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**Theorizing the Spanish-Moroccan Border Reconfiguration:
*Framing a Process of Geopolitical, Functional and Symbolic
Rebordering***

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Theorizing the Spanish-Moroccan Border Reconfiguration: Framing a Process of Geopolitical, Functional and Symbolic Rebordering*

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Abstract

This paper is aimed at theorizing the major aspects of the Spanish-Moroccan rebordering after Spain joined the European Union in 1986. It intends to set the path for a subsequent empirical exploration of the EU external border segment between the North-African city of Ceuta and its Moroccan hinterland. The paper starts by providing a brief historical overview of the evolution of this border, and continues by delineating the rationale of the chosen theoretical structure. Afterwards, the core of the theoretical discussion is addressed. The theorization follows a three-folded structure by means of which the geopolitical, functional and symbolic aspects of the Spanish-Moroccan border reconfiguration are scrutinized. Taking the general Spanish-Moroccan border as the point of departure, the analytical frame is gradually channeled towards the (EU)ro-African border scenarios constructed around Ceuta and Melilla..

1. Introduction

Somehow, one could argue that the border between Spain and Morocco functions as a prolific 'metaphor provider'. It is, indeed, a border of borders, built on top of a captivating amalgamation of clash and alliance: Spain and Morocco; Christianity and Islam; Europe and Africa; EU territory and non-EU territory; prosperous north and impoverished south; former colonizer and former colonized. A wide range of geographical, historical, political, social, cultural and economical categories face each other on the Spanish-Moroccan border landscape. The extreme symbolic power of these numerous convergences and divergences provides analytical succulence at a cross-disciplinary level.

Notwithstanding that, within the context of the current border debate, the Spanish-Moroccan border has not been as vastly scrutinized as other borders—such as the US-Mexican, for instance. It is also true that a considerable number of studies have dealt with Spanish-Moroccan border affairs (see for example: Lazrak 1974; Rezette 1976, Hess 1979; Labatut 1985; Lería 1991; Driessen 1991, 1992, 1996a, 1996b, 1999; Evers Rosander 1991, Cárdenas 1996; Planet 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2002; Gold 1999, 2000; Morales Lezcano 2000; Bennison 2001; Delmote 2001; McMurray 2001; El Abdellaoui and Chikhi 2002, Pennel 2002; Cajal 2003; Ribas-Mateos 2005; Aziza 2006). Nevertheless, so far at

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least, the attention attracted by this border seems to be still lower than the potential that its extreme nature would suggest.

It seems as if, paradoxically, the accumulation of remarkable phenomena taking place around the Spanish-Moroccan border area had subtracted attention from the border itself. Despite of the fact that, south-north and north-south migrations, the *reconquista*, colonialism, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as well as the general scenario of Spanish-Moroccan relations have prolifically inspired academia (to name but a few: Morales Lezcano 1986, 1993; López García 1993, 1996, 2004; Bouchat 1994; Berriane 1996; Lazzar 1996; Damis 1998; Garcia-Ramon et al. 1998; King 1998; Benaboud 1999; Gillespie 1999; Joffé 1999; Lacoste 1999; Miguez 1999; Nogué and Villanova 1999, 2005; De la Serna 2001; White 2001; Martín Corrales 1999, 2002a, 2002b; Aziza 2003; Feliu 2003; Haddadi 2003; Juárez and Bacaria 2003; Kachani 2004; Affaya and Guerrraoui 2006), as mentioned above, in comparison to other borders, there seems to be a certain scarcity of contributions specifically focused on the border.

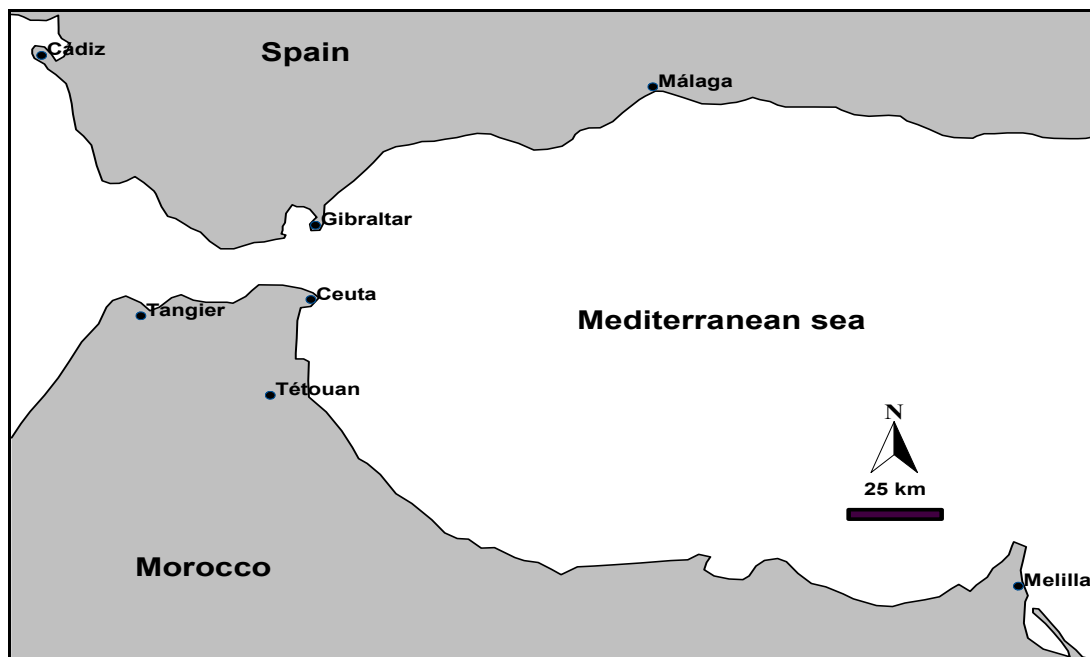
1.1 Brief Description of the Border

The border between Spain and Morocco is essentially a wet border. On the one hand it is comprised by the waters of the Strait of Gibraltar, which separate the Iberian Peninsula from the African continent; and on the other by the fragment of Moroccan Atlantic coast which lies opposite to the Canary Islands. Though, this predominant wet border landscape is altered by the boundaries between the enclaves¹ of Ceuta and Melilla and their hinterlands, which form the Spanish-Moroccan land borders in the Maghreb. Apart from Ceuta (19,6 Km²), Melilla (12 Km²) and the Canary Islands (7.446,62 Km²), also the Alborán Island (7,1 Km²), the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera (2,2 Km²), the Peñón de Alhucemas (1,36 Km²) and the Chaffarine Islands (Congreso 4,5 Km², Isabel II 2 Km², Rey 0,6 Km²) complement the contested and less obvious geography of the Spanish-Moroccan border. The uniqueness of the North-African enclaves and the rest of non-Iberian Spanish territories provide additional research appeal to the border between Spain and Morocco. Needless to say, this research appeal constitutes an essential part of the rationale of the present study.

Often, visual representations of the Spanish-Moroccan border are condensed into the metaphorical image of the Pillars of Hercules on the two shores of the Strait of Gibraltar -Gibraltar on the one hand, and Ceuta's Monte Hacho, on the other. Not without a reason, due to its symbolism the Mediterranean-divide dimension of the border is especially marked in the collective imaginary. However, the border between Spain and Morocco goes beyond the Herculean divide. It is configured by an extra set of border segments, which confer an anomalous and fascinating character to the border scenario. The theoretical frame that is put together in this paper mainly focuses on the land borders between the Spanish North-African enclaves and Morocco. As previously mentioned, the fieldwork that is going to follow this theorization will be conducted in the border area between Ceuta

¹ Actually, the term 'enclave' appears to be technically inexact when referring to Ceuta and Melilla because they both have an exit to the Mediterranean (Cajal 2003:164). An alternative terminology is possible. Vinokurov (2004), for instance, categorizes them as exclaves or semi-enclaves. However, the common usage of the term 'enclave' for Ceuta and Melilla is widely accepted both in daily life and in academia. For this reason, in the present research, they will be referred to as 'enclaves'.

and its Moroccan hinterland. Though, this will happen at a latter stage. At this point, a brief contextualization of the historical construction of the Spanish-Moroccan border follows. The research lens is mainly put on Ceuta and Melilla.



Source: Sergi Cuadrado, 2006²

1.2 Historical Overview

The end of the *reconquista*, in the year 1492, coincided with the fixation of a rather stable frontier between Christianity and Islam in the western Mediterranean. The Iberian seizure of Maghribian territories, and consequently the preliminary setting of today's (EU)ro-African borders, took place within this historical scenario of political, cultural and territorial delimitation. Ceuta fell in Portuguese hands in 1415 (it became Spanish in 1668), whereas Melilla is conquered by Castile in 1497. The main difference between the Iberian mobile borders of the *reconquista*, and those ones that were established in the African continent resides in the fact that the first were borders of expansion, whereas the latter (at least in the beginning) were borders of contraction. From the Iberian capture of the Ceuta and Melilla to their subsequent development into dynamic trading posts, first, and into bases for colonial penetration, later, the enclaves basically functioned as *presidios* (military garrisons).

In the year 1863 Ceuta and Melilla acquired Free-Port status and intense trading activity came to complement the up-to-then predominantly garrison function of the enclaves. By that time the Spanish interest in Northern Morocco was increasing considerably and the roads of colonial penetration were being paved. During the years of colonial intervention (1912-1956), despite being fully permeable, the borders the two North African enclaves and the territory under the Spanish Protectorate had a distinct status. In the eyes of Spain Ceuta and Melilla were not considered colonial territories but part of the Spanish territory. To a certain degree, this distinctiveness explains why, by the end of the Spanish-

² Merci, Sergi.

French Protectorate of Morocco in 1956, the enclaves remained in Spanish hands. Ever since, Morocco has identified Ceuta and Melilla as an integral part of Moroccan territory, which is still to be decolonised. The end of the colonisation of Morocco (1956) substantially changed the meaning of the Spanish North-African enclaves and consequently the significance of their borders with decolonised Morocco. Ceuta and Melilla remained under Spanish sovereignty and followed the successive political guidelines traced by the government of Madrid.

Spain's entrance into the European Union (1986) involved another turn of the screw with respect to the Spanish-Moroccan frontier scenario. In 1986 Ceuta and Melilla were still under Spanish sovereignty and, consequently, after Spain's access to the European Union, they automatically became (EU)ro-African territories. Although the enclaves became part of the EU, their traditional anomalous status kept ongoing and, to some extent, it was even emphasized. These peculiarities are explored later on in this paper. The year 1986 – the year of Spain's entrance in the European Union- is unquestionably a major point of inflection within the history of the Spanish-Moroccan border. The (EU)ropeanization of the border in 1986 was followed by its Schengenization in 1991. The next point of inflection is found in 1995, when the militarization of the enclave's perimeters started and the path towards the Euro-Mediterranean commercial liberalization started to be paved.

2. Structuring the Theorization

The frame of this theoretical exploration is sourced, mainly, in the scrutiny and merging of several border theorizations—notably, O'Dowd 2003; Walters 2002; Anderson 2001; Donnan and Wilson 1994—and fashioned in accordance with the particularities of the border under review. As previously said, the resultant structure traces a sequential path through the geopolitical, functional and symbolic dimensions of the Spanish-Moroccan rebordering. This structure intends to gradually lead the discussion towards the questioning of the way in which this 'high level' border reconfiguration has influenced border agency.

Amongst the aforementioned scholarly contributions, Walters' (2002) genealogy of Schengen has been particularly influential inasmuch it has motivated the three-folded structuring of the analysis. Anderson's (2001) notions of 'selective permeability of borders', 'differential filtering effects of borders', and 'politics/economics contradictory unity' help integrate sequentially the geopolitical, functional and symbolic aspects of the border reconfiguration. O'Dowd's (2003) categorization of the four main functions or ways of understanding borders (barriers, bridges, resources and symbols of identity) facilitates the ordering of the multiple phenomena impinging on the targeted border area. The theoretical discussion is channeled towards the empirical terrain being pushed by the principle that 'much can be learnt about the centers of power by focusing on their peripheries' (Donnan and Wilson 1994).

2.1 Three Dimensions of the Spanish-Moroccan Rebordering

Through the first part of the theorization (geopolitical dimension) the double geopolitical significance of the Spanish-Moroccan border is explored. In his study Walters (2002) delineates continuities and discontinuities between the national and the (post-national) Schengen border, and between the

classical geopolitical notion of borders and the current nature of Schengen's. Here, it is suggested that by putting the lens on the Spanish-Moroccan fragment of the EU external border, we can examine how a national (Spain-Morocco) and a post-national (EU-non EU) border overlap. That is, the continuity of the national border within the post-national border. Some of the aspects Walters examines in his first two trajectories (2002) are merged within the first of the dimensions presented here (geopolitical). Issues regarding (national and post-national) identity formation are approached in the third of the dimensions (symbolic). Within this first part of the theorization, the geopolitical border landscape of the colonial period and that of the emerging scenario of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are compared. In doing so this section is aimed at examining the current nature of the border between an EU member and a partner (non-candidate) country –both actors of the young European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The second part of the theoretical framework (functional dimension) explores the role of the border as a regulator of flows. Walters' text (2002) is mainly circumscribed to the relationship of the border to population in Schengen's external frontier and its networked apparatus. Here, in contrast, people, economic -and political- flows are approached jointly, putting the lens into a concrete fragment of the external border. This enables the study to highlight the peculiar functional management of the North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (Ferrer-Gallardo 2005), caused by its post-1986 status. The anomalies and contradictions of the enclaves' border regime are analyzed in the light of the 'selective permeability and differential filtering effects of borders' (Anderson, 2001). The impact and uses of a sealed off border that must remain permeable are discussed.

The third part of the theoretical framework (symbolic dimension) deals with the impact of the geopolitical and functional reconfiguration of the Spanish-Moroccan border, in terms of national and post-national identity shaping. The aspects of identity formation approached by Walters in his 'national border' trajectory (2002), are transported thus to the 'symbolic dimension'. The role of the Spanish-Moroccan border as an instrument of national and post-national identity formation is historically scanned.

The Spanish-Moroccan border—and to a higher extent the Moroccan borders with Ceuta and Melilla—shelter symbolically acute historical, political, geographical and economical phenomena. Their extreme nature—as well as the high number of analytically interesting border processes taking place there—seems to claim for an integrative approach which, at least in the beginning, might require a general picture of the ongoing rebordering process.

3. Geopolitical Dimension

3.1 The Dual Geopolitical Significance

The dual geopolitical significance acquired by the Spanish-Moroccan border in 1986 constitutes a key aspect of its redefinition. Spain's access to the European Union implied that the Spanish-Moroccan border also became the border between the EU/Schengen Space and Morocco. The border became the periphery of two different cores at the same side of the border and, as a result, the geopolitical appeal of the border was somehow doubled. This was also the case at the eastern limits of the

European Union- for instance on the Polish-German border before the 2004 enlargement, or currently on the border between Poland and Ukraine. The setting of the EU external border implied that two different perimeters were overlapped and two different and meaningful territorial lines were juxtaposed. The emergence of this dual border scenario was necessarily to metamorphose the way of approaching this border from a geopolitical perspective. The drawing of the EU-Morocco border did not erase the border between Spain and Morocco. Instead, they mixed and intertwined generating a non-dissolved two-folded amalgam containing: the border between two 'trapped territories' (Agnew, 1994) on the one hand, and the perimeter of a 'post-national' territorial unit—understood as a supranational territorial container—on the other. For this reason, although still relevant, classical geopolitical interpretations of borders fail to grasp the current significance of this border because they can only explain it partially. They need to be complemented with postmodern and less rigid approaches (see Newman and Paasi, 1998; Berg and Van Houtum, 2003) that tune in to new socio-spatial and reterritorialized scenarios. In doing so, a full picture of the geopolitical implications of the Spanish-Moroccan rebordering is more likely to be obtained.

The European Union itself is embroiled in a duality, which is similar and related to the one presented above. The scenario produced by the intergovernmental-supranational tension entails the co-existence of national and post-national notions of territoriality under the same roof. The key role nation-states play within the European Union project shows to which extent the EU project has not conceptually run away from Agnew's Territorial Trap (1994). As Anderson (1995:71) points out, in some ways 'nation-states and its borders are as firmly rooted as ever' and, at the same time, supranational EU building dynamics have shaped and forged a new post-national territorial unit. Within the EU national and post-national territorial units co-exist and, consequently, so do their respective national and post-national borders. On the Spanish-Moroccan border they do coincide and lay one on top of the other.

Interestingly, Walters (2002:564) argues that the Schengen Process 'is not about political power understood as confrontation between territorial power containers' and that, consequently, the nature of its borders (the Schengenland borders) is far from the notion of borders classical geographers like Curzon or Ratzel had. He identifies Schengen as an attempt to accommodate political borders to a new political spatiality that does not necessarily equate space with the fixed territories of modern statehood. Notwithstanding this observation, it could be argued that the Schengen/EU external borders are juxtaposed with previously existing borders that, in some cases – as it occurs with the EU-Morocco border, do coincide with boundaries between confronted (and to some extent still confronting) territorial power containers.

From 1986 onwards, the Spanish-Moroccan border sets the limits between EU and non-EU territory and therefore constitutes the external border of an emerging political spatiality. Nonetheless, it has not ceased being a traditionally contested border between two states with past and present territorial disputes—which might be explained in the light of classical geopolitics. Not too long ago, such disputes have been important enough to instigate military performances like the Parsley/Perejil/Leila Island -in front of the Ceuta coast- invasion/liberation on July 2002 (see Szmolka 2005; Hernando de

Larramendi 2004; Cajal 2003; Planet and Hernando de Larramendi, 2003). Although this incident had a considerably high impact in the media, its real importance—beyond, of course, the subsequent temporary withdrawal of ambassadors—was low. The episode was, however, highly significant inasmuch it revealed classical territorial disagreements, which were not well clarified after the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco ended. Until 1956 Spain was, somehow, inside Morocco—the two territories were not confronted but juxtaposed—and consequently the border between the two states, although existing, was blurred. The northern part of Morocco had been colonized by its neighbor and the geopolitical line that nowadays divides the two territories had a much slacker profile. As Driessen writes (1992:36), ‘ever since Spain gained a foothold in Morocco relations between them had been strained, constantly alternating between open confrontation and delicate entente’. The geopolitical nature of the Spanish-Moroccan border has been, also ever since, elastic, ongoing, progressing.

The triangular geopolitical discussion between Spain, Morocco and the UK regarding the sovereignty of Ceuta, Melilla and Gibraltar (see Lazrak 1974; Rézette 1976; Labatut 1985; Ballesteros 1990; Lería 1991; López García, Planet and Bouqentar 1994; Cárdenas 1996; García Flórez 1998; Remiro Brotons 1999; Gold 2000; Cajal 2003; Hernando de Larramendi 2004; Zurlo 2005) provides the Ceuta-Morocco border with some classical geopolitical content, which as stated by Walters (2002), might be less significant in the general EU-Schengen border overview. Together with the influence of the complex intertwining of territorial claims across the Strait of Gibraltar, the echoes of the Spanish colonial presence in Morocco (1912-1956) are also geopolitically relevant and should therefore be taken into consideration. In doing so, approaches that stress post-national and less classical aspects of the border would be complemented.

3.2 *The Spanish Lebensraum and the EU ‘Post-National Lebensraum’*

The colonial sinking of Spain after the defeat in Cuba and the Philippines in 1898 implied the refocusing of the Spanish geopolitical interest across the Straits of Gibraltar. The necessity of recovering a colonial space—a vital space—was understood as a way to ensure Spain’s independence and prestige (Riudor 1999:255). In this context, and under the influence of Friedrich Ratzel’s contributions, the North of Africa appeared within the Spanish geopolitical debate as an alternative ‘*lebensraum*’ (Nogué and Vicente 2001:59). The geopolitical claim of northern Morocco represents a way to catch up with the traditional and already vanished imperial role of Spain.

In the beginning of the 20th century the diplomatic weight of Spain in the international arena was certainly weakened. Therefore, the State was not very well positioned in the African colonial race. However, the British-French ‘balance of power’ enabled Spain (already present in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) to ‘protect’ the northern part of Morocco and fulfill, partly, its ‘Africanist Dreams’ (Riudor 1999)—connected to the will of Isabella the Catholic and the African prolongation of the *reconquista*. After the Spanish-French agreements of 1912, Morocco was divided into two Protectorates, ‘with France seen as the main protector while Spain occupied Tarfaya, Ifni, and the Río de Oro in Western Sahara and, in the north, most of the region of the Rif and Yebala’ (Gold 2000:1). Spain obtained part of its African *lebensraum*; France would ‘protect’ the rest of Morocco, whereas the coastal city of Tangiers would become an international enclave. As Morales Lezcano (2002:244)

explains, the Spanish area of the Protectorate was of low economic value though strategically very important. It was placed 'in a cultural crossroad, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, between Christian and Islamic worlds, between Europe and Africa' (Nogué and Villanova 1999:103). To a certain extent, during the years of the Protectorate (1912-1956) Spain was expanding its geopolitical influence across its southern border and materializing, somehow, the idea of Morocco as a Spanish *lebensraum*. As pointed out by Cajal (2003:9), during those years the character of the border was, consequently, rather blurred.

By bridging the classical Ratzelian thought with the current post-national scenario, and putting into practice an exercise of geopolitical speculation, it could be argued that the establishment in 2010 of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA)—agreed by the Euro-Mediterranean Partners within the Barcelona Declaration (1995)—resembles the building of a 'post-national (EU) *lebensraum*'. Thus, speculating and playing around with this geopolitical picture of a 'post-national EU *lebensraum*' might contribute to the mapping of the emergent nature of the EU outer border drawn between Spain and Morocco. Also, it might help understand the character of the borders between the EU and its non-candidate neighbours. The analogy between the present scenario and the days of Spanish colonialism in Morocco evokes the idea of a border that, within a context of a certain economic permeability/integration, still preserves political/institutional difference between territorial units. During the years of the Protectorate (1912-1956), despite the functional blurring of the border associated to the colonial relationship, the territorial line between Spain and Morocco remained binding differentiated political and institutional units. Albeit of course politically linked for managerial purposes, the border preserved the clear difference between the 'protector' and the 'protected'.

Within the context of the European Neighborhood Policy, the European Union aims to strengthen economic and institutional links with its Mediterranean partners. But, however, the efforts being made to economically bridge the two shores of the Mediterranean—despite their intrinsic managerial political dimension—are not complemented with the will of EU political enlargement towards the south. Simply put, Euro-Mediterranean partnership does not necessarily mean Euro-Mediterranean political integration. Whereas the north and the south of the Mediterranean tend toward the relaxation of economic borders and market integration, democratic political institutions and citizenship—and its associated rights and obligations—are still fragmented by the EU external border. In relation to this, Peter Gold argues that 'it may be too fanciful to see the "European" Union extending so far to the north, east and south that the northern African states, Russia and the Middle East are all virtually part "Europe", although a free trade area stretching from Mauritania to (and possibly including) Russia and the Ukraine is already seen as an "ultimate goal" (Rheing, 1999:3, quoted in Gold 2000:173).

The idea that economic globalization does not necessarily equate political democratic globalization, expressed through the concept of 'politics/economics contradictory unity' (Anderson 2001), seems to be present in both the images of the Spanish 'classical' *Lebensraum* in Morocco and the speculative post-national EU *lebensraum* in the Mediterranean. The functional reconfiguration of the Spanish-Moroccan border that is taking place within this contradictory logic, and the management peculiarities of the Ceuta and Melilla perimeters are analyzed in the following part of the paper.

4 Functional Dimension

4.1 *Selective Border Management*

The functional reconfiguration of the Spanish-Moroccan border and its new role as a regulator of flows is characterized by what Anderson (2001) describes as the 'selective permeability' of borders and their 'differential filtering effects'. On the one hand, the border is becoming more permeable to the flow of goods and capital, due to the logic of globalization and the upcoming Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. On the other hand the border is becoming less permeable to the flow of some types of labor migration, in harmony with the idiosyncrasy of Fortress Europe and via the implementation of the SIVE—System of Integrated External Surveillance (see Migreurop 2005). Clear similarities can be found by comparing the Spanish-Moroccan border regime with the US-Mexico case. Both, these examples of border management entail, as Nevins (2002:7) points out, 'maximizing the perceived benefits of globalization while protecting against the perceived detriments of increasing transnational flows'. As Anderson (2001) observes, 'this seriously impedes the free movement and exchange of labor and is generally accepted by neo-liberals despite the fact that it contradicts their free-trade, anti-state ideology' (2001:30). The reconfigured Spanish-Moroccan border regime, as it occurs within the general EU external border landscape, seems to be becoming increasingly selective.

In this scenario, the peculiar border regimes of Ceuta and Melilla appear to be designed in accordance with their anomalous status. Consequently, they even seem to be giving rise to more intense patterns of border selectivity. To a large extent, the economic sustainability of the enclaves depends on their interaction with their hinterlands, and for this reason, the cross-border flows of people from the surrounding areas of Tetouan and Nador are permitted. These flows are allowed under the legal framework of an exception to the Schengen Agreements. On a daily basis, Ceuta and Melilla import labor force and consumers from Morocco, lowering the barrier effect of the border for (some) people, whereas simultaneously benefiting from the legal and illegal cross-border flow of goods -based on massive economic asymmetries between the two sides of the border. The acrobatic management of the Ceuta and Melilla borders with Morocco (Ferrer-Gallardo 2005) seems to be simultaneously embracing EU guidelines in regard to its external border regime, as well as the special regulation the sustainability of the enclaves requires. For this reason, as a consequence of their exceptional Schengenization, in the particular cases of Ceuta and Melilla, the 'selective permeability' of borders and their 'differential filtering effects' (Anderson 2001) appear to be peculiarly selective and anomalously differential.

4.2 *The Militarization of the Border—The Gates of the Fortress*

In economic terms, the gap between Spain and Morocco has extraordinarily increased since Spain entered the EU in 1986. In turn, the resulting structural asymmetries have stimulated illegal flows (of goods and people) across the Strait of Gibraltar and remarkably across the borders of the North-African enclaves. Spain's new condition as a EU member—and as a country of immigration and no longer a country of emigration—required the reconfiguration of its border controls. As a result of this, since 1986 immigration and asylum policies have been turning increasingly stricter. It seems clear

that, beyond its instrumental dimension, the reinforcing of the external EU border controls also seems to be obeying to practices of political and symbolical delimitation.

When Spain joined the Schengen Agreement in 1991, its visa regime was adjusted to the new situation. The strengthening of border controls started and the rules of the game changed. From that moment onwards, Moroccan citizens would not be allowed to cross the new Spanish/Schengen - Moroccan border without a visa—with the later explained exception of the inhabitants of the surrounding areas of Ceuta and Melilla. Significantly, on the 19th of May of that very same year, the first victims of clandestine migration would die whilst trying to cross the wet border of the Straits of Gibraltar. The range of legal readjustments associated to the Schengenization of the Spanish-Moroccan border came together with practices of physical reshaping and securization techniques. Once again, with regard to Ceuta and Melilla a distinctive process of physical transformation was conducted.

In order to prevent the illegal entrance of immigrants, security controls have been reinforced all along the border with financial assistance of EU institutions. The Spanish-Moroccan liquid border is electronically sealed off by the SIVE (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior; Integrated System of External Surveillance), which allows the monitoring of the illegal immigration gates of the EU-Morocco border (see Migreurop 2005). The SIVE has been gradually implemented by means of fixed and mobile radars, first along the coasts of Andalusia (in the year 2002), and later in the Canary Islands. Border controls are highly technologically developed, and even comprise 'sensors now being able to detect heartbeats from a distance' (Clochard, 2005). However, despite the SIVE the number of people trying to reach the Spanish coasts on board small fishing boats (*pateras*) is not decreasing at all. The first remarkable consequence of the implementation of the SIVE was the change in the trajectories of many of these small boats. Increased surveillance carried with it alternative and more dangerous immigration routes through un surveilled fragments of the Strait of Gibraltar. After the early implementation of the SIVE, extremely perilous routes through the Atlantic Ocean, departing from the Moroccan coast towards the Canary Islands, also became recurrent. Some clear analogies might be drawn with the fortification of the US-Mexico border and the alternative immigration routes taken through the desert of Sonora.

4.3 Particularities of Ceuta³ and Melilla⁴

'As the only territories which provide a land border between the EU and Africa, the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla act as magnets for would-be illegal migrants to continental Europe from all over the African continent' (Gold 2000: 120). In order to stop immigration, the perimeter of these two cities has been physically reshaped through the building of a twin metal fence (from 3'5 to 6 meters high) equipped with high-tech surveillance systems, such as thermal and infrared cameras, and less sophisticated elements like barbed wire. Nevertheless, the militarization is not stopping the attempts of

³ The surface of Ceuta is 19.48 km². Its total perimeter has a length of 28 km, 8 of which constitute the land border with Morocco (*Instituto Geográfico Nacional*). It is inhabited by 75,276 people (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, January 2005*)

⁴ Melilla comprises an area of 13.41 km². Its total perimeter has a length of 20 km, 11 of which constitute the land border with Morocco (*Instituto Geográfico Nacional*). It is inhabited by 65,488 people (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, January 2005*).

people who try to cross the border by hiding inside or underneath trucks, jumping or opening holes in the fences, mixing with those who are allowed to legally cross back and forth, or swimming from Moroccan beaches to the enclaves. Despite the efforts made in their tangible sealing off, the European Union external borders in Africa remain permeable. This fact raises the question regarding the real purpose of the militarization and introduces the idea of the symbolic use of the sealed off perimeter.

The free port status acquired by Ceuta and Melilla in 1863, beneficial tax conditions and the strategic location of their harbors, have gradually given rise to what Planet (2002:268) calls a hypertrophy of the commercial sector. Planet (2002:269) explains how the extraordinary commercial activity of the enclaves is organized through a binary scheme—of legality and illegality—that benefits from appealing tax structures: on the one hand legal economic activity related to the redistribution of goods to locals and tourists, and on the other, illegal (or informal) economic activity through which goods are redistributed outside the enclaves. An exceptional tax regime associated with the deep economic asymmetries between the two sides of the border provides the ground for an intensively developed smuggling activity between Ceuta and Melilla and their hinterlands (Aziza 2006; Planet 2002; McMurray 2001; Driessen 1999).

In these circumstances, three different types of smuggling practices can be identified. Hajjani (1986, as cited in Planet 2002:275) categorized the following categories of smuggling to Morocco via the Spanish enclaves: (a) occasional smuggling of tobacco, alcoholic beverages or electrical household appliances, performed sporadically by foreign workers, students, civil servants, and generally those (Spaniards and Moroccans) who can easily enter and leave the enclaves; (b) subsistence smuggling consisting on the illicit cross-border flow of consumption goods such as batteries, chocolate, canned milk, perfumes, etc., executed by inhabitants from the surrounding Moroccan cities going back and forth across the border several times a day—in Spanish called *matuteros*—and (c) large scale smuggling of electronic equipment like satellite dishes and other expensive goods, carried out by organized networks of professionals. This typology roughly coincides with the three varieties of smugglers described by McMurray (2001:116-117), regarding the smuggling activity between Melilla and Nador—and which can be extrapolated to the Ceuta-Tetouan case. He differentiates between: a) weekend smugglers—or amateurs; b) everyday smugglers; and c) the 'big boys', and points out (2001:123) that 'it is difficult to name an item that is not smuggled across that border into Morocco'. Aziza (2006), in turn, and also regarding the Melilla-Nador case categorizes only two types of smugglers—*petits contrebandiers* and *grands contrebandiers*—using different methods and focusing on different products. In both the cases of Ceuta and Melilla, the high permeability associated with the illegal flow of goods collides with the idea of an intensively patrolled and sealed off border. It, once more, raises the question concerning the actual use of the border militarization and the selective nature of its securization.

The anomalous status of the enclaves and their paradoxically permeable sealing off seem to be highly beneficial for some, given the fact that they are the cornerstone of the economic sustainability of the enclaves. However, the impact of this peculiar situation at the other side of the border appears to be

distinct. In the north of Morocco, as Planet (2002:275) points out, these illicit cross-border flows entail 'unfair competence for the national production, obstruction of the creation of industrial units, discouragement of foreign investment and loss of jobs'. Notwithstanding these negative consequences impinging on the Moroccan side of the border, some other indicators seem to be pointing towards a different direction. The urban expansion of the border towns of Nador and Finideq, for instance, suggests that the impact of the enclaves' border regimes is certainly activating the economy also on the Moroccan side. Though, this activation happens in a mostly semi-illegal, acrobatic and, perhaps, also non-efficient way.

In any case, this current anomalous border scenario by no means contributes to decidedly correcting the economic underdevelopment of northern Morocco which, in turn, constitutes a far-reaching cause of Moroccan emigration towards the EU—itself motivating and somehow curiously justifying the current EU external (b)ordering model. The growing importance immigration issues are gaining in the recent European (Union) building debate indicates to what extent the future of Europe is extraordinarily linked to the future of its migration policy. The increasingly restrictive migratory legislation, which goes hand in hand with the hardening of the EU outer border, is providing the framework for the symbolic delimitation between those who are in and those who are out. The very idea of Europe, the way it functions and what it represents seem to be completely dependant on the way its space is (b)ordered, not only in a functional sense, but also in the symbolical terrain.

5. Symbolic Dimension

5.1 Inside-outside

As pointed out before, the physical reinforcement of the perimeters of Ceuta and Melilla represents not only a functional exercise of translation from EU legality into a tangible reality, but also a symbolic performance aiming to (re)mark and (re)mind the limits of the socio-spatial identities delimited by the border. O'Dowd (2003) argues that borders function as barriers, bridges, resources, and also as symbols of identity. In this section the last of these functions is explored. It is argued that the Spanish-Moroccan rebordering seems to fit within the traditional logics of 'us-them' delimitation associated to place-making dynamics, and that the border itself seems to entail the symbolic representation of this delimitation. Among other issues, the fieldwork to come will examine how this symbol of identity is perceived on the ground in the context of the rebordering process.

After its (EU)ropeanization, Spain's fast economic growth together with its close proximity to the Maghreb implied that it became a country of immigration, and indeed a key country for Moroccan migration. In some areas, economic transformations were remarkably intense. The southern province of Almeria, for instance, is no longer that poor and labor exporter region Juan Goytisolo described in his book *Campos de Níjar* (1959). The development of EU subsidized agricultural activity brought radical economic growth, and the arrival of migrant workers, notably from Morocco. New richness and new europeanness have decisively contributed to the reconfiguration of the way Spain sees Morocco and vice versa (Goytisolo and Naïr 2000). It seems that after 1986, the shift in mutual perception has been severe.

Whereas the Eastern limits of the European Union are still under bargaining, and the very idea of Europe flows and mutates whether we think of it geographically, historically, politically or culturally, its west-southern edge seems to be already set and well defined. Despite the fact that Spain's southern neighbor is only 13 kilometers far from Europe—even closer if we take into account its land borders with of Ceuta and Melilla—in the (EU)ropean imagery there seems to be no room for Morocco. Morocco is not in Europe and, apparently, it is never going to be in (EU)rope. Paradoxically, at the same time the European Union has fragments of its external borders in the African continent, via the Spanish North African enclaves. When in 1986 the Spanish-Moroccan border turned into a part of the EU perimeter new elements were added to the existent Europe/Africa, Christianity/Islam and wealthy North/developing South divides. As Driessen (1996a) indicates, new metaphors were invented to designate the strengthening of the divide: 'new wall of shame', 'gold curtain', 'European wall', 'moat of Fortress Europe'. The territories of Ceuta and Melilla, however, defy these divisive metaphors, because as border spaces themselves, they are placed right in the middle of those divides, enabling the simultaneous embracement of (EU)ropeanness, Africanness, Spanishness, Moroccanness, Islam, Christianity—Judaism and Hinduism—and providing the ground for ambiguous, complex and hybrid identities.

5.2 Formation of Collective Identities and Othering

Benedict Anderson (1983) described nations as imagined political communities that are inherently limited. He argued that 'the nation is imagined as limited, because even the largest of them has finite boundaries beyond which lay other nations'. As pointed out by Heffernan (1998:2) 'the idea of an imagined European community, which, for instance, would allow us to cheer enthusiastically for a European soccer team, is difficult to envision'. However, it is true that European building dynamics has much in common with other processes of collective identity formation. Reicher and Hopkins (2001) stress the importance of symbols in these processes. For instance, they remark that, 'through the introduction of a single currency, the use of a common European flag, the adoption of a European anthem, or through the commemoration of community history in postage stamps, the EU Commission is actively seeking to construct a sense of a European identity'. 'Sense of identity, unifying symbols, or criteria of belonging in the particular history and geography of a territory' are, according to James Anderson (1995:71), 'typical elements of nationalism'. 'Nationalisms are internally unifying: they play down the divisions and conflicts of the imagined community, partly by externalizing the sources of its problems. However, in doing so they are externally divisive with respect to people defined as other and, hence, they create or exacerbate divisions between different peoples and territories' (Anderson 1995:71). Similarly, Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002) point out the decisive role of othering and observe that 'the making of a place must be understood as an act of purification, as it is arbitrarily searching for a justifiable, bound cohesion of people and their activities in space which can be compared and contrasted to other spatial entities. Others are needed and therefore constantly produced and reproduced to maintain the cohesion in the formatted order of a territorially demarcated society'. So, even though it would not be exact to say that the European Union building process is an attempt to shape a new nation in its traditional sense, many analogies might be drawn in regard with national building processes. The simultaneous rejection and erection of othering might constitute an

illustrative commonality. Tracing lines, by means of borders, enables both the formation of collective identities and the creation of others. As O'Dowd (2003:4) argues 'borders are integral to human behaviour—they are a product of the need for order, control and protection in human life and they reflect our contending desires for sameness and difference, for a marker between "us" and "them"'.

5.3 *The Factory of Others*

The case of the Spanish-Moroccan border allows us to examine two different processes of collective identity formation (national and post-national) that have taken place in the same space and are necessarily interrelated. To some extent, the 'collateral' effects of the European (Union) building process could be linked to the exclusionary legacy of the making of Spain. In this light, the Spanish-Moroccan border could be interpreted as a past and present 'factory' of others. In the present context, the rebordering of Southern Spain, having 'helped reaffirm the country's new identity as part of the "inner club"' (Andreas 2000: 128), is also playing a key role in the process of European (Union) building. Marking and reinforcing the border with Morocco (and consequently strengthening otherness) has been historically used as a tool for binding together the 'Spanish People'. Similarly, the current efforts made towards the 'protection' of the EU external border (particularly at the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) might be used to upgrade the homogeneity of the emergent EU socio-spatial identity. Rather than as a product of rational border regulation, the militarization of the Spanish-Moroccan border might be interpreted as a symbolic performance for domestic consumption - attempting to mark the limits (and hence shaping the identity) of the European Union.

'In its origins, the idea of Spain and its nationalism were clearly shaped as an opposition to the "moors". Inspired and forged by the spirit of the *reconquista*, the Spanish State was built on a policy of ethnic, religious and cultural homogenization. The failure of assimilation and the fate of Jewish and Muslim minorities indicate how strongly the formation of Spanishness rested on Catholicism and xenophobia' (Driessen 1992:17). For centuries, the Strait of Gibraltar symbolized a bridge between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb, but, after the defeat of the Kingdom of Granada in 1492, the meaning of the 'salted river' of Gibraltar changed. The successive expulsions of Jewish and Muslim inhabitants entailed the cultural closing of the border, at least in the Iberian Peninsula. The border was then to separate Christianity from the North African Kingdoms that received the Muslim and Jewish expelled populations. (Morales-Lezcano 2004). For many former inhabitants of the Peninsula the coasts of Andalusia would become just a distant 'line of remorse' (Maalouf 2002:115). The *presidios* of Ceuta and Melilla would become, in turn, anomalous strongholds of the *reconquista* across the Mediterranean.

The *reconquista* entailed what Morales Lezcano (2004) calls the purification of Iberian Christianity's systems of representation. Martín Corrales (1999) explains that, beyond the Christian *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish vision of Morocco is also closely related to future confrontations between the two countries. The Spanish offensive in the north-African coasts in the beginning of the XVI century; the pirate confrontation and the siege of Spanish enclaves in Moroccan shores during XVI-XVIII centuries; the War of Africa in 1860; the War of Melilla in 1893; the War of Africa in 1909 and the Wars of Morocco from 1914 to 1927; as well as the Ifni-Sahara War in 1958-1959 and the

Sahara decolonization. These conflicts, indeed, would add negative connotations to the Spanish vision of Moroccans and to the religious divide. Moreover, the years of the Protectorate (1912-1956) contributed to shape the idea that Moroccans were not able to reach development without the assistance of colonizers. Some periods of fruitful trade relations, in the late XVIII and the beginning of the XIX century, as well as other moments of peaceful interaction, contributed to whiten the vision of Morocco in the Spanish imaginary. However, facts like the unskillful decolonization of the Sahara or the phenomena of immigration continue to add new elements to the Spanish dark vision of Moroccans (Martín Corrales 1999:396) and have obviously reshaped Moroccan perceptions of Spain (Affaya and Guerraoui 2006). The shift in mutual perception linked to the EU/non-EU divide seems to be of course highly significant.

Although since the *reconquista* an important cultural and symbolic divide has existed between Spain and Morocco, it is also true that communication has never been interrupted, moving beyond the interaction on the frontier zone—particularly intense in Ceuta and Melilla. This communication could also be described as mutual presence in each other's own space, which moves the border—translated into a multiplicity of social and cultural boundaries—from peripheral to central areas. It can be illustrated with a few examples: the immigration to northern Morocco of 'Spanish' Muslims expelled from the peninsula by the Catholic Kings—in what might be considered the first Spanish Civil War (Mechbal 1998: 219)—the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco (1912-1956); the increasing number of Spanish companies moving their production to Morocco; the increasing number of Moroccan citizens moving their own productivity to Spain; the legacy of Al-Andalus in present-day Spanish culture, the influence of Spanish culture in present-day Morocco, etc.

As previously suggested, in the specific cases of Ceuta and Melilla, daily frontier practice and historical socio-cultural interaction challenge the notion of a precisely set symbolic border. The idea of a clear symbolic border—'the finite, if elastic, boundary beyond which lie other nations' (Anderson 1991:7)—drawn (from above) by the (EU)ropean external (b)ordering is renegotiated (from below) by the border communities. The sharp symbolic border envisioned from the center of the bounded communities is transformed at the periphery, where it is split up into a multiplicity of boundaries, sometimes reinforcing, sometimes blurring and always reinterpreting the 'us-them' divide. Interaction and complex identification processes at the Ceuta and Melilla borders show that (b)ordering processes have dissimilar impacts in the core and at the periphery. The implicit bordering, ordering and othering (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002) associated to national/post-national building dynamics carries with it a considerable amount of arbitrariness, which blooms in border areas and is to be handled by the borderlanders. They are, indeed, on the front line of place-making dynamics.

It seems clear that borders engender contradictory feelings and complex identification processes. Mixed, contradictory, hybrid, complex, ambiguous and complementary identities in border areas can not be understood without a focus on emotions (Svasek 2000). The reconfiguration of the Spanish-Moroccan border, as well as the general process of EU external bordering, can not be understood without taking into account the human dimension of the rebordering. For this reason, reporting the views, emotions and narratives engendered by the reshaping of the border is amongst the goals of the

fieldwork. In the particular case of Ceuta, the Spanish-Moroccan rebordering takes place within the fascinating merging of the notions of Europeanness and Africanness that makes us wonder about the very idea of Europe. The contested status of the enclave and its condition of Mediterranean cultural cross-road provide the ground for the analysis of a significantly complex place-making (and therefore identity-making) process.

6. Conclusion

In the course of this paper it has been argued that the reconfiguration process that has affected the Spanish-Moroccan border since 1986 can be read as a process of geopolitical, functional and symbolic reshaping. The significance, functioning and meaning of the border have been remarkably transformed due to the drawing of the external EU perimeter between the two Mediterranean states. These transformations have influenced the daily practice on the border area as well as the perceptions and understandings of the borderlanders. This endeavour has intended to provide the ground for the succeeding stage of empirical research. The fieldwork enterprise is to explore the way in which the process of border reconfiguration has impacted on the border area. The empirical research will be conducted on both sides of the border and mostly by means of qualitative methodology. It is expected that, on due time, the fieldwork findings feedback—and help interpret—the main aspects outlined during this theoretical discussion.

So far, the theorization has been structured by means of the geopolitical-functional-symbolic three-folded frame. In what follows, the same frame is going to be used in order to structure the closing reflections.

6.1 Geopolitical Reshaping

The continuity of the national border within the post-national border: The drawing of the external EU border has engendered the overlapping of the border between Spain and Morocco and the border between EU and non-EU territory. Put differently, it has given rise to a frontier scenario where the boundaries of two traditional territorial units (nation states) meet with the line that marks the limits of a new territorial container characterized by its supranational (or post-national) nature. Two different and meaningful territorial lines are juxtaposed. The external bordering of the European Union has dramatically altered the geopolitical significance of the Spanish-Moroccan border. The advent of the post-national (EU-Morocco) border did not erase the border between Spain and Morocco. Instead, the two borders have merged generating a non-dissolved two-folded territorial amalgam.

The Spanish *lebensraum* and the EU post-national *lebensraum*: The process of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership bears a certain resemblance to the Spanish geopolitical expansion experienced during the years of the Protectorate. Some continuities can be found between the Spanish (national) *lebensraum* of North Africa and the EU (post-national) *lebensraum* represented by the future Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. The analogy between the present scenario and the days of Spanish colonialism in Morocco evokes the idea of a border that, within a context of a certain economic permeability/integration, still preserves political/institutional difference between territorial units. Euro-Mediterranean commercial integration does not necessarily go hand in hand with political integration.

The idea of the EU post-national *lebensraum* suggests that the barrier effect of the Spanish-Moroccan (Euro-Mediterranean) border might be being selectively lowered in order to provide the EU with its post-national vital space.

6.2 Functional Reshaping

Border Acrobatics between (EU)rope and Africa: Moving on to the specific situation of the (EU)ro-African borders, we see how the peculiar border regimes of the enclaves' borders with Morocco appear to be designed in accordance with their anomalous status. To a large extent, the economic sustainability of the enclaves depends on the interaction with their hinterlands, and for this reason, the cross-border flow of people from the surrounding areas is allowed. On a daily basis, Ceuta and Melilla import labour force and consumers from Morocco, lowering the barrier effect of the border for (some) people, and simultaneously benefiting from the legal and illegal cross-border flow of goods -based on massive economic asymmetries between the two sides of the border. The acrobatic and paradoxical management of these borders seems to be simultaneously embracing the EU outer border regime, as well as the special regulation the sustainability of the enclaves requires. The peculiar circumstances of the north-African enclaves accentuate the selective model of external border management deployed by the European Union. The border regimes of Ceuta and Melilla represent an extreme sample of the Gated Community model described by Van Houtum and Pijpers (2005) as an alternative narrative to the 'imprecise' metaphor of 'Fortress Europe'.

Conflicting logics of softening and fortification: The Spanish-Moroccan border is becoming more permeable to the flow of goods and capital, due to the logics of globalization and the upcoming of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. On the other hand the border is becoming less permeable to the flow of (some types of) labour migration, in harmony with the idiosyncrasy of a fortified (EU)rope and via the implementation of the System of Integrated External Surveillance (SIVE). The peculiar border regime of Ceuta and Melilla is rooted in an accurate acrobatic equilibrium between the bridging and the barrier functions of the border. Inasmuch as the enclaves are 'total' frontier territories, the border functions as their main resource, and its preservation requires the deployment of apparent contradictory policies of softening and fortification.

6.3 Symbolic Reshaping

Instrument of national and post-national identity formation: The reconfiguration of the Spanish-Moroccan border seems to fit within the traditional logics of 'us-them' delimitation associated to place making dynamics. The (b)ordering process has a dissimilar impact at the core and at the periphery of the bordered territories. The (re)marking of the socio-spatial identities delimited by the border appears to be more accentuated in the core than in the periphery. From the centre(s) of the territorial unit(s) the bordering process orders and clarifies the us-them divide. From the distance, the symbolic reinforcing of the border is translated into the strengthening of Spanish and EU (as well as Moroccan and non-EU) identities. At the periphery, on the frontier field, the arbitrary nature of the outer EU 'line on the sand' blurs this divide, giving rise to complex processes of identification.

The uses of the militarization: Despite the efforts made in their tangible sealing off, the European Union external borders in Africa remain permeable. As it is occurs in the case of Melilla, the fortification of the Ceuta-Morocco border has been implemented taking into consideration the peculiar circumstances of the enclaves. This fact implies the existence of a permeable sealed off border managed under the terms of a selective militarization regime. The peculiar management of these borders raises several questions regarding the real purpose of the militarization and introduces the idea of the symbolic use of this peculiarly sealed-off fragment of the EU perimeter. Rather than as a product of rational border regulation, the militarization of the (EU)ro-African borders might be interpreted as a symbolic performance for domestic consumption, aimed at marking the symbolic limits of the emergent EU identity.

6.4 What Next?

As argued before, in the course of the next phase of the research, the fieldwork is intended to uncover and document the perspectives and practices of the actors who operate on the (EU)ro-African border. The inquiries will be articulated around the ways in which these actors experience and understand the aspects of the border reconfiguration that have been delineated in this paper. The 'us-them' delimitation produced by the external EU bordering provides clarity, order and 'others' to the core(s) of the EU and Spanish imagined communities. At the same time, though, it generates ambiguity and confusion around their overlapping border lines in Ceuta and Melilla. The desire of an impermeable, militarized border at the core, contrasts with the border permeability required by the sustainability of the enclaves and their populations. In turn, on the Moroccan side of the fence, the impact and understanding of the border is also different at the core than at the periphery. On the one hand, at the core of the Moroccan state, the contested character of the enclaves implies that the claim for the disappearance of their borders -and not their symbolic remarking- constitutes an element of national cohesion. On the other hand, the viewpoint at the periphery seems to vary. And, although belonging to the Moroccan 'imagined community', those whose life is closely linked to the border might very well have different (or even opposed) views in regard to the status of the border.

It seems clear that conflicting views and contradictory interests concerning borders exist. As observed by O'Dowd (2003), 'some actors have a vested interest in maintaining borders as barriers; others wish to develop their bridging role; others still use borders as a positive economic resource in ways which seek to benefit from their bridging and barrier functions simultaneously' (2003:25). Discerning between the standpoints of these actors is amongst the main objectives of the fieldwork, which, as previously remarked, also seeks to document the evolution and transformation of their border actions. To sum up, the subsequent part of this research will examine the way in which the structural Spanish-Moroccan border reconfiguration has impinged on the (EU)ro-African border scenario between Ceuta (Spain) and Finideq (Morocco). Far from the territorial core of the European Union, from the peripheral angle provided by a segment of its outer border, this ongoing research intends to help document the way in which the EU shapes itself by delineating its geopolitical, functional and symbolic external boundaries.

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