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Editors: Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Ravi Sundaram,
Awadhendra Sharan, Jeebesh Bagchi + Geert Lovink

Associate Editor: Smriti Vohra
Translations: Shveta Sarda

Editorial Collective: Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Ravi Sundaram,
Ravi S. Vasudevan, Awadhendra Sharan, Jeebesh Bagchi + Geert Lovink

Design: Mrityunjay Chatterjee
Design Intern: Mrinalini Aggarwal
Cover Design: Mrinalini Aggarwal
Back Cover Photo: Monica Narula

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Tel: (+91) 11 2396 0040, Fax: (+91) 11 2392 8391
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In Turbulence

At some point during the closing half in the 'extra time' of the Italy vs. France match in this year's FIFA World Cup final game on 8 July, the world changed. Again. The synapses in the brain of a man named Zinedine Zidane went into a state of momentary turbulence. A wave of rage surged into a headbutt that we mourned and saluted, seconds later, glued to television screens halfway across the world. The world seemed to change that instant, as it always does when the angel of the unexpected flaps his wings in the middle of a great game. Many prayers went unanswered that night.

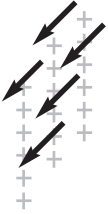
All this was happening as e-mails bearing notes and queries about the book you now hold in your hands, or scan with your eyes on a screen, flew across the world. This book, a book titled 'Turbulence', was on its way into the world. A turbulence caught, distilled, held between covers, in these many pages, in this much ink, in these images, in this much white space.

Who knows what else was happening that night? What ripples had radiated out of that momentary collision between two footballers in Berlin? Or which wave had carried that headbutt with it, to crash on which distant shore of the global unconscious?

Someone had gone to sleep after a solitary vigil over a cache of explosives in Mumbai. An Israeli soldier stood at his checkpost, somewhere along the border with Lebanon. A Hezbollah fighter spent a restless night thinking of his girlfriend. Perhaps a party of Bengali tourists in Srinagar sang songs just because it was too cold for them, and perversely, because Italy had won. Somewhere deep within the earth, below the ocean floor, not too far off the shoreline of Pandarang in Java, magma crackled. The seeds of a million cells of turbulence, inheritors of tsunamis, descendants of riots and curfews, progeny of hurricanes, modernity's questioning bastards, were germinating fractally, branching out into new constellations of storm. The world was at unrest. As it is, every night.

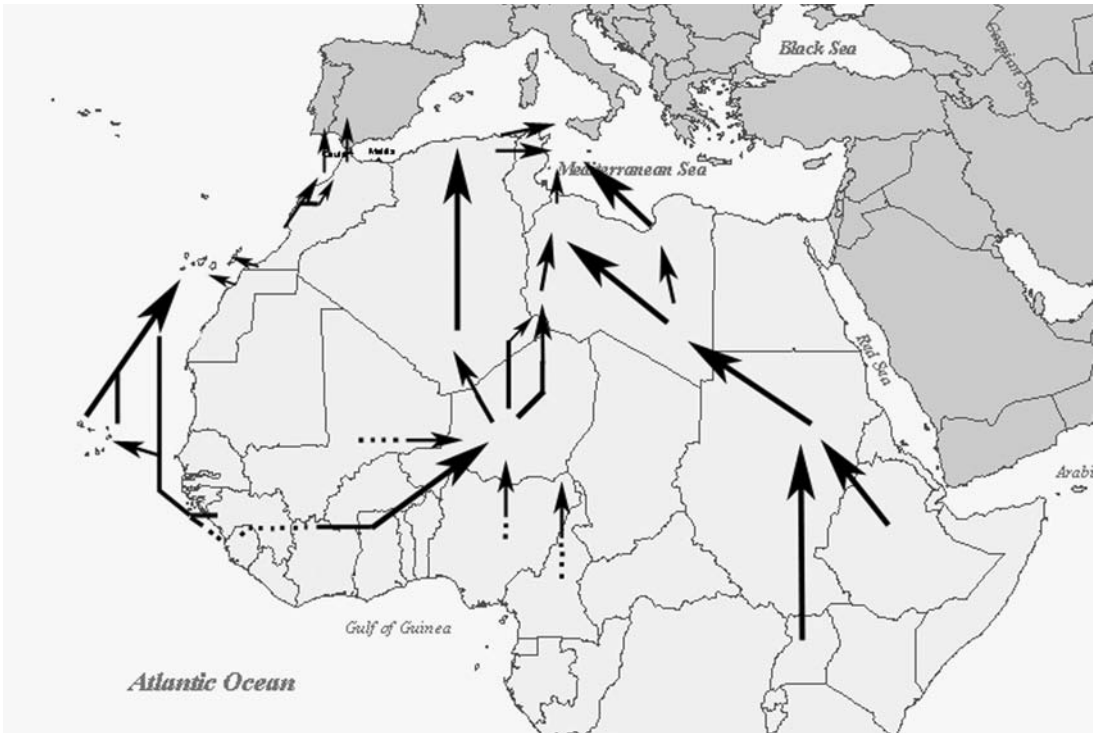
In the week and days that followed, bombs exploded in Mumbai, grenades were hurled at tourists in Srinagar, a war began in Lebanon, a tsunami hit Java, once again. There was rain. There was fire. There were signs of birth and death. There were quarrels and street fights, there were parties, the Richter scale quivered, there were demolitions. The twenty-first century rumbled on, as usual, turbulently.

If there were ever to be a 'weather report' for our times, an audit of the climate in which we have grown accustomed to live, it would use the word 'turbulence' often. We inhabit the vortex of storms, and smell sunshine. We are always prepared for rain. Our cities are sites of flood and fire. We live between tremors, power cuts and voltage surges. Agitations emerge and abate on our streets and on the airwaves, as if by accident. Books are burned, blogs are blocked, bourses dance mad tarantulas. We fly with seat belts fastened. Predictions are pronounced and dissembled in seconds. Bets are placed and lost, wagers made and found wanting. Insurance companies invoke acts of God. The more things change, the more they change.



Ceuta and Melilla Fences: A Defensive System?*

GUIDO CIMADOMO + PILAR MARTÍNEZ PONCE



I.

The Mesopotamian idea of plain Earth surrounded by an ocean which was forbidden to sailing, the punishment being a fall into an unlimited abyss, or the Babylonian cosmogony whose priests described the universe as an oyster in an ocean of water, supported by a sky like a round solid room, are examples of the conception of the Earth by the earliest civilisations.

Through the observation of natural phenomena, the Greeks were the first to imagine the earth as a sphere.¹ But till the Middle Ages, the flatness of the earth remained a general belief, with its correlated speculations on concrete limits and definitions. Today we have



more delimited borders, some vanishing while others are built *ex novo*, generating another order of related problems.

Borders exist due to interrelated reasons that are difficult to separate. With some simplifications, we can reduce these to the following flows: economic, migratory, military and touristic.²

The role of globalisation in generating and controlling these flows can hardly be questioned. But what is not so clear is whether globalisation makes the most marginal and poorest countries poorer, or whether these countries are victims of the 'lack of globalisation'³.

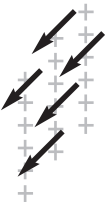
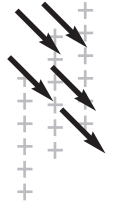
II.

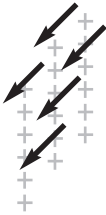
Here we want to focus on the alarming question of the assaults on the fences of Ceuta and Melilla. Spain assumes that illegal border crossings have intensified despite the construction of the fences in the early 1990s; during October 2005, these attempts at crossing occurred with heightened frequency and strength. These attempts could be identified in the bigger movement of people without possibilities who cross the African continent, leaving their homes in the hope of finding a better future in Europe.

If we analyse the paths of immigration followed to enter Europe from the South, we can see evidence of three patterns. First, arrival at the coast of Morocco and Mauritania in the effort to reach Spain (Andalusia and the Canary Islands). Second, arrival through Libya at the coast of Malta and Italy (mostly Lampedusa and other Sicilian islands). Third, arrival at the coast of Greece, a solution that constitutes the longest walk for sub-Saharan people, and mostly used by people following routes from south-east Asia. Maybe airports and land frontiers are the most reliable options for immigrants to reach Europe;⁴ sea-crossing attempts show the highest percentage of people dying in the effort to reach the continent, and provoke questions about all European policies on immigration. These policies are impulsive responses to problems, not consciously planned, long-term strategies.

The implementation of the SIVE control system (a coordinated system of radars and video cameras to control the first 20 kilometres of Mediterranean coastline, connected directly with a coordination centre that directs rescue and immigration forces) along the entire Andalusian coast during the last year has reduced the attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea. As a consequence, a selection process is initiated when people reach the Moroccan border. Immigrants with money are separated from those without money. The former can attempt to pay for a false passport or for a trip to the opposite coast, while the latter have no possibility other than to settle around the fences of Ceuta and Melilla, and to attempt to cross them.

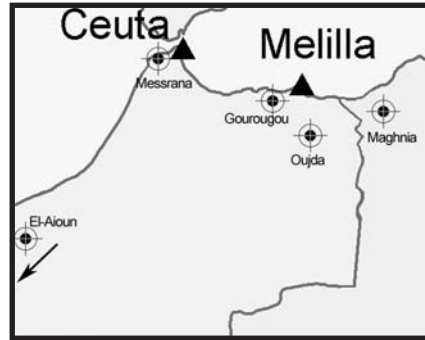
The situation of these European territories on the African continent simplifies the options for attempted entrance. The average waiting period within these settlements is about seven months, and in this time many attempts are made to cross the fences. The Moroccan authorities show no interest in solving the situation, at least up till now, with the Spanish government pressing for more active control on Moroccan side. This situation,





similar to that on the Libyan side, could be interpreted as a way to obtain economic compensations in exchange for more active cooperation in policing their borders.

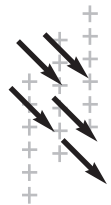
The intention of the EU is to move the pressure from its own limits to those of the nearest countries (Libya and Morocco among others). Last May, the European Border Agency was created to execute EU immigration politics. About €285 million has been allocated for the 2007-2013 period (apart from the fund of €760 million allocated for repatriation of migrants to their countries of origin, and the €2.2 million allocated for strengthening exterior borders). The agency, perhaps created as part of the development of an European Border Police Corps, or a coordinated Coast Guard force, has the assigned task of coordinating between the border forces of member states, preparing risk analyses, and coordinating the repatriation of illegal immigrants. This is a lot of money for the defence of the privileges of what has been called Fortress Europe, with no real attempt to solve the problem at its roots.



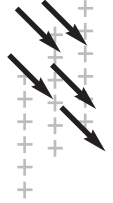
III.

The object of these short notes should be read in a double way. For instance, the militarisation of border control, the increasing of the height of the fences from 3 metres to 6 metres where necessary, apart from the building of a third fence proposed for Spain, are just answers to specific problems, as they are always adopted after critical situations. The problem of immigration is not actually of each state independently but rather of the EU in general, as the adoption of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 (with the progressive dissolution of interior borders from 1993) allowed for free movement between its signatory member states; this being applicable, however, only to EU nationals and the transport of EU goods. The solutions that are being proposed show more and more how the interests of the EU lie in strengthening border control, with military force if necessary, and in the politics of the readmission of illegal migrants to their countries of origin.

The assaults put into evidence some legal questions related to the double fence location, that we would like to examine more closely. The fence is defined by two walls that have actually been raised to 6 metres in height from the original height of 3 metres, throughout their length (about 10 kilometres in Melilla and 8 kilometres in Ceuta). Between the fences, a road is used by Spanish forces to control borders (in conjunction with infrared cameras and more advanced tools, that contrast with the rudimentary tools used for the assaults: ladders, gloves and clothes for protection). The way institutions (Spanish or Moroccan, equally), act through these assaults shows the degree of this unresolved problem. The Spanish expelled immigrants (in the process of trespassing or already in



Spanish territory)⁵, without questioning the legality of the act of expulsion. According to Spanish migration law, the expulsion of migrants found on national territory has to be registered by the police before the action is done. These principles are not followed in practice, with the law disregarding the rights of migrants and asylum seekers. Morocco, which usually looks upon migrants as clandestines, started deporting them beyond the southern national border, into the desert, without shelter or humanitarian aid. The legal advisory is reduced, nationalities are not acknowledged, refugees are not recognised; the only official aim is to expel all undesired visitors from the more privileged/desired country.

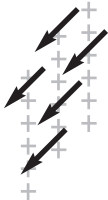


IV.

Another aspect we want to question is the interaction of these migratory flows with the fences. The long path to Europe has many stops, dangers to be avoided and ways to be walked, but it is the arrival at the EU frontier that we want to focus on. The fence is a permeable membrane according to the genre of flows it has to filter, but in the case of migratory ones it becomes a dense wall. We could say it generates an opposite vector force against the natural flow of migrants, whose only chance is to settle nearby while attempting to cross. We can consider as another vector the (often violent) pressure of Moroccan forces, due to which attempts to cross the border have grown in number and intensity. The consequence of this is the creation of unconventional settlements: at this time we can count five (Oujda and Maghnia on the Algerian border; Gourougou in Melilla; Belyounech on the border of Ceuta; Messrana in Tangier; and El Aioun and Dejlja in Sahara, the nearest to the Canary Islands).⁶



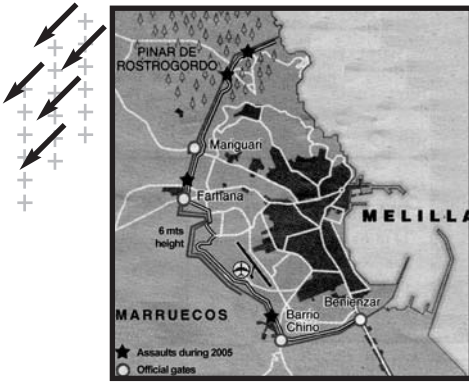
We would like to think of these settlements as a 'third nation'⁷; a new place where migrants cannot obtain the benefits of the developed world, nor can they claim the rights of their own country (rights often hard to demand; the denial of such rights often becomes the reason for migration). We could talk of extraterritorial spaces, to which arrive extremely varied populations that settle in camps according to their nationalities. Sustaining the daily routine,



including cooking, collecting water, constructing ladders for the purpose of scaling the fences, and creating means of protection such as gloves for the hands during crossing attempts, is a group effort. The celebration of religious ceremonies to sustain a vivid hope for a better future, together with the self-regulation and self-organisation of these settlements, is further evidence of the ordinary, peaceful aspirations of this 'community'.

V.

At the risk of necessary simplifications, we can say that the situation is mostly due to



political forces at the highest levels. The repetition of international meetings and congresses, full of well-intentioned declarations but void of real solutions for the problems already identified, show how difficult it is to take action. Actual immigration policies tend, through *ad hoc* legalisation processes, to accept only the number of immigrants needed to implement the national work force; while economic policies tend to see the issue as a means of obtaining more privileges and opportunities for national companies. The difference between richer and poorer countries is growing, in part due to the opportunities that these companies find in the poorer countries. In

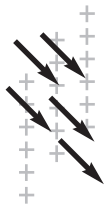
any case, whatever the policies, money flows move from the South to the richest countries.

In situations related with border limits these actions directly affect space and territory, hence the quality of life. The Berlin Wall, and Israel's fences raised with the excuse that they are a necessary defence against Palestinian attacks, are the most famous examples that we can cite in our reflection on how political separation barriers influence life in their neighbourhoods. For this very relevant reason, spatial practitioners should have an important role in proposing solutions for these conflicted spaces. Architects should be accorded a role in creating solutions that permit inclusion, interaction between communities, and development on both sides of the border, areas treated as marginal and whose full potential is still not considered.

Of course, the solution to such a big problem is not only in the hands of urbanists and architects. Their voices must also be attended by those of politicians, together with those of many other professionals, reflecting on how to resolve or palliate what is, in the end, an unequal distribution of opportunities.

*Ceuta is a Spanish enclave in North Africa, located on a northern tip of the Maghreb, on the Mediterranean coast near the Strait of Gibraltar. Its area is approximately 28 square kilometres. It has a rank between a standard Spanish city and an autonomous community. It forms part of the territory of the European Union. Melilla is a Spanish enclave in North Africa, located in the northernmost tip of the Maghreb, on the Mediterranean coast. Its area is approximately 20 square kilometres. Its population consists of Christians, Muslims, Jews and a small minority of Hindus. For over three decades, Morocco has claimed Ceuta, Melilla, the Canary Islands and various small islands off the coast of Africa, drawing comparison with Spain's territorial claim to Gibraltar.

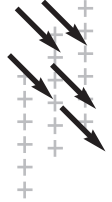
The Ceuta border fence is a separation barrier between Morocco and Ceuta. Constructed by Spain, its stated purpose is to stop illegal immigration and smuggling. The €30 million razor wire barrier was financed by the European Union. It consists of 8 kilometres of 3-metre fences topped with barbed



wire, with regular watchtowers and a road running between them, to accommodate police patrols. Underground cables connect spotlights, noise, movement and infrared sensors and video cameras to a central control booth. The Melilla border fence is a separation barrier between Morocco and the city of Melilla, considered by all countries except Morocco to be an integral part of Spain. The construction of the razor wire fence cost Spain €33 million. This barrier consists of 10 kilometres of parallel 3-metre fences, closely resembling the Ceuta fence. The height of both the Ceuta and Melilla fences is currently being raised to 6 metres.

Morocco has objected to the construction of both fences as it considers Ceuta and Melilla to be occupied Moroccan land, and since 1975 has sought full handing over of both territories.

In October 2005, over 700 sub-Saharan immigrants tried to enter Spanish territory from the Moroccan border. Many of them were shot in the back, allegedly by the Moroccan *gendarmérie* as well as the Spanish police. Amnesty International and Médécins Sans Frontières have accused the Moroccan government of dumping over 500 refugees in the Sahara desert, without food and water.



NOTES

1. Aristotle developed the first astronomic observations that questioned the notion of the flatness of the earth. In *On The Heavens*, Bk. II (350 BC), Aristotle summarised the reasons for the Greek belief in the curvature of the earth. (1) Certain stars disappeared beyond the southern hemisphere as one travelled north, and beyond the northern hemisphere as one travelled south. (2) The earth's shadow on the moon during a lunar eclipse was always the arc of a circle. (3) On earth itself, ships disappear beyond the horizon hull-first in whatever direction they are travelling. These facts could not be explained if the earth's surface were flat, but could be explained by assuming the earth to be a sphere. Aristotle's observations are based on the phenomenon of parallax, the angular shift or change in the apparent position of an object due the change in the position of the observer.
2. From Latin *fluxus*, the act and effect of flowing. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. Edición Electrónica, Versión 21.1.0. Real Academia Española, 1992.
3. Guillermo de la Dehesa. "La Economía Tecnológica". In *El País*, 2 January 2005, Sec. Negocios 1000, p. 9.
4. Tomás Bárbulo. "El Verdadero Agujero Negro de Schengen Está en los Aeropuertos". In *El País*, 25 December 2005, Sec. España, p. 19.
5. Surveillance forces seem to forget the fact that the Melilla fence is all within Spanish territory; those who manage to climb the first of the two existent parts of the fence are therefore already within Europe.
6. Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía. "Informe sobre la Inmigración Clandestina durante el Año 2004". 10 January 2005.
<http://www.apdha.org/areas/documentos/inmigra2004.pdf>.
7. Juan Jesús Aznárez. "Tijuana, Frontera del Arte". In *El País*, 5 February 2005, Sec. Babelia, p. 2.

