

Small places, Large Issues

*Identity, morality and the underworld at the Spanish-Moroccan
frontier of Melilla*

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology

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Abstract

Situated on the north-eastern coast of Morocco, the Spanish enclave of Melilla is a paradigmatic case of an unusual yet increasingly common kind of community. These are small, rather isolated communities with no industry or natural resources of their own, which rely heavily on capital and labour drawn from outside. Together with Ceuta, Melilla is one of the two only land borders between Europe and Africa. The enclave's economic and political set up reflects its geopolitical importance. Across the border from Melilla lies the Moroccan province of Nador, home to one of the largest communities of Moroccan emigrants in Europe and a steady source of unskilled labour on which the Spanish enclave relies. Connections across the border are strong, including kinship links, employment networks and a wide range of both legal and illegal commercial transactions.

Based on twelve months of fieldwork conducted on both sides of the border, this thesis departs from prevailing images of the borderland as either an abstract space of 'creolisation' and 'hybridity' or a locus of resistance to state power, and suggests, instead, that we carefully consider the large-scale political and economic processes through which places like Melilla and Nador are produced, and analyse the ways in which such global structures shape local reality. A fundamental aim of the thesis, therefore, is to elucidate the nature of the relations between space, place and capital at the Spanish-Moroccan frontier, and understand how such relations affect the lives of those who inhabit the region. This involves thinking about the language of a 'community' and the discourses and practices of morality that sustain it; analysing discourses of 'us' vs. 'them' in contexts of institutionalised economic inequality; and understanding local conceptions of identity, morality and legitimacy, and how the three interact.

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To my father

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Experience soon taught me that under these laboratory conditions one found out nothing at all except in answer to a question; and not a vague question either, but a definite one ... so that a man who was asking questions of one kind learnt one kind of thing from a piece of digging which to another man revealed something different, to a third something illusory, and to a fourth nothing at all.

R.G. Collingwood

1.1 Small places, large issues

Anthropologists, we are often told, used to work in *naturally* small places; villages, communities and hamlets were the object and setting of ethnographic studies which, nevertheless, dealt with ‘large issues’. The story is familiar enough. In a well-known introduction to anthropology, for instance, students are advised to consider that ‘knowledge of traditional, “remote” societies greatly enhances the understanding of modern phenomena’ and that, although the ‘traditional focus on small-scale non-industrial societies [can be regarded] as a distinguishing feature of anthropology’, because of ‘changes in the world and in the discipline’ this is no longer an accurate description (Eriksen 1995: ix). Today, the author argues, ‘space can no longer be said to create a clear buffer between “cultures”’ (ibid. 297). The traditional, isolated communities which used to occupy anthropologists, the reader is led to conclude, no longer exist; the world ‘is not an archipelago of isolated cultures, but an unbounded system of multiple interrelationships’ (ibid. 305).

Let us begin with the claim that, in the past, anthropologists worked in small-scale, isolated societies. Geertz already noted in 1973 that ‘the locus of study is not the object of study’ (1973: 22). Anthropologists, he wrote, ‘don’t study villages (tribes, towns, neighbourhoods...); they study *in* villages’ (ibid.).¹ Most of us, I think, would

¹ In fact, Eriksen’s now famous slogan ‘small places, large issues’ was originally formulated by Geertz in slightly different words, when he said that ‘small *facts* speak to large issues’ (ibid. 23, my emphasis). The difference is not trivial.

agree with Geertz's distinction between the locus and the object of study. Indeed, small places were not necessarily the *object* of early anthropology, but were they even the setting? Anthropological literature seems to indicate that they hardly ever were. The work of Morgan (1871) and Boas (1914) in North America, or that of Tylor (1870 [1861]) in Mexico are paradigmatic examples of a comparative, macro-regional approach found also in the later work of Lévi-Strauss (1964-1971) on South American mythology, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940) on African political systems, and Dumont (1970) on Indian caste.² Even the more 'classical' ethnographies, such as Cohen's (1969) study of Hausa merchants, Evans-Pritchard's ethnographies on the Nuer (1940) and the Azande (1937), Lienhardt's (1961) on the Dinka and Malinowski's on the Trobriand Islands (1922) can hardly be considered studies undertaken in small villages. The idea that the traditional loci of anthropological study were small-scale, isolated communities seems to be simply mistaken. As Sahlins put it, 'the rhetorical shift to morality and politics ... has effected a kind of anthropological amnesia, a loss of ethnographic memories' (1999: 403).³

Eriksen's argument, however, is not uncommon: Appadurai, for instance, writes that 'the landscapes of group identity —the ethnoscares— around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous' (1991: 192). The now platitudinous warning against taking societies and cultures as bounded, isolated systems appears here explicitly conflated with the idea that bounded systems are a thing of the past. This is a spurious historical argument on both counts.

² Of course, there are also examples of ethnographies of comparatively isolated places —or those that appear as such to the ethnographer— like Firth's (1936) study on Tikopia, but they are a minority.

³ Sahlins is arguing specifically against the idea that early anthropologists depicted societies as bounded, isolated and static. He writes: 'it is astonishing from the perspective of North American anthropology to claim that our intellectual ancestors constructed a notion of cultures as rigidly bounded, separated, unchanging, coherent, uniform, totalized and systematic. Talk of inventing traditions. The historiographic principle here ... consists of attributing to one's predecessors the opposite of whatever is now deemed true' (1999: 404). In fact, Sahlins reminds us, 'the old-timers virtually made a Heraclitean mantra of the incantation that "cultures are constantly changing"' (1999: 405).

The view that we once lived in a world composed of spatially bounded, independent units that has now been swept away by a new world of flows and connections is largely without foundation. As Eric Wolf (1997 [1982]) pointed out in *Europe and the people without history*, ecological, demographic, economic and political connections are not only a feature of the present, but also of the past. Human societies and cultures, he writes, cannot be properly understood until we learn ‘to visualize them in their mutual interrelationships and interdependencies in space and time’; trying to reduce links and networks to societies and nations is thus unproductive (Wolf 1997 [1982]: x). More recent work by Horden and Purcell (2000) supports Wolf’s contention that societies and cultures ‘have always formed part of larger systems’.⁴ As Horden and Purcell show, however, it is not simply that societies are connected and form part of larger systems; rather, they are *produced* by these connections and *formed* by these systems. In the Mediterranean, the exchange of goods and services has been the main insurance against the uncertainty of a natural environment where forest fires, plagues, droughts and floods are frequent and unpredictable. Connectivity (through the exchange of animal products, human labour, crop surpluses and minerals among other things) has been crucial to the production and survival of a fragmented landscape of ‘micro-regions’ linked in networks of interdependence. The products exchanged, and the micro-regions involved in these exchanges, varied historically; yet exchange itself remained a constant feature.⁵ If, as these and other authors have argued, connections,

⁴ Building on Braudel’s analysis of the Mediterranean, Purcell and Horden embark on the momentous task of demonstrating, historically, the connections and linkages across the Mediterranean Sea prior to the 16th century (the main period explored by Braudel in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*). Their reading of Braudel is critical, but they maintain that an argument for the existence of a Mediterranean region or unit can be made. In anthropology, the focus on a distinct Mediterranean identity goes back to Redfield’s observations in the 1950s about what he called ‘the anomalies’ of peasant personality in the Mediterranean area (Redfield 1955, 1989 [1960]). Shortly after the publication of Redfield’s *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture*, Julian Pitt Rivers and John Peristiany published *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (1965), an edited collection which aimed to explore the idea of a Mediterranean basin as a cultural unit of shared social and cultural traits structured around a distinct moral system of honour and shame. Other studies, such as John Davis’ *People of the Mediterranean* (1977), developed the idea of a discrete Mediterranean subspecialty in social anthropology.

⁵ For further studies addressing the question of how patterns of exchange have developed across different regions see Scheele’s (2011) work on the Sahara and Ho’s (2006) on the Indian Ocean.

linkages and relations between societies are the norm and not the exception, small-scale, isolated communities can hardly be seen as the natural foundation of social life.

Genuinely small places do exist, but they are not *naturally* small; they are historical constructions which respond to a specific set of social, economic and political processes. In our times, these processes are of a particular kind, and it is in this context that small-scale, isolated communities are being produced in fundamentally novel ways. Heavily dependent on capital drawn from outside, these new kinds of ‘enclaves’ rely on the sale of material (oil) or non-material (fiscal regimes, bank secrecy regulations, etc.) resources to external clients and, in this sense, they can be seen as forming part of a wider *rentier* economy typical of our times. The Arab Gulf states described by Dresch and Piscatori (2005) or the offshore enclaves analysed by Palan (2003) are two cases in point; the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, located on the northern coast of Morocco, are less well-known but equally relevant examples. In fact, far from dying out, as Appadurai seems to suggest, ‘small places’ are spreading across the globe. The proliferation of gated communities and other forms of privileged compounds worldwide can be seen as instances of the same phenomenon. A common feature of these new ‘enclaves’ is the stark contrast between a privileged elite with exclusive access to resources and an underprivileged majority. But how are these kinds of places *produced* and *maintained*? And what is their relation to their neighbouring territories? Following the work of geographer David Harvey, this thesis constitutes an ethnographic account of one such place and its counterpart across the border.

Situated on the northeast coast of Morocco, the city of Melilla is a fenced territory of twelve square kilometres that has been under Spanish sovereignty since 1497 (Ceuta, a similar enclave located across the Gibraltar Strait, fell in Spanish hands in 1580). Historically, Melilla has been a disputed land: the frontier between Spain and Morocco, Christianity and Islam, and, most recently, Europe and Africa. As a *place*, it has achieved a certain kind of ‘permanence’ throughout the centuries, though the forces sustaining it have shifted over time. Initially established as a military outpost and a penal settlement, Melilla became a regional and international trading centre in the wake of British and French imperialism, when the Spanish enclave was declared a free port

(1863) and began serving as a key point of entry to North Africa for British and French manufactured products. The establishment of the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco during the first half of the 20th century strengthened commercial links across the border, and established the foundations for a new hierarchical relationship between people of Spanish descent and Moroccan Berbers (known locally as Riffians).

Spain's incorporation into the European Community in 1986, thirty years after Morocco's Independence, turned Melilla into a gateway to European territory. The consolidation of human-trafficking networks in the region to cater for thousands of Sub-Saharan African and East Asian migrants trying to enter the EU followed shortly. This brought about drastic changes to the economic, social and political landscape. Pressure from the European Union led to the construction of a fence to secure the perimeter of the enclave, and control of the border became a priority for local and national authorities. European funds to secure the Euro-African border soon became one of the most important sources of revenue for Melilla and trade across the border grew into a full-blown black market economy which today encompasses not only the contraband of basic commodities and luxury goods, but also people smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering.

Across the border, the Moroccan province of Nador is home to one of the largest communities of Moroccan emigrants in Europe, and a key hub in drug trafficking routes linking Africa to Europe. Riffian emigration to Europe began in the 1960s, when economic growth led to increased demand for cheap labour in Europe. It was common for Riffian migrants in Europe, most of whom had originally come from the countryside, to invest in relocating their families in the city. This resulted in the rapid development of urban Nador. The trend continued over the following decades, drawing a rapid inflow of capital into an economy previously based on regional commerce, seasonal migration to Algeria, and subsistence agriculture. In recent years, the increased purchasing power of Nadori emigrants has attracted the attention of external investors, and today the region is undergoing drastic changes as capital for the development of a tourist industry is poured in and long-needed basic infrastructure begins to be built.

Placed on opposite sides of the conceptual divide between Islam and Christianity, the Arab and the Western world and, most recently, Europe and Africa, the Spanish enclave of Melilla and the neighbouring Moroccan province of Nador are both separated by and connected through the border they share. The two sides of the border are bound together by long-standing connections, ranging from legal commercial activities to contraband, kinship links, employment networks and a myriad of social, political and economic relations of mutual dependence. Here, the border is first and foremost an economic resource, a space where commerce, traffic, and high-volume circulation take place on a daily basis, but where territoriality and sovereignty stand as crucial elements in the regulation of capital, mobility and exchange.

Legal, political and economic differences across the border have generated new relations of social, political and economic inequality between Melilla and the Moroccan hinterland, as residents in the enclave enjoy a number of rights and privileges inaccessible to people living on the other side of the fence. This recently established divide, however, conceals further hierarchical divisions on either side: in Melilla, a long history of Christian hegemony informs relations between Christians of Spanish descent and Muslims of Berber descent. In Nador, relations between locals and emigrants, though deeply ambivalent, also show a clear rift. The ways in which social relations and interactions are informed by these contrasts occupy most of the thesis.

1.2 A borderless world?

The last three decades have witnessed a move in academic discourse towards an emphasis on the fluid, the mobile and the ephemeral. This shift is not exclusive to anthropological thinking, but it is part of a more general move in academia and in the arts from a modernist to a supposedly postmodernist framework (Harvey 1989). The change in the real world, especially in economic organisation, is not without significance. The image of a borderless world so prevalent in academic literature at the turn of the 21st century responds to this shift, albeit sometimes in inadequate ways.

Conceived during the 18th century as an effort to ‘develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic’ (Habermas, 1983: 9, cited in Harvey 1989: 12), the project of modernity promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion and superstition through science and rationality. At a time when the industrial revolution offered a promise of development and emancipation from the past, the modernist project embraced the idea of progress, and actively sought a break with history and tradition (Harvey 1989: 12).⁶ The two world wars in the 20th century shattered this optimism. After WWII, when modernist art became establishment art and a corporate capitalist version of the modernist project of development held sway, a new vision emerged as the radical alternative. In contrast to the project of modernity, the so-called ‘postmodernist’ project professed acceptance of the fragmental and chaotic currents of change, renouncing all attempts to find the immutable in its midst. The embrace of the transitory, the fleeting and the fragmentary led to new modes of representation; truth was not to be found in the immutable, but precisely in the ephemeral, the volatile, the incommensurable.⁷

This shift in focus has had an impact on anthropology, as growing numbers of academics emphasise the predominance of change, movement and flow in every aspect

⁶ The *Avant-garde* movement that emerged in the early 20th century was inscribed in this new conceptual framework. New transport infrastructures and faster communication systems, technological advances, processes of urbanisation, and changes to modes of consumption with the advent of mass markets, advertising and mass fashion, were the background against which the modernist project emerged and developed. Aesthetic responses to these changes varied widely; from the open rejection found in the work of Heidegger or the incisive critique of actor and film director Charles Chaplin, to the enthusiastic embracement of the Futurist movement or the anti-establishment ‘shock art’ of Dadaism. The work of painters like Manet, Pollock or Picasso, writers like Baudelaire, Joyce and Proust, poets like Mallarmé or Aragon, or architects like Le Corbusier or Frank Lloyd Wright has to be understood in terms of this quest for new modes of representation to render intelligible the rapid changes occurring at the time. The opposition between the fleeting, the ephemeral and the fragmentary on the one hand, and the eternal and immutable on the other, structured intellectual and artistic production, and the problem of representing the immutable amidst the chaos led to a preoccupation with language as a mode of representing ‘eternal truths’.

⁷ According to Harvey, the shift in modes of representation corresponds to a series of political and economic changes initiated in the 1970s which are significant enough to mark the beginning of a new historical moment. Callinicos (1989), by contrast, considers that these changes are either the consequence of long term processes or specific to the highly unstable conjuncture of the 1980s; in either case, unlike Harvey, he considers that these changes do not mark a new phase in capitalism. It is important to remember, however, that Callinicos was writing against neo-Marxist academics like John Urry or Frederic Jameson, who argued that the 1970s marked the beginning of a new, disorganised phase of capitalism characterised by the disintegration of state-regulated economic spaces and the expansion of multinational power. This is not the position sustained by Harvey. For a detailed discussion of Harvey’s position, which I subscribe to, see section 1.3.

of social life.⁸ Globalisation, transnationalism and interconnectedness are said to be at the core of contemporary processes and relationships of all kinds, as phrases like the ‘global village’ (MacLuhan 1994 [1964]), the ‘global ecumene’ (Hannerz 1996), a ‘borderless world’ (Ohmae 1990), ‘spaces of flow’ (Castells 1996) and even ‘non-places’ (Augé 1995) proliferate.⁹ Diversity of metaphors aside, the picture presented in this literature remains by and large the same: globalisation has given rise to a new transnational reality in which groups are no longer bounded, identities no longer homogeneous (the concepts *en vogue* are ‘creolisation’ and ‘hybridisation’), and space is no longer an obstacle to movements and flows (see, for example, Appadurai 1991; Eriksen 1995; Kearney 1995; Hannerz 1996; Ong 1999; Vertovec and Cohen 1999; Tsing 2000).

Against the discourse of a ‘borderless world’, which some have dismissed as ‘neoliberal propaganda’ (Anderson et al. 2002: 9), a growing number of academics have

⁸ Of course, there has also been a number of scholars who have argued vehemently against the postmodernist turn, and particularly against the image of a globalised, deterritorialised world. Harvey is undoubtedly one of them, but he is not alone. Callinicos’ *Against Postmodernism* (1989), discussed in the previous footnote, is perhaps one of the most renowned examples. In anthropology, Sahlins (1999) has a wonderfully written piece against what he calls ‘afterological’ literature (which includes all the ‘postisms’, i.e. postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism and the like), where he points to the structural amnesia that besets current anthropology and reminds us of all the things we once knew about culture. From a different standpoint, Friedman (2000) has argued that the ‘globalization discourse’ is neither a theoretical framework nor a model of reality or even the result of serious research, but simply a manifestation of a ‘growing awareness by intellectual and other elites that something has happened’ (ibid. 638-39). Strathern (1995) writes a strong critique of the notion of a ‘globalised culture’ in her *Shifting Contexts*, while Mintz’s (1998) piece on area studies and transnationalism can be cited as critical review of the ‘transnationalism’ framework.

⁹ Marc Augé’s work on ‘supermodernity’ is a particularly extravagant example. Augé (1995: 78) coined the phrase ‘non-place’ to refer to a space of transience which cannot be defined as relational, historical or concerned with identity (characteristics that he attributes to ‘places’) and therefore must be regarded as a non-place. According to him, airports, motorways, hotel rooms and supermarkets are examples of such non-places. One may be forgiven for questioning the claim that any place *at all* could lie outside of history, or be non-relational for that matter; that airports, of all places, should be described as ‘not concerned with identity’ defeats the most basic common sense. As Ekholm-Friedman and Friedman (1995: 134) put it, ‘this is indeed the self-identity of the cosmopolitan culture critic, and not of those whom he observes’. The same assumptions inform Aihwa Ong’s (1999) latest work on ‘flexible citizenship’, where she writes that flexible citizenship is ‘the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions’ (ibid. 6). This contrasts radically with her earlier work (1987) on spirit possession amongst Malaysian factory workers, where in place of the mobile, ‘multiple passport holder’ (1999: 2) we find a working subject, immersed in and responding to new relations of subordination and domination at a time of changes in the modes of production in Malaysia. Perhaps the same could be said of Bayart’s most recent *Global Subjects* (2007) in relation to his earlier work on the state in Africa (1993) and of Manuel Castells’ early work on immigrant workers and class struggles in Europe (1975) as compared with his most recent work on ‘the network society’ (1996).

called for a return to the consideration of the state as a powerful agent in the configuration and enforcement of territorial boundaries (Donnan and Wilson 1998, 1999; Anderson 2001; O'Dowd 2002; Anderson et al. 2003). The argument goes as follows: while it is true that the world in which we live is one in which flows of capital, information and commodities have increased dramatically, borders continue to be both testimony to and agents of the power of the state, and should therefore be studied in relation to the state (Anderson, et al. 2003).¹⁰ In their words:

According to some scholars, we are living in a world where state borders are increasingly obsolete. This view holds that international borders are becoming so porous that they no longer fulfil their historical role as barriers to the movement of goods, ideas or people, and as markers of the extent and power of the state ... [But in fact] The world of expanding deterritorialised identity politics is a world of many more and, in some cases, stronger states. Lost in the crush of much contemporary social science is one simple fact – the new politics of identity is in large part determined by the old structure of the state (Donnan and Wilson 1998: 1, 2).¹¹

There are, in my view, important problems with this approach. First, if states are taken as the primary agents of power, their territorial borders become both symbols of state power and sites for its contention. Consequently, any extra-legal activities occurring across the border are seen as a form of resistance to the state (cf. Donnan and Wilson 1999: 87-106). Indeed, according to Donnan and Wilson, 'such activities threaten to subvert state institutions by compromising the ability of these institutions to control their self-defined domain ... they ignore, contest and subvert state power'

¹⁰ See also O'Dowd and Wilson (1996), Donnan and Wilson (1998, 1999) and Gupta and Sharma (2006). The emphasis these authors place on taking into consideration the role of 'the state' as an agent of power in the study of borders, and to consider it in relation to 'the nation' in some cases and 'society' in others, comes at the expense of neglecting the simple fact that states do not exist in isolation. That is, states are defined in relation to other states, they are not 'natural communities'. It thus follows that the analysis of 'the state' cannot be divorced from the analysis of the specific, historical relations established between states, in borders as much as elsewhere.

¹¹ This leads them to conclude that 'the theoretical importance of an anthropology of borders lies primarily in what it might reveal about the interplay between nation and state, and about the role of the border in the past, present and future of nation and state' (1998: 7). In their view, therefore, borders are of anthropological interest *because* they constitute a means to study the state. I see no grounds for presuming that the inverse holds. That is, while the study of borders may provide an insight into the workings of the state, the state may prove to be only one amongst many factors of importance in the study of borders. Whether the state is a key element or not will be determined by ethnographic findings and not the other way around.

(1999: 88). This is a rather widespread misconception.¹² The problem here is taking a state-centric view, from which economic activities outside the state's control appear invariably subversive. Yet, as Harvey notes, we should be wary of the romanticisation of borders as places where one can find the 'voices of the marginalised', for

it then comes as a bitter disappointment to discover that the impoverished, the marginalized, and the oppressed often lack the extraordinary and moving nobility that can occasionally be found, and that they often aspire not to a radically different social order, but to one that gives them a piece of what the privileged already have (1996: 101).¹³

Also, more often than not, the illegal cross-border activities that Donnan and Wilson refer to occur not despite of, or against, state control, but as a consequence of economic and governmental interests. In Melilla, as we shall see, the whole city benefits from an underground economy that yields considerable revenues.¹⁴ Furthermore, as Piliavsky (forthcoming) argues, neither smuggling nor any other economic activities around border areas are confined to trade across national boundaries and, in fact, smuggling hubs are quite often found in the heartlands of states and not on their peripheries.

A second, related problem lies in the uncritical employment of concepts such as 'borderlands', 'border identities' or 'border cultures'. Take the following example:

¹² Despite her insistence that the informal economy should not be taken as an anti-state movement due to its connections with state power, Roitman (2004) takes fiscal disobedience to be a 'moment of struggle' (ibid. 8). While she criticises the use of the term informal economy on the basis that these kinds of economic activities involve highly organised modalities of financing and labour recruitment (ibid. 19), her suggested alternative, 'fiscal disobedience', implies precisely the presumption of a subversive intention which she takes herself to be rejecting. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) subscribe to a similar assumption: 'the traders do not organise themselves into concerted political actions but they are a part of this general dissent, which can result in, or provide support for, political change' (ibid. 172). Instead, I part from the premise that, if people do not consider themselves to be engaged in a political struggle or in a movement of anti-state resistance, assuming they *are* is probably not a useful ethnographic approach. In this, my work is more in line with Scheele's (2008); the focus is placed on the ways in which people classify trading hubs and perceive the different kinds of economic activities occurring within and across them. The connections between questions of legality and questions of legitimacy take precedence. This approach, which Van Schendel and Abraham present as a 'radically different way of conceptualizing "illegal" transnational linkages' (2005: 4) is in fact a matter of common sense for most anthropologists.

¹³ Along the same lines, Wacquant warns against 'the generous moral sentiment' which becomes 'a serious obstacle to sociological analysis' and, paraphrasing Bourdieu, reminds us that 'good sentiments make for bad sociology' (2010: 170).

¹⁴ As discussed in chapter 5, products smuggled across the border of Melilla and Ceuta are shipped in mainly from Asia and Europe and the trade networks through which they are distributed span across Moroccan territory. Because goods are smuggled *out* of Melilla and *into* Morocco, Spanish authorities can legally benefit from the revenues collected through taxes on incoming merchandise at the port.

Borders are liminal zones in which residents, wayfarers and the state are continually contesting their roles and their natures. As a result, borders and border people have identities which are shifting and multiple, in ways which are multivocal and multilocal, but which are none the less fashioned to some degree by the structures of the state (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 64).

Borders and border people seem to have rather extraordinary qualities: not only the people but the borders themselves, apparently, have *shifting* and *multiple* identities which are also *multivocal* and *multilocal*. Semantic niceties aside, the idea that people's identity should be multiple by virtue of their living near a territorial boundary applies if and only if we accept the long-contested equation between culture, nation and territory, so that by virtue of their living between two national territories inhabitants of these border regions acquire a double identity.¹⁵ Evidence in the field generally points to the contrary conclusion; if anywhere at all, it is precisely in border regions where identities appear more fixed, permanent and non-negotiable. As Freud (2001 [1953] [1919]) told us and Simmel (1950b) reminded us, familiarity and closeness breed difference. Barth (1969) explained it in simpler terms when he said that this is where ethnic boundaries are drawn.

In this respect, the emergence of an anthropology of 'borderlands' has done considerable damage to the study of borders. The idea that borders generate 'borderlands' and that 'borderlands' are special and discrete entities in which one can find specific 'border cultures or identities' is prevalent in the literature.¹⁶ In some of the most colourful writings in this area, borderlands are described as 'a place of incommensurable contradictions' or 'an interstitial zone of displacement and

¹⁵ Donnan and Wilson (1999: 36), for instance, write that in borderlands we can study 'the interstices between cultures'. As Friedman puts it, the problem is not 'the attribution of a fixed set of properties to a given population, but the assumption that this set of properties is somehow not the result of practice but an inherent property of the individual members of that population. It is the substantivization of culture and the channelling of this substance into individuals as if it were a packet of recipes, codes, or even forms of knowledge that can be passed on like genetic material or blood to coming generations of individuals' (2008: 271). This vision of cultures as substances that can flow into one another, Friedman argues, has given rise to the concepts of hybridization, creolization and the like. Indeed, if cultures maintain their properties while travelling, moving and mixing with one another, borders may be a good place to go when searching for the interstices between them.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Álvarez (1995), Anzaldúa (1987), Baud and Van Schendel (1997), Gupta and Ferguson (1992), Hannerz (2000), Rosaldo (1989) or Rösler and Wendl (1999).

detritorialization that shapes the identity of the hybridized subject' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 18); they are 'sites of creative cultural creolization, places where criss-crossed identities are forged out of the debris of corroded formerly (would be) homogeneous identities' (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996: 15); they are 'where the action is, and hybridity and collage are among our preferred words for characterizing qualities in people and their products' (Hannerz 2000: 2).

Little attention is paid in these narratives to the ways in which changes in the economic and political system, while resulting in an increased movement (flow) of capital, commodities and information, have also led to severe restrictions in the movement of people. This is not simply an anecdotal correlation. It is, in fact, one of the main reasons for the continued existence of borders at a time when free trade agreements have led to the creation of numerous transnational political entities. The proliferation of programmes and institutions devoted to the study of borders and so-called 'border communities' responds precisely to this interest in controlling the movement of labour.¹⁷

There is something to the idea that border regions *are* a distinctive kind of place. Yet, as Piliavsky argues, 'it is the set of relationships that borders bring about, rather than the formulation of borders as free-standing material entities that ... should be at the basis of the study of border zones' (Piliavsky forthcoming: 24). Understanding the kinds of relations that borders may produce requires that we distance ourselves from rhetorical narratives of fluxes, flows, hybrids and creoles, and consider carefully the processes by which certain 'flows' are crystallised into fixed patterns that assume a relative permanence in the social and material world (Harvey 1996: 55). For, as Geertz put it,

¹⁷ Examples abound, often within the academic setting. In Oxford, the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) is one such institution, but there are many others elsewhere. In Spain, for example, the Ministry of Employment and Immigration created, in 2001, the Permanent Observatory of Immigration (*Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración*) and has generously funded a Spanish NGO (*ACCEM*) which has opened several similar 'observatories' across the country, from Girona to Sevilla, Valencia and Melilla.

it is still the case that no one lives in the world in general. Everybody, even the exiled, the drifting, the diasporic or the perpetually moving, lives in some confined and limited stretch of it –“the world around here”. The sense of interconnectedness imposed on us by the mass media, by rapid travel, and by long-distance communication obscures this more than a little (1996: 262).

In this light, the term ‘borderland’ acquires a rather different meaning. The Spanish enclave Melilla, a territory located *literally* between two borders, is a case in point.¹⁸ The interest lies not in the geographical idiosyncrasy of the borderland *per se*, but in the system which gave rise to it in the first place; a system which is designed to protect the unrestricted flow of trade while ensuring control over the movement of people. In order to understand this, as Harvey suggests, the ways in which certain processes crystallise into ‘permanences’ (1996: 81), we must take a few steps back from the border itself, and look at the social, economic and political processes involved in what Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) termed ‘the production of space’.

1.3 Space, place and capital

Recent anthropological work on ‘space and place’ has been strongly influenced by the writings of German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Drawing on Husserl’s theory of phenomenology (defined as the science of consciousness and its objects), Heidegger (1977 [1927]) was concerned to establish the nature of the relationship between consciousness, Being and the world.¹⁹ He proclaimed the spiritual unity between humans (Being) and things (the world) through the concept of dwelling. Dwelling, he

¹⁸ The fence that secures the perimeter of the city and separates Spanish from Moroccan territory marks one end of this borderland; the border controls at the port of the city and at the airport mark the other end. Officially, the former demarcates the limits of the European Union and the latter those of the EU customs territory.

¹⁹ A disciple of Husserl, Heidegger wrote against the then prevalent idea that the world could be unveiled by naturalistic or physical explanations. His interest was in the analysis of what he called *Dasein* (literally, life or existence; in Heidegger, *Da* [site, in] *Sein* [being], the site for the revelation of Being); that Being for which Being is a question, i.e. the human being. This Being is not a Being-in-itself, but a Being-in-the-World; the fundamental mode of Being is thus neither purely subjective nor objective, but grounded in the world. His thinking influenced a large number of existentialist and, later, post-modernist thinkers, including Sartre, Ortega y Gasset, Merleau-Ponty, De Certeau, Bachelard, Ricoeur and Lyotard amongst others.

wrote, entails an identification with the environment. In this identification ('Being-in-the-World') Heidegger saw the basis for authenticity and rootedness, both undermined by the spread of technology, rationalism and mass production prevalent at the time of his writing.

In the anthropology of space and place, the adoption of Heidegger's phenomenological approach, particularly the concept of 'dwelling', has led to a strong focus on senses, perception and experience (Tuan 1977; Tilley 1994; Basso and Feld 1996; Ingold 2000; Corsín Jiménez 2003; Lawrence-Zúñiga and Low 2003). Tilley (1994) has been one of the leading proponents of the phenomenological analysis of space. The key concern in this approach, he writes, 'is the manner in which places *constitute* space as centres of human meaning, their singularity being manifested and expressed in the day-to-day experiences and consciousness of people within particular lifeworlds' (ibid. 14-15). Ultimately, he argues, 'what space is depends on who is experiencing it and how' (ibid. 11).²⁰

The emphasis on subjective aspects of experience leads to a conspicuous lack of clarity and precision in the language used by some proponents of this approach. Because it is defined in relation to the subject experiencing it, space becomes alternately 'a capacity', 'a condition', 'a faculty', 'a becoming', 'an emerging property of social relationships' and a 'shifting constellation of social relationships through which "places" are activated as they are practised and brought to life' (Corsín Jiménez 2003: 139, 140); it contracts and expands 'according to a person's emotions and state of mind', and it is 'embedded', 'embodied' and 'engendered' (Lawrence-Zúñiga and Low 2003: 2-5); moreover, 'the world and the subject reflect and flow into each other' (Tilley 1994: 14), and 'places and objects define space, giving it a geometric personality' (Tuan 1977: 17). One could easily extend the list of metaphors. As Geertz

²⁰ Tilley presents the phenomenological approach as an alternative to both 'empiricist objectivism', which 'makes an object of the subject', and 'cognitive idealism', which 'reduces the perception of the object to an operation of thought' (Tilley 1994: 13). The solution to this dichotomy lies, he argues, in the concept of 'perceptual consciousness', which 'is not just a matter of thought about the world, but stems from bodily presence and bodily orientation in relation to it, bodily awareness' (ibid. 14).

put it, 'like Love or Imagination, Place makes a poor abstraction. Separated from its materializations, it has little meaning' (Geertz 1996: 259).

Space, wrote Lefebvre, is a historical product (2009: 171). As such, it cannot be understood outside the relations of production and reproduction of a given society. In the capitalist mode of production, space is 'utilized to produce surplus value' and, in this sense, space is 'a means of production' (ibid. 187-188). That is, under the specific conditions of capitalism, space is hierarchical, and must thus be conceived in terms of the relations between centres and peripheries (ibid. 215). If, as Lefebvre argues, relations of production and reproduction create a certain order according to which space is organised, an understanding of space will necessarily require an understanding of the geographical configuration of the economic system in place. Harvey provides an insight into such a configuration. He has written extensively on what he sees as a relatively recent change in the 'regime of accumulation' and its associated mode of social and political regulation (Harvey 1989: 121-122). The increased movement of capital, commodities and information that characterises the current economic system, he argues, has to be understood in the context of a transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation.²¹ This new regime, characterised by an acceleration of turnover time in capital and production, rests on flexibility with respect to production processes, labour markets and patterns of consumption. The emergence of new sectors of production, new

²¹ Fordism is understood here as a regime of accumulation based on the idea that mass production requires mass consumption and therefore a new system of reproduction of labour power, a new politics of labour management, and new kinds of social values, for the creation of the affluent (and thus consuming) worker (Harvey 1989: 125-127). The Fordist system was set up, first in America and later in Europe, over a long period of time (1914-1965) through a wide range of individual, institutional and state decisions, and was particularly influenced, first, by the Great Depression and, later, by the war-time mobilisation. By 1945, when the post-war boom started, the state had begun to take on new roles and build institutional powers (through a mixture of fiscal and monetary policies directed towards public investment in transportation, public utilities, etc.), leading to a tense but firm balance of power between organized labour, large corporate capital and the nation-state. The post-war boom was dependent upon a large-scale expansion of world trade and international investment flows which would permit surplus capacity in the United States to be absorbed elsewhere. Mass production led to mass consumption and to a standardization of products which brought with it a new aesthetic and a 'commodification of culture' (ibid. 135). In all this, the state played a key role, assuming a variety of obligations directed towards those areas of public investment that would guarantee full employment and contribute to the growth of mass production and mass consumption. The years between 1965 and 1973 marked the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation. The process of economic restructuring and social and political readjustment that followed the oil shock of 1973 led to a new economic regime which implied high levels of structural unemployment, organised industrial subcontracting, loss of power for trade unions, an acceleration of technological innovation and a drastic reduction in state regulation.

ways of providing financial services and new markets, together with the greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological and organisational innovation are fundamental elements of a new economic system in which

the incentive to create the world market, to reduce spatial barriers, and to annihilate space through time is omnipresent, as is the incentive to rationalize spatial organization into efficient configurations of production (serial organization of the detail division of labour, factory systems, and assembly line, territorial division of labour, and agglomeration on large towns), circulation networks (transport and communication systems), and consumption (household and domestic layout, community organization, and residential differentiation, collective consumption in cities) (Harvey 1989: 232).

Greater flexibility, however, does not result in a more ‘disorganised’ form of capitalism. Rather, capitalism becomes ever more tightly organised *through* dispersal, geographical mobility, and flexible responses in labour and consumer markets (Harvey 1996). Relative regional advantages have acquired unprecedented significance in a system in which the strategic use of spatial differentiation in the administration of labour supplies, resources, and infrastructures yields increased profits. Local differences in capital, technology, market taste, material resources, technical skills and labour markets have led to a decentralisation of relations of production. As a consequence, ‘the active production of places with special qualities becomes an important stake in spatial competition between localities, cities, regions, and nations’ (Harvey 1989: 295).

Here, the distinction between space and place implicit in Harvey’s writings is of relevance.²² He writes: ‘those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance’ (1989: 234). Commanding space refers both to the

²² This distinction is, as far as I am aware, not made explicitly, but the contrast between space and place is drawn repeatedly throughout the book. He writes, for instance, that ‘working-class movements are, in fact, generally better at organizing in and dominating *place* than they are at commanding space’ (1989: 236) and that ‘capital, in short, continues to dominate, and it does so in part through superior command over space and time, even when opposition movements gain control over a particular place for a time’ (ibid. 238-239) or, to give one last example, that ‘the “otherness” and “regional resistances” that postmodernist politics emphasize can flourish in a particular place. But they are all too often subject to the power of capital over the co-ordination of universal fragmented space and the march of capitalism’s global historical time that lies outside the purview of any particular one of them’ (ibid. 239).

control over spatial organisation (through transport infrastructures, establishment or elimination of territorial boundaries, administration of private and public life, organisation of the work-space, and so forth) and the control over representations of space (for instance, through mapping and measurement). By contrast, place refers to a particular space at a particular time. It is in this sense, Harvey argues, that capital commands space (and time), while labour is linked to place. In this order, those who control certain places, have the power to produce space.²³

Harvey describes two forms of place-construction which are of interest here. The first relates to the creation of bounded, protected places reserved for elite groups. He gives the example of Guilford, a gated community in Baltimore. Guilford was purchased in 1907 by a syndicate of rich Baltimoreans to preclude the speculative development of the area (ibid. 291). Soon after, a sophisticated development plan was commissioned from a private company, and neighbourhood lots were built and sold under restrictive and exclusionary clauses which excluded non-Caucasians and Jews. By the 1920s, Guilford had already become the secluded residential centre of affluent white Anglo-Saxon and largely protestant power in the city which today lies north of the Johns Hopkins University Homewood Campus (ibid.). The exclusionary clauses were later rescinded, but Guilford maintained its original character, and a 'strict isolation from the less affluent and racially different communities that formed on its eastern edge', facilitated by the construction of a solid wall which prevents access from the east (ibid. 292).²⁴ The history of Guilford's constitution as a gated community is uncannily

²³ Mike Davis' renowned analysis of the city of Los Angeles (1998) provides a perfect illustration of how the production of space is in the hands of those who control certain places. In the 1990s, Davis tells us, Los Angeles was undergoing a process of militarisation which was part of a larger 'crusade' to secure the city. This effectively meant containing the homeless and poor in restricted areas and enforcing urban segregation in an effort to ensure the protection of the middle and upper classes. The construction of a new downtown centre hosting financial and commercial 'megastructures' served to create a citadel in the centre of the city, isolated from the surrounding poor immigrant neighbourhoods by large highways and palisades, as the poor and the homeless were gradually driven out of the area towards peripheral neighbourhoods.

²⁴ Guilford is by no means a unique example. In fact, gated communities are a worldwide phenomenon. In the United States alone, an estimate put the number at 20,000 in 1997 (Blakely and Snyder 1997; see also Low 2001; Le Goix 2005; McKenzie 2005). While there are no official estimates of the total number of gated communities worldwide, it is generally acknowledged that they have proliferated rapidly over the last three decades. The literature on gated communities has grown at a parallel speed, with several edited books published over the last few years (see Low 2003; Glasze et al. 2005; Atkinson and Blandy 2006) and a growing number of case studies on gated communities across the world. Despite significant

similar to that of the Spanish enclave of Melilla. Indeed, Harvey's analysis of Guilford could be applied almost *verbatim* to the Spanish enclave. He writes:

So what kind of place is Guilford? It has a name, a boundary, and distinctive social and physical qualities. It has achieved a certain kind of "permanence" in the midst of the fluxes and flows of urban life. Protection of this permanence has become a political-economic project not only for Guilford residents but also for a wide range of institutions in the city (government, the media, and finance in particular). And it has a discursive/symbolic meaning well beyond that of mere location, so that events that occur there have a particular significance (1996: 293).

The second kind of place-construction described by Harvey confronts us with a radically different landscape which parallels the situation found across the border from Melilla, where the hitherto underdeveloped province of Nador is undergoing a radical transformation which will soon turn it into a tourist hotspot for Moroccan migrants returning from Europe and foreign tourists. 'When the landscape shaped in relation to a certain phase of development (capitalist or pre-capitalist) becomes a barrier to further accumulation', Harvey writes,

the geographical configuration of places must be reshaped around new transport and communications systems and physical infrastructures, new centers and styles of production and consumption, new agglomerations of labor power, and modified social infrastructures (including, for example, systems of governance and regulation of places). Old places have to be devalued, destroyed, and redeveloped while new places are created (1996: 296).

His example, in this case, hits close to home. A few miles away from the centre of Oxford lies the neighbourhood —formerly a borough— of Cowley. In 1973, Cowley's

historical and geographical variations, these studies show that gated communities function by and large as private, secluded residential areas for either local and/or foreign elites. In South Africa, for instance, gated communities are invariably linked to new forms of territorial governance such as home-owners associations and private firms managing enclosed areas (see Landman 2002); in Ghana, the emergence of gated communities can be traced back to the 1990s and is directly linked to the remittances of migrants in North America (Grant 2005); in the Arab world, case studies show that gated communities host local elites in Lebanon and foreign residents in Saudi Arabia (Alkhayyal and Glasze 2002); in Istanbul gated communities house new urban elites (Genis 2007); in Indonesia, residents include both local upper classes and foreign expatriates (Leisch 2002); and in Shanghai a morally-informed distinction between 'the rural' and 'the urban' underlies discourses of spatial segregation amongst the upper class elites that reside in gated communities (Pow 2007).

car plant —‘the focus of some of the most virulent class struggles over the future of industrial relations in Britain’ (1996: 19)— employed 27,000 workers. In 1988, British Aerospace (BA) acquired the Rover car company in a privatisation deal under the auspices of the Thatcher government. Partial closure of the plant was immediately announced, while the prospect of total closure loomed as BA planned the redevelopment of the area for the creation of a business park. In the early 1990s, after numerous lay-offs, what remained of the original car plant was sold to Rover, and not long afterwards the Oxford Business Park was built.

Oxford’s city centre might as well have been Guilford; or, alternatively, the Cowley car plant might as well have stood east of Guilford’s gated community. They are two sides of the same coin. The same structure is at play in the relationship between the enclave of Melilla and the neighbouring Moroccan territories. The hierarchical configuration of space is nowhere more obvious than in the contrast between these two kinds of place, which more often than not lie side by side.

1.4 The *rentier* state

What is the role of the state in the configuration of such places? How do ‘those who control certain places’ produce space and, conversely, how do those who command space control ‘the politics of place’? In our case, how relevant to the analysis of the hierarchical configuration of space is the fact that the border between Spain and Morocco is also the border between Europe and Africa?

The processes of geographical specialisation described above, by which small-scale differences between places (in terms of labour supply, infrastructures, market niches or resources) acquire unprecedented importance, have generated an increase in inter-place competition. The state has played a critical role in these processes, utilising its regulatory power to facilitate the expansion of capital at an international level, and reinforcing the spatial differences on which such expansion relies. In this context, where countries without a strong productive sector must sell whatever natural or artificial

resources they possess, new forms of *rentier* enclaves have flourished. These are mainly of two kinds: micro-states such as Monaco, Liechtenstein, Nauru (in Micronesia), Singapore, Tuvalu (a Polynesian island nation), San Marino and some of the Arab Gulf countries (Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain), and different kinds of offshore enclaves, including Hong Kong, Macao, Gibraltar, and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.²⁵

The concept of the *rentier* state, first introduced by Hossein Mahdavy to refer to pre-revolutionary Iran, has been applied to oil economies in the Arab world (Beblawi and Luciani 1987). *Rentier* states, which derive all or a substantial portion of their revenue from the rent derived from the sale of resources to external clients, often function as gate-keeper states. Beblawi and Luciani's (1987) definition of the *rentier* economy as an economy which relies on substantial *external rent* derived from indigenous natural resources can also be applied unproblematically to the relatively new oil-economies in the Middle East.²⁶ However, as Beblawi himself points out, the effects of the oil economy spill over to non-oil states, thus creating a regional *rentier* economy. Taken in its broader definition, a *rentier* economy can be seen as including economies dependent not only on the sale of natural resources such as oil, but also on other forms of external rent such as foreign aid or migrant remittances (what Beblawi calls semi-*rentier* states and Luciani 'induced allocation states', *ibid.* 15-16).²⁷ In this sense, the *rentier* economies of the Middle East can be seen as paradigmatic of a much wider

²⁵ Catudal (1974) distinguishes between divided states, landlocked countries, 'enclave' states (the Vatican City), coastal territories (such as Hong Kong, Macao or Gibraltar), 'neutral' zones, 'pene-exclaves', 'quasi-exclaves', 'virtual exclaves' and 'temporary exclaves'. None of these, he claims, are 'true' enclaves/exclaves, given that, 'technically, for an exclave (enclave) to exist it must be (a) part of one country, (b) completely surrounded by the territory of another state' (*ibid.* 116). Following his definition, therefore, Melilla and Ceuta would belong to the category of 'coastal territories', for they are 'regions along the sea coast of one state but administered by another' (*ibid.* 111).

²⁶ It is important to note that Beblawi (1990: 87-88) qualifies this definition by adding that in *rentier* states (as opposed to *rentier* economies) the government is the principal recipient of the external rent, and only a small fraction of society is directly engaged in the generation of the rent, while the rest of the society is only engaged in the distribution and utilisation of this rent. In earlier work, however, Beblawi and Luciani favoured the use of the wider concept of *rentier* economy, considering the *rentier* state as a sub-system associated with the *rentier* economy (Beblawi and Luciani 1987).

²⁷ In fact, Beblawi and Luciani (1987: 61) argued explicitly that remittances were becoming one of the main sources of external rent for non-oil Arab economies, giving the example of the prosperous trade developed in Egypt through labour migration to the Gulf.

phenomenon. Bayart (1993) for instance, described a similar situation for a number of African states. Insofar as the state controls the flow of capital and resources coming in and out of the country, African governments function as gate-keepers for their own countries. Given the lack of material resources and a production base, access to political power is defined by access to wealth dependent on contact with the outside world (through imports, aid programs and foreign debt), a contact which occurs only through the state. This, Bayart argues, leads to the fusion of potentially competing elite groups to form a single dominant national class, centred on the control of government. The parallels with the *rentier* states of the Arab Gulf are evident.²⁸

Rentier economies/states, therefore, can also exist where external revenue is derived from non-material resources. Political alliances, beneficial fiscal regimes, bank secrecy policies or a strategic geopolitical situation can generate *rentier* economies and states as much as can oil revenue. The relatively recent emergence of an ‘offshore’ economy is a case in point. The offshore interface is the point at which international corporate capital, state funds and sovereign debt, and the money laundering industry meet (Hampton 1996).²⁹ Since the early 1970s, offshore financial markets have been joined by a plethora of territorial enclaves, called special economic zones or export processing zones.³⁰ Offshore economies thus include state-established enclaves

²⁸ I am referring to the oil economies described by Dresch and Piscatori (2005), where a privileged autochthonous group is maintained by the state while an immigrant ‘worker’ population is forced to subsist through underpaid jobs with minimum rights. As discussed in chapter 3, this economic and political structure, which Longva (2005) defines as an ‘ethnocracy’, finds important parallels in Melilla.

²⁹ While in popular parlance ‘offshore’ refers to any bank that accepts deposits or manages assets in foreign currency on behalf of persons legally domiciled elsewhere, offshore should technically refer to an institution that, while legally domiciled in one jurisdiction, conducts its business solely with non-residents (Blum et al. 1998: 28). The offshore interface as defined by Hampton comprises both Tax Havens and Offshore Finance Centres. Tax havens and OFCs gained prominence after the 1960s, and particularly in the 1970s. The amount of bank deposits in tax havens is estimated to have increased from \$11 million in 1968 to \$385 million in 1978 and one trillion US dollars by 1991 (Hampton 1996: 295).

³⁰ Palan defines ‘export processing zones’ as ‘relatively small, geographically spread areas within a country, the purpose of which is to attract export-orientated industries by offering them favourable investment and trade conditions compared to the remainder of the host country’ (ibid. 67). Palan (1998) distinguishes different types of export-processing zones, but argues that they all ‘share the same principles of territorial enclaves, in some cases surrounded by a perimeter fence, in which a certain amount of regulation and taxation are withheld. Like the offshore financial centres, they offer bundles of legislation which are aimed at attracting businesses to areas they are unlikely to go to otherwise’ (ibid.). This is, in fact, an accurate description of Melilla. As with Tax Havens, Palan tells us, the numbers of EPZs grew rapidly after the 1970s. As will be seen, the date is not arbitrary; a number of important economic changes took place in the decade of the 1970s which effectively made it possible for such

‘characterised by “designer rate tax and regulatory regimes” aimed at harvesting rent from the world economy’ (Palan 2003: 1-2). To this we may add the rising number of countries offering ‘flags of convenience’³¹, enclaves or micro-states selling internet-driven facilities such as offshore pornography and offshore gambling, and regions offering a cheap workforce and/or facilities for the establishment of manufacturing industries.

The emergence of an offshore economy is connected in more than one way to the shift towards a flexible regime of accumulation described above; it is in fact an integral part of the processes of spatial differentiation and regional specialisation that characterise the current economic system.³² In this regard, the offshore interface cannot be reduced to offshore banking, tax havens or financial centres. The range of processes that benefit from offshore displacement is much wider. While the Arab Gulf countries import labour from South Asia, to take a classic example, North Atlantic and Western European countries export their manufacturing industries to China, Indonesia, Taiwan, and other countries in the region where labour and production costs are lower. The two strategies respond to the same problem; capital accumulation and the generation of surplus value are now more than ever dependent on the spatial organisation of production, circulation, distribution and consumption.

By providing access to cheap labour and low taxation, the offshore economy ‘offers capital a stick to wave at recalcitrant states that have failed to deregulate their economies sufficiently’ (Palan 2003: 3). In this way, the mobile yet traditionally heavily-regulated sectors of the economy (shipping, finance, gambling, commerce, pornography) are relocating to unregulated spaces that present themselves as external to

places to flourish. Today, the majority of EPZ are located in the Caribbean (48%) and East Asia (42%), with Singapore and Hong Kong hosting the largest numbers of EPZs (ibid. 68).

³¹ A flag of convenience is a flag of a country under which a ship is registered in order to avoid the payment of financial charges such as taxes. Panama, perhaps, is the most famous provider.

³² Indeed, despite claims that the growth of alternatives to currency and the decline of state control over the monetary system point to an increasing ‘deterritorialisation of money’ (Dodd 2005: 388; cf. Cohen 1998), the existence of offshore finance centres points to the continued importance of territoriality and sovereignty in the circulation and accumulation of wealth.

the state. But while the offshore economy may appear external to the state, it is in fact a product of the state system as well as an integral part of it. Indeed, in this fiction,

states have found a politically acceptable, albeit awkward, way of reconciling the growing contradictions between their territorial and nationalist ideology so critical for the maintenance of capitalist (global) order, and their support for capitalist accumulation on a global scale (ibid.).

Within the network of offshore transactions, however, there are central hubs. Tax Havens and Offshore Finance Centres (OFCs) play a fundamental role in the circulation of international financial capital, 'acting as satellites orbiting the global financial centres of London, New York and Tokyo' (Hampton 1996). Thus, the offshore economy, writes Palan, 'is not off shore at all' (2003: 2), and the appearance that the offshore interface is external to the mainstream economic system should be seen, as Mitchell (1991) argued for the division between state and society, not as a matter of conceptual imprecision but as a clue to the nature of the phenomenon.

Offshore finance centres provide a haven for the mobility of capital and the accumulation of tax-free profits regardless of the source. The connections between the legal and the illegal spheres are nowhere more visible. Bank secrecy laws and offshore banking offer multiple opportunities not only for international corporations and foreign investors, but also for money laundering and other criminal activities, pointing to the 'blending of legal and illegal actions, and the mixing of various degrees and sorts of criminality' (Blum, et al. 1998: 25).³³ To the extent that the connections between the legal and the illegal are institutionalised, and to the extent that the offshore interface entails a suspension of standard regulatory frameworks, the offshore interface can be

³³ Hampton (1996) provides well-documented examples of the blurred boundaries between legal and illegal financial operations at the offshore interface. The corporate and state abuse of the offshore interface includes: disguising the origins of corporate illegal payments (such as bribes, contributions to political parties and sanctions busting), locating a company in an offshore financial centre to avoid legal responsibility for toxic waste disposal sites in the manufacturing country, or using flags of convenience from OFCs for international shipping. Governments, he claims, have also used the offshore interface for a number of political and economic reasons, for instance, the avoidance of economic sanctions imposed by certain states on others, funding security services' covert operations abroad, or supplying funds to foreign governments, opposition parties or terrorist groups. State military uses also include the international arms trade and the use of offshore companies to create semi-mercenary firms to be deployed in foreign countries (ibid. 304-305).

seen as a variant of the state of exception described by Agamben (2005).³⁴ As Yeung argues, ‘it is not a question of whether capital’s internationalization results in the decline of the state, but rather of how the state continues to participate in capital’s internationalization in order to sustain the reproduction of capitalism itself’ (1998: 296).

Offshore economies constitute new and relatively unregulated spaces in which certain economic transactions can take place with minimal intervention by the state, but which are nevertheless created *by* the state (Palan 1998). As Palan puts it, ‘the state system is not disappearing, but is in the process of creating secondary, relatively unregulated juridical spaces in which economic activities can develop more or less without hindrance’ (ibid. 1). But this phenomenon is not restricted to economic transactions. State-sponsored, unregulated territorial enclaves may serve not only to guarantee unrestricted economic activities, but also to ensure control over the movement of people. The Australian immigration detention facility built in 2001 on Christmas Island, a 135 km² island located 2,000 kilometres away from the Australian coast, is a paradigmatic example of these eminently modern ‘enclaves of exception’.³⁵ The 12 km² Spanish enclave of Melilla serves a similar purpose by providing an offshore, enclosed territory to contain the inflow of illegal migrants. After all, it seems, small places do speak to large issues.

1.5 Nador, Melilla and the *rentier* economy at the Euro-African border

Neither the Spanish enclave of Melilla nor the neighbouring Moroccan province of Nador fall squarely into any of the categories described above, yet all of the elements discussed in this chapter have played a central role in the configuration of these two places. Neither of the two hosts an offshore finance centre of the kind found in places

³⁴ Writing against Carl Schmitt’s definition of sovereignty as the power to proclaim a state of emergency, Agamben (2005) argues that the state of exception entails a prolonged suspension of the law by which citizens are deprived of their rights as the state increases its power.

³⁵ The most extreme example of these kinds of offshore enclaves is perhaps the United States’ detention camp in Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), established in the US naval base of Guantamo by the Bush Administration in 2002 to hold detainees from the so-called ‘war on terror’.

like the Cayman Islands; yet they sustain a sizeable money laundering ‘industry’ inextricably linked to drug trafficking. Neither Nador nor Melilla are tax havens strictly speaking, yet a peculiar fiscal regime in the Spanish enclave has generated an economy of contraband and smuggling across the border linked to trade networks across Morocco. They are not *rentier* states in the strict sense of the word, yet both depend in large measure on capital drawn from the outside. Separated by a border which also brings them together, Nador and Melilla have found themselves in the midst of a conceptual, political and material divide between two countries, two continents and two religions. Nowhere is the capitalist dialectic between (capital) flows and (border) closure more obvious than at the limit between Europe and Africa.

Despite its long history, the Spanish enclave of Melilla can be seen as paradigmatic of an eminently modern kind of community, sustained by the processes of regional differentiation and spatial reorganisation described above. Lacking in productive infrastructure and natural resources, Melilla’s main income derives from the sale of the only commodity the enclave has to offer: the frontier. Three external clients sustain the economic ‘burden’ of the city: international import/export businesses operating in the region, the Spanish state, and the European Union. Since Spain’s incorporation into the European Community, and particularly after the first arrivals of Sub-Saharan African migrants in the enclave during the 1990s, EU funds to secure the Euro-African border have become one of the most important sources of revenue for Melilla’s local government. At the same time, the enclave’s delicate geopolitical position has led the Spanish government to establish generous fiscal advantages for residents in the city in order to ensure political control over the enclave, granting cheap access to housing and relatively high wages for those employed by the state, who constitute 40% of the population.³⁶

The protection of the new Euro-African border, however, has in no way deterred the continuation of a cross-border smuggling economy linked to legal international trade

³⁶ The Spanish state, through the local government, is the main employer in the enclave. Long-standing networks of patronage together with a long history of better access to education ensure that the majority of these jobs are taken up by Christians of Spanish descent, while Muslims work in the construction and services sectors, or smuggling across the border. This is explored in more detail in chapters 3 and 5.

networks in Europe and Asia, which benefits from Melilla's strategic position as a gateway to the North African market (a cheaper alternative to the high customs-duties imposed by the Moroccan authorities). The economy of contraband generates revenues which benefit the city as a whole, while employing a large percentage of the enclave's Muslim population and providing a source of livelihood for large numbers of Moroccans living in nearby towns. Indeed, as we shall see, the enclave has flourished in part through the labour of its neighbours. The geopolitics of flow and closure at the Spanish enclave reflect these interests: the frontier between Melilla and the Moroccan hinterland permits free access to people from the region (i.e. smugglers and, thus, trade), while border controls at the port and airport ensure that non-European citizens remain in the African continent.³⁷ The flow of capital across the border, however, is not restricted to commodity trade. Melilla's proximity to Nador, a key hub for drug trafficking, has generated a different, perhaps more lucrative economic activity attracting external clients and linking Nador and Melilla to international networks: money laundering.

The Spanish enclave is entirely reliant on external capital. When the sources of the capital are legal, it is filtered through state institutions and used to finance public employment and urban development projects; when the sources are illegal, it remains underground, feeding a black market economy which, at the lowest level guarantees a relatively stable means of livelihood to the underprivileged Muslim population in the enclave and, at the highest level, procures alternative sources of wealth for local elites in the political, financial and law-enforcement sectors on both sides of the border. It is in this sense that Melilla can be considered a *rentier* economy.

If Melilla's *rentier* economy is sustained by rent derived from the frontier, Nador's external rent is derived from the production and consumption of an idea and a place: home. Until recently, Nador was one of the least developed regions of the

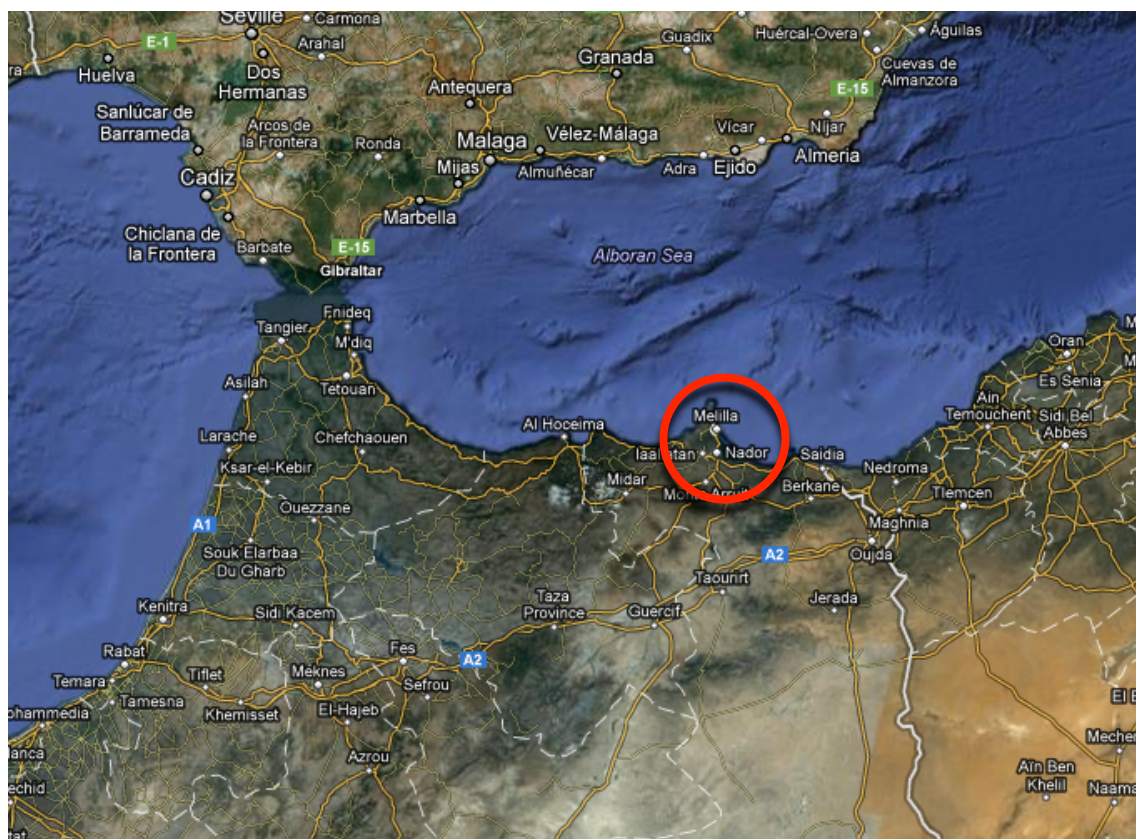
³⁷ As we shall see, Moroccans from the neighbouring province of Nador have free access to the Spanish enclave but would be detained at the port or at the airport if they tried to reach mainland Spain without a visa. On the other hand, Sub-Saharan African, South Asian and North African migrants who enter the enclave clandestinely are forced to remain in Melilla until an order of expulsion is issued or until they are granted asylum as refugees, a process which often lasts years. I discuss this in more detail in chapter 5.

country. Trade, seasonal labour migration, and small-scale agriculture were the main sources of livelihood in a region largely ignored by the central Moroccan government. Today, external capital (mainly in the form of emigrant remittances, but also through income generated by drug trafficking) constitutes the main economic support of the province. The increased purchasing power of Riffian emigrants and their families back home has attracted the attention of external investors who see in the emigrants' yearly summer holidays an opportunity to seize an expanding market of consumers. The Moroccan state is no exception. As we shall see, in order to sustain the continued inflow of capital generated by emigrants in Europe, the Moroccan government 'tactfully courts the rent earners' through different kinds of financial incentives designed to attract remittances, including agreements with foreign banks or the development of internal tourist industries (Beblawi and Luciani 1987: 61). The building of a macro-tourist complex around the Lagoon of Marchica should be understood as part of this strategy.³⁸ Indeed, as Harvey argues, when landscape becomes an obstacle to capital accumulation, those who have the power to produce space will transform it to accommodate to the demands of the market (1996: 296).

The forthcoming incorporation of Morocco into the Euro-Mediterranean partnership scheduled for 2012 will again change the geopolitical landscape of the region. As Morocco joins the European Free Trade Area and Melilla loses its competitive advantage vis-à-vis Moroccan ports, smuggling will most likely cease to be a lucrative trade. Trade between Europe and North Africa, however, will proceed unaffected. The Moroccan government has already made provision for a large industrial port in the Betoya Bay (some 30 km from Nador) to cater for the commercial routes that, until now, made use of the Spanish enclave. In all likelihood, the European Union and the Spanish state will continue to ensure the permanence of the Spanish enclave, while emigrant remittances and the tourist industry will supply a source of income for Nadoris. Small commercial establishments in Melilla and Moroccan petty smugglers will suffer most, but, fundamentally, little will have changed.

³⁸ While the Moroccan state is not necessarily a *rentier* state, given that the economy of the eastern Rif is almost entirely dependent on external rent, I consider this to be a *rentier* economy.

Nador and Melilla have both seen their landscapes transformed by large-scale political and economic processes of international reach, and the process is ongoing. Sustained by external interests and dependent on foreign capital, these two relatively small, remote places have gained unprecedented importance over the last few decades, as protection of the newly established European Community called for increased control of Europe's external borders. Trapped at the limit between Europe and Africa, Nador and Melilla are bound by a common 'destiny' which is partly out of their hands. Yet, it is precisely *because* they have a significance that transcends their boundaries that these two places with no autochthonous industry or natural resources have acquired, in Harvey's phrase, a certain kind of permanence in the social and material world (Harvey 1996: 55).



Source: googlemaps.

1.6 Notes on fieldwork

Research was carried out in 2008 and 2009, in three main 'sites': the enclave of Melilla, the city of Nador and the Moroccan town of Selouane, which lies some 24 km south of Melilla and 10 km south of Nador.

I was introduced to Melilla by a handful of university professors and students with links to the University of Granada, where I had spent some time as a visiting researcher. It was through them, and through the people they introduced me to, that I became acquainted with the 'Christian' side of the city. Riffian emigrants in Spain who had relatives in the area provided me with the initial contacts to access the 'Muslim' side. The two worlds rarely coalesced, in fieldwork and in everyday life.

Across the border, I lived with a Riffian family from the frontier town of Beni Enzar who had recently moved to Selouane and, in the city of Nador, I spent a few months in a rented flat which I occasionally shared with my landlady's daughter. Selouane gave me an insight into the more routine aspects of everyday life, and allowed me to access, however partially, a certain domain of privacy. Nador, by contrast, offered me a wider perspective on emigrant-local relations, and the means to talk to people whom propriety and modesty would have prevented me from interacting with while under the protection of my host family.

The avenues for fieldwork in the Arab world are partially determined by sex: 'one knows most intensely a small space, usually female if we impose labels, or less intensely a wider one, usually male' (Dresch 2000: 111). The choice was there for me to make (indeed 'women have usually more options than do men', *ibid.*). As a woman and as an outsider, I could either situate myself within a wider, 'male-dominated' space where I would gain the confidence of men at the expense of losing moral status and social respectability, or remain under the protection of the household and lose access to what we could call the more private domains of public life. I made no such definite choice, and tried, instead, to navigate between the two. From my host family, I learned the intricacies of the Riffian moral world and the categories that determine how certain

boundaries are drawn, but it was clear from the start that much of what mattered in Nador occurred in a domain to which family life gave little access.

Researching illegal activities requires a particular kind of fieldwork. The data is barely there for one to gather, if one can say that it ever is, and there is a level beyond which the boundary between observation and participation becomes blurred. 'Participant observation' in this area carries its own kinds of risks. Where the lines are drawn determines what kind of information one has access to, and the choice, again, is there for one to make.

Most of the fieldwork was conducted in Spanish, although I make use of Moroccan Arabic and Tarifit terms when these were used in conversation. I have used the abbreviation 'Sp.' to designate Spanish terms, 'Ar.' for Arabic and 'Tar.' for Tarifit (a variant of Tamazight spoken in the Rif and commonly known amongst Melillans as *Chelkha*), although it should be noted that many of the Tarifit words I cite are Arabic in origin. Finally, I have preserved the Spanish spelling for all place-names except where French spelling is customary.

1.7 Summary of chapters

The thesis is organised in six chapters. Chapter one should have situated the text theoretically, putting it in dialogue with wider anthropological questions and providing an analytical framework to think through the issues that arise from ethnography.

Chapter two will introduce the reader to the region. Through a historical overview that begins at the end of the 16th century and takes us to the present times, I examine how the Spanish enclave was produced over time, and how interests in the region converged to generate a particular kind of place. The illusion of an isolated enclave breaks down in the face of historically long-standing networks connecting Melilla not only to the Moroccan hinterland, but also to a number of commercial and financial centres in Europe, Africa and Asia. The processes which have shaped Melilla's social, political and economic landscape have also had an impact across the border, in

the neighbouring province of Nador. The chapter explores connections between these apparently dissimilar places, tracing how commercial, social and political linkages across the border developed and changed in the long term, and analysing how certain events—for example, Spain’s incorporation into the European Community—disrupted this continuity by generating new sets of relations across the border.

Chapter three examines relations between Christians and Muslims inside the Spanish enclave. The process of naturalisation that granted Spanish citizenship to Muslims is key to understanding the enclave’s political rhetoric, and underwrites popular narratives more generally. Behind an official rhetoric which oscillates between a form of Catholic Spanish nationalism and a more European-friendly ‘multiculturalism’ lies a deeply entrenched structure of economic inequality which informs often concealed tensions between the two groups. The social, political and economic dynamics at play mirror those found in ethnocratic states like Kuwait, where a ruling minority perceives itself as under threat by a majority of non-citizens.

Chapter four takes us across the border, to the Moroccan province of Nador. The chapter opens with an analysis of the effects that Riffian emigration have had on the province. The cash influx generated through migrant remittances has brought significant transformations to the physical landscape of the region and to its economic structure. Its effects on the social and moral landscape have been equally important. The chapter examines these transformations through an exploration of Riffian discourses of morality, setting out a contrast between new forms of aesthetic valuation imported through emigration and a ‘traditional’ code of morality which informs Riffian perceptions of the homeland in opposition to the outside world.

Chapter five takes a closer look at the border itself. Following Wacquant’s work (2010), the fencing of Melilla is analysed as an instance of a more generic process of socio-spatial seclusion based on the principle of ‘selective permeability’. Border regulations and long-standing unspoken agreements ensure that the enclave’s gates remain open to the passage of goods and of locally-necessary labour, and firmly shut to the passage of migrants trying to reach Europe. The chapter explores these two kinds of movement (of goods and of people), focusing on the range of relations, connections and

transactions that tie Melilla and the surrounding hinterland in networks of mutual interdependence, and analysing the ways in which (Moroccan) Riffians conceptualise their relationship with the Spanish enclave in general, and with Melilla's Christian population in particular.

Finally, chapter six looks at how people conceive of and relate to the region's underground economy. Narratives of suspicion and mistrust are analysed against the backdrop of a black market economy based on the drugs trade, corruption and money laundering whose operations remain hidden. The first half of the chapter examines the imprint that this underworld has had on social relations and on the discourses that sustain them, focusing on the climate of generalised mistrust which pervades both sides of the border. The second half is devoted to analysing the international context in which this underworld is inscribed and to unpacking the connections between the local structures described throughout the thesis and the global system which generates and sustains them.

CHAPTER 2. A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The events of history are never mere phenomena, never mere spectacles for contemplation, but things which the historian looks, not at, but through, to discern the thought within them.

R. G. Collingwood

2.1 Melilla: a Spanish *presidio* on the North African coast

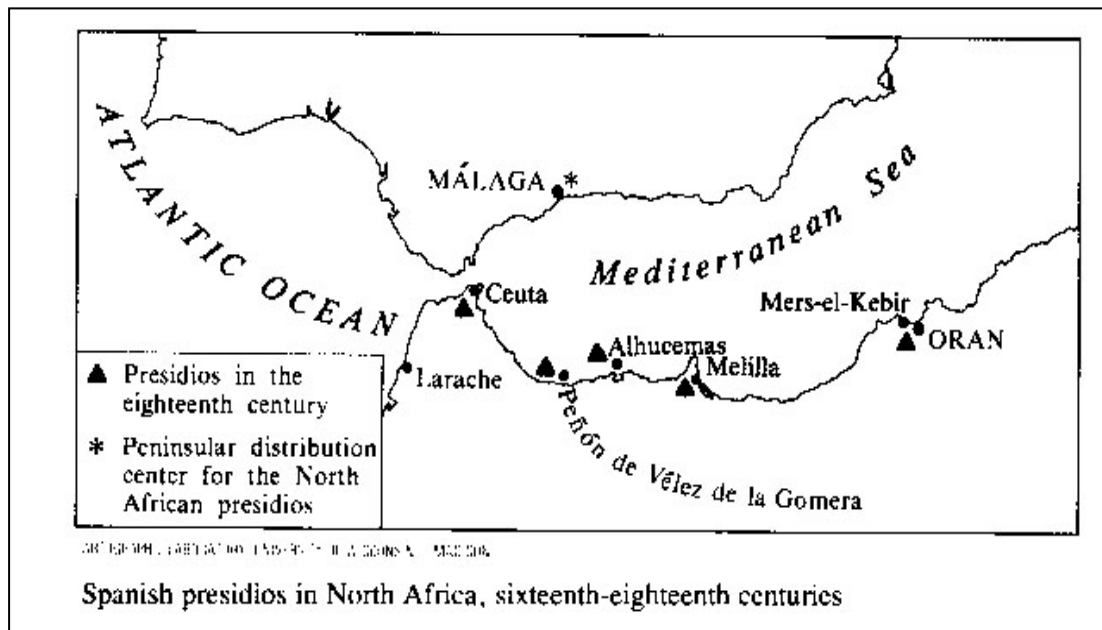
The history of the Hispano-Maghrebian frontier begins in the fifteenth century. After the last Muslim stronghold in the Iberian Peninsula had been conquered (1492),¹ the Spanish, —driven by the threat of the growing Ottoman Empire,² growing conflicts with the *morisco*³ population, and an increase in piracy along the southern shore of the Mediterranean— attempted to extend their control beyond the Gibraltar Strait. Military posts and garrisons were built along the North African coast to monitor the movements of the Ottoman fleet and the Barbary corsairs, while establishing a base for potential expansion (Driessen 1992: 17). These posts were known as the *presidios* of Africa; Melilla was one of them, as was, from 1580, Ceuta.⁴

¹ The Iberian Peninsula was largely under Muslim control between the 8th and the 11th centuries, and remained partially ‘occupied’ until 1492. During this period, it was known as Al-Andalus. From the beginning of the so-called Muslim invasion, Christian states began a series of campaigns by to recapture the territory. The *Reconquista*, as this process is commonly known, went on until 1492, when the last Muslim stronghold (Granada) fell into Christian hands.

² The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 had strengthened the status of the Empire as the main power in south-eastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. By the end of the 15th century, the Empire extended across North Africa, Mesopotamia and the Balkans down to the Red Sea.

³ The *moriscos* were Muslims who remained in the Peninsula after the Christian Reconquest (*La Reconquista*) and converted (sometimes forcibly) to Christianity.

⁴ Ceuta was conquered by the Portuguese in 1415. The enclave became Spanish when Spanish king Phillip II seized the Portuguese throne in 1580, and remained under Spanish sovereignty once Portugal regained independence in 1640.



Source: Pike, R. *Penal Servitude in Early Modern Spain*. <http://libro.uca.edu/pservitude/psems3.htm>

The term '*presidio*' derives from the Latin *praesidium*, a garrison or fort surrounded by protective walls. In seventeenth-century Spain, it was defined as 'the castle or fort where troops are posted' (Covarrubias 2006 [1611]); today, the term refers to a penitentiary. The Spanish North African *presidios* were usually built around a natural port, and surrounded by fortified walls and a defensive perimeter of exterior forts. Initially, noble and rich men were sent to the *presidios* to perform military duties, in what was often considered a form of deportation.⁵ Over time, the *presidios* became penal settlements for the general criminal population. The exact date at which this happened is unknown, although most historians agree that it fell somewhere in the mid-seventeenth century, when the *presidio* sentence was extended to poor commoners and the penalty took the form of either service in arms or hard labour according to the prisoner's rank, class and wealth (Pike 1983: 42).⁶ Common criminals, however,

⁵ The origins of the *presidio* sentence are difficult to establish. Sixteenth-century legal writers claimed that it originated from sentences *ad metallum* found in medieval law. According to Pike (1983), however, it is likely that three different kinds of punishment (banishment, confinement in a fortress or castle, and utilitarian service for the state) came together in this form of penal servitude. Significantly, those who were sent to the North African *presidios* were originally called *desterrados* (banished men), a term still in use in the eighteenth century to denote those performing military service as opposed to the *presidarios*, condemned to hard labour (ibid.).

⁶ Until the mid-eighteenth century, however, the majority of convicted felons were sent to the galleys. It is for this reason that 'the *presidios* continued to be viewed as places of confinement for the privileged, and this attitude was reflected in the way in which they were administered. They were not governed by

remained a minority until the mid-eighteenth century, after the abolition of the penal galleys (1748). Only then did the *presidios* become fully functional penal institutions (ibid. 111).

The headland where the *presidio* of Melilla was established belonged to the Kingdom of Fes until Pedro de Estopiñán, in the service of Juan Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, Duke of Medina Sidonia, conquered it in 1497. Spain took formal control over Melilla in 1556 —although it had unofficially run the enclave since its conquest⁷— and turned it into a *presidio*. For several centuries, Melilla was little more than a military garrison surrounded by walls sitting on a rocky headland in the Guelaya Peninsula. Initially, the citadel comprised a small cluster of buildings accommodating a population of around six hundred, comprising military personnel and their families —the so-called ‘people of war’ (*gente de guerra*)—, convicts, and auxiliary personnel (including carpenters, blacksmiths, engineers, builders, fishermen, merchants and priests, see Calderón Vázquez 2008: 18).⁸ The Spanish enclave was physically isolated from the Moroccan hinterland.⁹ The walls around the citadel and the forts outside the walls served to shield Melilla’s perimeter from the potential threat of neighbouring tribes, and social interaction with the neighbouring population was limited to intermittent warfare and highly regulated commercial exchange.¹⁰

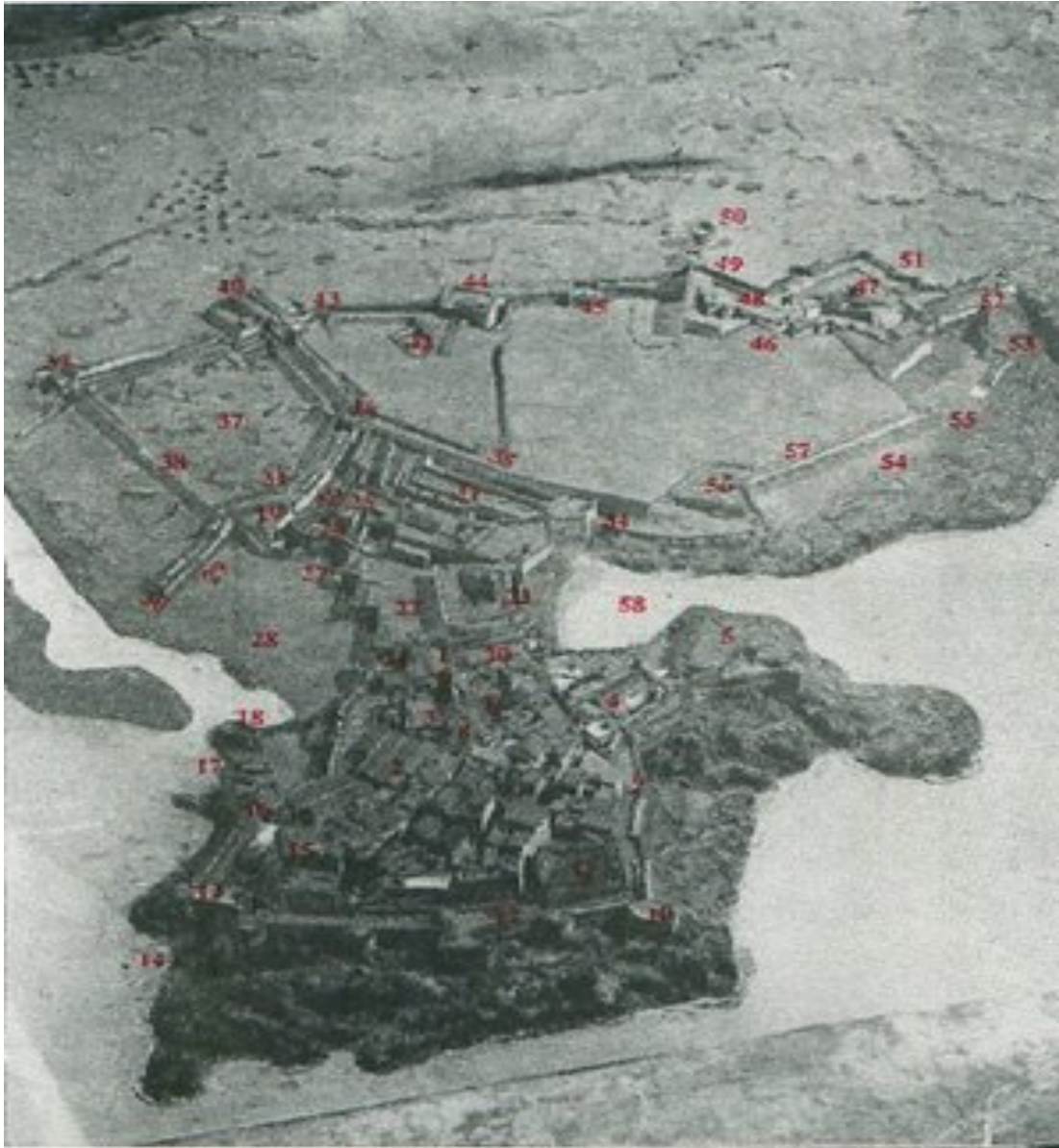
any formal code of rules, but rather by customs and observances developed over the course of the centuries’ (Pike 1983: 42). For a historical account of life in the *presidios* see Domínguez Llosa (1989). For an English account of these processes, see Hess (1978).

⁷ Estopiñán’s conquest was a private adventure, but it had always enjoyed the approval of the Spanish Crown.

⁸ The number of prisoners was never stable. The maximum occupancy was 1,000 towards the end of the 18th century, the minimum 273 at the beginning of the 20th century (Pike 1983).

⁹ Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the confines of the garrison were extended through successive modifications of the wall, and a series of smaller surveillance forts were built outside the walls (Bravo Nieto and Sáez Cazorla 1988).

¹⁰ We know of conflicts with neighbouring tribes in 1564, 1646, 1649 and 1893, and with the Sultan in 1679, 1694-95, 1715 and, most notably, during the siege of 1774-1775 (Mateo Dieste 2010: 73). According to Driessen (1992: 20-22), many of the conflicts with Riffian tribes, particularly during the 16th century, were caused by attacks on religious shrines. Documents from the early years of the *presidio* show that, in 1564, a local *marabout* (holy man) named Muhammad ben Alal led a raid into Melilla, and, in 1632, a group of Riffians pillaged the chapel of the Virgin of Victory. The Spanish, in turn, carried out several attacks on Riffian shrines; in 1737, one of these attacks left the shrine of Sidi Wariach in ruins.



Scale model of Melilla built in 1846 by León Gil de Palacio.¹¹

Life in the enclave was far from easy. Shortages of food and basic supplies were recurrent problems, and plagues and disease were common. Raids and counter-raids between the Spanish and the local tribes were frequent for most of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, and the enclave was under the constant threat of attacks and sieges, both from the neighbouring Guelaya tribes and from the troops of the Sultan (Driessen 1992: 19).¹² Taking prisoners was common on both sides, and often tribesmen were held in

¹¹ Source: <http://estudiosmelillenses.blogspot.com/2009/03/la-maqueta-de-melilla-ultima-obra-de.html>

¹² It is important to emphasise the distinction between the Moroccan Sultanate and the Berber tribes in the territories neighbouring Melilla. Berber tribes had historically opposed the control of the Sultanate over their territory; conflicts between Riffian tribes and the Moroccan Sultanate were common, and their

the *presidio* to be used as *moros de rescate*, or ransom Moors, in periodic exchanges of captives at the gates of Melilla (ibid. 32). Desertion was common not only amongst prisoners but also among soldiers, who were badly paid and badly armed; in the course of four centuries, more than 20,000 men fled the *presidio*.¹³ Documents also attest to a number of Riffians who were either seized by the Spanish or sought refuge in the enclave, and converted to Christianity, sometimes forcibly and sometimes voluntarily.¹⁴ Despite limited social interaction, therefore, the walls of the Spanish enclave were far from impermeable.



Guelayi tribesmen, early twentieth century.¹⁵

interests often antagonistic. Pennell, for instance, recounts how in 1812 Sultan Mawlay Sulayman, who had prohibited any commercial relations between local Riffians and the Spanish, sent a military expedition to punish Riffian tribes who were selling corn to Melilla (Pennell 2002: 69).

¹³ Some of them converted to Islam and joined neighbouring tribes, while others were killed, returned to the enclave for ransom, taken as prisoners to the Moroccan Sultan or, sometimes, enslaved (Pennell 2002: 70). It was considered of prime importance when deserters or captives returned to Spanish territory to establish whether they had apostatised. Bodily proofs of renunciation, particularly circumcision, were taken as evidence of religious allegiance (Driessen 1992: 29).

¹⁴ According to Driessen (1992: 31) the adoption of Riffian children by Spanish families in the enclave was not uncommon, a practice which lasted until well into the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ Most of the photographs included in this chapter were given to me in a digital format by an amateur collector in Melilla. Their origins are varied, although many seem to proceed from the collection of Juan Diez, one of the largest private photographic archives of the city, widely available online and through local magazines.

In fact, trading took place alongside raiding most of the time, and remained the most important form of exchange.¹⁶ Riffians were forced to trade because the Spanish forts blocked any alternative anchorage on the coast, while the Spanish were constantly faced with food shortages and had to rely upon commerce with local tribes to ensure the provision of basic supplies when shipments from Spain failed.¹⁷ Throughout the 16th-18th centuries, the Sultan of Morocco issued decrees forbidding commerce between local tribes and the Spanish, but contemporary testimonies suggest that these were never effective (see Pennell 2002).¹⁸ The steady growth of the population, particularly during the 18th century¹⁹, turned commerce into a priority for Melilla's military authorities, who set up a highly regulated system of commercial exchange. Basic foodstuffs such as meat, vegetables, fruit, grain, wood and water were bought from merchants coming from the Moroccan hinterland, who sold them in exchange for money, textiles, medicines, tools, weapons and ammunition. Transactions normally took place during daytime by the gates of the citadel, though when conflicts with neighbouring tribes called for stricter safety measures the market was moved outside the walls (Calderón Vázquez 2008: 26).

To trade, the Spanish often relied on the services of the *moros de paz* (Moors of peace), who usually lived in settlements near the *presidio*, and belonged to what were known as frontier tribes (*cábilas fronterizas*). In peaceful times, the *moros de paz* were

¹⁶ This is evidenced by the fact that already in the sixteenth century Spanish coins and vocabulary were circulating widely among Riffians (Driessen 1992: 33).

¹⁷ During the sixteenth century, the 'discovery' of the New World and the gradual withdrawal of the Ottoman threat had shifted Spain's interests away from the Mediterranean towards Europe and the Americas, and shipments to the North African posts decreased. The *presidio* was regularly forced to rely on its own resources, and commerce with the hinterland became necessary.

¹⁸ Confrontations with the Sultan had increased during the first half of the eighteenth century, reaching a climax in 1774 and 1775 when the troops of Sultan Mohammed Ben Abdullah imposed a siege on Melilla. Trade with the hinterland decreased and the provision of basic supplies was drastically reduced. This resulted in an increased dependency on the irregular shipments coming from the port of Malaga in Spain (Martín Corrales 1988: 43).

¹⁹ During the eighteenth century the population of the *presidio* grew at a steady rate and, by 1774, there were 1,828 people residing in Melilla, including 842 prisoners (Pike 1983: 120). Prisoners were sent to Melilla after raids against vagabonds and gypsies in mainland Spain, and more generally after 1748, when the galley sentence was abolished (Pike 1983). But prisoners were not the only inhabitants of the enclave; soldiers, governors, priests and their families had settled there too. Towards the end of the eighteenth century overpopulation became a serious problem and, in 1777 and 1791, King Charles III approved a number of measures to regulate shipments of prisoners (Domínguez Llosá and Rivas Ahuir 1989: 22).

employed as translators, interpreters and intermediaries with neighbouring tribes, and were granted permits to enter the enclave during the day to sell their produce (Driessen 1992: 33). When relations were tense, the *moros de paz* were employed as guides and collaborators, and recruited to defend the perimeter of the *presidio* from tribal attacks.²⁰ Their regular collaboration with the Spanish earned them the epithet of *mogataces* (or *Almogataces*, meaning ‘the baptised ones’) amongst other Riffian tribes, a term also used by the Spanish to refer to indigenous collaborators throughout the North African posts.²¹

Towards the first half of the nineteenth century, armed confrontations with the Moroccan Sultanate broke out, reaching unprecedented intensity in the decade of 1850, and culminating in the War of Africa (*Guerra de Africa*) in 1859.²² A year later, Morocco lost the war and Sultan Mulay Aberrahman was forced to sign the Treaty of Wad-el-Ras, handing over to the Spanish more land around Ceuta and Melilla.²³ The Treaty, signed in 1860, specified that the new limits of Melilla should be the range of a 24-pound cannonball (2,900 meters) fired from the Victoria Chica fort, at the centre of the citadel. Neighbouring Guelayi tribes saw the agreement with the Moroccan Sultanate as an invasion of their territory, and it took two years of negotiation —and

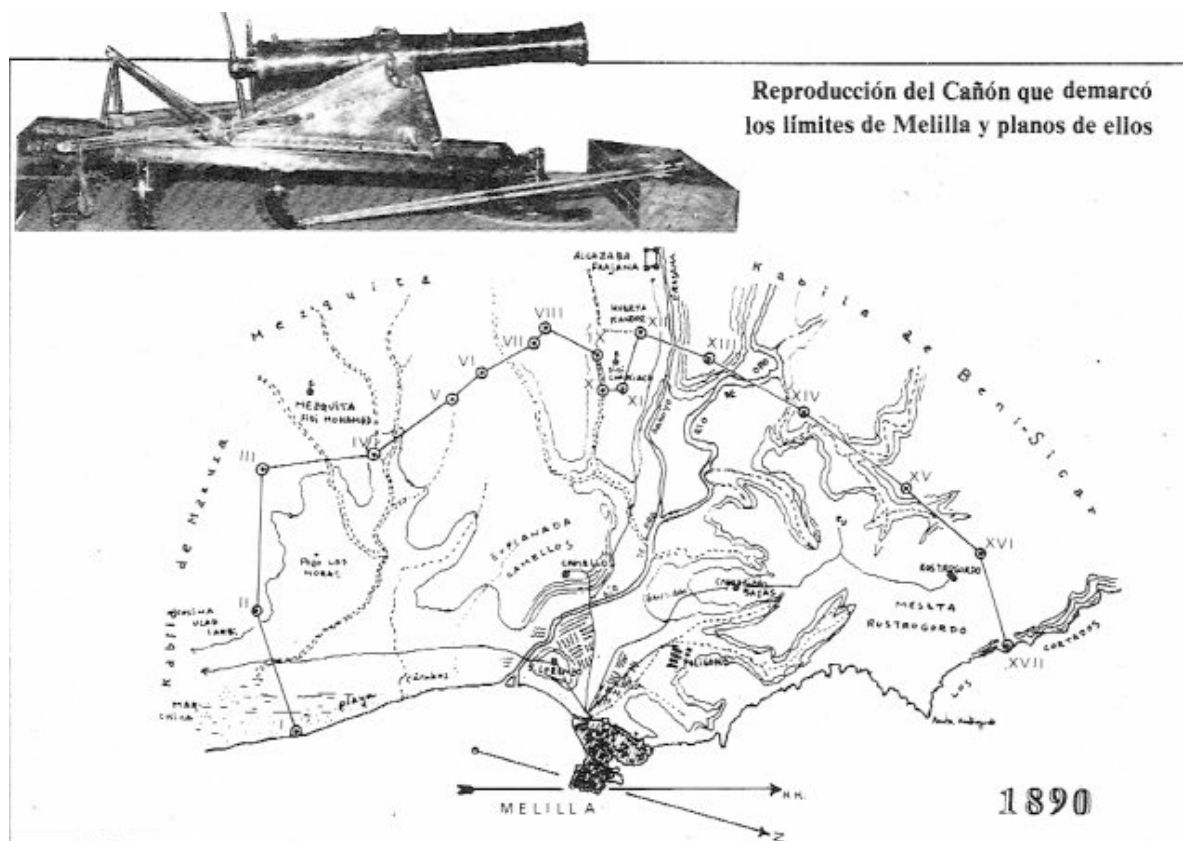
²⁰ Interestingly, the RAE (Real Academia Española) defines ‘*moros de paz*’ as follows: 1. m. Moroccan moor who served as a mediator to treat with other moors in the Spanish *presidios* of Africa. 2. m. Person of pacific disposition who need not be feared or distrusted (Real Academia Española 2001).

²¹ The *Almogataces* were common figures across all the Spanish *presidios* in North Africa, and they were particularly active in the *presidio* of Oran (Algeria). They eventually became a regular armed force used by the Spanish to defend their interests in North Africa, and can be said to be the precursors of later indigenous forces such as the ‘*Tiradores del Rif*’, created in Melilla in 1859.

²² Diplomatic and commercial relations between Morocco and Spain had been strained by conflicts in the eastern Rif and around the enclave of Ceuta since the 1840s (Martín Corrales 1999). The gradual loss of the American and Asian colonies during the nineteenth century had turned North Africa into the main focus of Spanish colonial interests, and England’s and France’s growing influence on Moroccan affairs impelled Spain to define and further its interests in the area (Driessen 1992: 36). This was also a time of social and political unrest in mainland Spain —there were peasant uprisings in Castile, Aragon and Andalusia—, and a victorious war was a means to raise support for the state (Pennell 2000: 64). When conflicts in Ceuta reached a peak in the late 1850s, the War of Africa broke out between the Moroccan sultanate and the Spanish crown. For an more detailed account of the Rif War, see Pennell 1982.

²³ An extension of Spanish territory had already been agreed with the Sultan in 1859, but the outbreak of the war disrupted the enforcement of the treaty. The peace treaty signed in Tetouan in 1860 was in fact a ratification of the previous agreement. The new treaty not only expanded Melilla’s perimeter, it also provided for large financial compensation to Spain and promised the settlement of Shariffian troops in the vicinity to ensure the safety of the new perimeter. This last commitment, however, was not fulfilled until the late 1890s, when attacks on the enclave increased dramatically and the Sultan was forced to intervene.

1,200 soldiers sent in by the Moroccan *makhzen*²⁴— to demarcate the new limits. This was done in 1862. The new territory, which encompassed some 12 km², remained partially occupied by local tribes until the end of the century. Nevertheless, the victory of 1860 marked a turning point for the Spanish enclave, and is generally considered to be the first step towards the establishment of the Protectorate in 1912.²⁵



Reproduction of the canon fired and the new limits of Melilla, 1890. The shaded area represents Melilla's old citadel. Source: *Revista Trápana*, vol. 2 (Ponce Gómez 1988a: 99)

²⁴ Name commonly used to designate the Moroccan government or state apparatus. *Blad-el-makhzen* (the land of the state) was opposed to *blad-al-siba* (the land of dissidence). The latter referred to tribal areas in the mountainous Berber regions of the country.

²⁵ After the war, Spain launched a number of strategic initiatives in North Africa intended to encourage domestic support for colonial policies. These included commercial companies (*Compañía Comercial Hispano Africana*, 1885, *Centros Comercial Hispano-Marroquí*) and colonial associations (*Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid*, *Sociedad Española de Africanistas y Colonistas*, *Liga Africanista Española*). For details on these initiatives, which constituted the core of what came to be known as Spanish Africanism (*Africanismo español*), see Martín Corrales 1999 and Morales Lezcano 1988.

2.2 Melilla as a free port: from military garrison to trading post

Shortly after the War of Africa, Melilla was declared a free port (1863).²⁶ This opened up new trading opportunities in the enclave and, in the years that followed, Melilla was gradually integrated into a wide international and regional trade network, becoming a key transit area for European manufactured goods and African raw materials.²⁷ A few years earlier, in the late 1850s, a French shipping company had established regular lines linking the two Spanish enclaves to Marseille, the French occupied coast of Algeria, and the Atlantic coast of Morocco (Saro Gandarillas 1984: 55). Although the process was slow, the establishment of a free port can be seen as the beginning of a long period of

²⁶ Strictly speaking, a free port is a port where goods in transit (both imports and exports) are exempt from custom duties, regardless of the country of origin or destination. In the case of Melilla, however, certain conditions applied. It is surprisingly difficult to establish exactly what the fiscal regime in place at the time was; most sources simply note that Melilla became a free port, without specifying details of the Royal Decree. The *Gaceta de Madrid* of 18 March 1915 (num. 2060) seems to provide a more accurate description: in fact, the abolition of custom duties applied to ‘articles, genres [*généros*, i.e. goods], fruits and effects’ (the article does not clarify what exactly these are) that reached the port of Melilla coming from the Spanish mainland; in terms of exports, only fish from the enclave was entirely exempt from custom duties. According to the *Gaceta*, the law was extended in 1894 to include the export of Melillan agricultural produce to the Spanish mainland. Unfortunately, the article does not mention the status of foreign goods, so it is not clear whether these were, in fact, entirely exempt from custom duties, although most available sources seem to indicate that they were (see Saro Gandarillas 1988: 56). We do know that, with the creation of the *Junta de Arbitrios* (Board of Taxation) in 1879, the military authorities charged a local tax, known as *arbitrios*, on certain kinds of incoming merchandise such as textiles, alcoholic beverages and tobacco. Together with taxes collected from certain products like eggs, leather and wax coming from the Moroccan hinterland, this was the main source of revenue available to the local military council (see Saro Gandarillas 1984: 29-30). These taxes, it seems, were lower than those levied in the Spanish mainland. It is also important to note that different sources give different dates for the institution of Melilla as a free port. Driessen (1992), Pennell (2002) and Saro Gandarillas (1988) among others situate it in 1863, while López-Guzmán and González Fernández (2009) give the date as 14 June 1894 and Muñoz Domínguez (1986) as 14 July 1894. In the text of the Law 8/1991 (BOE num. 73, reference: BOE-A-1991-7645) on the enclave’s fiscal regime, it is stated that in fact Ceuta was declared a free port on 18 May 1863 and Melilla on 14 July 1894. I have nevertheless kept 1863, based on the abundance of sources using this date and citing Law 18/05/1863, published by the *Gaceta de Madrid* 20/05/1863 as evidence. According to these sources, the 1863 law dictated the institution of free ports in Ceuta, Melilla and the Chafarina Islands (see Lebrancón Nieto 2009: 18; see also Elías de Molins 1901 and Donnet Pareja 1915). As we have seen, according to the *La Gaceta de Madrid* of 18 March 1915 (num. 2060), Melilla was declared a free port in 1863, but the law was reviewed in 1894. This may well be the source of the confusion between dates.

²⁷ French and British products were shipped in from Gibraltar and Algeria, using Melilla as a gateway to the Moroccan market. Britain maintained a virtual monopoly over trade in cloth, soap, tea and candles, while France predominantly exported sugar. Spanish products could not compete with the French or British, and olive oil was the only Spanish product sold widely at rural markets in the Moroccan hinterland. Morocco exported iron ore, cattle and foodstuffs.

demographic, urban and economic expansion which lasted until well into the 20th century.²⁸

Trade across the border ceased to be exclusively a matter of subsistence, and became a central source of revenue for Melilla. The protection of the new economic regime, however, required legal changes and, in 1864, a year after Melilla was declared a free port, a Spanish royal decree derogated previous regulations which restricted the number of non-military personnel allowed to reside in the enclave. People living in the vicinity were granted permission to settle in Melilla to work as labourers and merchants, and migrants from the poorest regions of southern Spain began to arrive in search of work. Soon, businessmen from northern Spain and Jewish merchants from Tetouan, Tangiers, Gibraltar and Oran were drawn to the area.²⁹ A commercial treaty signed in 1866 between Spain and Morocco, which provided for the establishment of a Moroccan customs checkpoint *inside* the enclave,³⁰ offers revealing testimony regarding the regulation of cross-border transactions:

²⁸ According to Saro Gandarillas (1988), several factors contributed to the economic and demographic growth of the enclave. The new territories acquired by Melilla in 1862 guaranteed a 'safety belt' for commercial transactions. The establishment of a free port in 1864, together with the prior establishment of a shipping line linking Melilla to France and Algeria, contributed to the development of new commercial routes. As he notes, however, several obstacles hindered Melilla's commercial expansion, including: the establishment of a Moroccan customs checkpoint in the enclave, which thwarted regular commercial transactions and favoured contraband; the impossibility of buying property in Melilla, whose soil was entirely in the hands of the military; the existence of local taxes on imports, which were only increased after the creation of a Board of Taxation (*Junta de Arbitrios*) in 1879; and a very strict regulation of commercial transactions (for a more detailed account see Saro Gandarillas 1984).

²⁹ According to Salafranca Ortega (1987) the first Jew arrived in Melilla in 1764. In 1864, the census registered twenty-seven Jews residing in Melilla, all but two from Tetouan. This first group of Jews were merchants with the capital, contacts and skills to establish new trade routes through the enclave. Later, in 1883, eighty Jews from the tribes of Beni-Sidel and Beni-Bugafar settled in Melilla, although the causes of the move are unknown. Conflicts between the Spanish and Riffian tribes in 1893, and between Riffians and the Moroccan Sultanate in 1904, drove hundreds of poor Jews to the enclave in search of protection, thus increasing Melilla's Jewish community. Finally, in 1909, over one thousand wealthy Jewish traders arrived from Casablanca, Oran, Fes and Debdu, once again attracted by the commercial opportunities offered by the enclave. For an analysis of the demographic and migratory history of the Jewish community in Melilla, see Salafranca Ortega 1987, and Ponce Gómez 1988.

³⁰ The 1866 treaty expanded existing regulations for maritime trade established in the 1861 Treaty of Commerce (including taxes to be paid for the importation of goods into Morocco) to commercial activities across the border with the Spanish enclave. The treaty also sanctioned the establishment of a Moroccan customs checkpoint in Melilla. Half the revenue collected through customs went to the Spanish treasury. Collection of taxes, however, was far from easy. Since taking goods out of the enclave was not illegal for the Spanish, enforcing payment was nearly impossible (Ponce Gómez 1988a: 96). In 1894, an article published in the *Journal of Commercial Geography* described it in the following words:

this Moorish customs point is the strangest thing that one can conceive of; it taxes the Moors inside the Spanish limits for whatever they buy in Melilla and take to the field for

In order to avoid the evils that could result if the inhabitants of Melilla were to enter the territory of the Rif under the pretext of engaging in commercial activities, Her Majesty the Queen of Spain will most categorically command the Governor of that fortress not to allow said inhabitants to cross the border under any pretext. Only Moorish merchants, subjects of His Majesty the Sultan, are exempted (*Tratados y Convenios* 1988: 82).

Since the Spanish could not enter Moroccan territory to conduct their trade, Jewish merchants became the middlemen, and Riffians the main couriers, for products bought in Melilla to be sold in regional markets, both in Morocco and in Algeria. Riffian emigrants working on French colonial farms in Algeria were often an integral part of these networks. Labour migration to Algeria had begun in the second half of the nineteenth century, and tribesmen from this region used their connections in the occupied French territory to import goods from Melilla and engage in trade as well as in large-scale smuggling with Algeria (Seddon 1972).³¹

Soon, Melilla became an important trading centre within a wider regional network of weekly rural markets, and came to be known by neighbouring tribesmen as *temrirth*, the 'place of gathering' (Driessen 1992: 49). Trade routes linked the *presidio* with Taza, in Morocco (153 km southwest of Melilla), and Oran (215 km east of Melilla) and Algiers (374 km east of Oran).³² Thousands of people congregated in the

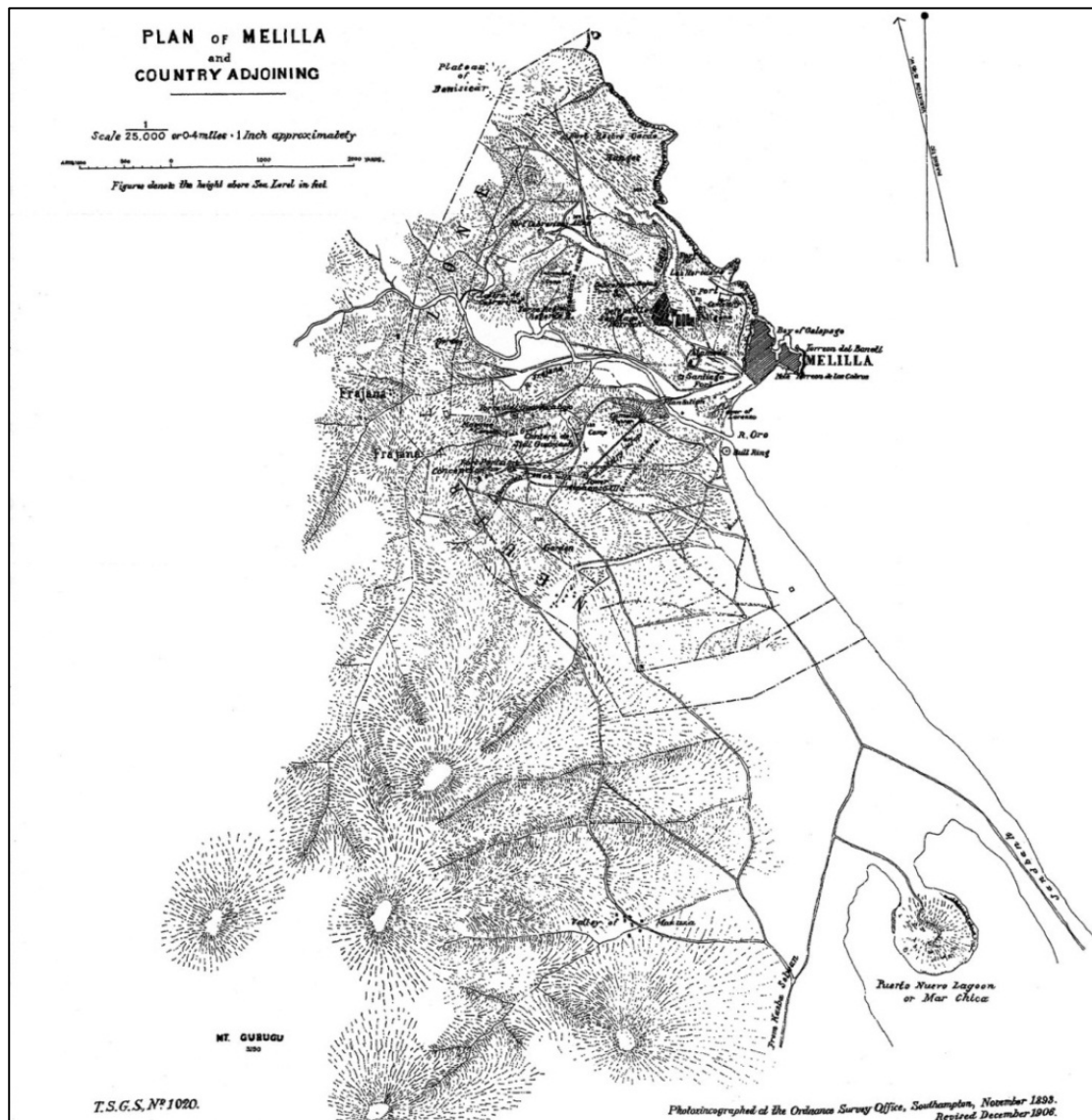
consumption; and although it is placed in a situation and condition of little honour, we must praise the talent of he who conceded such permit, for it opened a door to the Moroccan Empire to the untamed territory of the Rif, a door through which civilisation is being introduced (Guarro y González 1894: 113)

³¹ Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, emigration to Algeria (barely 65 km away from Nador) had been a common solution for the high number of unemployed men in the region. By the turn of the twentieth century, thousands of Riffians were being driven to Algeria in search of seasonal agricultural work, as were many Spaniards from the Peninsula. Migratory routes soon gave way to commercial networks. The conflict between France and the Algerian tribes during the period of French colonisation, together with the absence of any established customs control between Algeria and Morocco, also contributed to the development of a regional commercial network linking the Eastern Rif to Algeria. This network was initially set up to supply Abdelqader, the leader of the tribal resistance in Algeria, with basic goods, arms and ammunition. It originated in England and reached Algeria via Gibraltar and the northeastern Moroccan coast, particularly Melilla. Smuggling routes set up in the 19th century remain important today; the smuggling of petrol, medicines and other goods, for instance, reaches Morocco through the Algerian border in the eastern Rif.

³² Cattle, for instance, were exported to Marseille through a newly established shipping route linking the enclave to the French mainland and Algeria. Approximately 100 caravans reached the enclave each year, varying in size from 100 to 500 pack animals per caravan (Driessen 1992: 50).

weekly rural markets in the Guelaya region to trade in grain, wool, hides, sheep, salt, cotton, mules, cattle, chicken, eggs, vegetables and fruit. Caravans from Algeria, sometimes travelling for as long as sixteen days, came to buy sugar, tea, cotton and candles in Melilla, where prices were 15% lower than in Oran. Others travelled from the south of Morocco to sell chickens, eggs, wax, vegetables, cattle, leather and wool and to buy manufactured products to be exported to the Moroccan hinterland. Similarly, tribesmen from the outskirts of Melilla travelled to Taza and other Moroccan towns to sell English products bought in Melilla (mainly cotton and candles) and bring back cattle or other products of interest to the French or the English. These networks were also commonly used to trade in guns and ammunition, acquired in the enclave and sold in Algeria and in the Moroccan hinterland.

According to a contemporary account, commercial exchanges between Melilla and Gibraltar generated 4 million *pesetas* annually (see Pezzi 1893: 149, in footnote). Indeed, the existence of a detailed map of the region commissioned by the English in 1893 attests to the military and commercial importance that the Spanish enclave had acquired by the turn of the century.



Source: <http://estudiosmelillenses.blogspot.com/2009/06/un-extrano-mapa-ingles-de-melilla.html>

As trade flourished, the number of civilians living in the enclave began to grow. While in 1860 non-military personnel in the enclave numbered 374 (out of a total of 1,874), by 1880 the number had almost doubled. The needs of a growing civilian population and the increasing importance of commerce called for the establishment of a new administrative body which would deal with non-military issues. In 1879, the *Junta de Arbitrios* (Board of Taxation) was created. Although technically a civilian institution, the *Junta* was chaired by the Military Governor, and all permanent members were part of the military.³³ The purpose of the *Junta* was to collect taxes —mainly levied on

³³ Since 1556, when the Duke and the Duchess of Medina Sidonia handed Melilla over to the Spanish crown, the enclave had been run directly by the military. As the population of the enclave began to grow,

textile imports, alcoholic beverages, tobacco and a number of goods imported from the Moroccan hinterland like eggs, wax and leather (Saro Gandarillas 1984: 29)— and use them to fund construction work in the city and address problems related to urban development.³⁴

When the old compound became too small to accommodate the incoming population, the *Junta* authorised the construction of new dwellings outside the walls of the citadel.³⁵ In 1881, the building of the first *barrio* (neighbourhood), *La Alcazaba*, began. The arrival of several Jewish families from neighbouring tribes in the same year (the causes are unknown) made further housing necessary, and a number of wooden shacks were set up in what would later become the *barrio* of *El Mantelete* (Saro Gandarillas 1985). By 1885, the civilian population numbered 1,176, of whom only 300 were classified as ‘born in Melilla’; the rest were immigrants from Andalusia and Castile, Jews from Tetouan, and 153 ‘foreigners’ (Driessen 1992: 42). The gradual increase in the civil population continued over the following years and, in 1888, a new *barrio* —*El Polígono*— was built. By March of 1893, the old citadel accommodated 1,154 people, while the three neighbourhoods in the outskirts of the old compound (*Mantelete*, *Polígono* and *Alcazaba*) hosted 1,877.³⁶

the *Junta de Arbitrios* (Board of Taxation) was created to deal with economic affairs, public safety and public works. The new *Junta* included three civilians as occasional advisors, but it remained essentially a military body.

³⁴ In fact, some form of taxation was in place since 1849, when a tax on canteens (*cantinas*) and grocery stores was established. From 1879 onwards, taxes on imports were gradually augmented to meet the needs of the *Junta* in the financing of construction work for the urbanisation of the enclave.

³⁵ The boundaries defined in 1862 had been largely ignored by Guelayi tribes living in the vicinity, who used the land for grazing and crops, while the Spanish resided mainly inside the walls of the old citadel. During the 1880s the Spanish began to build a number of forts outside the old walls (the Forts of San Lorenzo, Camellos, Cabrerizas Bajas, Rostro Gordo and Cabrerizas Altas) and, in 1890, negotiations began for the re-establishment of the boundary stakes marking the limits set in 1862. Each of the stakes, however, had to be renegotiated independently with the notables of the tribe whose territory was concerned. In some cases tribesmen could not be persuaded to give up their land, and the limits had to be drawn back a few hundred meters. This was the case with the Beni Chicar, who fought fiercely to preserve a pond they used as a trough for their cattle which was officially located in Spanish territory (Ponce Gómez 1988). Another crucial point of conflict was the compensation that the Sultan had to offer the tribesmen for the loss of land following the establishment of Melilla’s expanded perimeter in 1862, which had not yet been paid.

³⁶ The ‘urbanisation’ of the peripheral territories continued over the following years and, by 1909, seven new *barrios* had materialised. It is important to note that this period of expansion was not the result of planned urban development, but the formalisation of a *de facto* situation. Most of the new neighbourhoods were in fact made up of wooden shacks, caves, and shantytowns.

The year 1893 marked a turning point in the urban development of the enclave. Open confrontations between the Spanish and the Guelayi tribes over the occupation of the territory surrounding the citadel lead to the outbreak of the ‘War of Margallo’³⁷ (*Guerra de Margallo*, also known as *Guerra Chica* or *Primera Guerra del Rif*), which lasted under a year but brought over 20,000 Spanish troops to the enclave. The need to accommodate them led to the establishment of improvised barracks and shacks at several points across the outskirts of the old citadel. The troops, in turn, attracted a floating population of traders, beggars, handymen, workers and so forth, who settled in the territories surrounding the military encampments. A contemporary witness described the situation as follows:

Sinewy streets, flat houses, lowered as much as possible so as not to present an easy target to the enemy’s fire above the walls, an intricate labyrinth of vaulted passages and guards who alternate shifts in horrendous monotony, numerous sentinels, soldiers everywhere and, in their custody, numerous prisoners who, at a slow pace and accompanied by the dangling of their chains, push loads, carry rocks, build walls, or leave covered in dust and sweat after the daily fatigues to lock themselves up in the barracks, with the indifference that is engendered by the death of the soul [*la muerte del espíritu*]. That is, in a broad stroke, the normal appearance of Melilla.

Its little alleys [*callejuelas*] are being replaced by roads which, though they do not yet deserve to be called streets, already show in the ornamental care of buildings and other such details, that Melilla is adapting to the needs and frivolities of modern life (Pezzi 1893: 149).

When the Spanish won the war, in 1894, most of their troops returned to mainland Spain. The size of Melilla’s *permanent* garrison, however, doubled with respect to the period before 1893. The civil population also continued to grow and, by the turn of the century, 6,000 civilians were registered in the municipal census (Saro Gandarillas 1985: 25). The new residents included not only Spanish migrants, but also

³⁷ The War of Margallo started in 1893, when five thousand frontier tribesmen (*fronterizos*) launched a surprise attack on the Fort of Cabrerizas Bajas, and ended in March 1894. The Spanish won the war, and the peace treaty that followed ratified the limits of the enclave as set in 1860, establishing financial compensation for Spain as well as a commitment to respect the neutral zone across the border. Soon afterwards, the Moroccan Sultan established a military garrison near Melilla to ensure that Riffian tribes complied with the agreement. This led to the construction of six more forts in the periphery of Melilla: Sidi Bajo, Horcas Coloradas, Santiago, Reina Regente, Bateria J. Alfonso XIII and Maria Cristina.

prominent Jewish traders, an incipient but highly selective Muslim elite and the first Indian immigrants.³⁸

The urbanisation of new territories around the old citadel facilitated the accommodation of a new population of both unskilled labour and merchants and, as the prisoner population decreased and Spain's colonial policies shifted from Central and South America towards the southern shore of the Mediterranean, Melilla acquired a new political and economic significance extending far beyond its original function as a *presidio*. It was not long before the *Junta de Arbitrios* was restructured to include civilian members (1902).³⁹ Projects for the creation of a new port (1902-1914) drew more labourers to the enclave and, in 1905, the *Junta* initiated the construction of the *Barrio Obrero* (the working class district).⁴⁰ A year later, the penitentiary of Melilla was shut down and prisoners who were in the last years of their sentence were given the option of remaining in Melilla as citizens. As the civil population continued to increase, the enclave's military past began to *formally* give way to a civil society.⁴¹ With the consolidation of Melilla as a transit hub for international commerce, interest in the region grew, and the protection of the enclave ceased to be an exclusively regional

³⁸ A list of Jewish traders published in 1894 listed seventeen important merchants settled in Melilla; one of them, José Salama, represented the French shipping company Compagnie Générale Transatlantique in its dealings with the enclave, as well as the French bank Crédit Lyonnais (Driessen 1992: 90). The Indian community in Melilla was significantly smaller than the Jewish one. Indian immigrants began to arrive in Melilla, one at a time, during the last years of the nineteenth century. Relatively larger groups arrived after Indian independence in 1947, but the community never exceeded two hundred people. As for Muslims, only 95 were registered in the 1900 census. A small number of them belonged to an incipient elite of merchants and notables, many of Arab origin, who had long collaborated with the Spanish (see Driessen 1987). Most Riffians, however, continued to live in the Moroccan hinterland and accessed the enclave daily to trade, making up a large floating population (around four thousand people daily, according to Bravo Nieto, 1996: 69) which did not appear in official censuses.

³⁹ The new *Junta* included nine military officers and nine civilians. The influence of the military remained nevertheless strong, as is attested by the fact that the Junta continued to depend on the Ministry of War until 1924 (see Saro Gandarillas 1985: 38).

⁴⁰ For a complete timeline of Melilla's urbanisation process, see Saro Gandarillas, 1985. For a thorough historical analysis see Bravo Nieto, 1996.

⁴¹ The Junta remained in essence a military body, dependant on the Ministry of War, until the 1920s. In 1927, a Municipal Board was established in the place of the old Board of Arbitration, only to be replaced three years later by a City Council. The Board's functions were extended to include Governance and Culture, Treasury, Public Works, Supplies and Urban Police (Saro Gandarillas 1985). Nevertheless, the move from military to civil governance was a slow and irregular process, interrupted first by the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and, later, Francisco Franco. If, formally, the enclave was a civil society, in practice the military elite preserved its power until well after the end of the Franco's fascist regime in the mid-1970s.

concern. Soon after, Spain began political negotiations in Europe to take possession of the northern Rif and establish the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco.

2.3 Melilla and the Spanish colonial project in Morocco

Private agreements between Britain, Spain and France had divided the Maghreb into separate spheres of influence in 1904, paving the way for the establishment of the Spanish and the French protectorates in 1912. Britain gave up its interests in Morocco in exchange for the control of Egypt, on condition that Spain acquired territories in the northern part of the country, thus preventing a French monopoly in the region.⁴² The Treaty of Algeciras, in 1906, ratified the previous agreement and, by the time the Treaty of Fes was signed on 30 March 1912, Sultan Abdelhafid had given up sovereignty over Morocco.⁴³ Spain was allocated an area of 300,000 square kilometres in the eastern and central Rif, a territory for the most part unknown to the Spanish.⁴⁴

The establishment of the Spanish Protectorate was far from easy. When the Spanish tried to take control of the newly acquired territories they were met with the armed resistance of Riffian tribes led by Muhammad Ibn 'Abd el-Karim El-Khattabi (widely known as Abd el-Krim).⁴⁵ The Battle of Annual, fought near Melilla in 1921,

⁴² For a detailed account of this process see Verdú Baeza 2007 and Martín Corrales 1999.

⁴³ The Protectorate, which lasted until 1956, comprised two geographically separate areas: one in northern Morocco, including the regions of the Rif and Yebala, and one in the south, comprising the region of Tarfaya and Ifni. Ceuta and Melilla were excluded from the Protectorate, as they were considered to be a part of Spain. Administratively, Melilla was part of the province of Málaga in mainland Spain and was therefore entirely separate from the Moroccan territory under Spanish rule. The rest of the country was ruled by France under the name of French Morocco (1912–56), while the disputed city of Tangiers was declared an International Zone.

⁴⁴ Up until the mid-nineteenth century, geographical knowledge of this part of Africa was limited to the coastal territory. In fact, it has been claimed that this was the reason why the so-called pacification campaign, also known as *Guerra del Rif* (Rif War), lasted 16 years, from 1911 to 1927 (Villanova 2002).

⁴⁵ Abd el-Krim was the leader of the armed resistance movement against French and Spanish colonial rule in the Rif. He launched a series of attacks on Spanish positions which culminated in the Battle of Annual in 1921, where the Spanish suffered a brutal defeat, losing almost 10,000 men. The battle is known amongst Melillans as the Disaster of Annual (*Desastre de Annual*). After their victory, Riffians reconquered most of the Spanish colonial territories, and prepared for further expansion. Abd el-Krim and his troops entered French Morocco in April 1925. The same year, however, the French sent in a force under Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain. Together with the Spanish, a total of 250,000 soldiers were sent to

marked the climax of violent conflict between the Spanish and Abd el-Krim's army. The Spanish lost at Annual and, two years later, Abd el-Krim appointed himself Emir of the Independent Riffian Republic. Violent fighting continued until 1926, when France saw its territory falling under threat and allied with the Spanish to defeat the Riffian leader. Abd el-Krim was exiled to Réunion in the Indian Ocean and, a year later, the end of the Spanish 'pacification campaign' of the Rif was announced. In 1927, the Spanish occupied *de facto* the territory they had been granted *de jure* in 1912.

The Spanish colonial project, however, had begun a few years earlier. In 1907, Spain had acquired mining concessions —mainly for lead and iron— in the region of Ouixan (some 23 km southeast of Melilla) from Bu Hamara, a pretender to the Sultanate who had gathered support in the Rif and fought the reigning Sultan between 1903 and 1908.⁴⁶ The acquisition of mining rights in the Riffian hinterland attracted investors from northern Spain, and two Spanish mining companies were established in the region.⁴⁷ Soon after, the construction of a railway linking the mines to the port of Melilla began. Neighbouring tribes saw the construction of the railway as an invasion of their territory and launched a series of attacks along the railway tracks shortly after the works began (Alberich González and Vidal Pérez 2004). In 1909, the mining companies resolved to secure their industry with the help of the Spanish army.⁴⁸ It was in this year

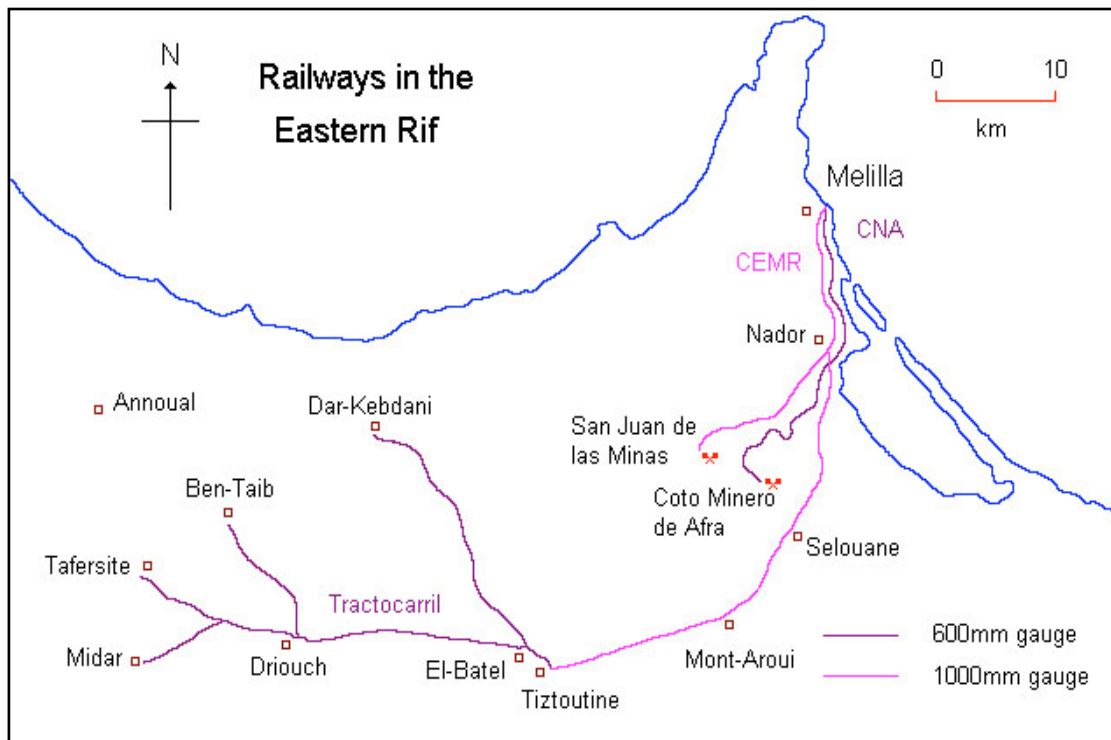
fight against the Rif Republic. For details on Abd el-Krim's rebellion, see Woolman, 1968. For a Spanish perspective, see Madariaga, 2009.

⁴⁶ Bu Hamara, alias *El Rogui*, became a very popular character in Melilla, as is attested in the detailed accounts of his battles against Sultan Abdelhafid in local Melillian newspaper *El Telegrama del Rif*. News of the war was recurrent in local press, and continued throughout the first quarter of the century with the coverage of raids over mining concessions and the construction of the railway. See, for instance, the compilation of the titles of articles published by *El Telegrama del Rif* from 1903 to 1910 made available by Melillan journal *Revista Trápana* (Cano Martín 1989-1990).

⁴⁷ Two Spanish companies were created to manage the exploitation and distribution of the minerals (lead and iron): the *Compañía Minera del Norte Africano* (1907) and the *Compañía Española de las Minas del Rif* or CEMR (1908). During the years of Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956), the CEMR became the largest company and employer in Spanish Morocco (Driessen 1992: 52). The mining industry, in turn, attracted other companies, such as the *Compañía Transatlántica Española*, a passenger ocean line owned used to transport Spanish troops to the Protectorate, and the *Compañía Colonial de Industria y Comercio*, or the Banco Hispano-Africano (Hispanic-African Bank). For a detailed history of the mining industry in Melilla see Alberich González and Vidal Pérez, 2004.

⁴⁸ The military campaign launched to protect the mining industry and defend Spanish interests in the region can be seen as a crucial step in the Spanish colonisation of the Eastern Rif. Strictly speaking, the so-called Campaign of the Rif (*Campaña del Rif*) lasted until 1911, a year before the establishment of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco. However, fighting was resumed in later years, and it is common to

that a permanent military garrison was established in what would later come to be known as ‘Villa Nador’.



Source: <http://www.internationalsteam.co.uk/trains/moroc01.htm>



A railway being defended by Spanish soldiers.

speaking of the Campaign of the Rif to refer to the on-going fighting from 1909 to 1927, which ended when the Spanish took control of the region (see Seddon 1972).



Spanish troops arrive at the site of the siege of Monte Arruit, where around three thousand Spanish soldiers had retreated after their defeat in the Battle of Annual in 1921. No more than sixty men survived the siege.

While fighting took place in the hinterland, Melilla was expanding economically. The military campaign launched in 1909 had brought 40,000 troops to the enclave, repeating the process of 1893 and resulting in an important increase in the enclave's civilian population which led, in turn, to further urban growth. At the same time, mining had become an important source of revenue, attracting investors from northern Spain and employing large numbers of labourers in the Riffian countryside.⁴⁹ The abolition of the 1866 Moroccan customs checkpoint which followed the establishment of the Protectorate in 1912, and the development of transport infrastructure for mineral export, resulted in a significant increase in the volume of trade and mining revenues. In 1911, Melilla's Chamber of Commerce sent a request to the Spanish Treasury for the establishment of a branch of the Bank of Spain (*Banco de España*) in the enclave. By the mid-1910s the railway linking the mines to the enclave had been finished and, in 1920, work in the port began for the construction of a loading

⁴⁹ Riffians worked the mines, while Spanish migrants were given higher positions, as supervisors of Riffian workers. Even when Spaniards and Riffians were employed in the same kinds of jobs (such as, occasionally, the building industry), wages differed. A document issued by the Board of Taxation in 1917, for example, shows that Riffian workers were systematically paid lower wages than Spanish workers (see Driessen 1992: 47).

quay (*cargadero*) for minerals. Because most of the iron-ore was exported directly to Britain and Holland, the mineral trade did not generate an autochthonous industry. It did, however, generate a local bourgeoisie, linked to industrial and commercial financiers in northern Spain, and employed thousands of Spanish migrants and Riffians, who worked not only in the mines themselves but also in the numerous construction projects for transport. Mining would continue to constitute an important source of trade revenue and employment until the mid-1950s, when the Protectorate came to an end and the mining exploitations were gradually shut down.⁵⁰



The new port of Melilla and the *cargadero*.

⁵⁰ However, CEMR continued to function until 1967, with the Moroccan government owning 26.67% of the company's shares. In 1967 a Moroccan company was created (SEFERIF) to take over the mineral trade. SEFERIF continued to work the mines until 1972. See, for details, Alberich González and Vidal Pérez 2004.



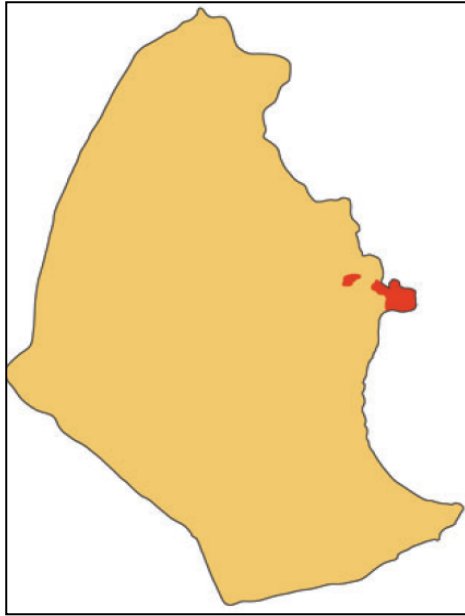
Train arriving at the station in Melilla.

The period of economic expansion produced rapid demographic growth and urban development. Whereas in 1906 the census registered 8,800 inhabitants, by 1920 the civil population in Melilla had increased to 40,000 and, by 1925, to 52,542 (Driessen 1992: 43).⁵¹ Fourteen local newspapers were launched in Melilla during the decade 1910-1920, and engineers were shipped in to design a new urban plan for the city centre, most famously Catalan architect Enrique Nieto, responsible for a large share of Melilla's modernist architecture.⁵² This was the time of the great urban expansion of Melilla, which was particularly intense from 1909 to 1921, but lasted until well into the 1940s. While the centre of the city was consolidated as an eminently bourgeois area,

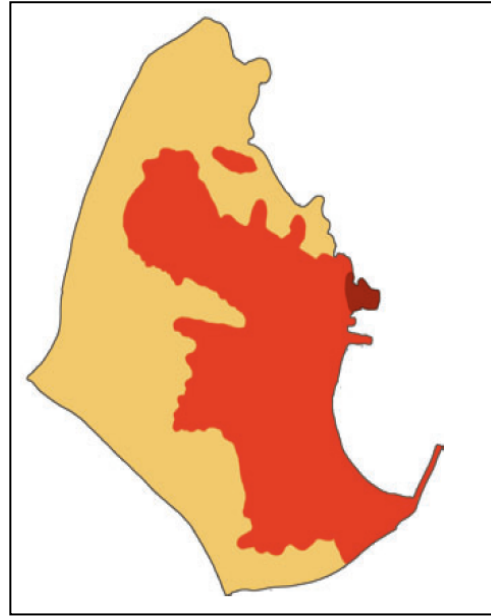
⁵¹ At this time, the majority of the population was of Spanish origin, with a significant minority of Jews (2,903, versus 33,625 Spaniards, according to the 1917 census) and a small number of Muslims (234). Over the following decade Melilla's population grew significantly, reaching 52,542 inhabitants by 1925. The increase was in great part driven by the military campaigns of 1893, 1909, 1911 and 1921, which fostered commercial activity in the enclave and attracted important contingents of civilians. The military population fluctuated radically according to the scale of military conflicts in the hinterland. For instance, Driessen (1992: 43) tells us that while in 1925 there were 41,110 soldiers in the enclave, numbers decreased to 14,000 once the so-called pacification campaign was over in 1929.

⁵² Catalan architect Enrique Nieto worked in Melilla from 1909 until his death in 1954 and ran numerous projects (up to 457 himself, and over 1,000 including projects he participated in but did not run) to design the centre of the city as well as the main Christian neighbourhoods. His buildings were based on European Modernism, with some elements of classicism, baroque and, later, art-deco (Bravo Nieto and Sáez Cazorla 1988).

cheap housing (literally referred to as *casas baratas* [cheap houses] or *casas ultrabaratatas* [ultra-cheap houses] in official documents) continued to be built to host the thousands of incoming migrant workers.⁵³ A comparison of maps of the enclave in 1900 and 1940 shows the extent of urban development (Castro Maestro 2003: 40 and 42):



Urban areas in Melilla, 1900



Urban areas in Melilla, 1940

The military campaigns of 1893 and 1909 had brought thousands of soldiers to the enclave, raising demand for produce, textiles and other basic commodities and leading to an increase in trade revenues. This increased the budget of the *Junta de Arbitrios*, for the most part dependent on taxes levied on incoming merchandise. Tax revenues were then reinvested in construction work and urbanisation projects, which, in turn, generated employment for the thousands of Spanish migrants from southern Spain who had settled in the enclave since the early 1900s. This was, in fact, one of the main drivers of the enclave's economy during the first half of the 20th century⁵⁴, and it made

⁵³ Although, as noted earlier, large numbers of workers lived in houses which they had built themselves in terrains granted by the public administration. The combination of privately built accommodation and state-led urban planning was in fact a constant feature of Melilla's process of urbanisation until well into the 1940s.

⁵⁴ In 1925, for example, Nicolas Pérez Cerisola, a well-known Melillan journalist of the time, wrote that Melilla lived off the state's budget, and not off industry, agriculture or even commerce (cited in Bravo Nieto 1996: 39). Five years later, in 1930, Melillan writer Francisco Carcaño published a book entitled *La Hija de Marte* ('The Daughter of Mars' [the Roman god of war]), where he described in detail the

Melilla's growing working class particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the numbers of troops posted to the enclave. Behind the image of a prosperous commercial enclave lay important social and economic tensions.

The Spanish labourers had in fact joined a highly stratified society. At the top of the hierarchy were high-ranking Spanish military officials, colonial officers and state representatives, together with prosperous traders, financiers and the mining industry elite. The financial and political elites were closely connected to the military, which continued to control the *Junta* and remained the most powerful institution in the enclave. Tensions between the two groups, however, were important. The emerging bourgeoisie, who controlled the Chamber of Commerce (created in 1906), fiercely opposed the interventionist policies of Melilla's military commanders, particularly the imposition of any kind of taxation on imports and exports.⁵⁵ Alongside the new financial elite were a few selected Jewish and —less frequently— Muslim personalities.⁵⁶ The list of members of Melilla's Rotary Club⁵⁷ in the mid-1930s, for example, includes one Muslim and two Jews.⁵⁸ It is worth noting that many of the Jews who had arrived in Melilla in the late nineteenth century had become important merchants in Melilla, sitting in the local Chamber of Commerce, acting as agents of

situation of Melilla, stressing the military character of the enclave and on the importance of the army for its economic viability.

⁵⁵ Eventually, this new elite would gather enough support amongst the population to pressure the military authorities into creating a Municipal Council (*Junta Municipal*). The new *Junta* was established in 1927, initiating a period of civil rule in the enclave, only to be rescinded in 1936 with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. For details on the municipal council, see Morala Martínez, 1985. For a good analysis of the conflicts between the military and the local bourgeoisie, see Bravo Nieto, 1996: 30-37.

⁵⁶ According to Driessen (1987), in the last decades of the nineteenth century the Spanish had established close relationships with Riffian tribal leaders, who became 'friends of Spain' (*amigos de España*). They were offered monthly pensions, advantages in trade, permits to buy weapons, administrative offices and scholarships for their sons. They often came from frontier tribes such as the Beni Chicar, the same tribes the old 'Moors of Peace' had come from. Later, they would support the Spanish in the colonial project and would be granted Spanish citizenship and permission to settle in Melilla. During the Protectorate, a number of Arab bureaucrats would be added to Melilla's Muslim elite.

⁵⁷ The full list includes fourteen members, eleven of whom are of Spanish descent (including, among others, a doctor, a journalist, an engineer, a captain and two high-ranking civil servants). The Rotary Club in Melilla was active from 1933 to 1936. For a brief study of its history and a list of members see Moga Romero 1988.

⁵⁸ The Muslim was Hamed Amor Zrac, registered as responsible for supplying army uniforms. And the two Jews were Samuel and Moises Salama. The Salamas were an affluent Jewish family dedicated to imports and exports. It was one of the Salamas who paid for the construction of brick houses to accommodate hundreds of Jewish refugees who had arrived in Melilla in the first decade of the 20th century, leading to the construction of the *Barrio Hebreo* (Saro Gandarillas 1985).

western European trading and banking houses, and playing a key role in trading networks linking Melilla, Algeria, French Morocco and the Rif (Driessen 1992: 93).⁵⁹ Finally, while the vast majority of Riffians belonged to the lower echelons of society, serving as a cheap workforce in the mining industry or operating as middlemen for Jewish and Spanish traders, a small number of Muslim merchants and tribal leaders who collaborated with the Spanish were also among the enclave's elite.



Melilla's bourgeoisie was closely connected to the military. Note the modernist architecture of Melilla's city centre in the background.

While Melilla's elite enjoyed a period of prosperity and growth (later known as 'the happy 1920s'), migrant workers from Spain struggled for survival. Housing became a problem, and labourers began to join settlements of barracks and shacks on the peripheral areas of the city. This, combined with unemployment, low wages and high prices for basic commodities, generated profound social tensions.⁶⁰ The withdrawal of

⁵⁹ Driessen (1992: 93) writes that of eight ship-owners, five were Jews, and of seventy-nine wholesale traders twenty-seven were Jews. It is not clear from the text, however, where the data comes from or to what year it refers.

⁶⁰ Class tensions developed mainly within the Catholic —and, to an extent, in the Jewish— population, for at this point Muslim residents in the enclave were a minority. According to Planet (1998: 28) the

troops during WWI only worsened the situation.⁶¹ The local authorities responded by developing a system of municipal charity, encouraging employment through state-sponsored construction projects and, after 1918, repatriating migrant workers to mainland Spain. More often than not, however, these measures were insufficient. An article published in the *Telegrama del Rif* sometime between 1915 and 1918,⁶² entitled 'The Melilla that enjoys itself and the Melilla that suffers. Eternal contrast', attests to the situation in the city:

Little girls, dressed in pink and white, joyful and cheerful, circle around like birds in a grove. The boys run and jump around untroubled, charming their elders with the mischief typical of the age of innocence. Each of them separately and all together exhibit the toys won in the raffle or bought by their parents. Young ladies, beautifully attired, stroll and chat gleefully with their young admirers who whisper to them words of love ... The left bank of the Rio de Oro offers a less joyful impression. It is the eternal contrast of life. Those tortured by hunger crowd at the gates of the soup kitchen Reina Victoria ... Women abandoned by their husbands, with six or seven children, who miraculously survive. Children weakened by malnutrition, clothed in rags; young women worn by motherhood and deprivation; old ladies who have seen loved ones pass away and have no shelter but the endless charity of this community ... But what moves us to the greatest sadness and pity are the strong, robust men, labourers without a job, who arrive looking for the warm bowl of soup that they cannot bring to their desolate homes.

After a period of stability in the early 1920s, partly due to the resumption of the military campaign in the Riffian hinterland from 1919, class conflicts resurfaced. The end of the pacification campaign in 1927 saw the military garrison significantly reduced, as falling demand for iron following the Great Depression of 1929 resulted in massive job cuts in the mining industry. The gulf between the minority who lived in the

census of 1918 records 262 Moors living in Melilla. Numbers only began to increase significantly after the end of the Spanish civil war.

⁶¹ When troops were withdrawn during the First World War (1914-1918), and later, when Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera ordered a reduction of soldiers in the Spanish garrison following the end of the pacification campaign in the protectorate (1927), unemployment amongst migrant workers rose and tensions became particularly acute.

⁶² I gained access to a scanned copy of the article through an anonymous collector in Melilla. The date of publication is not visible in the article, but the reference to the Victoria Soup Kitchen indicates that it was published between 1915 and 1918.

bourgeois city centre with its modernist buildings, casinos and theatres, and the poverty-stricken workers in the periphery widened.⁶³ According to Driessen (1992: 47), by the late 1920s, there were thousands of unemployed and underemployed Spanish immigrants living in caves and wooden shacks in the peripheral neighbourhoods of Melilla, and it was estimated that approximately 3,000 Spanish families depended on municipal welfare benefits, with 30,000 people registered in the Charity Census (*Censo de Beneficencia*) of 1928 (Bravo Nieto 1996: 67). Unable to meet the needs of the increasingly impoverished population, the municipal council (*Junta Municipal*), which had replaced the *Junta de Arbitrios* in 1927, decided to send as many unemployed immigrants as possible back to mainland Spain.⁶⁴ The result, however, was limited, and by 1930 there were still 1,266 shacks hosting Spanish migrant workers (Quirós Linares 2009: 249). A document published by the local authorities in 1936, regarding a change to the city's fiscal regime, gives testimony to the situation in the city:



Neighbour of Melilla, you, who are hungry due to unemployment, you, who cannot sell your produce because you are overwhelmed with [economic] burdens [*estás agobiado de cargas*], you, whose rents are threatened by the new taxes; all of you, workers, traders, owners, you cannot be indifferent to the future of Melilla. To resolve so great a problem, take part in the Referendum for the Economic Agreement with the State, which will take place on June 14 in all electoral colleges (Alias Rodríguez 1985: 78-79).⁶⁵

⁶³ At the very time when all these strikes were taking place, for instance, Melilla's first Rotary Club (1933-1936) —composed by members of the intellectual, commercial, industrial and professional elite— was established. For a history of Melilla's Rotary Club, see Moga Romero (1988)

⁶⁴ They sent 790 in 1927, 1,285 in 1928 and 1,072 in 1930 (Driessen 1992: 47).

⁶⁵ According to Alias Rodríguez, the document refers to a local referendum which was to be held in that year to vote on the establishment of a preferential fiscal regime for Melilla, which would deter Spain's central government's proposal to establish a 12.5% customs duty at the frontier of Beni Enzar, and eliminate the Utility Tax (*impuesto de utilidades*) levied on local businesses and commercial

The city authorities took several measures to end unemployment. These included negotiations with the Spanish central government to generate jobs through state-sponsored construction projects (such as the building of a dike near the port) and, later, the establishment of a charity fund (to which Melillans could make voluntary contributions) used exclusively to generate new jobs for unemployed workers (Alias Rodríguez 1985). These measures had a limited impact. Strikes and demonstrations in all sectors (including, but by no means restricted to, the mining industry and the port) escalated in the years to come, but insurgent factions were silenced by the military once the Spanish Civil War began in 1936.

2.4 Melilla's 'golden age': Francisco Franco and the Spanish Protectorate

During the first months of 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out.⁶⁶ In the context of increasing political tension between republican and conservative factions within the Spanish government and the military, army officers Francisco Franco, Emilio Mola, Juan Yague, Gonzalo Queipo de Llano and Jose Sanjurjo organised an insurrection to overthrow the Republican government. The Republican government, aware of the risks posed by dissident factions within the military, had sent Franco and other right-wing military leaders to posts in the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco, particularly in and around Melilla. It was in Melilla and the North African colonies that the Fascist uprising began. After the successful coup in the Protectorate on 18 July 1936, Franco led the *Ejército de África* (Army of Africa) —sixty thousand Moroccan soldiers, most of them

establishments. The new taxes were most likely a product of the newly-established Republican Government (1931-1936), and its new economic policies to pull Spain out of the deficit into which it had fallen during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930). The 'economic agreement' (*concierto económico*) proposed by Melilla's local authorities entailed the transfer of revenues from taxes previously collected by Spain's central government to the enclave's city council in exchange for an annual payment of 1 million pesetas. For an account of Melilla in the months leading up to the Spanish Civil War, including details of the referendum, see Alias Rodríguez 1985.

⁶⁶ For a comprehensive bibliography of the Spanish Civil War, see García Durán (1985). For an English account, see the works of Thomas (1971), Carr (1982) and Preston (1993).

Riffians⁶⁷— across the Gibraltar Strait to fight Republican forces in the Peninsula. By 1939, mainland Spain had fallen under Franco's rule.

Franco's regime left a strong imprint on Melilla. Under his rule, the enclave grew into a city of over 95,000 inhabitants —the largest it would ever be— and completed the period of urban expansion which had begun in the late 1880s. Melilla became a prosperous and relatively stable commercial hub, as the city council, which had been created in 1930 to replace the *Junta Municipal*, brought an end to the problem of workers' housing and unemployment through a mixture of private and state-led initiatives and regulations. During this period, Melilla's fiscal regime was legally defined, leading to an increase in tax revenues and public expenditure, and the social configuration of the enclave changed, as many Jews moved to Israel and increasing numbers of Riffians —many of them soldiers who had fought in Spain during the Civil War— settled in Melilla. This was, therefore, both a period of prosperity and a period of transformation; a time Melillans remember through nostalgic narratives in which the image of an idyllic past serves to denounce the supposed ills of the present. Let us look at a few of these processes in more detail.

During the 1940s, Melilla's city council funded the largest number of public works the city had ever seen. Many of these projects emulated the kind of monumental architecture that Franco had promoted in mainland Spain; Melilla's central bullring (*plaza de toros*) and football stadium, the central bus station and the Municipal Palace (*Palacio Municipal*) were part of these construction projects directed at 'the masses' (Bravo Nieto 1996). But the city council also tackled the problem of workers' lodging

⁶⁷ *El Ejército de África* was the name given to the Spanish military forces in North African colonial territories. The recruitment of Moroccan soldiers was not a new development. In fact, the Spanish had long relied on indigenous forces to protect their interests in the region, from the *mogataces* who defended the perimeter of Melilla in the 16th century, to the *Compañía de los Tiradores del Rif* ('company of the Rif's shooters'), created in Melilla in the 1859 and who fought mainly in Ceuta throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, or the *Fuerzas Regulares Indígenas* (Indigenous Regular Forces, created in Melilla in 1911) who assisted the Spanish in the 'pacification campaign'. Compared to the Army of Africa, however, these were relatively small. The Army of Africa employed tens of thousands of Moroccan soldiers (most of them Riffians) and was, in fact, the Fascists' main support in the uprising against the Republican government. As Sotomayor Blázquez (2005: 236) points out, the number of soldiers fighting in the Army are approximate and vary considerably between sources, from 63,000 to 120,000. For a historical analysis of the role played by the Army of Africa in the Spanish civil war see Madariaga (2002). For information on the role of the Protectorate in the war see Fleming 1982.

through the construction of council houses (*viviendas de protección oficial*), which gave workers a cheaper alternative to Melilla's highly-inflated housing market and generated employment. The money to fund these projects came mainly from the central state, although it is worth noting that CEMR, the main mining company operating in Melilla, 'donated' 1 million *pesetas* for the construction of workers' housing in the early 1940s and financed the construction of 104 new houses for workers in 1953 (for further details see Bravo Nieto 1996: 107-115). During the same period, private employers⁶⁸ were, for the first time, legally required to raise salaries (*ibid.* 216), and property owners were forced to lower rents and improve the conditions of existing housing. Finally, the arrival of further unskilled workers from mainland Spain was controlled through a new law which required newcomers to show a 'letter of invitation' (*carta de llamada*), issued by a permanent resident of the enclave with proven financial resources.⁶⁹ By 'managing' immigration, local authorities were able to generate a new form of 'selective' demographic growth. This brought the population of the enclave up from 67,192 in 1940 to 95,841 in 1949.

A significant proportion of the new population came from the Riffian hinterland. While in 1940 there were 2,776 Muslims recorded in the official census, by 1950 the number had more than doubled, to 6,277. In the next fifteen years, the Riffian population in the enclave would reach 12,753 (Planet 1998: 28). This increase was partly due to the return of Riffian soldiers recruited to fight in the civil war, but it was also the result of the emergence of the first Muslim neighbourhoods in Melilla (the *cerro Camellos* and, from the 1940s, the *Cañada de la Muerte*). The *Cañada*, which had been built —without any official permit— by Riffian soldiers on military soil, grew into a small shantytown (*poblado*) and soon attracted immigration from the Riffian hinterland. Despite the fact that by 1950 there was a five thousand strong Muslim

⁶⁸ The city council subcontracted a number of private companies to undertake the new construction projects, the majority from mainland Spain, but also some from Melilla.

⁶⁹ It is interesting to note the parallels with current Spanish immigration laws, which require Moroccan visitors (i.e. people applying for a tourist visa) to show an 'invitation letter' from a Spanish citizen, and dictate that those applying for a work visa show a signed contract from a potential employer with proven financial resources. Seventy years later, the same methods respond to the same interests.

community living in Melilla, their social invisibility is palpable in the testimony of present-day Melillans:

Until 1956, when Morocco was granted Independence, everything was very good, because [the Riffians] who came [to Melilla] during the day left at night, and Melilla slept only with its own people [i.e. Spanish Christians].⁷⁰

In 1944, a new law was passed to regulate Ceuta's and Melilla's fiscal regimes. The law authorised both enclaves to charge a tax on the import of merchandise to be calculated *ad valorem* (López-Guzmán and González Fernández 2009). Local authorities had been taxing certain imports since the late 19th century, but the new law provided a unified legal framework which would allow them, for the first time, to charge *all* incoming merchandise and keep the proceeds for local investment.⁷¹ Despite the new taxes, Melilla continued to be in an advantageous position vis-à-vis the Moroccan ports. The construction of urban centres, administrative headquarters, military posts and transport infrastructure in the Spanish Protectorate encouraged an increase in trade across the border, while mining exports continued to generate considerable revenues.⁷² As businesses set up by Spaniards in the Protectorate grew, regional trade between Melilla and the neighbouring territories, and between the enclave and mainland Spain, thrived. A classified page of the *Telegrama del Rif* from 1947 gives a good idea of the city's commercial activities:⁷³

⁷⁰ This testimony was collected for a state-funded project on collective memory known as the 'Archive of Experience'. It is available online in a video format at: <http://www.archivodelaexperiencia.es/testimonios/detail.php?id=1327441>.

⁷¹ This tax would be replaced, in 1991, by the API (*Arbitrio sobre la Producción y la Importación*), a tax on imports and production, which was in turn replaced, in 1996, by the IPSI (*Impuesto sobre la Producción, los Servicios y la Importación*), a tax on imports, production and services that continues to be charged today.

⁷² Large numbers of Spaniards (both from Melilla and from the mainland) had settled in the Protectorate in the years following the end of the pacification campaign (1927) to start a business.

⁷³ The advertisements include two Muslim textile establishments (one selling military uniforms), a Christian stationary shop, two import and export businesses (one of them Jewish), a toy store named 'The Reconquest', and an automobile store among others.

EC TELEGRAMA DEL RIF

Le desean un feliz y...

1947

HAMED AMOR ZRAK
VESTUARIO PARA EL EJERCITO
Y FUERZA IND GENAS
Avda. Generalísimo, núm. 2, y 'Jé cito Español', núm. 3 MELILLA

PARA REYES
REG LOS PRACTICOS
Linas estilográficas de las más renombradas marcas
PAPERERIA LOPEZ OCHOA
Avda. Generalísimo, 15 -- Teléfono 2135

MANUFACTURAS BEN YELUN
HACH MOHAMED BEN MHAMUD BEN YELUN
TALLER CONFECCIONES: MELILLA ALMACEN TEJIDOS
Paseo Tallar, 14-16. Teléfono 1310 P. Camadeta, Benito, 3. Teléfono 2023

Grandes Molinos de Beni-Ensar
S. A.
FABRICA DE HARINAS
Teléfono 1627 -- Beni-Ensar (Melilla)

Comercial Mediterránea
Armaderos, Consignatarios, Transmisioneros y
Agentes de Aduanas Colegiados en Melilla
IMPORTACION Y EXPORTACION
Casa Central en Málaga
SUSCRIBASES: Sevilla Núm. de Bienes, 1. Teléfono
no 27-65 -- Melilla A. Generalísimo 31. Teléfono 2106.
Calle José Antonio Páez de Rivera 6. Teléfono 42
Dirección: Intergaláctica Málaga, Sevilla, Melilla, Cádiz: "ALVARZOLAR"

Confecciones BEUTER
Construcciones de vestuarios militares -- Fábricas de impermeables
CONFECCION EN GENERAL
Casa fundada en 1907 -- Productor Nacional núm. 2905
Fábrica y Oficinas: Calle 9 d. Julio, 11-13. -- Teléfono 1730. -- Dirección: Calle Alcazar B. Melilla

Maderas, Hierros, Forastería, Pinturas,
Esteros Marinos, Saneamiento y Materiales
de Construcción en General
Juan Montes Haya e Hijo
S. R. L.
CASA FUNDADA EN 1899
Alvaro de Bazán, 9 -- Teléfono 1341
MELILLA
CASA EN VILLA NADOR

Parres Hermanos
AUTOMOVILES
EL MEJOR SURTIDO DE

Jacob de J. Salama & C.ª
CASA FUNDADA EN 1888
IMPORTACION EXPORTACION
Casa Central en TANGER
Sucursales en MELILLA, TETUAN,
VILLA SANJURJO y VILLA NADOR

PARA REYES EL MEJOR SURTIDO DE LA RECONQUISTA
JUGUETES

SIDRA Zarracina
ANTONIO GARCIA VALLEJO
Café - Bar - Confitería | Panadería y Bollería fina
LA MAYAQUINA | LA ROYAL
Generalísimo, núm. 18 (O'Donnell), número 26
PAN DERIA LOS TRES HERMANOS Gran Capitán, 2, 4 y 6

...próspero Año Nuevo

Franco's highly protectionist policies gave Melilla a competitive advantage vis-à-vis mainland Spain, and not only did Melilla serve as a point of entry for manufactured products going to the North African market, but it also regularly exported foreign cars, cement, foodstuffs, leather and other commodities to mainland Spain. It was at this time, Driessen (1992: 102) tells us, that Melilla's Indian community began to grow; from 16 members in 1940 to 73 in 1965 and 110 in 1983. Over time, they would take over as the intermediaries in international trade from Asia into Melilla, particularly with the rise of Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Korea as manufacturers of cheap luxury goods. But that was much later. In the 1940s and early 1950s, and despite growing commercial activity, the military continued to play a crucial role in the economic development of the enclave. In 1944, for example, the secretary of Melilla's city council, Carmelo Abellán, claimed that

Melilla has not yet ceased to be an eminently military city [*castrense*, from the Latin *castrensis*, belonging to the army or the military profession], sustained by the resources which the armed forces bring in with their development. Local industry is extremely reduced, commerce is distributed among many hands, and few of them of true economic consistency (cited in Bravo Nieto 1996: 39).

The loss of the Spanish Protectorate marked a turning point. The declaration of Moroccan independence (1956) led to an important outflow of Spaniards from the Protectorate towards mainland Spain.⁷⁴ This marked the beginning of a period of demographic decline that continued until 1981, when Melilla's population reached a low point of approximately 58,000 inhabitants.⁷⁵ The closure of Spanish businesses in the former Spanish territories and the gradual decline of the mining industry had an impact upon the local economy, while the establishment of an independent Moroccan state led to the first diplomatic rows between Spain and Morocco over sovereignty, making Melillans particularly aware of the vulnerability of their position. With the withdrawal of Spanish troops from the protectorate and the reduction of the military garrison in Melilla, the sense of being isolated from, and abandoned by, the Spanish motherland became pervasive among the Christian population. The memory of the protectorate was thus rapidly inscribed in narratives of structural nostalgia that speak of a 'golden age' of prosperity and harmony which stands in contrast to present times. A Melillan resident who lived through the final years of the Protectorate, for instance, explained the situation at the time as follows:

During the Protectorate, all the workers [in the mine] were Moroccan. I had about 1,300 workers under my charge, I had a few foremen, and I supervised them and they supervised the Moroccan workers. Everything was in the hands of Spanish people; we had all the vehicles and transport infrastructure and all. Melilla was a free port so we had cars and trucks imported from America, Germany and other countries. We had the Mercedes and all the modern cars that they didn't have in mainland Spain ... My grandfather was one of the pioneers in the Protectorate. He opened a

⁷⁴ Between 1950 and 1975, 25,000 people of Spanish origin left Melilla for political or economic reasons (Driessen 1992).

⁷⁵ After 1981 the population began a slow recovery, gradually increasing up to the 73,188 inhabitants registered in the 2010 census.

small business in Nador, bought some land and built a house. There were so many Spanish workshops and factories in all these towns near Melilla. Leather workshops, for instance, it was all owned by Spaniards! There was plenty of work for everyone; we created so much employment with the mining industry ... But everything changed with independence. Many [Spaniards working in the Protectorate] left. They [the Moroccans] didn't have to expel us; we just left of our own volition ... But now, they [Riffians] are everywhere, all the neighbourhoods are populated by Moors and they are even now moving into the centre of town, they are everywhere! If there was a revolution and they decided to occupy Melilla they could kill us all; that's what their book says, that anyone who is not an adept of [sic] Islamic religion deserves to die.

The mythical image of a past of prosperity appears not only in the testimony of 'common' Melillans, but also in historical narratives. A passage by a local historian, for example, provides the following description of everyday Christian life during the 1950s:

In the decade of the 1950s, Melilla was a welcoming city and, for some, due to the affluence of people from the Protectorate, it was like a provincial capital. This avenue was a centre of gathering for all the youth in the city after the movies, which was one of the few entertainments available: house parties were a different matter. What we did with great elegance in emulation of the happy 1920s was to stroll along the avenue from Plaza España to the textiles shop La Pilarica, and then cross to the opposite side, where one could find the perfume shop Levantina or the Bar Zaragoza ... greeting each other each time we passed by, and so on and so forth until curfew, at around 10 pm. Those in uniform had no choice but to leave earlier, for military discipline was more severe than that of our parents. Many married couples, now grandparents, started their romances on that avenue. An avenue full of life and neoclassical buildings - the envy of many architects for their particular modernist style - built by military engineers and specifically by Don Enrique Nieto, the architect whose talent is responsible for a great share of Melilla's architectural riches (Aranda 1998).⁷⁶

In these romanticised narratives, which I discuss in more detail in chapter 3, the image of a time of harmony and prosperity that came to an end with the loss of the Spanish territories plays a crucial role. Franco occupies a special place in these stories. The strong military presence in the enclave was associated with his rule, as was the

⁷⁶ The passage is available online (in the original Spanish version) at: http://brevecronologiademelilla.blogspot.com/2006/01/siglo-xx-23-de-septiembre-de-1900_02.html

greatly improved economic position of Christians at the time. Despite the fact that Franco's regime outlived the end of the Spanish protectorate by almost twenty years, the figure of the Spanish dictator is strongly associated with the period of Spanish rule over the neighbouring Moroccan territories and, consequently, with a time of undisputed Christian hegemony. It should come as no surprise, then, to learn that Melilla is the only city in Spain that still preserves a statue of the dictator.



Franco's statue by the walls of the old citadel. Melilla, 2009.

But the significance of the Spanish *caudillo* (leader), as Franco is known amongst Spaniards, extends beyond the memory of the Protectorate. The use of Catholicism as the hallmark of Spanish identity in Francoist ideology resonated with a deeply engrained sentiment amongst Melillan Christians. A centuries-long history of antagonism between Spain and Islam served as the foundation for the kind of Catholic

nationalist discourse that Franco endorsed.⁷⁷ Franco's regime was heir to the Carlist ideology⁷⁸ and thus representative of the official Catholic discourse promoted by monarchy and Church in post-Reconquest Spain. As Rodríguez Mediano (2002: 40) argues, the Francoist discourse revolved around a nebulous racial conception in which a compound of religious, linguistic and biological ideas gave rise to the ambiguous notion of hispanity (*hispanidad*). The notion of hispanity served to invoke a sentiment of brotherhood with Moroccans much needed to justify both the deployment of Riffian troops in Spain during the Civil War and the development of colonial policies under the Protectorate.⁷⁹ At the core of this image was the notion of a Hispanic-Berber unity whose origins were to be traced back to Al-Andalus.⁸⁰ A quote by Miguel Asín Palacios (1871-1944), a Spanish Arabist who studied and published prolifically on the connections between Islam and Spanish Catholic mysticism, exemplifies the content, tone, and style of Francoist ideological discourse at the time. The title of the article (1940) is 'Why do the Muslim Moroccans fight on our side':

⁷⁷ Starting with the so-called 'reconquest' of the Iberian Peninsula by the Catholic Monarchs in the 15th century, the Spanish 'imagined community' had been built, both in official narratives and popular discourse, as a product of the struggle between Catholicism and Islam. Oral and written literature, paintings, legal documents and historiography from the 15th to the 20th centuries attest to the significance of the memory of Al-Andalus (the name given to the peninsula under Muslim rule from AD 711 to 1492) as a central trope in debates over the 'essence' of Spain, the nature of 'Spanishness' and the idea of a national identity (see Stallaert 1996; Castro 2001; Goytisolo 2002).

⁷⁸ *Carlismo* is the name given to a Spanish anti-liberal political movement which, at the beginning of the 19th century, advocated for a return to the Ancien Régime. As a political movement, it sought the establishment of a separate line of the Bourbon family —the descendants of the Infante Carlos, Count of Molina (1788–1855)— on the Spanish throne. The movement was particularly strong during the 1830s, and again after Spain's loss of its colonies in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

⁷⁹ Given the long history of antagonism between Spanish Catholicism and Islam, Franco's introduction of Moroccan soldiers into Spain had to be justified ideologically. A propaganda campaign designed to promote the acceptance of Moorish troops amongst the Fascist ranks was launched in 1936 and, after the end of the war, numerous measures were taken —and various media used— to promote a new image of harmonious cooperation between Spain and Morocco. For a detailed analysis of the ideological justifications deployed for the establishment of the protectorate see Bunes Ibarra (1995).

⁸⁰ In the Protectorate, the message of Arab-Hispanic brotherhood was transmitted through local radio stations (*Radio Tetuán*), and the national and local press (*El Heraldo de Marruecos*, *Gaceta de África*). Other measures included the organisation and sponsoring of pilgrimages to Mecca, construction of new mosques, public libraries and local radio stations, and the foundation of numerous institutions for the promotion of Arab culture and Hispanic-Arab academic relations both in the Protectorate and in Spain. Institutions created during Franco's mandate include among others: Centre of Muslim Studies, 1937; Institute Muley el Mehdi, 1938; Casa de Marruecos in Cairo, 1938 Institute General Franco, 1938. For a more detailed analysis, see Madariaga 2002.

Under the rough bark of those rude and brave Moroccan soldiers beats a heart that is identical twin with the Spaniard, a heart that worships spiritual ideals, not unlike ours, and that feels the same religious emotions as we do, because it professes many of the Christian dogmas that we ourselves profess and which Marxist atheism repudiates and persecutes unmercifully (cited in Madariaga, 2002: 346).

Behind the image of brotherhood, however, lay a strong commitment to the discourse of ‘blood purity’ that had informed official narratives of Spanish identity since the 16th century and which professed a genealogical definition of Spanishness based on Catholicism. Consider for example the following passage from a school textbook of the 1940s: ‘Spain fought for the Catholic religion against Arabs, Turks, Protestants, Masonic Encyclopaedists, and Marxists ... The Spanish soul is Catholic by nature; ... we serve Spain by being Catholic’ (cited in Stallaert 1996: 47, fn. 54). At the core of the Francoist discourse, therefore, was a long-standing association between Catholicism and Spanish identity which, as described in chapter 3, found in the enclave its most fervent supporters.

2.5 Becoming Europeans: the enclave as Europe’s last frontier

Franco’s death in 1975 led to a democratic transition that lasted until 1978, when Spain became a constitutional monarchy. In general terms, the constitution of 1978 established a new political and administrative regime which decentralised the power of the central government. Specifically, two articles (144 and 151) were adopted concerning the transfer of powers from the central state to the newly established Autonomous Communities.⁸¹ The text included a regulation which granted Ceuta and Melilla—both of which belonged administratively to the province of Málaga in Andalucía— the option to become ‘Autonomous Cities’ through parliamentary approval. The Statute of Autonomy which officially gave the enclaves the status of Autonomous Cities was

⁸¹ Initially the constitution recognised eight autonomous communities, but in 1981 the Spanish government signed the Autonomical Pacts (*Pactos Autonómicos*), under which seventeen communities were recognized.

passed in February 1995, after years of negotiations with the Spanish central government.⁸² In practical terms, this meant that the two enclaves would enjoy greater political independence from Madrid and, above all, greater fiscal autonomy.

Ceuta and Melilla's fiscal regime differs from that of other Autonomous Communities. The two enclaves enjoy a 50% reduction on 'direct taxes' (*imposición directa*), which include taxes on housing and property, on salaries and other rents, on inheritance and on vehicles. Regarding 'indirect taxation' —namely, VAT— the enclaves are entirely exempt. Instead, the local government imposes IPSI (Tax on Production, Services and Importation), which contributes annually between 35% and 55% of the city's total budget (data from 1997-2007).⁸³ Most of the revenues generated through this tax come from the import of goods through the port (which, it is well known, are later smuggled out of Melilla to be sold in Morocco) and from the construction sector, which grew exponentially from 1996 and is taxed under the 'production' category (López-Guzmán, et al. 2003: 256). The system is designed to make the enclave's government economically self-sufficient. In 2006, for example, the local government accrued 51,429,000 euros through taxation but returned to the central government only 0.03% of these revenues. By contrast, the Autonomous Community of Catalonia returned to the central government 21.09% of tax revenue for the same year (Gómez Rodilla 2007: 58-59).

The importance of the public sector in Melilla cannot be overestimated. Besides the IPSI, Melilla receives from the central government the Sufficiency Fund (*Fondo de Suficiencia*), the Interterritorial Compensation Fund (*Fondo de Compensación Interterritorial*) and the Compensation Fund (*Fondo Complementario*), with each contributing between 6 and 7 million euros to the city's budget (López-Guzmán, et al. 2003). Not surprisingly, therefore, the economy of the enclave is marked by a

⁸² For a detailed account of this process, see Gold 2000: 36-55.

⁸³ Today, revenues from this tax constitute between forty and eighty percent of the total of taxes accrued by the local government (*ibid.*). The IPSI applies to the production of goods within the Spanish enclave as well as to the import of any merchandise to the city. Indirect taxation also includes the Special Tax on Certain Means of Transport and the Special Tax on Electricity. In addition, petrol, alcohol and tobacco are subject to supplementary taxes. For details see Gómez Rodilla 2007: 57-68; also López-Guzmán and González Fernández 2009, and López-Guzmán et al. 2003.

prominent public sector, which employs around 40% of the total resident population. In fact, this has become a most effective mechanism to induce migration from mainland Spain to Melilla. The ‘residency compensation-pay’, a financial incentive for Spanish civil servants to take up positions in Spanish territories distant from mainland Spain, has drawn many mainland Spaniards to the enclave.⁸⁴

Another important source of revenue for the local government has been the funds received from the European Union since the late 1980s. Spain’s incorporation into the European Community in 1986 brought about radical changes to the social, economic and geopolitical landscape of Melilla. A gateway to Europe in the African continent, the enclave soon found itself at the centre of trans-Saharan migration routes, becoming the focus of attention of both European political institutions and international media. This had several important consequences. First, the frontier’s physical landscape was transformed to facilitate border control. The enclave had first been fenced off in 1971, after a cholera outbreak in the Moroccan hinterland, but, in the early 1990s, several successful assaults by groups of African migrants who jumped over the old metal fence made apparent the inefficacy of the old barrier. Under pressure from the EU to improve border control, the local government announced the building of a new, three-meter high fence along the perimeter of the city, to be completed by 1998. The construction of an immigration detention centre (CETI) in the enclave began the following year. After further assaults on the fence in August 2004, and particularly after the tragic events of September and November of 2005, when fourteen migrants died trying to climb over the fence, the building of a higher, larger and more solid fence began.⁸⁵ By autumn 2005, a 10.5 km long, six-meter-high fence sealed the perimeter of the enclave.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ The ‘residency compensation-pay’ (*indemnización por residencia*) is paid in the Balearic and Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla (with Ceuta and Melilla having the highest compensation rates). In Melilla, the payment ranges from 312.87 euros for the lowest income jobs to 881.48 euros for the highest, amounting to a 50-60% increase on the basic salary paid in mainland Spain.

⁸⁵ Between August and September, over 3,000 Sub-Saharan Africans tried to climb over the fence of Melilla in several assaults *en masse*; by the end of that year over 11,000 had tried to jump over the fence, and Morocco had detained 7,749 migrants in the region of Nador. The coverage of these events in the international media was widespread, as discussed in chapter 5.

⁸⁶ The external fence was 3.5 meters high, while the internal one measured up to 6 meters throughout most of its length. Both fences were equipped with sharp wire, infrared security cameras and microphone cables. A road between the two fences allowed for frontier patrols to control the area regularly.

Second, the maintenance of the enclave and the control of its borders became a political project in the hands of European institutions and governing bodies. Due to their peripheral situation, their structural constraints for economic development and, above all, their geo-political significance, both Ceuta and Melilla came to be classified as priority zones for the EU, and funding was poured in from different European bodies. Between 1989 and 1993, over seventy-two million Ecu (European currency unit) from the European Structural Funds were allotted to Melilla (Planet 1998: 48). Over the last two decades, the inflow of European funds has only increased, and today European-funded projects are one of the central pillars of the city's economy.

Third, the institutionalisation of the frontier created new categories of people, transit and transactions across the border. In order to comply with EEC membership standards, Spain was required to pass a new immigration law (1985) and, following its adhesion to the Schengen Area in 1991,⁸⁷ to introduce visa requirements for Moroccan citizens (1991). Followed strictly, the new immigration law implied that 82.5% of Muslims in Melilla (17,027 people, that is 32.5% of the population) should be considered illegal migrants and could consequently be deported to Morocco.⁸⁸ The publication of the law set in motion a movement of resistance amongst Berbers in the enclave which forced the Spanish government to modify the law and grant Spanish citizenship to Muslim residents of Melilla and Ceuta. At the same time, when visa requirements for Moroccan citizens accessing Spanish territory were introduced in the early 1990s, a mutual agreement granted access to the Spanish enclave to residents of the neighbouring province of Nador. This agreement safeguarded the continuation of trade across the border through smuggling, thus protecting one of the main sources of revenue for Melilla.

⁸⁷ The Schengen Area comprises the territories of 25 European countries, signatories to the Schengen Agreement (1985). The Schengen Agreement was originally a treaty signed between five of the ten member states of the European Community (1985) which provided for the removal of border controls between the participating countries while strengthening border controls with non-member states. Italy acceded to the Schengen Agreement and the Convention in November 1990, Spain and Portugal in June 1991, Greece in November 1992, Austria in January 1995, Sweden, Denmark and Finland in December 1996. The treaty was first implemented in 1995. It now covers much of Europe, including some non-EU members, but excluding the UK and Ireland, and is therefore not an EC or EU treaty as such.

⁸⁸ According to Planet (1998: 386), only 17.5% of Muslim residents in Melilla had Spanish citizenship in 1985. Therefore, 82.5% would fall under the category of illegal residents.

Today, the frontier is the main pillar of the region's economy. Commerce across the border includes foodstuffs, basic commodities and all kinds of manufactured goods—from cars to pirated DVDs, clothes, and tiles—and employs thousands of people on both sides of the border. There are important reasons why this large-scale smuggling economy emerged precisely at this time, and these are addressed in detail in the coming chapters. But it is equally important to emphasise the historical continuities, for much of this trade was already taking in place, on a smaller scale, in the early 1980s. During the 1970s, Melilla's Indian community had begun to take over as the main importer of Asian manufactured goods. The Jewish community continued to dominate the trade in jewellery and textiles, while Spanish Christians controlled much of the commerce—mainly in leather—between the enclave and mainland Spain. By 1981, one in five Melillan residents were making a living through commercial activities, and there were 1,268 commercial establishments in Melilla (García Velasco et al. 1985: 85-87). Spain's incorporation into the European Union in 1986 opened new trade routes and, as Riffian emigration to Europe (and therefore migrant remittances) grew, a large market of consumers emerged across the border. Commodity trade increased dramatically in the following years, and it was not long before other kinds of clandestine activities and criminal organisations emerged in the region, including drug-trafficking, money-laundering and people-smuggling networks. Behind the image of Melilla as an impermeable European fortress, therefore, lies a large-scale black market economy that sustains the existence of a region with no industry or natural resources of its own, and reliant to a great extent on capital drawn from the outside.

Initially segregated from its surroundings by protective walls, the Spanish bastion finds itself today in a paradoxically analogous position. Like the old wall of the citadel, the new fence constitutes a spatial strategy to protect the interests of those who control the enclave; but, in the 21st century as much as in the 16th, walls can be circumvented when necessary. Indeed, the enclave of Melilla has long relied on transactions with the Moroccan hinterland for its own survival. Yet much has changed since Melilla was first conquered in 1497. Economically, the enclave has been integrated into a global financial system which relies heavily on small-scale

geographical differences and leaves ample room for the development of *rentier* economies. Demographically, it has grown into a city of 73,000 inhabitants, and has seen Christian hegemony challenged by a growing Muslim population of Riffian descent and Spanish citizenship. Politically, it has moved from a Catholic nationalist ideology to a European multiculturalist rhetoric which both represents and obscures a new social reality. These changes have not come without effects, both materially and symbolically, and to these I turn in the coming chapters.



Aerial photograph of Melilla.

2.6 The other side of the border: Nador

Created by the Spanish in 1909 as a military encampment, the city of Nador (13 km from Melilla) is home to one of the largest communities of Moroccan emigrants in Europe.⁸⁹ While in the winter this is a relatively quiet, peaceful and sparsely populated town, in the summer it becomes crowded with thousands of returning migrants who travel from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands or Spain to spend the holiday season in Nador. Every year, from mid-June until the end of August, the city undergoes a radical transformation. Cafés, pizzerias and restaurants open their doors to welcome the returnees, as travel and housing agencies, internet centres and all sorts of commercial establishments prepare for the ‘high-earning’ season, which will see them through the quiet winter months. The return of migrants has generated a large-scale seasonal economy which has, in turn, transformed the physical landscape and economic structure of the region.

The first evidence of migration from the Rif can be traced back to the seventh century (Refass 1992).⁹⁰ Up until the mid-nineteenth century, however, migratory movements were of regional or, at most, national reach, with large numbers of Riffians leaving the mountainous region of the Rif for the west and south of Morocco, where sources of livelihood were more abundant (ibid.). The year 1830 marked the beginning of the French colonisation of Algeria and with it the onset of massive Riffian migration into the neighbouring country.⁹¹ The increasing demand for low-skilled labourers in the

⁸⁹ Nador was initially designed as a military encampment to protect the mining industry. The grid-patterned settlement, known as Villa Nador, was expanded several times during the 1910s and 1920s to accommodate an increasing civilian population that had moved to Villa Nador attracted by the economic activity generated by the military garrison. By 1934, Villa Nador had become the capital of the eastern Spanish Protectorate; during the following two decades, Nador’s population grew from 4,699 inhabitants in 1935 to 23,443 in 1955. Many of the new residents were Spaniards who had settled in the colonial territories; they made up 65% of the population in 1935. As the small town grew into an urban centre, however, many poor Riffians from the surrounding countryside settled in improvised houses built on the periphery of the Spanish quarters. In 1945, Riffians made up 75% of the population. After independence, Nador became the capital of the Moroccan province of the same name. For a detailed historical study of the city see Bravo Nieto 2009.

⁹⁰ The eastern Rif is characterised by a severe physical environment. The high aridity of the soil, combined with scarce and irregular rainfall, make agricultural production unreliable, and the Rif has long relied on emigration in times of famine or drought (Refass 1992).

⁹¹ For a detailed analysis of the history of emigration in the Rif from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s, see Bossard 1978.

newly acquired Algerian territories drew thousands of Riffians across the border each year. Seasonal migration to work on the farms of French land-owners and in the construction of the expanding Algerian coastal cities became a common source of income for Riffian families, who were often faced with lack of resources, poor infrastructure, endemic unemployment and high population density at home. By 1859, it was estimated that 20,000 Riffians were working for French *colons* in Algeria (Aziza 2003: 3). Emigration to Algeria continued during the years of the Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956), while in French Morocco, road construction, infrastructure projects, and the rapid growth of cities along the Atlantic coast shaped new markets attracting rural-to-urban migration. In the Spanish protectorate, however, infrastructural development was limited and Algeria continued to be the main destination for Riffian labour.⁹²

When Spain relinquished the Protectorate in 1956 it left behind a poor infrastructure and an impoverished, largely illiterate population under constant threat from drought and famine.⁹³ The integration of the eastern Rif into the former French protectorate of Morocco between 1956 and 1958 resulted in great hardship for the local population. Unemployment rose rapidly, as did the cost of living. High levels of unemployment, lack of agricultural development, an inadequate infrastructure and a poor and corrupt administration led to unrest in the provinces of Al-Hoceima and Nador in 1958 and again in 1959. Protests were brutally repressed by King Hassan with the aid of 20,000 troops.

⁹² Although 40,000 Riffians were recruited for Franco's army during the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and continued to work as auxiliary troops in Spanish Morocco during Franco's regime (de Haas 2005c: 8), and around 3,000 were employed in the Spanish mining operations at Beni-Bou-Ifrou (Aziza 2003: 5), the region remained, by and large, overpopulated and underemployed. Migration was a common alternative to the dim prospects afforded by the scarcity of the homeland. The famine of the 1940s further increased this trend, with approximately 20% of male members of the main regional tribes migrating to Algeria (for detailed data on individual tribes, see Aziza 2003: 8). While in the late 1930s, the number of Riffian migrants to Algeria was estimated at about 55,000 each year, by 1950 around one third of the male adults in the region were working on Algerian farms (de Haas 2005c: 19). Of course, regional differences were important. Tribes located near the mines of Beni-Bou Ifrou and near the Spanish enclave of Melilla were less likely to emigrate than others, mainly due to the economic opportunities afforded by mining and trading. In fact, three quarters of Riffian emigrants in Algeria had come from the tribes of Tamsaman, Beni Saïd, Beni Touzine et Tafersit, where sources of income were much scarcer (Aziza 2003: 6).

⁹³ It is important to note that, unlike the French territories, the Spanish protectorate did not generate a network of infrastructure in the Rif. The impact of colonisation in the region, as Berriane and Aderghal (2008: 22) note, was practically negligible.

The closure of the border between Algeria and Morocco in 1962 led to the sudden halt of migratory movements between the two countries, removing the only stable source of income for Riffians. Luckily, the 1960s were a time of strong economic growth in Western Europe, and there was a great demand for cheap, low-skilled labour. The government of Morocco actively encouraged migration from the Rif, and many Riffian migrants in Algeria moved to Europe.⁹⁴ Morocco signed labour recruitment agreements with West Germany (1963), France (1963), Belgium (1964), and the Netherlands (1969), and between 1965 and 1975, the estimated number of registered Moroccans living in Europe increased from 30,000 to around 400,000. The region of Nador was particularly favoured by these agreements, as the government was eager to facilitate migration as a means to relieve economic and social tension. It has been estimated that somewhat more than 32% of adult men (15-59 years old) born in the eastern Rif were employed in Europe in 1971; for the whole of Morocco, this percentage was only 5.5% (Bossard 1978).⁹⁵

In 1973 the oil crisis initiated a period of economic stagnation in Europe, which led to rising unemployment and a lower demand for migrant labour (de Haas 2005c: 11). European countries closed their frontiers to migration and introduced new visa requirements for Moroccan visitors. This signalled the beginning of clandestine migration to Europe. Spain's incorporation into the EU in 1986 increased the opportunities for migrants to establish clandestine routes of passage via Melilla, Ceuta, and the Gibraltar Strait, and for the first time Moroccan migrants began to settle in Spain. When new waves of unrest hit the eastern Rif in the mid-1980s,⁹⁶ the Moroccan

⁹⁴ In the main, this took the form of directing recruiters to these areas and selective passport issuance. In fact, up until 1973, the biggest constraint on migration was not the immigration policies of European states, but the difficulty of obtaining a Moroccan passport. Following the social and political turmoil of the late 1950s, the Moroccan state recognised the potential benefits of migration as a means to relieve social, political and economic tensions. From 1959, the government ordered its consulate in Oran to issue passports to Moroccan migrants in Algeria to move to Europe and work there (Aziza 2003: 10). Since then, the Moroccan government has encouraged emigration in the poorer regions of the country, and has directed European funds for border control mainly towards policies to restrict Sub-Saharan African migration through Morocco, rather than Moroccan emigration itself.

⁹⁵ In fact, between 1970 and 1973, the region of Nador was ranked first for the absolute number of those leaving for Europe (Berriane and Aderghal 2008: 22).

⁹⁶ Between 1973 and 1983, food prices in Morocco more than tripled, and in the five months between July and October 1983 the food index rose 10.6 percent, with the cost-of-living index rising 8 percent

government repeated the process of the mid-1950s, issuing passports in the Rif in order to encourage emigration. Because Spain did not introduce visa requirements until 1991, Riffians were able to enter Spain as tourists, settle anywhere in Europe and overstay their visas.

The profile of the Riffian emigrant changed: prior to the closure of European borders, Riffian emigrants were mainly middle-aged men from rural areas, often married, and seeking temporary employment; with the emergence of clandestine emigration, younger Riffians began to emigrate and family reunification policies meant that women and children joined the Riffian emigrant community (Aziza 2003: 10). Migration became permanent and, by the end of the 1980s, there were 130,000 emigrants from the province of Nador residing in Europe: 40% in the Netherlands and 30% in Germany (Bossard 1978). High economic growth in the 1990s drew an even higher number of undocumented migrants to Europe, attracted by the intense demand for cheap labour in sectors such as agriculture, construction, cleaning and diverse service jobs. As a consequence, the total population of Moroccan emigrants increased from 400,000 in 1975 to 2.1 million by the turn of the 21st century (de Haas 2005c: 11, 15). By 2009, it was estimated that over 3 million Moroccans were living in Europe; of these, 758,900 were in Spain (Khachani 2011).

The most significant effect of the drastic increase in Moroccan emigration has been that brought about by remittances: around 4.8 billion euros reach the country every year through fund transfers from MREs (*Marocains Résidents à l'Étranger*). The increased purchasing power of Moroccan emigrants and their families back home has attracted the attention of private and public investors. In Nador, one of the Moroccan regions with most emigrants per capita, the Moroccan government has projected the development of a large-scale tourist industry to cater for the thousands of emigrants

overall. At the beginning of January of 1984, virtually all basic foodstuffs (flour, bread, tea, sugar and cooking oil) had gone up in price by at least 20 percent. With high levels of unemployment, very large numbers of households often failed to maintain subsistence levels of income (Seddon 1984). When, in January 1984, the Moroccan government decreed a rise in the fee paid by high school students, student demonstrations began, soon triggering large-scale strikes and violent protests. Following protests in Marrakech and Casablanca, demonstrations spread to the north. For a vivid account of these events see Paul 1984 and Seddon 1984.

who flood the city every summer. The region has been transformed by the rural exodus fostered by the investment of returning emigrants on urban housing, leading to a major expansion of the commercial sector. More importantly, however, recent decades have seen been the consolidation of a drug-trafficking and money-laundering ‘industry’ dependent on the financial capital and social networks generated through emigration.

The province of Nador is located 50 km east of the central Rif, a mountainous region of northern Morocco which hosts one of the world’s largest cannabis plantations.⁹⁷ Since the 1960s and 1970s, cannabis crops in the central Rif have supplied the European market (Ketterer 2001). Spain’s incorporation into the EU turned the Gibraltar Strait into a suitable route to access the European market, and drug trade between Morocco and Spain flourished. By 2005, the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), estimated an annual market of 4.6 billion euros is in the hands of Moroccan cannabis-resin trafficking networks operating mostly in Europe (UNODC 2005). Today, northern Morocco is an important transit point not only for cannabis resin grown locally, but also for cocaine coming from South America.⁹⁸ Nador is one of the centres of operations for these networks.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ It is hard to determine the origins of cannabis cultivation in the central Rif, but we know that its use was firmly established in the 19th century (Joseph 1973: 238). According to estimates from 2005, Morocco is one the main producers of cannabis resin (*hashish*) in the world, with a cultivation area in the central Rif of roughly 20,000 hectares, and around 760,000 people involved in the production of cannabis crops (UNODC 2005).

⁹⁸ In recent years, increased controls at European airports and ports have forced South American mafias to redirect cocaine distribution routes through Africa, and the eastern Rif has become a centre for the distribution of cocaine into Europe. The assimilation of the South American cocaine trade greatly increased the volume of revenues generated by the drug business and, today, drug trafficking is one of the most important ‘industries’ in the region. See, for an analysis of cocaine trade routes through West Africa, the UNODC’s (2007) situation report, and for an analysis of *hashish* and cocaine trade through Morocco, see Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs’ (2009) strategy report for Morocco.

⁹⁹ There is abundant evidence pointing to Morocco’s role as the world’s leading cannabis producer and as a key transit point for *hashish* and cocaine going to Europe (see, for example, UNODC 2003, 2005, 2007). The presence of drug-trafficking networks in the area of Nador/Melilla has received less attention in the general literature, but it has been widely documented in the Spanish press. Relevant examples include: Cembrero, I. ‘La flotilla de la droga zarpa de Nador’, *El País*, 19/11/2006; Duva, J. ‘Lanchas de hachís a 120 por hora’, *El País*, 18/10/2007; ‘Una “armada” de hachís, lista para zarpar desde Nador’, *El Mundo*, 12/05/2008; Rodríguez, J. A., ‘Una red blanqueó 350 millones del hachís con transferencias a China’, *El País*, 17/11/2005; S.G.D., ‘Un gran centro de contratación de droga y blanqueo de dinero’, *El País*, 08/07/2002; Ramos, T. ‘Detenido el consejero de Economía de Melilla por un delito de blanqueo de dinero del narcotráfico’, *El País*, 27/11/2002. The Moroccan press has also noted the growing importance of the eastern Rif as a centre of operations for drug-trafficking networks, with articles reporting on the arrests of local drug lords (see M. Abouabdillah, M. ‘Evolution de l’affaire de trafic de drogue a Nador’, *Le Journal de Tanger*, <http://www.lejournaldetanger.com/article.php?a=2592>; MAP,

Nador and Melilla are two sides of the same coin. Both cities were created by the Spanish to facilitate military intervention in the region and, since then, the same historical processes that have shaped the Spanish enclave's economic and geopolitical structure have also defined the physical, economic and social landscape of Nador. Economically interdependent, the two are connected by a large-scale underground economy which transcends national boundaries and relies precisely on the differences that the border itself generates. As we shall see, the material connections between these two places reveal that ultimately, and despite remarkable differences in the kinds of narratives found on each side of the border, Nador and Melilla are products of one and the same world order.

‘Arrestation d'un trafiquant de drogue à Nador’, *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, num. 1855, <http://www.aujourdhui.ma/nation-details66879.html>. In the academic literature, McMurray (2001: 149-151), Driessen (1992) and Berriane and Hopfinger (1999) have noted, without going into much detail, the existence of drug-trafficking networks in the area.

CHAPTER 3. ONE SPACE, TWO PLACES: SEGREGATION AND ETHNOCRACY IN MELILLA

Besides the wealth of monuments, and its historical and cultural patrimony, Melilla offers a fragile but very valuable treasure, that of promoting conviviality [*convivencia*], tolerance and métissage [*mestizaje*]. Our city wants to show it, share it and thus enrich it.

Tourist leaflet published by Melilla's city council.

I arrived in Melilla on the first day of Ramadan in 2008. It was a late afternoon in early September, the stores were closed and the streets empty as people slept through the hours of heat. I was on a quest for a better map of the city, as the one I had been given at a visitors' stall in the morning included only the city centre. Walking around Melilla's central roundabout, the *Plaza de España*, I found a young boy working in a news-stand. I approached him and asked for the whereabouts of Melilla's central tourism office. He looked me over, frowning in confusion, and hesitated for a few seconds before responding: 'But, what is that, Muslim or Christian?'

3.1 Ethnocracy in Melilla

With approximately 73,000 people sharing a territory of under 13 square kilometres, Melilla's autochthonous population is divided between people of Spanish descent (locally known as 'Christians' or 'Spaniards') and people of Berber descent (known as 'Muslims' or 'Moroccans'), with small minorities of Jews, Gypsies and Hindus whose importance is symbolic rather than numerical.¹ Melilla presents itself to the outside

¹ Economically salient some 30 years ago, the Jewish and Hindu communities in Melilla's social, political and economic landscape have shrunk significantly in recent decades. Today, only a few Jewish and Hindu families continue to live in the Spanish enclave. Although no official data on the size of Melilla's religious or ethnic groups are available, an estimate published in 2000 reports that Jews constitute 1% of Melilla's population, and that there remain around 60 Hindus and 200 Romani (Mayoral del Amo 2003: 38-39).

world as a ‘multicultural’ city. A tourist booklet for English-speakers describes it as follows:

Melilla is a mixture of cultures. Here, Christians, Moslems, Jews and Hindus co-exist in perfect harmony. The largest community is made up of the Christians, followed by the Maghrebis.² In the main, the Jews and Hindus, less in number, are engaged in the various sectors of local trade. Together, the four cultures have created an open, multifaceted and cosmopolitan city, as may easily be observed in the countenance of the buildings, streets and squares.³

Yet behind the thin veil of multiculturalism —a relatively recent addition to Melilla’s official narratives, aimed at developing a local tourist industry— lies a different reality. A history of Christian hegemony and unequal access to political power and economic resources underlies real, though often well-concealed, tensions between people of Spanish descent and the Muslim population. The legacy of the Spanish protectorate weighs heavily on the configuration of the enclave and, twenty-five years after Muslims first acquired full rights as Spanish citizens, Christians continue to dominate a political and economic structure which is best described as an ethnocracy.⁴

The concept of ethnocracy was first used by Ali Mazrui in 1975 to describe ‘a political system based on kinship, real or presumed’ (cited in Longva 2005: 119).⁵ Mazrui was describing Uganda, but the concept has since been used of a number of regimes across the world.⁶ Writing about Kuwait, for example, Longva defines it as ‘a

² *Magrebies* or *magrebis*, generally used to refer to people from the Maghreb region in North Africa (which includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania). In Spain, however, it is used to designate Moroccans. Here, it refers to local Muslims.

³ The leaflet is published by the Secretary of Tourism (Ministry of Economy) and the European Regional Development Fund, and can be found online at: www.tourismbrochures.net/spaintouristguides/spain/melilla/print.pdf

⁴ The focus of this chapter is on the nature of social, political and economic relations between the Christians and Muslims in Melilla. It is important to clarify, however, that the emphasis on this divide renders a partial image. Other, equally important issues are addressed in chapters 5 and 6, and these should be read in conjunction for a full picture of social relations in the enclave.

⁵ Although the word appeared first in an earlier book published in 1963 under the title *African ethnocracies: some sociological implications of constitutional change in emergent territories of Africa*, by G.E.J.B. Brausch.

⁶ For example, Israel (Yiftachel 2006), Thailand (Von Feigenblatt 2009), Estonia and Latvia (Melvin 2000), Malaysia (Wade 2009) or, under the variant ‘semi-ethnocracy’, Hong Kong (Sautman 2004).

term that describes the tendency for an elite to posit their own physical characteristics and cultural norms as the essence of the nation over which they rule, thus narrowing its definition and excluding all those within the polity who do not exhibit the same characteristics or embrace the same norms.’ Simply put, ‘ethnocracy is government by an ethnic group’ (ibid.). Ethnocracies may, of course, take different forms. The emphasis may be placed on race, language or religion, to take the most common examples, yet it is always expressed in terms of a ‘natural’ community. Longva defines the Kuwaiti regime as a ‘civic ethnocracy’, where citizenship, conceived as a form of shared descent, serves as the fundamental criterion for inclusion in the dominant group. The pattern recurs throughout the Arab Gulf, where citizens are minorities and the major part of the working force is foreign (see Dresch and Piscatori 2005). In such contexts of demographic imbalance, Dresch argues, ‘the importance of citizenship increases, and the line around the privileged status of “national” or *muwātin* is drawn more tightly’ (2005: 24). The similarities with the situation in Melilla are striking; the differences are important too.

The question of citizenship took centre stage in Melilla in the mid-1980s, when Spain compiled its first immigration law and the irregular situation of Muslims in Melilla, as an offshoot of Spain, came to light. Before 1985, the enclave was an ethnocracy in the strictest sense of the term: religion, ethnicity and citizenship together were the defining features of the ruling group in a system which precluded any kind of mobility across that group’s boundaries. The enclave’s elite was made up of Christians of Spanish descent and with Spanish citizenship; the underclass was composed of Muslims of Berber descent and Moroccan citizenship who, more often than not, worked in Christian households or for Christian employers. The boundary between the two groups was clearly defined and non-negotiable; most Moroccans had no means of acquiring membership in or assimilating to the Christian elite. Spain’s incorporation into the EC changed the rules of the system by setting in motion a series of events which culminated in the mid-1980s with the naturalisation of Muslim residents in the enclave. Debates over the legitimacy of the process of naturalisation have been widespread in the past twenty-five years. Unlike in Kuwait, where the rule of citizens

over non-citizens is the overarching structure, in Melilla the division between Muslims and Christians, conceived as a division based on descent, continues to exert a considerable influence, equal to —if not greater than— that between nationals and non-nationals.

Let us begin with some historical and legal ground-clearing. Spain became a member-state of the EC (European Community) in 1986. In order to comply with EC standards and regulate the often ambiguous status of non-EU nationals on Spanish soil, the Spanish government drafted an Immigration Law (*Ley de Extranjería*) which came into effect on 22nd October 1985. The law gave non-EU nationals until January 1986 to apply for Spanish citizenship, and determined that those who could not prove their status as either legal residents or citizens were liable to be deported. Exceptions were made for certain groups, who were allowed to apply for Spanish citizenship after two years of residency, but neither people from the former Spanish colonies in northern Morocco and the Western Sahara, nor Berber and Arab residents of Ceuta and Melilla were included in the clause.⁷ Spanish citizenship was granted to non-nationals if they lived in Spain *and* at least one parent had been born in Spain, and the law allowed other non-nationals to apply for citizenship (without any guarantees of obtaining it) if they could prove residency in Spanish territory for over ten years. In both cases, legal documentation was required to prove nationality and residency. Muslims in Ceuta and Melilla often lacked the necessary papers.⁸ Followed strictly, therefore, the law implied that 82.5% of Muslims in Melilla would be considered illegal migrants and could be deported (Planet 2004: 386).

⁷ The law is explicit: 'Latin-Americans, Portuguese, Filipinos, Andorrans, Equatoguineans, Sephardis [Jews of Spanish descent] and those originally from the city of Gibraltar, all of them communities and peoples linked historically and culturally to Spain, could benefit from a preferential treatment to gain access to Spanish nationality and to obtain work and residence permits' (*Ley Orgánica 7/1985, de 1 de Julio, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España*).

⁸ Of 17,800 Muslims in Melilla in 1986 (32.5% of the total population), only 6,000 had Spanish nationality. The rest were split between those who held a local residency permit known as the Statistical Card (around 6,500) and those who did not have any documentation and were thus stateless persons (Gold 2000: 92).

The publication of the law set in motion a movement of resistance in the enclaves. Led by Melillan intellectual and politician Aomar Duddu,⁹ Melillan Muslims rose up against the Spanish government and the enclave's local authorities, who supported the Spanish government's position and strict application of the law. On 23rd November 1985, between 4,000 and 22,000 people gathered in the Muslim ghetto known as the *Cañada de la Muerte*, in the largest demonstration Melilla had ever witnessed.¹⁰ The Christian sector, with the support of all political parties in the enclave, reacted by calling for a counter-demonstration in favour of the law on 6th December, the Day of the Constitution. Over 35,000 people took to the streets, waving Spanish flags and chanting national slogans.¹¹ The Muslim community called for a general strike the next day and continued to hold meetings and assemblies to discuss the situation, as tensions escalated (Gold 2000: 91-119). The protests continued, and negotiations between the Spanish central government and the Muslim community, represented by Aomar Duddu, were initiated soon after. After two years of unrest, on-going negotiations, frequent strikes and demonstrations, and at a time when confrontations between the Muslim and Christian communities in Melilla had reached a climax, the Spanish government modified the law to grant Spanish citizenship to all Muslim

⁹ The son of a prosperous Muslim merchant of Spanish nationality, Aomar Duddu (also Omar Dudú) was the first Melillan Muslim to obtain a university degree. He attended a private Spanish Catholic school in Melilla, and later moved to mainland Spain to read economics and business at the University of Granada. In 1982 he was elected president of Melilla's Muslim Community's Association (*Asociación de la Comunidad Musulmana*) and, in 1985 he became the first Muslim to be employed by the City Council in Melilla. Duddu played a key role in the organisation of a movement of resistance against the new immigration law, and became the main spokesperson for the Muslim sector in the ensuing negotiations with the Spanish central government. After the derogation of the law, in 1986, he was briefly employed by the Spanish government in Madrid, as a 'sub-director general' to Spain's Interior Minister. Soon afterwards, however, he was accused (many believe *falsely* accused) of sedition and his Spanish nationality was revoked. He then moved to Morocco, where King Hassan II appointed him Counsellor to the Ministry of Interior and, later, Governor of the Ministry of Interior.

¹⁰ According to the Spanish government's local ministry (*Delegación de Gobierno*) 4,000 people attended the meeting; according to the organisers, it was 22,000. See Chueca, E. 'Miles de musulmanes se manifiestan en Melilla contra la ley de Extranjería', *El País*, 24/11/1985.

¹¹ According to the *Delegación de Gobierno* between 35,000 and 40,000 people attended the demonstration; the city council put the number at 42,000. The demonstration was presented in the Spanish press as an act of Spanish nationalism. See Yañoz, C. 'La manifestación en favor de la ley de extranjería se convirtió en un acto de reafirmación de la españolidad de Melilla', *El País*, 07/12/1985. Also, Zamarró, J.M. 'La manifestación en Melilla a favor de la ley de extranjería fue un acto de afirmación española', *ABC*, 7-12-1985.

residents in Melilla and Ceuta.¹² By the end of 1988, five thousand Muslims had been granted nationality in Melilla and one thousand nationality appeals were pending (Planet 1998: 100).¹³ The number of Muslim residents who acquired Spanish citizenship in the following years grew exponentially until the process of regularisation ended in 1991.¹⁴

The events of 1985-1986 changed the legal and political landscape in the enclave. As Spanish citizens, Melillan Muslims gained free healthcare, unemployment benefits, freedom of movement within the European Community and public education. They gained the right to political representation and organisation and were able, for the first time, to challenge Christian hegemony in the enclave. *De jure*, therefore, the strict ethnocratic regime which had been in place for centuries gave way to a democratic system. *De facto*, however, Christians continue to hold all positions of power politically, financially and militarily, while Muslims struggle with the legacy of a system which has left them in a structurally underprivileged position. Historically disadvantaged vis-à-vis the Christian population, Muslims in Melilla are still paying the price of a political system which for centuries has favoured residents of Spanish origin. Long-standing networks of patronage work to the advantage of Christians, who are educated to a higher level and in a better position to obtain white-collar jobs. Thus, while Muslims work in the construction and services sector, or engage in informal trade across the border, Christians are mainly employed by the state in schools, hospitals,

¹² According to *El País*, the exception decree promulgated would grant Spanish nationality to 99% of the Muslim population in the Spanish enclaves. See L.G. 'Adiós a la tarjeta de estadística', *El País*, 09/02/1987.

¹³ The Spanish newspaper *El País* reported on 27th November 1988 that 3,500 Muslims had been granted Spanish citizenship and had the Spanish national identity card, 5,000 were awaiting their new documents and yet another 1,500 had a provisional national ID card. Nine hundred Muslims were denied Spanish citizenship. See Carrizosa, J. A. 'Melilla tres años después', *El País*, 27/11/1988. According to Gold (2000: 92), in 1986 there were 17,824 Muslims living in Melilla; by 1988, therefore, 7,824 of these would still be undocumented. These statistics, however, are far from uncontroversial. For instance, *El País* reported in 1986 that, prior to the census, official estimates put the number at 20,000 while the Melillan Muslim association *Terra Omnium* put it at 27,000 (Gutiérrez, A. 'Una comisión empieza a elaborar el censo de población musulmana de Melilla', *El País*, 18/02/1986). As Stallaert notes for Ceuta (1998: 131), given the numbers of Muslims not officially registered as residents in the Spanish enclaves, and the large floating population of Muslims who worked in Ceuta or Melilla but lived across the border, population statistics derived from the official census cannot be taken at face value.

¹⁴ For a detailed account of these events see Gold 2000: 91-110.

government institutions or the military. As Lopez et al. (2007) write, ‘the City Council is the company that generates, by far, the largest number of jobs in the city’. In fact, while in Spain the public sector represents between 14% and 15% of the labour market, in Melilla the proportion is 42.52% (Mayoral del Amo 2005: 34).¹⁵ An important number of civil service posts are taken up by the military. Despite the significant reduction in troops since the end of the Protectorate and, more so, after the abolition of the Spanish compulsory military service in Spain in 2001, the army still commands a particular kind of influence over social and political issues, and maintains a visible presence in the enclave (in 2002 troops numbered 4,000). For historical reasons (see chapter 2), the military is associated with times of prosperity and this, together with its role in defending the enclave, has granted it a singular place in the Melillan collective imagination.

Melilla’s political regime is no longer, legally speaking, ethnocratic; yet, centuries of ethnocratic practices have left a strong imprint, and the issues which both the elite and the underclass confront on a daily basis are in many ways reminiscent of those described by Longva for Kuwait, and found more generally throughout the Arab Gulf. Segregation informs social relations at all levels, and is manifest both in the division of labour and in the regulation of urban space. This ethnically-defined religious divide is played out in everyday life, informing relations between two communities which, while sharing one physical space, certainly inhabit different places. Before exploring the spatial organisation of difference, however, it is important to address the political discourse which sustains this regime.

¹⁵ Together with commerce, which represents 89.5% of the local economy (Mayoral del Amo 2005: 34), the state is one of the main employers in Melilla. Once again, parallels can be drawn with the situation in Kuwait, where 83% of the labour force are expatriate workers employed mainly by the private sector, while 92% of Kuwaitis who work are employed by the state (Longva 2005).

3.2 From Catholic nationalism to multiculturalism

Structures of power are not wrought from thin air, but are sustained in both material and symbolic practices which provide those ‘who have pretensions to create an institutionalized locus of social and political power’ with ‘an imaginary sufficient to achieve some level of social cohesion, solidarity and institutionalized order’ (Harvey 1996: 321). Although ‘invented traditions’ can be useful tools to build such an order, often these practices draw on shared understandings with a long history of their own.

In Melilla, official narratives rely on long-standing ideas about ‘Spanishness’ (*españolidad*). The origins of this particular form of national identity, which draws on ideas about religious and genealogical purity, are to be found in Spain’s long history of interaction with the Arab-Islamic world.¹⁶ For more than seven centuries (AD 711-1492), the Iberian Peninsula was partly under Muslim control. The final push in the military ‘reconquest’ (*Reconquista*) during the 15th century occurred in parallel with the process of unification of the kingdoms of Castilla and Aragon, which had begun with the marriage between Isabel de Castilla and Fernando de Aragón in 1469 and culminated in 1479 when Fernando officially inherited the crown of Aragon. With the unification of the two territories, Isabel and Fernando became popularly known as the Catholic Kings. It was under their reign that the Iberian Peninsula (with the exception of Portugal) became Spain, and it is only thereafter that we can speak of a Spanish identity. Unsurprisingly, the idea of a common Spanish identity is intimately tied to the struggle against the ‘Muslim invader’. The very title of ‘Catholic Kings’ attests to the imprint left by the centuries of antagonism, and to the strong association between Spanish identity and Catholicism. Perhaps because during the period of Muslim rule the social and political organisation of the Peninsula (first under the Caliphates and, later, under the Taifa kingdoms) followed a system of segregation akin to that found in Melilla

¹⁶ Following the thesis proposed by Spanish intellectual Americo Castro (1885-1972), Christiane Stallaert (1996) situates the origins of Spanish identity in the Christian Reconquest, as a response to the Muslim presence in the peninsula. Indeed, Al-Andalus has figured prominently in Spanish popular and official narratives since the early Middle Ages, with discourses of Spanish identity returning to Spain’s Muslim past time and again as a mythical point of reference which is at times idealised and at times demonised. For an account of the role played by the myth of Al-Andalus in the configuration of Spanish identity see Soto Bermant 2007. Also of interest is the work of Spanish historian Américo Castro (1987 [1954]) and writer Juan Goytisolo (2002).

today, religious identity came hand in hand with notions of genealogical purity. Blood determined religious affiliation, and religious affiliation, in turn, determined social and political identity.¹⁷ By the time of the fall of the last Muslim stronghold in Granada (1492), the systematic opposition between Christianity and Islam had become the foundation of a collective identity whose boundaries were traced according to what was known as ‘purity of blood’ (*limpieza*, literally ‘cleanliness’).

Both official narratives and popular rhetoric amongst Melillan Christians need to be understood against the backdrop of this history, transmitted across generations through language. Thus, a Spanish child will soon learn to say ‘*no hay moros en la costa*’ (literally, there are no Moors on the coast) to express the idea that there is no danger, that the coast is clear, and will be taught in school about the mythical Santiago Matamoros (Santiago the Moor-killer), the apostle who helped Christians against the Muslim invader in their ‘reconquest’. He will also learn about the division between *Cristianos Viejos* (Old Christians, i.e. descendants of Christians, of ‘pure blood’) and *Cristianos Nuevos* (New Christians, i.e. converts of Moorish or Jewish ancestry), and how, in order to protect the privileges of Old Christians, the *Estatutos de Limpieza de Sangre* (Statutes of Blood Purity) were gradually established throughout the ‘reconquered’ territories.¹⁸ Similar examples abound.¹⁹ As Halbwachs puts it, ‘verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and the most stable framework of collective memory’ (1992: 45). Official narratives in Melilla rely on these

¹⁷ The fundamental role played by religious discourse and religious institutions in the construction of a Spanish national identity seems to contradict common assumptions about the simultaneity of the decline of religious thought and the rise of the nation state. Benedict Anderson makes reference to this in his ‘Imagined Communities’ (1983), when he writes that ‘in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought’ (ibid. 11). Anderson immediately makes clear that he is not establishing a necessary connection between the two processes, but the idea that there is a connection —however contingent— between the two is already there. The case of Spain, however, points to a different conclusion. As Charles-Edwards (2004) argues for Britain and Ireland, the concept of a nation can often precede the nation itself. A similar idea is found in the work of van der Veer (1994) on religious nationalism in India.

¹⁸ Literally *Estatutos de Limpieza de Sangre* translates as ‘Statutes of Blood Cleanliness’. The statutes worked as a seal of warranty. The imposition of an *Estatuto de Limpieza de Sangre* limited access to certain social institutions to Christians who could prove that their lineage was ‘clean’, that is, not mixed with Jewish or Muslim blood, and that their ancestors had not been prosecuted by the Inquisition.

¹⁹ Consider, for example, the oral literature regarding Franco’s Riffian troops during the time of the Spanish Civil War, discussed in Madariaga 2002.

‘collective representations’ to sustain the illusion of a homogeneous, cohesive community.²⁰

Three pillars sustain the Spanish nationalist discourse in Melilla: the idea of ‘Spanishness’ (which draws on classical Spanish folklore and references to the homeland), the military and Catholicism. These three elements find their most visible expression in Melilla’s public holidays. In August, for example, Melilla celebrates the ‘Acts of the Patron Saint’ (*Actos de la Patrona*). The holiday consists in a week-long ritual during which, every day, a different group of parishes and associations pay their respects to Melilla’s patron saint, the Virgin of Victory, through a floral offering. These include not only parishes and religious institutions, but also military institutions, schools, non-profit organisations, leisure clubs and societies, sports clubs and even professional associations such as the Medical Association or the Lawyers’ Association. Every day a different group of organisations gathers to make a floral offering. The program is advertised across the city and large numbers of Melillans gather to witness the offerings.

²⁰ Blood purity, religious belonging, and a collective, mythical past and common homeland are central elements of this imagery which is found, albeit to a lesser degree, across mainland Spain. In Melilla, however, there is an additional element to take into consideration: its physical distance from mainland Spain. Surrounded by Moroccan territory, and sharing a reduced and enclosed space with Muslims of Moroccan origin, Melillan Christians imagine themselves in a particularly delicate position. Here, parallels can be drawn with Malkki’s (1995) analysis of Hutu identity discourses in a refugee camp in Tanzania. She writes: ‘The camp refugees’ insistence on a collective identity as a distinct people also found expression in another theme in the camp: authenticity ... The maintenance of “authenticity” was considered to require continual effort, particularly as it always appeared to the refugees to be under threat from the categorical “other” of exile, the Tanzanians’ (ibid. 223).



Leaflet announcing the Acts of the Patron Saint, 2011.

A few days later, on 17th September, the enclave celebrates the ‘Day of Melilla’. This holiday, which is intended to celebrate the conquest of the headland by the Spanish in the 15th century, has been a cause of controversy since it was first established in 1991.²¹ The celebration consists of a ritual performance in five acts:

1. In the morning, the awards ceremony takes place, at which prominent Melillan citizens or institutions are given the city’s gold medal in the City Council. (In 2011,

²¹ This is, strictly speaking, an invented tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Initiated in 1985 as a homage to the Spanish flag, the celebration lost momentum in the following years, only to be revived in 1991 as the Day of Melilla. In official narratives and in the local press, however, it is implicitly presented as an anniversary celebrated since the year of the conquest in 1497.

for example, these were given to a high ranking military officer, a soldier and a Catholic private school.)

2. In the afternoon, the official acts of celebration move to the old citadel. The first act consists of an official floral offering (*ofrenda floral*) to the statue of Pedro de Estopiñán, the Spanish officer who conquered the headland where the *presidio* was erected in the late 15th century.
3. After the floral offering comes the homage to the Spanish flag.
4. Following the homage to the flag, the President of the City gives a public speech.
5. Finally, the ceremony is closed with a military parade which descends from the Plaza Pedro de Estopiñán in the old citadel to the city centre.

The ceremony condenses most of the key elements of Christian Melillan identity in a sequence which is itself revealing. The sequence establishes a form of continuity between the Spanish conquest in the 15th century and the current political elite in the enclave in a victorious historical narrative which reasserts Christian power. The homage to the Spanish flag hammers home the point by invoking a connection with the Spanish homeland which resonates strongly with Melilla's Christians while implicitly excluding Melillan Berbers. As Driessen puts it, 'in Melilla the symbolism of the national flag rests primarily in this ceremonial display ... as a rallying point for identification by a collectivity and for concerted action' (1992: 112). Finally, the military parade which closes the ceremony constitutes a reminder of Spanish dominion by drawing upon the important role played by the military in Melilla and invoking a fundamental pillar of Melillan Christian nationalist imagery.²²

Melilla's official discourse, reminiscent of Francoist rhetoric, is best illustrated through the work of local historian Francisco Mir Berlanga, who was, until recently, Melilla's 'official chronicler'. I quote two passages of his *Lights and Shadows of a Long History* (1999). The language used in these passages is a good example of the traditional

²² The importance of Melilla's military as a symbol of a Christian collective identity cannot be overemphasised. In this regard, it should be noted that the military parade on the Day of Melilla is relatively small as compared with the parade organised for the Day of the Armed Forces (DIFAS), which also includes a homage to the Spanish flag and in which *all* of Melilla's military units take to the streets, including armoured vehicles, and parade along the city's main avenue.

Francoist historiography, and gives a sense of the kind of official discourse prevalent in Melilla until recently:

Estopiñan [Melilla's first conqueror] was a courageous gentleman [*caballero*, which can also mean 'knight'] in the service of the Ducal House, who enjoyed well-deserved prestige. His contemporaries described him as a "man [who was] diligent and wise in all things" ... Don Pedro honoured his reputation, perfectly undertaking the mission with which he was entrusted (Mir Berlanga 1999: 35).

If, in its entirety, the Old Melilla is overwhelming because of its stone-like fortress, its inner design is the same as that of any other village of Spain across the Strait. Because Melilla has nothing African about it except its geographical location. While Sevilla, Cordoba and Granada preserve abundant traces of past invasions, in Melilla the Arabs did not leave even a minor imprint: not a building, nor a monument or a simple carved stone. Its silent and narrow streets, and its little secluded squares ... preserve an undefinable Castilian charm. And if you walk them at night, the dim light of its old streetlamps seem to draw on every corner the proud shadow of the ladies of past times, and of their arrogant knights [*caballeros*] with their uniform, cape and sword, who once filled [the streets] with life and animation. What heroism, what love and what suffering had their seat [*asiento*, i.e. their base] in these now solitary streets of the old and remote Melilla! (Mir Berlanga 1999: 42-43).

Contemporary political and historical discourses have lost much of the shine and glory invoked in Berlanga's writings, yet parallels can be drawn between the two. Let me illustrate by returning to the celebration of the Day of Melilla.

Every year, despite the rhetoric of multiculturalism, the celebration of Melilla's Day becomes a source of controversy and friction between Christians and Muslims in a trial of strength which brings to the fore the conflicts between the two groups. The holiday, which celebrates the conquest of Melilla by the Spanish, has always been criticised by Muslim organisations. The local authorities have long pressured Muslim political parties and organisations (specifically CPM, the largest Muslim political force in the enclave) to participate in this celebration, which CPM invariably fails to attend, issuing instead a public statement against it every year.

In 2008, the acts organised for the Day of Melilla included the publication of a history of Melilla, entitled *Los Alguaciles de Melilla* (The Deputies of Melilla).²³ The book, published with public funds and written by a local historian, refuted previous theories (defended by, amongst others, Mir Berlanga) which portrayed the Spanish occupation of the enclave as a conquest, offering historical evidence that Melilla was ‘handed’ to the Spanish by two local Berbers. The presentation of the book on the Day of Melilla became a political tool against CPM, a bid to counter any arguments put forward against the celebration of the Spanish occupation. As reported by a local newspaper, under the heading ‘Imbroda says that he will not permit any threats to the “essence” of Melilla’, the President of the City²⁴ made the following statement during the ceremony: ‘As the President and as a Melillan it is my duty to denounce those gentlemen who want to threaten (*atentan contra*) the essence of a city which is also theirs.’²⁵ The emphasis on a shared heritage has to be understood as a significant change in the enclave’s official discourse, but the language used by the President, and echoed in the local press, is nevertheless reminiscent of Berlanga’s nationalist rhetoric. For example, a local newspaper described the celebration as follows in its editorial:

Today is 17th September, a day on which, like every year for the past 511 [years], we celebrate Melilla’s birthday as a city which is Spanish in every way [*por los cuatro costados*] ... It is not hard to imagine that the evolution that Melilla has undergone in this more than five centuries would have been very different had Estopiñán not arrived in Melilla to join these territories to the Castilian Crown. This circumstance should be more than sufficient to [encourage] all Melillans to attend *en masse* the commemorative acts that take place today in the Pueblo ... However, as every year, CPM has criticised [the fact that] the Day of Melilla is on 17th September and not on 13th March, when the Statute of Autonomy [1995] was approved.²⁶

²³ See Villalba González, 2008.

²⁴ Let us recall that Melilla is an Autonomous City, equivalent, legally, to the Autonomous Communities found in mainland Spain. Before 1995, Melilla was part of the province of Málaga, belonging administratively to the Autonomous Community of Andalusia. It should be noted that I use the term ‘mayor’ when referring to the period prior to 1995 and the term ‘President’ or ‘President of the City’ when referring to the years after 1995.

²⁵ Perdiguerro, S. ‘Imbroda says that he will not permit any threats to the “essence” of Melilla’, *El Telegrama de Melilla*, 19/10/2008.

²⁶ The article goes on to refer to *Los Alguaciles de Melilla*, arguing that there is no justification not to celebrate Melilla’s conquest, and citing the president’s words in a version slightly different to that above: ‘there is no longer any excuse to miss the institutional acts [that celebrate] the Day of Melilla and salute

The public dismissal of the enclave's traditional official historiography —let us recall that Mir Berlanga was Melilla's *official* chronicler²⁷— and the publication of *Los Alguaciles de Melilla* need to be understood in the context of a shift in political discourse from a hard-line Spanish nationalistic discourse to a more conciliatory rhetoric in line with the new 'multicultural' image of the city that has been promoted in recent years.²⁸ This image —the local term is 'interculturalism' (*interculturalidad*)— colours official speeches and documents, press articles and, increasingly, everyday talk. The two discourses exist side by side, sometimes quite literally. For instance, a local newspaper featured an advert for an exhibition entitled 'The Recovery of *Coplas*' —a traditional Andalusian song, very popular during the mid-twentieth century and which is generally seen as a symbol of Spanish folklore— next to an advert for the 'Third Contest of Intercultural Short Stories-City of Melilla'. A more explicit example is the peculiar account that the daily *Melilla Hoy* gave of a Patron Saint ceremony, under the heading 'More than one thousand Melillans will welcome the Patron Saint in the Rociera Mass (*Misa Rociera*) during the Fair':

The bullring was the stage of an emotive *Rociera* Mass in honour of the Virgin of Victory, patron saint of Melilla, which was attended by over a thousand Melillense followers [*fieles*] to ask her that conviviality [*convivencia*] in our city be more effective not only during the holidays but also throughout the year.²⁹

the Spanish flag, which has been here since 1497'. Editorial, 'El día de todos los melillenses', *Melilla Hoy*, 17/10/2008.

²⁷ The 'official' chronicler is a well-respected figure with a long historical tradition in Spain. Generally, official chroniclers are nominated by a village, town or city's authorities and assume the honorary position of the locality's official historian.

²⁸ A common official practice in recent years has been, for example, to congratulate the Muslim community for Ramadan through the local press. Local authorities thus publish the following half-page advert every year at the beginning of Ramadan in all local newspapers: 'The Autonomous City congratulates the Melillan Muslim community for the beginning of the sacred month of Ramadan and wishes it [the community] a happy celebration in the company of family and friends'. See for instance *Melilla Hoy*, 2/10/2008, page 12.

²⁹ Sánchez, P. T. 'Más de mil melillenses arropan a la Patrona en la Misa Rociera de la Feria', *Melilla Hoy*, 1/10/2008.

The obviously nationalistic rhetoric is qualified with reference to Melilla's multicultural character. Behind the development of a new multicultural rhetoric is the deliberate attempt by the local authorities to generate a tourist industry in the city. The newcomer is greeted at the tourist office stall located in the city's main square—known as *Plaza España* (Square of Spain), yet located a few meters away from the more recent *Plaza de las Cuatro Culturas* (Square of the Four Cultures)—with a map of the city centre. The map shows the location of Melilla's main modernist buildings alongside the four different religious buildings open to visitors—the Church, the Synagogue, the Mosque and the Hindu Temple—and a suggested route to visit them. The visitor can request a guided tour free of charge. At the back of the map, a brief description of the enclave is given, in Spanish:

Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims live in perfect harmony in the city of Melilla. This multicultural character is reflected in a rich gastronomy, and in the diversity of environments, customs, and religious buildings, the most important of which are situated on the periphery of the “Golden Triangle”.

Along the same lines, a booklet printed by the Spanish Ministry of Economy (Secretariat of Tourism) and the European Regional Development Fund, and addressed to English-speaking tourists, describes Melilla as follows:

Known as the city of four cultures, Melilla is home to a large community of Christians, Moslems, Hebrews and Hindus. This cultural melting pot has done much towards enhancing the face and character of the European city, lying 160 km from Almería and 180 km from Málaga.

Examples like this abound in official leaflets, educational books and other publications.³⁰ The diverse gastronomy and architecture of Melilla are often cited as evidence of its multicultural character and this ‘character’, in turn, is presented as a sign

³⁰ The press echoes the same kind of language, printing articles devoted to the celebration of Ramadan which include headings such as ‘Multicultural City’. The main text reads: ‘Melilla lives Ramadan at its fullest. Not in vain is the third part of the official census of Muslim confession ... But Ramadan this year has a double celebratory aspect, because it also coincides with the fair in honour of the Virgin of Victory. Without a doubt, two more reasons that induce to conviviality [*convivencia*] and that lead Christians and Muslims, the largest communities, together with Jews and Hindus, to get together and share experiences in this sacred month’, Andújar, J. ‘La Comunidad Musulmana inicia hoy el mes sagrado de Ramadán’, *Melilla Hoy*, 2/10/ 2008.

of Melilla's uniqueness and singularity. A similar kind of language informs the city's education system, both at primary and secondary levels and at university level³¹ (where schoolteachers are trained). The local teachers' union (SATE-STEs Melilla) has considerable power and, together with the Department of Education of the university (UGR), runs several annual courses on 'interculturalism', 'intercultural education', 'cultural diversity' and so forth, which are attended by large numbers of local teachers. They run projects in local schools, and publish reports and edited volumes based on seminars, conferences and all kinds of projects in the city. In one such volume, we find a description of the city which is in many ways reminiscent of the leaflets produced by the Tourism Department:

The situation and history of Melilla make it a small multicultural city, and a good observatory for metissage [*mestizaje*], where not one culture can be considered exempt from the influence of other [cultures]; while there are tensions [*roces*] and conflicts, at the same time the conflicts are a privileged stage for the dialogue between cultures. This dialogue helps, undoubtedly, to understand the world from different perspectives, taking as a basis the good knowledge of the other's culture [*la cultura del otro*] (Lara Castaño 2005: 205).

The language used in this kind of literature points to a theme which is central to the adoption of multiculturalism in Melilla: a desire to be, appear and act 'European'. In the same volume, for instance, we find a chapter which presents the results of an 'intercultural' questionnaire addressing local knowledge of a particular scientific subject (biotechnology). What is interesting about this article is the categories chosen for the sample, classifying the population of Melilla into three groups: 'Europeans', 'Riffians' and 'Hebrews'. This choice is justified by the authors on the following grounds:

³¹ The Melilla campus depends on the University of Granada, where the discourse of multiculturalism plays a prominent role. It is no surprise, then, that, together with the state, the university has been one of the main channels through which this new kind of language has been introduced in Melilla. Unlike in Granada, however, where the adoption of a language of multiculturalism has also entailed a transformation of the city's public spaces to accommodate the image of a 'consumer-friendly' oriental city —with sushi bars, yoga classes, 'intercultural' film festivals, Moroccan tea houses, street markets selling incense, and so forth—, in Melilla the incorporation of the rhetoric of multiculturalism in the official discourse has barely entailed any changes to the enclave's landscape. The city remains a 'typically' Spanish town; here, tea houses look anything but 'oriental', if by oriental we understand the exotic, andalusi imagery described, for instance, by Salamandra (2004) for the city of Damascus.

With regards to cultural origin, there is a widespread practice in colloquial language of considering origin as a function of religion, so that we could speak of Christians, Muslims, Jews ... However, religion may not be a good indicator of cultural origin. For instance, one can be a Muslim and a Riffian, that is, having Tamazight as the native tongue, or be a Muslim convert, or an Arab-speaking Muslim. In the same way, when you demarcate a group of 'Christians', you would include subjects that in fact have not been baptised or who are agnostic, if we only deduce [that they are Christian] from their surname. Because of this, in these two cases, we chose to describe them as having Riffian origin and European origin, reserving religion to describe the Hebrew group (ibid. 244).

The substitution of religion for ancestry as an 'indicator of cultural origin' is telling, given the assimilation between the two that prevails in Melilla's Spanish nationalist discourse. In fact, the alternative classification does not in any way challenge that established in colloquial language. It does, however, incorporate a new category ('European') in the complex identity formulations prevalent in the enclave. In contrast to Muslim residents, Melillan Christians are not only Catholic and Spanish, but also *European*. This recently acquired identity fits well with long-established ideas about civilisation and savagery, and about Melilla as the last preserve of (then Spanish, now European) civilisation in the African continent.³²

The language of multiculturalism is not restricted to official channels. Popular rhetoric has also assimilated this form of 'newspeak', in a formulation similar to that described by Herzfeld (2005) through the concept of 'cultural intimacy'. People in Melilla talk about conviviality and multiculturalism, but they do so in public contexts which involve a 'foreign' audience. For example, in a filmed interview for a nationwide oral-history archive (*Archivo de la Experiencia*) a number of Melillans were asked

³² Examples of this orientalist rhetoric are plentiful, particularly in Spanish colonial literature. The Spanish Protectorate of Morocco was the object of numerous military and pseudo-ethnographic studies written by colonial officers. This body of literature is commonly known as '*africanista*' (for an analysis of Africanismo in Spain, see Morales Lezcano 1988). Contemporary official discourse tries to avoid obviously orientalist rhetoric, yet at times a language reminiscent of the africanista style makes its appearance in official or semi-official documents. For instance in a tourist leaflet published by the Department of Tourism, it is written that 'Melilla is a city that brings together the mystery of Africa and the history of Spain'.

to share their thoughts about their city.³³ One interviewee described Melilla as follows, and the number of ‘cultures’ shifts slightly compared to the previous quote:

We have here the greatest thing in the world, we have the five cultures. For instance, I have friends in the five cultures that we have in Melilla. They [the ‘cultures’] are Christian, Muslim, Indian, Hebrew and Gypsy. We all get along very well. It is a beautiful thing that we have that other cities in Spain don’t have.³⁴

At times, the very same texts that proclaim Melilla as a harmonious mixture of cultures reveal the extent to which the supposed mixture relies on segregation. Consider, for example, the following text, published in Melilla’s official tourism website under the heading ‘Land of Cultures’ (note how the number of ‘cultures’ again shifts):

In it [Melilla], there live together [*conviven*] four cultures which, without renouncing their own particular signs of identity [*señas de identidad*], are enriched through their daily contact. We could say that in the same city there come together [*conviven*] four different Melillas: the Christian, the Muslim, the Hebrew and the little Hindu Melilla ... If we speak of four Melillas in a single city, we can also speak of four types of Melillan inhabitants ... They all form one community which surprises its visitors with the calm conviviality [*convivencia*] that one can breathe in the atmosphere of Melilla. Only in Melilla can one walk surrounded by such diverse peoples, with Hebrew or Indian features, others with the typical Berber dress or with the Arab jellabas. The essence of the everyday threads between singularity and the feeling of respect for differences, sharing a cosmopolitan look at a world which, increasingly so, considers the multi-ethnic and multicultural riches as the true pillar of democratic and social integration. Far from folkloric connotations, our City pledges its commitment to [*apuesta por*] inter-culturality [*la interculturalidad*], to strengthening relations with other ethnic and culturally diverse groups, enriching ourselves as individuals and as a community.³⁵

The quote is revealing of the ways in which ‘multiculturalism’ is understood in the Melillan context; as the Spanish saying goes ‘together, but not mixed’ (*juntos pero no revueltos*). The ‘four cultures’ thus preserve their ‘particular signs of identity’ which,

³³ All these interviews are accessible online at <http://www.archivodelaexperiencia.es/>

³⁴ As discussed below, the oscillation in different testimonies between three, four and five cultures is itself revealing.

³⁵ <http://www.melillaturismo.com/tierradeculturas.html>

in turn, produce ‘four types of Melillan inhabitants’. In fact, the inclusion of Hindus and Jews in the image of Melilla as a multicultural city can be seen as a mechanism for concealing economic, social and political tensions between the two main groups, a mechanism used not only by politicians in their official speeches but also by ordinary Melillans. Jews and Hindus and, occasionally, Gypsies are the third element in the equation, an element whose only function is to obscure the binary opposition between Muslims and Christians.³⁶

What is assigned to that ‘third’ category is not always clear, and both in official discourse and in everyday parlance the number of Melilla’s ‘cultures’ varies. Melilla is at times the city of the three cultures (Muslims, Christians and Jews), at times the city of the four cultures (Muslims, Christians, Jews and Hindus) and at times the city of the five cultures (Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus and Gypsies). The only constant elements are Muslims and Christians, in a ‘two plus x’ formula which serves to break an otherwise binary structure. Once again, public statements made for the ‘Archive of Experience’ are revealing. In one of the interviews, a Christian Melillan woman explains that in Melilla ‘there are Muslims, there are Indians [*Hindús*], there are Jews [*Hebreos*] and there are Gypsies; it’s four cultures that we have here, and up until now not one problem’. Interestingly, her four cultures do not seem to include Christians. Yet, immediately after she adds: ‘there are many Moors [female, *moras*], and you put them in your house, and they make you food, and not a single problem!’ Along the same lines, another interviewee claims: ‘we have lived very well [in Melilla] even with the Chinese, the Indians [*Hindús*], the Jews [*Hebreos*] and the Gypsies and the Muslims’, only to add, ‘but of course now it’s not like it used to be! Before there were only a couple of Muslim families; we were all Spaniards’.

³⁶ Let us recall the size of these ‘other’ communities in Melilla; out of a population of 73,460 (census 2009), less than 1,000 people are Jewish, around 60 are Hindu, and 200 Gypsies.

3.3 The spatial production of difference: La Cañada de la Muerte

Difference and otherness are produced in physical space ‘through the logic of uneven capital investment, a proliferating geographical division of labor, an increasing segmentation of reproductive activities and the rise of spatially ordered (often segregated) social distinctions’ (Harvey 1996: 295). In other words, space is never neutral. More specifically, in the capitalist system space is hierarchical. The argument, which Harvey develops in his *Nature, Justice and the Geography of Difference*, can be found in Marx’s work and, later, in Lefebvre’s. One of the fundamental processes by which difference is *produced* in space is through the construction of certain kinds of places. These are social constructions which reflect, create and reproduce structures of power. In Melilla, processes of place construction are tied to the history of Spanish power in the enclave, and the organisation of urban space can be seen as both the product and the agent of the unequal economic, political and social relations between the Spanish and the local Muslim population. Let me illustrate with the history of a paradigmatic neighbourhood which came to prominence in the wake of the 1985 Muslim protests.

The *Cañada de Hidun*, locally known as *Cañada de la Muerte* (Ravine of Death),³⁷ was created during the military campaigns of the early 20th century, when it served as a Spanish internment camp for Muslim prisoners. In the early 1920s, the camp was dismantled, and the wooden shacks were occupied by Riffian soldiers of the Spanish army and their families. A Muslim ghetto in the Spanish enclave, the *Cañada* was built illegally on military terrain and grew ‘organically’ over the years. By 1940, over one thousand Muslims lived in the *Cañada*, including soldiers, unskilled workers and peddlers (Driessen 1992: 165). Over time, the wooden shacks were transformed into mud and stone houses, but the *Cañada* remained an overcrowded, marginal neighbourhood with deficient infrastructure and hosting a large population of Muslim

³⁷ The name refers to a battle in 1893 between the Spanish and the neighbouring tribesmen, where large numbers of Spaniards were killed and which culminated in a bloody defeat for the Spanish.

unskilled workers with a 98% illiteracy rate. By the mid-1980s there was still no running water, and only a few houses had electricity.

The neighbourhood gained public prominence in the second half of the 1980s, as the stage of the main demonstrations that followed the promulgation of Spain's immigration law. Amidst growing national interest in the Spanish enclaves, national newspapers began to publish articles reporting the situation in the (in)famous Melillan *barrio*. One of these articles described the neighbourhood as follows:

The largest nucleus of Muslim population in Melilla inhabits the neighbourhood known as the *Cañada de la Muerte*, where the City Council –whose annual budget stands at around 3,000 million pesetas and is currently managed by the socialists [socialist party], still has not installed running water. The almost 4,000 Muslims in the neighbourhood relieve themselves in buckets or plastic bags which they throw in the small stream of black water that runs through the main street in the area.³⁸

Being one of the poorest areas in the city, and home to the largest Muslim community in the Spanish enclave, the *Cañada* was placed –both materially and symbolically- at the centre stage of the civil movement that culminated in the naturalisation of Muslim residents in Melilla. On 11th May 1985, Aomar Mohammedi Duddu, the leader of the Muslim movement of resistance, published in the Spanish national newspaper *El País* a controversial article on the situation of Muslims in Melilla. The article began by outlining the situation of Melilla's population, with 50,000 people of Spanish origin, six to seven thousand Muslims with Spanish citizenship and over 20,000 undocumented Muslims, including those holding a 'statistical card'.³⁹ I quote it at length:

No one can ignore the social and human consequences of this situation. The over 20,000 undocumented people settled in Melilla, strongly deprived of their rights, constitute a reservoir of cheap labour, often manifestly exploited. For many of them, getting a work permit is a true odyssey, or even getting a simple extension [of their current permit]; many don't even

³⁸ 'Racismo español' *El País*, 26/05/1985.

³⁹ The Statistical Card (*Tarjeta Estadística*) was a document issued by the local authorities to Muslim residents in the enclave. It was created in 1958 to replace the 'Permit of Residency and Permanence' and the 'Work Permit'. Its sole purpose was to identify and register the numbers of Muslim residents; it granted no rights to its holders. These cards were popularly known amongst Muslims as 'dog tags' (*chapas de perro*), see García, R. 'Chapas de perro', *El País*, 10/06/1985.

reach that goal. These ‘undocumented ones’ are banned from buying houses or renting them without a special authorisation. They are banned from moving within the national territory: for instance, in order to go to Malaga for a medical emergency they require yet another document, a safe-conduct for a limited period, which is either granted or denied by the Delegation of Government, not always without controversy. In these conditions, to talk of Muslim integration is pure sarcasm. Unless one considers the fact that the totality of Melilla’s underpaid domestic workers are Muslim a proof of it. In Melilla, save a few exceptions, Muslims are tolerated, people co-exist with us, but the general fact is that we don’t live together (*convivir*, from *convivencia* [conviviality]). Integration does not occur even in the urban sphere: the Muslim barrios are acutely peripheral and, as one would expect, clandestine and insalubrious. Not long ago I denounced on a radio station the existence of an epidemic of meningococcal meningitis in one of those ghettos (*barriadas*) without sanitary networks [sewage system, running water, etc], the *Cañada de la Muerte*, which led to more than one death.⁴⁰

The situation described by Duddu was one of the main catalysts for the protests of 1985-1986. The naturalisation of Muslim residents over the following years opened the way for the establishment of Muslim political organisations in Melilla. The poor conditions in the neighbourhood had become a symbol of the marginal situation of Muslims in the enclave, and demands for the improvement of basic infrastructure were central to Muslim political discourse in the years to come. Immediately after the riots, the city’s mayor pledged to build new social housing to accommodate the *barrio*’s growing population, yet the housing never materialised. Three years after the riots, residents of the neighbourhood had begun to build their own brick houses, but basic infrastructure was lacking, and the situation in the *Cañada* remained more or less the same. A newspaper article published in 1988 described it as follows:

The *Cañada de la Muerte* is the main and most conflict-ridden of the Muslim suburbs in Melilla, and the neighbours of the Christian sector never venture there at night. The Arab community [*colectivo*] is spread across the neighbourhoods of Cuernos, Cabrerizas, Monte Maria Cristina y Calvo Sotelo. Officially, they add up to 17,040 people but there are probably many more. Some of them (around 800) are fortunate because they have a small shop. The rest survive through informal employment [*empleos callejeros*,

⁴⁰ Duddu, Aomar Mohammeddi, ‘Legalizar Melilla’, *El País*, 11/05/1985.

literally ‘street jobs’], selling fish or lottery tickets. At night they return to their neighbourhood, to their ghetto of mud and stone.⁴¹

In fact, the *Cañada* had other, less visible, sources of revenue: the drug trade and prostitution. Located a few meters from the headquarters of the *Legion*⁴², both trades had as their primary clients Spanish soldiers. The growth of the drug trade over the following decade left an imprint on the landscape of the neighbourhood and, by the mid-1990s, the typical mud and stone houses had been replaced by two-storey brick dwellings built by hired labourers from southern Morocco. The new houses were built without official permits and rumour has it that one can find houses built around lamp-posts and other such oddities.

Today, the lack of infrastructure and the high rates of unemployment in the *Cañada* continue to be a source of contention between the Muslim community and the City Council.⁴³ The garbage-collecting trucks cannot get through the narrow alleys, and residents deposit their garbage at the entrance to the neighbourhood. Ambulances cannot get through to the highest parts of the barrio, and there is no health centre. The *Cañada* has been identified as one of the most marginal and vulnerable areas of the city in a number of reports, as residents in the neighbourhood complain that the *barrio* is in the hands of religious fundamentalists and drug lords.⁴⁴ Development plans have been drafted on several occasions, but the neighbourhood continues to be one of the areas with the lowest literacy rates, highest school dropout rates and highest unemployment

⁴¹ Castilla, Amelia, ‘Calma en Melilla: La Cañada de la Muerte’ *El País*, 12/07/1988. Available online at: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/MELILLA/Canada/Muerte/elpepiesp/19880712elpepinac_9/Tes

⁴² Also known as *Tercio de Extranjeros* (foreigners’ regiment), the Spanish Legion is an elite unit of the Spanish Army, comprising between 7,000 and 8,000 men. Although it was originally established as the Spanish equivalent of the French Foreign Legion, the Spanish Legion recruits almost exclusively Spaniards and Spanish expatriates. During the Protectorate, the Legion was part of the Army of Africa.

⁴³ See Soledad Gallego-Díaz, ‘Analfabetismo y coches de lujo en la Cañada’, *El País*, 08/07/2002.

⁴⁴ That drug lords have a strong hold over local politics in the *Cañada* seems to be a well-established fact. The role of religious fundamentalism is less clear, although a number of academics and journalists have supported this thesis. Ponce Herrero (2010), for example, writes that the *Cañada* is home to ‘the families of the drug trade and most conservative Islamist movement, supported by the latter through a strange partnership; while the first increase the numbers of drug addicts under their control, in the mosque they help them quit, they take care of them physically and indoctrinate them morally with the most radical precepts and interpretations of the Coran.’ Similar images recur in the Spanish press (see De la Cal, J. C. ‘Alerta en Melilla por el integrismo’, *El Mundo*, Suplemento Crónica 397, 25/05/2003).

rates. The pattern recurs across the city, with Muslim neighbourhoods being systematically disadvantaged vis-à-vis Christian areas. Unemployment, for example, is much higher in districts 3, 4 and 5 (41.67%, 36.84 %, and 50% unemployment respectively), where most of the Muslim population lives, than in districts 2, 6 or 8 (11.11%, 8% and 18.12%), which are predominantly Christian. Illiteracy is also higher in Muslim neighbourhoods, where basic infrastructure is often deficient and crime rates more elevated.⁴⁵

As Harvey argues, however, we need to understand not only how places acquire material qualities but also how activities of discourse and representation serve to produce a ranking of places which, in turn, has material consequence (1996: 321). In other words, how people think about places matters. For example, in some of the articles cited above the *Cañada* is presented as a chaotic place, where law and order are absent and conflicts prevalent. The association between poverty, crime and danger is, of course, not an original Melillan production. As Caldeira argues for the *favelas* of São Paulo, fear of crime is a most effective instrument ‘to create distance and separation among social groups and, thus, to enforce segregation’ (1996a: 63). In Melilla, everyday Christian narratives function in a similar fashion, presenting the *Cañada* as a chaotic, dangerous and foreign space. For example, a young Christian woman who took me for a ride around the city described it as follows:

Now we go to *La Cañada*. This is very curious. Here some of the streets are so narrow that a single car cannot go through. It is because they started building [indiscriminately] and it’s not distributed in blocks. Here, they all built [their houses] and in the end the streets looked really strange. Here they all come from Morocco, it is a completely Muslim neighbourhood ... They build without a permit, and then you find things that are not normal, like the lamp-posts. These are the people who live in Morocco, they come here and they make their little house and there you go. It is the most

⁴⁵ Income figures show a similar trend: unemployment is higher amongst residents of districts 3 and 5, who make on average 803 euros and 664 euros per month. By contrast, residents of district 2, for example, earn on average 1,860 euros (data from 2004, see Mayoral del Amo 2010: 29). Finally, districts 3, 4 and 5 also have the lowest education levels and the lowest literacy rates (ibid. 33). A report on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Melilla identifies districts 4 and 5 as the most vulnerable in the Spanish enclave (Segura Vázquez: 6-7). Similarly, a report from 2001 on vulnerability and social exclusion in Melilla puts the number of people in a vulnerable situation at 24,378, and names the neighbourhoods of Monte Maria Cristina, Cañada and Cabrerizas (located in districts 4 and 5) as the most vulnerable (Ministerio de Fomento 2001).

conflict-ridden [*conflictivo*] neighbourhood in Melilla ... It's dangerous here. I remember once I drove past with my father and they threw stones at us. This is *totally* Morocco.

The reference to Morocco here is telling, for in the Melillan imagination Morocco is associated with backwardness and, more generally, otherness. Thus, the *Cañada* becomes not simply a dangerous, chaotic space, but also a non-civilised and, more importantly, non-Melillan place, a foreign enclave within the enclave.

It is claims like these that inform spatial practices of segregation, to which I turn in the next section. Of course, struggles over representation are ferocious, and residents of the *Cañada* use whatever means they have to make their claims heard. The Neighbours' Association, for example, regularly organises meetings and, occasionally, demonstrations and protests to pressure the local authorities, while the press itself is often used as a political tool. These battles of representation, however, need to be understood in the wider context of social and spatial segregation which informs relations between Muslims and Christians politically, materially and symbolically.⁴⁶

3.4 Navigating space: segregation, avoidance and mistrust

Navigating through the city in accordance with local standards requires an intimate knowledge of the politics of space. As a newcomer, one is introduced to this almost immediately. A widespread form of hospitality amongst Melillans is to take outsiders for a ride around the city and offer them a running commentary on the history and

⁴⁶ Conflicts between the Cañada's Neighbours' Associations (*Asociaciones de Vecinos*) and the local government continue to this day. In 2010, a small group of young men set rubbish containers and car tyres on fire in protest at not having been selected for employment through the City Council's Employment Plan (*Planes de Empleo*), a quota system to tackle unemployment in Melilla's most deprived areas (see Ramos, T. 'Un grupo de jóvenes vuelve a formar barricadas en llamas en Melilla', *El País*, 27/10/2010). In September 2011, the neighbourhood as a whole rose in protest against the new list of jobs published by the 2011 Employment Plans. According to them, there had been an unjust distribution of jobs because some of the people on the list had already been given jobs the previous year, and because, according to the protesters, none of the new jobs had gone to Melilla's most marginal neighbourhoods. See 'Tensión en el barrio de La Cañada', *El Faro- Edición Melilla*, 24/09/2011; Ortega, P. 'Vecinos de La Cañada denuncian que hay gente del plan 2010 en el nuevo listado', *El Faro- Edición Melilla*, 24/09/2011; Perdiguero, S. 'Los ánimos se calman, de momento, en La Cañada de Hidúm', *El Faro- Edición Melilla*, 25/09/2011.

anecdotes of different neighbourhoods. The landscape of the city takes on a life of its own in these narratives: the fence surrounding the enclave ‘was installed because of the *Negros* [sp. ‘blacks’]’; the *Club Marítimo* and the *Hípica*, a meeting place for Melilla’s financial and political elites, are the places where ‘the Christian *pijos* [rich, posh] gather’; the small pine forest on the east side of the city is where, ‘in the old times’, Melillans gathered for the Sunday picnic brunch; and so forth. In these impromptu narratives, the enclave is revealed as a hierarchical space of contrasts. The city centre’s modernist buildings stand a few minutes’ drive away from the most marginal Muslim neighbourhoods; the immigrant detention centre where asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, Algeria and South Asia are held lies across the road from a luxury, state-funded golf course frequented by the enclave’s elite; and expensive-looking houses sit a few hundred meters from the passage of Barrio Chino, where *couriers* stand in line to earn a few dirhams carrying large, heavy bundles of smuggled goods. These contrasts are well known to Melillan residents, who are familiar with the ethnic configuration of neighbourhoods and navigate through the city’s urban space accordingly. Christian warnings against the dangers of entering certain Muslim neighbourhoods are common, and constitute a central element in impromptu narratives fraught with suspicion and mistrust.⁴⁷

The city is divided between predominantly Muslim and predominantly Christian areas. Not only do Muslims and Christians live in different parts of the city, but they also gather in different public spaces, buy in different shops and eat in different restaurants. Because Melilla is an enclosed space and the room for complete spatial segregation is thus limited, boundaries are maintained through the *use* of space.⁴⁸ This is

⁴⁷ I address some of these narratives in more detail in chapter 6. As we shall see, mistrust informs not only interaction between the two communities, but also within them. More generally, narratives of suspicion are integral to the ways in which both Muslims and Christians conceive the enclave as a *kind* of place. Melilla’s underground economy —and the limitless possibilities of corruption, deception and treachery associated with it— contributes to the perception of the enclave as place where nothing is what it seems, and where trust is inherently dangerous.

⁴⁸ In this sense, processes of segregation in Melilla work differently than in places like Los Angeles (Davis 1992) or São Paulo (Caldeira 1996a), where segregation between the elite and the poor is played out in spatial struggles which involve the control of both centres and peripheries. In Melilla, lack of space makes the implementation of patterns of segregation of the kind described by Caldeira and Davis difficult.

best illustrated with an example. The city's annual fair, which takes place every year in September, brings together Christians and Muslims in a relatively restricted area. The fair is open day and night, and includes a funfair, food and drink stalls, live music and dance performances. Spatially, it is divided into two main areas which lie side by side: at one end, the funfair, and at the other end the drinking, eating and dancing stalls. I visited Melilla's fair on two different occasions; on the first with two young Muslim girls, and on the second with a group of young Christians. The first time, I was taken to the funfair section, at night. All around us were young Muslim boys and girls, Muslim families with children and large numbers of Moroccans who had come from across the border. The second time, I was taken to the stalls area, during the day. All around us were young Christian men and women, drinking wine, eating ham, listening to Spanish pop and watching the *flamenco* and *sevillana* dance performances. Little girls dressed in traditional Andalusian clothes walked hand in hand with their mothers, waiting for the 'best *sevillana* dress' competition to begin. Pig's heads were displayed in some of the food stalls and, as we walked into a large tent-restaurant, two Muslim waiters served us Spanish ham and a glass of red wine.⁴⁹ As I asked my hosts about the funfair, one of my Christian companions replied: 'Oh, we don't go there; the *feria* happens here, in the stalls, during the day! And at night we go to the clubs by the port.'

Melilla's annual fair can be seen as a microcosm of the enclave; the way in which the fair is organised and used by locals is representative of a more general pattern. Muslims and Christians are thrown together constantly in everyday life, yet they are remarkably skilled at navigating public space to avoid crossing paths unless necessary. Numerous *halāl* restaurants and grocery stores cater exclusively to a Muslim clientele and accept Moroccan dirhams as a form of payment. By contrast, Christian cafés, restaurants and supermarkets accept only euros, and rarely serve *halāl* food.

⁴⁹ The public display of certain kinds of food works as a 'sign' directed not at Christians but at Muslims. The message it conveys is straightforward: in Christian establishments Christian rules prevail, and Muslims must either submit to these rules or find their own place. As Driessen (1992: 145-146) notes, in public life the Catholic sector of the enclave dictates the terms of the *convivencia* and the peaceful coexistence between the different groups. The code of appropriate behaviour follows the Christian Spanish tradition and Muslims are expected to accommodate to —if not necessarily follow—the habits and customs of Christians in public life.

Public transport in the city is barely ever used by Christians, who drive around the city in their own cars, while local buses are almost exclusively used by lower-class Muslims. Private schools, which in Melilla, as in most of Spain, are Catholic schools, are mainly attended by Christian children, while Muslims, who, in fact, make up 60% of Melilla's primary school students, attend the city's state schools. As a young Christian Melillan girl once put it,

Christians here are very, very posh [*pijos*]. And you have schools that are 'concerted', half public and half private, like La Salle and Las Monjas. So the very posh ones, they send their children to these posh Catholic schools, so that they don't mix [with Muslims]. There are some Muslim students too, but they are also very posh. It's not so beautiful, you know? It angers me. It's really not so beautiful. And then people talk about multiculturalism and all that, but it is very difficult.

The gap that separates the Christian from the Muslim world is such that at times people forget the rules that regulate the 'other' space. A Muslim acquaintance, for instance, told me that all shops in Melilla accept Moroccan dirhams, and that I should not worry if I did not have euros at hand. This is of course not true; Melilla is part of the European Union, where the euro is the official currency and Moroccan dirhams are not accepted. In Melilla, all commercial establishments accept euros. Spanish/Christian establishments accept exclusively euros, but Muslim shops usually accept dirhams as well; hence the confusion. His comment, however, revealed the extent to which an average Muslim need not interact with Christians in everyday life. The same divergence occurs regarding the meaning of the border; whereas Christians see it as a final frontier which marks the end of a 'civilised'⁵⁰ domain which connects Melilla to mainland Spain, Muslims see it as a continuum linking the enclave to the Moroccan hinterland. These different conceptions of space inform the use that both communities make of the border. Christians rarely enter Moroccan territory unless on organised holiday tours to the southern regions of Morocco, yet they regularly travel to mainland Spain to visit

⁵⁰ Christians often remark on the dirtiness and chaos found right across the border in Moroccan territory. On more one occasion, for example, I overheard a group of Christian Spaniards complaining about the smell and dirtiness of the frontier (the one-hundred meter frontier passage is itself controlled by Morocco), adding that 'those are not human beings, they are animals!'

relatives or for leisure. By contrast, Muslims seldom travel to mainland Spain but regularly visit friends and relatives across the border.

Segregation between the two communities is presented by both sides as a product of irreconcilable cultural differences. The Christian-Muslim divide is conceived as being genealogically defined: one is either born a Muslim, to Muslim parents, or a Christian, to Christian parents. Genealogy, in turn, is assumed to carry with it a set of cultural characteristics which are invariably seen as a direct effect of religious belonging. In other words, being a Christian or a Muslim is not simply a matter of birth but entails a mode of behaviour, a certain public performance which relies on local stereotypes about Muslim and Christian customs and traditions. Food, drink, music, clothes and language⁵¹ are all fundamental aspects of the performance of this boundary; all this against the backdrop of a religiously loaded rhetoric in which culture, religion and blood coalesce. These are the three key elements which inform the opposition between Muslims and Christians in everyday life. A very common remark amongst Melillans, for example, is that Christian and Muslims ‘get along’ but that each ‘culture’ has its own ways of doing things, its own habits, customs and traditions. A Christian woman described Melilla in the following terms:

There are Muslims, there are Indians, there are Hebrews, Gypsies ... They have their customs and we have ours, they have their holidays, we have ours, if they invite us we go and we invite them too. They have a problem sometimes because there are things that they cannot eat, but you just don't put that on the plate and that's all ... I have a Muslim girl at home, too, and she helps me clean the house. She's been there for ten years, and anything she finds, she gives me [i.e. she does not steal]. Of course, this doesn't mean they are all the same.⁵²

Implicit in her testimony is a central element of Christian-Muslim relations as conceived by Christians: relations between the two communities are only possible within a clear hierarchical structure, as in the relationship between employer and

⁵¹ Muslims learn Spanish at school and speak it fluently. Spanish is, indeed, the official language in the enclave and the primary language for public interaction. Yet, when speaking amongst themselves, Muslims often switch to *Chelkha*, the Riffian Berber dialect (also known as *Tarifit*).

⁵² Archivo de la experiencia, ‘La vida de esperanza en Melilla’. Available at: <http://www.archivodelaexperiencia.es/>

employee. In other words, the reproduction of the social stratification characteristic of the pre-1985 period is the foundation on which cordial interactions between Muslims and Christians may occur. As a Melillan Muslim eloquently put it,

Do you see any industry in Melilla? Exactly, Melilla lives off commerce. And if I have to sell you something in order to survive, then we better find a way to get along! In appearance we all get along here. But you will never see a Moor sitting at a Christian's table. You may see a Christian eating with a Moor, but not a Moor with a Christian; ... the key to understand this city is to know that in Melilla the *morito* always had the worse jobs, and it is in these circumstances that you can have tolerance and conviviality. The problem is that in recent years the street cleaners and the domestic workers have finally been able to afford an education for their children, and their children are now doctors, lawyers, or judges, and that's where problems and tensions start.⁵³

The naturalisation of Muslim residents in the years after paved the way for the emergence of a new generation of Melillan Muslims with better access to education, resources and employment. Although the majority of white-collar jobs are still in the hands of Christians, Muslims have begun to have a visible presence in Melilla's public life. In contexts where the two groups stand on equal footing, however, relations are always mediated by mistrust. A young Melillan university student, for example, described her relationship with her Muslim classmates as follows:

There hasn't been any violence [between Muslims and Christians] in Melilla. But look, there is mistrust [*recelillo*]. It's not as beautiful as it looks from the outside when people say we are four cultures living together. The truth is that there is mistrust. ... In my group of friends, for instance, they [Muslims] always protect each other, and they do their own thing.

⁵³ Indeed the number of upper-class, educated Muslims has increased over the past two decades, although they still constitute a minority. In fact, in most cases highly educated Muslims come from families which have long-standing relations with the Christian elite, dating back to the years of the Spanish Protectorate (i.e. Muslims who already had Spanish citizenship before the 1985 protest movement). If we take a look, for example, at the list published by Melilla's Lawyers Association (*Colegio de Abogados de Melilla*) in 2011, we can see that out of eighty-five registered lawyers, six have Muslim names, three come from mixed families (Spanish names use both mother's and father's surname), and seventy-six have Christian surnames (data extracted from the list of lawyers on duty for the 4th semester of 2011, available at: <http://www.icamelilla.es/guardias.php>).

Similarly, an elderly Christian man described his relationship to Muslims in the following terms:

Well, I have friends who are Moors. Look, even here there are some Moors and we even play dominos together, but we always have inside [a sense] that the Moor, the Moor if he doesn't cheat you the first time he will cheat you the second time around ... the Moor [says to you] 'you are my best friend' but if you fail him one day in something he wants, it's over forever. He no longer remembers you were his friend and all that, that's his policy/politics [*política*], a politics of a double realism, of camouflage. I am their friend, yes, but inside, inside I am, how do they call it? Racist, I am racist. I accept some Moors, but the majority I don't accept because they have bad intentions⁵⁴ against the Spaniards and they have intruded in the government and they are in the city council.

The reference to the effects of the 'intrusion' of Muslim residents in local politics is important. In Christian narratives, this imagery is tied to concerns over the growth of the Muslim population in Melilla, which, in turn, is connected with a fear of losing political control over the enclave. Amongst Muslims, as we shall see, the counter-demonstrations organised by the Christian population during Muslim protests are also a cause of mistrust. These conflicting narratives underwrite relations between the two communities, although they are never discussed openly if outsiders to the group are present.⁵⁵ Instead, they are invoked to generate a sense of solidarity *within* each community and to reaffirm the boundaries that separate 'us' from 'them'. Let us turn to these narratives and explore them in more detail.

⁵⁴ The term he used is '*mala leche*', which translates literally as 'bad milk', and is commonly used to denote 'bad mood' or 'moodiness'. In this context, however, it is best translated as bad intentions.

⁵⁵ In this sense, they belong to that domain which Shryock (2004) alludes to when he writes that 'the production of identities meant to be public will create an "off stage" terrain of production which is in turn a site of social intimacy' (ibid. 3). Although it is not 'universally private', he argues, 'this terrain can never be fully transparent' (ibid.). Herzfeld (2005) uses the concept of 'cultural intimacy' to define the same terrain. Cultural intimacy, he writes, refers to 'those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality' (ibid. 3). Within this 'terrain', identities are produced to be displayed before an outsider 'whose opinion is imagined, and imagined to matter' (ibid. 11). Antagonistic narratives surrounding the events of 1985 fall within this category; they provide insiders with a 'common sociality' but are a source of embarrassment before the eyes of the external observer. It is for this external observer that Melilla's 'multicultural' identity is produced.

3.5 The Christian world: 1985 and beyond

As already noted, 1985 marked a turning point in the history of the Spanish enclave. Christian hegemony in the enclave was challenged for the first time and, although a deeply entrenched economic and political structure guaranteed the relative continuation of the status quo over the following decades, relations between the two groups were changed. Narratives of the past return time and again to 1985, marking a dent in an otherwise continuous timeline. Interpretations of these events differ widely between Christians and Muslims, providing an insight into the different worlds they inhabit.

Christian narratives portray the years after 1985 as a time of turmoil which has contributed to the gradual decay of the enclave. This interpretation of Melilla's history is related not only to the naturalisation of Muslim residents, but also to the loss of the Spanish territories in northern Morocco in 1956 and to the gradual withdrawal of the military from Melilla's public life over the past three decades.⁵⁶ The events of 1985 are therefore part of a wider historical narrative which speaks of the gradual loss of Spanish power and looks back to the early days of the Protectorate as a golden age. The settlement of Muslims in the enclave after 1985 is inscribed in these narratives of 'structural nostalgia' (Herzfeld 2005: 147-182) as a turning point which marks the end of a time of social cohesion, harmony and solidarity, and the beginning of Melilla's decadence.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ This was so particularly after 2001, when Spain's mandatory military service was abolished and Melilla lost a floating population of thousands of soldiers. People regularly talk about the heyday of Melilla's military. For example, a Melillan Christian interviewed for the 'Archive of Experience' recalls those days as follows: 'there used to be soldiers and military personnel here, all military men, but little by little they all left. But all the headquarters here in Melilla... You'd go out in the centre of town and it was all soldiers from the Peninsula, from Jaen, Granada, Barcelona... they came here for the *mili* [mandatory military service] and after a year, or a year and a half they left'.

⁵⁷ The image of an almost mythical Spanish homeland permeates popular narratives and everyday conversations, and mainland Spain remains a crucial point of reference. Those who can afford it travel to the Peninsula a few times a year to visit relatives, and all recall with pride their Peninsular origins and their ties to the Spanish mainland; in particular to Malaga. In this, Melilla is no different from other population enclaves distant from their imagined 'homeland'. For example, Malkki (1995) finds a similar kind of rhetoric among Hutu camp refugees in Tanzania, where the image of a common past and a mythical homeland is a point of reference through which to interpret everyday processes, events and relations as a pillar of collective identity.

Let me illustrate with some testimonies. The first two were recorded for the 'Archive of Experience'⁵⁸ and were made by residents who lived through the years of the Protectorate; the third is from a Christian informant born after Moroccan independence:

We had a family atmosphere. People even slept with the doors open at night because it was very hot and nothing [dangerous] happened. Oh, what we have lost! Like day and night, so great is the difference. It's the mixing, the mixing of races, not very clean! I call it mixing to call it something. Before, it was ninety something per cent, almost a hundred per cent, of Spaniards here. What else is there to say? And with the passage of time everything has deteriorated, education, shame, everything!

The idea of a foreign Muslim intrusion is a central theme in these narratives. By most accounts, there has been a significant increase of the Muslim population in the enclave during the past two decades, and the trend continues.⁵⁹ However, this growth should be considered in light of important changes to the definition of Melilla's 'population'. For example, during the first half of the twentieth century the increase in the number of

⁵⁸ I have quoted the Archive of Experience (*Archivo de la Experiencia*) several times throughout this chapter. A few words on the *nature* of this project are called for. John Davis (1989) has argued that the making of history needs to be seen as inscribed in social relations which affect and in turn are affected by the meaning ascribed to past events (see also Morphy and Morphy 1984). These processes of production, Davis (1989) argues, generate different kinds of historical narratives; from the 'never again' of Belmonte de los Caballeros (as described in Lison-Tolosana's 1966 account) to the 'always so' of Zuwaya oral history in Libya. In Melilla, we are confronted with a very common form of historical narrative; that of structural nostalgia, i.e. 'things were always better in the past'. Despite their official purpose, therefore, the accounts catalogued in the Archive of Experience are best seen as a repository not of past events and processes but of the meanings attributed to them. As Morphy and Morphy put it, 'they are not "recollections of times past" but part of present understandings of the past that need bear no relation to what actually happened or was' (1984: 462).

⁵⁹ If we take a look at the population statistics available, we can see that Melilla's total population increased dramatically over the first half of the 20th century, reaching a peak in the early 1950s, and declined thereafter until the early 1980s, when it started growing once again. Throughout this time, the Muslim population followed a different trend, increasing dramatically from 932 in 1930 to 17,824 in 1986 (Gold 2000: 92). After 1986, the census in Melilla ceased to distinguish between people from different religious or ethnic origins; since then the data regarding the size of the Muslim population have been approximate calculations. A study in 2001 (Mayoral del Amo 2005) found that approximately 40% of the enclave's population is Muslim and, in 2009, the Union of Muslim Communities of Spain (UCIDE) published that Muslims make up over 50% of Melilla's population, with 37,763 Muslims out of a total population of 73,382 (see <http://es.ucide.org/home/index.php>). Interestingly, if we compare the percentage with that of 1986, when 34% of the population was Muslim, the percentile increase is minor. The total population, however, grew significantly during that period, from 52,388 in 1986 to 71,448 in 2008, and, according to data from Ponce Herrero (2010), over 6,000 Moroccans settled in Melilla between 1998 and 2007, while increasing numbers of Spaniards returned to mainland Spain during the same period.

Muslims registered in the census can be seen, in great measure, as a result of the appropriation of areas of the enclave which had hitherto been ‘left’ in the hands of Riffian tribes. The redefinition of Melilla’s territory —partly through urbanisation— thus yielded different population statistics. After 1985, the redefinition of the population itself produced similar effects. Admittedly, most Melillans —both Muslims and Christians— agree that after 1985 large numbers of Moroccans succeeded in settling in the enclave and obtaining Spanish citizenship by forging birth certificates, a perception partially supported by the available data. Yet, this increase in numbers must also be considered in light of the redefinition of the category of ‘Spanish citizens’ in the enclave. As Muslims who had been living in the enclave for decades obtained Spanish citizenship, they ceased to be classified as ‘foreigners’ and became ‘legal residents’, thus prompting an increase of the Muslim population in official censuses. As Ardener (2007 [1989]: 66) puts it:

In the discussion of the dynamics of a population, your unit —‘the population’— is not merely subject to a statistical determination on the part of the observer; it is also dependent on the subjective definition of that population by the human beings concerned. Over time, therefore, population series are continually affected by changing definitions on the part of both the measurers and the measured.

Christian concerns over the growth of the Muslim population are tied to the fear of losing political control. Often, the insinuation that the decay of Melilla is to be blamed on the Muslim population comes together with the clarification that native Muslims (those who were born in Melilla) ought to be excluded from this accusation. It is the newcomers, those who settled in Melilla after 1985, who brought problems. In fact, the distinction between rooted Muslims and newcomers is a leitmotiv in Christian narratives about the 1985 events. Often used as a measure to counter accusations of racism before outsiders, this distinction also draws on notions of belonging which are shared by both Muslims and Christians alike. A Muslim informant, for example, made the following remark:

The thing is, if the government had wanted to, if it had been a smart government, then they wouldn't have given papers to everybody, because Muslims, if you look at it, the one who has the right you give papers to. Those who have a birth certificate, who were born in a hospital or at home but in Spain, with a Spanish midwife or even a Muslim midwife. If you are born here, then you have the right to the ID card.

The same argument was put forward by a Christian woman, who said:

Look, the person [i.e. Muslim person] who is from here, born here, we know them. The bad thing is the ones who are coming in now, *that* is the bad thing, the bad seed [*semilla*] that is coming in and is growing here, that's the bad thing.

Another Christian similarly argued:

Muslims in Melilla made much progress, and there are some that deserve the rights by law but the great majority don't deserve it because they came here only four years ago and we are giving them social welfare, schools, and they get even more than us, from Melilla, us who have been here hundreds of years. They have been here for a few years and they get a house and there are people who have been here forever and they don't get a house and they are tired of asking for it but they always give it to them [Muslims] to shut their mouth and keep them happy and that's the problem we have here in Melilla: that politicians don't know their place.⁶⁰

This gradual 'occupation' of the enclave by the Muslim population —both through high birth rates and through immigration— is known in Melilla as 'the march of the tortoise', in reference to the 'Green March' organised by Morocco to peacefully occupy the Spanish Sahara in 1975. As González Enríquez (2007: 224) points out, several factors contribute to the generalised perception of the Muslim presence as a threat. The increase in the population of Moroccan origin is one of them. Also important, however, are loss of the enclave's strategic value as surveillance systems to monitor the Gibraltar Strait become more sophisticated, and the lifting of customs tariffs to European goods through the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which will see a drastic reduction of commercial activities through the enclaves by 2012. Melillans are well

⁶⁰ 'Mariano y la multiculturalidad en Melilla', Archivo de la Experiencia, available online at: <http://www.archivodelaexperiencia.es/>

aware that the enclave is losing part of its geopolitical capital, and fear the potential implications of such a loss should Morocco choose to pressure the international community over sovereignty.⁶¹ As Longva (2005: 126) has argued, ethnocratic regimes draw their *raison d'être* from a general sense in the ruling *ethnie* of being under threat.⁶² In this context, where the subordinate group constitutes a majority, the perception of an external threat is constant. In Melilla, the situation is on a delicate balance, with the ratio of Christians to Muslims standing at around 50:40 and predictions of an important increase in the Muslim population in the coming years.⁶³

Political power is one of the central issues at stake. The establishment of Muslim political parties and organisations in the aftermath of 1985 had a serious impact. On the one hand, Muslims became a political force to be reckoned with. On the other hand, and most significantly here, the emergence of a Muslim political movement led to the consolidation of a unitary political front amongst Christians. Faced with what they perceived as an impending threat of disenfranchisement at the hands of Muslim political organisations, the Christian community began to vote unanimously for the centre-right Popular Party,⁶⁴ representative of the Spanish nationalist ideology described earlier and traditionally more belligerent than other Spanish parties in their assertion of sovereignty

⁶¹ In fact, however, that is a highly unlikely scenario, for the Spanish enclaves continue to be a useful resource to control African migration, and Morocco would meet fierce resistance both from the EU and from within the enclaves should it try to force a devolution of Ceuta and Melilla.

⁶² Indeed, concerns over the growth of the Muslim population in the enclave, perceived by many as a foreign presence, find a parallel in the situation described by Longva for Kuwait:

As a minority in their own country, Kuwaitis live with the feeling of being permanently under siege ... Conventional wisdom has it that "Kuwaiti traditions" and "the Kuwaiti way of life" are under threat and that expatriates are the major source of this menace. Two kinds of knowledge inform this conviction: the stark, formal arithmetics of demography (1.1 million others versus 800,000 Kuwaitis) and the fact that foreigners are not only highly visible in every aspect of Kuwaiti social life, but fulfil critical functions in it (ibid. 122).

The parallel can be taken further, for, like foreigners in Kuwait, Muslims in Melilla also fulfil critical functions. This is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

⁶³ It is estimated that Muslim children make up 60% of the student population in primary schools, and it is generally agreed that the population growth rate amongst Muslims is significantly higher than amongst Christians (see Stallaert 1996: 159).

⁶⁴ The Popular Party (*Partido Popular*) is one of the two main national political parties in Spain. Its ideology is similar to that promoted by Christian Democrat parties across Europe. The other main party is the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* or PSOE).

over the territories (González Enríquez 2007: 227-228). A young Christian informant explained the reasons as follows:

Here you have two options, but everyone votes PP because they don't want the other party to win. The president of the CPM party is an Islamist doctor; I know him and his family, they are good people, but of course the idea of having the ruling party representing the Islamic world conditions you when it comes to voting ... So here the PP always wins, because people unite to stop the other party [from winning].

The insistence on creating a unified front against Muslims is also connected with Melilla's perceived relationship with mainland Spain. The process of decolonisation and demilitarisation, together with the growing political power of the Muslim population contributed to a generalised feeling amongst Christians of having been abandoned by mainland Spain and left to fend for themselves. Isolation and abandonment by the central government are both central themes in the enclave's political discourse and in everyday conversations, and news regarding the closure or opening of new routes (by sea or by air) between the enclave and mainland Spain habitually makes the local headlines in television and in press (cf. Driessen 1992).

Implicit in these narratives is the idea that the naturalisation of Muslims had led to a reversal of roles which disrupted peaceful relations between Muslims and Christians. When Christian domination was indisputable (i.e. during the Protectorate), so the story goes, the two groups lived in harmony, but once Muslims supposedly gained access to Christian resources and power, the balance was altered. For example, a Christian man explained recent changes in Melilla as follows:

Before, you know, before, the Spaniard had them under his shoe, the worse things were always for the Moor, just like with immigrants today in Spain. They would do anything you wanted for very little money. And that's why that stuff happened with Duddu ... We wanted this law [the Immigration Law] to kick out all the Moors, everyone in the peninsula said we were racist, because we didn't want the Moors and now that all the Moors are going to the peninsula ... well now you see, now they have to eat them [deal with the immigrants] over there, so let them eat them there.

The distribution of welfare is one of the most controversial issues in this regard. Against Muslim claims that the Muslim sector of the enclave has been traditionally neglected by the local authorities, Christians complain that, today, the city's welfare system is monopolised by Muslim families, most of whom, they claim, have no right to benefit from Melilla's social welfare because of their lack of roots in the city. Social housing, in particular, is a common source of conflict. As a lower-middle class Christian man put it,

Here in Melilla the social services and all that, they give it to them. Look, they are the ones who have fewer rights, so when they have to give assistance they give it to them. You never see a Christian waiting in line [for benefits] ... Forty or fifty years ago you could see Christians in line. For Christmas they gave away milk packets, sausages and all that, but today you don't see a Christian in line to get maybe 200 euros or to get your kid into kindergarten. They always put their kids first, because you have your salary, and they don't and they get the kindergarten places. So these things are more beneficial to them than to us, I am not saying no, but some people, some Christians maybe they don't have enough, some families are workers and they don't have anywhere to go.

At the core of these disputes is the question of *who*, in Melilla, is truly a Spaniard. This, however, is not a debate about citizenship. It is a debate about national identity. Thus, the distinction between rooted and 'unrooted' Muslims, between those who 'always' lived in Melilla and those who have arrived in recent years, does not in any way challenge dominant views on Spanishness and on the Christian and Hispanic nature of 'true' Spaniards. As an elderly Melillan once said to me, 'we all understand that when we say "Spaniard" we are referring to Christians'. This idea, which —as discussed below— is partially shared by Muslims themselves, is central to the ways in which Christians conceive of their relationship and interactions with Muslims. A Melillan Christian put it best when he said:

The *Moruno* that you find here now, with a [Spanish] ID card, is very different from the one we used to have in the past. He thinks he has rights, but no duties, and so that's very different. I say 'what's your name?' and those whose name is María or José I consider Spanish, but if your name is 'Moha' [from Mohammed] then to me that's not a Spaniard. They say I'm a racist. I get so angry when I discuss this with people!

3.6 The Muslim world: 1985 and beyond

For Muslims, 1985 evokes the memory of a struggle, a time when the community came together to challenge Christian domination and demand equal rights. For many, 1985 represents a unique instance of solidarity and union amongst Melillan Muslims, a time of victory remembered with nostalgia and pride. The struggle for the acquisition of Spanish citizenship, however, holds significance beyond the memories of the events themselves. One need only consider the life-stories of those who lived through this process to understand its symbolic and material consequences. Let me illustrate this through the words of Benaissa, a Melillan Muslim who participated in the 1985 protests in the *Cañada*.

Benaissa's grandmother moved from the Riffian hinterland to Melilla in 1928, when Benaissa's father was one year old. His father's older brother had had a quarrel with another family in their village, and he decided to flee with his family to the Spanish enclave, so they settled in the *Cañada de la Muerte* where, years later, Benaissa's father married and had nine children; Benaissa was the oldest boy. Benaissa and his family continued to live in the *Cañada*, in a small, one-bedroom house: his parents and four younger siblings slept in the bedroom, while Benaissa and his four brothers and sisters slept in the dining area by the kitchen. The bathroom, he tells me, was simply a wall and a small bucket behind it, and there was no running water in the building.

It was like this until Duddu came. After Duddu people started to work on their houses because the government promised the 400 housing units but they never delivered what they promised; they gave the houses to Christians instead. People were tired and they started to work on their houses, selling their land in Morocco and whatever little they had to pay for the work. They built new storeys above their houses and the city mayor gave us bricks, so he could save money in social housing.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ The houses Benaissa refers to are council estate housing; that is, houses belonging to the state, put up for sale at very low prices which are normally allocated through a lottery process amongst those who satisfy the necessary requirements. The parameters include the number of family members (and dependents), not owning any other residential property and earning a low salary (the maximum is established by each autonomous community). Occasionally, a local government may tackle particularly deprived neighbourhoods, demolishing old houses and building new housing facilities to relocate residents.

Benaissa started working at a very early age. As the eldest boy in the family, he was expected to contribute to the household's income, and by the time he was eight years old, he was working selling chewing gum to smugglers and traders in what is now known as the *Plaza de las culturas* (Square of the Cultures), Melilla's central square. Back then, the *plaza* served as Melilla's central bus station. Daily buses departed from the *plaza* towards Nador, Selouane, and other towns and villages in the hinterland where smugglers sold their goods. Benaissa bought chewing gum packets in the city centre and sold them to the bus passengers for a little money which he diligently handed to his parents every evening. Occasionally he and his friends would visit the military barracks by the dock, where Melilla's military officers lived. At that time, the military barracks were in a restricted area, fenced off from the rest of the city. They would swim under the fence, he tells me, to get through to the military zone and ask the officers for food:

they usually gave us something to eat, and sometimes, when the English came to Melilla [presumably for commercial reasons], they threw coins at us and took pictures. We would fight over the coins, because back then 15 pesetas was a lot of money for us!

A few years later, he began to work as an errand boy for a Spanish Christian family. 'They trusted me, and I could go in and out of their house anytime because they trusted me. Once, the lady of the house called me for Eid⁶⁶ and took me shopping. She bought me a suit and a pair of shoes', he says proudly, 'to wear during our holiday. And when she saw me all dressed up tears welled up in her eyes and she almost started crying.'

Today, Benaissa is a construction worker. He still lives in the *Cañada* with his wife and his four children, and earns around one thousand euros per month, most of which he hands to his wife to organise the household's expenses. 'Whatever I make from the extra hours, I keep', he says, 'for *kif*, you know?'⁶⁷ Later, he turns to me and says: 'Here in Melilla, Franco died in 1985'. He is, of course, well aware that the Spanish dictator died ten years before that, in 1975. 'But', he explains,

⁶⁶ A Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan.

⁶⁷ *Kif* is a derivative of cannabis. It is a powder made from the plants' dried flower, cultivated in the Central Rif and smoked widely throughout Morocco.

Here we say that he died in 1985, because until then we lived in a dictatorship [*dictadura*]. Back then, all we had was the statistical card, and when the immigration law was passed it meant that they could expel all of us. So the Muslims in Melilla all came together against this threat, led by Omar Dudú who was a lawyer here in Melilla. We came very close to a popular rising [*levantamiento popular*] here!

The struggle for the acquisition of Spanish citizenship, however, was far from easy:

When I went to get the papers for my mother they told me that [according to the official register] she had only been registered as a resident of Melilla for three years, only three years! And I said: ‘You know how old I am? Look I am twenty-four. So what, did I give birth to my mother three years ago? Or did my mother give birth to me? My mother gave birth to me, right? And if I have been here for twenty-four years and my mother was here for fifteen years before having me then how can you tell me that she has been here for three years?’

Benaissa’s story sheds some light on the precarious living conditions of Muslims prior to 1985 and on the wide economic gap that separated them from Christians. It also points to the important consequences of the process of naturalisation that followed the 1985 protests.

Prior to the possibility of naturalisation, Muslim political organisation was restricted to so-called cultural associations, including the *Asociación Musulmana de Melilla*, established in 1968, and *Terra Omnium* (land of all), founded in 1985 by Aomar Duddu (Driessen 1992). Politically, Muslims could only align with mainstream national parties or trade unions. For example, during the protests against the immigration law, most Muslims left the socialist trade union (UGT, *Unión General de Trabajadores*) to join the communist one (CCOO, *Comisiones Obreras*), as Christians switched from CCOO to UGT. CCOO was the only organised ‘political’ force which supported their demand for equal rights (González Enríquez 2007: 221). The naturalisation of Muslim residents in the enclave over the following years opened the way for the establishment of Muslim political organisations in Melilla. In 1985, Aomar Duddu founded the *Partido de los Demócratas Melillenses*, a predominantly Muslim

party, which was dissolved upon his exile to Morocco in 1986. Ten years later, when Melilla was declared an Autonomous City and ceased to belong administratively to the Spanish province of Malaga, Melilla's largest Muslim party, CPM (*Coalición por Melilla*), was founded, splitting off from the socialist party (PSOE). CPM received 15.47% of votes in the first elections, in 1995, and today holds 23.7% of the votes, making it the second largest bloc in the enclave.⁶⁸

More importantly, the acquisition of Spanish citizenship allowed Muslims to access rights they had hitherto been deprived of, including unemployment benefits, legal work and public education for their children. As Benaissa's story shows, although relative to Christians Muslims are still in a marginal position, the 1985 protests had important effects. The acquisition of Spanish citizenship, however, did not bring about an identification with Spanish values or Spanish people. In fact, twenty-five years after the conflict, Melillan Muslims continue to refer to the Christian population as 'Spaniards', a category which they oppose to 'Muslims'.⁶⁹ Instead, Muslims often speak of themselves as 'Melillenses'.⁷⁰ The open rejection of the Muslim presence in the enclave expressed in the counter-demonstrations organised by the Christian population in the months following the Muslim protests are perceived by many as a betrayal. By declaring open hostility towards the Muslim sector of the enclave, Christians had broken one of the fundamental rules of inter-ethnic relations for, while it is generally acknowledged that relations between Christian and Muslims are fraught with mistrust

⁶⁸ It is worth noting that in 1999, CPM governed the enclave briefly, through a coalition with the GIL party, a right-wing political party founded in 1991 by Spanish businessman Jesús Gil y Gil that gained prominence in Marbella. The Muslim president, however, was ousted shortly after through a censorship motion organised by all major parties in Melilla. Since then, the right wing party PP has held absolute majority in the enclave. For information on election results in Melilla over the past three decades see <http://www.historiaelectoral.com/amelilla.html> and, for an analysis of the evolution of Melilla's political landscape, see Gold (2000: 56-90).

⁶⁹ Only occasionally do Muslims refer to Spaniards as Christians, when making a point about their own Spanish nationality or when discussing specifically religious matters.

⁷⁰ As Stallaert (1996: 145) notes for Ceuta, the discourse of belonging found amongst Muslims is strongly tied to the enclaves themselves rather than to mainland Spain. The place of birth, therefore, is central to the ways in which Muslims distinguish between Melillenses and non-Melillenses. This is part of a wider discourse of rooting (*arraigo*) which is commonly used to emphasise the legitimacy of one's presence in the enclave both by Muslims and Christians (ibid. 147). In this regard, the emphasis on a Melillense identity is connected to ideas about belonging which mark a distinction between 'true' Melillan Muslims and newcomers.

and antagonism, it is a requirement of peaceful coexistence that this antagonism remain implicit. Today, Muslims remember these events as a time of revelation: the Christian demonstrations proved what many already knew, namely, that Muslims were not wanted in Melilla. Benaissa, for instance, recalled the protests in the following words:

Before Franco died, in the times of Duddu, he organised the demonstrations that made people rise against the immigration law, and then the Spaniards in Melilla had a demonstration. First we had ours: out with the immigration law and yes to nationality. And the Saturday after that the Spanish had theirs: yes to immigration law and out with the Moors. Most of them [went to the demonstration], instead of rising with us and asking for the same with us. We are neighbours, maybe my name is Benaissa and my neighbour's name is Antonio, and I was born in this house and Antonio was born in that house but he knows me and I was born next door, and we know each other and we are neighbours, and that neighbour rises against me saying I am not from here!⁷¹

3.7 Homo hierarchicus: the creation of new boundaries and new forms of stratification

Lest this convey a romantic image of Melillan Muslims as 'the voices of the marginalised' (Harvey 1996: 101), let me conclude this chapter by pointing to some important effects of Melilla's new socio-political landscape. The process of naturalisation of Muslim residents raised important questions of identity, nationality and self-definition. For the first time in the history of the enclave, the religious, ethnic and 'cultural' divide between Muslims and Christians no longer coincided with the formal divide between Spaniards and Moroccans. Inevitably, being Melillense acquired a new significance amongst Berbers. Citizenship became a crucial marker of status, and a new

⁷¹ It is worth comparing this with a quote by a Christian resident cited earlier in the chapter: 'I say "what's your name?" and those whose name is María or José I consider Spanish, but if your name is "Moha" [from Mohammed] then to me that's not a Spaniard.' Interestingly, both use the same kind of language to conceptualise the relation between Christians and Muslims, but different conceptions of loyalty and reciprocity are at play: in the first case, neighbourliness overcomes ancestry, in the second ancestry is the overriding feature. Thus, while Christians emphasise the ethnic divide above all other stratifications, amongst Muslims this is overshadowed by notions of neighbourliness and territoriality according to which neighbours ought to protect one another from any external threat.

boundary emerged between Melillan Berbers and their Moroccan counterparts. While, relative to the Christian population, Melillan Muslims continued to be disadvantaged, their newly acquired privileges put them in an unmistakably advantageous situation vis-à-vis their Moroccan relatives.⁷² Moroccan Muslims have since come to occupy the lower strata of Melillan society, taking up underpaid jobs previously performed by Melillan Muslims and being subject to the same power dynamics that Melillan Muslims once endured.

In a relatively short period of time, what was once a unified category defined against a unified ‘other’ (i.e. Christians vs. Muslims, and its equivalent, Spaniards vs. Moroccans) came into question. Muslims began to divide themselves between those who had Spanish citizenship and those who did not, and the stage was set for the dynamics which inform relations between Christians and Muslims to be replicated on a lower level. Consider, for example, the following words, spoken by a member of my Moroccan host family in Selouane (a relatively large town some 10 km from Nador) after a brief visit of some Melillan relatives:

They are not good. They think they are Spaniards, but they are Berbers like us! And they look down on us because they have “papers” [Sp. *papeles*]. My mum couldn’t get Spanish nationality, but actually it was for the best, because our family over there, they are terrible [Sp. *son una ruina*, literally ‘they are a ruin’], they lack any manners!

Once again, therefore, the redefinition of a population generates effects which transcend the demographic domain (cf. Ardener 2007 [1989]), bringing about new sets of categories which are incorporated into existing hierarchical structures.

The new status of Melillan Berbers as Spanish citizens gives them the upper hand in everyday interactions with Moroccan Berbers, both socially and economically, and, today, comments regarding citizenship are commonly used to assert this hierarchical structure. For example, once I travelled to Melilla with my Moroccan host mother Fatima to visit her brother’s family in Melilla. A few minutes after our arrival, I

⁷² Often, the new socio-economic status of Melillan Berbers generated relations of economic interdependence, as Moroccan families with close members living on the Spanish side of the border occasionally (sometimes regularly) received financial help from their relatives.

heard Fatima's brother asking his young daughter about me: 'but is she Spanish?' 'Her?', came the answer, 'Oh, she's got a red passport, she's more Spanish than you!' When he later asked about the places I had visited in Morocco he commented, sneeringly, 'what a nerve [*ya les vale*], these *Moors*, they haven't taken you anywhere!' Later that day, his daughter drove us across the border to take the bus from Nador back to Selouane. As we were approaching the border, a group of Moroccan women dressed in the traditional *jellaba* crossed the street right in front of us. Fatima's niece slowed down, waiting for the women to cross, and looked at me in despair: 'But look at these *morubas*! Damn it, and on top of that [i.e. the fact that they were crossing in the middle of the street] I now have to *wait* for them to get across?'

What is most interesting about these quotes is the appropriation of traditional Spanish terminology to refer, pejoratively, to Moroccans or people of Moroccan descent. The use of words like *moro* or *morube* is perhaps the best indication of the ways in which the identification with Spanishness is used by Melillan Muslims as a means to mark themselves off from Moroccans across the border. That in the eyes of Melillan Christians—or of Spaniards at large—they themselves continue to be *moros* despite their citizenship matters little; precisely because their Spanishness is under question in all other contexts, when confronted with Moroccan Berbers they are not only able but also adamant to draw a clear boundary defining their new identity.⁷³ The message conveyed is not simply one of derision or scorn; rather, both *moro* and *morube*, particularly in the contexts described above, carry with them a specific connotation of backwardness which stands in opposition to Spanish notions of civilization. In other words, together with the terminology, Melillan Muslims are appropriating a kind of

⁷³ One evening, for example, a family relative from Melilla came to visit us in Selouan. She was the wife of one of the family's sons, and had a very close relationship with the family. As we were sitting on the roof of the house, she recalled how one day, in the early years of her marriage, she had come to visit her parents-in-law wearing a traditional Moroccan *jellaba*. She was not wearing anything underneath because, she said, it was summer and it was very hot. As she was standing on the roof with her father in law a gust of wind lifted the bottom part of her dress and her legs became exposed: 'It would be alright in Melilla, but not here! And he saw me and I was so embarrassed! Since then I always wear long pants under my *jellaba*. I always wear more clothes here, because here they are very traditional, not like us in Melilla, so whenever I come here I have to wear all these clothes which I never wear at home!'

discourse and, by doing so, they are distancing themselves from a position they themselves occupied not long ago.

3.8 Conclusion

We started off with the opposition between Christians and Muslims as the key axis around which relations are structured in Melilla. A system of Christian hegemony, I argued, is sustained on a discourse of Spanish nationalism closely connected to Spain's Catholic tradition. In this binary system, Spaniards and Catholics are one in opposition to Moroccan Muslims. Europe's increased presence in the enclave after Spain's incorporation into the European Community introduced a new language to conceptualise this divide and generated a new form of political rhetoric based on multiculturalism. Yet the boundary between Melilla and Nador continued to be conceived as the limit between Europe and Africa, between Christianity and Islam. The naturalisation of Muslim residents in the enclave challenged this deeply entrenched structure which served to legitimise Christian power in the enclave. As Muslims acquired rights hitherto reserved for Christians, the division between the two groups *appeared* to come under threat. As we have seen, however, today the threat remains mainly symbolic. Ultimately, Christians continue to hold most positions of power and have an unofficial monopoly over state employment; Muslims, by contrast, work in the construction sector or turn to smuggling to make a living.

The naturalisation of Muslims also generated new categories of people by establishing a formal distinction between Spanish and Moroccan Berbers. These new categories, however, reproduce the same division that has long informed relations between Christians and Muslims, drawing a contrast between savage and civilised, Spanish and Moroccan, European and African. The two poles have a significance which extends across the border. The opposition between Riffian emigrants and locals, central to the organisation of social relations in Nador, brings forth yet another instance of the same divide; the ideal of a traditional North African society is here confronted with the

equally fictional image of a modern yet morally corrupt Western world. In the next chapter, I turn to these narratives and explore the effects that the relatively sudden increase in Riffian emigration over the past three decades has had on the economic, physical, social and moral landscape of Nador, across the border in Morocco. As we shall see, the Spanish presence in the region has had an impact on the way Riffians imagine their community and contrast it to ‘the outside world’.

CHAPTER 4. FROM TRIBESMEN TO MREs: IDENTITY, MORALITY AND EMIGRATION IN NADOR

L'attachement des Marocains du monde à leur pays est indéniable. Chaque année, ils en donnent la preuve en y retournant, en y investissant et en restant attachés à sa culture, à ses traditions.

Aujourd'hui Le Maroc, August 2009
Special Marocains du Monde et son avenir

4.1 From tribesmen to MREs: the development of a *rentier* economy

David Hart's monograph on the Rif was first published in 1976. Based on fieldwork during the 1950s and 1960s, Hart's ethnography explored the tribal organisation of Berbers in the Moroccan Central Rif. He built on Montagne's (1931) classic ethnography of Berber tribal structures, and argued that lineage segmentation was the primary mechanism for the political, economic and social organisation of Riffian tribes. A heated debate on the exact nature of tribal alliances in the Rif Mountains followed the publication of his book.¹ Twenty-five years later, anthropologist David McMurray (2001) published *In and out of Morocco: smuggling and migration in a frontier boomtown*, an ethnography of the city of Nador during the mid-1980s. In it, not a single mention of tribes is made that is not in reference to pre-colonial times. Instead, the relationship between emigrants and locals takes centre stage. My experience in Nador, twenty years down the road, gave a similar picture. What had happened in between? How did the distinction between migrants and locals come to replace the old tribal boundaries as the main organising principle for social relations?

¹ In 1931, Robert Montagne had published *La vie sociale et la vie politique des berbères*. David Hart's work in the 1970s questioned Montagne's 'checkerboard' thesis. Together with Gellner (1969), who worked amongst Berbers in the High Atlas, Hart was one of the main advocates of the segmentary model in Morocco. Shortly after the publication of Hart's monograph, Henry Munson (1989) wrote a thorough critique his work, suggesting that segmentation occurred according not to lineage genealogy, as Hart had suggested, but to forms of affiliation which cut across genealogical lines. Finally, the work of Raymond Jamous and David Seddon should be mentioned as an important contribution to the anthropology of the Rif in general. Jamous (1981) worked mainly on the code of honour amongst the Iqari'yen confederation of tribes in the region of Nador, and emphasised the role played by ties of patronage with big men (*Tar. amghar*). Seddon (1981), who published the first English translation of Montagne's classical work in 1973, focused on processes of social and political change.

Emigration has long been a source of livelihood for Riffians. In chapter 2 we saw how, during the second half of the nineteenth century, it was common for Riffians to travel to Algeria yearly to work on French-owned farms. After Moroccan independence (1956), when European countries began to encourage labour migration from Morocco, thousands of people from the region of Nador moved to Europe (mainly Germany) to work in the industrial sector.² Later, after Europe closed its borders to foreign workers, clandestine emigration grew and Riffians migrated *en masse* to a number of European countries, both legally (through marriage and family reunification policies) and illegally (overstaying tourist visas, forging work documents and, less frequently, hiding from the customs authorities at the border). Today, Riffians constitute one of the largest contingents of Moroccan emigrants in Europe, being particularly numerous in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France and Spain. It is difficult to establish how many of these migrants come from the province of Nador, but judging by the numbers of re-entries through the port of Melilla in the summer months, we could well be talking about over one hundred thousand people.³

Emigration has brought dramatic changes to Nador. The physical landscape of the province has been transformed by the capital invested by migrants in urban housing, while migrant remittances have generated a rapid expansion of the service sector and fostered the development of a seasonal economy reliant on the migrants' yearly return for the summer vacation. The consolidation of social networks linking the eastern Rif to the main European capitals has also provided new opportunities for the development of drug trafficking routes originating in the Central Rif, and this, in turn, has fostered the emergence of money laundering operations. In a relatively short period of time, Nador has been transformed from an impoverished province dependent on subsistence agriculture, labour migration and petty trade, into a booming economy, led by a new kind of elite and generating new kinds of divisions. Emigration has shaped the

² As we saw in chapter 2, Morocco signed labour recruitment agreements with West Germany (1963), France (1963), Belgium (1964), and the Netherlands (1969).

³ In 2009, the Passage of the Strait Operation (*Operación Paso del Estrecho* is the name by which the passage of residents from Europe to Morocco via Spain every summer is known) through Melilla counted 110,000 passengers and 17,085 vehicles.
See: <http://www.infomelilla.com/noticias/index.php?accion=1&id=20420>

relationship between the Rif and ‘the outside world’, both materially and conceptually. Let us begin by addressing changes to the economic domain.

The most noticeable effects of large-scale emigration, both in the Rif and across Morocco, have been those brought about by the influx of migrants’ remittances. The numbers speak for themselves. In 2002, official remittances represented 6.4% of Morocco’s gross national product (GNP), 22% of the total value of imports, and six times the total development aid paid to Morocco (de Haas 2005a: 6).⁴ Today, it is estimated that around 4.8 billion euros reach the country every year through remittances.⁵

The capital of Moroccan emigrants has become the target of both private enterprises and government policies. The Moroccan state has facilitated the remittance of money by supporting the development of a Moroccan banking system in European countries.⁶ The lifting of restrictions on foreign exchange and the promulgation of fiscal policies that favour emigrants have further encouraged the inflow of capital (de Haas 2005). Investments from emigrants have also been encouraged through the establishment, in 1990, of the Ministry for the Moroccan Community Abroad (*Ministère de la Communauté Marocaine à l’Etranger*) and the *Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidents à l’Étranger* (thus, the acronym MRE). Through these institutions, the government has financed the creation of help centres (known as *Maisons des Marocains Résidents à l’Étranger*) where emigrants can receive assistance, general

⁴ Between 1968 and 1992, the officially registered remittances rose from \$23 million to \$2.1 billion per year, as the number of Moroccan emigrants in Europe increased from 137,000 in 1968 to 1,174,000 in 1990, and 2,278,000 by 2005 (de Haas, 2005a). For a detailed examination of the history and patterns of North African migration in general, and Moroccan migration in particular, see de Haas (2007) and Berriane (2008).

⁵ Source: <http://moroccoworldnews.com/2011/06/expatriates%E2%80%99-remittances-hike-7-8-in-2010/1587> (data from 2010).

⁶ The Moroccan Banque Populaire, for example, now has forty branches throughout Europe (in France, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden); the bank’s headquarters are situated within the Moroccan embassy (Nyberg Sorensen 2004).

information and advice on the best investment options at home.⁷ At present, the *Fondation Hassan II* finances the settlement of legal and administrative disputes involving the Moroccan diaspora, while a special MRE branch of the *Fondation Mohammed V*, created in 1999, coordinates the yearly return of Moroccan expatriates through a transit operation known as '*Opération Marhaba*', that is, operation welcome (Nyberg Sorensen 2004). The private sector has followed a similar path, with banks offering special finance packages for migrants and targeting the emigrant population through intense advertising campaigns during the summer months.⁸ Investment opportunities are also regularly broadcast by the media, and road signs welcoming returning emigrants can be found on the main highways of both southern Spain and Morocco.⁹ In other words, there are substantial interests invested in the continuation of Moroccan emigration, and in the strengthening of links between the diaspora and the Moroccan homeland.

⁷ At the *Maison* in Nador, for instance, an investment welcome-pack for emigrants is available upon request, and is handed out to any emigrants requesting information. The pack includes a 'Guide for Moroccans Living Abroad' where detailed information can be found about official resources available to MREs, regional and national investment opportunities (including specific sections on the country's tourist industry, and a step-by-step guide through the bureaucratic processes required for investment. Together with a number of flyers and pamphlets, the pack also includes a magazine significantly entitled *Marocains du Monde – Fidèles au pays et confiants dans son avenir*.

⁸ The Ministry of the Moroccan Diaspora organises every year (since 2003) a nationwide rally for MREs, known as 'Le raid des Marocains du Monde'. The rally covers 11 regions or towns across the country, from Tétouan to Essaouira Tangiers, Asilah, Larache, Rabat, Casablanca and Marrakech, among others. Participants pay around €300 for a weeklong trip which includes lodging, activities, food and petrol for the car. According to the government's official website, the purpose is 'to offer participants the chance to inform themselves about investment opportunities for Moroccans living abroad'. For an idea of this and similar projects, see: <http://www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/accueil.aspx>

⁹ Most returning emigrants drive through Europe and take the ferry across the Gibraltar Strait. Spain, therefore, and particularly the south of the country, is a key transit area for a large population of MREs. On the road from Taza to Nador, for instance, a billboard from a national financial entity reads '*MRE-Ici et à l'étranger votre banque est à votre côté*' (MRE –Here and abroad your bank is by your side). Advertisements of this kind are common not only on billboards but also in magazines, and on television and radio.



First edition of the 'Conference day of the Moroccans of the world', under the title 'What is their role for the development of our country?' Organised by the Université Hassan II de Casablanca in collaboration with the CCME (*Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger*).



A rally organised in the summer for the MREs by the Ministère Chargé de la Communauté Marocaine Résident à l'Étranger.



Advertisement from the La Banque centrale populaire (BCP) and Royal Air Maroc of their new services for MREs.

As one of the regions with most emigrants *per capita* in the country, the province of Nador receives considerable attention both from the private and from the public sectors. In recent years, links to the financial and administrative centres of Morocco —Rabat, Casablanca, Tangiers— have been strengthened through an extension of the rail network, and the region's only airport, which opened in 1999 with a flight to Dusseldorf (Germany), now has flights to Casablanca and to a much wider range of emigrant destinations (Madrid, Barcelona, Berlin, Dusseldorf, Brussels and Amsterdam among others). Construction work is underway for a vast industrial port a few kilometres from Nador (the Nador West Med) and for the development of a large-scale tourist resort.

The increased purchasing power of Riffian emigrants and their families back home has transformed the landscape of the region. Riffian emigrants, mostly of rural origin, have played a key role in the consolidation of urban structures by investing in the relocation of their families from rural villages either into the city of Nador or into one of the growing satellite towns in the province.¹⁰ One of my Moroccan host families, for example, was originally from the frontier town of Beni Enzar but had relocated to a new neighbourhood in Selouane with the economic help of close relatives living in Europe. On my first trip, the neighbourhood had no more than three completed housing units and a number of plots in preparation for construction. There were no roads, lampposts or any other facilities, and the closest grocery store was a small *téléboutique* by the main road, a twenty-minute walk away. The last time I visited, two years later, the neighbourhood had grown into a fully equipped suburb, with a large supermarket and all sorts of facilities underway. On that trip I found out that a new university had just opened in Selouane; the first (and only) university in the province of Nador.

In fact, contrary to the commonly held view that the Rif is one of the poorest regions of Morocco, Nador is, according to the Central Bank (*Bank al-Maghrib*), one of the main financial strongholds of the country (Berriane and Hopfinger 1999: 163). The

¹⁰ Large towns like Seghangan, Selouane or Beni Enzar, for instance, are a product of the housing boom (driven by emigrants' investments) that has overtaken the province since the 1970s. For a detailed analysis of these processes, particularly with reference to the town of Seghangan, see Berriane and Hopfinger (1992).

high numbers of banks operating in the region, together with the volume of bank deposits and currency trade,¹¹ are revealing of the capital that circulates in the province. According to the Spanish newspaper *El País*, Nador is second only to Casablanca in the volume of bank deposits, with local banks holding up to 2,500 million euros in 2006.¹²

Legal remittances account for a significant share of this money, but there are other, less visible sources, including drug trafficking and money laundering. ‘Bank branches in Nador’ says a former bank director from Nador to *El País* in an interview,

open in the afternoon to serve the drug lords who arrive with rubbish bags full of cash. If one afternoon one of them takes in, for instance 830,000 dirhams (76,570 euros), he will deposit 800,000 and the rest is a tip to be divided amongst the director of the bank and the employees.¹³

In fact, as Berriane and Hopfinger (1999: 166) suggest, it is not implausible that a large number of ‘emigrant accounts’ are in fact connected with drug trafficking. Largely dependent on migratory networks linking the province of Nador to Spain, Germany, Holland, Belgium and France, the drug trafficking industry is generally run by Riffian emigrants, both locally and internationally. Distribution routes follow those traced by Riffian emigration, and Riffian emigrants themselves are often in charge of the sale of the drug —most commonly *kif* or *hashish*, but also cocaine and, to a lesser extent, heroin—, in their host countries (Chouvy 2005). At least some of the wealth generated through emigration, therefore, originates in the drug trade and in the money laundering operations which sustain it. This explains how, despite a 26% unemployment rate, Nador has an average income per inhabitant of 3,500 euros per month, eleven times higher than that of Casablanca (data from 2006).¹⁴ The interests invested in the

¹¹ Nador is the city with the most banks per inhabitant in Morocco - with 3,906 inhabitants per branch versus a national average of 10,000, according to data from 1994 collected by Berriane and Hopfinger (1999: 163). As a by-product of contraband and drug smuggling, a number of prosperous businesses have emerged in Nador, the most common of which is money changing and currency trade. It is revealing that Nador is the only city in Morocco where jewellers are allowed to exchange currency (ibid. 114). The large numbers of jewellery and bijouterie stores responds to this fact.

¹² Cembrero, I. ‘La flotilla de la droga zarpa de Nador’, *El País*, 19/11/2006.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

maintenance of this booming economy transcend regional boundaries. According to Spanish journalist Ignacio Cembrero,

Of that money [held in Nadori banks], only 10% is given away in credits to the province, while around 2,000 million are redirected outside of the region. This is how the deficit of Casablanca, which amounts to 4,000 million euros, is partially covered. That is why Nador and its surplus, much higher than that of more populated cities like Tangiers or Tetouan, are a key element in the Moroccan financial system.¹⁵

Locally, the yearly return of emigrants in the summer months has generated a seasonal economy based on the provision of services to the returnees. Jewellery and furniture shops, grocery stores, banks, currency exchange services, restaurants and cafés thrive on the revenues made every summer as thousands of migrants take over the capital of the province and its satellite towns. The process is familiar to the region: what the arrival of Spanish troops in the first decades of the 20th century did for Melilla, the yearly visit of MREs is doing for Nador. The wealth of Riffian emigrants has not only generated a new market of consumers, but also generated urban development and attracted migrant workers to the region, this time from the poorer regions of southern Morocco. The rapid development of the commercial sector has also led to an increase in smuggling across the border of Melilla, as foreign products are ‘imported’ from the Spanish enclave and this, in turn, has attracted further Moroccan migrants and created more employment.¹⁶ Emigration has therefore generated a new kind of *rentier* economy in the Riffian homeland, which, together with smuggling across the border of Melilla and drug trafficking across the Gibraltar Strait, constitutes the region’s main source of revenue. These economic processes have transformed the landscape of the region.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Often, migrants themselves invest in setting up a small commercial establishment as a stable source of income and a means to employ relatives back home. In 1994, for instance, Berriane and Hopfinger (1999: 68-69) found that of a total of 1,700 shop owners interviewed, 77% claimed to be or have been emigrants to Europe.

4.2 Emigration and urban development in Nador

Initially created as an encampment for the Spanish military, Nador remained a relatively small town until well into the mid-20th century.¹⁷ In 1960, when the first mass migrations to Europe started, the city had 17,583 inhabitants (Berriane and Hopfinger 1999: 27); today, it hosts 150,000 people. This extraordinary demographic expansion is a direct product of Riffian emigrants relocating their families from rural villages into the city (Aziza 2003: 11). Nador is thus a city sustained by Riffian emigration.

The urban landscape reflects the history of the city and sets Nador apart from most ancient Middle Eastern cities. The old citadel typical of places like Marrakesh or Fes is conspicuously absent, and Nador's oldest quarters follow the square-grid patterns imported by the Spaniards during the Protectorate.¹⁸ To the west of the old Spanish quarters, at the foot of a hill, extends the poorest quarter of the city, which housed local residents in the years of the protectorate and is today home to the less wealthy (including considerable numbers of Moroccan Arabs who have emigrated to Nador from poorer regions of Morocco in recent years). The architectural difference is self-evident:

¹⁷ In 1934 Spain transferred most administrative services of the eastern Spanish Protectorate from Melilla to Nador, and the city slowly began to grow. Situated midway between the Spanish enclave of Melilla and the mining complex of Ouixan, Nador was the ideal location for a new urban centre in the region.

¹⁸ Interestingly, this constitutes a reversal of typical colonial patterns, where the old citadel hosted the local population while the new colonial quarters which surrounded the old city housed citizens of the metropolis (Salamandra 2004: 31-33; for a critical analysis of the 'Islamic city', see also J. Abu-Lughod 1987). In Nador, the old quarters are precisely those that hosted the Spanish in the early years of the Protectorate while the areas immediately surrounding the Spanish quarter, which now constitute the poorest parts of the city, were occupied by the local population which began to settle in the city in later years attracted by the commercial possibilities which opened up with the arrival of the Spanish soldiers and residents. Today, the city has grown dramatically, and these areas are no longer peripheral as they once were.



Source: googlemaps

Over the past three decades, and parallel to the increase in emigration rates, the city has grown to reach many of its adjacent towns, with new neighbourhoods appearing and old ones growing at an extraordinary pace. What used to be the outskirts of the city is today an integral part of Nador's urban space.¹⁹ Compare, for a sense of the city's growth, the following image of Nador during the Protectorate, with an image of the city in the 1990s:

¹⁹ One of the new neighbourhoods hosting the *nouveaux riches*, for instance, is located where the old Nadori aerodrome used to be, on the outskirts of the old Nador. Today the quarter is growing rapidly; the aerodrome no longer exists but the quarter has retained the name of Al-Matar ('the airport').



Nador, in the early days of the Spanish occupation.²⁰



Nador in the 1990s .

²⁰ Both these photographs were given to me in a digital format by an anonymous collector in Melilla.

The rapid growth of the city and the growing purchasing power of Riffian families have attracted both public and private capital and, as the city continues to expand, financial, commercial and transport infrastructures are being built for the benefit of returning MREs. Banks, which formerly played a minimal role in sustaining the local economy, have now proliferated. New cafés have opened all over the city with ‘exotic’ names making reference to preferred emigrant destinations (‘Café Belgica’, ‘Amsterdam’, ‘Café Barcelona’), and travel agencies offering advice and legal support to Nadori emigrants can be found in practically every quarter of the city. As I was preparing to leave the field, the first McDonalds was under construction and the first large supermarket had just opened its doors.



Agency catering for returning emigrants I



Agency catering for returning emigrants IV



Nador's first hypermarket



MacDonald's construction site in Nador

Perhaps one of the most interesting features of the region's new urban landscape is the construction of European-style housing to accommodate Riffian emigrants and their families. These extravagant houses have flourished across the province and constitute a visible reminder of the new economic and social status of migrant households. At least some of the most elaborate residences have probably been financed through drug trafficking, as locals often claim. For, however improved the economic position of emigrants in Europe may be, earnings from working on a construction site, in a garage or in domestic service are not sufficient to finance houses like these:



Emigrant's house I. According to my informants, this house belonged to a drug trafficker.



Emigrant's house II. Again, according to my informants, the house belonged to a drug trafficker.

Emigration has thus radically transformed the landscape of the region over the past two decades, and the process is on-going. Drastic changes to the city's landscape are now under way with the construction of a macro-tourist resort which will include a network of seven mini-cities surrounding the Lagoon of Marchica. This project will involve a redevelopment of the city of Nador and of the Lagoon of Marchica, including not only the construction of hotels and restaurants, but also the creation of a natural park, a sports palace, a golf course (in a drought-prone region), two new 'leisure ports', and facilities for nautical and equestrian sports among others. In total, the project will cover an area of 2,000 hectares. To get an idea of the magnitude of this project, consider that the population of Nador city currently stands at approximately 150,000; the new resorts will make provision for over 100,000 visitors and employ around 80,000 people.²¹ Work on the city of Nador is due to commence in 2011, and the completion of the project is expected for 2020.²² Needless to say, Nadori emigrants —and their increased purchasing power— are one of the main targets of the new tourist industry, although the expectation is that it will also attract foreign tourism.²³

²¹ The capital invested in the project is equally significant: the Moroccan government has allocated a budget of 150 million euros to clean and depollute the Lagoon prior to initiating construction work for the tourist resort, which will require a further investment of over 4 million euros. The project, however, is also designed to attract foreign capital. According to Said Zarrou, President of Marchica Med:

The 'Agency for the Development of the Marchica lagoon site' has continuously received at its head office in Nador, delegations from different corners of the world such as a delegation from the World Bank, French, Spanish, and Dutch investors. We have also received Moroccan expatriates willing to invest.

For the full interview see 'Marchica Project in Morocco: Eco Tourism Project Development in the Region', in MacroPolis –Morocco country report, available at <http://www.marcopolis.net/marchica-project-in-morocco-eco-tourism-project-development-in-the-region.htm>.

²² Detailed information on the project, together with the photographs included below, can be found at the project's official website (www.marchicamed.com). Some of the information included here was taken from an interview with the president of the Marchica Med project published online (see above), and from the following article: Moujahid, M. 'Nador - Marchica Med', *La Vie Eco*, 20/07/2009, available online at: <http://www.lavieeco.com/news/economie/nador-marchica-med-84-000-lits-1-000-villas-2-400-appartements-6-marinas...-une-station-balneaire-geante-14314.html>

²³ According to Said Zarrou, the goal is 'to become an international tourist destination within the Mediterranean basin'. See: <http://www.marcopolis.net/marchica-project-in-morocco-eco-tourism-project-development-in-the-region.htm>.

The following are ‘projective’ images taken from the project’s official website. This is what Nador and the Lagoon of Marchica should look like in a few years, according to the Moroccan government:



The Marchica-Med project will see the construction of seven tourist resorts around the lagoon.



The new ‘leisure’ port



The city I



One of the new tourist resorts

The new tourist industry will once again transform the economy of the region, and it will do so in ways which are not unfamiliar. As Harvey (1996) argues, when landscape becomes a barrier to further accumulation, the physical configuration of places needs to be reshaped. New physical infrastructures have to be built, new communication systems established and old modes of production and consumption modified; 'old places ... have to be devalued, destroyed, and redeveloped while new places are created' (ibid. 296). In Nador, this takes the form of an adjustment of physical and infrastructural constraints to ensure that remittances and other forms of capital generated through the region's underground economy are not spent elsewhere, while generating further economic growth in a region traditionally deprived and in conflict with the central government. If emigration can be said to have generated a *rentier* economy of the kind found across the Arab Gulf and in a number of African countries, the development of a tourism industry can be seen as a means to ensure that the revenues derived from this external rent remain in the region.

Like the redevelopment of the old city of Damascus described by Salamandra (2004), Nador's tourist industry responds to a more general process of commoditisation of urban space.²⁴ Unlike in Damascus, however, the image of an exotic, oriental land has no purchase in Nador. Instead, a Westernised, 'modern' product is under construction. Traditionally, the tourism industry in the Middle East has relied on the oriental heritage of the region (e.g. Jordan, Tunisia or Egypt).²⁵ In recent years, however, self-contained luxury tourist resorts have proliferated across the region. Places such as Qatar, or the UAE, have become the new models of a booming tourist industry

²⁴ Salamandra (2004) describes the processes by which the landscape of the city of Damascus is being redeveloped through the preservation of the Old City as the new leisure space for the Damascene elite. Similar processes of redevelopment through conservation can be found across the Middle East, although generally responding to the demands of foreign tourism rather than a change in local paradigms.

²⁵ The manufacture of 'oriental' spaces for foreign tourist consumption in the Middle East can be seen as part of a wider trend towards the commoditisation of what MacCannell (1973) called 'staged authenticity'. His argument relies on the distinction made by Goffman (1959) between 'front' and 'back' regions of social establishments: the front regions refer to those spaces open to guests, customers and, more generally, outsiders (reception offices, parlours, and so forth); the back regions are those where insiders retire between 'public performances'. According to McCannell, the tourism industry has generated 'staged' back regions, designed for the gaze of the observer (1973: 596). It is worth noting, in passing, the similarities between this argument and that put forward by Herzfeld (2005) regarding 'cultural intimacy' and Shryock (2004) in his *Off Stage/On Display*.

based on the production of leisure spaces devoted to luxury travel.²⁶ In Morocco, both forms of tourism coexist. Cities like Fes or Marrakesh offer a traditionally exotic setting for ‘heritage tourism’²⁷, while, by contrast, the upscale seaside resort of Saidia, near the border with Algeria, or the winter ski town of Ifrane, in the Middle Atlas region, provide luxury resorts for local and, less frequently, foreign elites.²⁸ The tourist industry of Nador is clearly modelled on that of Saidia. As in Saidia, the primary clientele will be MREs who return to the homeland in the summer months. This is, indeed, an instance of what Urry (1995) has termed the ‘consumption of place’, a form of consumption which, as we shall see, fits well with new forms of aesthetic valuation.²⁹

²⁶ Waterfront projects such as The Pearl (Qatar), The Wave (Oman), or The Palm Islands (Dubai), the development of large shopping malls such as the Ibn Battuta Mall (Dubai), or the construction of iconic buildings such as Burj Al-Arab (Dubai) and the Emirates Palace (Abu Dhabi) have reshaped the landscape of Arab Gulf and transformed them into a product of consumption for elite international tourism. This new form of tourism, has flourished as the old, heritage-based tourist industry has begun to decay (see Hazbun 2004, 2008; Steiner 2009). In the new luxury resorts situated across the region, ‘little or no concern is shown about the country in which the resort is situated, and it may be inferred that the international tourism passenger is quite indifferent to the nature or status of that country’ (Burkart and Medlik, cited in Hazbun 2004: 321).

²⁷ Demerdash’s (2009), for example, has described, from an architectural perspective, the process of orientalisation of the Moroccan city of Marrakesh. In Marrakesh, she argues, the binary layout of the city characteristic of the colonial period, which divided the urban space between the old medina (for local residents) and the new residency areas (*ville nouvelle*) for colons, continues to live on through the marketing of the old medina for tourism. The Moroccan Ministry of Tourism has appropriated the old colonial constructs to generate an exotic myth for the old city, which in turn serves to attract foreign visitors. The significance of Said’s (1978) concept of ‘orientalism’ is evident in this context, and has been applied to tourism more generally by Urry (1990), Al Mahadin and Burns (2007), Behdad (1994) and Selwyn (1996) among others.

²⁸ Located some 80 km east of Nador, the city of Saidia hosts a large-scale luxury tourist industry similar to that which will be developed in Nador. Known as ‘the blue pearl’, this ‘city turned tourist resort’ attracts Moroccan emigrants from all across Morocco and is now being promoted by the Moroccan Tourist Office as a new destination for international tourism (See: <http://www.visitmorocco.com/index.php/eng/I-am-going-to/Saidia/Unmissable>). Hundreds of kilometres away, in the Middle Atlas region of Morocco, lies the town of Ifrane. Known as ‘little Switzerland’, Ifrane was originally created by the French in the late 1920s as a hill station and a ‘garden city’ for colonial families. Today, the town continues to function as luxury resort for upper-class Moroccans, foreign tourists and expatriates, and hosts one of the most important English-speaking universities of the country (Al Akhawayn University, created in 1995 with funds from the King of Saudi Arabia).

²⁹ The study of urban space (what is today known as ‘urban studies’) has long relied on a distinction between cities of production (‘producing cities’) and cities of consumption (‘consuming cities’) (see Castells 1977, Miles and Miles 2004, Zukin 1998). The advent of the post-Fordist era, some have argued, has led to a shift from cities as the locus of production to cities as the site of consumption. The interest, however, lies in understanding the processes of production by which these cities are created or transformed as sites of consumption. That is, ‘consuming cities’, too, are *produced*.

4.3 The crazy months: Riffian emigrants in Nador

Emigration has brought important changes to this region, not only to its physical and economic structure, but to its moral and social landscape. Every summer tens of thousands of young emigrants take over the streets of Nador, changing the economic and social rhythm of an otherwise relatively quiet, almost dormant city. In the evenings, groups of young men stroll along the seaside promenade, where neighbours and families usually gather at night, to enjoy a ride on a tourist boat around the lagoon or perhaps attend one of the music festivals and concerts organised by the city council to welcome the *jalia magrebia* (the Moroccan diaspora).³⁰ Young local boys push trolleys along the promenade selling snacks, ice-cream, popcorn or the typical snail soup, as emigrants meet with their friends in expectation; some girls might walk by and, if the young returnees are persistent enough, they might convince them to give away their phone numbers.



Nador's Corniche in the summer

³⁰ During my last summer in Nador, I witnessed the annual summer rally organised along the Corniche to welcome returning emigrants. The race was sponsored by one of the largest Moroccan banks, and billboards along the city announcing the event read: 'Bladi [my country]- Encore plus aux côtes des Marocains du monde avec les solutions. Banque Populaire'. At night, the same venue hosted live music in honour of the returnees, introduced by a presenter with the cry of 'Marhaba bikum al jalia al magrebia!' (Welcome, Moroccan diaspora!).

This is also the main wedding season.³¹ Caravans of cars drive around the streets of the city honking and playing loud music until well past midnight. McMurray (2001: 33) offers a vivid description of the summer months:

Every summer weekend, one procession after another of honking cars followed by fireworks displays created a ruckus, all due to the dozens of weddings taking place simultaneously. This was caused by the migrants' families back home, who found the male migrants brides and arranged for their weddings to coincide with their vacations ... The families of newlyweds used fireworks, Mercedes corteges, and professional electronic orchestras to compete with each other and to make a big splash in front of the neighbours and relatives.

Amidst the confusion generated by the crowds gathered on the city's main avenue, young migrants drive around, with the windows rolled down and playing loud Riffian pop music, chasing any girls who dare to venture outside unaccompanied by men. The summer is thus a boisterous, frenzied and unsettling time in Nador, and the contrast with the quiet, peaceful winter months leaves no one impervious. Not surprisingly, the summer months are known amongst locals as 'the crazy months' (*los meses locos*).

Locals await this season with a mixture of anticipation and unease. Anticipation because at this time of the year businesses collect the highest revenue, saving enough to endure the quiet winters. Anticipation too, because restaurants, caf  s and ice-cream shops open their doors for the first time in the year, and the main avenue of the city (the *Corniche*) comes to life with music, trolley vendors, and all manner of entertainment. Anticipation, finally, because migrants return home for their yearly visit, bringing gifts, cash and news from beyond the Gibraltar Strait. Unease, on the other hand, because the high numbers of migrants cruising around the city in pursuit of local girls constitute a permanent threat to one's own and one's family's reputation, and additional care must

³¹ Emigrants are generally considered to be good marriage material, as marrying one's daughter to an emigrant brings new opportunities to the family (contacts for the emigration of other members), and constitutes an easy way up the social and economic ladder. Emigrants and their families see this as desirable too, for marrying a local girl satisfies the ideal of tribal endogamy while increasing their influence within the community. Weddings between emigrants and locals, especially male emigrants and local girls, are therefore very frequent.

be taken to protect daughters and sisters from the unwanted attention of strangers. Unease, also, because as the city doubles its population, food prices rise, and competitive displays of wealth, coupled with norms of etiquette based on reciprocity and generosity, put a considerable strain on the family's budget. Relations of exchange and reciprocity become highly uneven, and local households often struggle to keep up appearances in the face such manifest inequality.

The cash influx derived from emigration has introduced a new kind of elite in Nador, an emigrant elite that represents a challenge to previous notions linking political power, social status and economic affluence (see McMurray 2001).³² The privileged economic position of emigrants grants them independence from relatives and neighbours, providing a sufficient alternative to make up for their lack of connections in the community. Relations of reciprocity developed over years of giving and receiving favours can now be sidestepped through a new form of unilateral dependence based on money. Large numbers of households rely on the financial help they regularly receive from their relatives abroad.³³ Migrants pay for their siblings' weddings, buy new furniture for the house (which, in all likelihood, they have also paid for), and bring back expensive gifts for the family. Their privileged economic position—which, it is worth recalling, is derived not only from legal remittances but also at least in part from the drug trade and, less frequently, from their involvement in large-scale commodity smuggling—grants them unprecedented power over family decisions. At the same time, the economic status of migrant households surpasses by a long stretch that of local households, generating a new divide between those who have successfully 'placed' a family member in Europe and those who have not. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the thousands of poor Arab immigrants who have settled in the region to work in the

³² For an account of pre-colonial political structures in the Rif, see Seddon 1971 and 1972, and for a detailed account of the Riffian status system and how it conjoins with honour and political power in the figure of the *amghar* ('big man') see Jamous 1981.

³³ Large numbers of households in the region depend on the financial help derived from emigration. In the province of Nador, over half of all households have at least one member who has migrated abroad. Migration has also become one of the main goals of the Riffian youth, faced with high rates of unemployment at home and attracted by the extravagant displays of wealth staged by returning emigrants in the yearly visit to their homeland.

construction section (that is, building the emigrants' new houses) or as couriers for professional smugglers.

Emigrant remittances have also served to exacerbate competitive displays of wealth.³⁴ Having little else to do during their lengthy visits to the homeland, the young returnees stroll around showing off their newest electronic gadgets, cars and fashionable clothes, in a contest that confronts migrants with one another before the gaze of local residents. In this contest, European objects and first-hand knowledge of the 'European way of life' are crucial signs of an 'emigrant identity' carefully built up during the year for its public display over the summer months. In some ways, the aggressive consumption displays of Riffian emigrants resemble those put forward in Brazzaville by the Congolese *sapeurs* (see Friedman 2002). A Congolese, writes Friedman (2002: 236), 'can identify everyone's social rank in a crowd by their outward appearance.' The *sapeurs* occupy a special place in this hierarchy; they progress through a system of status which begins with the purchase of European 'ready-to-wear' imports and culminates in regular trips to Europe to acquire Parisian and Italian *haute couture* clothes to display them, back in Brazzaville, in a public performance known as the *danse des griffes* (the dance of the labels). For this performance, designer labels are sewn on to the jacket lapel, so that others can see them. Riffian emigrants do not go take their displays that far³⁵, but the ostentatious displays of Western paraphernalia along Nador's seaside promenade during the summer months can certainly be seen as a variant of the *sapeurs'* *danse des griffes*, designed for the gaze of the observer as a means to reassert one's status.

This is, of course, an instance of a much wider phenomenon. Writing on Damascene elites, for example, Christa Salamandra (2004) argues that, with economic

³⁴ According to Jamous (1981), the dialectic of challenge and riposte in the pre-colonial Rif was based on oratory battles, murder *and* competitive displays of wealth. The cash inflow derived from emigration did not generate a new kind of social contest; rather, it intensified one that was already in existence.

³⁵ According to Friedman, in the Congolese context 'clothes are the immediate expression of the degree of life-force possessed by a person' (2002: 237). Consumption of Western attires here must be understood as part of a wider strategy of prestige accumulation 'whereby the maintenance and accumulation of self are dependent upon access to external life-force coming from the gods, from ancestors (also gods) and from Europe, the 'heavenly' source of such force' (ibid. 239). There are therefore important differences between the role that consumption of Western objects plays in Nador and in Brazzaville.

liberalisation, social identities were increasingly negotiated and contested through competitive consumption and display and the ability to purchase expensive consumer goods became an important mark of elite status. In a city like Damascus, where — despite the rhetoric of a close-knit, ‘small town’ society— people often do *not* know one another, consumption displays take on a particular significance:

Information networks are vast; social networks are much smaller. Because people may not know one another personally, may only know about one another, seeing and perceiving others become significant. Here consumption comes into play. Elite names remain elite, and new names become elite through public displays of wealth (ibid. 50).

The urban and demographic growth of Nador and the yearly return of thousands of young emigrants who do not generally know one another have generated a similar kind of dynamics. But while Damascene elites are tightly integrated into the social fabric of the city, Riffian emigrants use Nador as merely a stage for display. In this, they are not very different from what Veblen (1899) described as the modern ‘leisure class’.³⁶ Expensive cars, designer clothes, American cigarettes, sport shoes, high-tech gadgets and even the occasional pit-bull terrier have become new signs of prestige embraced by migrants and locals alike, and this, in turn, has given rise to a new form of aesthetic valuation based on the debasement of the local in favour of the foreign. As McMurray put it,

“Local” becomes synonymous with cheap, mundane, poorly made, unimportant. Stylistic innovation gets determined “out there” somewhere. Desire tilts more and more towards the fetishistic consumption of signs of foreignness (2001: 144).

Foreign goods smuggled in from Melilla flood the Nadori markets every week to satisfy a rising demand for Western-like paraphernalia. That most of these products were

³⁶ Based on a Marxist framework, Veblen argued that there was a distinction to be made between industry as a mode of production and business as a parasitic profit-making mechanism for what he termed ‘the leisure class’. Through conspicuous consumption and through the purchase of goods of low use-value but high symbolic value, the leisure class established its social status without contributing in any way to the productive activity of society. Interestingly, this perspective was later applied to tourism by MacCannell (1999 [1976]), who argued that the tourist could be considered as a new form of ‘leisure class’.

actually made in China seems to matter little; it is their Western appearance that makes them valuable. Here, therefore, what matters is not ‘the tourist gaze’ upon local culture (Urry 1990), but the local gaze upon ‘the tourists’. It is before this local gaze that migrants reveal their connections to the outside world and that such connections become a marker of status and prestige.

The contrast between ‘local’ and ‘foreign’ relies on a more fundamental opposition between ‘the rural’ and ‘the modern’. The terms used to draw this contrast are ‘*campo*’ (Sp. literally, countryside, or the Moroccan Arabic term ‘*aroubi /ya*’, with the same meaning) and ‘*moderno*’ (Sp. modern).³⁷ The former is associated with the ‘traditional’ ways of the countryside, while the latter refers to what is perceived as a European or Western style. As elsewhere in Morocco, in Nador the term ‘*aroubi*’ has strongly negative connotations.³⁸ It is associated with a lack of dexterity in the ways of the urban elite, a poor education and a lack of fluency in both classical and Moroccan Arabic. People who are ‘*aroubi*’ are deemed uncivilised, crude and unsophisticated; they are what the English would call a ‘country bumpkin’. McMurray noted the importance of this term in the Nadori context during his fieldwork in the mid-1980s:

Having good versus bad taste in matters of home décor, automobile choice, house style, clothing, etc., rests on a Nadori resident’s ability to discern what is considered refined and what is rustic (‘*aroubi*’) and then not mixing the two (2001: 65).

³⁷ In the Rif, the concept of modernity exists only as an adjective; things are (or are not) modern. Four features identify objects and traits defined as ‘modern’: they are foreign (or similar to foreign models), they are new, they stand in direct opposition to Riffian ‘traditions’ and they are, generally speaking, positively valued. The ‘modern’ objects par excellence are those brought back, either as gifts or as personal goods, by Riffian emigrants.

³⁸ Newcomb, for example, reports that in Fes shantytown residents are considered ‘*aroubi*’. ‘Calling someone a’rubi’ she writes, ‘is an insult, and the term connotes country people who fail to understand civilised urban ways’ (2004: 98).

Interestingly, the contrast drawn at that time was one between the rural ways of Nadori emigrants and the refinement of an urbane, educated and, more importantly, *local* elite. Today, the equation has been reversed, and it is the ‘modern’ taste of emigrants that is contrasted to the ‘rural’ ways of those left behind.³⁹

Furniture, cars and clothes were regularly submitted to a new form of aesthetic valuation based on the contrast between rural and modern. On one occasion, for example, fifteen-year-old Salima bought me a ‘traditional’ Riffian dress (*llavador*) in the market. She had bought the same dress for herself in a shade of turquoise. When we showed the two new dresses to her mother, she commented dismissively that she did not like the colour Salima had chosen for my dress. ‘It’s not a modern colour, like your turquoise’, she said, ‘it is a *campo* colour!’ Salima took offence at her mother’s remark, and spent ten minutes trying to convince her that she was wrong, that bright orange ‘is *not* a “rural” colour, it is a *modern* colour!’ This contrast had a way of reappearing under different guises. When I told my host family in the city that I had a cat at home, they were quick to ask whether it was a longhaired cat. When I answered he was simply a tabby cat, they looked disappointed; ‘So it’s just a normal cat, not a *European* cat! They have longhaired cats in Europe, you know?’ Even cats, it seemed, could be second-class citizens.

The appeal that all things ‘modern’ hold for Riffians is firmly grounded in an idealised image of the West imported through emigration. The narratives of emigrants, who have a vested interest in sustaining their newly-acquired position of privilege as the carriers of ‘modernity’, contribute to this image. The relationship with emigrants, however, and with the changes brought about through emigration and urbanisation, is fraught with ambivalence. Whatever the new forms of aesthetic valuation, ethical valuation has not changed. The assimilation of supposedly Western ways typically

³⁹ It is important to note that there remains a relatively small, educated elite of Nadoris who continue to function according to the parameters described by McMurray. The contrast between the modern and the rural, however, overshadows that formerly drawn between urban elites and people from the countryside, and systems of valuation have been transformed by the ostentatious consumption practices of emigrant elites. McMurray already foresaw the change in dominant values when he wrote that ‘a university degree now weighs less on the marriageability scale ... Instead, wealth is displayed in elite hotels, expensive restaurants, and at engagement parties, weddings, funerals and other rite of passage events’ (2001: 154).

displayed by emigrants is seen as an intrusion on the Riffian moral order, and within the moral domain, 'the modern' and 'the foreign' acquire negative connotations. The source of prestige is therefore simultaneously a source of defilement, and the traditions of the homeland both a manifestation of backwardness and a sign of identity. In this dialectical relationship, where ideas about the authentic nature of Riffian identity are held up against supposedly Western practices, adhering to the Riffian traditional ways is both a cause of pride and a source of embarrassment. Before turning to this ambivalence, however, a few words are necessary to address the Riffian moral order.

4.4 Defining the moral order: *hashooma* and *nīshān*

Ethnographic accounts of personhood in the Muslim world highlight two fundamental concepts, '*aql* and *nafs*'.⁴⁰ Roughly speaking, '*aql*' can be defined as composure, sensibility and wisdom; it is the domain of reason. *Nafs*, by contrast, implies passion, vitality and impulse. The cultivation of '*aql*' is required in order to subordinate the impulses of *nafs* and give reason and purpose to otherwise unharnessed passions. Control of one's affections and impulses and self-restraint in one's speech and actions are the fundamental attributes of the moral person. Discipline and reason are the means by which such ends are met. These principles are crucial to understand, in the Moroccan case, the full range of meanings of the word *nīshān*.

Nīshān is an adjective that literally means 'straight' (as in without a curve or bend). In everyday usage, the term can also mean 'true'. For instance, when in doubt about the veracity of a statement, Riffians will ask '*nīshān?*', to which one must reply: '*nīshān!*'. This is, of course, no coincidence, for it is common to talk about lying as 'bending words'. Being 'straight', consequently, is synonymous with being truthful. Like the English 'straight', however, *nīshān* also denotes someone who is 'not shifty'; that is, someone honest, trustworthy and reliable. During the course of the local electoral campaign in Nador, for instance, groups of young party members walked the

⁴⁰ For Afghanistan, see Anderson 1985; for Egypt, Abu-Lughod 1999 (1986); for Indonesia, Siegel 1969; for Morocco, Rosen 1984 and Eickelman 1976.

streets of the old Spanish quarter hoping to recruit new voters to the cry of ‘*nīshān!*’ This slogan was a means to claim that, unlike other political groups, this party was committed to truthfulness and honesty. Riffians often say of themselves that they are *nīshān*, and use the term to set themselves apart from Moroccan Arabs. In this context, *nīshān* denotes not only honesty or reliability, but a particular attitude which can be described as moral uprightness. It is, as we shall see, a quality of the person.

A term key to understand the language and practice of public morality, by contrast, is *hashooma*. This can be translated as shameful and/or embarrassing, and is applied to actions or situations in which someone shows himself in need or at fault before others. Grammatically, it is used as an interjection. One’s attention may be directed, for instance, to a young girl dressed in a non-traditional fashion (combining, for instance, a *hijab* with a pair of tight jeans), and someone will say: ‘*hashooma!*’ One rapidly learns that *hashooma* is used as an expression to condemn or reprove actions or attitudes deemed shameful.⁴¹ Other kinds of behaviour considered *hashooma* include drinking alcohol or being drunk in public, showing disrespect for one’s elders or swearing and using bad words. A full mastery of the concept, however, involves a multitude of different and subtler uses. Derived from the classical Arabic *hashama*⁴², *hashooma* is ambivalent in the same way as the English ‘shame’ or the Spanish *vergüenza*. In some contexts, it can mean modesty and consciousness of something dishonouring; in others, disgrace and loss of reputation. Roots of opposing meanings are

⁴¹ It has been common in the anthropology of the Mediterranean and the Middle East to postulate the pair honour and shame as a defining feature of social relations. In some instances, shame is taken to be the opposite of honour; in others, its feminine counterpart. By and large, however, they are conceived as complementary (for the classical literature on the subject see, for example, Caro Baroja 1965; Peristiany 1965; Gilmore 1987). This conception has come under criticism by a number of scholars —see, particularly, the work of Herzfeld (1980) and Wikan (1984)—, who have suggested that the correlation between honour and shame be not taken for granted. In a rather simplistic formulation, for instance, the *Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, under the entry ‘honour and shame’, states that ‘shame is an index of female reputation, just as honour is an index of male’ (Mitchell 2002). In the Rif, Crivello takes a similar approach to the question, arguing that shame ‘is localised in and on – and is a practice of – the female body’ (2008: 45). In fact, as Wikan (1984) argues, not only are ‘honour’ and ‘shame’ not equivalent in meaning, but they are also different in usage, and, in some cases it is shame, rather than honour, that dominates the politics of social interaction in everyday life. Such is the case with the Moroccan term ‘*hashooma*’.

⁴² In classical Arabic *hashama* is used to refer to feelings of modesty, shame and shyness. In its broadest sense, it means propriety. In classical Arabic, however, the equation between disgrace and a sense of shame, typical of the Spanish *vergüenza* and present also in the different applications of the root *H-sh-m* in Moroccan dialect is not present.

particularly numerous in Arabic, and have been the subject of works by many Arabic scholars, most notably the tenth-century scholar Abu Bahr al-Anbari; this is the case with the root *H-sh-m* which, in its nominal form (*hashooma*), refers to something dishonourable or inappropriate, while in its verbal and adjectival form (*hashama* and *hashoomi*) it refers precisely to the opposite, that is, to the act of showing modesty, shyness and *pudeur*.⁴³ Ultimately, the first relates to situations of exposure, while the second entails a virtuous form of concealment; these are two sides of the same coin.

Shame is a public matter. To protect one's reputation one must not simply avoid inappropriate exposure, but must do so publicly. Visibility is a crucial aspect of the practice of the moral code, and knowing what to show and what to hide, when and before whom is an indispensable skill in the maintenance of one's reputation. (The connection between shame and social respectability is evident in the numerous situations where shame appears as contagious). This is what I call the logic of concealment and exposure. Ideally, concealment—in the form of self-restraint, discretion and modesty—is considered a virtue. It signifies the triumph of reason and discipline over passion and impulse, of *'aql* over *nafs*. For women, this entails dressing and behaving modestly and, more generally, displaying shyness and bashfulness (in other words, being *hashoomiya*). For men, it involves showing rectitude, discretion and self-control. Here, Jamous' (1981) account of 'the man of honour' (*ariaz* in Tarifit) amongst the Iqar'iyyen (that is, the tribes of the region surrounding Melilla) is pertinent. The man of honour, he writes,

ought to be humble and modest. He should not boast. If others do so for him, he should act as if it does not concern him. He will let "the ignorant ones" (the *ibuhariyen*), those who are irresponsible, speak without

⁴³ The phenomenon by which one of the meanings of a polysemic word is in some respect the opposite of another (known in linguistics as enantiosemy) has long been the subject of linguistic and philosophical thought. Perhaps the most controversial work in this area was that of Carl Abel, recovered by Freud (1957 [1910]) in his essay on 'The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words'. Abel argued that our concepts arise out of comparison and each concept is thus inextricably linked to its opposite. His theory that in the early stages of language words comprised both themselves and their opposites was heavily criticised by later scholars (eg. Benveniste 1971). However, there is something to the idea that a concept is linked to, and given meaning by, its opposite and that this, too, should leave a trace in language. As Abel put it: 'The word which originally united the conception of "strong" and "weak", in truth meant neither 'strong' nor 'weak,' but the relation of both, and the difference between both, which created both' (cited in Gordis 1938: 271).

responding, so as not to waste his breath. This man, this *ariaz*, must exercise self-control and weigh each word he utters ... His discourse is precise, concise and delivered with serenity and measure (1981: 69-70, my translation).⁴⁴

Precisely because the key problem is not *fault* but *exposure*, exposing someone else is as shameful as exposing oneself. The guiding principle here is that certain unwelcome truths are better kept hidden.⁴⁵ A story told to me by a Riffian man in Melilla reveals the extent of this moral imperative:

A man gathers with his friends at the café. His friends talk about their wives, and one by one they tell each other about the times when they had to hit them because they had misbehaved. When his turn comes, he confesses that he has never hit his wife, for he never had a reason to. His friends scold him, and tell him he must provoke her into doing something wrong, so that he can hit her. The man returns home, and decides to try his wife. When he returns from the market carrying all the purchased goods on the back of his donkey, instead of pulling the animal into the patio by the reins, he tries to push him backwards. This being a silly thing to do, he thinks that his wife will say something disrespectful to him, thus giving him a reason to reprimand her. The wife looks at him, surprised, but keeps silent, grabs the animal from behind and pulls it through. Thus, once again, he finds himself without a good reason to hit her.

By concealing her husband's error and pretending that nothing was wrong, his wife had displayed due deference and respect. Pointing out his mistake would have put *her* at shame. This is an instance of a general pattern. As Gilsenan (2000 [1982]: 171) argues for North Lebanon, 'just as an insult can be negated or avoided if one can affect not to "see" it and if anyone else present at the time is also willing to go along, so potentially problematic situations can be neutralized by not "seeing"'.⁴⁶

This 'not seeing' is, in fact, a critical element in the logic of concealment and exposure. Dangerous situations are averted by 'not seeing', while 'being seen' carries

⁴⁴ Along the same lines, Bourdieu (1965: 210-211) writes of the Algerian Kabyle that 'the man who, incapable of preserving his dignity, grows impatient or angry, speaks at random or laughs without reason, is precipitate or uncontrolled, acts without thinking, throws his weight about, shouts, vociferates, in short, abandons himself to his first impulse, such a man is unfaithful to himself, and falls short of the ideals of dignity and distinction, of modesty and shame'. The passage could be applied *verbatim* to the eastern Rif.

⁴⁵ Note the paradox: while being morally virtuous requires the concealment of faults and unwanted truths, the term to denote that someone is indeed virtuous literally means 'truthful'. Partly, this is because, ideally, a *nīshān* person has nothing to hide. In practice, as discussed earlier, this is hardly ever the case.

important risks. Women, who are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of exposure, learn how to avoid 'being seen' in public —by veiling, dressing modestly and avoiding unnecessary contact with non-family male members.⁴⁶ Similarly, men are taught to leave the house when female guests are present and avert their gaze when circumstances demand it.⁴⁷ As Anderson writes for Afghanistan,

When a man and woman encounter each other outside the *kor* [domestic unit], restraint applies equally to both, or more precisely to their interaction, and in parallel fashions. In such encounters, a man will at the very least avert his gaze and "not notice" a woman (Anderson 1982: 402).

Anderson's 'not noticing' and Gilsenan's 'not seeing' are variations on the same theme.

In the Rif, declining to see is an act of deference due only to those worthy of it, that is, to those who do not willingly expose themselves. A man will never, under any circumstances, gaze or speak to a woman on the street if a man is accompanying her. But a woman or group of women walking the streets alone, particularly beyond the limits of her neighbourhood, may face a different treatment.⁴⁸ Indeed, public scrutiny is the final guarantor of this system, for, ultimately, it is only because everything is in

⁴⁶ However, it is important to note that covering the body is by no means a moral imperative exclusive to women. Riffian men always wear long trousers and shirts, occasionally covering their whole body with the male 'version' of the traditional *jellaba*. As Murphy (1964) has argued for the Tuareg, the veil (worn by men) can be seen as introducing a form of social distance that, far from constraining social interaction, facilitates it by reducing the dangers intrinsic to social proximity. Along the same lines, Anderson (1982) has argued that the female veil in Afghanistan constitutes a form of avoidance and distance between men and women which is in fact mutual. Rather than separating men and women, such techniques of symbolic separation serve to bring them together by regulating the conditions under which contact can take place without threatening the social and moral order.

⁴⁷ Generally speaking, private spaces are associated with —and inhabited by— women, while public spaces constitute the domain of men. Men's access to the private space and women's access to the public space are regulated by a set of rules that are learned at an early age. Children are taught that men who spend too much time in the house during daytime are suspect, while women who spend time outside without a 'good' reason are morally dubious. The regulation of space reflects this division: indoors, women take precedence over men; outdoors, men take precedence over women. In the same way that men regulate the family's excursions into the public sphere, women have control over access to the private domain and make decisions over hosting guests.

⁴⁸ Brothers have a very important role in this regard, one of their obligations being to accompany their younger sisters whenever they need to leave the house to run errands, and protect their reputation against potential threats from other men. Husbands and fathers may play the same role. When women (particularly young women) walk around without the company of a male member of the family, it is assumed that no respect is demanded and therefore no respect is owed. Thus, the same brothers who go out of their way to protect their sisters in the street will hiss at unaccompanied girls when they are on their own.

sight that one can choose ‘not to see’. It is the gaze of the community that ensures that shameful deeds do not go unsanctioned.⁴⁹ Within this system, the relationship with neighbours, guests and extended family is structurally ambiguous; on the one hand, the members’ of one’s inner social circle are allies against the outside world; on the other, they are the judges of one’s moral performance. It is before them that one must uphold the moral ideals described above, for it is in their hands to grant or withdraw respectability.

While shame is seen as a public matter, virtue is *conceived* as a personal, private domain. As in much of the Middle East and North Africa, the ideal of moral virtue encompasses a wide range of attitudes and dispositions which are seen as integral to the constitution of personhood. A person may fall out of grace circumstantially, but a consistently immoral person is not a fully developed moral being.⁵⁰ In this regard, moral attitudes and dispositions are not considered to be innate or ‘natural’ qualities. Rather, they are acquired through a process of learning that starts in early childhood and culminates past youth. Becoming a moral person is therefore conceived of as a process of socialisation, a process which involves the assimilation and incorporation of the implicit and explicit rules of appropriate moral comportment which regulate social practice and interaction. The stoic acceptance of suffering, whether emotional or physical, the mastery of needs, and the control over anger and other forms of passionate sentiment are an integral part of what is entailed in being a moral, and thus fully

⁴⁹ ‘People’s talk’, in this regard, is a much feared institution. In regards to the practice of morality, and particularly to attributions of shame, people’s talk may well be seen as ‘a formidable institution’ (Wikan 1984: 636); one which serves to produce a very particular category of people, shameful people. As Riffians often said to me as a warning in reference to morally sensitive situations, ‘*la gente habla*’ (people talk). The connection between shame and reputation is obviously mediated by public opinion, and anxiety over the possibility of gossip and rumour is ubiquitous, as Crivello (2008) has also noted for the Central Rif. Because respectability is only obtained through and in the eyes of others, the fear of collective reprobation becomes the most effective mechanism to enforce compliance with the rules of conduct dictated by the system of values. Indeed, the possibility of ‘shame by association’ often made people wary of being seen in public with anyone of a morally dubious reputation.

⁵⁰ As Schielke (2009: 25) has argued, morality should not be analysed exclusively as a set of codes, commands and prohibitions, but also as the cultivation of virtues ‘with the aim of developing a virtuous self’; a process often fraught with ambivalence and fragmentation.

developed, person.⁵¹ These virtues configure an ideal of personhood which applies equally to men and to women, and which becomes flexible only where children (i.e. not fully socialised people) are concerned.⁵²

In the Rif, some of the most important ideas that come into play in the configuration of the morally virtuous person are condensed in the term *nīshān*. The word is found in classical Arabic. Etymologically, however, the word has its roots in Sanskrit, meaning ‘taking good aim in shooting’.⁵³ This is also the meaning given by a Tarifit-Spanish dictionary written in the early twentieth century, where it is specified that *nīshān* also refers to the direction of aiming (Ibáñez Robledo and Sarrionandia 2007 [1944]). In his *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (1994) Hans Wehr has it as ‘goal, aim’. This explains the first meaning of *nīshān* as straight. As we have seen, ‘straight’, in turn, explains the second meaning of *nīshān* (true: where words are ‘not bent’). The Classical Arabic word, however, might shed some light on the third sense in which *nīshān* is used, that of a reliable and morally upright person. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ‘*nīshān*’ was a decoration bestowed by the Sultan, a badge of honour rewarding prowess and ‘determining status in society’.⁵⁴ It is easy to see how over time it could be used simply to refer to those who are worthy of such decoration.

⁵¹ Endurance of pain is a crucial virtue of the moral person, as are strength and resistance to hardship. As Meneley (1996: 162) has noted regarding Yemen, submitting the body to the will through fasting and praying is an essential part of being a respectable and responsible member of the community and, to that extent, religion plays an important role. The control of bodily functions and bodily movement through religious ritual, however, is representative of a larger scheme, one in which the mastery of emotions determines moral worth.

⁵² As Abu-Lughod (1999 [1986]: 90-91) notes, tolerance for transgressions of the moral code is considerably higher for men under forty. Once a man has reached that age, he is considered a fully responsible member of the community and his behaviour is subject to the strictest scrutiny.

⁵³ The following extract from an Indian newspaper provides a useful example of the original meaning of *nīshān*: ‘The sepoy used to assemble at the present-day All India Radio (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) site, which was more of a hillock at that point of time, and engage themselves in the act of taking aim or practicing their shooting skills. Gradually, it is believed that this very act of the sepoy of “taking aim”, which implies nishan in Hindi, got changed to “chan” and subsequently to “Chanmari” or “Chandmari” by mere slip of tongue with vigorous repetition of the word nishan itself.’ (The Assam Tribune, 11 July 2009, available online at: <http://www.assamtribune.com/jul1109/horizon.html>).

⁵⁴ The Encyclopaedia’s entry reads: ‘Nishan. (p.), means a sign, banner, seal (and hence letter of a prince), or order/decoration. As a loanword in Ottoman Turkish, it basically denoted a sign or mark and also designated the sultan’s signature ... later [it referred to] decorations bestowed by the sultan. In 19th and 20th century literary Arabic, *nīshān* (also *nīshān*), similarly a loanword, had essentially the same connotations’. For the full entry see Landau and Pellat (2011).

The word *nīshān*, however, invokes a multitude of meanings which cannot be conveyed by simply translating it as honour or honourable. For instance, the father of one of my host families would not allow his daughters to go to the city without their brothers. When I asked my ‘sisters’ about this, they told me that their father was ‘very *nīshān*’; he knew men in the city often behave in inappropriate ways and did not want his daughters to be unprotected. My young friend Taufiq once told me a story which is also illustrative of this:

There were once two young girlfriends who lived in Selouane. They both had boyfriends, but kept it secret from their families, as many young girls in the Rif do.⁵⁵ One of the girls had a key to her aunt’s empty house.⁵⁶ One night, the two girls decided to spend the night with their boyfriends using the girl’s aunt’s house. Both of them told her parents that they would be staying at the other girl’s house. In the early morning, a neighbour woke up for *al-fajr* prayer (the prayer of dawn). He saw light in a house he knew to be empty, and he rapidly called his neighbour and friend, the girl’s father, for he knew it was his sister’s house. The father, thinking it was a thief, called on some of his neighbours for help. All the men gathered, armed with sticks, and marched towards the invaded house. When they arrived, the man found his daughter with her friend and their boyfriends.⁵⁷

Taufiq interrupts the story here, to offer his comments on the situation: ‘He was destroyed’, he says,

Besides, he was a very religious man. Very *nīshān*! He was known for having educated his children very well. And all the neighbours were there, and they saw! So you can imagine how he felt.

⁵⁵ There is no word for boyfriend or girlfriend in either Moroccan Arabic or Tarifit. This reflects the common attitude towards pre-marital relationships. Two words are used to denote a relationship of such a kind in the eastern Rif: the Spanish *novio/novia* (boyfriend/girlfriend), and the Arabic for fiancée (*khatib/khatiba*).

⁵⁶ This is a very common practice in Morocco. Young people will often use a relative’s empty house to spend time alone or with friends. This is considerably more common amongst men, and though Taufiq never told me, there was probably a reason why this girl kept a key to her aunt’s house. Perhaps she was asked to keep the house in order, or perhaps she went to school nearby, or some other reason beyond simply leisure.

⁵⁷ This is a common theme in popular discourse. Accusations of sexual misbehaviour amongst young Nadori girls are frequent and people often remark that young girls in Nador lead a double life; while on the outside they appear to be very *nīshān*, behind the curtains, I was told, they are of the worst kind. Women had their own version of these stories. In their narratives, it was men, and particularly husbands, who turned out to be untrustworthy. As we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, mistrust played a crucial role in shaping social relations at various different levels.

Whatever the father may have done to restore the honour of his family *après coup*, and whatever the disgrace of the event itself, he was *nīshān* for having educated his children according to the ‘traditional way’.

Unlike honour, therefore, being *nīshān* is not an external attribute that can be earned or lost throughout life. Rather, it is an attitude, an outlook on life, and a way of being and interacting with others. Ultimately, a *nīshān* person is reliable *precisely* because he has mastered the necessary self-restraint and severity of manner to earn the respect of other members of the community and not to behave shamefully. When Riffians say that they are *nīshān*, therefore, and use this term to set themselves apart from Arabs, they are invoking a strict adherence to the principles of morality outlined earlier. They are also drawing on a widely held image of Riffians as a traditional, reserved and somewhat dangerous people, an image which is part of collective Moroccan imagery.⁵⁸ More importantly, however, they are asserting their integrity, both as individuals and as a community, and their commitment to defend a moral and social order seen as under threat. Being *nīshān* is thus more than simply being straight; as Crawford (2008: 29) wrote of Berbers in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, ‘to be *nīshān* is to be —notably and in the best sense— human; it is to behave humanely’.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The warning against Riffians in general, and against Nador in particular, is a recurrent theme in the repertoire of regional stereotypes. According to McMurray (2001: 69), an Arabic saying in Morocco categorises Moroccan Berbers in the following way: the Middle Atlas Berbers are the *šluh al-haz* (Berbers of shame), the Soussi Berbers of the Anti-Atlas region are the *šluh al-kinz* (Berbers of treasure), and the Berbers of the Rif are the *šluh al-‘az* (Berbers of honour). The stereotype of Riffians as a paradigm of honour and tradition is maintained both by Moroccan Arabs and by Riffians themselves, but while the former read it as an indication of backwardness and potential hostility, the latter consider it a sign of honesty and moral righteousness.

⁵⁹ Crawford (2008) defines *nīshān* as the common word ‘for trustworthy, honest or reliable’. The emphasis in his account is on the usage of *nīshān* to denote honesty and he makes an explicit link between *nīshānness* and absence of corruption. He notes that one of his informants claimed that, in fact, the only fully *nīshān* person is the King, because there is no one above him to ‘eat’ him; because he owes nothing to anyone, he is exempt from entering the game of corruption which organises political action in Morocco (ibid. 127).

4.5 The dangers of modernity: a moral order under threat

The moral code informs thought and action, and constitutes the basis on which social relations are formed, maintained or severed. Familiarity with rules of appropriate comportment determines perceptions of belonging to the Riffian community, and dexterity in their application ensures respectability and social status within it. Not coincidentally, Riffians are known across Morocco as the ‘Berbers of honour’. Backed by a long history of resistance to Arab rule which earned Berber regions in the country the epithet of the ‘land of dissidence’, the image of Riffians as an honourable and fearsome people is part of the collective Moroccan imagery. Riffians take pride in this image, and never tire of saying that they are, indeed, very *nīshān*.

The idealised image of the Rif as a moral community relies on two forms of narrative: the first is evocation of an idyllic, quasi-mythical past invariably perceived as in conflict with ‘modern’ times; the second is the contrast drawn between life in the village and life in the city, a contrast which informs —and is informed by— a more general opposition between the Rif and ‘the outside world’. The two are intimately connected; the relationship between past and present is inscribed spatially as a relationship between the rural homeland and the city in a narrative field clearly marked by the effects of emigration. The implication in these narratives is clear: in another place, at a different time, the world was in order and things made sense. Consider for example the following remark made by Rachida, a Nadori woman in her late forties who had spent part of her youth in Spain:

In Nador, the ancients [Sp. *los antiguos*] used to have old wooden doors in their houses. The doors had small gaps in them, because it was old wood. But back then, the men always covered those small cracks with pieces of cloth, so that the women could not see the street. Can you imagine? The ancients used to say that that a woman should only leave the house three times throughout her life: when she is born, when she gets married, and when she dies.⁶⁰ But now, you see, now women are always in the street.

⁶⁰ In fact, this is a modified version of a Spanish proverb: ‘*En la vida la mujer, tres salidas ha de hazer: bautismo, casamiento y sepultura*’, literally ‘a woman is to be from (leave) her house three times: when she is christened, married and buried’(see Bland 1814: 73; Wade 1824: 108). Interestingly, in Rachida’s account baptism is replaced by birth. The sense is preserved because the word ‘*salir*’, which literally means ‘to exit’, ‘leave’ or ‘get out’, can also be used in reference to the body.

Rachida was amused by the contrast, but many others looked back at that ‘mythical time’ of seclusion and strict morality with nostalgia.

Young women dressed in a fully ‘modern’ style (tight jeans, no headscarf, perhaps wearing lipstick or a revealing blouse) were ostracised by all ‘respectable’ members of the community, and had to face stares, whispers and rumours wherever they went. It was in reference to these young women migrants, most of whom had in fact grown up in Europe, that I first learned the word *hashooma*. By fully embracing the ways of ‘the outside world’, they had cut themselves off from the Riffian community. Paradoxically, the harshest judgments came from male migrants, who were as obsessed with the reputation of female relatives as careless towards that of other women. The same young man who would try to persuade his sister to wear the veil and look down with contempt at women wearing bathing suits at the beach—as opposed to swimming fully clothed—would get together with his friends in the evenings and drive around hissing at girls. Attitudes towards female migrants, however, contrast radically with attitudes towards young male emigrants, whose behaviour was often excused as the natural irreverence and audacity that comes with youth. The rationale was clear: the young female migrants deserved it for not respecting the code of morality.

The increased visibility of women in public spaces is presented as the paradigmatic symptom of a decadent, morally corrupt society. The lyrics of a Riffian pop song current in Nador at the time of my fieldwork illustrate this point well. The song was written after the promulgation of a new family law (*moudawana*)⁶¹ which granted further rights to Moroccan women.

Women have become crazy
and they now have power because of the *moudawana*.
Now men are scared of their wives because of the *moudawana*.
The men see but they don’t do anything.
The women reprimand/punish the men.

⁶¹ *Moudawana* is the name by which the ‘personal status code’ (also known as the family law) is known in Morocco. Morocco uses a dual system of governance; the first is the constitutional code, which is used for the regulation of public space. In contrast, the *moudawana* operates in the domestic domain, regulating marriage, divorce, parentage and child custody and inheritance. Originally based on Islamic law, the family code was revised in 2004 to grant further rights to women. The new code raised the minimum legal age of marriage to eighteen and granted women rights in the negotiation of marriage contracts and equal rights to petition for a divorce.

Now the men just see but they cannot talk.
 Keep away the women!
 Now you see a beautiful girl, but you marry her today
 and tomorrow she asks you for a divorce and she takes all your money.
 Now the women don't really 'shame' [are ashamed/embarrassed/modest]
 like before; I tell you the truth [*nīshān*].
 Now the woman goes shopping alone,
 while the man is at home sleeping and wakes up later.
 She goes, she goes.
 I am not scared to sing this song, it is normal;
 I am *nīshān* and I am not ashamed to say this.

This mythical image of the past implied in the song can be seen as a form of what Herzfeld (2005: 147) has termed 'structural nostalgia', that is, the 'collective representation of an edenic order—a time before time—in which the balanced perfection of social relations has not yet suffered the decay that affects everything human'. In these representations, unwanted 'truths' are conceived as a feature of the present, far removed from the repository of true identity and authenticity, always located in a timeless past. Historical facts have no place here; little does it matter that the confinement of women to the house that Rachida attributed to 'the ancients' is in fact a relatively recent phenomenon, traceable to the urbanisation of Nador during the second half of the twentieth century.⁶²

Until very recently, the province of Nador was, unofficially, a 'dry' province.⁶³ Alcohol could only be purchased at one of the main hotels in Nador city, a disreputable place situated in the centre of town and well known for prostitution; a place for

⁶² Segregation between the sexes has long been a feature of Riffian society. In the pre-colonial Rif, however, segregation between men and women did not necessarily involved seclusion in the house. It is important to emphasise, therefore, that although this is presented as a long-standing tradition, the seclusion of women in the house is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although the house has traditionally been associated with the feminine domain, for example, it is well known that in rural areas women regularly left the house in groups to fetch water from the well, wash their clothes or take the cattle to the field (Cammaert 1998). The process of urbanisation that followed the Spanish Protectorate changed the ways in which segregation was implemented. A distinction must therefore be made between segregation (which was present in rural areas too) and seclusion. Interestingly, in the mid-1980s McMurray (2001) tells us that when he asked informants about seclusion practices they replied that 'no one could be trusted in the city'. No one knew their neighbours and they did not want to give cause for gossip. This, he says, was a marker of status influenced by migrants, who seemed more concerned with female propriety than the locals themselves (ibid. 69-70).

⁶³ This changed with the establishment of the first large commercial store (a branch of a national chain of supermarkets) in the outskirts of the city in 2009. The establishment of this supermarket was, in fact, considerably controversial precisely because it sold alcohol.

foreigners, where no Riffian worthy of the name would set foot. Thirteen kilometres away, in Melilla, Moroccan prostitutes walk the streets every night, and alcohol is available in every bar. Riffians know this all too well and are extremely cautious of allowing female relatives to travel to the enclave without appropriate company. After all, everybody knows that young Nadori men (especially emigrants) travel to Melilla at the weekends to meet with their friends and go out in the evenings. Beyond the reach of public scrutiny, they can drink, dance and talk to girls freely; as long as it is not seen, it might as well not have happened. It is precisely this ‘displacement’ of transgression, and its confinement to an enclosed, foreign space, that allows Riffians to maintain the idealised vision of a morally impeccable society at home, a theme that runs deep through Riffian discourses of identity.⁶⁴ As Salamandra puts it in the case of Syria, ‘the preference for the imagined idea, rather than the reality of a past way of life, is a common feature of nostalgic expression’ (2004: 77).⁶⁵

A salient theme in these narratives is the opposition between life in the village and life in the city. The anonymity of urban spaces appears as a constant threat to the maintenance of moral order, while rural customs, practices and attitudes are perceived as the true repository of Riffian identity. The rapid urbanisation of the region —driven, it is worth recalling, by emigration— has left a strong imprint in the Riffian imagination. Emigration and urbanisation are merged in accounts that portray the city as a space of danger and anomie.⁶⁶ The contrast is one between a close-knit, moral community where neighbours look after one another and a city full of strangers with different and conflicting interests. On one occasion, for instance, as I was having coffee with my landlady and some neighbours, a Riffian man drove past and greeted me.

⁶⁴ It is worth noting, for example, that Moroccan prostitutes working in Melilla cater almost exclusively for a Riffian clientele (mainly Melillan Riffians, but also Nadoris).

⁶⁵ Salamandra is writing about narratives of nostalgia amongst Damascene elites, but variations of nostalgic narratives recur widely. Coontz (1992), for example, has written about how the image of the ideal ‘American family’ is grounded in a mythical past in his book *The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap*. Perhaps, as Ozyurek (2006) argues, nostalgia and privatisation ‘are among the powerful driving forces behind neoliberal ideology, which turns objects, relations, and concepts into commodities and transforms political expression by converting it to an issue of personal interest’ (ibid. 8).

⁶⁶ It is, in fact, quite likely that this process itself generated the image of the idyllic, rural homeland that informs these narratives of structural nostalgia.

Ismail, an old family friend who was sitting with us, asked me if I knew him. When I told him I was not sure, he pulled out a piece of paper and a pen and started scribbling something. 'It's the plate number', he explained, 'keep it, just in case'. This was a particularly curious instance of a more general pattern. Distrust towards strangers, whether foreigners or Riffians, was ubiquitous, giving most public interactions in the city an air of suspicion and mistrust.⁶⁷

Whether it was a question of emigrants breaking with the 'traditional' code of morality or of the city itself generating new and morally ambiguous kinds of relations, the underlying theme was the same: life in the city had changed the traditional ways and disrupted the equilibrium formerly guaranteed through the moral code.⁶⁸ One of the younger daughters in my family, to take a typical example, explained in the following terms why her father would not let her go to Nador city without her brothers: 'It was not the same when we lived in Beni Enzar', she said, 'because over there everybody knew us. But in Nador we don't know anybody and men always harass us in the street'. A few days later, as we were walking down the street in Beni Enzar, two young men passed by and began to talk to us. She stared at the floor and remained silent. Later, she said:

This is because people don't know me in this part of town. If we were in my neighbourhood this would never happen. Our neighbours would defend us. We should go inside and wait for my brother inside the store. No one will bother us inside.

The quote reveals the extent to which these narratives are mythical: the contrast that she had earlier drawn between Beni Enzar and Nador is here replicated in the opposition between 'our neighbourhood' and the rest of the town. It is the same contrast drawn with respect to Europe.

⁶⁷ I will return to this point in chapter 6. As we shall see, the discourse of mistrust, secrecy and paranoia has a presence on both sides of the border, and is tied in more than one way to the black market economy in operation.

⁶⁸ Indeed, as Herzfeld notes, one of the crucial features of structural nostalgia is that the object of this 'rhetorical longing' takes the form of a 'damaged reciprocity' (2005: 149); relationships of inequality are thus rewritten as relationships of protection, and whatever ideals are perceived as being in decay remain intact in this virtuous, timeless space.

Trapped between an imagined community which draws on a mythical orderly past and the constant confrontation with a foreign world of riches which promises wealth yet brings with it defilement, Riffians define their identity in ways which are contradictory and ambivalent. In this fiction, 'the outside world' is simultaneously a source of prestige and a source of pollution, of prosperity and immorality, of good and evil. Consider, for instance, the following fragments of popular songs at the time of my fieldwork. The first is a dialogue between a man and a woman; the second is the chorus of a song:

Song 1:

WOMAN: You are not my boyfriend you are my enemy...Why do you leave me and exchange me only for papers?

MAN: You don't understand; now everything has changed and we all need money, and for that I need papers.

WOMAN: Oh my god, why do all the men want to go to Europe? For these [European] women you forget everything!

Song 2:

Insha'allah I go to Holanda. I will marry my neighbours because I have a big heart.

Insha'allah I go to Holanda...

The theme of betrayal is central to both songs: in the first, the man has betrayed his beloved by leaving for Europe; in the second, the possibility of betrayal ('God willing I will go to Holland') is rapidly foreclosed by making reference to an undisputed *tropos* of Riffian identity (despite leaving, 'I will [still] marry my neighbours').⁶⁹

Their contact with this foreign world puts emigrants in a structurally ambivalent position. The fact that they go to extraordinary lengths to follow and enforce the Riffian moral code in their European host-countries carries no weight here. Many Riffians have never ventured beyond the Gibraltar Strait, and can only imagine what lies across the Mediterranean. Melilla is their window into the outside world, and Melillan Christians are the model according to which a broader category of 'foreigners' is imagined. The

⁶⁹ Joseph and Joseph (1987: 94-103) found similar kinds of songs in the Central Rif, a region with an equally long-standing migratory tradition, in the 1980s. For example: 'Germany, where has my young man gone? The train doesn't arrive there; the bus can't reach it', or 'A piece of packing cord has sullied a water glass. Oh Germany. You gave illusions to beggars'. As they note (1987: 95), an ambivalent attitude towards the world outside the Rif is a common motif running through these lyrics.

moral ambiguity attributed to Melilla is amplified when the ‘outside world’ is imagined. The well-known involvement of emigrants in drug trafficking, which I discuss in more detail in chapter 6, serves only to confirm this image. Stories of broken engagements and family betrayals involving emigrants are a common topic of conversation amongst Riffian women. During the long afternoons spent hosting and visiting, the fate of a young girl abandoned by her emigrant fiancée, the story of a migrant who was put in prison for trafficking heroin in Holland, or the minutiae of family disputes over a broken engagement are discussed at length. ‘My cousin and I, we were engaged for a year’, a young girl says, ‘but it didn’t work ... because he lied’. Her fiancée was living in Spain, and one day, she tells us, he stopped calling her. Later, she found out that he was trafficking cocaine. ‘I would have forgiven him’, she says, ‘if only he had told me...’

4.6 Conclusion

In 1971, Seddon wrote that ‘any study of social change in this area must consider in detail the constantly shifting and highly complex relationship between the inhabitants of the region —the eastern Rif— and “outsiders”, whether the latter are representatives of the central government, individual Moroccans from other parts of the country, or genuine foreigners’ (1971: 227). In this chapter, I have tried to shed some light on the ambivalent and often contradictory relationship that ties the inhabitants of this region to ‘the outside world’, both materially and symbolically. The conflict between an economic structure reliant on contraband, drug trafficking and emigration, and the ideal of an isolated, homogenous and virtuous community is at the core of this predicament. Consumption practices are changing, as are the values that underwrite them, but the moral ideal remains intact, and the image of a land of honourable men and modest women continues to operate as a powerful force amongst Riffians. As the carriers of the new ‘foreign’ influence, emigrants embody the conflict between a sometimes idealised,

sometimes demonised, but always limitless West, and an imagined traditional North African society.

At first sight, Melilla and Nador are very different kinds of places. Melilla is a secluded enclave, protected by a large wire fence and surrounded by ‘foreign’ land; Nador is a growing urban centre surrounded by satellite towns and located at the heart of the eastern Rif. The enclave’s population is divided between Muslims and Christians, a division which informs political action, official rhetoric and popular narratives. In Nador, by contrast, the population is largely homogenous and divisions are drawn only between locals and emigrants. A wide range of connections and transactions, however, tie these two seemingly dissimilar places into networks of mutual interdependence, ranging from commercial contraband to money laundering, people smuggling and drug trafficking. In the chapters that follow, I turn to these linkages and examine how they relate to the wider economic system. As we shall see, Melilla and Nador are connected in unsuspected ways.

CHAPTER 5. THE FRONTIER

Back then crossing the border took only about 20 minutes. We all used to go to Beni Enzar every Sunday for lunch, or to have Moroccan tea and pastries! But now, now it takes at least two or three hours to cross the border with all the contraband! I used to take customers through the frontier at least four or five times a day, but now I won't do it for less than a hundred euros! It's because of the blacks [*negros*], you know, that's why they built the fence.

Spanish taxi driver, frontier of Beni Enzar, 15/11/2008

5.1 From 'European Fortress' to gated community

Borderlands have become a growing political concern in Europe, and a common area of focus in academia. Recent times have seen the creation of numerous institutes, centres and organisations dedicated to the study of borders, migration and transnationalism, which have in turn generated a growing body of literature on the subject.¹ The border of Europe in particular has received a good deal of attention. Not surprisingly, the metaphor of 'Fortress Europe' —and the ways in which immigration is (or fails to be) deterred through processes of 'securitisation'— has been at the centre of this research.² Of particular interest here is a relatively new trend amongst academics working on the subject; that of comparing Europe's external border to a gated community.³ According

¹ A few relevant examples include the books edited by Baud and van Schendel (1997), Das and Poole (2003), Shapiro and Alker (1996), Dietz (2004) or the works of Ong (1999) and Appadurai (1996). For a more detailed literature review on the subject see section 1.2 of Chapter 1.

² Huysmans (2000), for example, has written about the connections between migration, security policies in Western Europe and the European integration process. Along similar lines but from a different theoretical perspective, Loader (2002) writes about the enhanced policing capacity of the European Union and its relation to official narratives emphasising the threat posed by 'criminal and 'alien' others, categories which include migrants, drug traffickers and organized crime syndicates. Finally, Alscher (2005) writes about the implementation of securitisation policies in southern Spain and Poland, arguing that restrictive measures in these two countries did not lead to a reduction in immigration, but to a geographical shifting of migration routes. In the context of the Spanish enclaves, Moffette (2010) has written about the dynamics of the securitization of migration in Ceuta, while Ferrer-Gallardo (2008) has done the same for Melilla.

³ Castan Pinos (2008), for example, writes about the processes of securitisation in Ceuta and Melilla, arguing that the metaphor of 'Fortress Europe' is an inadequate representation of the border regulations in place and suggesting instead that of a gated community 'because it combines the ideas of restraining access to the gated territory and a greater level of control over those who enter it and selective permeability towards those who bring benefits to the gated community' (2008: 23). The argument is presented as central to the article, but, in fact, most of it is concerned with the mechanisms of border

to this argument, the management of Europe's external border and that of gated communities respond to the same logic: a desire to exclude others born out of fear of losing a privileged position (see Houtum and Pijpers 2007; Zaiotti 2007).

At first sight, Melilla would seem to illustrate the comparison perfectly. Spatially, a similar structure is at play; a walled community separate from its surrounding territories, accessible only to 'members', and heavily monitored and 'protected' against outsiders. There are, indeed, important ways in which the enclave resembles a gated community, but these go well beyond 'desires' and 'fears'. In fact, protection from a dangerous outside world is the gated community's selling point (see, for example, Davis 1992; Caldeira 1996b), not its *raison d'être*.⁴ Behind the rhetoric of exclusion, security and protection which surrounds these exclusive compounds lies a system of 'selective permeability' which is necessary to their very existence. Gardeners, domestic workers, street cleaners, rubbish collectors, postmen, electricians and employees performing all kinds of necessary services to the community are allowed into these 'enclaves' on a daily basis, only to be expelled once their task is completed. Without their work, these would no longer be places of privilege. Similarly, the Spanish enclave relies on Moroccan workers to fulfil a demand for a cheap workforce in the construction and services sector. The ground for comparison, therefore, lies not in the rhetoric that surrounds privileged enclaves but in the socio-spatial structures which

control in Ceuta and Melilla, and the comparison with gated communities is only brought up in the last sentence of the paper and left unexplored. Houtum and Pijpers (2007) make the same argument for Europe as a whole. According to them, the EU's selective immigration policy is a product of fear; fear of losing economic welfare, public security and, above all, fear of losing a community's 'cultural identity' as a consequence of immigration. Similarly, Zaiotti (2007) argues that despite the rhetoric of friendship and good neighbourliness displayed in European official discourse, policies such as the ENP are being used to 'build fences' against Europe's neighbours. The tension between 'the goal of "friendship" and the construction of "fences"', he argues, can be seen as 'a symptom of a pathological condition affecting the ENP, which is called here the "gated community syndrome"' (2007: 144).

⁴ The discourse of fear —particularly fear of crime— does seem to feature quite prominently in gated communities across the globe; see, for America, Blakely and Snyder (1997) and Low (2001). The same discourse recurs elsewhere, albeit in different forms: see, for Shanghai, Pow (2007), and for Brazil Caldeira (1996b). The rhetoric of fear found in gated communities is in many ways similar to that described in chapter 3 in reference to Melillan Christians and to that described by Longva (2005) for Kuwaitis. That is, it is particularly prominent in contexts where spatial segregation comes together with a situation where the 'privileged' are a minority. It is important to insist, however, on the difference between a rhetoric of fear and a 'true feeling' of fear. It is only this distinction that marks the difference between ethnographic analysis and pseudo-psychological accounts of the kind that render 'syndromes' or 'mentalities' (Blakely and Snyder, for example, write about 'a new fortress mentality growing in America' [ibid. 1-2]).

sustain them. These, it is worth recalling, are inscribed in a global system which relies on small-scale geographical differences.

The argument can be taken further. Louis Wacquant (2010) has argued that ghettos, prisons, elite enclaves, gated communities, reservations and the like should all be considered as variants of a generic process which he calls 'socio-spatial seclusion'. Whether seclusion occurs at the top of the hierarchy (as in the case of gated communities) or at the bottom (as in the case of prisons, reservations or ghettos) processes of seclusion respond to the same interests.⁵ These processes are not exclusively urban, and are certainly not new. In the American countryside, for example, 'the major factor differentiating modalities of spatial enclosure is whether the subordinate population must move to supply labor or be removed to release land they occupy' (2010: 168). More generally, spatial seclusion serves

to secure the labor power of subordinate populations while preventing them from coming into the city, because full urbanization would raise the cost of their reproduction and also generate pressures toward mixing (which, in turn, would undermine ethnoracial purity and hierarchy) (ibid.).

A particularly severe example of these processes is what Mike Davis (1992) describes as the 'militarisation of Los Angeles', where the privatisation and securitisation of public space have come together with the subsidising of new exclusive enclaves, following a design which ensures complete segregation between the poor and the middle and upper classes.⁶ The commonality between gated communities and

⁵ It is important to note that Wacquant locates these interests solely in the state. According to him, the grand designer of urban marginality, by omission or commission, is the state. Through its various programs, from urban planning, economic regulation, fiscal policy, and infrastructural investment to the spatially differentiated provision of core public goods such as housing, education, health, welfare, and policing, the state determines the extent of the distance between top and bottom of the urban order ... and what forms of sociospatial seclusion take root and grow' (2010: 174).

In my view, while the state does play a crucial role in all of these processes, it is only in relation to what we could call 'global capital' that the role of the state can be properly understood. State and capital are not independent spheres but 'integral parts of the totality of capitalism' (Yeung 1998: 296).

⁶ Davis (1992) describes the new forms of containment that have developed to armour 'the city against the poor' in a battle where benches, sprinklers and even public toilets can serve as weapons (ibid. 160-164). Tellingly, and parallel to the implementation of new forms of spatial segregation designed to contain the poor, new strategies are being used to 'recapture the poor as consumers' (ibid. 169). For

walled enclaves like Melilla resides precisely in this feature, with the caveat that, in Melilla, the privileged position of the middle and upper classes relies almost entirely on the labour of the underclass whose function as smuggling couriers makes them indispensable to the enclave. In this, Melilla is not unique. Drawing on the work of Richard Sennett (1996), Wacquant (2010) describes the creation of a Jewish ghetto in sixteenth-century Venice. I quote him at length:

He [Richard Sennett] calls the ghetto an *urban condom*, because its design allowed for the penetration of the Christian city by Jews (they were needed to supply a gamut of financial trade, and cultural services pivotal to the success of the court) while isolating them to curtail intimate contact with them (the Jewish body was believed to be corrupt and corrupting, a vector of disease and sacrilege). The ghetto emerged as the sociospatial device permitting the joint *economic exploitation* and *social ostracization* of this outcast category: Jews fanned into the city to carry out their essential economic duties during the day, but returned at nightfall behind the locked gates of their reserved quarter under pain of severe punishment ... The same spatial device was reinvented and deployed four centuries later in the Northeast and Midwest of the United States when Southern blacks migrated into the expanding industrial cities that wanted their labor but did not wish them to mix with white residents (ibid. 166, emphasis in the original).

Similarly, relations between the Spanish enclave and the Moroccan hinterland are marked by a regulatory system which permits ‘the joint economic exploitation and social ostracization’ of the underprivileged. Unlike in Venice, however, in Melilla it is the privileged who are ‘walled in’. Within the enclave the pattern is reversed. Illegal migrants staying at the CETI —a fenced facility located on the outskirts of the city, sitting across from a state-funded luxury golf resort— are allowed out of the centre during daytime and ‘locked’ back in at night, when the centre closes its gates. During the day, they make their way to the city centre to earn a few euros washing the cars of Melillan residents (usually Christians), helping them with parking and watching their cars, a job which they share with Moroccans.⁷ Amongst Melillans, they are known as

example, the construction of a large shopping mall in the inner city where the ‘security-oriented design and management strategy’ —i.e. an eight-foot-high fence, video cameras, and controlled entries— serve to attract retailers who would otherwise never venture into those areas (ibid. 171).

⁷ The centre holds ‘illegal’ migrants while the legal process to determine their refugee status runs its course; this often takes years and, if an agreement exists between Spain and the country of origin, they

the '*tira-tira*' (the 'go-go', in reference to their instructions when helping residents to park their cars). When CETI residents break any of the rules stipulated by the centre, their permit (an electronic card) is taken away from them and they are forced to remain locked in at all times. The parallels with Sennet's description are remarkable, and the theme of the gated community recurs.

There are important differences between 16th century Venice and 21st century Melilla. As Harvey argues, domination by superior command over space is not a feature exclusive to modern capitalism. Urban merchants in the late Middle Ages are in fact a good example of how trading capital 'circumvented and eventually subverted the feudal order in large part by spatial strategies, albeit by protecting certain places —the early trading cities— as networked islands of liberty in a world of feudal restraints' (Harvey 2010: 155). Under the capitalist system, however, domination over space requires more complex strategies. The search for new trading routes is inscribed in a worldwide system where the exploitation of geographical difference is key to maximising profit and, consequently, where geographical difference is commoditised. In this context, where strategies to command space can shape the politics of place, border regions acquire special significance.

The potential of Melilla to become a buffer zone between Europe and Africa became clear soon after the first waves of African migrants arrived in the 1990s. Since then, European institutions have taken important measures to ensure the enclave's economic viability. EU subsidies have funded not only the necessary facilities for border control —namely, the construction of the fence around Melilla, the technological equipment for border control and the construction of the immigration detention centre— but also a number of infrastructure development projects. These range from the construction of facilities to ensure the provision of basic goods (such as a water desalination plant, a refuse dumping ground and an incinerator plant), to the

may be deported without ever reaching the Spanish coast. The numbers of immigrants allowed to reach the Spanish mainland is extremely low. Effectively, the CETI ensures that they remain in Melilla until an order of expulsion is issued. Paradoxically, CETI 'residents' are allowed in and out of the centre at will (through a card-swiping electronic system) until 11p.m., when the gates are closed. This system is exclusive to Ceuta and Melilla for, in the Spanish enclaves, the risk of migrants evading the authorities is nil. Strict border controls at the port ensure that no migrant leaves the enclave without official permission.

development of better transport communications (including a new ring road around Melilla) and the funding of training programs to foster business development and encourage economic growth.

Melilla benefits from three kinds of European subsidies: the Regional Development Fund (FEDER), the Social European Fund (FSE) and the Cohesion Fund (FC). The figures vary according to the source, but according to a publication by the General Direction of European Funds of the Autonomous City of Melilla⁸, for the period between 2000 and 2006, the EU allocated over €164 million to projects in the Spanish enclave. For the most part, the funds are administered by the local authorities and, to a lesser extent, by the Spanish central government. An exhibition organised by the city council in 2008/9 displayed photographs of all the projects that have been partially or entirely financed by the EU in Melilla. The images below are revealing of the extent to which the enclave relies on this ‘external rent’:



Extension of the port

⁸Available at: http://www.fondoseuropeosmelilla.es/plan_comunicacion/cuaderno.pdf. Other sources, for example the official publication *Converge*, Num. 1, 2009) claim that between 1989 and 2006 Melilla received 151 million euros. See: http://www.fondoseuropeosmelilla.es/admin/revistas/files/Melilla_Converge.pdf



New highways



The Four Cultures Square



Industrial park where smuggling is organised (see chapter 5)



Water purifying plant



New facilities at the port



Car repair park

Funds destined to ensure the sustainability of Europe's southernmost frontier have certainly shaped the physical landscape of the Spanish enclave. They have also had an impact upon its economic structure, generating new forms of *rentier* relations between Melilla, the Spanish mainland and the European Union. More significantly here, they have served to perpetuate relations of economic inequality between the enclave and the Moroccan hinterland, reproducing a socio-economic structure characteristic of gated communities and found wherever processes of socio-spatial seclusion are present. As we shall see, this structure relies heavily on what we can call the principle of selective permeability.

5.2 Sealing the enclave: the politics of selective permeability

The construction of a fence to seal off the enclave of Melilla dates back to the late 1990s. The first group of Sub-Saharan Africans had arrived in Melilla in 1991, coming from Mali, Nigeria, Liberia and Zaire. Melilla's local authorities sent the group back to Morocco as soon as they reached Spanish territory, but they were denied admission to Moroccan territory on the basis that Moroccan immigration policies did not allow for

the return to Morocco of non-Moroccan nationals.⁹ They remained in the no man's land between the Spanish and the Moroccan borders for several weeks, assisted by the Red Cross, until the government authorities decided to send them to mainland Spain. This was the first major attempt to enter the enclave illegally, and the Spanish media covered the events extensively. In the years to follow, the numbers of African migrants trying to reach the enclave grew dramatically and, in 1995, the government announced the construction of a new fence along the perimeter of the city. A year later, in 1999, Melilla opened a centre for the temporary internment of illegal migrants (CETI).¹⁰ The year 2005 marked a turning point. Between August and September, over 3,000 Sub-Saharan Africans tried to climb over the fence of Melilla in several assaults *en masse*; by the end of that year over 11,000 had tried to jump over the fence.¹¹ The coverage of these events in the international media was widespread.¹² By the end of the year, the EU had funded a project to build a new, six-meter-high, triple fence, equipped with infrared cameras and a large number of high-tech security measures.

⁹ Morocco has traditionally been what in migration studies is known as a 'sending country' (there are three types of countries: sending, receiving and transit). Over the last decade, however, and with the consolidation of people smuggling networks in West Africa and across the Sahara Desert, it has also become a key zone of transit for migrants coming from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Its proximity to the southern European coasts, particularly to Spain and Italy, make it an ideal point of access to European territory. The Gibraltar Strait which separates Morocco from Spain (14.4 km wide), and Spain's territories in North Africa (Ceuta and Melilla) and on the Atlantic coast (the Canary Islands off the west coast of Morocco) are the preferred migratory routes. For an overview of the literature on Morocco's role as a sending, receiving and transit country, see Berriane and Aderghal 2008. For an analysis of Morocco's transition from a sending to a transit and destination country, see de Haas 2005.

¹⁰ Before the construction of the CETI, Sub-Saharan migrants had to be taken to mainland Spain, where a process of deportation would be initiated. This process often lasted months, and by the time an order of expulsion was issued migrants had often gone clandestine. With the opening of the CETI, Sub-Saharan Africans remained in the Spanish enclave while the legal process ran its course.

¹¹ The main contingents of migrants in Melilla come from Asia (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), Sub-Saharan Africa (Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin amongst others), and North Africa (Algeria and Morocco). The routes vary depending on the country of origin, but access to Morocco is always through the border with Algeria, from where migrants travel to Nador (some 65 km west).

¹² For Spanish media see: Rodríguez J. A. '500 subsaharianos intentan penetrar en Melilla en la cuarta avalancha en siete días', *El País*, 06/10/2005; 'Medio millar de subsaharianos asalta la valla de Melilla con 270 escaleras y un centenar entra en España', *El Mundo*, 27/09/2005; '30.000 africanos llegados a Marruecos y Argelia preparan su salto a Ceuta y Melilla', *La Vanguardia*, 13/10/2005; Vega, L. 'Las avalanchas de subsaharianos convierten Melilla en un enorme campo de refugiados', *ABC*, 29/09/2005. For international coverage of the events, see: Sage, A. 'Laying siege to fortress Europe', *The Times*, 29/09/2005; Wilkinson, I. 'Expelled migrants dumped in the Moroccan desert', *The Telegraph*, 8/10/2005; Smith, C. S. 'Spain's African enclaves are migrants' portals to Europe', *The New York Times*, 5/ 11/2005.



Sub-Saharan migrants jumping the old fence in 2005.

Source: <http://www.nodo50.org/derechosparatodos/InfoMigracion4.htm>



The new fence built in 2005 is 10 km long.



There are control posts along the fence

Today, the perimeter of Melilla is entirely sealed. Four crossing points allow access: Beni Enzar, Farkhana, Mariguari and Barrio Chino.¹³ Beni Enzar is the most important of the four, for it is officially considered an international frontier and is therefore equipped to receive large numbers of visitors. Situated at the southernmost end of Melilla, the frontier of Beni Enzar consists of a one hundred meter strip of road with the Spanish customs post at one end and the Moroccan at the other. Two concrete walls seal the sides of the passage, and traffic in both directions, both by car and on foot, is intense. The no man's land that lies in between has effectively been occupied by Morocco so that the passage is controlled by Moroccan officers up to the gates that mark the beginning of Spanish territory. Beyond the customs point, on the Moroccan side, lies the frontier-town of Beni Enzar, and approximately ten kilometres further

¹³ The Passage of Mariguari (*Paso de Mariguari*), however, opens exclusively during the school months to allow the passage of students and parents who need to cross the border to take their children to school. This passage is also often used by domestic workers living in the town of Mariguari and employed in Melilla. The passage is closed during the summer holidays, and only allows pedestrians.

south is the city of Nador. Beni Enzar is the main point of reference for people on both sides of the border, and when one speaks of ‘the frontier’ (*la frontera*) everybody assumes that one is referring to Beni Enzar. By contrast, Farkhana and Barrio Chino are smaller passages used only by locals. The first can be accessed by car while the second can only be crossed on foot and is mainly used by smuggling couriers.



Melilla's fence and crossing points. Source: El Hammouti Gandouzi (2006)

The new fence put an end to the direct assaults, but it also led to the consolidation of smuggling mafias in the region. After the assaults on the fence, the Moroccan government came under mounting pressure from the EU to control its side of the border. Soon, a number of military interventions were launched to drive out the high numbers of migrants settled in the city of Nador.¹⁴ Once jumping the fence was no longer an option and the city of Nador no longer a safe place to hide while waiting for an opportunity, migrants were forced to resort to professional smugglers for shelter, guidance, and contacts to hire the services of a local willing to drive them across the

¹⁴ The largest operations took place in 2003, when 1,881 migrants were arrested, in 2004 with 2,758 detainees and in 2005, when 7,749 were detained (Al Khayari 2005). Due to a lack of deportation agreements with Sub-Saharan countries, most of the migrants arrested were simply driven back to the border with Algeria, where they were released and left to their own devices. For details of the raids see Médecins Sans Frontières (2005) and Groupe Antiraciste d'Accompagnement et de Défense des Étrangers et Migrants (2010).

frontier. During my time working as a Red Cross volunteer at the CETI, for instance, I was told both by migrants and by the centre's own workers that groups of Nigerian smugglers control the Gourougou Mountain,¹⁵ organising the passage of Sub-Saharan Africans across the border. According to these accounts, Nigerians shelter incoming migrants in the mountain and work together with 'infiltrates' in the CETI, who inform them regularly of the situation in the enclave and at the centre (including, for instance, the number of beds available), to coordinate the crossings.¹⁶ Nigerian smugglers charge considerable fees to smuggle migrants into the enclave, fees that are usually paid by the families of migrants. Failing to comply with the payment, I was told, was dangerous.¹⁷ With the construction of the fence, it seemed, a new market had emerged.

Since then, Melilla has become the destination not only of Sub-Saharan migrants, but also of Algerians and, above all South Asians. According to Rahul, a migrant from the Punjab, South Asian mafias coordinate the trip to Melilla from origin to destination. His story is representative of many South Asian migrants in the enclave. Rahul lived in a small countryside village in the Punjab, with his parents and his two younger brothers. Being the eldest son in the family, it was soon decided that he should migrate to Europe to help his family economically. It was his father, he tells me, who found the contacts to organise the journey. According to him,

The mafia works through contacts in different countries. There are two types of mafia: the big mafia and the small mafia. The small mafia is the mafia you find in every country, the national mafia. The big mafia is the international network which connects the different national mafias and organises the passage between different countries. When you arrive in a new country, they give you a cell phone with a local calling card and a contact number for the national mafia, and they take over. They have ways of

¹⁵ The Gourougou is a volcanic mountain 900 meters in height, situated between Nador and Melilla. Up until 2004, when the Moroccan army began carrying out regular raids, the Gourougou Mountain was the preferred hiding place for Sub-Saharan migrants trying to access Melilla.

¹⁶ According to a migrant who had reached Melilla through Algeria, the Nigerian mafia also runs the border between Morocco and Algeria near the Moroccan city of Oujda, from where most Sub-Saharan migrants access Morocco, and to where they are 'deported' if found by the Moroccan police or military.

¹⁷ According to a Sudanese migrant, Nigerians control the passage across the border and claim payment for it, effectively holding migrants hostage until payment is made and resorting to violence if migrants resist. Several different groups operate in the area, competing and at times battling against each other for the 'protection' of incoming migrants. Many migrants, I was told, had been killed and tortured for failing to pay smugglers.

forging work contracts in different countries, and that is how they can get you a visa to travel.

Rahul's family sold a plot of land they owned to collect the 14,000 euros needed to pay for the trip from his home village in Punjab to Melilla. Arrangements were made for him to travel to Algeria as a 'member' of an Indian football team scheduled to play against an Algerian team in an official match. Upon landing in Algeria, he was given a cell phone and a contact number for the local smugglers. He was asked to join a group of migrants from a number of different countries, and they were taken across the border, to the Moroccan city of Oujda. In Oujda, he says,

we were left in the hands of the Moroccan mafia, and they took us from Oujda to Nador, and from Nador to Melilla. At this point there were 32 of us: from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and five *morenos*¹⁸ and three *morenas*. They hid us in a truck carrying sand.¹⁹ They had built a little room under the sand, and they put us all in there [to cross the border with Melilla]. We could barely breathe, and we were in there for half an hour.

Once in Melilla, they were found by the police and taken to the CETI.²⁰ Rahul had been told before leaving India that within two weeks of reaching the enclave and registering at the CETI he would be taken to mainland Spain, where he would be granted a residency permit or, failing that, he would be able to evade the authorities and begin a life as an undocumented migrant. This was two and a half years ago, and Rahul is still in Melilla, awaiting a formal decision from the Spanish government. 'But I don't mind being here', he tells me,

¹⁸ *Moreno/a* is a Spanish word which literally means 'tanned' and 'brown-skinned'. It is commonly used by young people in Melilla as a euphemism for black people. By contrast, the more conventional term *negro*, used by elders, seems to have acquired a pejorative undertone. Using *moreno/a* instead of *negro/a* is taken as a sign of 'friendliness', a way of indicating that one is not —not openly, in any case— racist. I have never heard this word used in this way anywhere else in Spain.

¹⁹ Construction materials are regularly brought into the enclave from Morocco. Some of these trucks are used to hide immigrants to cross the border.

²⁰ This was not unexpected; if they had not been found by the police they would have headed to the police station themselves. Melilla is a small town, and it would be impossible to remain hidden. But even if it were possible, they would never be able to leave the enclave unnoticed, for there are strict controls at the port. Registering at the police station is therefore a part of the process. After the registration, they are taken to the CETI and the legal process begins.

some people, older Indians with families back home, they are always drinking, because they have been here for so many years, and they have no way of leaving, they can't even return to their families. But I'm alright here. I have a room, food and friends. I took a course as a Red Cross volunteer and I have worked as a lifeguard and as a translator at the hospital. I'd rather be in Spain of course, but I don't mind being here, I like Melilla.

Rahul's account should be qualified. Many CETI residents are in fact so terrified of the midnight raids when the police are granted access to the centre to 'collect' migrants and deport them to their countries of origin that they have left the CETI altogether and have settled in improvised camps by the side of the road. Deportations often come unannounced and migrants can do little to stop them. On the other hand, whenever the city's immigrant-detention centre reaches its maximum capacity, the central government's delegation (*Delegación de Gobierno*) and the local authorities issue a number of emigrants with a permit informally known as a *laissez-passer*. This allows migrants to board one of the ferries that connect Melilla with mainland Spain, on condition that they return to their country of origin within 15 days. Once they reach Spanish soil migrants go into hiding and never return to their countries, but local authorities are well aware of this. *Laissez-passers* are thus a winning lottery-ticket that migrants hope for and, at times, openly demand.²¹

Meanwhile thousands of Moroccans enter the (European) enclave every day to work in the construction sector, loading and unloading merchandise for smuggling, or as waiters in Spanish bars and restaurants. The construction of the fence sealed the enclave against unwanted migrants, leading to the development of professional smuggling networks designed to circumvent this new order and generate new spatial strategies to access this 'privileged' enclave. At the same time, however, Melilla's gates remained wide open to the traffic of labourers necessary to ensure a sufficient supply of couriers to smuggle goods across the border. In fact, behind the image of Melilla as a 'fortress' lies a different reality.

²¹ In January 2011, for example, a group of Congolese camped outside Melilla's Government Delegation to request in a written letter 'that we are included in the groups of people that each week leave the city towards mainland Spain with a *laissez-passer*'. For the full text of this letter (in Spanish) see: <http://melillafronterasur.blogspot.com/2012/02/solicitud-de-los-congoleses-retenidos.html>

Around 30,000 people cross the border between Melilla and Nador every day. Groups of women pushing through, carrying large, heavy bundles of clothes on their backs; old men begging and children selling tissues or chewing gum; middle-aged men driving convoys of old Mercedes loaded with goods to be sold across the border; a few men idling in the shade, waiting for a job opportunity; custom officers cruising around with a look of boredom in their eyes, yelling from time to time at a passer-by who is too slow, or too frugal with his bribe; thin young men walking up and down, waving a pen and a pack of custom documents and offering their services to the few foreigners crossing the border. Men and women, young and old, military and civilian, they all inhabit and make a living off the one-hundred-meter fenced passage that is the frontier.²² To the newcomer, the intense traffic of cars, people and goods, the heaps of rubble, discarded plastic wrappers and cardboard boxes lying on the pavement, and the comings and goings of migrants, smugglers and beggars present an image of chaos. Behind this apparent confusion, however, lies an order of things that needs disentangling.

Melilla has long been a source of employment for Moroccans across the border. The enclave is surrounded by frontier towns whose population relies on the opportunities offered by the Spanish enclave, from contraband to domestic work, petty smuggling or work in the construction sector. People living in these towns speak fluent Spanish and spend much of their time inside Melilla. Traffic across the border is intense, and these towns —located on the Moroccan side of the border-crossing points of Mariguari, Farkhana, Beni Enzar and Barrio Chino— rely on the revenues generated by this daily traffic. Restaurants, cafés, repair shops and so forth cater for a growing clientele of *frontaliers*. According to the Office of Foreigners of Melilla, 2,344 work

²² For a detailed study of the different kinds of *frontaliers* (frontiersmen), see Aziza (2008). A comprehensive repertoire would include smugglers (both petty smugglers and professional smugglers), frontier workers, ambulant merchants, beggars and prostitutes, and regular visitors from Nador (who enter the enclave once or twice a week to do the household shopping) and from Melilla (travelling to Nador to visit relatives or shop at the *suq*). Another important kind of *frontalier* would be the large numbers of people who work *at* the border, both legally and illegally, like the young boys who fill out custom documents for non-locals, the children who sell tissues and sweets at the passers-by, the Moroccan custom officers and policemen who complement their meagre salaries with the bribes from contraband, or the men who wait in the shade for the Nadori housewives to return from their shopping excursions and carry their shopping bags across the border for a few dirhams.

permits were issued to ‘frontier workers’ in 2008; of these, 95% were classified as autonomous (i.e. self-employed), of which 54% were registered as domestic workers (Asensio del Arco et al. 2008: 102). Of course, the large numbers of ‘frontier workers’ who are employed illegally are not registered in this census.

Women from neighbouring frontier towns ‘commute’ to Melilla to clean the houses of Spanish Christians, while those from other regions of Morocco work as prostitutes in the streets of Melilla. Buses linking the crossing point of Farkhana and Barrio Chino to the centre of the city cater almost exclusively to female domestic workers, while the men hoping to make a wage for the day gather together in a small square by the frontier of Beni Enzar to wait for potential employers. This transit of workers across the border is in many ways reminiscent of that described by Wacquant for Jews in 16th century Venice. As in Venice, where ‘Jews fanned into the city to carry out their essential economic duties during the day, but returned at nightfall behind the locked gates of their reserved quarter under pain of severe punishment’ (2010: 166) in Melilla Moroccans rush into the enclave every morning to satisfy the enclave’s demand for labourers and smugglers and return to Morocco at nightfall, before the gates to the enclave are closed.²³ What the emigrant-driven seasonal economy does for Nador, the frontier does for the towns located at the periphery of the Spanish enclave. Large numbers of Riffians living in these towns, and thousands of Arab migrants who travel weekly to the region (or who have settled there permanently), make a living through informal employment in the enclave or through smuggling. The numbers of Nadoris who engage in this kind of work is considerably lower, although as we shall see many of them benefit indirectly from the frontier economy.

The enclave depends heavily on this underpaid workforce. On the one hand, commercial establishments profit from the sales generated through smuggling. On the other hand, the construction sector and the services sector benefit from the existence of

²³ It is worth recalling that Nadori residents are allowed in and out of the enclave during the day under an agreement between the city of Melilla and the province of Nador (1991). Non-residents, however, are required to exit the Spanish enclave at night, and no Moroccans are allowed to access the enclave after 11 pm.

a cheap workforce willing to work illegally at lower rates. The importance of this labour force should not be underrated. As a Melillan resident put it,

Here, pretty much everybody participates in the underground economy. We are all in the know, even those who criticise it. That's why it is so difficult to eradicate it. It's true that it doesn't create legal employment, and that it reduces the tax revenues, but the way things are in this city, we all participate in it (cited in Gómez Rodilla 2007: 93).

The city as a whole benefits from a frontier economy that exists only due to the border regulations allowing residents of the province of Nador to access the enclave without hindrance. These regulations, I shall argue in the next chapter, are in place to preserve trade routes across the border, for commercial smuggling, locally known as 'atypical commerce', constitutes one of Melilla's fundamental sources of revenue.

5.3 Melilla's 'atypical commerce'

The sealing of the frontier led to the development of a professional economy of contraband. Before the new European fence was built, the limits of the enclave were marked by a one-meter high fence which had been pierced in several places to allow for the passage of goats and smugglers carrying their merchandise on bicycles, mules or donkeys (Driessen 1992: 121). There were several paths and roads that connected Melilla to the Moroccan hinterland, and buses ran from Melilla to the largest cities in the province on a daily basis. Traffic across the border was fluid, and smuggling a business accessible to everyone. With the construction of the new fence, however, border crossing became restricted to controlled crossing points. This, together with the interruption of all public transportation between the enclave and the Moroccan territories, complicated the logistics of contraband. Stricter controls at the border meant that contacts, financial resources and official documents proving residency in Nador or Melilla became necessary for smuggling. Soon the frontier attracted businessmen with the capital to start a smuggling business, as well as a cheap workforce looking for employment opportunities as couriers. Melilla's singular tax regime (by which foreign

products can be bought at far lower prices than those on the Moroccan market) and Nador's privileged arrangement with the Spanish enclave (by which residents of the province are exempt from the visa requirements applied to all other Moroccans entering Melilla) became tools at the service of a large-scale underground economy which constitutes the main source of livelihood for large numbers of people on both sides of the border, and binds together the main urban centres of the region and their satellite towns in networks of mutual interdependence.

Known amongst smugglers as *trabando* (from the Spanish '*contrabando*'), commercial smuggling can be defined as the trading of goods bought in Melilla and taken across the border clandestinely (in order to avoid duties) to be sold at a higher price in Morocco.²⁴ Goods imported into the enclave are exempt from regular duties.²⁵ This, together with the fact that products for sale are exempt from VAT, means that imported goods purchased in Melilla are significantly cheaper than in Morocco. Price differentials across the border make smuggling profitable and, in a region haunted by an endemic lack of employment, this kind of trade constitutes a fundamental source of income for many households; around 45,000 people make a living directly from smuggling, and a further 400,000 are indirectly involved in the business through the distribution and sale of smuggled products throughout Morocco.²⁶ The revenues generated are significant; in 2006, to give an approximate idea, Spanish authorities estimated the volume of illegal commerce in Melilla at around 440 million euros per year.²⁷

The links between migration and commercial smuggling are strong. Migratory routes linking the eastern Rif to the main European capitals provided the contacts and

²⁴ The main imports are cars and other vehicles together with replacement parts, electronic commodities, textiles, shoes, tea and other spices. Legal commercial activities across the border include the transport of fruit, vegetables, fish and construction materials from Morocco into Melilla, and products originating in Morocco stock the Melillan markets on a daily basis. Shoes, alcohol, car accessories, coffee, tea and spices do not go through formal channels at all, while textiles, electronic stuff and machinery go both legally and illegally (Asensio del Arco, et al. 2008: 88).

²⁵ Instead, products imported into the enclave pay the IPSI, a tax of between 0.5% and 10% (depending on the kind of good imported), significantly lower than regular custom duties in EU territory.

²⁶ See Cembrero, I. 'Ceuta y Melilla: 2012, fecha de caducidad', *El País*, 15/07/2008.

²⁷ See Cembrero, I. 'Ceuta y Melilla: 2012, fecha de caducidad', *El País*, 15/07/2008. Three years later López-Guzmán et al. (2009) put the estimate at 600 million euros, based on data from IPSI revenues.

resources to establish new trading routes (for example for luxury cars imported from Europe), as migrants themselves began to engage in small-scale contraband to supplement their incomes. The gradual urbanisation of the region —driven by the investment of emigrants on urban housing— led, in turn, to a higher demand for products (from foodstuffs to tools and utensils) unavailable in the region, particularly for European goods. The increased purchasing power of migrants and their families back home led to the gradual emergence of a new market of consumers, and this, over time, attracted foreign commercial interests, helping consolidate commercial routes linking the Moroccan Rif to the Spanish enclave of Melilla, and Melilla, in turn, to a number of international centres.

This is a highly organised form of trade. Products to be smuggled across the border reach the port of Melilla once or twice a week in cargo ships coming from Europe (Germany, France, Spain and Holland), Asia (mainly China) and South America (Planet 1998). From the port they are taken by truck to an industrial park located a few hundred meters from the frontier of Beni Enzar, where they are stored in warehouses.²⁸ At the warehouses, goods are either loaded into cars that have been ‘redesigned’ for smuggling purposes —doors unhinged to hide goods in the sides, back seats lifted or simply taken out, spare wheels removed— or distributed amongst men hired to take the merchandise to the border by bicycle or on a motorcycle and distribute it amongst the couriers (*porteadores*) who cross the border on foot. Lines of parked cars being loaded with goods, women rolling large, heavy bundles along the road, men riding heavily loaded bicycles and motorcycles are all part of the daily landscape in this part of the city.

²⁸ There are around 500 warehouses in the industrial park. It is important to note that the warehouses, mostly run by Melillan Muslims, are legal commercial establishments, as are all other shops and stores where products for smuggling are purchased. Some of the goods brought to the industrial park are sold in street markets in Melilla, but the majority is distributed amongst couriers to be taken across the border. Not everything is smuggled illegally. Beni Enzar is a commercial frontier and, while custom tariffs are high, some merchants prefer to declare at least part of the merchandise they take across the border. It is safe to maintain, however, that most of the goods are smuggled.



A group of men in the industrial park, waiting for the trucks to arrive with the merchandise.



Getting tyres ready to be loaded in cars.



A man loading his bicycle with products for smuggling.

Every day, in the early morning, thousands of people gather outside Melilla's main check points. Some travel for up to six hours, from cities like Fes, to smuggle items of all kinds across the Spanish-Moroccan border. Long lines of couriers and cars form along the border crossing-point of Beni Enzar and the passage of Barrio Chino, while a few hundred meters away, in Melilla's industrial park, couriers meet with their suppliers to collect the merchandise. The range of products smuggled across the border is wide, including foodstuffs, perfumes, toiletries, electronic commodities, tyres and other car replacement parts, home utensils, clothes and blankets, shoes, watches, and even locally discarded goods such as used furniture, plastic bottles or scrap metal. Everything can be sold across the border, from imported Nike shoes to, as an informant reminded me, the empty Heineken bottles that an old man used to collect and sell to the *nouveaux riches Marocains* (i.e. emigrants) who use the shattered green glass to decorate the façades of their new houses. The sale of these products is not illegal (although their transit across the border is), and all major cities in Morocco have a *suq* exclusively stocked with products from the Spanish enclave, known as *suqayyāt*

Melilia.²⁹ In the city of Nador, shops, grocery stores and large street markets are supplied daily with products smuggled out of Melilla. The summer seasonal economy relies almost entirely on these ‘imports’ of foreign goods, and many of the Western objects that emigrants so cherish are in fact smuggled out of Melilla and bought in Nadori markets. The same applies to grocery stores, where, as a customer, one is regularly asked whether one wants the Moroccan or the Spanish version of a product (from milk, to water, canned food and so forth). Quite often, particularly with canned or ready-made food, the choice is limited to the Spanish version.

People of all ages and conditions—from the wealthy *entrepreneurs* who control the large-scale smuggling of clothes, alcohol and tobacco, to the thousands of couriers who carry heavy bundles on their backs for a few dirhams a trip— participate in this underground economy whose main beneficiary is Melilla’s local government and, by extension, the Spanish enclave at large. There are two main routes for taking the goods across the border: the frontier crossing-point of Beni Enzar and the passage of Barrio Chino. The two routes correspond to two different forms of trade. The first is generally done by men, often self-employed and working in small groups, and returns significant earnings. By contrast, smuggling on foot involves working as a courier for professional smugglers; it is a job reserved to the destitute, usually women and old men, and is often seen as an alternative to begging or prostitution.³⁰ Both kinds of trade, however, are integrated into large-scale networks of distribution which link the enclave to all major cities in Morocco. There are therefore three levels at play in the smuggling economy:

²⁹ Markets of the kind exist in Taza, Fes, Casablanca, and all other major Moroccan towns. It is important to note, however, that Melilla is only one of a number of smuggling centres in Morocco; others include the Spanish enclave of Ceuta and the border with Algeria. Petrol and pharmaceutical drugs, for instance, are commonly smuggled through Algeria. For details on contraband across the border with Algeria, see the report by the Chambre de Commerce d’Industrie et de Services d’Oujda (2004-2006). For a detailed analysis of smuggling across the border of Melilla see Aziza 2008 and Berriane 2002. The research project run by the University of Fes on contraband linking the enclaves to the city of Fes may also be of interest; articles and papers are available online at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/ferguson-centre/fes-medina/index.html>.

³⁰ It should be noted that researchers generally distinguish between three types of smuggling: occasional smuggling, carried out by migrants, students and Moroccan civil servants posted to the frontier; subsistence or petty smuggling, done by small couriers who make a living by crossing the border back and forth several times a day; and large-scale smuggling, operated by professional networks, and requiring large capital investments (see, for example, Aziza 2008, Planet 1998, Driessen 1992, McMurray, 2001). The three ‘kinds’ of smuggling do indeed operate regularly in Melilla, but on the ground the most important distinction is between *couriers* and ‘middle-class’ smugglers.

the professional smugglers —often based in Casablanca or Rabat— who control the large-scale trade; the middlemen responsible for ensuring the passage from the Spanish enclave into Moroccan territory and who often smuggle the goods themselves by car across the passage of Beni Enzar; and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, the couriers, employed by the middlemen to carry certain kinds of goods on foot through Barrio Chino. As the capital derived from emigration in the Rif grows, Riffian smugglers come increasingly to belong to the second group, while the latter attracts unemployed Moroccans from poorer regions.

The capital to start a smuggling business is frequently derived from emigration. Moroccan Riffians involved in smuggling are often former emigrants themselves, or have relatives living abroad who are willing to invest in their business. They work with a specific product (for instance, car tyres or tiles), functioning as middlemen for traders based elsewhere in Morocco. Those smuggling by car (i.e. not with couriers) work in small groups employing around a dozen people, generally relatives, neighbours or friends, to help with the passage of goods.³¹ They rent a storehouse at the industrial park and make several trips a day in three or four different cars. At the border, safe passage of the merchandise is ensured through bribes. The bribe is pre-arranged with the officers on duty, and depends on the load and the number of cars, as well as on the terms of the personal and professional relationship between the smuggler and the officer. This is a lucrative business, and rumour has it that Moroccan officers pay to be assigned a post at the Spanish-Moroccan frontier.³²

³¹ Van Schendel (1993) has noted that a fundamental problem for smugglers is the establishment and maintenance of stable relations with their trading partners across the border. At the Spanish-Moroccan border, however, trading networks are created on the basis of pre-existing relations of kinship, neighbourhood and patronage between Riffians on both sides of the border. Smuggling networks are thus formed on the basis of what Eickelman (2002: 128, 146) calls the concept of 'closeness' (*qarāba*), and are organised around the principles that govern these relations. *Qarāba* does not necessarily imply kinship; it can develop through family links, but also through cooperation with neighbours, participation in different forms of alliances, patronage relations, and other bonds of mutual interest. Because they are constituted by ties of obligation and relations of reciprocity that transcend economic interest, smuggling partnerships are generally stable, durable and reliable.

³² The Weekly *Al Ayam* from Casablanca calculated in 2002 that the officers posted in the frontiers of Ceuta and Melilla made around 90 million euros in bribes annually (cited in Cembrero, I. 'La muerte de Safia, la porteadora', *El País*, 04/01/2009).

This kind of smuggling must be distinguished from that carried out by couriers, bound to their employers through exploitative and highly unstable spoken agreements. Couriers are employed by merchants and professional smugglers to collect a specific kind of merchandise in Melilla (generally clothes, shoes or foodstuffs) and carry it across the passage of Barrio Chino. Until recently Beni Enzar was the border crossing where all smuggling took place, both by car and on foot. In June of 2008, however, smuggling on foot was redirected to the passage of Barrio Chino upon informal agreement between the Spanish and the Moroccan authorities.³³ This was partly a means to alleviate the intense traffic across the passage of Beni Enzar and allow for architectural reforms to make the border more amenable to international tourism and to absorb the traffic of Moroccan migrants returning to Nador during the summer holidays. As the photograph below illustrates, the ‘redesign’ of the passage of Barrio Chino for smuggling purposes was not kept hidden from the public.



The signs on the fence indicate which doors are to be used by smugglers. Source: Prodein.³⁴

³³ See <http://www.infomelilla.com/noticias/index.php?accion=1&id=8739>.

³⁴ I am grateful to José Palazón, director of the human rights' association Prodein-Asociación Pro-derechos de la Infancia (Association for the Rights of Children), for letting me make use of his collection of photographs to document part of this chapter.



Couriers walking along the road to the passage of Barrio Chino. Source: Prodein.

Today, between six and eight thousand couriers smuggle goods across the passage of Barrio Chino on a daily basis. Earnings are meagre, and work as a courier (*porteador*) is generally taken up by widows, divorcees, old men and the physically disabled as a last resort for subsistence. Every morning goods are collected from providers on the Spanish side of the border, usually by Melilla's industrial park. Suppliers hire local men to take the merchandise from the warehouse to the passage of Barrio Chino by bicycle or motorcycle, where they distribute the merchandise amongst the couriers, who will carry the bundles on their back across the border. A courier is paid between thirty and fifty Moroccan dirhams (three to five euros) per trip, depending on the weight of the load. When the loads are particularly heavy (they may weigh up to one hundred kilograms) and have to be rolled through rather than carried, they may earn up to one hundred dirhams. A part of the earnings (between five and ten dirhams) is used to bribe customs officer on duty.

Women constitute a significant contingent, travelling from Fes, Casablanca, Kenitra and other regions of Morocco to work as couriers. The women who engage in

this trade are usually widows, divorcees or unemployed, some of them with university degrees. They take up residence in the province of Nador, buy or forge a local passport, and cross the border with Melilla every morning to collect heavy bundles of clothes and carry them on their back across the border. Competition between the women is fierce, for often there are more women than bundles to carry. The number of couriers is high and the lines are long, so each woman can make no more than three trips in a day.³⁵ This is a dangerous business. The border of Barrio Chino has three narrow passages with revolving doors at each end through which the thousands of smugglers must pass in order to reach the other side of the border. The crowds are large and accidents are common. In January 2009, to take a particularly tragic example, one of the couriers was crushed dead by fellow smugglers in the passage between the two doors, commonly known as ‘the cage’ (Sp. *la jaula*).³⁶

³⁵ The number of smugglers working on foot is so high that when smuggling on foot was transferred to the passage of Barrio Chino the government of Melilla set up public toilets and tents outside the passage for the *porteadores* to rest in the shade. The rains of the following autumn, however, washed them away.

³⁶ There is a third type of smuggling worth mentioning. These are smugglers who smuggle on foot but work independently. Women from Fes in particular are known to engage in this kind of trade. They collect orders from shopkeepers in Fes and travel to Melilla by bus two or three times a week to purchase the goods requested. Products include groceries, blankets, batteries, soap, perfume, diapers and watches amongst others. Customs controls along the main roads heading out of Nador mean that this kind of smuggling requires coordination between the smuggler and the bus driver. The driver and co-driver of the bus agree with the smugglers the price for the ride, which will depend on the load. The money is collected from all the passengers before the beginning of the journey back. The driver and co-driver keep a part of the money, and hand out the rest in bribes to the customs officials posted along the road. This kind of smuggling is so important that, on the rare occasions when the frontier of Melilla is closed, the buses between Fes and Nador do not run.



A group of *porteadoras* (couriers) prepare to cross the passage of Barrio Chino. Source: Prodein.



A 'distributor' helps the women move some of the heavier bundles. Source: Prodein.



A woman waits by the merchandise. Source: Prodein.

We should not be misled into believing that smuggling is a marginal economic activity, peripheral to legal channels and mainstream commercial interests (cf. Donnan and Wilson 1999). Most products smuggled across the border follow legal commercial channels; they are *legally* imported to Melilla through the city's main port, and *legally* sold across the border in one of the numerous Moroccan street markets. These are not illegal or 'fake-branded' products; rather, they are mainstream commercial goods, often well-known international brands available across Europe and America. China and South Korea are, by far, the most important sources (Asensio del Arco, et al. 2008: 55). The companies and retailers supplying the goods are exempt from legal responsibility given that, technically, imports into Melilla are legal. For them, the Spanish-Moroccan frontier is simply a rentable way to access an otherwise highly protectionist market. Melilla's local authorities also benefit from the legal ambiguity which surrounds the smuggling trade. The city as a whole depends on this commercial economy, which in the Spanish enclave is revealingly known not as smuggling or contraband, but as *comercio atípico* ('atypical commerce'). From the point of view of Spanish customs authorities, taking goods out of Melilla (for sale or otherwise) is not illegal. Goods

reaching the port of the city are charged a local tax (IPSI) from which the city council derives between 40 and 50 million euros annually —that is, around 40% of its total budget (López-Guzmán and González Fernández 2009: 41).³⁷ To all intents and purposes, therefore, the traffic of goods out of the enclave and into Morocco is the exclusive concern of the Moroccan customs.³⁸ This, in turn, works to the advantage of smugglers, who are free to organise their trade in plain view throughout the city without fearing legal sanctions, and must only concern themselves with the smuggling goods *through* the border. Informal agreements with the Moroccan officers on duty, who supplement their meagre incomes with the bribes they receive from smugglers, guarantee the unproblematic passage of goods across the border. The interests invested in the continuation of this trade are therefore significant, and there is little evidence to suggest that this economy is in any way generated or maintained against or despite the state, its agents, or the commercial sector at large.³⁹

In fact, most Riffians, both in Melilla and across the border, think of smuggling as a legitimate means of livelihood. For them, this is neither a subversive nor an illicit activity; rather, it is a standard, almost ‘middle-class’ way to earn a living. One of the very few sources of income in a region lacking in industry and infrastructures, trade between the Spanish enclave and the Moroccan hinterland has been a fundamental source of employment for centuries. In my host family in Selouane (some 10 km from

³⁷ Consider, for example, the following figures, taken from annual reports from Melilla’s Chamber of Commerce. For 2006, Melilla imported goods with a total value of €192,738,599. Exports, by contrast, amounted to €173,263. For the year 2009, the difference is smaller —perhaps as a consequence of the gradual reduction of Morocco’s custom tariffs in accordance with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, see chapter 6— but still significant, with €140,423,100 in imports versus €6,785,100 in (legal) exports. Smuggling accounts for much of the difference between the value of imports and the value of exports. In terms of local taxes, however, what matters is the value of goods coming in, which augments with any increase in demand for smuggling goods.

³⁸ Concerning this kind of traffic, there are two legal ways in which goods can be taken into Morocco: either as private goods (not for sale), in which case one is allowed to take as many personal goods as one can carry, or for commercial purposes, in which case duties must be paid and the kind and quantity of goods is subject to restrictions. The decision on whether the merchandise carried is considered ‘personal goods’ or ‘commercial goods’ is left to the officer on duty, and here is where bribery comes in.

³⁹ This is also evident in the approach taken by the Moroccan state towards smuggling, condemning it regularly but rarely taking any specific measures to stop it. The lack of alternative sources of income in a region traditionally in conflict with the central government has in all likelihood had an influence on this. In the early 1980s, for instance, when the Moroccan government tried to impose a fee for Moroccans entering and exiting the Spanish enclaves, riots broke out in the region and the law had to be scrapped (Driessen 1999: 125).

Nador city), for example, three generations had engaged in some form of trade across the border. The mother, Fatima, was born in Melilla sometime in the late 1940s. A lively, petite woman with bright brown eyes and henna-coloured hair, Fatima is in many ways typical of her generation. She speaks Spanish and Tarifit (the local Berber dialect), but like many others in the Rif, never learned to read or write. She owns one *jellaba*, the traditional Moroccan dress, which she wears on the rare occasions when she needs to leave the house. Her husband, Mohammed, is a retired truck driver. Also from Melilla, Mohammed is a taciturn man. Fatima and Mohammed have limited economic resources; the one hundred and fifty euros that Mohammed earns from his retirement pension are barely enough to live off. But this was not always the case, Fatima tells me one morning, as we hang out the laundry up on the roof of the house. When she was a child, she recalls, she used to help her father smuggle arms out of Melilla and into Morocco. In exchange, he received money, land, goods and preferential treatment from the Moroccan king. The times of affluence did not last long. Fatima's father remarried and had four daughters with his new wife. Before he died he wrote his will in favour of his second family, leaving all he had to his four daughters and Fatima without a penny. Decades later, as we are sitting at the dining table for a family meal, I meet her son Hassan. A married man with a new-born baby, Hassan has worked for over ten years smuggling tiles across the border, with his cousin, his younger brother and his brother-in-law. For Hassan, being a smuggler was a better-paid alternative to being an electrician. As he put it,

For me, smuggling was not about survival, but about making money. When you are twenty, the money and the access to women that contraband gives you are very tempting, and as you get older you realise that, even though it is unstable, it is also a good way of making a living, and once you know the people and how the system works it's easy. If I worked as an electrician [he was trained as an electrician], I could not afford to live in Melilla like I do now, and I would not be able to give my wife and son the life they have.

A key aspect of the widespread acceptance of smuggling as an ordinary means of livelihood is the contrast drawn between commercial smuggling and drug trafficking. Drug trafficking is the only form of trade that originates in Morocco and has Europe as

its destination. Unlike smuggled goods, which reach Morocco via Melilla, or people smuggling, which goes in the opposite direction but is ‘contained’ in the Spanish enclave, narcotics (mainly *hashish* and cocaine) are sailed from the Riffian shores straight to the Spanish coast (Chouvy 2005). Unlike commercial smuggling, therefore, the drug trade is *also* the concern of Spanish authorities. The logistics are considerably more complex, with networks spanning from Morocco to the Spanish coast and from Spain to the main European capitals, and the risks for those involved are much higher. If commercial smuggling may carry an occasional fine of up to 2,000 euros, the penalty for drug trafficking is jail term.⁴⁰ For obvious reasons, therefore, the number of people involved is considerably lower, and many of them either are emigrants themselves or coordinate with others who are.

While commodity smuggling is regarded as a morally legitimate means to earn a living, drug trafficking is morally objectionable and may not be discussed or practiced with the same openness; the first is considered a licit form of employment, the second an illicit means of rapid enrichment. The distinction between licit and illicit smuggling, clearly distinct from questions about the legality of both trades, is grounded on moral principles and invoked in connection with religious precepts. Riffians invariably relate this to the harm that comes from drug consumption, so that when asked about why drug trafficking is reprehensible they will say something like ‘because it harms other people, and Allah does not want us to cause harm to others’. Licit smuggling is consequently defined as any kind of smuggling that does not cause harm to others, while illicit smuggling is liable to be harmful and is therefore *harām* (prohibited).⁴¹

⁴⁰ Although well-established ties of patronage with local military and police forces ensure a certain degree of protection for networks operating in the area. In January 2009, to take a telling example, a Riffian man from the frontier-town of Beni Enzar was arrested for working as an intermediary for a drug-trafficking network operating in Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and the enclave of Melilla. His arrest led to the detention of 96 people in the province of Nador: 26 civilians, 29 members of the Royal Marine, 17 members of the Royal Gendarmerie, 23 members of the Auxiliary Forces and one member of the Royal Armed Forces. See M. Abouabdillah, M. ‘Evolution de l’affaire de trafic de drogue a Nador’, *Le Journal de Tanger*, <http://www.lejournaldetanger.com/article.php?a=2592>; MAP, ‘Arrestation d’un trafiquant de drogue à Nador’, *Aujourd’hui Le Maroc*, num. 1855, <http://www.aujourdhui.ma/nation-details66879.html>.

⁴¹ I will return to this particular point, and more generally to drug trafficking and money laundering in the next chapter.

Locals publicly dissociate themselves from suspected drug lords and drug dealers, and drug traffickers themselves often express a wish to ‘retire’ from the trade and start a legitimate business.⁴² Yet, few are the adult men who do not, occasionally if not regularly, smoke *kif* in company of others and, as everyone in Nador knows, at least part of the much-valued emigrant remittances originate in the drug trade.⁴³ Behind the moral rhetoric, therefore, lies a more complex reality. As with most potentially objectionable activities, from instances of mildly inappropriate behaviour to more ‘serious’ offenses like alcohol consumption or adultery, in the case of drug trafficking Riffians subscribe to an implicit ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy. As Riffian men repeatedly told me, ‘whatever happens in the street stays in the street and whatever happens at home stays at home’.

5.4 Defining Riffian identity: Berbers, Christians and Arabs

I began the chapter by drawing a comparison between the situation found across the Melillan border and the economic structure that sustains gated communities globally. I would like to end by returning to this point and exploring the social dimension of this comparison. In chapter 3 we saw how, among Melillan Christians, the fear of being overcome by the Muslim population serves to generate a form of ‘ethnic’ solidarity that reinforces the Muslim-Christian divide and groups together Moroccan and Melillan Berbers as a common ‘enemy’. In many ways, I argued, this discourse of fear resembles the narratives found in ethnocratic states. The same kind of discourse is found amongst residents of elite compounds like gated communities. But what is the other side of this story? I have argued that privileged enclaves rely on the labour of neighbouring,

⁴² Scheele (2008) reports the same kind of narratives in Al-Khalil, a smuggling hub in northern Mali. In Al-Khalil, she notes, the distinction between different forms of trade is drawn not according to state law but following Islamic morality, opposing the *frūd al-halāl* (licit trafficking) to the *frūd al-harām* (illicit trafficking), with the latter referring almost exclusively to trade in narcotics. As in Nador, so in Al-Khalil, ‘successful *ashāb al-frūd* are keen to “legalise” their business and invest surplus profit in legal or at least morally acceptable trade if they possibly can’ (ibid. 7-8).

⁴³ It should be noted that smoking *kif* is, compared to other drugs, a relatively acceptable activity amongst men. While most Riffian men would show little concern about smoking *kif* in relatively public spaces, the same cannot be said of drinking alcohol or consuming other types of drug such as cocaine.

underprivileged populations. In Kuwait, as we saw, these are foreign migrants with no access to Kuwaiti citizenship. In Melilla, they are Riffian (and at times Arab) frontier-workers and smugglers. How do *they* conceptualise their position within this system? What is the reverse of the discourse of fear found amongst Christian elites? In other words, how do Riffians on the Moroccan side of the border view the Spanish enclave and how do they relate to the Christian population? In order to answer these questions, we must turn once again to the domain of morality.

The Riffian community is imagined as a moral community. The rhetoric and practice of morality forms the basis on which the idea of a coherent, homogeneous society is built, and moral practices and principles are invoked as a means to mark a distinction between the Riffian community and a gradient of ‘others’ who are grouped together under the category of foreigners (Tar. *erbarrani* [foreigner], also *arumi* [Christian, and by extension, European]). Witchcraft narratives recount the story of the Riffian emigrant who, seduced by the charms of a European woman, lost his way and reason and broke ties with family and friends in the homeland, while rumours of Chinese traders feeding on stray dogs and cats in the port of Beni Enzar, across the border from Melilla, run wild. American Jews, I was told, planned the 9/11 attacks, while, closer to home, an ‘Arab’ woman keeps her fridge under lock and key while her children starve and beg from neighbours. The stories have a common theme that is by no means unique to Riffians; in a sense, all communities are moral communities.⁴⁴ Seduction, depravity, cruelty and greed appear in these narratives as fundamentally foreign, tracing the limits of a community defined by its moral distinctiveness.

In the Rif, the contrast between moral and immoral peoples relies on a conceptual association between moral order and Islam found generally in the Muslim world; conversion to Islam and acceptance of the rules and principles of morality dictated by the Muslim tradition are the only means by which foreigners can be incorporated into the community. Stories of Spanish women who converted to Islam

⁴⁴ As Herzfeld notes, insofar as they imply a qualitative distinction between insiders and outsiders, moral terms can be seen as markers of lines of social and cultural inclusion and exclusion; ‘ultimately, the language of national or ethnic identity is indeed a language of morality’ (2005: 79).

upon marrying a Riffian were presented as examples of successful integration in the community ('she prayed and kept Ramadan, and she would even wear the *jellaba* [the traditional Moroccan dress] and the *forana* [Tar. 'headscarf'], like us!'). Similarly, signs that a 'foreigner' had adopted, however partially, the Riffian moral code were met with questions about his or her identity ('what are you, a Spaniard or a Muslim?'). Local conceptions of identity are built on this association between morality and religion, which serves to mark the boundaries of the Riffian community vis-à-vis Melillan Christians and, more generally, vis-à-vis Europeans. For now, let us concentrate on the relationship with Melilla.

If belonging to the Riffian community implies sharing a certain code of morality and abiding by a number of explicit and implicit rules of public behaviour, the Spaniard is defined, from the Riffian viewpoint, by his detachment from this code and therefore by his structural immorality.⁴⁵ On several occasions during fieldwork, the opposition between Muslims and Spaniards was brought up as a means to express the contrast between the Riffian moral order and Spanish moral 'disorder'; amongst Christians, no strict rules seemed to regulate the interaction between the sexes, women did not cover their bodies and behaved immodestly, the boundaries between the private and the public domain appeared to be blurred, and the norms of hospitality that characterise the Riffian community were absent. In other words, this was a world where things that ought to remain hidden were exposed (women's bodies, intimate relations between couples, and so forth), and things that ought to be exposed remained hidden (generosity or hospitality towards strangers, for example). Contact between the two contrasting moral orders, like

⁴⁵ I use the term 'structural' advisedly, for it is not a matter of particular Spaniards displaying various forms of immoral behaviour; rather, it is the Spanish/Christian community as a whole that, insofar as it functions on the basis of a different moral code, becomes structurally immoral.

contact between any conflicting categories, had to be regulated.⁴⁶

Here, questions of morality, pollution and identity become muddled. Christians are not simply immoral; they are also polluted and, consequently, polluting. In the Rif, as in most Muslim societies, notions of cleanliness are intimately connected to religious ritual. Like all practising Muslims, to prepare for prayer Riffians wash their body several times a day in a ritual performance known as *wudu*'.⁴⁷ This is no triviality, for dirt is conceived as an external element that contaminates the body through 'unmediated' contact. Water thus serves to purify those parts of the body that come into regular contact with the 'outside world', as well as those that may 'transfer' dirt from the outside to the inside. This process of cleansing is crucial to ritual purity, for with dirt comes danger. Consider, for instance, the following story, told to me by a young Riffian woman:

A man in America works in a street market. There is dust on the ground, and on the dust, there is a rat. The man breathes the dust. When he goes home, he performs *wudu*', but he forgets to clean the inside of his nose. At first he is alright, but a few minutes later he dies, because of the microbes [Sp. *microbios*] in the dust.⁴⁸

These ideas extend beyond the ritual domain, informing conceptions of religious, social and moral order more generally. The house, for example, is subject to a similar cleansing process. Every morning and several times throughout the day, all the rooms of the house are cleaned in depth, washing away dirt and dust with water.⁴⁹ Keeping one's body, clothing, and house clean is central to Riffian conceptions of

⁴⁶ Anthropologists have long known that boundaries between categories often constitute a source of danger. Mary Douglas (1984 [1966]), Arnold Van Gennep (1960) or Edmund Leach (1964), to name a few, remarked on the potential dangers of anomalous stages and categories. In the Muslim world, this danger is embodied in the figure of the *jinn*, spirits which can possess human beings and deprive them of their capacity to reason and control their passions. As Jon Anderson writes, *jinn* 'inhabit the margins where order created by humans fades off into unorganized states such as the edges of villages and fields, the grass along ditches, rocks beside paths, drainspouts, the doorways of houses, stables and gateways ... *jinn* are attracted to disorder and entropy within the realms of human activity ... and are manifest in anxieties of all kinds about alterations of vital states that make orderly relations problematic' (1985: 206). Morocco's *jnun* (plural of *jnin*) inhabit exactly the same margins.

⁴⁷ Ideally, *wudu*' is performed five times a day, before each prayer. The ritual involves washing one's hands and forearms, feet, neck and face, as well as the inside of the ears, mouth, nose and genitalia three times over. That is, those parts which mark the limits of (and access to) the *inside* of the body (mouth, nose, ears, genitalia) and those which come into contact with the *outside* environment (hands, forearms, feet, neck and face).

morality and personhood, and informs the ways in which Riffians relate to non-Riffians and, especially, to non-Muslims. As a non-Muslim guest, for instance, I was invited to shower several times a day, repeatedly instructed not to walk barefoot around the house (except on carpets, which are also washed regularly), and asked not to leave windows open and not to wear open toe sandals outside. Riffians are well acquainted with Christian customs and habits, and interaction between the two groups is mediated by the maintenance of strict norms of segregation designed to avoid the dangers of pollution. I was once told, for instance, that

Berbers may sleep with Christians and eat with Jews; but never eat with Christians or sleep with Jews. For Christians have dirty ways of eating and Jews dirty ways of sleeping. Jews prepare the meat like we do and they are clean with their food, so we can eat together. But they are dirty in their sleep; they drool. Christians are cleaner so we can sleep together.

At first sight, the contrast seems straightforward: Jewish and Muslim slaughtering and food processing rituals follow similar rules, rules that are not shared by Christians. Thus, while a Muslim may eat *kosher* food without risking defilement, Christian food is intrinsically polluted. But there is more to it; the contrast between the sharing of food (a public act) and sexual intercourse (a strictly private sphere, *especially* in the Middle East) is important. Also relevant is the fact that the number of Jews in the region is negligible and that, consequently, Riffians have little need to enforce strict

⁴⁸ Neither the reference to America nor the mention of microbes was unusual. In fact, people constantly told stories of what they called ‘experiences’ (Sp. *experiencias*) in America which had scientifically proven the effectiveness of the teachings from the Qur’an. Another story of this kind, for instance, recounted an ‘experience’ whereby: ‘American scientists washed a dog feeding bowl with bleach and several other kinds of cleaning products, and another bowl in the Islamic way, with water and soil. When they finished washing up they saw that the first bowl still had microbes, while the one they had washed with soil and water didn’t.’

⁴⁹ Water is both purifying and potentially dangerous. Joseph and Joseph (1987: 17) have argued that, in the Rif, ‘water sites such as drains, dirty pools, and other bodies of stagnant water are associated with *jnun*, the malicious, supernatural beings which create mischief among the Riffian. As the association of saintly spirits is to benevolent water, so evil spirits seem to be associated with useless and even dangerous water.’ Evidence from the eastern Rif, however, points to a different conclusion. While it is true that bodies of stagnant water are intrinsically dangerous, running water can pose an equally potent threat. I was told, for instance, that one of the most effective methods to prevent the *jnun* from entering your house is to pour a few drops of milk into the toilet. This would seem to support Joseph and Joseph’s argument regarding stagnant water. Yet, I was also told never to let the running water get into my ears while showering or walk around the house with wet feet because the *jnun* travel through water. The issue, in this case, was not the opposition between stagnant and running water, but the dangers intrinsic to the points of transition between the inside and the outside of the body.

norms of segregation. The reference to Jews, in this context, would be merely anecdotal were it not for the fact that it brings forth a contrast: Christians and Muslims may sleep together on occasion, but whatever connection is established must and will always remain invisible. Segregation between Christians and Muslims is an indisputably public act and, in the public space of social performance, relations between the two are only justified —and justifiable— when restricted to due neighbourly friendliness and commercial transactions. Christians, Riffians —quite rightly— assume, share this approach to ‘inter-religious’ relations. I was often told, for instance, that ‘clean [Sp., *limpios*: clean, pure, impeccable] Spaniards never marry Muslims like us, they marry their own, they only marry other Spaniards. You cannot trust a Spaniard who wants to marry a Muslim, something is wrong there.’

In place of the discourse of fear prevalent amongst Christians, therefore, we find a discourse of morality which is firmly grounded on pollution beliefs. Parallels can be found elsewhere. Judith Okely (1983: 77-104), for instance, describes a similar situation for Traveller-Gypsies in Britain. Although in this case Gypsies are the minority, the economic structure is similar; Gypsies must enter Gorgio territory regularly to perform certain kinds of jobs, generally confined to the so-called informal economy. Relations between Gypsies and Gorgios, Okely argues, are determined by pollution beliefs that classify the Gorgio as polluting. These beliefs ‘are allied to daily, often commonplace practices concerned, for example, with eating, washing, the use of space and the placing of objects in that space’ (ibid. 78). Conformity with these practices allow Gypsies to enter Gorgio territory unharmed, offering a means to preserve the purity of the group while affirming the Gypsies’ identity vis-à-vis the Gorgio majority.⁵⁰ Here, too, the sharing of meals is an intrinsically dangerous activity:

⁵⁰ Interestingly, the contrast between Gypsy and Gorgio conceptions of dirt is replicated between Spanish Gypsies and Riffian emigrants in Spain. Restricted by their low economic status, both communities are forced to settle in the same, often deprived neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Spanish cities. Mainly concerned with the cleanliness of their domestic quarters, Gypsies often leave rubbish lying around in the lobby of the building or by the gates. This is a direct affront to Riffian ideas of cleanliness, and conflicts regularly arise between neighbours over the disposal of rubbish. These concerns are so acute that, in the Riffian homeland, people have begun to adopt common Spanish stereotypes of the ‘*gitanos*’ (Gypsies), associating Gypsies with dirtiness, evil and treachery. ‘Gypsies are bad’ used to say one of my informants; ‘my ex-fiancée, he was such a Gypsy!’ remarked another.

Since commensality is a sign of an affirmation of intimacy, the sharing of eating places with the Gorgio risks not only direct pollution via ‘poisoned’ food, but also secondary contamination by a weakening of the social boundary between the two groups. The precautions and limitations in these circumstances serve as continuing reminders of the need for differentiation (ibid. 84).

Similar rules regulate contact between Riffians and Spaniards across the border. As we have seen, Riffians are required to enter Christian territory regularly. Many do so in a daily struggle for survival, but even those who are not employed as *frontaliers* regularly access the enclave for family matters; relations with Melillan Riffians are close, and the preservation of ties across the border requires regular contact with relatives in the Spanish enclave. In order to avoid pollution, Riffians must navigate Christian territory with care. Most Riffians avoid Christian neighbourhoods altogether when visiting Melilla but, when complete separation is not possible, a few precautions ensure the maintenance of ritual purity. Avoiding Spanish restaurants and grocery stores is the most obvious measure, but there are others. When visiting Melilla with my Moroccan host mother, for example, we had to cross the street several times to avoid contact with Spaniards who were walking their dog. ‘If the dog comes anywhere near me’, she said, ‘I will have to perform *wudu*’ when I get home, and I will have to take all my clothes off and boil them before wearing them again. It’s such an inconvenience! Let us just cross the street’.⁵¹

Melilla, in this regard, functions as a gateway, a ‘window’ that allows Riffians to peer into a much larger foreign space which has long occupied, through emigration, a special place in the Riffian imagination. When one of the daughters in my host family in Selouane was preparing for her first trip to Spain, where she planned to settle with her brother and sisters, the anticipation was entirely overshadowed by a strong anxiety over the encounter with an imagined space of moral and ‘cultural’ difference. She was deeply concerned about not being able to find a job in Spain because of her dress and headscarf

⁵¹ It is interesting to note the generational clash in this regard. While, for many young emigrants, dogs of European pedigree are symbols of modernity to be admired, the older generations continue to profess the traditional aversion to dogs, considered ritually impure in Islam.

(unlike many Riffian girls, who wear Western clothing combined with a small headscarf, she always wore a traditional *jellaba* and a long *forana* which offered her full covering of her body), and asked, in tears, about the customs police, and whether they would try to search her belongings and, specifically, her Qur'an. 'They can't touch it without performing *wudu*!' But they will think I am trying to cause trouble if I don't let them touch it. Do you think I can open it for them, and show them, without them touching it?' Admittedly, Maryam was the most religious of the five sisters. Yet her concerns, and the way in which they were phrased, were far from unusual in a Riffian lower-class family of rural background.

The emphasis on the religious character of this boundary, however, can be misleading. In fact, the Rif's relation to Islam is highly ambivalent. While most Riffians are practising Muslims and identify with Islamic tradition, the Riffian nationalist movement is mainly secularist, and those who consider themselves Riffian nationalists (or, rather, Amazigh nationalists) insist on the non-Islamic roots of Berber tradition.⁵² Admittedly, nationalist intellectuals constitute a minority. Amongst the majority, however, there remains a widespread scepticism about new forms of religious fundamentalism that is representative of a more general attitude towards Arabs and the Islamisation of the Rif.⁵³ This is particularly noticeable in the reaction that most locals

⁵² The Riffian nationalist movement has a long trajectory, dating back to Abd-El-Krim's promulgation of the Republic of the Rif in 1921. Today, the Moroccan state plays an active role in the building of an Amazigh identity through the IRCAM (*Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe*) and its wide range of publications, conferences and events. The emphasis placed in IRCAM-financed publications on a North African, trans-regional Berber identity can be seen as an attempt to dilute Berber political activism in favour of a less threatening, global cultural movement; the banning of the 'Amazigh Moroccan Democratic Party' in 2007 lends support to this conclusion. In the Rif, the number of Amazigh cultural associations has grown in the past decade, mainly through the work of emigrant organisations in Europe (see Eguren 2004). An important aspect of this new Amazigh cultural movement is its emphasis on the secular character of Berber history and tradition. As Ben-Layashi (2007) argues, however, the secularist discourse reflects primarily the work of Berber intellectuals and scholars throughout Morocco, and has not permeated daily life in Berber villages or towns across the country. For a general view of the Berber/Amazigh movement in North Africa, see Maddy-Weitzman 2001; for details on the role of the Moroccan state in the promotion of the Amazigh movement, see Silverstein and Crawford 2004; for the role of secularism in Moroccan Berber activism, Ben-Layashi 2007, and for a case study of Berber activism amongst Riffian emigrants in Europe, see Eguren 2004.

⁵³ It is important to emphasise that this is a highly ambivalent relationship. On the one hand, the Arabisation of Berber regions is seen as a foreign invasion. Poor Arab immigrants in the region are looked down on, and Tarifit continues to be one of the most visible signs of Riffian identity. On the other hand, however, Arabic continues to be the language of education, status and prestige, and knowing how to read and write classical Arabic is something all Riffians take pride in.

have towards the relatively recent presence of small numbers of Muslim fundamentalists in Melilla and among returning migrants in Nador. Known as '*los de las barbas*' ('the bearded ones'), these new 'fundamentalists' and their 'sects' (people literally speak of *sectas*) are the subject of speculation and suspicion. Their radical interpretation of Islam is generally feared and harshly criticised:

Our friend from childhood, Soraya, recently married a bearded one. Before marrying he was a normal lad, but after marrying he turned into a different person. He joined a sect in Melilla, he grew a beard and now he won't let her do anything, not even watch television, because it is *harām*. He even made his six-year-old daughter wear the veil! ... But for him, for him it's different you know? Whatever is *harām* for his wife is *halāl* for him! ... You can't trust them, the bearded ones.⁵⁴

What may initially appear as conflicting discourses are in fact two sides of the same coin. Islam defines Riffians in opposition to Spaniards and Europeans. Logically, different questions are at stake within the Muslim context. A number of common themes emerge, however, if we take a closer look at how Riffians define themselves in opposition to Moroccan Arabs.

The relatively rapid enrichment of the Rif over the past twenty years has attracted increasing numbers of people from poorer regions of Morocco, who move to the province of Nador in search of employment in the booming building industry or as smugglers. Although the numbers are still relatively small, the settlement of Arab migrants has not gone unnoticed by locals, who see their presence as an unwanted intrusion. 'Before', a Riffian man from the border town of Farkhana said,

⁵⁴ The same kind of discourse permeates the narratives of Riffian nationalists. I was told by a group of Riffian intellectuals, for example, that women in the Rif did not veil until seven or eight years ago, and that it was a consequence of the arrival of the 'bearded ones'. The role of women in Riffian society, I was told by a local painter, changed radically with the Islamisation of the region:

Traditionally, Amazigh women did not cover up like Muslim women. They showed their shoulders. Look at the painting; you see how terribly the 'turban' [Sp. *turbante*] looks on her? That is because it is forced! Amongst the Imazighen, woman is greatness, and she rules in the house, and even in war, like the Queen Tihiya! [a 7th century Berber military leader, also known as Queen Kahina] That is what the word woman [Tar. *zamgarz*] means in Tamazight, it means greatness! [Tar. *zemger*].

it was only the Spaniards and us, and we got along just fine. Arabs could not come here before. But now everything has changed, and there is much more contact with Morocco and there are many more Arabs living in Nador.

The words are not unfamiliar. The arrival of a new ‘underclass’ has indeed generated amongst Riffians a discourse reminiscent of that found amongst Melillan Christians. The image of a mythical past of harmony prior to the naturalisation of Melillan Muslims, which I discussed in chapter 3, seems to reappear here in the opposition between Riffians and Arabs. This discourse of ‘solidarity’ between Spanish and Berbers *against* Arabs is, in fact, not uncommon, and relies strongly on some of the ideas about moral pollution and social segregation discussed above. Consider the following remark, made by a young Riffian woman:

This is why Spaniards and Berbers get along, and this is why people in Melilla don’t like Arabs, because they marry Christians [Arab women marry Christian men] and steal their husbands. We Berbers are different from the Arabs. The Berbers, they are like my father, you know, they are *nīshān* [straight] and very strict, and they never marry anyone who is not a Berber. Some people marry out, but these are people who were not born in Morocco [the children of emigrants]. Here in Morocco it is very important for us to marry a Berber. Arabs, on the other hand, they have no problem marrying other people [non-Arabs]. In Melilla, many Arab girls work in Spanish households and often they end up marrying Christian men. This is why Spaniards don’t like Arabs, because they steal their husbands in order to get ‘papers’ [Spanish nationality]. Berber girls never marry Spaniards, they don’t marry anyone who is not a Berber.⁵⁵

At this point it should be evident that the ideal of an endogamous, closed society is central to Riffian discourses of identity. Segregation from the Christian population, particularly when it comes to marriage, is fundamental. Mixed marriages are rare, and often involve Moroccans of Arab, not Riffian descent. By not respecting these rules of segregation, therefore, the morally dissolute Arab ‘intruders’ become a threat to the status between Christians and Muslims. But there is more at work behind these words.

⁵⁵ It is true that Berbers rarely marry Christians, but they do often marry Arabs from the neighbouring province of Oujda. The ideal, however, remains the same, and instances of mixed marriages, however frequent, are invariably treated as exceptions. When a Muslim man marries a Spanish woman, my informant said later that evening, ‘they always end up divorcing, and he goes back to marry a Muslim girl.’

The explicit commentary on ‘Arab customs’ says much about the ways in which Riffians imagine their community: unlike Arabs, Riffians preserve the purity of their group, even if that means renouncing the possibility of obtaining Spanish nationality. Unlike Arabs, Riffians do not mix; unlike Arabs, Riffians are *nīshān*. The Berber proverb says it well: ‘Berbers live alone, like sensible men; Arabs live with one another because of their fear, like sheep’.

5.5 Conclusion

I opened the chapter with a quote whose significance should not go unobserved. The border between Melilla and Nador has undergone important changes since Spain’s incorporation into the European Community. The effect on the regional economy has been substantial. Some of these developments have had a particularly visible impact on the physical landscape of the city, while others have remained hidden from view. For people on both sides of the border, however, one thing is clear: the frontier has nothing to do with them. On this, Christians and Muslims agree: the fence was put there ‘by Europe’ because of ‘the blacks’. Despite regular conflicts at the border between smugglers and customs officers, the fence itself is perceived as an external object, an unavoidable inconvenience directed not at the local population but at a vague category of ‘unwanted’ outsiders ranging from Sub-Saharan Africans to South Asians and Algerians. Of course, the fence *was* built to deter illegal migration, but its effects, we have seen, went well beyond that. On the one hand, the building of the fence led to increasingly restrictive measures to protect the enclave’s new privileged status. On the other hand, it led to the development of a professional smuggling economy that required the labour of thousands of Moroccans. On the whole, it served to institutionalise a structure of power which had long been in place, giving a spatial dimension to the distinction between Spanish and non-Spanish citizens and generating the kind of dynamics found in a number of places across the world, from gated communities in the United States to oil economies in the Middle East. The new legal and political structure,

however, has so far had little effect on what remains, to date, the main symbolic boundary across this border: the opposition between Christians and Muslims.

CHAPTER 6. SECRECY, SUSPICION AND THE UNDERWORLD

Imagine, there are four *mafiosos* sitting at a table. One of them traffics in arms, the other one gold, the third one in diamonds and the fourth one in drugs. There are millions [of euros] sitting right there on the table. If they can't use the money then it will just have to stay in their pockets. But if the government lets them use it, those people would buy land and build property, which would create employment and movements of capital which in turn would benefit everyone. They could solve the financial crisis!

Ahmed, 01/02/2009

6.1 Mistrust, suspicion and the underworld

‘Everything seems strangely believable in Melilla’, wrote a Spanish journalist who had travelled to the enclave to cover the aftermath of the 1985 events.⁵⁶ As I read the article one more time, I am reminded of one of the strangest episodes I experienced in Melilla. I had gone for a walk along the beach, when I saw a man walking in my direction. It was December, and the beach was otherwise deserted. Dressed in a long black coat, with his long white hair tied back, dark sunglasses and a distinctly English air about him, the man looked even more out of place than I did. After exchanging a few side glances, we began to talk. He was indeed English, and his name, he said, was John. I asked him what he was doing in Melilla and my question was met with a stare, followed by hesitation and, finally, a reluctant answer: ‘I buy cars’. By then, I had been in Melilla long enough to know that car dealing in the enclave functioned through international networks of contraband by which luxury cars from Germany and other western European countries were brought into the enclave as private property to be sold at a higher price in Morocco. As the conversation unfolded, however, John told me that he was also involved in the purchase and sale of pretty much anything, from leather accessories online⁵⁷ to property and housing. At this point, the chances of him being involved in money laundering seemed high. Towards the end of the conversation, he

⁵⁶ Grijelmo, A., ‘La Situación en Melilla’, *El País*, 08/02/1987.

⁵⁷ Presumably, he was exporting them from Morocco, known for its high-quality leatherwork.

indulged my suspicion with the following anecdote. He was once in a restaurant in Nador, he said, at a business dinner with ‘important people’, when he overheard two men at a nearby table. They were talking about killing him. As he heard them, he left the restaurant and ran away. ‘They had put a bomb in my car’, he said, ‘but I managed to escape’. The whole conversation must have lasted no more than fifteen minutes and, after we parted, I never saw him again.

What makes this story more than simply a bizarre encounter is that it was strangely believable. If there was any cause for disbelief at all, it was born out of the suspicion that more, not less, lay hidden behind his words. Suspicion towards outsiders takes on a special significance in Melilla, where a large-scale underground economy based on commodity trade, drug trafficking, people smuggling and money laundering is in operation. Melilla’s underground economy rarely comes up directly in everyday conversations; people seldom talk about it unless prompted to do so. When they do, it is often in the form of veiled references or, occasionally, as a piece of gossip regarding a neighbour, relative or acquaintance. Yet, the underworld commands a particular kind of influence over the social milieu. Here, secrecy, rumours and mistrust are an integral part of everyday life, informing both popular rhetoric and official narratives. Suspicion and paranoia are everywhere, and they are contagious.⁵⁸ A Spanish journalist visiting Melilla in 2010 wrote:

Mistrust is the local sport in Melilla ... There is always someone following your steps in Melilla. If you stop by the fence that separates it from Morocco, you run the risk of being approached by two herculean policemen dressed as *poligoneros* [smugglers] who will ask you for your documents, tell you off [for being there] and ask you to keep walking. ‘You can’t be here’. If you are observing how the Moroccan couriers kill themselves dragging the [smuggling] loads through the frontier of Barrio Chino, you may be surprised by two Moroccan policemen dressed in plain clothes who will ask you to identify yourself: ‘You are giving a bad image of our country’. If you photograph a group of legionnaires drenched in sweat running through the pinewoods of *Rostrogordo*, an officer may approach

⁵⁸ While working as a Red Cross volunteer in Melilla’s immigrant internment centre (CETI), for example, I was warned by a colleague that ‘if any information about the internal dealings [*marrones*, literally ‘browns’, used to refer to shady deals] came out’ all the fingers would point at me. ‘When I met you’, he added, ‘I was convinced that you were undercover police’. Similar accusations recurred in many different contexts, involving both people who were a part of the underworld and people who were not.

you defiantly and question you regarding the purpose of your photographs. If you ask too many questions around the mosque after the Friday prayers, you can get into trouble. Rule number one in Melilla: people are very sensitive.⁵⁹

People in Melilla are as prone to prying as they are sensitive about it, particularly when this involves outsiders. But this default attitude of suspicion is not restricted to government officials. In fact, the mistrust displayed by the Spanish and Moroccan authorities in the examples above is replicated at all levels, amongst friends, acquaintances and neighbours, between ‘ethnic-religious’ groups and within them. Everywhere, at all times, suspicion, rumour and mistrust loom on the horizon, threatening to break long-standing ties between people and, at times, serving to generate new ties by creating an illusion of solidarity vis-à-vis the object of mistrust (cf. Newcomb 2004). Relations are created and maintained with caution, and ties are easily broken when accusations of hypocrisy or duplicity arise. Terms like *envidia* (envy) and *desconfianza* (mistrust) function as ‘master signifiers’ which serve to explain and justify the making and unmaking of social relations. Consider, for instance, the following radio advert, broadcast (in Spanish) over the Christmas holiday in Melilla:

Envy, treachery, criticism, gossip, quarrels... they are like a boomerang that turns against he who throws it. Consider a more honest life, more transparent [*limpia*: literally, clean] with everybody else, because when times are hard [*cuando la vida te da un revés*: literally, when life gives you a slap] you start to value what is important, but maybe then it will be too late. Don’t let that happen to you. In these days, enjoy the company of others. From the radio, we wish you a happy holiday.

One would never hear anything of the sort in a Christmas radio-broadcast in mainland Spain.

The central role attributed to duplicity and mistrust in the making and unmaking of social relations cannot be understood without taking into consideration the enclave’s black market economy. As a newcomer, one is constantly warned against trusting people and advised to be cautious in all situations. I was first confronted with these

⁵⁹ Rodríguez, J. ‘Melilla, un laboratorio de convivencia’, *El País*, 25/11/2010.

warnings on my first day in the enclave. At the time I was based in the Moroccan town of Selouane. I had crossed the border with Melilla for the first time to accompany my host mother to buy groceries for Ramadan. After a long negotiation, she consented to let me go for a brief walk around the city on my own while she visited her brother. Minutes later I was sitting outside a little café, waiting for a cup of coffee. The only other customers, two middle-aged Muslim women, were sitting at a table nearby. Five minutes after I had sat down, one of them spoke: ‘you are not from around here, are you?’ —I answered, and asked how she knew— ‘Oh, I can tell. It’s obvious’. I asked again, hoping for a breakthrough anthropological insight, but she would not budge; it was just evident. She conferred briefly with her friend in *chelkha* (as Tarifit is known in Melilla) and spoke once again:

I’m going to give you a piece of advice, because you seem like a good girl. Listen to me: do not trust anybody here. Nobody, you hear me? Do not trust anyone. Melilla is not like the Península [mainland Spain], you have to keep your eyes open here, and never trust anyone.

A few days later, I met a Melillan relative of my host family in Selouane, a young Muslim girl called Amina. Amina showed me around Melilla’s city centre and rapidly warned me:

You need to be careful. Here we all know each other. They all know me, so I never have any problems, but they don’t know you, so they could say or do something to you. Melilla is dangerous and you really shouldn’t trust anyone here!

The phrase (‘do not trust anyone’) became a *leitmotiv* of my fieldwork; everyone —not only in Melilla but also in Nador, where I was constantly reminded that ‘trust can kill you’— agreed that trust was a dangerous thing.

It would be imprudent to assume a direct correlation between narratives of mistrust and the region’s black market economy. Concerns over an omnipresent possibility of betrayal often appeared in the context of neighbourly and family gossip and, of course, not all the people who insistently reminded me not to trust anybody were involved in ‘the underworld’. Yet, it would be equally problematic to assume that no

relation exists between the two; undoubtedly, the kind of society people live in informs the nature and character of social relations. Indeed, as we shall see, both in Melilla and in Nador there exists a certain class of rumours that speak precisely of the hidden connections between the domain of everyday life and the invisible workings of the underground economy. As Van Schendel has noted, at the geographical limits of the state, where the public violation of the law becomes particularly acute, ‘what cannot be seen must be imagined, and what can be seen might only be the tip of the iceberg’ (van Schendel and Abraham 2005: 23).

6.2 The underworld unveiled

The paranoid style in which some of the concerns above are voiced can be misleading. Not all the fears expressed belong exclusively in people’s imagination. Some are the result of popular readings of well-documented facts; others are extracted from a pool of shared knowledge available to all Melillans. Along with ‘journalistic’ references to the banks, supermarkets and commercial establishments found to conduct illegal currency exchange in one of the numerous anti-laundering police operations, for instance, people tell stories of policemen accepting bribes from people-smugglers to finance their own cocaine addiction, or of a group of boys finding a box full of weapons in the compartment of a ferry, a well-known diamond trafficker nicknamed ‘Papi’, or a famous doctor who was caught smuggling gold out of the enclave in his small aircraft. These characters are all part of the popular narratives through which people try to express a shared knowledge of Melilla’s underworld. Rumour and fact are combined in detailed accounts in which the enclave invariably appears as a façade behind which unseen forces operate.

How much of what people suspect is actually true is hard to tell, but there is evidence to suggest that at least part of it is. As discussed in chapter 2, Melilla has long been an important hub in trade networks linking Europe and Asia to Africa. Since the mid-1980s, however, the Spanish enclave has also been an important hub for money-

laundering networks linked to the drug trade across the border. Melilla is located 50 km east of the central Rif, a mountainous region of northern Morocco which hosts one of the world's largest cannabis plantations. Since the mid-1980s, the hashish produced in the central Rif has supplied European markets, with the area of Nador across the border from Melilla playing a key role in the distribution and sale of the drug.⁶⁰ Today, drug trafficking networks operating in Nador have also absorbed the distribution of cocaine grown in South America and brought into the region through West Africa (Chouvy 2005). Long-standing migratory routes link the eastern Rif to a number of European countries (including Germany, Holland, Belgium and Spain), and Riffian emigrants themselves are often in charge of the sale and distribution of both cocaine and hashish in their host countries (ibid.). Drugs are sent on speedboats directly from Nador to the Mediterranean coast of Spain and distributed throughout Europe. Until very recently these operations were carried out in plain sight; the Spanish newspaper *El País*, for example, reported in 2006 and 2007 that up to two hundred zodiac motorboats used for transporting hashish were based in the Lagoon of Mar Chica (Nador), with thirty to forty of them departing towards the Spanish coast several days a week each loaded with one to five tonnes of hashish.⁶¹

The revenues generated through drug trafficking are made legal through well-established money-laundering networks which rely heavily on the border itself and on the different legal frameworks found on either side. There is well-documented evidence that the enclave is indeed an important centre of operations for drug lords based in

⁶⁰ According to data published by the Spanish newspaper *El País*, in 2003 there were 134,000 hectares of cannabis crops in Morocco, which produced 3,080 tonnes of hashish annually, with a total commercial of ten billion euros (see Cembrero, I. 'La flotilla de la droga zarpa de Nador', *El País*, 19/11/2006). Under growing international pressure, the Moroccan government succeeded in reducing the volume of cannabis to 60,000 hectares in 2008, but Morocco continues to be the main supplier of cannabis in Europe and was, until recently, the largest producer of cannabis in the world (Chouvy 2005).

⁶¹ The first article appeared on 19 November 2006; two days later, the Moroccan government announced the arrest of four drug lords in Nador, together with the confiscation of 24 motorboats and 10 tonnes of hashish. Considering that the opening in the Lagoon through which the motorboats departed is barely 120 meters wide, as noted by the author of the article, it is hard to believe that the Moroccan authorities were unaware of these operations prior to the article (see Cembrero, I. 'La flotilla de la droga zarpa de Nador', *El País*, 19/11/2006 and Cembrero I. 'Golpe al narcotráfico en el este de Marruecos', *El País*, 22/11/2006). Further articles in 2007 (Duva, J. 'Lanchas de hachís a 120 por hora', *El País*, 18/10/2007) and 2008 ('Una "armada" de hachís, lista para zarpar desde Nador', *El Mundo*, 12/05/2008) attest to the continuation of this trade.

neighbouring Nador.⁶² The Spanish enclave serves as an offshore facility where the money generated through drug-trafficking and through the smuggling of goods across the border can be exchanged, transferred or invested in real estate. The enclave is ideally suited to the business. Legal differences across the border generate opportunities for anonymous financial transactions, as Moroccan residents can open bank accounts in Melilla with relative ease. Its status as a free port also means that large-scale international transactions can easily go unnoticed and cover-businesses can mimic standard commercial operations without arousing suspicion. Finally, the large volume of commerce which circulates through Melilla makes currency trade—a preferred method for laundering drug money—a common form of exchange. Rather than being an obstacle, therefore, the frontier seems to work to the advantage of drug lords and money launderers.

In 1999, 2002 and 2005, the Spanish authorities carried out a number of anti-money laundering operations in the enclave. These operations were reported in the Spanish press, with the national newspaper *El País* writing extensive reports on Melilla.⁶³ Supermarkets, bank branches, consultancies and a number of other establishments were found to conduct illegal currency exchange.⁶⁴ The raid of 2005, to take a telling example, concluded with the dismantling of a network suspected to have laundered at least 350 million euros.⁶⁵ This network, with people operating in Ceuta,

⁶² In 1999, forty-four people were arrested on ‘money laundering and drug trafficking’ charges in Melilla; a number of them were bank employees involved in illegal currency exchange and working for a larger drug-trafficking network linking Nador to Spain (see ‘44 detenidos en una redada antidroga y contra el lavado de dinero en Melilla’, *El País*, 06/07/1999). Over ten years later, in January 2011, a police operation dismantled, in Madrid, ‘the largest cocaine laboratory ever found in Europe’. The ensuing investigation led to the arrest of a deputy of Melilla’s Coalition Party (CPM) and a well-known Melillan lawyer for their alleged involvement in laundering money proceeding from *hashish* and cocaine trade through a ‘shell’ real-estate company in Melilla. The drug-trafficking network extended from northern Morocco to Holland. See Rubio, A. and Sánchez, P. ‘Detenido un diputado de Melilla por blanquear 4 millones para un ‘narco’ al que ayudó a huir’, *El Mundo*, 19/01/2011.

⁶³ See S.G.D, ‘Un gran centro de contratación de droga y blanqueo de dinero’, *El País*, 08/07/2002 and Ramos, T. ‘Detenido el consejero de Economía de Melilla por un delito de blanqueo de dinero del narcotráfico’, *El País*, 27/11/2002.

⁶⁴ The Moroccan dirham is a non-convertible currency, which means that it cannot be legally exchanged for any other currency outside of Morocco. There is a large black market of currency exchange in both Spanish enclaves as well as in the neighbouring Moroccan territories.

⁶⁵ See Rodríguez, J. A., ‘Una red blanqueó 350 millones del hachís con transferencias a China’, *El País*, 17/11/2005.

Melilla and Malaga, laundered money from the *hashish* trade by depositing the cash in Melilla's banks and arranging international transfers to China as a supposed payment for the sale of luxury car accessories. Two hundred bank accounts were blocked in eighteen bank branches, and fourteen people were arrested in Melilla (as well as two in Malaga and three in Ceuta), including a well-known businessman who owned a company dedicated to the import of manufactured goods from Asia.

According to Ahmed, a well-to-do money launderer and occasional trafficker who became a regular informant in Melilla, a common practice amongst drug lords in Nador is to pay poor Riffian peasants to open a non-resident bank account in Melilla and make them authorised users of this account. The peasant would be paid a small fee, and the drug lords would have a bank account which could never be traced back to them. Other, more sophisticated methods of money laundering include forging invoices by using information from real companies abroad to justify large deposits of money, setting up a cover business and inflating the costs, or arranging international transfers via a third party. According to him, this last method is the most popular now that police investigations have become more frequent and effective. He explained the logistics to me as follows:

A common way of laundering money is to get someone to make a transfer to a foreign account in China, for instance. You find someone who has the capital, let us call him A. Then someone who works with you, someone you trust (B), will travel to wherever A lives. At the same time A will send one of his people, C, to Melilla. B will then make a transfer for a pre-arranged sum of money from A's account to an anonymous account in Switzerland, China or some other foreign country. Simultaneously, you give C the same amount of money plus an extra, all in cash. In this way, the cash will be in the hands of A, who has the means to justify the possession of this capital, while you will get the same amount in a bank account in a foreign country but the transfer is invisible to the Spanish authorities, and they can never trace it back to you.

The idea that the deregulation of the financial system on a global scale has facilitated the absorption of illegal capital into mainstream financial channels is

certainly not new,⁶⁶ but it is a point that bears repetition. Indeed, offshore financial banking and lack of control over international transfers have been one of the most valuable instruments for the money laundering industry. The adoption of new regulatory policies for international banking in the aftermath of 9/11 complicated the logistics of money laundering significantly,⁶⁷ but, as Ahmed's account reveals, there are numerous mechanisms to circumvent increased surveillance. According to him, in fact, the main obstacle faced by drug lords and money launderers is not the laundering itself, but spending the money inconspicuously:

There is a lot more money than you think here, but people have to just sit on it because they cannot use it. I bought two cars and I already got a letter from the Treasury Department. But I've learned my lesson now, and the next car I buy I will buy it in Germany, then drive it here and have it registered. The key is to never have anything registered in your name. It's a problem, though, because in Melilla all you can spend your money on is buying land, houses and cars.

Ahmed's testimony attests to the scale of Melilla's underground economy. Even though no official data on the scale of money laundering in the region are available, a number of traits are telling. One is the unusually high number of bank branches and the volume of bank deposits, second in Spanish territory only to Madrid.⁶⁸ Similarly revealing are the high volume of currency trade⁶⁹ and the size of the construction sector,

⁶⁶ See, for instance, Hampton (1996) or Palan (1998 and 2003).

⁶⁷ After 9/11, the U.S. government implemented a number of policies to increase control over international banking in order to target the finance networks funding organisations classed as 'terrorist'. U.S. congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act, which granted government and judiciary institutions the right to summon financial records from banks and other financial institutions (both national and foreign) working on U.S. territory. Following pressure from the U.S., over one hundred countries passed laws increasing control over financial institutions to facilitate criminal investigation of terrorist financing and money laundering. For details on post-9/11 financial regulations in the U.S. and worldwide see FATF (2008) and Tompkins (2002).

⁶⁸ According to journalist Ignacio Cembrero, 'the revenues generated by contraband, together with the laundered money from the hashish trade, explain, in part, [the fact that] after Madrid, bank branches in Ceuta and Melilla are the ones that accumulate the most money in deposits, according to a report by *Caja España*' (see Cembrero, I. 'La muerte de Safia, la porteadora', *El País*, 04/01/2009).

⁶⁹ Before Spain adopted the euro as the official currency, Melilla was the city where most currency exchanges occurred in Spain. While in Ceuta, in 1997, currency exchange amounted to 1.23% of the national total, in Melilla the percentage was 10.42% (Goytisolo 2003: 138, 141). The volume of currency trade is now a less useful criterion, however, given that a large percentage of transactions of this kind go unnoticed.

for investing in property and building is one of the preferred methods for laundering money. In fact, the construction sector is one of the strongest in the city, second only to the services sector, and it is worth noting that the price of a house in Melilla is about the same as the price of a house in cities like Barcelona or Madrid. Despite the limited size of the enclave, this cannot be explained by a scarcity of houses or land, for, over the last decade, the number of new houses and apartment buildings under construction has grown steadily.⁷⁰ Finally, one of the most evident indications of a money laundering economy is the existence of commercial establishments which remain open despite having no customers and being evidently unprofitable. For example, at the beginning of my stay in Melilla I decided to rent a car for a few days to visit the different frontier posts in the enclave. I found a small car rental agency in a narrow alley behind the main square of the city. The store manager reluctantly informed me, after a long wait, that the cheapest car they had would cost me nine hundred euros for a one-week rental. In a twelve kilometre square city, where the average family owns two cars and there is no international tourism, the very idea of anyone opening a car rental agency was bizarre; that the prices should be higher than in a city like Barcelona or Madrid was otherworldly. But this was the beginning of my fieldwork, so I walked away, perplexed, and wondering how much a taxi would cost. It was much later that I began to entertain the thought that the agency may have been a cover to launder money. Months after I had left the field, as I was browsing through a local Melillan newspaper on the internet, I came across the name of that same rental agency. It had been shut down in 2002 as the owner stood trial accused of money laundering.⁷¹

Melilla's underground economy encompasses a wide range of illegal operations beyond money laundering, from the drug trade itself to the contraband of goods across the border or the illegal hiring of Moroccan workers for the services and construction sectors. Money laundering, however, generates a particular kind of dynamic. Its inner workings remain hidden from view, and only traces are visible. Here there are no

⁷⁰ See S.G.D., 'Un gran centro de contratación de droga y blanqueo de dinero', *El País*, 08/07/2002.

⁷¹ See 'Destituido el consejero de Economía', *El Mundo*, 27/11/2002. The case was shelved in 2005 for lack of evidence, which explains how I ended up in the same agency in 2008.

speedboats loaded with hashish departing from the shore in plain view, no clear knowledge of where this shadow economy lies or what it entails. In its stead, there are rumours, hearsay, suspicions and suppositions. In his analysis of secrecy and secret societies, Simmel offers an insight which is crucial to understand the specificity of Melilla's underworld and, more importantly, people's relation to it. He writes:

Ever since traffic in economic values has been carried on by means of money alone, an otherwise unattainable secrecy has become possible. Three characteristics of the monetary form of value are relevant here: its compressibility, which permits one to make somebody rich by slipping a check into his hand without anybody's noticing it; its abstractness and quality-less, through which transactions, acquisitions, and changes in ownership can be rendered hidden and unrecognizable in a way impossible where values are owned only in the form of extensive, unambiguously tangible objects; and finally, its effect-at-a-distance, which allows its investment in very remote and ever-changing values, and thus its complete withdrawal from the eyes of the immediate environment. These possibilities of dissimulation develop in the measure in which the money economy expands, and they are bound to show their dangers in economic action involving foreign moneys (Simmel 1950a: 335).⁷²

The 'mysterious' qualities of money as a commodity were of course noted by Marx.⁷³ Simmel's examples, however, are particularly relevant to our context. Unlike the drug trade, which relies on the distribution of a material substance and therefore a tangible object, money-laundering moves through entirely invisible channels. As Simmel notes, slipping a check into someone's hand can go unnoticed. Transactions between partners—whether people, banks or commercial establishments—remain hidden in a system which allows endless 'possibilities of dissimulation'.

⁷² Simmel uses the argument to present an evolutionary analysis of the role of secrecy in society, arguing that 'with growing cultural expediency, general affairs became ever more public, and individual affairs ever more secret' (1950a: 336). According to him, 'politics, administration, and jurisdiction thus have lost their secrecy and inaccessibility in the same measure in which the individual has gained the possibility of ever more complete withdrawal, and in the same measure in which modern life has developed, in the midst of metropolitan crowdedness, a technique for making and keeping private matters secret, such as earlier could be attained only by means of spatial isolation' (ibid. 336-337). The assumption that state affairs have become more transparent has been criticised by West and Sanders (2003), who argue that transparency is better conceived as a rhetorical and ideological tool than as a property of the modern state. On the other hand, as Dresch (1995) shows, at least in some places, individual affairs have a tendency to become public.

⁷³ According to Marx, 'it is ... just this ultimate money form of the world of commodities that actually conceals, instead of disclosing, the social character of private labour, and the social relations between the individual producers' (Marx 1960 [1867]: 86).

6.3 The hidden hand: secrecy, conspiracy and rumour

Melilla's underworld is not a secret in the strict sense of the word, for most Melillans are well aware of its existence. If anything, the underworld is an open or, in Taussig's (1999) terminology, a public secret.⁷⁴ Yet, the sets of relations it generates mirror those engendered by secrets. Secrets are a specific kind of knowledge distinct from everyday knowledge or belief; they generate a dynamic of exclusion and inclusion, and institute a position of exception for those who 'hold' it (Simmel 1950a). As Jenkins (1999: 226) puts it, 'people can only be let in on a secret; it does not by that token become common knowledge, even if, in the extreme case, everybody knows it: the secret is quite a different sort of knowledge to common knowledge or common sense'. Indeed, the kind of knowledge that Melillans have of the enclave's underworld shares both of the principles which Jenkins identifies as being at work in secrecy: an outward movement, by which secrecy propagates itself through sharing, discovery or betrayal; and an inward movement, that is, a structure of secrets within secrets by which 'even when you have been let into the secret, things are not what they seem: there is more to know, there is an inner council, or deeper knowledge to be obtained' (ibid.). Knowledge of Melilla's underworld propagates itself through rumour, suspicion and everyday talk; yet, it also extends inwards in a structure of infinite concentric circles where there is always an imagined residue which remains hidden.

The secret, in this case, is not so much the underworld *per se*, but its inner workings; *who* is involved in it and *how* it works, rather than what it is. Because what is (believed to be) known can rarely be proven or confirmed, the knowledge of Melilla's underworld takes on the quality of a rumour, or even a conspiracy theory. Conspiracy theories have traditionally found a fertile ground in the Middle East. Anthropologists and other academics have noted the appeal that narratives of suspicion hold in the

⁷⁴ That is, a secret which is 'generally known but cannot be articulated' (ibid. 5). In this sense, it should be distinguished from the kind of secrets described, for example, by Piliavsky (2011) for Rajasthan (India), where the secret is circulated in the open and 'enthusiastically articulated' in public contexts' (ibid. 291) and where the discourse of secrecy itself 'generates mystified knowledge that acts as a screen for the absent, the well-known, and the banal' (ibid.).

region.⁷⁵ Middle Eastern conspiracy theories have been analysed as a creative form of political analysis (Anderson 1996) and as ‘theories of human agency, power and knowledge’ (Tapper 2000). Narratives of suspicion more generally can be seen as a question of secrecy and the dangers of public knowledge (Dresch 2000). As Anderson argues, conspiracy theories cannot be abstracted from

an emphasis, which is frequently reported in domain after domain of Middle Eastern life, place on knowledge and on techniques for gaining, ascertaining, and evaluating knowledge ... Knowledge is the value here, the end; in such a setting, conspiracy theories assume the significance first of means to that end and finally as that end itself (1996: 100).

A fundamental element at play is the protection of ‘private’ knowledge from the gaze of the outsider: ‘whatever the specific pattern, caution about private truth seems basic; to list what elsewhere might be public knowledge will be problematic, as indeed it often is in Middle Eastern cases’ (Dresch 2000: 111). Much of this caution is directed at the foreigner; that is, at those standing outside the ‘cone of privacy’ (ibid. 117). In Iranian conspiracy theories, for example, the conspirators are always foreign powers, whether governments, institutions or people. Here, the ‘hidden hand’ lies beyond reach, in the more or less abstract category of ‘the outside world’ (cf. Tapper 2000).

Narratives of suspicion in Melilla are not inscribed in this general pattern. Outsiders are treated with caution, their questions met with mistrust; yet, the central object of suspicion is not the workings of a foreign government or its secret agents, but a local underground economy whose traces are visible on both sides of the border. This underground economy is the material support for the imagined, mysterious underworld

⁷⁵ Daniel Pipes (1996), for example, has argued that it is futile to try to understand political culture in the Middle East without recognising the significance of conspiracy theories. The prevalence of these kinds of narratives, however, need not be attributed to a Middle Eastern ‘conspirational mentality’, as Pipes does. In fact, conspiracy theories can hardly be said to be peculiar to the Middle East; a brief contact with popular American TV series will show that in ‘the West’ they enjoy as wide and mainstream an audience. The currency of conspiracy theories in the U.S. (see Hofstadter’s 1964 piece for a classic example; more recently Melley [2000] has written on American post-war conspiracy theories), and elsewhere (see Marcus [1999] for cases on Italy, Slovenia, Brazil, Russia, Britain and the US, and West and Sanders [2003] for cases on Nigeria, Korea, Mozambique and Indonesia among others) shows the appeal of these narratives worldwide. There is a case to be made for the significance of narratives of suspicion in the Middle East; this, however, rests not on a type of ‘mentality’ but on a particular understanding of knowledge, of the boundaries between the private and the public domain, and of the dangers intrinsic to that boundary.

which informs local relations and narratives. Because the underworld is not seen as a foreign import, rumours and suspicion are directed inwards, towards neighbours, acquaintances and relatives. It is thus not simply a matter of guarding the boundaries of privacy and treating with suspicion unwanted quests for knowledge, or of imagining hidden, foreign forces behind local structures of power. Instead, it is a question of dealing with the knowledge of an underground economy whose existence is certain but whose workings remain occult. In this context, narratives of suspicion cannot be understood without considering the existence of an invisible economy which makes it impossible to determine both the economic status of relatives and neighbours and the legitimacy of its sources. West and Sanders (2003) have argued that conspiracy theories and occult cosmologies share a similar structure. Occult cosmologies, they write,

suggest that there is more to what happens in the world than meets the eye – –that reality is anything but “transparent”. More specifically, they claim that power operates in two separate yet related realms, one visible, the other invisible; between these two realms, however, there exist causal links, meaning that invisible powers sometimes produce visible outcomes (ibid. 6).

This, West and Sanders argue, mirrors closely the workings of conspiracy theories. The rhetoric of transparency that today populates political discourse, they claim, coexists with a growing sense that ‘power remains, notwithstanding official pronouncements, at least somewhat opaque’ (ibid. 2). The suspicion of an invisible structure of power which can influence the world of the visible is thus a common feature of both phenomena which betray ‘profound suspicions of power’ (ibid. 7).

In Melilla, people’s concern with the underworld functions in a similar manner; the idea that there are two realms, one visible—including the ‘common people’, but also government officials, the city council and the state’s security apparatus at large—and one invisible—mainly the drug trade and money laundering—and that power operates in the interstices between the two is common currency amongst Melillans. It is generally assumed that political power and corruption go hand in hand, and that there are strong connections between the underworld and ‘the surface’ which are hidden from

view. The idea that corruption is an integral part of political life is prevalent and, although direct accusations are rare, there is a tacit understanding that political and financial elites in the city are involved in the enclave's underground economy. This knowledge is also shared in political circles. In 1998, for example, the Popular Party's senator for Melilla, Aurel Sava, publicly accused the local government of benefiting from money from the drug trade, the arms trade and people smuggling. He compared Melilla to Sodom and Gomorrah, and described it as a city 'where there is no law, no Constitution, and where blackmail and nepotism [*amiguismo*] are a daily occurrence [*el pan de todos los días*]' (cited in Goytisolo 2003: 138).⁷⁶ When, in 2002, the Secretary of Treasury and Economy in Melilla was arrested and charged with participating in money laundering operations⁷⁷, few in the enclave were surprised. Everyone knows that corruption is pervasive in political circles, even if, most often, it is successfully kept hidden from the general public.

Like secrets, conspiracy theories establish a boundary between those with access—to resources, information, power—and those without (Anderson 1996, cf. Simmel 1950a).⁷⁸ In Melilla, the boundary is clearly drawn around the political and financial elite. Both Muslims and Christians are well aware that there is an oligarchy within the bureaucratic milieu. For example, when I asked the director of a local NGO which has

⁷⁶ Admittedly, the statement was made at a time when the Popular Party was the opposition party, and can be seen as a political weapon directed at the city's authorities. Yet, this kind of accusation is not thrown around freely in places like Burgos or La Rioja; in Melilla, however, these are plausible allegations. For details of the accusation and the ensuing controversy see B.R. 'El ejecutivo denunciará a Sava por decir que se financia con narcotráfico', *ABC*, 11/06/1998, p. 84, and Rubio, B. 'El PP dice que con Palacios se ha incrementado el blanqueo de dinero del narcotráfico en Melilla', *ABC*, 03/09/1998, p. 25.

⁷⁷ See Ramos, T. 'Detenido el consejero de Economía de Melilla por un delito de blanqueo de dinero del narcotráfico', *El País*, 27/11/2002.

⁷⁸ In this regard, it is worth noting that the role played by secrecy, suspicion and mistrust is more prominent amongst Muslims than amongst Christians. There are several reasons for this. If we take heed of Anderson's argument that conspiracy theory discourses flourish in contexts of exclusion, it is easy to see how this kind of narrative would have a stronger grip over the Muslim community, excluded to a larger degree from the enclave's political and economic landscape. Financial deprivation is an important element to consider for, given a lower economic status, the chances of participating in the lower ranks of Melilla's underworld (for example, as a drug dealer or as an 'errand boy' for money launderers) are higher. The fact that most Christians work for the state and that very few are unemployed means that fewer participate in the lower strata of the underground economy, and suspicion within the community is therefore less pronounced. Finally, given the active role played by Muslim neighbourhoods—particularly the *Cañada*—in the sale and distribution of drugs, it is reasonable to presume that, in the lower echelons of the underworld, Muslims have a stronger presence than Christians.

long been ostracised by the enclave's political and financial institutions who, in his view, truly held power in the enclave, he replied:

The President, his brother—who is a famous lawyer—his cousin, who is in charge of commerce, and so forth. Whoever is elected always finds jobs for the whole family ... even if the party changes they are still the same people, they share the cake [of corruption] amongst them.

His opinion was shared by many, the common assumption being that those in power held tight to it and used it for their own benefit. Explicit connections between people in power and the underground economy, however, were rarely made, and most people were reluctant to discuss issues of the kind openly. As the director of the NGO put it, 'they know, but they prefer not to see'.

Where processes of wealth acquisition remain out of sight, and financial and monetary transactions of a certain scale are intrinsically dubious, wealth itself becomes an object of suspicion. Distrust of wealth accumulation is, of course, not exclusive to Melillans. Anthropologists of Africa have long noted the significance of wealth accumulation in witchcraft narratives and cosmologies of the occult.⁷⁹ In the Moroccan context, illegitimate wealth occupies a special place in popular mythologies and rumours. Newcomb (2004) has written about the production and circulation of rumours in the Moroccan city of Fes. Rumours, she argues, serve both to posit a unitary Fassi identity and to undercut it by bringing out tensions intrinsic to Moroccan social organisation. Newcomb focuses on one particular rumour circulating amongst middle-class Fassis: the existence of great wealth hidden in the shantytowns lying on the outskirts of the city. The rumour about the shantytown dweller, Newcomb argues, is both a commentary on the uncontrolled effects of urban-to-rural migration and a means to posit a 'true' Fassi identity (i.e. "true" Fassis earn their money honestly and do not

⁷⁹ Most recently, the Commaroffs (1993) and Peter Geschiere (1997), but it goes back further, with the work of Victor Turner (1957) and Edwin Ardener (1970). Of particular interest here is Sander's (2003) piece on witchcraft narratives in Tanzania, where a growing informal market based on foreign manufactured goods has changed the local economy of cities across the country. The question of illegitimate wealth features centrally in these narratives for, 'as wealth in the shops and among an elite class of individuals increases, so, too, across a much broader segment of the population do relative poverty, envy, and untenable and unobtainable dreams of a vastly better future' (ibid. 153-154).

send their children to beg' [ibid. 99]).⁸⁰ Newcomb's example brings out a theme which is common across Morocco; while in much of Sub-Saharan Africa commentaries of the kind are incorporated in witchcraft narratives, in Morocco they are expressed through rumours and other forms of popular mythical narratives.

Rumours about illegitimate, hidden wealth circulate widely in both Melilla and Nador. The object of rumours, however, is *not* the very poor or even the very rich, as in Fes. Most often, rumours speak of common people, of neighbours, friends or acquaintances whose rapid enrichment is intrinsically suspicious. Once again, the specificity of Melilla's underworld produces a particular kind of popular narrative and rhetoric. In this sense, the rumours produced and circulated in Melilla resemble those described by Morin (1971) for the French town of Orleans in 1969, where the rumour that young girls were being drugged and abducted to be sold for white slave traffic circulated widely, both amongst the town's residents and in the press. One of the key elements of this rumour, Morin tells us, is that the girls were always abducted in Jewish shops.⁸¹ The rumour, Morin writes, 'concentrated exclusively on a group of shop-owners who had nothing exotic about them, who looked just like anyone else, but through that very fact contrived to conceal the one mysterious difference which the whole world knew: their Jewishness' (ibid. 28). If we replace 'Jewishness' by a connection to the underworld we obtain an exact description of Melilla's popular narratives. As in Orleans, so in the Spanish enclave, those accused in popular rumours have nothing exotic about them, nothing out of the ordinary; they are common,

⁸⁰ It is worth noting that Newcomb's article places much of the emphasis not on the rumour itself but on the context in which it arises: an awkward conversation amongst middle-class Fassis in a train carriage in which a delicate issue regarding marriage is brought up. The comment on the shantytowns serves, at that particular time, to ease the tension by directing attention to a commonly agreed topic which serves to restore a certain sense of balance amongst the passengers.

⁸¹ Morin argues that anti-Semitism was a key factor in the rumours. The Jewish community in Orleans at the time numbered 100 families, mainly employed as low-ranking civil servants and clerks. An 'invisible, and peaceful, segregation' informed relations between Jews and non-Jews in Orleans (1971: 105). Yet, Morin identifies the Jews accused in the rumour as neither those of 'French extraction and old family who had been long settled in the town', nor 'the "old style" shop-keepers' or 'the Mediterranean newcomers', but 'the commercial nouvelle vague—all young, go-ahead, modern types, born in France' (ibid.). It is worth noting that in Melilla rumours are rarely connected to the Muslim-Christian divide. Yet, the principle stands that those who are more like 'us' are those liable to be hiding something.

seemingly honest people who are suddenly revealed as a 'two-faced monster of duplicity' (ibid. 56) in their connections with the underworld.

The rapid enrichment of neighbours, acquaintances or relatives is thus perceived as the visible face of a deeply entrenched illicit structure which remains hidden, their participation in Melilla's underworld being the ultimate betrayal of a common identity opposing the enclave's elite to the 'common people'. This is best illustrated with an example. Consider the following stories, told by a Christian woman of modest economic background:

Where do all those expensive cars come from? ... There are many businesses that you wonder, how can they still be open? Sometimes they open for a couple of months and then close again, or maybe they start selling pens and then switch to selling plates or clothes, and you think, but what's going on with these people? That is all money laundering ... For instance, there are some poor people that suddenly you see them with these amazing houses. I know some of them. There was this boy, he used to sell potatoes, onions and peppers in the market with his father. And now he owns this building. I recognised him when we went there to sign our contract for the rent: I said 'hello' to him, and Antonio [her husband] said to me 'how do you know him?', and I said 'he used to sell potatoes!', and he said 'well, he is the [building's] owner!' ... Look, I know this other family; they were from Barcelona. They came here and I knew them because I used to work as a hairdresser and they were my customers. And when they arrived [in Melilla] they didn't have a penny, they didn't have anything, one hand on the front and on the back, that's all. And they moved into her mother's house, and the husband opened a small shoe store in the neighbourhood with whatever means they had. But mother of God that shoe store was profitable! In a year he had a house in the suburbs that you can't imagine, you couldn't dream of it.

Whether the rumours in question have any factual basis is beside the point, although it is worth noting that most of them do. What matters here is the implicit condemnation of the rapid and illicit enrichment of those who, not belonging to the enclave's elite, nevertheless profited from Melilla's underworld. Indeed, rumours often involved people of a relatively equal economic status; those higher or lower in the socio-economic scale were expected, to an extent, to have their wealth and poverty, but amongst 'equals' rapid advance could only be explained through illicit means. Here we return to the theme of secrecy, for it is not only the illicit enrichment that is condemned, but also the

duplicity implied in living a double life which escapes the usual mechanisms of social control that are prevalent in small, closed communities such as Melilla's. In such contexts, holding a secret —or being perceived as doing so— is, in and of itself, a motive for suspicion and mistrust. Indeed, as Simmel (1950a: 331) put it,

Although the secret has no immediate connection with evil, evil has an immediate connection with secrecy: the immoral hides itself for obvious reasons even where its content meets with no social stigma ... The intrinsically isolating effect of immorality as such, irrespective of all direct social repulsion, is real and important beyond the many alleged entanglements of an ethical and social kind. Among other things, the secret is also the sociological expression of moral badness.

In sum, two principles are at work in the relation of Melillans to the enclave's underworld. On the one hand, there is a relatively certain knowledge of the state's involvement (or, at least, of some of its members) in Melilla's underworld. That the underworld exists and that it does so partly through corruption —be it on the Spanish or on the Moroccan side of the border⁸²— is a matter of fact to most Melillans. Yet this shared knowledge is treated as a secret, to be passed around with caution and kept hidden, when possible, from the gaze of outsiders. That is the first circle of secrecy, where Melilla's underworld functions as an open secret. But within that circle there are others; these are the secrets within secrets described by Jenkins. How does Melilla's underworld actually work? Who is involved in it? How wide are the webs of corruption on which it is built? The ground is laid for conspiracy theories to emerge. On the other hand, and as a by-product of the conspiratorial nature of this knowledge, there remains

⁸² Suspicion of the state is in fact more prevalent on the Moroccan side of the border. On one occasion, for example, as one of my Muslim informants fantasised about winning a lottery ticket and running away from family and marriage to move to some remote Caribbean island, he half-jokingly suggested that I show up at his house pretending to be a secret government agent and tell his wife that her husband had to come with me to Morocco for a classified business, no questions asked. 'You'd have to tell her', he said, 'that my name came up in a secret draw and there is nothing she can do to stop it. Then she'd believe you'. Often people joked about corruption, whether on the part of government officials or of the lay citizen. On the day of local elections in Nador, for example, I accompanied my landlady to vote. As we reached the door of the voting site, she joked with the guard at the door, saying: 'I brought with me my dead grandfather's identity card to vote for him too!' The guard gave us a wide smile; everyone in Nador knows that voting with fake IDs is a local tradition. Government corruption, however, was also a source of concern. During the same electoral period, an educated Riffian woman complained that all politicians in the region are corrupt and that the central government has a vested interest in keeping literacy levels in the Rif low, for when people are educated they begin to question the actions of those in power.

the suspicion that anyone anywhere could be a part of the underworld's inner workings. Here rumours run wild, often with good reason.

6.4 Drug lords, migrants and locals: the underworld in Nador

Unlike in Melilla, where knowledge of the underground economy functions like a secret to be passed around with caution, in Nador the existence of the drug trade is openly admitted by all. When asked about the origins of the city's wealth, a young Nadori answered: 'contraband [commercial smuggling], emigration and drugs'. Faced with the same question, a different group of Nadoris responded in unison: '*hashish!*' 'Here', they explained, 'when people pick up the phone they don't say "Hello, how are you?" All you hear is "How much do you want? When and where?"'

In Nador, the underworld is sustained on a very tangible, material reality. Since 2006, when a large-scale police operation led to the detention of a number of drug lords operating in the city, drug traffickers have become more discrete. Most people, however, still remember the days when the speedboats could be seen departing from the coast of the Lagoon of Marchica, and some are familiar with the new locations used by drug lords.⁸³ During my stay, I was offered a 'tour' to visit these locations to 'see for myself' more than once.

⁸³ Indeed, zodiacs departing from the Nadori coast loaded with drugs were recorded in a documentary by the TV program 'Enquête Exclusive', broadcast by French television-channel M6.fr on 7 September 2008 under the heading 'Gibraltar: le détroit de tous les dangers'. The final part of the documentary follows the steps of Chakib el-Khayari, director of a human rights association in Nador, and the mayor of Beni Sicar (a small town some 10 km west of Melilla), in their attempt to document both the operations of drug lords in Nador and the passivity of the police and military forces with regard to the drug trade. The part of the documentary dealing with Nador is available online at: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6r44w_enquete-exclusive-nador-maroc-le-de_news, and also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NC_HIwr8nVY, last accessed: 18/03/2012.



Lagoon of Mar Chica.⁸⁴

Many believe that without the involvement of local and regional authorities this transit would not be possible, and it is often assumed that drug lords bribe military and police officers at both ends. Indeed, according to drug trafficker and money launderer Ahmed, the relationship established with the military and the police is a fundamental pillar of drug trafficking:

You must bribe the police both at the origin and the destination. You can see it. If you go to the areas where the speedboats are based there will be police officers and they will tell you that you cannot be there. This is because they do not want people to see what is happening. And the same happens across the border, on the Spanish coast. The problem here is that some of the officers are young and senseless and as soon as you pay them they start changing their lifestyle and buying expensive things and they raise suspicion ... The best officers are the older ones, the ones who have been in the loop for many years and don't lose their mind with the easy money.

⁸⁴ The Lagoon of Mar Chica is the largest lagoon on the Mediterranean southern shore. It is surrounded by the city of Nador (on the interior shore), Beni Enzar to the north and Kariat to the south. It is around this lagoon that Nador's new tourist industry will be built. According to *El País*, the 120-meter opening in the Lagoon was regularly used by drug traffickers to reach the Mediterranean sea (see Cembrero, I. 'La flotilla de la droga zarpa de Nador', *El País*, 19/11/2006). For some time now, drug traffickers have been using alternative points of departure for the drug trade. There are numerous small, hidden beaches on the Riffian coast, and it is highly unlikely that the development of the tourist complex should affect the drug trade.

While in Melilla the inner workings of the underground economy remained hidden, in Nador everybody knows who benefits from the drug trade. Whereas in the enclave money launderers and drug traffickers must be careful to conceal their riches from the Treasury Department, in Nador control over property holdings and other such riches is minimal, and drug lords can freely spend their money on extravagant houses and cars. Both in Nador and in Selouane, for example, people frequently drew my attention to one of the many wealthy-looking houses on the outskirts of the city and told me that the owner of the house trafficked in heroin, cocaine or hashish. This was always said matter-of-factly (there was no doubt as to the truth of the matter) and with a slight condescending frown (the money, they understood, was tempting, but the act was nevertheless reproachable).⁸⁵ Indeed, as we saw in chapter 5, drug trafficking and the money it generates are considered *haram* (prohibited). Accusing someone of drug trafficking (something never done directly, but rather said of a third person) is therefore an offence in and of itself, it is a sign of weakness which runs contrary to the Riffian ideal of discipline and self-control outlined in earlier chapters. As a Nadori once said to me, ‘everyone knows what is *harām*, it says it in the Qur’an, but they just turn a blind eye to it’.

Attitudes towards drug trafficking, however, are ambivalent. Judging by data provided by Driessen in the early 1990s, part of the ambivalence could be rooted in the fact that drug money is often used to fund mosques and other services to the community where the government is traditionally deficient. He writes:

It is a public secret that several mosques have been financed by such contaminated funds in Nador ... There are Rifians who condemn such religious laundering of black money as *harām*, sinful, and there are cases of villages who refused donations originating from the drugs trade. (Driessen 1992: 125).

⁸⁵ Parallels can be drawn here with the situation described by Judith Scheele (2008) for Al-Khalil in northern Mali. In Al-Khalil, a key trading and smuggling hub in northern Mali, ‘rapid accumulation of wealth by people of a formerly lesser status is directly blamed on the drug trade, whether there is any evidence to back such a claim or not, while also being associated with intra-communal violence, moral failure and religious transgression: in short, with asocial behaviour’ (ibid. 7).

What is it, then, about drug smuggling that makes it condemnable yet possible? It is clearly not the case that it is done as a last resort for survival. Nor is it the case, as Joseph and Joseph (1987) suggest in their volume, that a capitalist ideology of profit-seeking individuals has been imported through emigration.⁸⁶ Rather, the enrichment that drug trafficking entails seems to align well with a code of morality in which generosity plays a crucial role, and with a status system where ostentatious displays of wealth are a symbol of prestige. As a young Riffian woman explained,

Everybody knows who is trafficking and who isn't. You can tell by their houses and by the cars they drive. This is because we are Berbers here. Most of the traffickers are Berbers, because we, the Berbers, like to dress well and eat well and drive nice cars. Arabs don't care, you see. Even if they have lots of money they don't spend it like we do. This is why it took us so long to build this new house, because we spent everything we had in living day to day. Our neighbour back in Beni Enzar, for instance, she made her children go around the neighbourhood asking neighbours for food. She used to come to our house and ask for flour, salt, and all that. And then one day all of a sudden she bought a shiny new house with all the money she had saved. She was an Arab, you see.

Drug trafficking has flourished in the eastern Rif, my informant would argue, because—unlike Arabs—Riffians are lavish and generous.

In this sense, it is important to remark on the usual identification between drug trafficking and emigration. In the Rif, any prosperous migrant is suspected of drug trafficking. This, too, contributes to the ambivalent attitude towards the 'prohibited' trade, for most—if not all—families in Nador have one or more members living in Europe. Because of the well-known connections between emigration and drug trafficking, the source of emigrants' wealth becomes, at best, suspicious. Extravagant displays of wealth make migrants the target of local gossip, and rumours about drug trafficking are quick to follow. People would frequently point at the costly-looking cars emigrants drive around and say to me, by way of explanation, 'drug-trafficking'. The

⁸⁶ Joseph and Joseph (1987: 10) argue that as entrepreneurship, wage labour and migration have become a part of Moroccan culture, new semiotic codes have emerged. The transformation from a pre-capitalistic to a market economy has disrupted the foundations of social relationships by introducing a new ideology of profit in the Rif that clashes with what they see as a 'double code of agonism and solidarity'.

following remark made by a young Riffian emigrant who was spending the summer holidays with his family in Selouane condenses some of the ideas presented above:

If I wanted to traffic in cocaine it would be very easy for me. I know the people and the system. Actually, many people think I am a trafficker because of my car, you see. And I've had young boys approach me in Tarragona (Spain) to work with me (selling the drug). It would be very easy for me to take 100 grams across the border and make lots of money! But I don't do it. Because of my family, you see. Cocaine kills people, and Allah does not want that. The money that comes from drugs is made by killing people and harming them, and that is against Islam. This is why I don't do it. But I have thought about it many times, it would be so easy! Now I am thinking of going to Romania to buy gold, so I can sell it back in Morocco. They tell me gold is very cheap there.

His words suggest that, while many of these rumours are false, the possibilities of involvement are omnipresent.

On the Moroccan side of the border, therefore, the underground economy is not a parallel underworld unknown to those who do not belong in it. Rather, it is an integral part of the city's economic and social life. Here, the mystery that surrounds Melilla's underworld is absent. The critical question is not *who* participates in the underground economy, but rather how to interact with those who do. Like emigration, drug trafficking brings forth contradictions that challenge the image of the Rif as a moral community, leaving Riffians no choice but to navigate between the social and economic benefits of wealth and the moral condemnation that the drug trade (and, by association, emigration) inevitably entails.

6.5 Regional difference in the world economy: the border as a barrier

Not any place can accommodate the kind of underground economy found in Melilla. In order to flourish, black market economies need a niche, a set of conditions which allows not only their emergence but also their consolidation and continuance over time. These conditions are hardly ever 'natural'. Places like Melilla are *produced* within —and by— a global economic structure. They are the by-product of what we have come to know as

‘processes of globalisation’, processes which may be best understood as a change in the spatial and temporal conditions of the capitalist mode of production (Harvey 1989). I now turn to these processes to analyse Melilla as a *kind* of place and identify the conditions which have allowed for the development of an underground economy in the enclave.

We can best begin by outlining a general framework based on some of the ideas advanced by Harvey in his theory of uneven geographical development (see Harvey 2005 and 1996). ‘Capitalist activity’, he writes, ‘is always grounded somewhere’ (2005: 60). The generation of surplus, therefore, cannot be abstracted from its material basis. Natural resources, for example, allow for the possibility of rapid surplus production, but to the degree that these resources are geographically differentiated and unevenly distributed they generate a form of uneven geographical development. The appropriation of such resources depends upon ‘spatial strategies to gain access to and command over them’ (ibid. 70). The same applies to non-natural resources; flexible labour regulation, for example, can be a key factor in the allocation of production. But ‘small pre-existing geographical differences’, Harvey argues, ‘be it in natural resources or socially constructed endowments, get magnified and consolidated rather than eroded by free market competition’ (ibid. 75).

The past three decades have witnessed an intensification of these processes of regional differentiation. The reduction of spatial-temporal constraints through the development of new technologies has furthered the significance of territorial divisions. The emergence of new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services and new markets, together with the greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological and organisational innovation, have generated a new, more flexible mode of production which relies strongly on spatial differentiation. Local differences in capital, technology, market taste, material resources, technical skills and labour markets have led to a decentralisation of relations of production, as relative regional advantages acquire unprecedented significance in a system in which the strategic use of space in the administration of labour supplies, resources and infrastructure returns increased profits. As a consequence, the production of places with special qualities has become a crucial

element in the competition between localities, cities, regions and nations (Harvey 1989: 295). Strategies of local labour control, infrastructural provision, financial deregulation, favourable tax policies and so forth become a means to attract capital in a system increasingly reliant on geographical differentiation:

New industrial ensembles arise, sometimes out of almost nothing (as the various silicon valleys and glens) but more often on the basis of some pre-existing mix of skills and resources. The 'Third Italy' (Emilia-Romagna) builds upon a peculiar mix of co-operative entrepreneurialism, artisan labour, and local communist administrations anxious to generate employment, and inserts its clothing products with incredible success into a highly competitive world economy. Flanders attracts outside capital on the basis of a dispersed, flexible, and reasonably skilled labour supply with a deep hostility to unionism and socialism. Los Angeles imports the highly successful patriarchal labour systems of South-East Asia through mass immigration, while the celebrated paternalistic labour control system of the Japanese and Taiwanese is imported into California and South Wales. The story in each case is different, making it appear as if the uniqueness of this or that geographical circumstance matters more than ever before. Yet it does so, ironically, only because of the collapse of spatial barriers (Harvey 1989: 294).

How does Melilla fit into this global structure? What small-scale geographical difference is being exploited in the enclave? What are the processes by which this is done, and what is the relation to Melilla's underground economy? In other words, what *kind* of place is Melilla? The production of Ceuta and Melilla as security facilities for the prevention and detention of illegal migration flows needs to be understood as part of the processes of spatial reorganisation. Borders are mechanisms for the control of flows. Insofar as they serve to regulate the movement of people, commodities and capital across national boundaries, borders are instrumental in the processes of territorial expansion intrinsic to the reproduction of global capital. Where surplus creation depends on access to geographically distributed resources —cheap labour supplies, natural resources, a favourable regulatory system and adequate infrastructure among others— spatial strategies to gain control over particular resources and places acquire importance. Borders provide an instrument to do just that.

Labour markets are not evenly distributed across territory. Access to adequate labour supplies has been the driving force behind immigration policies for a long time and, as Sassen (1988: 26) points out, 'the use of foreign labour, whether slaves or immigrants, has been a basic tendency in the development of industrial economies'. The reorganisation of traditional modes of production through the outsourcing of manufacture has had important effects in this regard. The displacement of manufacture to 'developing' countries, for example, has generated new labour flows to satisfy a new demand for workers. At the same time, immigrant labour in European countries or in the US has concentrated in the tertiary sector, taking over service jobs which, as Sassen argues, cannot be 'offshored' (1988: 43-52). Moroccan emigrants in Europe fulfil that very function, working the fields in southern Spain or joining a growing labour force in the construction sector. Sassen's analysis of migration flows in the US from 1960 to 1985 leaves little doubt that immigration policies (and border control) need to be understood as an instrument for the regulation of labour supplies. As she notes, the strengthening of state borders should not be seen as conflicting with the needs of a global economy, for 'in fact, national boundaries do not act as barriers so much as mechanisms reproducing the system through the international division of labor' (Sassen 1988: 36).

Closer to home, the same dynamics are at play. Despite official rhetoric condemning immigration, for example, the granting of work permits to migrants has been in place in Spain since 1993, starting with the proposal to allow 20,600 permits (Gold 2000: 140). In September 1999 Rabat and Madrid agreed an annual quota for Moroccan workers who would receive a Spanish work permit for nine months. By July 2000 the government was planning to issue 100,000 permits each year for the eight months of the harvest periods (ibid.). Spain's unofficial 'open border' policy during the 1980s and 1990s, and the ensuing 'processes of regularisation' (by which undocumented migrants illegally employed in Spain were granted residency and work permits *en masse*) in 1986, 1991, 1996, 2000 and 2005 can similarly be seen as two ways of responding to a growing national demand for labour (Kostova Karaboytcheva

2006). This is not restricted to Spain. For example, in a document published by the European Commission in 2000 it is stated that:

as a result of growing shortages of labour at both skilled and unskilled levels, a number of Member States have already begun to actively recruit third country nationals from outside the Union. In this situation a choice must be made between maintaining the view that the Union can continue to resist migratory pressures and accepting that immigration will continue and should be properly regulated, and working together to try to maximise its positive effects on the Union, for the migrants themselves and for the countries of origin.⁸⁷

In this regard, it is important to consider that illegal immigration may also have a function in this system. As discussed in chapter 5, this is the case with Moroccans living across the border from Melilla, who have access to the enclave during the day to perform certain jobs and are sent back to Morocco at night. As Sassen (1988: 36-37) puts it:

The enforcement of national borders contributes to the existence of a large number of countries in the form of a periphery and the designation of its workers as a labor reserve for global capital. Border enforcement is a mechanism facilitating the extraction of cheap labor by assigning criminal status to a segment of the working class —illegal immigrants. Foreign workers undermine a nation's working class when the state renders foreigners socially and politically powerless. At the same time, border enforcement meets the demands of organized labor in the labor-receiving country insofar as it presumes to protect native workers. Yet *selective* enforcement of policies can circumvent general border policies and protect the interests of economic sectors relying on immigrant labor. This points out the contradictory role of the state in the accumulation process, especially evident in the consolidation of the liberal state.

Whether in the form of legally 'imported' workers or of illegal migrants, migratory flows need to be regulated in order to satisfy labour demand without threatening other factors relevant to the spatial organisation of capital —for example, the costs of reproduction. Effective control over territorial borders is crucial to the reproduction of global capital.

⁸⁷ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, 2000, 'On a Community Immigration Policy', available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2000:0757:FIN:EN:PDF>

A fundamental element in these processes has been the outsourcing of border control through partnerships and agreements with neighbouring countries. In Australia, for example, Christmas Island serves as an offshore enclave where illegal migrants can be detained, held and deported without ever reaching the Australian mainland.⁸⁸ Melilla fulfils a similar role. In fact, the externalisation of borders has been one of the principal objectives behind numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements, both at the level of the EU and by individual EU member states. Spain, for instance, has signed several agreements regarding labour migration flows and border control not only with Morocco but also with Mauritania, Senegal and other Sub-Saharan African countries (see Asín Cabrera 2008). Within the EU's institutional framework, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) have served a similar purpose by granting financial sponsorship to countries neighbouring the European Union on condition that they increase border control. For example, the ENP action plan agreement with Morocco (2005) includes as one of the main objectives:⁸⁹

The effective management of migration flows, including the signing of a readmission agreement with the European Community, and facilitating the movement of persons in accordance with the *acquis*,⁹⁰ particularly by examining the possibilities for relaxing the formalities for certain jointly agreed categories of persons to obtain short-stay visas.

For this, financial resources are provided:

⁸⁸ First annexed to the British Crown in 1888 after the discovery of phosphate on its soil, the island was officially transferred to Australia in 1957 after the Australian government paid Singapore £2.9 million in compensation for the estimated value of the phosphate foregone by Singapore. In the late 1980s, the island first became a key point of entry for migrants sailing from Indonesia. In 2001, however, the Australian government removed Christmas Island—together with a number of other islands—from Australia's migration zone. Thereafter, asylum seekers arriving on the island could no longer automatically apply for refugee status. Instead, as part of the so-called Pacific Solution, they were transported to detention camps on small island nations in the Pacific Ocean, where their refugee status was determined. The construction of a \$400 million immigration detention centre in 2006 was the final step in the consolidation of the island as an offshore border control facility. See Hyndman and Mountz (2008) and Amnesty International's report at: <http://www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/comments/20442/>

⁸⁹ Full text available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/march/tradoc_127912.pdf

⁹⁰ The term *acquis* is short for the French *acquis communautaire* and refers to the accumulated legislation and court decisions which constitute the body of European Union law. In French, *acquis* means 'accepted, agreed upon'. The same root is found, for example, in the English 'acquiescence'.

In order to meet all the objectives contained in this Action Plan, the European Union will provide substantial financial support via an appropriate range of financial instruments.

The financial incentives to comply with European-sponsored policies regarding trade, infrastructure and migration control are significant. Between 2007 and 2010, Morocco received from the European Union €170 million a year; between 2011 and 2013 the sum was increased to €194 million a year. Clearly, the Moroccan state has an interest in controlling illegal migration flows through its borders, but it has an even greater interest in maintaining, and even promoting, Moroccan emigration to Europe (let us recall that emigrant remittances amount to around 4.8 *billion* euros annually). Thus, the Moroccan government's efforts to enforce border controls target primarily if not exclusively Sub-Saharan Africans trying to access Europe via Morocco. The province of Nador has been the object of numerous military operations with that precise purpose, particularly since the assaults on Melilla in 2005.

On the one hand, therefore, there is an indisputable interest on the part of the EU to keep migratory flows under close watch. The two Spanish enclaves have proved to be remarkably useful in this regard, serving as a funnel that both attracts and contains unwanted migration. Europe has also sought the collaboration of Morocco, making border control a condition of packages of financial aid. Certainly, both the Spanish enclaves and the Moroccan state have an economic interest in, at the very least, *seeming* to implement strict border policies, just as they have an interest in making the threat appear larger than it may actually be.⁹¹ On the other hand, however, Europe has long relied on Moroccan migrants to satisfy demand for unskilled labour at times of economic growth, and Morocco has become increasingly dependent on the financial remittances that these migratory flows generate. Despite official rhetoric, therefore, border control policies respond to complex processes which extend beyond national

⁹¹ It is worth noting that, when assaults on the fence were at their height, around one thousand people successfully reached the enclave. This is a relatively small number compared, for example, to 758,900 Moroccans who, according to data from 2009, live legally in Spain; that is, not including the thousands of Moroccans who have entered the country illegally (Khachani 2011).

boundaries. The economic structure of Nador is as much a result of these processes as is that of the Spanish enclave.

6.6 ‘Border acrobatics’: the border as a conduit

The protection of trade is as important as the control of labour flows. Despite efforts to seclude it, Melilla is not an isolated enclave. Indeed, what makes Melilla different from places like Christmas Island and more similar to export-processing zones across the globe is that it provides a gateway to the North African market. Let us recall that Melilla has long been at the centre of international trade routes linking Europe and Asia to North Africa. As discussed in chapter 2, the Spanish enclave was a central market for agricultural products produced in the Moroccan hinterland as early as the seventeenth century. After Melilla became a free port in 1863, and in the wake of European imperialism, commerce between the enclave and the hinterland grew as French and English manufactured products arrived in the enclave via Gibraltar and French Algeria. Trade across the border increased during the Spanish Protectorate and, again, after Moroccan independence, when Riffian migration to Europe began and the increased purchasing power of Moroccan emigrants and their families back home led to a rise in demand for European products across the border. By the time Spain joined the EU, therefore, long-standing trade routes linked the enclave both to the Moroccan hinterland and to a number of commercial hubs in Asia and Europe. Today, Melilla’s government relies on the revenues it accrues through the IPSI, a tax on imports which generates between 40 and 60 million dollars annually (see López Guzmán, et al. 2007 for annual data). Products originating in Europe are exempt from paying the IPSI and therefore benefit from a special tax regime which allows them to access Melilla and, from Melilla, the Moroccan market.

In order to preserve this trade —from which both Melilla and the EU benefit⁹²— border regulations had to be adapted. Parallel to the gradual closure of the border, therefore, important measures were taken to ensure that the traffic of commodities remained untouched. When Spain joined the then European Community, a special clause determined that both Ceuta and Melilla would remain outside Europe's Common Customs Area while remaining members of the EC.⁹³ In this way, the two Spanish enclaves preserved their privileged position as points of access to a market otherwise hindered by Moroccan protectionist policies. Later, as visa requirements for Moroccan citizens were introduced (1991), a formal agreement between Spain and Morocco established that residents of the Moroccan provinces neighbouring Ceuta and Melilla would be exempt from visa requirements and thus free to access the enclaves at will during daytime, with residents of the Spanish enclaves enjoying the same rights in the neighbouring Moroccan provinces. Partially exempt from the new immigration law, Riffians from the province of Nador were able to continue trading (that is, smuggling) across the border of Melilla, while strict passport controls at the port of the city ensured that smugglers and cross-border workers did not make use of their privileged position to migrate to the European mainland. In this way, commercial exchange across the border continued unaffected by the new geopolitical context, while Europe remained 'protected' from unwanted labour.

The spatial and geopolitical configuration of Melilla's frontier responds precisely to the conflict between these two contrary and often conflicting processes: the opening of the border to the movement of capital and goods, and its closure to the movement of people. Behind the image of Melilla as the gate to the European fortress lie a number of more or less permeable boundaries which operate at different levels to

⁹² It is worth repeating that commercial transactions represent one of the main sources of revenue for the enclave. Preserving this trade, therefore, was not only a means for European interests to preserve a gateway to the North African market, but also a way to ensure the economic sustainability of the enclave which, in turn, ensured the continued existence of this border control post in African territory.

⁹³ Until July 1, 1991, the Canary Islands shared the same status as Ceuta and Melilla. The relationship of these regions with the EU was governed by Protocol 2 of the Spanish Accession Act, which provided that these territories were part of the EU but were excluded from the Community's Common Customs Tariff (CCT) and from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In 1991, the Canary Islands joined the CCT but Ceuta and Melilla remained classified as 'special territories'.

regulate the transit of capital, goods and people at different levels and in different ways. On the first level is the fence which surrounds the enclave and officially separates Moroccan from Spanish (and thus European) territory. This fence prevents entry to Melilla to non-EU citizens; with the exception of residents of the province of Nador, as per the 1991 agreement. The second level is the unmarked boundary that separates the province of Nador from the rest of Morocco and which marks the distinction between those Moroccans with access to Melilla (i.e. Nadoris) and those without (all other Moroccan citizens). A third border, marked by strict passport controls at Melilla's airport and port, ensures that Nadori residents do not use the Spanish enclave as a transit point to access mainland Spain. This is indeed a paradigmatic example of what Ferrer-Gallardo (2007) aptly calls 'border acrobatics'.

This form of 'selective permeability' can be seen as a means to manipulate the spatial organisation of place in order to manage what Harvey, drawing on Marx, identifies as the fundamental contradiction between fixity and movement in the capitalist system.⁹⁴ Allowances must be made to ensure, on the one hand, a certain degree of control over the movement of labour —and therefore over the costs of its reproduction— while facilitating the mobility and expansion of capital. The 'exceptions' made to the visa requirements established in 1991 are the perfect example of these allowances. But capital mobility is guaranteed not only through 'selective permeability' but also through the creation of the necessary infrastructure to allow financial, industrial and commercial development. As we saw in chapter 4, this is precisely what is happening in Nador with the development of a tourist industry. To take another revealing example, the ENP agreement quoted above as evidence of the EU's interest in 'exporting' migration control to Morocco also included the following objectives as part of the same 'Action Plan':⁹⁵

⁹⁴ His focus here is on physical investments. He writes: 'investments of this sort must cohere so that transport relations, working class housing, factories and offices, shopping malls and leisure places, institutions (hospitals, schools, etc.) hang together in physical space in reasonably coordinate and mutually accessible ways. The effect is to concentrate these investments geographically ... Geographical fixity tends to increase, therefore, in the midst of the struggle to acquire greater geographical mobility for all the other factions of capital. Clearly, there is abundant opportunity here for tensions between factions of capital as well as for crises of devaluation in the built environment' (2005: 77-78).

⁹⁵ EU/Morocco Action Plan, available at:
http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/march/tradoc_127912.pdf

The negotiation of an agreement on liberalising trade in services.

The development of a climate conducive to foreign direct investment, growth and sustainable development; development of the transport sector based on safety, security and reinforcement of national and regional infrastructures and their inter-connection with the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T);

Development of the energy sector, including inter-connections and infrastructure under optimal safety, competitiveness and quality conditions; integration of the Moroccan electricity market into the European electricity market, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding (Rome, 2 December 2003) on the gradual integration of the electricity markets of the Maghreb countries into the EU's internal electricity market.

Paradoxically, agreements such as this are now placing Melilla in a vulnerable position. The forthcoming incorporation of Morocco into the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, a free trade area including the 27 countries of the EU, as well as 16 countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean and adjoining areas, will inevitably threaten Melilla's commercial standing in the region.⁹⁶ As Morocco becomes integrated into the European Free Trade Area (2012) the Spanish enclave will no longer be in a privileged position to offer lower prices, and commercial smuggling will cease to be a lucrative form of trade across the border. The enclave will have to find new forms to incentivise local commerce and alternative sources of revenue, but trade between Europe and North Africa will proceed unaffected. Most likely, commercial routes across the Mediterranean will greatly benefit from an agreement which eliminates custom duties between Europe and Morocco while ensuring the protection of the European border.⁹⁷

In fact, the Moroccan government has several projects in place that will equip the province of Nador to take over as the industrial and commercial centre of the region.

⁹⁶ For details on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership see:
http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm.

⁹⁷ Together with the Euro-Med partnership, Morocco subscribed to the MEDA programme, the EU's principal financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Through the MEDA Morocco received €1,472 million for the period between 1995 and 2006, including €660 million under Meda I (1995-1999) and €812 million under Meda II (2000-2006). The funds were directed towards the development of sectors such as finance, taxation, water, transport, health, education, the civil service, customs, and so forth. Meda funds were also channelled to ensure a better management of migratory flows. For more information see:
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/morocco/association_agreement/index_en.htm

The Nador West Med project will see the construction of an 850 hectares industrial port and a storage platform for petrol and petrol-derived products in the Mediterranean Botoya Bay, 30 km west of Nador city.⁹⁸ Together with the projected development of a 72-hectare industrial park in Selouane, the new port will provide the necessary infrastructure for large-scale professional smuggling to be absorbed into legal commercial transactions. As Harvey puts it, 'state administration is always ... an active agent in capital circulation and accumulation' (2005: 81). In fact, as Ferrer-Gallardo remarks,

The current progressive commercial debordering between the EU and Morocco, free-trade agreements signed by Morocco, notably with China and the United States, as well as large economic investments and infrastructural transformations developing in northern Morocco, may lead [sic] alternative legal entry points for goods into a more 'liberalized' Moroccan economy (2008: 312).

With regard to Melilla, the prospects are less favourable. European funds directed to the enclave have been considerably reduced in recent years, most likely as a consequence of Morocco's integration into the European Customs Union and its commitment to enforce European migration policies. The ENP agreement with Morocco has reduced Melilla's geostrategic value and the enclave must now find new sources of revenue. After much public debate over the possible effects of joining the European Customs Union, according to news agency Europa Press, both Ceuta and Melilla have submitted a proposal to the Spanish central government to modify their fiscal regime and guarantee tax-free purchases for tourists visiting the enclave.⁹⁹ If the proposal is adopted and the Spanish enclaves become tax havens for tourism, they will be following in the steps of Andorra in the Pyrenees, a small, duty-free frontier country which relies entirely on revenues generated through 'shopping tourism'. Once again, therefore, Melilla would be relying on external rent.

⁹⁸ Nador West Med will comprise a deep-water port, an industrial park open to local and foreign investors, and a site for the storage, transshipment, import and export of unpackaged products. Selouan's industrial park will lodge light-industry and commercial establishments, warehouses and offices for logistical support.

⁹⁹ Available at: <http://ecodiario.eleconomista.es/espana/noticias/3578369/12/11/Ceuta-y-Melilla-pedirana-Rajoy-convertirse-en-dos-ciudades-libres-de-impuestos-sobre-las-compras-de-los-turistas.html>

6.7 Melilla, Nador, and the conditions of the underworld

Melilla's reliance on external rent helps us situate the enclave as a *kind* of place. Here, the frontier —both as a gateway to the North African market and as a border control post on African soil— constitutes the most important source of revenue. Rents derived from the sale of this 'resource' to external clients (whether these are international import and export companies or the EU) sustain the economy of a place with no other productive resources. These rents have two main sources: the European Union, whose funds have sustained the economy of the enclave since Spain signed the Schengen Agreement (1991), and the IPSI, a tax levied on incoming merchandise which, in Melilla, unlike elsewhere in Spain, is collected and administered by the local government. Even if the Euro-Mediterranean partnership forces Melilla to change its economic structure and become a 'shopping tourism' centre, the outcome will remain the same. With no natural resources and no industry, the Spanish enclave can be nothing but a *rentier* economy, or disappear entirely

Melilla thus joins a growing list of small enclaves around the globe which subsist on capital drawn from outside and are entirely reliant on external interests. These enclaves are *produced* to generate such incomes. If we take the case of offshore economies, for example, it becomes evident that a favourable tax and regulatory regime can be utilised to attract external capital. From countries trading in 'flags of convenience' to micro-states offering offshore gambling or regions selling a cheap workforce and a favourable regulation for the establishment of manufacturing industries, these *rentier* economies are a product of large-scale processes of spatial re-organisation which have generated new kinds of 'small places'. Melilla's peculiar fiscal status within the EU together with its geopolitical situation as the border between Europe and Africa have generated a *rentier* economy not unlike those found in what has come to be known as 'the offshore interface' (Hampton 1996). In both cases, we are faced with a state-sponsored 'enclave' where standard regulations are suspended to allow for a more flexible regime in which economic activities of different kinds can develop unhindered (cf. Palan 1998, 2003).

That certain kinds of offshore centres facilitate the circulation of illegal capital is an open secret in the international financial community. Bank secrecy regulations and offshore banking provide a haven for money laundering operations worldwide. The financial incentive to 'overlook' illegal transactions is great; according to official estimates from 2006, illegal capital makes up 35% of the world's GDP (Naím 2006). In this regard, the offshore interface has been seen as a form of institutionalising the connections between legal and illegal capital through the state-sponsored creation of legally unregulated spaces where economic transactions occur with minimal interference by the state (cf. Blum, et al. 1998; Palan 1998). In the case of Melilla, the connections with illegal capital movement are not as 'transparent'. Notwithstanding special tax regulations, Melilla is not legally speaking an offshore banking facility. Yet, the enclave is a haven for money laundering in the region, and hosts a black-market economy which includes not only drug trafficking, but also the large-scale smuggling of commodities across the border, people smuggling and other forms of contraband (including, for example, contraband of gold).

The 'border acrobatics' required to safeguard trade routes while sealing the European border have generated the spatial and legal framework in which Nador and Melilla's black-market economy thrives. On the one hand, this underground economy profits from a system where the mobility of financial capital is privileged. On the other hand, the ability to move between different national territories is precisely what allows money-launderers and drug-traffickers to conceal the origins of illegal transactions. The enclave's long-standing commercial tradition and its particular fiscal regime provide a relatively safe environment where import and export companies (both real and fictitious) can operate without hindrance, while the border itself allows for 'endless possibilities of dissimulation' by generating two distinct legal spaces where different currencies, banking regulations, security apparatuses and criminal codes apply. Once again, the tension between fixity and mobility emerges as an inescapable feature of a global system whose effects are most visible in the configuration of places like Melilla, where small-scale geographical differences acquire unprecedented significance.

The everyday moral structures that anthropology habitually considers and the sets of relations such structures bring about are parasitic on this wider logic. Melilla's underworld and its moral effects is perhaps the most apparent example, but it is by no means the only one. Local narratives have been shaped by large-scale political and economic processes in a much more general though perhaps less obvious way; from Melilla's multiculturalist rhetoric to the relatively recent hierarchical divide between Spanish and Moroccan Berbers, or the clash between 'the modern' and 'the moral' in Nador. This is of course not to say that local categories and relations are simply a product of externally-driven processes —indeed, as we have seen, the Christian-Muslim divide has so far persisted despite new legal and political boundaries—; it is to say, however, that a dialogue between global structures and local narratives is not only fruitful but necessary to ethnographic analysis. Only then can small places truly speak to large issues.

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