



Chapter Six

Gibraltar as a Gated Community: A Critical Look at Gibraltarian Nationalism

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'{...} spaces for the elite {...} rely on {...} the practice of gating to assess belonging or identity.' (Duca, 2015)

On the 23rd of June 2016, Gibraltar's citizens were the first to declare their vote in the Brexit referendum and 96% voted Remain in sharp contrast to the UK. Nevertheless, on this occasion and especially when the prospects of a 'hard' Brexit became more apparent, the Britishness of Gibraltar and the loyalty of its people to the UK has been emphasised again and again. This chapter, a product of the *Bordering on Britishness* suggests that the border has created a sense of privilege, security, and exclusion which led to a profound sense of cultural difference which hitherto did not exist. That is, the border has functioned to create a gated community of Gibraltar and looking at Gibraltar in this perspective sheds much light on its identity as a prosperous British Overseas Territory as well as on Gibraltarians' antipathy to joint sovereignty with Spain, which would remove the border. How does the concept of a gated community shed light on Gibraltarian nationalism?

In recent decades, contemporary urban landscapes have been gradually fragmented as several walls and gates started delineating the boundaries of increasingly exclusive residential enclaves, separating them from the rest of the population (Sassen, 2010). Created to ensure the safety of their residents by separating them from less wealthy citizens (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Judd, 1995) these barriers worked to replicate and reinforce symbolic and real segregation amongst different social classes (Grant and Mittlesteadt, 2004). As such, gated communities





mark the geographical distribution of wealth and social statuses over specific urban areas, with gates and fences defining the boundaries of groups of insiders and outsiders. In a way, the fences of gated communities resemble international borders as they produce and reproduce different groups, both materially and symbolically, and regulate the interactions among them (Bentley, 1987; Diener and Hage, 2012).

As pointed out by Barrington (1997: 713), nations consist of 'groups of people linked by [. . .] the desire to control a territory that is thought of as the group's national homeland. The belief in the right to territorial control is central to distinguishing nations from other collectives'. That territory is made evident as it is marked both on the map and in the experienced geography of those who inhabit the nation. Borders are thus essential in defining nation, as much as fences and gates are necessary to demarcate the space of the gated community from 'the rest'. While nations certainly tend to be much bigger than what are generally thought of as gated communities the size of micronations can be similar if not smaller than that of exclusive and gated areas. As such, while most nations can be arguably compared to gated communities, and the other way around, Gibraltar due to its limited size offers an instructive case study in considering nations as gated communities.

What makes Gibraltar a highly significant case study is the recent history of border relations there, and the very rapid development of a specifically Gibraltarian national identity. What were historically economic and political differences became read as specifically national ones from the early 1990s as Gibraltar adopted many of the symbols of a nation such as a national anthem (previously the British one), a National Day, and a parliament (hitherto a House of Assembly). Gibraltarian society which, until the eighties experienced the relatively strict social and ethnic segregation of British colonial rule first-hand (Scott, 2005; Chatterjee, 1993), today not only identifies closely with British values and culture but, in many instances, has mimetically assumed that identity.

There has been a boundary separating the enclave from the rest of the Iberian Peninsula for about 300 years although most certainly not a stable one over time.¹ In the past, the walls of the fortified city marked the separation as any exchange with the surrounding territories had to pass through specific entry points. However, apart for very limited periods when war inhibited (but never actually stopped) border cross-



ings, the flow of people amongst Gibraltar and its Spanish neighbourhoods has always been fluid (Scott, 2005).

Yet, even though there was usually little in the way of a physical border, different legal jurisdictions and economic conditions marked Gibraltar from its hinterland. As such, Gibraltar was a place people could flee to escape oppression; it was also a place with a vibrant economy and where a good living could be made: for almost the entirety of the last three centuries economic conditions in Gibraltar have been sharply different to those in neighbouring Andalusia and most of Spain (Groom, 1997). In particular, from the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Gibraltar was a source of employment as well as British industrial goods traded or smuggled into Spain. In other words, the British enclave formed an integral economic unit with the Campo de Gibraltar.

Exchanges across the border went in both directions. The founding of the city of La Línea² – located just across the border, in Spain – in 1870 was in response to overcrowding in Gibraltar and the need for alternative accommodation for workers in the colony (Muñoz Martínez and Sáez Rodríguez, 1995). The international border thus worked for centuries as an important bridge (Grocott et al., 2015) between the people of La Línea and those living on the Rock.

Not only did Gibraltarians regularly socialise in La Línea, but almost a third of marriages contracted in the earlier decades of the 20th century were between Gibraltarians and Spaniards (Sawchuk, 1992). The key social differences were vertical, not horizontal; that is, class differences were more significant than whether one was considered 'Spanish' or 'Gibraltarian'. There is little evidence that there was much differentiation between civilians on one or the other side of the border. The colonial authorities, although they gave some people passes and others were refused, did not do so on the basis of any ethnic distinction between 'Gibraltarians' and 'Spaniards'; the former were simply those who had rights to live in the territory by virtue of birth, marriage, or other means. There is very little evidence that there was any sense of a Gibraltarian identity in the 19th century that was fundamentally different culturally from that of the broader Campo area.

Although Gibraltar had a gate, both figuratively and literally, between it and Spain it was mostly an open one. Open, that is, until the 1930s when the Franco regime started placing restrictions on who could come and go, a process which accelerated in the 1950s and 60s culminating in the 1969-82 closure that had several consequences: not only



did it turn the border into a barrier, but it also created a growing sense of national and ethnic difference between the communities whereas previously this had been inchoate at best. All these factors contributed to Gibraltarian nationalism behind a gate separating Gibraltarians and Spaniards.

Many studies of gated communities note that there is a clear racial element on who is controlled at the gates: workers of colour that abound in fenced spaces during the daytime, become instantly suspicious at night as they have to finish to work and return outside the gates (Webster et al., 2002). There was no such distinction between Gibraltarians and Spaniards in the 1960s but the border closure sharpened differences between the two groups, to the point where differences are essentialised and some people explicitly racialise the other group. Some of our interviewees talked about Spaniards in strikingly essentialising terms: “The Spaniard is another animal” and “we are biologically different” being but two examples.

In order to see how the tightening of the border worked to build a nation and a nationalist feeling in Gibraltar, we consider how the enclave increasingly became a gated community and concentrate our attention on how the dividing frontier came to dominate sociocultural life in the area since the 1950s. Moving thus from a brief overview of cultural and social interactions before the border closure, we then examine the ways in which peoples’ perception and experience of ‘those from the other side’ changed alongside the changing status of the border. We suggest that the border itself played a role in colonising Gibraltarians’ minds, as we show the ways in which cross-border ties were disrupted by new discourses on national – and ethnic – diversity generating through and from the border. As such, we analyse how and why the Gibraltarian nation resembles a gated community, where an affluent society keeps itself – and its economic, social and political privileges – safe behind the gate and fence now separating the British Overseas Territory from Spain.

The Campo de Gibraltar as a Macro Community: The Permeable Border

The economic opportunities present in the enclave undoubtedly facilitated cross-border exchanges and mobility in the region. In general, the small territory has prospered economically in comparison to its



hinterland – which is in fact one of the poorest areas of Spain (Pujolar, 2011). In addition to all jobs related to the armed forces, port activities and shipbuilding accounted for the bulk of the economy of the tiny colony in the 20th century (Lancaster and Taulbee, 2008). Due to its geographical position caught between two continents – Africa and Europe, and seas – the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, Gibraltar has always been a natural port of considerable importance for global trade (Truver, 1980).

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

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

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

Over the centuries, close social and cultural relations, but also family ties, formed across the border. While membership to one or another ethnic group mattered mainly for the colonial rulers who organized authority in the enclave on an ethnic basis between UK British and others (Low, 2001) relations across the border were structured along class lines. Spanish and Gibraltarian workers used to share the same work and leisure spaces – and, often, a very similar degrading treatment from British colonial authorities (Constantine, 2008). Similarly, colonial masters on the one side, and Spanish aristocrats on the other, had plenty of common interests, as well as shared spaces and leisure activities – such



as hunting (Stockey 2012; Ballantine Perera, 2010). Class solidarity and mainly the hostility towards the British, pushed Gibraltar and Spanish workers to unite, as they experienced first-hand the discrimination of British colonial government (Jeffries, 2008). On the Rock, British colonial elites as well as Gibraltar moneyed people, separated themselves from the rest (Constantine, 2006). Similar to how the military lived in separated – and gated – areas of the Rock where Gibraltar could not enter unless they were allowed, only a few selected Gibraltarians could access ‘the most exclusive clubs’ of the enclave.

In a very colonial way, economic and political power was physically as well as symbolically distributed across Gibraltar society through such separations, allowing the colonial masters to retain control over the Rock. Such discrimination did not go unnoticed by the Gibraltar subjects. This is what an important Gibraltar public figure in his sixties told us concerning ethnic and class relations in the enclave, up until the middle of the 20th century – and even later.

Speaking of the English . . . we must say the truth . . . If we say the truth . . . then there were three kinds of persons. There were the Englishmen – I am talking of the officials and the people in high places . . . Then, there were the Gibraltarians, who you could divide in two parts: those who found it convenient to get closer to the [British. They were the] merchant class, those who the British chose and the poshest ones; and then there was the whole people here. And then, there were the third-class citizens. They were the Spanish poor people.³

One of the clearest and most humiliating manifestations of this was separate toilet facilities for Englishmen, Gibraltarians and Spaniards in the Royal Naval Dockyard (the major employer until the late 1970s) as well as in other areas of employment such as Cable and Wireless.

Until mid-century only the wealthiest or most aspirational Gibraltarians were dominant in English although functional bilingualism was widespread, particularly among men. Even though English was certainly the official language, most Gibraltarians of all social classes spoke Spanish at home and among themselves. As one octogenarian Gibraltar and one of the wealthiest men in Gibraltar put it, ‘I cannot imagine speaking to anyone of my generation in anything other than Spanish’. For much of the 20th century Gibraltarians not only shared a language with their neighbours they shared the same accent and variant



of Spanish. People on both sides of the border also shared the same – or at least similar – social struggles against the British colonial powers.

Being born in Gibraltar, however, conferred an important status compared to being Spanish. Many of our interviewees gave examples of the lengths people went to make sure children were born in Gibraltar. Spanish wives almost always settled in the Colony for this reason. Being a Gibraltarian male gave one better access to employment as well as political security, so it is not surprising that very few working-class Gibraltarian women married Spanish men. The economic difference between Gibraltarians and Spaniards is what is most salient when our interviewees were asked what the difference between the two groups was in the first half of the 20th century. Many people underlined that culturally there was little or no difference, but that people who lived *there* and came to work in Gibraltar were invariably poorer.

Gibraltarians were certainly not all wealthy but they were almost always wealthier than poor Spaniards. This is underlined by the widespread existence of Spanish servants across all social classes. One of our interviewees who grew up in a large house shared by several families, a typical working-class arrangement in Gibraltar called a *patio*, impressed upon the interviewer how difficult times were in the 1950s, so hard that the men rotated employment when it was scarce so that no one was unemployed for very long. Even here, however, the *patio* had a Spanish servant, María, who crossed the border every day and who was paid in leftovers from the family pots as well as money. Although the interviewee confessed that there is no way he could have said which of the mothers in the *patio* was Spanish or Gibraltarian, it was quite clear that María who worked for them all was Spanish. That is, 'Spanishness' in those days was an identity that did not survive very long if people settled in Gibraltar and had kinship ties. Having been born in Spain, being Spanish speaking and enjoying Spanish culture did not mark one as 'other' since not only did most Gibraltarians speak Spanish better than English but they crossed the border to watch bullfights, enjoyed Spanish music and, by and large, were culturally indistinguishable from their neighbours.

Other Gibraltarians of working-class backgrounds remembered that their fathers earned enough to maintain their families and that their mothers had at least some Spanish help. The border then functioned as an economic marker much like the gates of a gated community indicate the perimeters of differently affluent communities. Similar to gated



communities, in Gibraltar servants and other workers arrived in the morning and left in the evening, but were not allowed to spend the night there. Yet, no distinct cultural or ethnic identity was felt to divide the people on the two sides of the frontier: rather, social class solidarity developed across it regardless of nationality.

Nonetheless, such situation of relative cross-border cultural and social continuity came to an end in the middle of the 20th century, as that porous and invisible frontier became an almost insurmountable border.

From a Borderland to a Gated Community

As discussed above, for centuries most Gibraltarians formed a unique community with their Spanish neighbours of the Campo de Gibraltar. At the same time, many Gibraltarians lived outside the walls of the city, and, therefore, in the immediate Spanish territory, because of the shortage of accommodation in the enclave (Grocott and Stockey, 2012).

The cutting of cross-border relations in 1969 deeply affected the socio-cultural fabric of the Campo de Gibraltar. Family, friendship, economic and business ties that had formed through centuries of cross-border interactions were quickly interrupted with the border closure. Here, a nonagenarian from Gibraltar confirmed how the border closure ruptured family ties and disrupted the familiarity people had with Spanish culture.

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

Our interviewee underlines the point made by many Gibraltarians that they have a strong kinship connection with Spain. Yet, when the connections are cut or made difficult then there is a lack of familiarity with Spanish culture – or, as he said, ‘being accustomed to Spanish things’.

Having kin born in Spain and sharing “Spanishness” become quite different things. The political nature of this breach can scarcely be exag-



gerated. In countless interviews, people mentioned the visceral hatred of Franco, or the pain of not being able to cross the border to see a dying relative (*cf.* Labarta Rodríguez-Maribona, 2015; Sepulveda Muñoz, 1995). Some of our younger respondents reported teasing their grandmothers for being Spanish only to be told that they stopped being Spanish when they could not attend a parent's funeral – or simply because of Franco's fascism.

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

There is no question that Gibraltarians were spared the often extreme violence that occurred during the Spanish Civil War. With political unrest in Spain during the Civil War and, later, with the political repression of Franco's regime, Spain appeared as a much more dangerous place than Gibraltar. Here a young Gibraltarian, recalled his grandparent's relationship with Spain as they moved to the Rock.

I think [that] because [my grandparents] were in an era where Franco was very much in control – the Spanish dictator – they remember a lot of hostility and aggression . . . towards the people of Gibraltar. [...] So he – my grandfather – fled with his family and they set up a shop in Gibraltar and they made their life here [and] I don't think [they have ever returned to Spain].

The border, as with so many gated communities, serves to keep the unruly and criminal out and offers a sense of security (Ellin, 1997). One would think that the events of a war over 80 years ago can have little impact on people's sense of security today, but many of our interviewees across all generations mentioned how Gibraltar makes them feel safe – that they breathe a sigh of relief when they cross and come home. Some younger Gibraltarians note with conscious irony that they do not feel unsafe when travelling in Madrid or Barcelona or indeed anywhere else in the world and yet, crossing the border into La Línea creates a sense of



anxiety. Part of this is due to the continued tensions at the border which involve long, arbitrary delays which produces intense frustration. Because crossing the border is rarely a simple process, it has a kinaesthetic effect which contributes to the essentialisation of the difference between Spaniards and Gibraltarians.

Here a Gibraltarian in his seventies describes how, today, he perceives his neighbours of the Campo de Gibraltar.

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

In the minds of many Gibraltarians Spanish culture is thus inherently violent and Spanish people, by extension, are violent too. Yet, not only is Andalusia's crime rate below the Spanish average (Ministerio del Interior, 2015), but Spain is certainly not amongst the most crime prone countries in Europe (Clarke, 2013). Nevertheless, one way Gibraltarians understand and experience the border is as a major security apparatus protecting them from the imagined widespread criminality that goes uncontrolled across the border in Spain. The words of this retired Gibraltarian police officer in his late fifties confirms such views.

Once the border opened, I think we opened the floodgates to the rest of the world. For the years that we had been almost isolated from the rest of the world, we were almost insulated because a lot of the problems that happened in other countries never happened in Gibraltar. I mean I can tell you of the days when people would leave their cars unlocked . . . Your front door would be unlocked. In fact, neighbours would get on so well with each other that their front doors were not only unlocked, they were open wide and the children would just go from one house to the other. All that was lost when the border opened and we had an influx of criminals . . . We started having crimes that had not been common in Gibraltar like people being mugged, people being pickpocketed, the burglaries increased until people became more aware that the Gibraltar we lived in was no longer the Gibraltar that we had lived in . . . Although I still feel that Gibraltar is probably



one of the safest places to live on earth but it's not the Disneyland that we used to live in.

The political climate of international confrontation between the United Kingdom and Spain concerning Gibraltar favoured the polarization of the debate in the enclave (Orsini, 2015). The closure of the border had changed the perception of Spain even for those from La Línea who resided in the enclave (see Introduction).

While Spain became the worst threat to the existence of Gibraltar, Spaniards quickly began to be perceived as the 'others' of Gibraltarians. A new sense of Gibraltarian national subjectivity developed in contrast to everything Spanish.

Gibraltar's Gated Nationalism

By the mid-1980s and after almost two decades of not being able to go to Spain without first taking a ferry to Morocco, for many Gibraltarians the land beyond the border was one of political violence, crime, and poverty. The border became thus an essential device for Gibraltarians to secure social, economic and political life in the enclave. Set to separate what was until recently a cross-border community, the border became increasingly similar to the fences surrounding many of the gated communities that fill contemporary urban landscapes. Rather than separate culturally different neighbours, the border with La Línea marks and ensures the economic and social status of the inhabitants of the Rock (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).

It is not surprising then that, according to many Gibraltarian interviewees, Spain is essentially backward. This is echoed by a common pejorative term for Spanish in Gibraltar, *sloppies*, people who are basically careless and incompetent. In this, Gibraltarians implicitly and sometimes explicitly associate themselves with a British culture which is imagined as being more advanced and efficient. As an increasing number of education opportunities in the UK had been established since the 1950s, the access to a multitude of English language television channels rapidly expanded, and as flights to London and other British destinations became increasingly accessible, for an increasing number of Gibraltarians Spanish lost its position as the language of everyday life on the Rock. Not only do fewer people speak Spanish now, but there is



a sense that it associated with older people or the uneducated and some people express an outright hostility to the language.

Here a thirty-year old Gibraltarian describes his relationship with the Spanish language.

I refused to speak Spanish [...] because I had that idea in mind [that] only older people speak Spanish. I'm British and I'm [going to] speak British. [...] I would refuse to speak Spanish. I mean, you would talk me to in Spanish and I would refuse.

The geographical proximity of the inhabitants of the Campo de Gibraltar seems to be today counteracted by a social, cultural and political distance that divide peoples from the two sides of the border. Nevertheless, up to 12,000 people continue to enter the enclave daily to work there – resembling the many workers from lower social classes and/or different ethnic groups allowed into gated communities to work and then leave before night (Álvarez-Rivadulla, 2006). Most of these are Spanish citizens and other EU nationals who work as the care workers, cleaners, domestic workers, shop assistants, waiters and waitresses and other jobs Gibraltarians no longer do. It is unlikely that *any* Gibraltarian crosses the border in the opposite direction for work. Some Gibraltarians actively avoid going to Spain if they can help it. In the words of a Gibraltarian housewife in her seventies:

Since Franco closed the border [...] Families have been broken apart, because there have been fathers, mothers and sons who were here or there and who have died without being able to see each other. They could not come! At the time people did not have as much money as today. Now we earn good money here [in Gibraltar] but this was not the case years ago, when you could not travel as many times as people do today . . . Yet, today it is unusual to leave Gibraltar to go and spend a weekend in the [Spanish] coast . . . This is, in fact, what happens here . . . a lot of hate . . . A lot of hate!

If, on the one hand, many have stopped crossing the border both physically and figuratively, those who do it more frequently tend to experience Spain as a foreign land where they can access 'cheaper goods' or 'sandy beaches'. It is no longer the everyday space of friendship and family. One civil servant in his early sixties remembered how he would meet with his cousins every Sunday in summer and spend the day on the beach.



When the frontier opened, we were so happy to see each other and we did the same, spent the day on the beach. But then . . . Now we only see each other at funerals and we always say we should see each other more but we don't. I don't know what happened. My cousins seem to have become more Spanish and I have become more . . . I don't know, British?

We have thus seen the ways in which many Gibraltarians isolated themselves from their Spanish neighbours, as their perception and experience of Spain and Spaniards has changed dramatically. In other words, by looking at the border Gibraltarians developed a new communitarian identity, now a national one: thus, a Gibraltar nationalism centred on its boundaries. In fact, a nationalist discourse allowing Gibraltarians to perceive themselves as members of a distinct nation, and thus making it possible for them to safeguard their own economic privileges behind the border.

Nations as much as gated communities are specific sections of territory inhabited by given communities and limited by boundaries established at a certain point in time and space. The access to such enclosed territories is regulated through gates, or border checks, where designed authorities, or border control forces, check individuals' membership to that specific community, and eventually allow or deny access to it. Once allowed to enter and/or reside inside the gates or border, then individuals will be expected to respect specific and shared norms – or, rules (Tamir, 1995; Grant and Mittelsteadt, 2004).

In fact, if we consider how the border facilitated – if not directly affected – the rapid shift in Gibraltarians' attitudes towards the people of the Campo de Gibraltar, Gibraltar nation-building resembles what happens to several gated urban populations, as they also come to separate themselves symbolically from their former neighbours. While life in such a small and enclosed community comes at a cost – e.g. the price of housing or the limited social space – today, as in the past, to be Gibraltar means to benefit from better living conditions compared to most Spaniards of the Campo de Gibraltar (Oda Angel, 2000). The border closure played a central role in setting the conditions for a general and significant improvement of the lives of Gibraltar. Until the 1970s Gibraltarians were paid less than UK British citizens whether they were contracted in Gibraltar or the UK. With Gibraltar being cut off from cheaper Spanish labour, Gibraltar's unions organised several, ultimately successful, strikes asking for better conditions and parity of



wages with the UK. By the mid-1970s working conditions for Gibraltarians had markedly improved so by the time the border opened in the 1980s the economic differences between the two communities were even sharper. A difference that was strengthened since Gibraltarians became British citizens in 1983 under the British Immigration Act of 1981 (Blake, 1982).

In other words, since the border with Spain reopened, being Gibraltarian implies an even higher economic status and access to better public healthcare and education, compared to life on the Rock before the border closure and certainly better than in La Línea. For such cross-border economic and social differentials to continue, Gibraltar has to remain separated from Spain. Gibraltarians' anxiety about joint sovereignty proposals with Spain are often expressed in terms of cultural and political identity but the loss of a border, which joint sovereignty implies would also rapidly erode Gibraltar's economic advantage and social separation.

There *are* cultural differences between Gibraltarians and Spaniards but these were largely created by the border itself: during the 20 years of border closure Gibraltarians were forced to rescale their social networks and develop them inside the enclave and, partly, in Britain, rather than in Spain, where people spent most of their leisure time before. The border closure, moreover, created a shared experience, and thus an identity maker by itself. Here a Gibraltarian company manager in his eighties describes the mood during the closure.

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

As for gated communities, new networks developed within the enclosed territory of the Rock - or, alternatively, away from there in the UK. Much less contact was instead available with the neighbouring

people, so that new individual as well as collective sociocultural geographies generated behind the closed fences (Bagaeen and Uduku, 2015). A Gibraltarian retired teacher in her sixties describe what, in her view, “Gibraltarianness” is all about.

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

As is the case with conventional gated communities, the fence that cuts the isthmus of land connecting Gibraltar to La Línea marks the boundaries of Gibraltarians' superior economic and social status, a condition that is certainly facilitated by the possibility for many local entrepreneurs to access a much cheaper and exploitable workforce coming from the other side of the gate.

As a Gibraltarian banker of Spanish origin pointed out, *'the life that you can make in Gibraltar is not the same of that you will make in Spain: it has to do with tranquillity in terms of crime, work and anything else in general'*. The border that enabled Gibraltarian to imagine themselves as a nation (Anderson, 1983), serves primarily to produce and maintain such real as well as perceived quality of life differentials.

Gating as a Way of Life

One of the features of being in a gated community is the strong sense of *them* and *us*. Before the border closure another separation rather opposed the upper classes in Spain and the British colonial elite in Gibraltar on the one side, and lower classes in Spain and Gibraltar on the other. In other words, social classes – not culture or nationhood – divided the people of the Campo de Gibraltar. Such a divide was mirrored by a series of more or less physical borders – as described here by one of our interviewee as he speaks of his relatives:

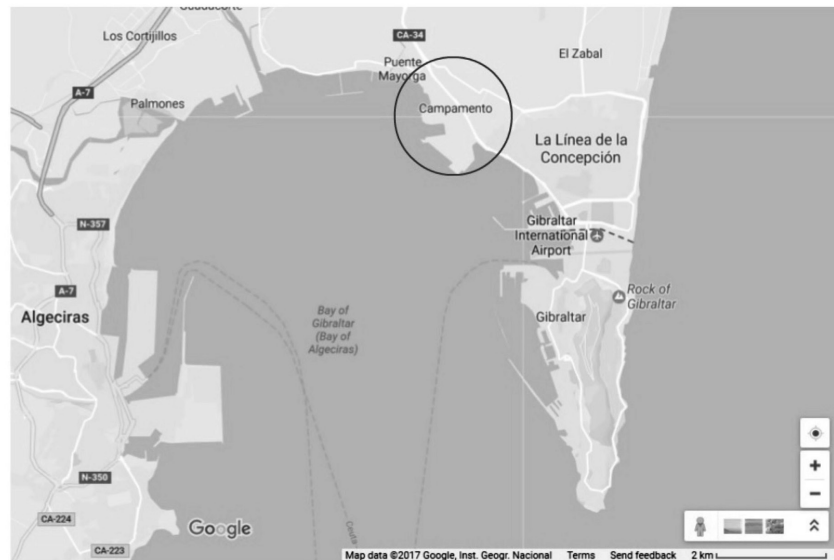


My grandfather [...] had a job during the war as assistant colonial secretary. Now he was a Gibraltar born in Gibraltar and in those days, they never had Gibraltarians in that kind of posts. So, he was, you know, quite well-known. [...] He helped during the war as a . . . he was a bit of a spy. They used him . . . The Spanish government used him and the British government used him. [...] He was in-between and I think it was very hard for him because he probably wasn't accepted by Gibraltarians as . . . they were probably a bit wary of him because he was mixing with the British . . . with the English. And the English probably thought there's a local in our midst, so I'm sure it must have been hard for him. [...] There were boundaries. There were boundaries [...] If you were from a certain family in Gibraltar, you wouldn't even think of going to the Yacht Club. For example, it wouldn't even, I mean, you lived in . . . [You would not have been allowed] in the Yacht Club [if you were] from an underprivileged or a council house or whatever.

Boundaries and gates thus worked to structure everyday life on the Rock also before the closed border led Gibraltarians to turn into a gated community. For instance, many wealthy Gibraltarians had to leave their villas in the Campo de Gibraltar, typically in Campamento – see Map 1 overleaf – adjacent to La Línea and on the bay, just under a kilometre from the border.

Yet, with the border closure they had to move back into the enclave and leave Spain. There were some who had good relations with the Military Governor in Algeciras who could simply take their boats to their properties in Campamento. As one elderly Gibraltarian put it: 'the border closure didn't affect me at all. I went to my villa in Campamento every weekend.' Others had to go up the coast to Estepona, bribe customs officials, and then drive back down to Campamento. Others still simply gave up on their properties which were rapidly losing in value as a massive refinery was being built in Campamento. In general, the great majority went to live inside the Rock.

One of the consequences of the closure was that rich and poor Gibraltarians had to live in close proximity within the enclave and the wealthy were limited in how much they could display their wealth. There simply wasn't enough land to build large houses and the scope for separating one's self from others was certainly restricted – as confirmed here by this Gibraltarian company director in her late sixties:



Map I

[When] the frontier was closed . . . it was difficult to find a house here in Gibraltar . . . people got married and they went to live with their parents so, there weren't that many houses available.

As discussed above, for many Gibraltarians this was a period of solidarity and cohesion, the conditions under which a Gibraltarian national identity was forged.

The opening of the border in 1982, however, demonstrated that some Gibraltarians were not so keen on living cheek by jowl with the lower classes. Wealthy Gibraltarians were instrumental in the development of Sotogrande, a classic gated community 20 minutes by car from Gibraltar, within the Campo de Gibraltar – see Map 2, opposite.

Although Sotogrande's development began in the early 1970s, its major expansion as a gated community occurred in the 1980s, coincidentally as the border opened with Gibraltar. It markets its exclusivity with its own beach, marina and golf courses.

Sotogrande is within the municipality of San Roque, which also includes Campamento, and does not only house Gibraltarians. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that there is a very tight knit Gibraltarian community there. As one resident explained:



Map 2

The young people don't really mix. You have the Gibraltarian children and the English children and the Spanish ones and they don't really mix. I have heard that they even fight when they go out.

Other people do mention much more social mixing, but what is striking about Sotogrande in Spain is that Gibraltarians there are much better able to put Spain at a distance than many can in Gibraltar.

Children of Gibraltarians in Sotogrande either go to school in the UK or in the international school which offers classes in English. Although formally a bilingual school, as many of our interviewees commented, these children socialise in a very English-speaking environment and are very often monolingual English speakers. One graduate of the school in his late twenties said, "*Bilingual? We [i.e. Spanish children] are bilingual but [the English and Gibraltarian kids] just speak English.*" In the words

of one very affluent Gibraltarians among the first who moved to Sotogrande in the 1980s.

First of all, there's a very good school in in Sotogrande, the English school, International School of Sotogrande . . . English, they teach Spanish as the language but they talk English. I have known kids who've left school or during school, who spoke perfect Spanish [...] and perfect English . . . But [in Sotogrande, where I live,]. I've known Gibraltarians with Gibraltarian father and mother who talk very good . . . English but [...] not a word of Spanish. [...] Now, isn't it sad to go to school to live in school, to grow up to the age of fourteen fifteen and at the age of fifteen you don't know how to talk Spanish?

Although, according to our observations and interviews, the young people who were brought up in Sotogrande generally identify quite clearly as Gibraltarian and certainly not as Spanish, having being brought up away from the Rock generates also a sense of being disconnected from Gibraltar. From the other perspective, some people suggested that those "Sotograndees" – as the Gibraltarians living in Sotogrande – are not really Gibraltarian. This was explicitly commented to us from a thirty-year-old interviewee from Gibraltar: 'a lot of them to me, are not [Gibraltarian] because they grew up in Sotogrande and from a very young age went to boarding school'. Another respondent in his twenties said much the same thing but added that the reason they weren't 'really Gibraltarian' is because they were able to insure themselves for the social and political struggles of the 1970s and 80s as 'they had the means to avoid the struggle'.

The irony is that Sotogrande is where the social and economic elite of Gibraltar tend to live or, at least, this is the perception of many Gibraltarians. As one woman in her thirties explained, Sotogrande covers a role in establishing social hierarchy in Gibraltar:

There are the Sotogrande lot . . . there are certain surnames that you know are Sotogrande lot type . . . well then there's us, and then there's the social cases [at the bottom].

In many of our interviews, 'Sotogrande' is shorthand for indicating the social elite in the way that the 'Yacht Club' did for previous generations. When the border was close the Yacht Club functioned as an elite



club with an exclusive membership, when prospective members were known to be 'blackballed' for being Jewish or Hindu or simply not fitting in.⁴

Many people in Gibraltar talk of the years of the frontier closure as one of enormous social solidarity, where rich and poor lived in close proximity. There was simply no scope for extensive residential segregation and the Yacht Club functioned as one of the few spaces where social elites could enjoy something of an exclusive existence. People who were members of the Yacht Club were predominantly English speaking and were part of the 'moneyed classes' (Constantine, 2006) that were most aligned socially and politically with the English colonial authorities.

With the opening of the border many of these moved to the gated community of Sotogrande and (re)created Gibraltarian society there but, curiously, divorced from much that usually epitomises being Gibraltarian: being bilingual and a deep connection to the Rock. Many of our respondents in Sotogrande, rather than speak of their deep affection for Gibraltar usually stress that they find it stifling and 'hardly go at all', 'only when I have to'. It seems that the Gibraltarians of Sotogrande have managed to create a further kind of gated Gibraltar, where the Spanish elements are kept clearly at bay and popular culture is left at the other side of a gate. As Gibraltar was partially decolonized, Gibraltarians' minds were recolonized through the border – or, the gate – since the inhabitants of the Rock started safeguarding their increased wealth by identifying with the colonisers and their ways of organizing power within society (Fanon, 1952).

Conclusion

As presented in these pages, the border dividing Gibraltar from the rest of the Campo de Gibraltar and Spain has worked similar to the gates of gated communities. Workers coming from poorer areas crossed the gates of the city walls and/or the invisible border in the morning, worked in Gibraltar, and leave by night. Moreover, throughout the centuries the border also worked as a key security apparatus against, for instance, the violence of the Spanish Civil War.

Yet, despite the British attempts to divide and rule the people of Gibraltar and the Campo de Gibraltar – British officials actively encouraged Gibraltarians to see themselves as socially superior to Spaniards and



adopt a colonial attitude vis à vis Spaniards even as they were colonial subjects themselves (Stockey, 2017) – class solidarity and cultural sameness structured cross-border interactions. Gated spaces served the colonial masters and richer locals to separate themselves from the rest – the rest being Gibraltarian and Spanish workers.

As Franco's regime closed the border and the economic, social and political conditions of Gibraltarians increased, however, the Gibraltarian–Spanish border started working increasingly as the gate of gated communities. While cross-border interactions decreased significantly, social class differences eroded within the enclave, as Gibraltarians became also formally British and an increasing amount of institutional functions moved from London to Gibraltar. It is within such a transforming scenario that a national discourse gained momentum in Gibraltar.

In fact, throughout the process, an increasingly affluent population started to imagine itself as a distinct nation, whose boundaries were set against a Spanish culture defined in terms of a series of pejorative stereotypes. With a barrier separating physically as well as symbolically the Rock from the rest of the Campo de Gibraltar, ethnic and cultural diversity was thus constructed, and soon the border became that apparatus allowing Gibraltarians to maintain their improved economic, social and political status.

In categorizing and characterizing the different types of contemporary gated communities, Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004: 914) emphasize as 'the option of living in gated developments appeals to those who feel they cannot rely on public regulations and political processes to protect [themselves and] their [belongings]'. As we have seen, that same border that allows Gibraltarians to imagine and project themselves as a distinct nation, is also that apparatus capable to ensure greater standards of living compared to those experienced by the rest of the inhabitants of the Campo de Gibraltar. Looking at Gibraltarian nationalism from this critical angle, it appears thus clear how this micro-state and its young nationalism resemble, in many ways, a gated community.

Notes

- 1 In the 18th century the border was at the heavily defended northern wall of the city and moved to its current position, in the middle of what was declared 'neutral territory' (the distance of an 18th century cannon shot) in 1908.



- 2 'The Line', in English, named thus because of the fortifications called the Line of Contravallation (La Línea de Contravalación) also known as 'La Línea de Gibraltar' constructed after the siege of 1727 (Tornay 1981). A settlement eventually developed behind this line and, in time, it came to be the town of La Línea, founded in 1870. It wasn't until 1883 that La Línea de Gibraltar was officially recorded as La Línea de la Concepción (op. cit.), named after the Immaculate Conception.
- 3 When quoting interviews, those sections in italics correspond to the sections where the interviewees spoke in Spanish – as Gibraltarians often mix it with English.
- 4 With so many of Gibraltar's elites now residing in Sotogrande, the Yacht Club has been forced to open its membership and nowadays even includes women as full members.

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