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Editor

Bordering on Britishness

National Identity in Gibraltar from the Spanish Civil
War to Brexit

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A New British Subject: The Creation of a Common Ethnicity in Gibraltar

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, nationalism scholars have paid increasing attention to the role of ethnicity in the formation of nations. Anthony D. Smith, John Hutchinson, and others have revisited modernist theories, emphasising the ‘ethnic character of modern nations’ (Hutchinson 2000: 651). Not only do they point out that nations usually emerge on ‘the basis of pre-existing *ethnie*’ but also that the lack of these ethnic backgrounds constitutes ‘a serious impediment to nation-building’ (Smith 1986: 7). Nations often tend to structure around discourses that set a continuity with an early ethnic group that inhabited the territory. However, the persistence of ethnic backgrounds does not mean necessarily that ethnicity is an immutable phenomenon. The cultural components of existing *ethnies* are often in a process of transformation. Furthermore, there are historical factors that might determine the rise of new ethnic communities and the ‘dissolution of older ones’ (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 7). Historical processes—such as nationalism and imperialism—might cause these cultural changes, strengthening some ethnic backgrounds over others within the community.

Although all countries are ethnically diverse, nationalists usually invent a dominant narrative of the nation, which often set aside ethnicities, languages, and religious beliefs of minorities inhabiting the national territory (Kymlicka 1995: 11–12). These narratives often structure the nation around a core ethnic group and a hegemonic language. It was this model, for example, that was behind the redrawing of many international borders in Europe and the Near East established in the Treaty of Versailles—and especially in the break-up of Austria-Hungary (Mylonas 2013: 17–23). Nationalist narratives, therefore, set ‘a common myth of descent’ for every nation (Smith 1986: 24–25), often linking ethnic homogeneity to national identity discursively.

Nevertheless, there are communities which have problems in clearly defining their shared ethnic backgrounds—that which explains why they are members of the same nation. This is the case of many former colonies because old empires tended to maintain ‘the diversity of people they conquered’ (Burbank and Cooper 2010: 2, 58). Colonial rulers often organised their colonies in an ethnically based hierarchy, exacerbating cultural differences within the colonial society. In territories of the British Empire—such as, for instance, Malaysia and Singapore—‘an ethnically determined division of labour’ was created, adding social class differences to the ethnic

hierarchy (Chi 2003: 55). After decades of colonisation, the nationalist movements of these territories have faced the problem of creating national identities for their culturally diverse societies. This is the case of Gibraltar, which offers an exceptional opportunity to shed light on the political strategies for the creation of a discursive common ethnicity from a community with a very culturally diverse background.

Gibraltar served as the starting point of the Moorish conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711; it was held by the Moors until 1462 when it was captured by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, an ally of the Kingdom of Castile. It remained under Spanish control until 1704 when this small territory was conquered by a combined Anglo-Dutch fleet during the War of Spanish Succession and formally ceded to the British Crown under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. From then on, Spain and the UK have maintained a long-standing diplomatic dispute over Gibraltar's sovereignty. Both sides have had a significant cultural influence on the Rock's everyday life. This was particularly intense in the case of Spain, mainly due to geographic proximity and frequently iterated cross-border relations. With two powerful countries determining their identity, Gibraltarians found it difficult to develop their own national narrative, much less a claim for independence. In the 1940s, however, the Spanish dictator, General Franco, began a campaign to recover Gibraltar that culminated in the closure of the border in 1969. It was during this campaign that Gibraltarians developed the clearest articulation of their unique collective identity through a nationalist discourse that would make them new British subjects, albeit with their own ethnic peculiarities. In the context of an external Spanish threat, Gibraltarians asserted their sense of belonging to Britain, through a sovereignty referendum in 1967, and started to highlight what made them different from Spain and Spaniards. In this process of differentiation, the idea of a cultural 'melting pot' was revealed as a useful discursive tool to stress the singularity of this community, eliding Gibraltar's Spanish heritage. The closed border situation (1969–1982) intensified the sense of solidarity within the community. During this period, and indeed since World War II, Gibraltarian identity was articulated around an official discourse that would attribute to the local population—which is formed of people of Genoese, Spanish, Maltese, Portuguese, Sindhi, Sephardic, Moroccan, and British descent—a shared ethnic character, which is the basis of the British Gibraltarian nationalist movement.

This chapter analyses how a nationalist narrative helped Gibraltarians form their own ethnic identity, incorporating, at least discursively, a diverse

ethnic background that would make the Gibraltarian a ‘melting pot’.¹ Our research is based on the analysis of six indispensable conditions in the formation of ethnic communities: a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity (Smith 1986: 22–32). Although the formation of a Gibraltarian ethnic community probably started prior to the twentieth century, all these aspects were only codified into a nationalist discourse after World War II (1939–1945). Therefore, this chapter explores how political actors gave birth to a new British subject, the Gibraltarian, during the postwar period, charting the reception of this ideological discourse on the Rock. This research is based on both archival material and semi-structured oral history interviews with over 300 people in Gibraltar. We reviewed nationalist literature to study how the Gibraltarian nation was imagined. By giving voice to locals from diverse ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds, we also explore the ways in which the inhabitants of this British colony have embraced this discourse to define their identity, adapting and reshaping the official national narrative.

IN THE BEGINNING...

In the early twentieth century, there was no fully fleshed national sentiment in Gibraltar, at a time when Spanish culture predominated among locals. The majority of Gibraltarians, especially women, were monolingual in Spanish, and few could converse fluently in English. As several of the chapters in this volume have demonstrated, they shared many cultural traits with their Spanish neighbours, as well as significant kinship ties (Sawchuck and Walz 2003: 87).

Although the British Army erected a fence along the edge of the neutral territory at Gibraltar in 1909 (Jackson 1990: 262–263), the Rock and the neighbouring Spanish city of La Línea de la Concepción essentially constituted one community. Our interviewees still recall how the new fence was ‘very amorphous’ and ‘porous’ until well into the twentieth century. Border guards rarely required commuters to show any legal document: ‘They hadn’t to ask for a permit, or a pass or anything. And then people could

¹ Although many scholars question the concept of a cultural ‘melting pot’, Gibraltarians often use it to define themselves. Will Kymlicka (1995) defines a ‘melting-pot’ as ‘the biological fusing of various (white) ethnic groups through intermarriage, more than the fusing of their cultural practices’.

just go through. So, it wasn't so much as a barrier, as something which kept uniting [...] these two towns'.² This intense cross-border communication led both peoples to share collective claims on the basis of social class rather than due to any kind of national feeling. As recent research work has demonstrated, workers from both sides of the border usually came together 'to defend and advance their interests' from 1890 to the end of World War I in 1918 (Grocott et al. 2015: 385). In a similar manner, the Gibraltarian upper classes established social networks with their Spanish equivalents through the Royal Calpe Hunt and other exclusive leisure institutions (Ballantine Perera 2010).

Many of our oldest interviewees recalled that, whereas having rights to live and work in Gibraltar were important issues, people did not, by and large, translate this into specifically British and Spanish identities; identity was focused on being from Gibraltar, or Algeciras, and so on (see Introduction). As one of our nonagenarian interviewees put it: 'Look, in those days we didn't have time for those things. We were too busy getting by'.³ This comment succinctly points to the pragmatics of identity in the difficult years of the first half of the twentieth century: when people were struggling for a livelihood, identity politics did not seem to resonate for most people. After all, for much of this period, as Francisco Oda states in Chap. 2, Gibraltarians and Spaniards had common economic interests rather than divided ones.

For their part, the British government was uninterested in Gibraltar's population and made few efforts to anglicise Gibraltarians, who were subordinated to the military needs of the Garrison and regarded 'as second-class citizens' by the colonial rulers (Burke and Sawchuck 2001: 532). British politicians thought that Gibraltar was 'so small, so cosmopolitan, so parasitic that it [could] not develop a real nationalist movement' (Garratt 1939: 151). When serious demands for independence arose in Egypt and other territories of the British Empire, the Rock continued being a military garrison.

The situation changed with the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). This conflict marked the end of an open border, and, more importantly, it also showed Gibraltarians how potentially significant national differences vis-à-

² Bordering on Britishness interview (22 June 2014) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s. Canessa, A. (2017). *Bordering on Britishness*. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 852694, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-852694>

³ Bordering on Britishness interview (20 June 2014) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1920s.

vis Spain were. Although the war caused many problems for Gibraltar, Britain remained officially neutral, and Gibraltarians stressed their sense of belonging to the British Empire to escape the horrors of the war. One of our interviewees explains how her mother hung a Union Jack flag on the window of their property in Spain in order to avoid looting by Franco's African troops.⁴ Being Gibraltarian, and being British, served to protect people from this war, at least. It is at this time, and in this context, that one can see Gibraltarians starting to regard the Rock as a safe place: a safe homeland.

In 1940, however, war itself came to Gibraltar. The Rock became an important military base for the Allies during the World War II and the British government did not hesitate in evacuating most of the civilian population, demonstrating once again that the fortress came first (Finlayson 1991). Around 13,000 Gibraltarians, mostly women and children, were evacuated to England, Jamaica, Madeira, and Ireland. The Hindi population of the Rock, however, was sent to India.⁵ The Evacuation allowed many Gibraltarians to get to know Britain—where most of them went—first-hand for the first time. Although Gibraltarians were generally grouped together, they had the opportunity to meet other British people. Much has been said of how this Evacuation to the UK contributed to giving Gibraltarian a greater British identity (Garcia 1994: 12–35). However, this can only be part of the story: not all Gibraltarians were evacuated to the UK and even those that were in Britain, lived and went to school with other Gibraltarians. Although it seems to be the case that many children learnt English, adults continued to speak Spanish, often relying on their children to translate.

Not all Gibraltarians, however, went to the UK. Those who went to Madeira (with some exceptions) financed themselves and were generally wealthier than the others on the evacuation scheme. Other wealthy Gibraltarians spent the war in French-speaking Tangiers or even in the Campo itself. It was these groups, surrounded by Portuguese, French, and Spanish speakers, that became the most anglophone in the immediate war years. So, it was clearly not simply the environmental effect of being in the UK that impelled Gibraltarians to absorb English language and culture.

⁴Bordering on Britishness interview (19 August 2014) with a woman born in Gibraltar in the 1930s.

⁵Bordering on Britishness interview (19 June 2014) with a member of Gibraltar's Indian community who was evacuated to India during World War II, despite being born in Gibraltar.

These people settled in North Africa, and the Campo were among the first to return long before the war's end, starting in 1943, whereas the last Gibraltarian to return from Northern Ireland arrived in 1951 (Bond 2003).

The Evacuation has formed something of a 'foundational fiction' of Gibraltarian identity (cf. Sommer 1991) or as Stockey refers to it, the 'myth of the Evacuation' (2009: 184). Stockey (2009) is at pains to point out, this is not to suggest that it did not happen or that the memories are misplaced but, rather, that it enjoys an overdetermining status in accounting for Gibraltarian increasingly British national identity in the years to follow. Gibraltar in the 1950s and 1960s was still a very Spanish-speaking place where people crossed the border to enjoy bullfights or enjoyed *zarzuela* in Gibraltar theatres and Spanish films in the cinemas. In the immediate aftermath of the War, the circulation of Gibraltar's Spanish language dailies *El Calpense* and *El Anunciador* far exceeded those of the Garrison's *The Gibraltar Chronicle* (Stockey 2009: 189–90). For all the memories of children returning from the UK fluent in English, in 1953, it was estimated that 85% of Gibraltar's school children arrived on their first day of school knowing only Spanish (West 1953, in Stockey 2009: 191). In fact, there was no shortage of interviewees who recounted that on their first day of school they spoke *not a word* of English, not only in the 1950s but up to the 1970s.

The Evacuation was, without a doubt, a transformative experience for those who lived through it, among other things they were able to see and appreciate Gibraltar while removed from it. Curiously, quite a number of our interviewees commented that leaving Gibraltar and going to the UK made them realise how little they had in common with British people. It did, however, create a sense of solidarity among those who shared the experience, and this of course included a fair proportion of the population which was Spanish-born but had married Gibraltarians. The anthem of the Evacuation, a song actually penned by a Gibraltarian emigrant in New York, was, of course, a song in Spanish *Llévame donde nací* (Take me back to where I was born).

The Evacuation had another, more immediate, effect on Gibraltarian society. In 1942, a group of Gibraltarians founded the Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights (AACR) to support the evacuees. This institution became the first political organisation on the Rock, demanding action on behalf of Gibraltar's civil population from British colonial authorities. Moreover, the emergence of the AACR suggests that

Gibraltarians were already forging links of solidarity between themselves. The two wars, the Spanish Civil War and World War II, were transformative in reifying differences between people for whom there had been little difference previously. People with a Gibraltarian connection were able to seek sanctuary in Gibraltar during the Spanish Civil War, and those who fought on the Republican side were subsequently able to use their British documents to be released and live in Gibraltar (even if they had never lived there before). During the Evacuation, the choice for many was whether to stay in La Línea or go to the UK with the other Gibraltarians. Not all of them did, and many of these simply merged into the exiting working-class La Línea society. Those that did, Spanish-born or otherwise, shared an experience that was, without a doubt, life changing.

Although Gibraltarians returning after the war noticed, according to accounts, little overall change, Spain had, nevertheless, changed profoundly. By then, Franco had established a military dictatorship, and, from the end of 1940 onwards, the Spanish government decided to actively seek to advance its claim on Gibraltar as an important component of its diplomatic strategy (Hoare 1946: 21–22). By this point, and partly due to the experience of the evacuation of Gibraltarians to the UK, the British government had come to the view that the task of making Gibraltarians more British must be undertaken.

A NARRATIVE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW BRITISH SUBJECT

The narrative that describes the Gibraltarian as a new British subject was built after World War II when both the evacuation of the Rock's civil population and the threat of Franco's Spain encouraged colonial officials to create a discourse that would render Gibraltarians different from Spaniards. It was the then Colonial Secretary, Miles Clifford, who chaired a committee to promote the learning of English in Gibraltar and strengthen the 'imperial connection' with the UK (Picardo, Chap. 6, this volume). The person in charge of this mission was Dr Henry William Howes, who was appointed Gibraltar's first Director of Education, and held the position from 1945 to 1951. During this period, he wrote two books, which formed the beginnings of a Gibraltarian national narrative. The first book—*The Story of Gibraltar*—was published in 1946, when Gibraltarians were still returning from a shared unique war experience: the Evacuation.

The author's motivation was to 'provide those leaving the Secondary Schools of Gibraltar with an account of their own place'. He thought that if Gibraltarians knew their history, they might feel 'a sense of real pride in being members of both of their own community and of the British Empire' (Howes 1946: 85–86). With the aim of ensuring their loyalty to the British Empire, he wanted the Gibraltarian to be a new British subject, promoting Gibraltarians' own identity at both local and imperial levels. His aim was to make the Rock's population feel Gibraltarian and British at the same time. With this aim in mind, he used history as a nation-building tool. As Anthony D. Smith points out, ethnic communities are built on 'a sense of shared history' that unites 'successive generations' and define the population 'in terms of experienced temporal sequences' (Smith 1986: 25). Howes' book provided a lineal historical account that would bind Gibraltarians' past to British history.

Not only did the Rock's civil population get their own official history, British colonial rulers also started to redefine them with a collective term in English during this period. Before World War II, Gibraltarians were colloquially known as *Yanitos*—or *Llanitos*—a Spanish term which also included those Spaniards living in La Línea de la Concepción.⁶ In the early twentieth century, therefore, Gibraltarians did not use an English word to name themselves. One of our interviewees tells us that the term Gibraltarian was rare before the border closure in 1969. When he travelled to the UK in the mid-1960s, his English friends were confused about his nationality, and he tried to clarify it 'using the term Gibraltarian, which wasn't used a lot'.⁷ The lack of an own English name—and the popularity of the term *Llanito* instead—might suggest that Gibraltarians did not need to make themselves different from their Spanish neighbours in La Línea. As Anthony D. Smith argues, a collective name matters because it summarises 'the essence' of each ethnic community, and it is essential for distinguishing the group (Smith 1986: 23).

Although, in his first book, Howes celebrated that the Rock's population were 'immensely proud of being known as Gibraltarians', he knew

⁶There are many examples that demonstrate that *Yanito* or *Llanito* was used to name people inhabiting Gibraltar and the Spanish neighbouring cities, such as La Línea and Algeciras and is still occasionally used in Spain to refer to people from the Campo region. See, for instance, 'Una Mirada a Gibraltar', *El Sol*, 14 July 1926: 1.

⁷Bordering on Britishness interview (3 March 2015) with a man who was born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

locals very rarely referred to themselves using this term (Howes 1946: 86). It was partly a linguistic issue. The British government had begun with the promotion of English language learning in Gibraltar, but Howes admitted that Spanish was still ‘completely dominant’ on the Rock. Nevertheless, even if the inhabitants were Spanish-speaking, he highlighted that the population was not ‘entirely Spanish in origin’, stressing Gibraltarians’ Italian ethnic backgrounds: ‘A careful study of surnames shows that the majority of them are derived from Italian sources, and a much smaller number from Maltese. Gibraltar is unique in this and in so many other ways’ (Howes 1946: 17). What Howes did not say is that it was also the case of La Línea, where many Spaniards’ surnames derived from Maltese, Genoese, and Jewish sources, too (Oda, Chap. 2, this volume: 127). There were, however, various ethnic minorities in Gibraltar—such as Jews, Indians, and so on—who were not found in significant numbers on the other side of the border, Howes only emphasised Gibraltarians’ Maltese and Genoese backgrounds to create ‘a common myth of descent’. This common myth of descent is another key feature of the making of an ethnic community (Smith 1986: 24–5). He was describing Gibraltar as a melting pot of White races, in which Spanish and Moroccan heritages were elided. As we shall see below, the idea of a ‘melting pot’ became very popular among Gibraltarians in the second half of the twentieth century, and it is still an argument locals use to distinguish themselves from Spaniards.

In 1951, Howes published *The Gibraltarian*, which carried on the mission of creating a new British subject in Gibraltar. As with his previous book, this new one aspired to demonstrate that the fortress’ civilians constituted a distinctive ethnic community in a period in which Spain had a strong influence on the Rock. In the Foreword, the Governor of Gibraltar, Kenneth Arthur Noel Anderson, highlighted this theme stating, ‘Although the ties with Spain are close and Spanish is spoken by everyone today, with English as a second language to a wide and increasing extent, it is very clear that the Gibraltarian is certainly not Spanish’. Language, however, could not be used to distinguish Gibraltarians from Spaniards, and so, when seeking to stress differentiation, the tendency was to highlight the uniqueness of the ‘Gibraltarian race’. The idea of a ‘melting pot’ appeared as an identity marker in Anderson’s Foreword: ‘The synthesis of blood is still going on’ (Howes 1982 [1951]: i–ii). Gibraltar’s ‘Spanishness’ would be erased in the mixture of cultures that formed the Rock’s local identity. In line with Anderson, Howes carried out a ‘scientific approach’ to dem-

onstrate that this mixture was what made Gibraltarians a unique people, despite the exclusion of some non-White minorities—for example, the Indian community in Gibraltar—from his description:

It would be correct to say that the fusion of races which has made the Gibraltarian of to-day, includes apart from Jews, Genoese, men of Savoy, Spaniards, men of the United Kingdom, Portuguese, Minorcans, Sardinians, Sicilians, Maltese, French, Austrians, and Italians. (Howes 1982 [1951]: 214)

Howes (1982 [1951]) pointed out that these ethnic backgrounds were essentially Latin but emphasised that this Latin character did ‘...not make the Gibraltarian a Spaniard’. Although the Rock was still influenced by Spain—in particular, by Andalusia—after World War II, Howes argued that the Gibraltarian was a British subject. Therefore, he stressed on those Gibraltarian cultural features that linked them to the British Empire. His aim was to demonstrate that the Rock’s population shared a local, distinctive culture which was in line with British values. With this in mind, Howes pointed out tolerance as one of the Rock’s peculiarities—a cultural element that could not be claimed as ‘an essentially Spanish trait’. The Gibraltarian is ‘a tolerant man, while holding fast to his religious principles, he lives in harmony with those not of his faith’ (Howes 1982 [1951]: 215). He thought that tolerance was an important feature that Gibraltarians shared with the Britons, but there were others. In his own words, the Gibraltarian was ‘ambitious’, ‘businesslike’, ‘commercially minded’, and ‘industrious’ (Howes 1982 [1951]: 218). In his description—which echoes ‘Victorian values’ clearly—Gibraltarian identity is clearly inflected with Britishness. Similar stereotypes have been common in Britain precisely as a point of distinction from southern Europeans. Undoubtedly, Howes wanted to create a new British subject—the Gibraltarian—and he had to emphasise those Gibraltar’s cultural elements in line with an essentialist description of the British culture. Howes was attempting to create a shared distinctive culture, which is another fundamental component of ethnic communities which Anthony D. Smith highlighted in his definition of *ethnie* (Smith 1986: 26–28).

In the 1950s, the Rock’s collective identity was still under construction. Even at what appeared to be the height of British identity with the Queen’s visit in 1954, Gibraltar remained culturally much more Spanish

in its orientation than English, according to our interviewees⁸ (see Introduction). Nevertheless, Howes' ideas became relevant in arguments to distinguish Gibraltarians from Spaniards in subsequent years. Gibraltarian politicians—in particular, Joshua Hassan—used some of these arguments in the propaganda struggle with Franco's regime. In 1956, for example, Hassan described the Rock as a 'melting pot' in an interview for the *New York Times*: 'The last thing we Gibraltans (sic.) think is that we are in any way Spanish or of Spanish nationality. My ancestors came from Morocco in 1729. There was a mixture of races here when the British seized Gibraltar in 1704'.⁹ In this quotation, we observe how the interviewer (or perhaps the editor) did not know how to write the word 'Gibraltarians' properly a collective name that was still quite new on the Rock but also abroad. Nevertheless, this interview shows how Hassan tried to spread the idea of Gibraltar as a 'melting pot' of races. In the second half of the twentieth century, in fact, local leaders repeated this argument, which used to come along with claims by some of Gibraltarians' sense of tolerance, thereby linking them to a sense of Britishness.

Although a new British subject was already emerging on the Rock, Gibraltarians were far from enjoying the same rights that their colonial masters had. Ethnic hierarchies were still ongoing, and Gibraltarians were not recognised as full British citizens.¹⁰ One of our interviewees recalls that before the 1980s, very few Gibraltarians held a British passport. Such a passport potentially provided you with a prominent social position on the Rock where 'English were still very powerful'.¹¹ As with other British colonies, there was an ethnically based division of labour on the Rock. Gibraltarians could not get access to certain areas of employment, in particular, those positions that required excellent communication skills in English. One of interviewees remembers how 'difficult' it was for a Gibraltarian 'to get into the Civil Service' in the 1960s.¹² Although Gibraltarians progressively obtained high-qualified jobs—such as doctors,

⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (12 February 2015) with a couple born in Gibraltar in the 1920s and 1930s.

⁹ 'Gibraltar Curbs by Franco Failing', *The New York Times*, 16 September 1956: 27.

¹⁰ At the time, Gibraltarians were classified as British Dependent Territory Citizens and not as British Citizens, and consequently second class British subjects.

¹¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (30 March 2015) with a man born in Spain in the 1940s, but living in Gibraltar.

¹² Bordering on Britishness interview (22 July 2014) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

teachers, lawyers, and so on—social segregation continued. For instance, at the Dockyard, there were three toilets: one for the British, another for the Gibraltarians, and the last for other Aliens, mostly Spanish.¹³ Spaniards generally performed lower-status jobs in the Dockyard, and many Spanish women worked as cleaners and maids (Díaz Martínez 2010).

Although ethnic hierarchies remained stable, there were important changes after World War II. As Howes' books suggest, colonial officials made efforts to create a community of new British subjects who had their own specific history, an English name, a common descent, and a distinctive shared culture. Postwar colonial authorities and local political parties claiming new, expanded civil rights fostered Howes' nationalist narrative, in the context of an increasing, external Spanish threat. While they popularised this discourse, some historical events reinforced the configuration of a British Gibraltar ethnic community in Gibraltar. The most important one was the border closure of 1969. For 13 years, the Rock was almost completely isolated from Spain, and this intensified a growing sense of solidarity among Gibraltarians, who were mostly confined to their territory. This enforced proximity meant that many wealthy Gibraltarians had to abandon their properties across the border and were forced to live cheek by jowl with everyone else. In these circumstances, the scope for maintaining a social spatial segregation with other classes was severely limited, even if membership of clubs such as the Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club or sending one's children to boarding school in England continued to differentiate social groups.

Although the Evacuation made Gibraltarians develop 'a strong sense of belongingness' to the Rock, the border closure helped to clearly delimit their national territory. As Anthony D. Smith points out, two relevant components of ethnic communities are the 'association with a specific territory' and a 'sense of solidarity' (Smith 1986: 28–31).

With the frontier closure, the majority of Spanish workers left the Rock, and all direct communications with Spain were curtailed. Gibraltarians found themselves by their own in 'an enclosed community'.¹⁴ They coalesced in the face of these new circumstances, in effect they needed 'unity in order to survive'.¹⁵ Our interviewees recall those years as times of

¹³ Bordering on Britishness interview (22 June 2014) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

¹⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016) with a woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

¹⁵ Bordering on Britishness interview (14 July 2016) with a woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

solidarity among Gibraltarians: ‘There was more unity here, everyday we met in someone’s place... Before [the border closure] you would say: “Uff, I take the car” and you would go to Spain’.¹⁶ In their accounts, Gibraltarians usually highlighted the fact that they socialised among themselves more than ever during this period. Before the border closure, many Gibraltarians used to go to Spain regularly. Some interviewees went to visit their relatives living in the Spanish neighbouring region— El Campo de Gibraltar—on weekends. Others went shopping, to meet friends, to attend social events, and so on. The border closure meant that Gibraltarians spent most of their time on the Rock. One of our interviewees was a young woman in 1969, but she still recalls how the border closure changed her weekends: ‘A very important thing! We couldn’t go out [in Spain] at weekends. (Laugh). And we used to go out on the Rock’.¹⁷

During this period of isolation, the border closure clearly delimited Gibraltar’s national territory but also that of the national population, reinforcing a British Gibraltar identity on the Rock. During the process of the frontier closure, many of those Gibraltarians living in the Rock’s hinterland returned to Gibraltar. Although repatriation caused housing problems, they were incorporated into the national body. Our interviewees recall how they helped each other during these hard years, using words such as ‘unity’ and ‘solidarity’ to describe the period. Gibraltarians ‘rallied around themselves’, reinforcing solidarity links among them.¹⁸ For instance, there are many accounts of Gibraltar housewives who started to work—as cleaners at the hospital or doing other jobs—in order to replace those Spanish workers who left when the border shut: ‘And so there were jobs to be done, and people went down and did them. We wouldn’t have thought a cleaner, a Gibraltar woman, a cleaner, you know, not really. People became cleaners in the hospitals and schools, in everything’.¹⁹

With the decline of Spanish influence during this period, Gibraltarians were exposed more and more to British culture, while also developing their own local identity. At the time, they commenced stressing the two identities—Britishness and Gibraltarianess—that Howes had tried to foster

¹⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (06 March 2015).

¹⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (20 June 2014) with a woman born in Gibraltar.

¹⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (21 June 2014) with a woman born in London in the 1960s but living in La Línea and working in Gibraltar.

¹⁹ Bordering on Britishness interview (24 March 2015) with a woman born in Gibraltar in the 1930s.

among the Rock's civil population. Many locals learnt or improved English and even anglicised their names. They reinforced their cultural links to the UK. However, they also started to closely examine themselves, becoming 'a very inward looking community'.²⁰ In these years, Gibraltarians also promoted their own way of speaking, *Yanito*—a kind of English-Spanish patois (Cavilla 1976), and it seems that only in the 1970s did the term come to refer to way of speaking in addition to referring to the people of Gibraltar.

In other words, the border closure had an important impact on the Rock, forever changing Gibraltarian society. Between 1969 and 1982, culminated the formation process of a British Gibraltarian ethnic community. As one of our interviewees points out, the border closure was the crucial point for the rise of a new ethnic identity in Gibraltar: 'The border made us, it made us more of a people'.²¹

THE NATIONALIST NARRATIVE ON THE STREETS

In the previous pages, we have seen how post-World War II Gibraltar's colonial rulers and local leaders created a new British subject around the concept of a 'melting pot'. This narrative and historical events associated to this period—such as the evacuation and the border closure—contributed to make a new ethnic community in Gibraltar. In this second part, we move to explore to what extent Gibraltarians have embraced this official narrative. Our research data suggest that this way of thinking has spread successfully throughout the Rock's population even though there have been nuances and critiques of it. Today, many defend Gibraltar as a melting pot of cultures: 'And you think of the cocktail of people that were here: Greeks, Maltese, Jewish, Italians [...] Everybody was sort of thrown into one melting pot and most of these people were single'.²²

In Gibraltar, the idea of a 'melting pot' has been revealed as a useful discursive tool to highlight the singularity of this community. The essence of the Gibraltarian resides in the mixture of cultures. One of the interviewees points out that the fusion of varied cultural backgrounds is

²⁰ Bordering on Britishness interview (22 June 2014) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1940s.

²¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (8 June 2014) with a woman born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

²² Bordering on Britishness interview (2 February 2015) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

what makes the Gibraltarian rather than the fact of having been born on the Rock:

I would consider myself Gibraltarian simply because, apart from having lived here all my life, I think that one of the interesting things about Gib[raltar] is that it's such a melting pot of cultures, like kind of different national backgrounds or as earlier on I referred to it that I feel identified with this type, with these type, with these people, right?²³

After this, however, our interviewee specified that he does not 'feel more British than' he does Spanish, and that his identity was formed of various cultural backgrounds: 'I'm a mix between different cultures, which means that I don't feel really Spanish, so [...] I would describe myself as Gibraltarian because that is what is in my head, that mix, that's how you can describe that mix'.²⁴ In many other accounts, we observed that the idea of a 'melting pot' is very popular on the Rock. Gibraltarians usually described themselves as a mixture of cultures, thereby they have embraced most elements of the official narrative.

According to the official narrative, the Gibraltarians are the result of a fusion of White races—mainly Italian and British—in which Spanish contribution to it would be minimised or even elided. While our interviewees have embraced this discourse, they also recognised Spanish influence as another component of his identity. One of interviewees explained that being Gibraltarian meant that one could be 'Italian, Norwegian, English and Spanish' at the same time. After stressing his varied backgrounds, he recognised that 'there's Spanish heritage there as well and I'm proud of it all'.²⁵ Another interviewee suggests that the mixture of Spanish and British cultures makes the Rock a unique place, but, like the majority of our interviewees, he suggests that Gibraltarians have inherited their inclination to tolerance from the UK.²⁶

Many interviewees accept the official narrative that describes Gibraltar as a melting pot of cultures, linking the ethnic fusion to a particular sense of tolerance that set them apart from Spaniards. However, there are inter-

²³ Bordering on Britishness interview (09 February 2016) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1980s.

²⁴ Bordering on Britishness interview (09 February 2016) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1980s.

²⁵ Bordering on Britishness interview (4 July 2015) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1980s.

²⁶ Bordering on Britishness interview (4 March 2015) with a man born in Gibraltar.

viewees who also recognised that some ethnic groups were discriminated in Gibraltar:

When you look at Gibraltar, it is a melting pot of different cultures, the Italians from Genoa based in Catalan Bay, the Spaniards obviously, the English, the Jews, the Indians in one of few places in the world where they all get on [...] The one exception in the early years... talking about barriers and frontiers... was the Moroccans. In the early years Moroccans were always second class citizens and that's changed again. The Moroccans are much more integrated now. You'll see Moroccans in much more... under-taking positions of importance within the local community.²⁷

Nevertheless, some interviewees put the official narrative in a broader context. One of our interviewees, born in the UK, points out that 'there is more segregation' in England than in Gibraltar, which she describes as a 'warm' and united community.²⁸ Another interviewee with an Indian background really believes that Gibraltar is a melting pot of cultures but questions Gibraltarians' tolerance in relation to some kind of minorities as, for instance, the gay community:

We can be the most tolerable people in the world, but we can also be the most intolerant because we know the people affected by this [discrimination against gays and lesbians] or we know how contradictory or hypocritical it is at times and things like that. And so, it's really interesting that a part of being Gibraltarian is a part of being like this melting pot of cultures [...], and then, at the same time, it can really contradict itself just because of the nature of being in Gibraltar itself.

Although the majority of our interviewees have embraced the description of Gibraltar as a place where all cultures live in harmony, some Gibraltarians see a gap between the official narrative and their life experiences. A woman in her 60s with a Gibraltarian father and mother born in Morocco of European parents, for instance, pointed out that 'when you start digging under the surface' you find that this melting pot of cultures and this narrative of tolerance are 'just a myth'.²⁹ A young student who had descended from

²⁷ Bordering on Britishness interview (24 April 2015) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1950s.

²⁸ Bordering on Britishness interview (03 March 2016) with a woman born in the UK in the 1980s.

²⁹ Bordering on Britishness interview (10 February 2016) with a woman born in Morocco in the 1950s.

Gibraltarians on both sides tells us that ‘The standard thing they say is [that Gibraltar is] a melting pot and everyone gets along. It’s not true. Not everyone gets along. No one will always get along with everyone’. He thinks that people are classified in Gibraltar on the basis of their linguistic skills: ‘If you can’t speak *Yanito* [the local dialect] very well you very quickly fall into one part of the spectrum’.³⁰ Therefore, language is a way to check who is a Gibraltarian:

Gibraltarians speak very loud in English, which does make a difference. Sometimes they can be loud in Spanish but it’s not even Spanish half the time. It’s *Yanito* really. [...] It’s like... it sounds a bit more Andalusian but it still doesn’t sound Andalusian, really. So we’re different, but the same.³¹

Yanito is seen by Gibraltarians as a form of self-identification, but they seem to find in *Yanito* the mixture that defines them: it is not Spanish, nor English what makes them Gibraltarian, but the mix of both cultures.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has analysed how, after World War II, the colonial rulers and local politicians fostered the creation of a nationalist narrative that would constitute Gibraltarians as a unique ethnic community—at least discursively—separate from their Spanish neighbours. We have demonstrated that the six aspects that Anthony Smith establishes for the formation of ethnic communities appeared clearly in Gibraltar from the 1940s onwards.

In this period, indeed, a *collective name* in English, the Gibraltarian, became a popular choice for identifying the Rock’s civil population, marginalising the previous Spanish term *Llanito* which, in any case, also included people in La Línea. We have collected accounts from interviewees stating that the name Gibraltarian was not much used until the latter half of the twentieth century. If we consider that the vast majority of Gibraltarians were monolingual in Spanish before World War II, these accounts make complete sense.

After 1940, Gibraltarians also became aware of their special *links with a homeland*. The evacuation of Gibraltar’s civilian population during World

³⁰ Bordering on Britishness interview (05 April 2016) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1990s.

³¹ Bordering on Britishness interview (01 April 2016) with a man born in Gibraltar in the 1990s.

War II—and in particular the memories of this diaspora—gave Gibraltarians a sense of their emotional attachment to the Rock, their homeland. During the Franco's regime, these links were reinforced by the traumatic experiences that—they knew—took place on the Spanish side of the border. Many of interviewees pointed out that they felt safe when they came back to Gibraltar. This particular feeling of security is still ongoing today. Last but not least, the border closure in 1969 fixed clearly Gibraltarians' national territory and population.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Gibraltarians also started to recall *shared historical memories* of what they have lived through as a people. The Evacuation provided one of these collective memories. In the postwar, additionally, colonial rulers constructed an historical account of Gibraltar, which emphasised their unique history. But there was more. In the 1950s and 1960s, Gibraltarians' opposition to Franco would also give them a shared narrative of their fight against a common enemy. Moreover, the closure of the border (1969–1982) constituted the last major event constituting Gibraltarians' collective experience. Nowadays, Gibraltarians usually recall these events from their history—even the most traumatic ones—as a justification of their uniqueness.

As shown above, there also appeared a *myth of common ancestry* among Gibraltarians. In this, the colonial masters built a narrative of the Gibraltarian as a British subject that was the result of a melting pot of white races, stressing Gibraltarians' Genoese and Maltese backgrounds over Spanish or Moroccan ones. The idea of a melting pot became very popular among Gibraltarians, but our interviewees' accounts demonstrate that it was only partly accepted, given that many still flagged-up the importance of their Spanish ethnic heritage.

In the twentieth century, Gibraltarians also emphasised *elements of their common culture*. With the spread of the English language in Gibraltar after World War II—and particularly after the border closure—many Gibraltarians became increasingly bilingual, which became a marker of identity—combined with the informal use of their own dialect, *Yanito*. Colonial masters and local leaders also promoted the idea of tolerance as an element that Gibraltarians and Britons shared. Although the description of the Gibraltarian as a very tolerant person became extremely popular, many of our interviewees consider that it is a myth. We have collected accounts of discrimination against Gibraltarians with Indian or Moroccan backgrounds. We have also seen how some social minorities—for instance, the LGBT community—have suffered discrimination on the Rock.

The diplomatic dispute over Gibraltar's sovereignty also exacerbate a *sense of solidarity* within the community. The frontier closure in 1969 heralded 13 years of relative isolation for Gibraltarians, in turn, helping to develop a strong sense of solidarity within the community. All these processes contributed to discursively creating a new common ethnic community which helped Gibraltarians build their own national identity on the basis of a shared historical ethnicity.

The emergence—or reinforcement—of all these features provided the wherewithal for the rise of a new British subject: the Gibraltarian. However, the emergence of this new subject did not mean the end of ethnic hierarchies, which were still in operation in Gibraltar for a long time. In this sense, it is not that Gibraltar's colonial rulers considered the locals as their equals in the 1950s rather than that they were aware of the huge Spanish influence over Gibraltar at that stage. Amongst the possible aims of a policy of nation-building was the elision of Gibraltar's Spanish cultural heritage to create a British Gibraltarian identity in the shadows of a diplomatic dispute with Spain.

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