach Gibraltar they are not allowed to take their families and the only women that can reside in the city are those with a work contract. This explains why we find a majority of married men who have their wives and children in Morocco and who live together in very humble conditions and very distant from those shared by the remaining communities.

The birth of a Maghrebi has never been allowed in Gibraltar. Each time one of the Moroccan women workers was pregnant, she was sent to her country to give birth. The latter were measures imposed due to the aim that these people did not acquire full rights as British citizens. This policy has been very criticised by Gibraltarian sectors, but at the same time, defended as a way of preventing the creation of a very numerous community with strong affective and cultural links but rootless from its geographical environment.

The Islamic community is integrated by Moroccans who mostly come from cities like Tangiers and Tetuan. It is formed by 1850 people according to the census of the Gibraltarian Government carried out in 1991, which represents 6.9% of the total population. The presence of a young population is very reduced and regarding the different age groups we must outline those older than 40. Children are few and those existing are not older than 12. The characteristics of the Islamic community are very different from those of other communities. Family uprooting imposed on their lives and, therefore, the abnormality of their lives has caused this community to be defined, nearly exclusively, in labour terms, being marginalized from participation within social and political scopes. Nonetheless, this does not mean that they are not structured and organized in order to defend their rights.

The Islamic community is organized from the religious power led by the Imam of the Mosque and, regarding the civil scope, there are representatives of the two associations of workers who participate in the issues which may affect them. There are two main temples for daily prayers, the Mosque located in the Tip of Europe and financed by the Government of Saudi Arabia, and another local one, assigned by the local Government, located in the centre of the city in Queen's Way, very near the Anglican "Holy Trinity" Cathedral and the Bomb House Lane Jewish Synagogue. The magnificent, beautiful Mosque of the Tip of Europe is not greatly used by the community given its location far away from the centre, though there are free buses, financed by the Mosque, which link the centre of the city with Tip of Europe so that the faithful can attend the prayers. Nonetheless, the one in the centre is always full of faithful at prayers time.

In the Mosque, Muslims residing in Gibraltar may find not only a place to meditate and pray, but a wide range of possibilities for the education in the Koran faith. This institution palliates the lack of means and possibilities that the children residing in the city had up to now when it was not possible to find the possibility of religious education in the different State schools. Education has been another of the challenges that has had to be overcome by this community in their struggle against the local Government to allow the Muslim children, approximately 40, to study in State schools. This is now possible, but they cannot study Religion in the schools, nor have they the possibility of studying Arabic.

The eventual influence of this population on the rest of the society is minimum, as they are not entitled to the same rights as the rest of the communities. There is a very important difference, they are not recognised as Gibraltarian and, therefore, they lack the same opportunities for direct participation and influence in social and political relations. The Government has not even entitled them to a normalised residence, which gives us an idea of the deprivation in all areas of decision and movement imposed on this population.

The Hindu Community.

Another community with a complicated history in the city are the Hindus, currently representing 2.07% of the population. The history of this population is associated to the British trading routes which crossed the entire Mediterranean and reached India through the Suez Channel. After it was opened in 1869, the first Indian merchants reached Gibraltar. In the year 1870, some Hindu merchants settled in the city thanks to a decision of the Governor allowing this settlement. Then, there was no difference in status or rights between a merchant from any other place and the Hindus who mainly came from the city of Hyderabad in the region of Sindh, nowadays under the sovereignty of Pakistan. News on the possibility of doing business in Gibraltar made many of those who had experienced prosperous trade in the garrison, encourage their close friends to come to this Mediterranean enclave. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that, almost the same as happened to the rest of the communities, the current Hindu population is totally comprised of immigrants coming from that city, in those days partly belonging to the British Empire. Despite this condition of subjects of

Her Majesty, the Hindu community always had problems to legitimise its rights, even more than the Catholic or the Jewish. In fact, they could reach Gibraltar to start business having workers who were not allowed to live with their families, which made it very difficult for them to achieve full residence rights, which were not achieved until much later.

In the year 1900, and for the first time, the concept of “Gibraltarian natives” or “Gibraltarian status” was introduced, which limited the entry to the city to all those, British citizens included, who were non-native. “Native” was the term used to describe the legitimate child born in Gibraltar of a male born in the city before 1925. The Order of the Gibraltarian Statute developed this concept of “native” to refer to the birth in the city or the legitimate descendants of a male born in Gibraltar before the 20th of June, 1925. Shortly after this year, the birth of the first Hindu in Gibraltar was allowed. Only after these changes, the owners and workers of the businesses held by the Hindus started to reside with their corresponding families.

In 1948, the Hindu legal statute made a significant turn. The British Nationality Act granted those British subjects older than 21 and resident in the British territory for no less than 5 years, the right to be recorded as citizens of the United Kingdom and its colonies. Citizens of the Commonwealth (Hindus included) were British citizens and, pursuant to the latter, those Hindus who had been living in Gibraltar more than five years were recorded as citizens of the United Kingdom. Later, in 1969, the Spanish had to abandon their jobs, and the latter forced the Gibraltarian Government to make residence possible in the city to those Hindus residing in Spain and working in Gibraltar. This way, those Hindus holding British citizenship and residing in Spain settled in Gibraltar with their families.

In 1973, with the entry of the United Kingdom in the European Economic Community, the situation of the Hindu community experienced a very important turn. The members of the community who had acquired British citizenship could be treated as nationals of member countries of the Union, with the same rights as those of the citizens of the remaining member countries of the European Union. The right to live, trade and work in Gibraltar, with full guarantee of rights, has made this a dynamic community, growing not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. This significant event has made it possible, since 1973, for an increase of investments in real estate and a gradual diversification of the activities of Hindus which are more numerous as time goes by.

Religious identity as an expression of differences: increase of fundamentalism in Gibraltar.

As part of the research we are carrying out herein on these multi-border societies, we have detected in Gibraltar the increasing presence of radical religious elements within the Jewish and Catholic communities. An increasing fundamentalism which is breaking their normality and, very often, this phenomenon breaks the internal cohesion in terms of class and status. Many of the most powerful and wealthy families are using this extreme way of religious identification to establish differences with the rest of the community. In addition, membership of these radical groups strengthens the dominant position of these families and becomes a clear referent of belonging to the elite. These forms of elitism in terms of class and status are consolidated coinciding with the search for new economic alternatives and as a consequence of the new forms of power arising thereof. This situation is clearly perceived by the rest of the members of the remaining communities and they realise that the phenomenon is affecting the taking of political decisions.

A micro-cosmos of possibilities opens if we analyse the relations between the different communities, which does not show a solid, compact and unwavering image. The discourse used in the description of its own perception and of the rest of the members of the other communities is carried

out from positions of domination, depending on which one we are studying. There are differences not only within communities, but also in the relationships between them, always with different degrees of distance and with changeable perceptions of one on other. There is no coincidence between the perception that Catholics have about the Jewish, or that of the latter about the former, or that of Muslims about the Jewish and vice versa. If we cross the different variables, we may conclude that there are many differences in the relations and the image that each one of them have of the other.

Nonetheless, internal divergences and those between the different communities are solved before an external element that integrates them all and makes them aware of themselves. This is the role assigned to Spain (at the other side of the border, that is to say, to the “Campo de Gibraltar”) in the long Gibraltarian identity training process where our country plays a significant role. All the members of the different communities coincide in their opinion on the idea of Spain and on the negotiations of the contentious. The discourse is full of resentment and the most fierce views can be found in the Catholic and Jewish communities. In general, rapprochement to Spain depends on the will of the latter country to thoroughly understand this city and to solve the problems arising on the border, an element used by Gibraltarian politicians as a support to prove their arguments towards considering Spain a country without the least will to respect local hopes and interests. This argument socially construed and reproduced by politicians for their electoral interests has been returned to the society with much more strength and with institutional support.

Another interesting element of this multi-border society familiar with diversity, is that distrust is not only deposited in Spain, but also in Great Britain. Increasingly, Gibraltarians admit to distrusting Great Britain’s promises and they doubt that this country complies with the commitment undertaken with this population.

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