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The Strategic Mobilisation of the Border The (Post)colonial (Re)production of a British National(ist) Identity in Gibraltar[*]

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Colonialism can generally be described as a form of power that emerged in the heart of European cities, to be imposed on the rest of the world. During the period of colonialism, pre-existing systems of social, political, economic and cultural organisation were replaced by the establishment of racial and/or ethnic hierarchies over the indigenous populations.[1] Interestingly, while colonisation took place through the – more or less violent – application of these new (and racist) governmental strategies, for colonial power to endure, these forms of social, political and economic control had to be reproduced over time. As such, the colonial power structures were progressively internalised by the colonised subjects, hence colonial governance was not simply imposed by the colonisers.[2] For colonialism to last, the racist/exclusionary logics had to be absorbed and reproduced by the colonised peoples themselves.

Interestingly, since the mid-twentieth century, the decline of old colonial empires has led to the birth of new national borders and communities in the territories of the former colonies.[3] There, the colonial rationalities of government have carried on operating within society, combining with new and post-colonial modes of organising sociocultural but also political and economic life. This work explores this transition by concentrating on one specific tool of colonial and post-colonial government – that is,

[*] For further reading, see my article GIACOMO ORSINI, 'Gobernando a través de la frontera: seguridad y la gubernamentalidad (post)colonial en Gibraltar,' *Almoraima. Revista de Estudios Campogibraltareños* 48, no. 1 (2018): 377–89, as well as the co-authored chapters GIACOMO ORSINI, ANDREW CANESSA, and LUIS G. MARTÍNEZ DEL CAMPO, 'Gibraltar as a Gated Community: A Critical Look at Gibraltarian Nationalism,' in *Barrier and Bridge: Spanish and Gibraltarian Perspectives on Their Border*, ed. ANDREW CANESSA (Brighton: Sussex University Press, 2018), 163–84, and GIACOMO ORSINI, ANDREW CANESSA, and LUIS G. MARTÍNEZ DEL CAMPO, 'Governing Through the Border: (Post)Colonial Governmentality in Gibraltar,' in *Bordering on Britishness: National Identity in Gibraltar from the Spanish Civil War to Brexit*, ed. ANDREW CANESSA (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 195–216.

[1] PARTHA CHATTERJEE, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); DAVID SCOTT, 'Colonial Governmentality,' in *Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics*, ed. JONATHAN XAVIER INDA (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 23–49.

[2] George Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968).

[3] JEFFREY HERBST, 'The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa,' *International Organization* 43, no. 4 (1989): 673–92; WALTER MIGNOLO, *Local Histories/Global Design: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

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the border – to explore the construction of a national(ist) identity in the territory of a former colony: Gibraltar.

This British Overseas Territory constitutes an extremely significant case study, as it has been controlled by the United Kingdom (UK) since the eighteenth century. Founded as a military garrison for the British military, over time a civilian population of Maltese, Genoese, Spanish, Portuguese, Jewish and Moroccan origin has been able to settle on the Rock.[4] Importantly, unlike most former colonies, the Gibraltarians have never challenged the British colonial power. On the contrary, in the context of a tense international dispute between the governments of UK and Spain, since the second half of the twentieth century the inhabitants of the small enclave – who have never fought a war of independence – have shown their desire to remain part of Britain.

This desire was formalised with two referendums in 1967 and 2002,[5] and it has hardly been contested, even when faced with the dangers of the enclave's possible post-Brexit isolation.[6] Today, Gibraltarians claim a different national identity from their Spanish neighbours, increasingly identifying themselves with the British culture. As discussed in this paper, the border that divides the enclave from Spain plays a key role in this complex and seemingly contradictory framework.

Importantly, despite being marked on maps, the border between Gibraltar and Spain remained permeable until the early twentieth century. In 1908, the British installed the first fence in an attempt to limit smuggling to and from the nearby Spanish town of La Línea de la Concepción.[7] But it was only from the mid-1950s that, due to the increasing restrictions on the movement of individuals and vehicles imposed by the Spanish government, it became more complicated to cross the border. This process culminated in the total closure of the frontier between 1969 and 1985.[8]

Although, in the past, the border had already played a key role in shaping the economic and social life of the small enclave, it was only with Franco's rise to power in Spain that problems relating to the border began to somehow permeate the daily life of the small Gibraltarian community. As discussed in this article, henceforth, the border became a cornerstone in the construction of a Gibraltarian national identity.

Unlike those who describe the border between Gibraltar and La Línea as the greatest threat to the normalisation of everyday life in the small enclave, this paper analyses the border as an essential element for the exercise of social, cultural and

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[4] Gibraltarians call Gibraltar 'the Rock.'

[5] PETER GOLD, 'Identity Formation in Gibraltar: Geopolitical, Historical and Cultural Factors,' *Geopolitics* 15, no. 2 (2010): 367–84.

[6] ELENA SÁNCHEZ NICOLÁS, 'Confusion over Gibraltar Border Controls in UK-Spain Deal,' *The EU Observer*, January 6, 2021, https://euobserver.com/brexit/150517?utm_source=euobs&utm_medium=email.

[7] WILLIAM G. F. JACKSON, *The Rock of the Gibraltarians. A History of Gibraltar* (Grendon: Gibraltar Books, 1990); SIMON J. LINCOLN, 'The Legal Status of Gibraltar: Whose Rock is it Anyway?' *Fordham International Law Journal* 18, no. 1 (1994): 285–331.

[8] CHRIS GROCOTT and GARETH STOCKEY, *Gibraltar: A Modern History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).

political life on the Rock. The aim is thus to show how it is precisely through the border that Gibraltarians can imagine themselves as part of a nation distinct from neighbouring Spain.

Empirically, the article concentrates on the analysis of a major set of data consisting of almost 400 oral history interviews collected in the enclave and the bordering Spanish city of La Línea.[9] The interviews were conducted by locally recruited researchers drawn from all sectors of the community and included researchers from the Moroccan, Jewish and Hindu communities, as well as researchers from La Línea. The in-depth interviews, often lasting several hours, were conducted in English, Spanish or any combination of the two. Others were conducted in Moroccan Arabic. The interviewees were representative of social class, ethnic and religious affiliation, gender and people with mobility issues. There was a clear bias in the sample towards older people since they have longer memories, but a representative sample of younger people was obtained as well. The youngest interviewee was 16, while the oldest was 101 at the time of the interview.

In the following pages these interviews are discussed within a historical reconstruction which focuses on the main transformations in the management of the border and the development of a Gibraltarian national(ist) identity.

Colonial Times and the Permeable Frontier

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were virtually no physical limitations marking the perimeter of Gibraltar's territory. There were only the gates of the city fortifications which, located almost one kilometre south of the current border, were closed at night and opened in the morning to regulate access to and residence in the city.[10] As a result of frequent cross-border interactions, relations between Gibraltarians and the populations of the neighbouring Campo de Gibraltar region remained almost osmotic for centuries. People crossed the city gates in both directions, from La Línea to Gibraltar and vice versa.[11]

The economic opportunities present in the enclave undoubtedly facilitated cross-border exchanges and mobility in the region. In general, the small peninsula has prospered economically in comparison with the surrounding area – which is, in fact, one of the poorest areas in all of Spain.[12] In addition to military activities, the port and shipyards represented the bulk of the colony's economy.[13] Due to its geographical

[9] The interviews were collected as part of the ESRC-funded project 'Bordering on Britishness: An Oral History of 20th Century Gibraltar' led by Professor Andrew Canessa at the Sociology Department of the University of Essex.
[10] STACIE D. A. BURKE and LAWRENCE A. SAWCHUK, 'Alien Encounters: The Jus Soli and Reproductive Politics in the 19th-century Fortress and Colony of Gibraltar,' *History of the Family* 6 (2001): 531–61.
[11] ANTONIO REMIRO BROTÓNS, 'Estudios. Gibraltar,' *Cuadernos de Gibraltar/Gibraltar Reports* 1 (2015): 13–24.
[12] ANTONIO ESCOLAR PUJOLAR, *Sobremortalidad por cáncer en El Campo de Gibraltar. El medio social, la piedra clave* (Cádiz: Delegación Provincial de la Consejería de Salud, Junta de Andalucía, 2011).
[13] THOMAS D. LANCASTER and JAMES L. TAULBEE, 'Britain, Spain, and the Gibraltar Question,' *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 23, no. 3 (1985): 251–66.

position, caught between two continents – Africa and Europe – and seas – the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean – Gibraltar has always been a natural port of considerable importance for global trade. Gibraltar's geopolitical position as a nodal point for the British colonial empire's trade made the difference.

The border which delimited the territory of exclusive British sovereignty – differentiating it from the rest of Spain – ensured additional benefits for the goods unloaded in Gibraltar. In part because of the availability of products that could not be found on the Iberian Peninsula and also because of their low cost – the port of Gibraltar has been a free zone since 1706[14] – many of the goods unloaded in Gibraltar fed – and continue to feed – a flourishing smuggling trade with Spain. Marco, a Gibraltarian tobacco entrepreneur in his early nineties, describes the role that smuggling played in the local economy.

> […] In 1640, Spain did us the great favour of banning the import of tobacco. It was this that allowed us to become what we are today. It was so important that, even now, Gibraltar keeps living thanks to one thing: forget wine, forget cars! Here we live thanks to tobacco![15]

Marking the limits of the Spanish and British tax jurisdictions, the border has always been at the basis of one of the most important economic activities of the enclave. What is more, the border also generated other differentials which facilitated cross-border mobility.

The lack of housing which has always characterised the tiny, crowded enclave of about five square kilometres led to poor living conditions and high living costs. Combining this with the military colonial discipline with which life inside the Rock was organised, the area of the Campo de Gibraltar constituted a natural extension of Gibraltar where plenty of Gibraltarians lived – or spent much of their leisure time. The border also served to keep vice at bay. Although Gibraltar was full of bars for the British soldiers and sailors, entertainers were imported from Spain while prostitution was kept on the other side of the frontier. In the words of a Gibraltarian woman in her nineties:

> At that time, there were many soldiers in Gibraltar, you know. There was the Trocadero Bar and all the bars... A lot of Spanish girls used to come and dance, you know, in the Trocadero and things like that. Oh, yes [… And then there was] Calle Gibraltar, in La Línea.[16]

Gibraltar Street – 'la Calle Gibraltar' in Spanish – was famous for its brothels widely frequented by Gibraltarian civilians and British servicemen. The brothels, however, through a largely unspoken code, catered for different ranks and social classes.

Allowing those living in Gibraltar to spend their leisure time in La Línea reduced social tensions within the garrison.[17] Not only did Gibraltarians regularly socialise in La Línea, but almost a third of marriages contracted in the earlier decades of the

[14] JAMES E. S. FAWCETT, 'Gibraltar: The Legal Issues,' *International Affairs* 43, no. 2 (1967): 236–51.
[15] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa in August 2015.
[16] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on June 20, 2014.
[17] MATILDA BETHAM-EDWARDS, *Through Spain to the Sahara* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1868).

twentieth century were between Gibraltarians and Spaniards.[18] Over the centuries, close social and cultural relations, but also family ties, had thus formed across the border. Membership of one or another ethnic group mattered mainly for the colonial masters who organised authority in the enclave on an ethnic basis, between the British and others.[19]

Importantly, relations across the border were structured along class lines. Spanish and Gibraltarian workers shared the same work and leisure spaces – and, often, a very similar degrading treatment from the British colonial authorities.[20] Similarly, the colonial masters on the one side, and Spanish aristocrats on the other, had plenty of common interests, as well as shared spaces and leisure activities, such as hunting.[21] Class solidarity, and hostility mainly towards the British, pushed the Gibraltarian and Spanish workers to unite, as they experienced discrimination from the British colonial government first-hand.[22] On the Rock, the British colonial elites, as well as the moneyed Gibraltarians, separated themselves from the rest.[23] Similar to how the military lived in separated – and gated – areas of the Rock, which Gibraltarians could not enter unless they had permission, only a few selected Gibraltarians could access 'the most exclusive clubs' of the enclave.

Such discrimination did not go unnoticed by the Gibraltarian subjects. These are the words of an important Gibraltarian public figure in his sixties. Here he described the ethnic and class relations in the enclave up until the middle of the twentieth century – and even later.

> Speaking of the English… we must tell the truth… If we tell the truth… then there were three kinds of people. There were the Englishmen – I am talking of the officials and the people in high places… Then, there were the Gibraltarians, who you could divide in two parts: those who found it convenient to get closer to the [British. They were the] merchant class, the ones chosen by the British and the poshest ones; and then there was the whole people here. And then, there were the third-class citizens. They were the poor Spanish people.[24]

One of the clearest and most humiliating manifestations of this system of segregation were the separate toilet facilities for British, Gibraltarians and Spaniards in the Royal Naval Dockyard (the major employer until the late 1970s) as well as in other areas of

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[18] LARRY A. SAWCHUK, 'Historical Intervention, Tradition, and Change: A Study of the Age at Marriage in Gibraltar, 1909–1983,' *Journal of Family History* 17, no. 1 (1992): 69–91.
[19] SETHA M. LOW, 'The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear,' *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1 (2001): 45–58.
[20] STEPHAN CONSTANTINE, 'The Pirate, the Governor and the Secretary of State: Aliens, Police and Surveillance in Early Nineteenth-Century Gibraltar,' *The English Historical Review* 123, no. 504 (2008): 1166–92.
[21] GARETH STOCKEY, 'Sport and Gibraltar – Problematizing a Supposed 'Problem', 1713–1954,' *Sport in History* 32, no. 1 (2012): 1–25.
[22] JONATHAN JEFFRIES, 'The Wrongful Deportation of Albert Fava: The Indisputable Champion of Workers' Rights,' *Gibraltar Heritage Journal* 15 (2008): 47–60.
[23] STEPHAN CONSTANTINE, 'Monarchy and Constructing Identity in 'British' Gibraltar, c.1800 to the Present,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, no. 1 (2006): 23–44.
[24] Interviewed by Ronnie Alecio on January 23, 2016.

employment such as cable and wireless. John, a Gibraltarian professor in his late sixties, describes how segregation in the shipyards worked in the late 1940s.

> In the shipyard there were three types of toilets: one for the English, one for the *llanitos*[25] and one for foreigners. […] And the foreigners were mostly the Spanish. There were some Portuguese, but very few, right? So, the English toilet was kept very clean […] the one for the *llanitos* was inferior and dirtier, and the Spanish one was a hole in the ground […] There was a certain amount of xenophobia.[26]

Until the mid-twentieth century, only the wealthiest or most aspirational Gibraltarians had a good command of English, although functional bilingualism was widespread, particularly among men. Even though English was certainly the official language, most Gibraltarians of all social classes spoke Spanish at home and among themselves. As one octogenarian Gibraltarian and one of the wealthiest men in Gibraltar put it, 'I cannot imagine speaking to anyone of my generation in anything other than Spanish.' For much of the twentieth century, Gibraltarians not only shared a language with their neighbours, they shared the same accent and variant of Spanish too. People on both sides of the border also shared the same – or at least similar – social struggles against the British colonial powers.

Being born in Gibraltar, however, conferred a more important status than if one was born in Spain. Many of our interviewees gave examples of the lengths people went to make sure children were born in Gibraltar. Spanish wives almost always settled in the colony for this reason. Being a Gibraltarian male gave one better access to employment as well as political security, so it is not surprising that very few working-class Gibraltarian women married Spanish men. The economic gap between Gibraltarians and Spaniards is the most salient aspect pointed out by our interviewees when asked about the differences between the two groups in the first half of the twentieth century. Many people underlined that, culturally, there was little or no difference, but that the people who lived *there* and came to work in Gibraltar were invariably poorer.

Gibraltarians were certainly not all wealthy, but they were almost always wealthier than the poor Spaniards. This is underlined by the widespread existence of Spanish servants across all social classes. One of our interviewees who grew up in a large house shared by several families – a typical working-class arrangement in Gibraltar called a '*patio*' – impressed upon the interviewer how difficult times were in the 1950s, so hard that the men rotated employment when it was scarce so that no one was unemployed for very long. Even then, however, the *patio* had a Spanish servant, María, who crossed the border every day and was paid in leftovers from the family cooking pots as well as money. Although the interviewee confessed that there is no way he could have said which of the mothers in the *patio* were Spanish and which Gibraltarian, it was quite clear that María, who worked for them all, was Spanish.

[25] The term '*llanitos*' is commonly used in the area of the Campo de Gibraltar to refer to the inhabitants of Gibraltar.
[26] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on June 22, 2014.

In other words, in those days 'Spanishness' was an identity that did not survive very long if people settled and had kinship ties in Gibraltar. Being born in Spain, being Spanish-speaking and enjoying Spanish culture did not mark a person as 'other' since not only did most Gibraltarians speak Spanish better than English but they crossed the border to watch bullfights, enjoyed Spanish music and, by and large, were culturally indistinguishable from their neighbours.

Other Gibraltarians of a working-class background remembered that their fathers earned enough to maintain their families and that their mothers had at least some Spanish help. So, the border functioned as an economic marker, yet no distinct cultural or ethnic identity was felt to divide the people on the two sides: rather, class solidarity developed across it regardless of nationality. The key social differences were vertical, not horizontal; that is, class differences were more significant than whether one was considered Spanish or Gibraltarian. Despite the fact that some people were given passes by the colonial authorities and others were refused them, this was not done on the basis of any ethnic distinction between Gibraltarians and Spaniards; the former were simply those who had rights to live in the territory by virtue of birth, marriage or other means. There is very little evidence that there was any sense of a Gibraltarian identity that was fundamentally different from that of the broader Campo area.

As such, the British authorities were interested in maintaining a porous border while providing differentiated access to civil, social and economic rights to the people residing in the enclave or entering it daily for work. The border helped to mark inter-group distinctions, pushing Spanish border workers to the margins of Gibraltarian society and dividing the enclave's workforce along national and ethnic lines. While Gibraltarian workers experienced colonial exploitation and discrimination first hand, the fragmentation of the labour force into distinct groups made it more difficult to establish any form of trade union organisation.[27] We should keep in mind that, for centuries, Gibraltar was one of the most strategic colonies of the British Empire. It functioned as a military base and commercial nerve-centre of the empire, even more so after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.[28] The colonial government was thus very interested in maintaining a dynamic economy in the small peninsula, a relatively low-cost labour force and a tight control over the local population.[29] In this sense, the border allowed for a large and cheap supply of labour from the Campo de Gibraltar. These workers had limited rights and were therefore harmless in terms of public order. The border was undoubtedly an instrument of coercion in the hands of the colonial government of Gibraltar.[30] As we will see in the following pages, this function became

[27] EDNA BONACIHIC, 'A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market,' *American Sociological Review* 37, no. 5 (1972): 547–59.
[28] SCOTT C. TRUVER, *The Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff and Noordhoff International Publisher, 1980).
[29] GROCOTT and STOCKEY, *Gibraltar: A Modern History*.
[30] GARETH STANTON, 'Military Rock: A Mis-anthropology,' *Cultural Studies* 10 (2006): 270–87.

increasingly predominant with the implementation of policies restricting the movement of people across the border.

The Partial De/Colonisation of Gibraltar and the Tangible Frontier

As the crossing of the frontier became more problematic in the second half of the twentieth century, cross-border relations in Gibraltar underwent profound transformations. The series of developments which took place as more governing powers were transferred to newly born Gibraltarian institutions are central to explaining the rapid construction of a Gibraltarian national(ist) – and mainly British – identity.

From a Cross-Border to a Bordered Community: The Making of Gibraltarian Nation(alism)

For centuries, most Gibraltarians perceived themselves as part of a single community which included those residing across the border, in the whole area of the Campo de Gibraltar. The situation remained largely unchanged after the installation of the first metal fence in 1908. However, it was with the beginning of the Spanish Civil War – and even more so with the end of the Second World War – that border crossing began to be limited and regulated.[31] Officially, restrictions were imposed by the Spanish government in response to a series of changes in political relations between the inhabitants of the small colony and the British colonial authorities.

The evacuation of the civilian population from the enclave in 1940 had led to considerable tension against the colonisers.[32] Following an initial and brief evacuation to Morocco, the Gibraltarians were soon redistributed by the British authorities in the UK, on the island of Madeira and in Jamaica.[33] The relationship between the British colonisers and their Gibraltarian subjects can be summed up in the words of the then local governor: Colonel Sir Clive Gerard Liddell. In 1945, in an official communication to the British government, he described the civilian inhabitants of the enclave as 'useless mouths,'[34] referring both to the need to feed them and to meet their demands. After centuries of colonial hierarchy and deprivation of the most basic civil rights, the social and political relations between the colonial government and the local population deteriorated significantly, during as well as immediately after the evacuation. From then on, the Gibraltarians began to demand greater self-government and, through trade unions, equal rights to their British co-workers.[35]

At that point, Gibraltar still retained an important geopolitical role for the UK. At the same time, the enclave also seemed to be attracting the increasing interest of the government of General Franco in Spain. From the 1950s onwards, Spanish claims

[31] FAWCETT, 'Gibraltar: The Legal Issues.'
[32] TOMMY J. FINLAYSON, *The Fortress Came First* (Gibraltar: Gibraltar Books Ltd, 1991).
[33] DAVID J. DUNTHORN, *Britain and the Spanish Anti-Franco Opposition, 1940-1950* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).
[34] JOSEPH GARCIA, *Gibraltar. The Making of a People: The Modern Political History of Gibraltar and its People* (Gibraltar: Mediterranean SUN Publishing Ltd, 1994), 15.
[35] GARCÌA, *Gibraltar: The Making of a People*; JEFFRIES, 'The Wrongful Deportation of Albert Fava.'

to sovereignty and control of the enclave became more frequent and stronger.[36] Over the same period, the British authorities allowed the formation of a legislative council with a minority of members elected by the Gibraltarians[37] and, in 1954, the Queen of England made her first official visit to Gibraltar.

In response to the royal visit and the transfer of some legislative function to the inhabitants of the Rock, the Franco regime ordered a radical change in the management of the border. A growing number of limitations to free movement were introduced: restrictive measures that culminated in the complete closure of the frontier in June 1969, a few days after the adoption of Gibraltar's first constitution.[38] Thus, the beginning of the (partial) decolonisation of Gibraltar took place in parallel to the closure of the border. This closure profoundly affected the socio-cultural fabric of Gibraltar, thus somehow colonising the Gibraltarians' minds. It is not just that the inhabitants of the Rock began to perceive themselves as distinct from their Spanish neighbours: they in fact increasingly identified with their British colonisers.

The family, friendship, economic and business ties that had formed through centuries of cross-border interactions were quickly interrupted. A nonagenarian from Gibraltar confirmed to us how the border closure ruptured family ties and disrupted the familiarity people had with Spanish culture.

> What I feel is that they imposed it on us... [that we could not] bring up our kids with their grandparents from La Línea. […] We would have liked them to be more used to the... Spanish things by experiencing them more than once a year. My parents always took us [to Spain] for Christmas, but it was not the same [compared with when] we could go there every weekend.[39]

Our interviewee underlined the same point as many other Gibraltarians: that they had a strong kinship connection with Spain. Yet, when the connections were cut or made difficult, this led to a lack of familiarity with Spanish culture.

Having kin born in Spain and sharing the characteristic of 'Spanishness' became quite different things. The political nature of this breach can scarcely be exaggerated. In countless interviews, people mentioned a visceral hatred of Franco, or the pain of not being able to cross the border to see a dying relative.[40] Some of our younger respondents reported teasing their grandmothers for being Spanish only to be told that they stopped being Spanish when they could not attend a parent's funeral – or simply because of Franco's fascism. One man in his fifties reported that his grandmother refused to set foot in Spain even after the border reopened in 1982 – and did not cross

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[36] STEPHAN CONSTANTINE, *Community and Identity: The Making of Modern Gibraltar since 1704* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[37] D. J. HEASMAN, 'The Gibraltar Affair,' *International Journal* 22, no. 2 (1967): 265–77.

[38] KLAUS DOODS, DAVID LAMBERT, and BRIDGET ROBINSON, 'Loyalty and Royalty: Gibraltar, the 1953–54 Royal Tour and the Geopolitics of the Iberian Peninsula,' *Twentieth Century British History* 18, no. 3 (2007): 365–90; GROCOTT and STOCKEY, *Gibraltar: A Modern History*; GEORGE HILLS, *Rock of Contention: A History of Gibraltar* (London: Robert Hale, 1974).

[39] Interviewed by Robert Anes on July 2, 2014.

[40] CAROLINA LABARTA RODRÍGUEZ-MARIBONA, 'Las Relaciones Hispano-Británicas Bajo el Franquismo, 1950–1973 (Anglo-Spanish Relations during the Franco Regime, 1950–1973),' *Studia historica. Historia contemporánea* 22 (2015): 85–104.

the frontier until she died in 1998. She did receive a visit from her brother but threw him – a brother she had not seen for 20 years – out of the house when he said Gibraltar was Spanish.

The anti-'Spanishness' of Gibraltar thus came as much from people born in Spain as from those born in Gibraltar. We were surprised in our interviews by how many people told tales of relatives killed or imprisoned by the fascists, and others who sought refuge in Gibraltar and stayed. One man in his late eighties remembers seeing his uncle shot in the streets of La Línea as he peered through the window of his house. Many others mentioned that when, in 1936, the fascist troops arrived in La Línea they did not enter the houses of those flying a British flag, which therefore saved people's homes from being sacked and women from being raped by Franco's militias.

There is no question that the Gibraltarians were spared the violence that occurred during the Spanish Civil War. With political unrest in Spain during the Civil War and, later, with the political repression of Franco's regime, Spain appeared a much more dangerous place than Gibraltar. In the Gibraltarians' minds, the border started to serve as key security apparatus, keeping the unruly and criminal out of the enclave.[41] Many of our interviewees across all generations mentioned how Gibraltar makes them feel safe – that they breathe a sigh of relief when they cross the border and come home. Some younger Gibraltarians note with conscious irony that they do not feel unsafe when travelling to Madrid or Barcelona or indeed anywhere else in the world and yet, crossing the border into La Línea creates a sense of anxiety.

Part of this is due to the continued tensions at the border which involve long, arbitrary delays which produce intense frustration. Crossing the border is rarely a simple process, it has a kinaesthetic effect which contributes to the essentialisation of the difference between Spaniards and Gibraltarians. This is how a Gibraltarian in his seventies perceives his neighbours of the Campo de Gibraltar:

> Spain [has] a distinct culture... It is a more violent culture... Everything looks nice... fictional life and a nice one, but it was not like that, you know. And they have a distinct way of being... They enjoy life in a different way... I do not know... We are not quite like that! […] Those […] from Algeciras […] are like [those] from La Línea, [while] we are the *llanitos*![42]

The political climate of international confrontation between the UK and Spain concerning Gibraltar favoured the polarisation of the debate in the enclave. The closure of the border had even changed the perception of Spain for those from La Línea who resided in the enclave. One interviewee in his late sixties, born in Spain of a Gibraltarian father and a Spanish mother, told us how he experienced his transforming relationship with Spain.

> Frankly speaking, I had a very hard time here because... I did not feel British; I did not feel Gibraltarian; I felt that I was from La Línea. I did not perceive myself as a Spaniard. I felt like I was from La Línea because it was there where I spent my childhood with all my friends... Thus,

[41] NAN ELLIN, *Architecture of Fear* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997).
[42] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on August 2, 2015.

> honestly speaking, I spent my first months here crying... And then, little by little... the Spanish government made sure that I changed. Today I feel Gibraltarian to the bone, right to the marrow. […] And this was thanks to all the beatings and pain they gave us... My mother was left without all her family. She remained here alone... unable to see her family.[43]

As Spain became the worst threat to the existence of Gibraltar, Spaniards quickly began to be perceived as 'others' to the Gibraltarians. Through the border, a new sense of Gibraltarian national subjectivity developed in contrast to everything Spanish. Alexander, a young Gibraltarian, recalls his grandparents' relationship with Spain.

> [My grandparents] lived... when Franco was in control of everything in Spain, they remember many hostilities and aggressions... towards the people of Gibraltar. My grandfather escaped with his family to Gibraltar, they opened a shop and spent their whole lives here... I do not think [they ever returned to Spain].[44]

It is as if, due to the impossibility of crossing the border, the Gibraltarians had embraced a new geography in which Spain had become a distant land. While Spain came to be perceived as the worst danger to Gibraltar's existence, the Spaniards quickly began to be seen as the alter ego of the Gibraltarians. A new Gibraltarian national subjectivity started to be constructed in contrast to everything Spanish.[45] As this new Gibraltarian identity appeared throughout the process of partial decolonisation of the enclave, somehow Gibraltarians paradoxically ended up feeling culturally as well as politically closer to their British colonisers.[46]

After serving as a bridge to unite the inhabitants of the Campo de Gibraltar and the enclave in one single community, the border became an essential device for Gibraltarians to live a socially, economically and politically secure life against the perceived/imagined threats posed by the Spanish neighbour. After years of isolation from Spain and the simultaneous rapprochement with the UK, Spanish was no longer used as a lingua franca in Gibraltar. This is how Fred, a 30-year-old Gibraltarian, describes his relationship with the Spanish language:

> I refused to speak Spanish […] because I had this idea in my head that only old people speak Spanish. I am British and I am going to speak like a British person. […] What I mean is that if you spoke to me in Spanish, I was going to refuse to speak to you.[47]

Although the frontier became traversable once again in 1985, it has never left the core of local public debate. These are the words of Angela, a 90-year-old Gibraltarian: 'It is getting worse. Unless [Spain] changes government or something... There are a lot of queues [at the border]. And all the women [...] come tired, after work... and have to wait there!'[48]

[43] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on February 10, 2016.
[44] Interviewed by Ronnie Alecio on January 28, 2016.
[45] MICHAEL BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
[46] DAVID ÁLVAREZ, 'Colonial Relic: Gibraltar in the Age of Decolonization,' *Gran Valley Review* 21, no. 1 (2000): 4–26.
[47] Interviewed by Ronnie Alecio on April 2, 2016.
[48] Interviewed by Robert Anes on June 18, 2014.

Today, the elements that constitute Gibraltar's national identity are multiple. However, in order to differentiate themselves from their Spanish neighbours, Gibraltarians often refer to liberal values – in particular democracy and multiculturalism – as the cornerstones of local society, politics and culture. This is what a Gibraltarian of almost 90 years of age told us about the Spanish political system. 'I do not think that the Spanish … are truly democratic. I do not think so. I do not think [in Spain] the law is the same for everyone.'[49]

Similarly, Gibraltarians often refer to Spaniards through the pejorative term of 'sloppies,' that is, as basically careless and incompetent. In this, Gibraltarians implicitly and sometimes explicitly associate themselves with a British culture which is imagined as being more advanced and efficient.

The geographical proximity to the inhabitants of the Campo de Gibraltar seems to be countered today by a socio-cultural distance that divides the people who live on the two sides of the border. While thousands of Spanish and other EU citizens continue to enter the enclave every day to work, fewer Gibraltarians cross that same border in the opposite direction, as Ana, a Gibraltarian housewife in her seventies, specifies here:

> Since Franco closed the border […] the families have been pushed aside, because there have been fathers, mothers, brothers, some from there, some from here, who have died and have not been able to come and see each other again! […] Now, it is rare for Gibraltarians to go to the Spanish coast. The truth is...What happens is that... there is a lot of hate... A lot of hate![50]

We have seen how Gibraltarian society moved very quickly from a border geography – characterised by the centrality of cross-border relations – to a bordered geography which is defined through the isolation induced by the closure, both real and symbolic, of that same border. Through the border, and as the partial decolonisation of the enclave progressed, locals came closer, more or less symbolically, to their British colonisers.

A Colonised National Identity in Gibraltar

Contrary to what happened in most colonies, Gibraltarian nationalism did not develop in opposition to the cultural identity assigned to the colonisers.[51] It was rather generated in opposition to the former indigenous peoples of the area of Campo de Gibraltar. The socio-cultural construction based on the frontier and its closure between 1969 and 1985 allowed Gibraltarians to (re)produce a historical and cultural separation from their Spanish neighbours.

There are cultural differences between Gibraltarians and Spaniards but these were largely created by the border itself: during the 20 years of border closure, the Gibraltarians were forced to rescale their social networks and develop them inside the enclave and, partly, in Britain, rather than in Spain where people had previously spent

[49] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa in March 2014.
[50] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on September 1, 2015.
[51] ANIA LOOMBA, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007).

most of their leisure time. The border closure, moreover, created a shared experience, and thus was an identity maker in itself. A Gibraltarian company manager in his eighties described the mood during the closure.

> [The border closure] had an effect on all our businesses. The Rock Hotel for argument's sake, most of [the workers were] Spanish and overnight we had the lady volunteers of Gibraltar who worked, fabulous. Fantastic. They came up in hundreds to volunteer to work in whichever way possible, we had [a friend] who flew from London, the Head Waiter, he was... He had a very good job in Piccadilly in London and he arrived at the door of the Rock Hotel and said: 'I am here. Can I help?' And, you know, it was that sort of feeling and one was very proud to be a Gibraltarian and it was great.[52]

New networks developed within the enclosed territory of the Rock – or, alternatively, away from there, in the UK. Much less contact was instead available with the neighbouring people, generating new individual as well as collective sociocultural geographies behind the closed fences. A retired Gibraltarian teacher in her sixties described what, in her view, 'Gibraltarianness' is all about.

> I think also the fact that we are so well-off economically helps us keep a sense of identity in the sense that we, the Gibraltarians, have always felt we are superior to the Spanish because... For us, Spain is La Línea, the Campo de Gibraltar, which is the most downtrodden part of Spain [...] The most impoverished part of Spain and I think so long as our economy is doing well that helps to feed this sense of identity that we are better than our neighbours. [...] It is still us and them but if the border were to completely disappear and the standard of living in the Campo de Gibraltar rose then, perhaps... you know... That would dilute this sense of identity of being different, of this 'us and them.'[53]

The fence that cuts the isthmus of land connecting Gibraltar to La Línea marks the boundary of the Gibraltarians' superior economic and social status, a condition that is certainly facilitated by the possibility for many local entrepreneurs to access a much cheaper and more exploitable workforce from the other side of the gate.

As a Gibraltarian banker of Spanish origin pointed out, 'the life that you can make in Gibraltar is not the same as the one you will make in Spain: it has to do with tranquillity in terms of crime, work and anything else in general.'[54] The border that enabled the Gibraltarians to imagine themselves a nation[55] serves primarily to produce and maintain these real as well as perceived differentials with respect to the quality of life.

As Gibraltar was partially decolonised, the Gibraltarians' minds were recolonised through the border – or, the gate. The inhabitants of the Rock started safeguarding their increased wealth by identifying with the colonisers and their ways of organising power within society.[56] It was a very fast national identity-building process, with several contradictions. As mentioned earlier, many Gibraltarians emphasise the liberal and

[52] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa in July 2015.
[53] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa in March 2015.
[54] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa in June 2014.
[55] BENEDICT ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
[56] FRANTZ FANON, *Black Skin White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1952).

cosmopolitan nature of Gibraltarian society and politics as opposed to the undemocratic and intolerant spirit of Spain.[57] However, this view clashes with the experiences that were reported by many of our interviewees.

After the closure of the border, Spanish workers disappeared from the socio-cultural horizon of Gibraltar and, in their place, a growing number of Moroccan workers were invited to move to the enclave.[58] An influential Gibraltarian historian describes the relations with the newcomers as follows: 'The Jews came to Gibraltar because they were needed. [The same thing happened with the Moroccans] and it was very good. As soon as they arrived, [...] they were given the same rights and the same protections as the others.'[59] However, this idyllic description contrasts with the experience of a Moroccan woman who came to Gibraltar during the 1970s:

> Eight people in one room. Eight people! [We lived in] Tuckey's Lane: a room and a kitchen [and] the toilet for all [the] neighbours. The shower was also outside: in the courtyard […] Do you understand? It was very difficult before! When I stayed here working […] a Moroccan boy from Tetouan married me... We started our life, but I could not have a child here... [I was four months pregnant] and I was taken by a policeman […] I will never forget that in my life! ... I did not know anything about this thing, [and] I went out on the street when I was four months pregnant – four and a half – and the policeman said: "Come with me." They took me to the hospital and said "You?"' ... [And they took me to take the] ferry to Morocco as [if I had committed] a crime. [So, I went to Morocco to] have the baby, [and] I came back here: they wanted me to leave the baby with my sister.[60]

On the one hand, the coexistence between different cultures and religions is not exceptional for a Mediterranean port city – even less so if we consider the role of nerve-centre of the British Empire that Gibraltar played for centuries.[61] On the other hand, the coexistence between the different ethnic groups established in Gibraltar does not seem to be the result of a process of social inclusion and equality. Rather, the opposite is true. If, in the past, the strict colonial hierarchy dispensed individual rights and duties according to ethnicity, with the gradual decolonisation of Gibraltar the border became the main instrument for the distribution of power and privilege in the enclave.

Today, Gibraltarians have effectively achieved equal rights to their British colonisers. However, the Moroccan population continues to live at the margins of local society,[62] while the nearly 3,000 frontier-workers who enter and leave Gibraltar daily

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[57] LUIS MARTINEZ, ANDREW CANESSA, and GIACOMO ORSINI, '"An Example to the World!": Multiculturalism in the Creation of a Gibraltarian Identity,' in *Barrier and Bridge*, ed. CANESSA, 119–33.
[58] GARETH STANTON, '"Guests in the Dock": Moroccan Workers on Trial in the Colony of Gibraltar,' *Critique of Anthropology* 11, no. 4 (1991): 361–79.
[59] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on June 22, 2014.
[60] Interviewed by Andrew Canessa on January 23, 2015.
[61] HENK DRIESSEN, 'Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered,' *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2005): 129–41; DANIEL GOFFMAN, 'Izmir: From Village to Colonial Port City,' in *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul*, eds EDHEM ELDEM, DANIEL GOFFMAN, and BRUCE MASTERS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 79–135; DIETER HALLER, 'The Cosmopolitan Mediterranean: Myth and Reality,' *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 129, no. 1 (2004): 29–47.
[62] STANTON, '"Guests in the Dock."'

through the land border tend to have the lowest paid jobs, and often see some of their rights denied on the Rock.[63] The border and its closure encouraged the emergence of a number of myths which today are embedded in Gibraltar's national(ist) culture. Based on stereotypical views of the Spanish context, these myths are at the heart of the contemporary discrimination of Spaniards working in the enclave.[64]

Marking a cultural difference that did not exist, the frontier seems to function as a self-fulfilling prophecy.[65] We are talking about a population – that of Gibraltar – whose members did not hesitate to welcome Spanish Republican refugees during the Civil War, despite the British colonial elite's support for Franco's uprising.[66] They are the same Gibraltarians who shared many common trade union struggles with their Spanish co-workers, against British colonial injustice and exploitation.[67] Like any other nationalism,[68] the Gibraltarian one also stands on a series of myths: myths that are generated by (and through) the border.

Conclusions

Despite the British attempts to divide and rule the people of Gibraltar and the Campo de Gibraltar – the British officials actively encouraged the Gibraltarians to see themselves as socially superior to the Spanish and adopt a colonial attitude vis-à-vis Spaniards even though they were colonial subjects themselves[69] –, cross-border interactions over the centuries remained structured around class solidarity and cultural sameness.

As Franco's regime closed the border and the economic, social and political conditions of the Gibraltarians improved, however, cross-border interactions decreased significantly and social class differences were eroded within the enclave as the Gibraltarians became formally British and an increasing amount of institutional functions moved from London to Gibraltar.

Within such a transformational scenario, a national discourse gained momentum in Gibraltar. Throughout the process, the increasingly affluent population started to imagine itself as a distinct nation, whose boundaries were set against a Spanish culture which came to be defined in terms of a series of pejorative stereotypes. With a barrier

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[63] JOHN FLETCHER, *An Economic Impact Study and Analysis of the Economies of Gibraltar and the Campo de Gibraltar* (Gibraltar: The Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce, 2015); FRANCISCO ODA ÁNGEL, 'Gibraltar a un año de la Declaración de Córdoba: la recuperación de la confianza,' *Documento de Trabajo* 45 (2007): 1–23.
[64] CAROLINE NORRIE, 'The Last Rock in the Empire: Evacuation, Identity and Myth in Gibraltar,' *Oral History* 31, no. 1 (2003): 73–84.
[65] ALEXANDER T. ALEINIKOFF and RUBÉN G. RUMBAUT, 'Terms of Belonging: Are Models of Membership Self-Fulfilling Prophecies?,' *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal* 13, no. 1 (1998): 1–24.
[66] JULIO PONCE ALBERCA, *Gibraltar and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39: Local, National and International Perspectives* (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
[67] JEFFRIES, 'The Wrongful Deportation of Albert Fava.'
[68] ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities*.
[69] GARETH STOCKEY, 'Us and Them: British and Gibraltarian Colonialism in the Campo de Gibraltar,' in *Bordering on Britishness. National Identity in Gibraltar*, ed. ANDREW CANESSA, 91-119.

physically as well as symbolically separating the Rock from the rest of the Campo de Gibraltar, ethnic and cultural diversity was thus constructed, and soon the border and the bordered nationalism generated by it became central in allowing Gibraltarians to maintain their improved economic, social and political status.