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Ceuta's Border Regime:
Perceptions and Strategies of Civil Society Organisations

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ABSTRACT

Ceuta, as a Spanish city in North African territory whose participation in the EU is marked by exceptionality, forms a very stimulating borderland for research in border and migration studies. With a complex history of relations with Morocco and a strategic position for the migration management of the European Union, Ceuta undergoes multiple bordering processes at the political, economic and social levels. Through fieldwork conducted during three weeks in the city with its civil society fabric involved in migration issues, this thesis assess the configuration of these bordering processes and how they shape the local fabric of civil society. Furthermore, the strategies that these organisations build to develop their work are examined, with special attention to the opportunities that are created for advocacy, and the conditions that need to be in place for CSOs to be able to develop counter-bordering practices.

KEYWORDS: border regime, bordering process, CSOs, counter-bordering.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CETI - Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes / Migrant Temporary Stay Centre

CIE - Centro de Internamiento para Extranjeros / Immigration Detention Centre

CSO / CSOs - Civil Society Organisation/s

EC - European Communities

EU - European Union

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Ceuta is one of two Spanish autonomous cities situated within North African territory. Together with Melilla, they constitute the sole European Union border in this territory. Their geographical and geopolitical situation renders their status as European cities exceptional. Neither Ceuta nor Melilla are part of the customs union, in order to maintain their commercial viability. Additionally, in order to facilitate a more permeable land border, so that Moroccans from neighbouring areas can participate in the city's economy, they have passport controls at their sea and air borders with Spain and the European Union.

These particularities have given rise to a complex configuration of Ceuta's border regime. The land border with Morocco, which has become a site of heightened economic inequality since Spain's accession to the European Union, is designed to facilitate economically necessary trade with Morocco while simultaneously constituting a fortified barrier against irregular migratory flows. This barrier has twofold effects: in addition to securitising and repressing mobility from Morocco, it also hinders forward mobility to Spanish mainland and the rest of Europe for those who do manage to enter the city.

This border regime, although strategically constructed, is subject to constant change and instability. The repression of irregularised mobility through border patrolling and the fluidity of "desired" flows of people and commodities at passport controls depend to a large extent on collaboration with Morocco. Spain's sovereignty over Ceuta and Melilla itself is contested by Morocco, which considers them occupied territory. This, along with other sources of tension, leads to fluctuations in relations between Spain and Morocco, in which border management is transformed into a key area of contention.

On the other hand, it has already been proven that human mobility is not stopped even if fences are raised, as people find ways to resist and circumvent repression at the border. Thus, although Ceuta has seen its borders highly securitised over the last few years, people have continued to enter the city. However, this securitisation makes the conditions for these entries increasingly dangerous, turning Ceuta into the scene of serious human rights violations. In addition to the latest deaths and disappearances at sea that are defining 2024, in which multiple people are attempting to cross through the beach jetties, there are episodes in which the actions of patrols in Morocco and Spain took the lives of several people on the move.

Since 2014, after the Tarajal tragedy in which 15 people lost their lives in the hands of repressive patrols, marches organised by civil society have mobilised numerous people from all over Europe every year, calling for justice and raising awareness of the Ceuta border situation

internationally. Furthermore, an increasing number of organisations have arrived on the ground, both advocating for and assisting individuals who are on the move as they enter the city.

In 2019, relations with Morocco over border management began to alter the idiosyncrasies of the city, hindering the economic exchanges that constituted one of its main sources of revenue. These tensions reached a boiling point in 2021 when Morocco relaxed its border control, allowing thousands of people to enter the city. In 2024, ten years after the tragic events at Tarajal and in a context of significant change and uncertainty, this thesis aims to address how civil society organisations (CSOs) articulate themselves in the field. Building on existing literature that posits that civil society organisations are an active participant in bordering processes, either contesting or reinforcing them, this study seeks to elucidate how these organisations perceive their context and the strategies they employ to act within it.

To this end, three weeks of fieldwork in Ceuta were conducted between April and May. This entailed interviewing a range of CSOs and other key informants in the city, in addition to active ethnographic observation. The findings from this work, in conjunction with the results of desk research, are intended to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which civil society can mobilise in border zones, the structural factors that shape their activity, and the diverse effects that these can have.

The thesis is structured as follows: firstly, a contextualisation of Ceuta is provided, in which a historical review of the development of its border regime is followed by an overview of the main theoretical contributions that have contributed to a greater understanding of it. Subsequently, the theoretical frameworks that inform this research are outlined, primarily within the domain of border studies. The conceptualisation of migration as a construct and bordering as a process is introduced, along with an examination of the various mechanisms that contribute to it. Following this, the concepts of securitisation and its interconnection with humanitarianism are delineated, emphasising the impact of this nexus on border regimes. Finally, a review of the existing scholarship on CSOs and their role in the domain of human mobility is presented. Subsequently, the methodology employed in the research is delineated, after which the outcome of the analysis are presented. The results identify the bordering processes of Ceuta through an analysis of the discourses of CSOs, for then outlining the different strategies observed among them. Finally, a concise conclusion is offered, accompanied by suggestions for further and more comprehensive research.

I.I. Research questions and objectives

As stated, the work presented in this thesis aims at getting more nuances on how CSOs experience the border regime of the city and the strategies that they deploy within it. As a case study of exploratory nature given the scope of this thesis, the research questions that guide this inquiry are:

Which processes that constitute the border regime in Ceuta shape the activity of migration-related CSOs?

Which strategies do they deploy within this border regime and which opportunities for counter-bordering open up?

In order to answer these questions, several objectives were drawn for this work:

- Deepening the understanding on Ceuta's bordered context and border regime.
- Understanding how the work of CSOs is affected by and affects this bordered regime.
- Identifying if there are opportunities for contestation and how they are developed.

II.   CONTEXTUALISATION: Ceuta as a border city.

Ceuta, with its unique position as a European border city on North African soil, has been extensively studied by scholars interested in how its border dynamics unfold. Ferrer-Gallardo, in particular, explores the multiple separations embedded in Ceuta's borders, which under different circumstances, serve as points of conflict and alliance. By doing so, he highlights the interacting geographical aspects of the border and the symbolic significances that are attached to them: Spain is separated from Morocco and the EU from Africa, but so are Christianity from Islam, the so called Global North from the Global South, abundance from economic struggle, or colonising forces from colonised ones (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008). This chapter aims to contextualise the work presented in this thesis by outlining a chronological overview of the development of the border regime in Ceuta, situated within the aforementioned complexities. Following this, a brief overview of the main theoretical contributions to its analysis is provided.

II. I. Historical overview

Spanish Sovereignty & colonial ties

Firstly, it is relevant to explain that Ceuta's legitimacy as a Spanish territory, together with Melilla and other locations that are nowadays Spanish military basis in the area, is still a matter of contention in the relations between Spain and Morocco, constituting an object of analysis for numerous scholars (Calderón-Vázquez *et al.*, 2022).

Specifically, Ceuta's history in the matter unfolds as following: Initially inhabited by Berbers and Arabs[1], Ceuta was occupied by the Portuguese in 1415 during the Reconquista, when Portugal and Spain were expelling Arabs from the Iberian Peninsula (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). This event

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FFOxhBSYAs (Accessed: 23/07/24)

unfolded in a moment of further desired expansion, coinciding with the early stages of European colonisation (*ibid*). Later on, with Melilla already under Spanish rule since 1497, the Portuguese and Spanish kingdoms merged under the Spanish crown in 1581 (*ibid*). This union dissolved officially in 1668 with the Lisbon Treaty and Ceuta, whose inhabitants took a stand in favour of the Spanish crown, became officially Spanish[2].

Over the following centuries, Ceuta's borders were contested through several military incursions and treaties, solidifying its current shape in the Treaty of Tétouan of 1860 signed after one of the warfare episodes (Carpintero, 2022). Later on, in 1912, the French and the Spanish established a Protectorate over what is now Morocco, with Spain ruling the North of the region (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). Under the Protectorate, Ceuta and Melilla were ruled as Spanish cities, but their borders with the rest of the protected territory were permeable to the passage of people, commerce and the military (Calderón *et al.*, 2022). After Morocco gained independence in 1956, Ceuta and Melilla remained under Spanish rule, eventually becoming autonomous cities in 1995 - which means that their government does not have legislative competences - (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a).

However, since its independence, Morocco has kept on claiming the cities, together with other pieces of land that serve basically as military basis (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008b) as occupied and pending decolonisation. This allegation has officially been dismissed by the United Nations, based on the fact that Morocco became a state after Spain had already established sovereignty over the cities, and the juridical and social cohesion that Ceuta and Melilla have with the rest of Spain (Carpintero, 2022). Despite this, the issue remains central to the geopolitical strategies of both Spain and Morocco (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a).

1985 - 1995 : Ley de Extranjería, EU & Schengen

During the centuries covered, but especially during the years of the Spanish Protectorate, a considerable Muslim population from neighbouring regions settled in the predominantly Christian cities of Ceuta and Melilla (Brandon, 2020). After the Protectorate ended, these people remained in Spanish territory and got some kind of regulatory status, being included in the census in 1975 (*ibid*).

However, as Spain prepared to join the European Communities (now the European Union), it enacted a new law on foreigners - *Ley de Extranjería* - in 1985, This law rendered the status of this population irregular, not giving them access to Spanish nationality even if born in the cities (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). The affected population, facing potential marginalisation, organised and protested against the law, and due to the magnitude of the matter and the strong response, a regularisation process took place in 1987 in which many of these families obtained Spanish nationality (*ibid*). In any

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[2] https://www.lavanguardia.com/historiayvida/edad-moderna/20190823/47309951136/cuando-espana-y-portugal-compartian-rey.html (Accessed: 23/07/24)

case, this process did not cover everyone, and since then, the lack of documentation of many families adds to the dynamics that have been concentrating the highest rates of precariousness and unemployment among the population of Moroccan origin (Fernández, 2020).

In 1986, Spain officially joined the European Communities, making Ceuta and Melilla not only Spanish but also European territories on the North African coast. Both cities, designated as free ports in the 19th century, remained outside the EU customs territory to preserve their economic viability, which relied heavily on commerce (Fuentes-Lara, 2018). Spain's accession to the EU significantly heightened the inequalities embedded in the borders of Ceuta and Melilla (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a).

As part of its integration into the European Communities, Spain joined the Schengen Agreement in 1991. As it has been widely stated, the free internal mobility that the Schengen project brought was accompanied by stricter control on the area's external borders, directly impacting Ceuta and Melilla, which were now its southernmost frontiers (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). From 1991 onwards, Moroccans, who previously accessed these cities without documentation, were required to have visas to cross the borders. However, given Ceuta and Melilla's economic dependence on trade with Morocco, some exceptions surrounded their inclusion in the Schengen agreement (Carpintero, 2022). In order to maintain a certain ease of mobility of goods, services and people, Moroccan nationals residing in the neighbouring areas of Tétouan and Nador could enter the cities without a visa during the day, without staying overnight. To enable this, passport controls were implemented when entering Spanish mainland, leaving Ceuta and Melilla in between two different controlled frontiers: the one, on land, with Morocco, and the other one, at the sea, with the rest of Spain and Europe (Brandon, 2020; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a). Then, land borders became selective, allowing freer movement to those who, either as consumers or workers, benefited the local economy (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). This exceptionality, coupled with the absence of European customs and the increasing inequality that EU membership brought to the borders, led to a significant dynamic of irregular commerce between the ports in Ceuta and Melilla and Morocco. Accepted and facilitated by authorities from both states, this trade involved large groups of people, constituting an important aspect of the enclaves' social, economic and geopolitical logics (Fuentes-Lara, 2018). Some statistics have proved how the irregular and regular commerce that the relationship with Morocco allowed added up to more than 50% of the Ceuta's imports and sales (Fernández, 2020).

However, this selective influx that the borders were built to allow did not prevent their shielding. In 1992, plans to seal the borders were developed, culminating in 1995 with the construction of a double wire fence standing 2.5 metres high, equipped with surveillance cameras and sensors (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). This initial fence was relatively easy to bypass and was quickly damaged by the local climate and terrain, which led to its replacement in 1999 with sturdier 3-metre

steel fences (*ibid*). It is important to note that Ceuta and Melilla's fences are fully built in Spanish territory instead of following the official perimeter that separates it from Morocco (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a). This distinction is crucial in cases of human rights violations at the border, as Spanish law should apply on both sides of the fence - for instance, a devolution or deterrence at the outer border of Ceuta should be legally assumed as an illegal *push back*, but authorities often neglect it by stating that Spanish territory only starts when the inner fence is crossed (Acosta, 2016) -.

Alongside the physical fortification of the border, Spain and Morocco signed their first readmission agreement in 1992[3], which regulates the return of third-country nationals who entered Spain irregularly from Morocco, provided the request is made within ten days of entry (Carrera et al., 2016). Interestingly, during this period a parallel process took place, in which the EU aimed at liberalising trade and economic flows with Mediterranean countries, including Morocco (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008b).

1995 - 2005: *El Ángulo, Calamocarro & CETI*

From 1991, despite the construction of the city's fencing, a relevant number of black Africans - labelled as *sub-saharianos* in the written documents, with no mention of nationalities - were entering Ceuta, embodying a new mobility influx for the city (Brandon, 2020). At the time, Ceuta had no infrastructure or procedures to deal with immigration fluxes, and they started inhabiting the old fort of the city in very precarious conditions (*ibid*). Transfers to the mainland were already hindered, and these living conditions merged with the immobility that these people were caught in resulted in an uprising event during October 1995, in which the denounce of the situation was followed by violent attacks between the newcomers, the locals and the police[4] (SOS Racismo, 2006). Resulting in numerous foreign and local detainees, this event, known as the revolts of *El Ángulo,* launched the initial development of the city's migration management infrastructure.

Some of the people who inhabited the fort at the time of the riot were transferred to the Spanish mainland, while the others were provisionally accommodated in a camp used in the dictatorship period, far from the city and without basic services, but somehow showing more control on the part of the authorities (Brandon, 2020). This camp, called *Calamocarro*, became the system for hosting people arriving irregularly in Ceuta during the next five years. During this period, transfers to Spanish mainland started to get regularised under the first reception programmes, and different organisations started to arrive or emerge in Ceuta to assist or accompany the newcomers (*ibid*).

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[3] https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1992/04/25/pdfs/A13969-13970.pdf (Accessed: 25/07/24)

[4] https://elfarodeceuta.es/25-aniversario-disturbios-angulo (Accessed: 24/07/24)

While *Calamocarro* served as a temporary solution for managing irregular arrivals, a temporary reception centre was built. In 2000 the *CETI - Centro de estancia temporal de inmigrantes* - was inaugurated in Ceuta, a year after the one in Melilla, and placed, as *Calamocarro*, in the outskirts of the city (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b). The centre, managed by the ministry responsible for migration under each national government, aims to provide basic services and assistance to people arriving irregularly in Ceuta, to guide them through their legislative procedures or asylum requests, and to host them until their transfer to mainland is authorised, either under a protection programme or with an expulsion order (*ibid*). In the latter case, a person would be transferred to a detention centre for migrants - *CIE or Centro de Internamiento para Extranjeros* - in the mainland, for a maximum of 60 days, after which they should be freed in an irregular situation or actually expelled from the country (Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016). It is relevant to note that, unlike in a *CIE*, there is no maximum length of stay in the *CETIs*, which leads to very long waits in such institutions before leaving the city, during which a person does not know if they will get regular allowance to continue their journey or repatriation (*ibid*). For that reason, although the *CETI* does not restrict movement and people can leave the centre during the day, it is often analysed as a tool for their containment in the whole cities of Ceuta and Melilla - the only places where *CETIs* exist in Spain- (*ibid*), or as a mechanism of the deportation system (Carpintero, 2022; Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016). Moreover, although their mission is not to detain but to host, they are surrounded by fences 3 metres high that were further reinforced in 2010[5] (Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016), and the conditions within have been often criticised, starting from the chronic overcrowding of its facilities (Fernández, 2020).

Regarding relations between Spain and Morocco during the period, tensions became particularly pronounced when, in 2000, Moroccan military tried to occupy a little inhabited island close to Ceuta which belongs to Spain (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008s). This ended up in a large symbolic militarised operation in which Spain took back the territory, resenting Moroccan discontent. As well as straining relations between the two countries, this event helped to reinforce perceptions of the latent threat to Spanish enclaves from possible Moroccan insurrection.

2005 - 2014: *Crisis de las vallas*, higher securitisation & externalisation

With the establishment of the *CETI* and the emergence of a few organisations focused on assisting newcomers, Ceuta began to develop an infrastructure to manage the continuous inflow of people that did not stop despite its fencing (Brandon, 2020), although irregular expulsions were also systematically committed (SOS Racismo, 2006). In the early 2000, a surveillance system was deployed to control maritime routes to the Canary Islands and mainland Spain, resulting in a

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[5] https://www.inclusion.gob.es/w/el-gobierno-aprueba-la-construccion-de-nuevas-vallas-en-los-cetis-de-ceuta-y-melilla (Accessed: 20/07/24)

significant increase of entrances through Ceuta and Melilla in the late summer of 2005 (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008a). The numerous crossing attempts during those months - covered in many cases as assaults and invasions in the media - were met with increasing violence on both sides of the borders. This response was marked by intensified collaboration in surveillance and repression from the Moroccan authorities, due to improved relations with the new government that got elected in Spain in 2004 (*ibid*). These episodes ended in multiple violations of human rights in Spanish and Moroccan territory, hundreds of injured, the deaths of at least 11 people from direct shootings by authorities as they tried to cross from Morocco, and the deaths of three others due to violent conditions during the attempts (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b; Brandon, 2020; SOS Racismo, 2006). This period, known as *la crisis de las vallas* - the crisis of the fences -, highlighted the severe violence of the border in Ceuta and Melilla in the international press and marked a turning point in their migration management (Andersson, 2014; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b).

Although several organisations denounced this violence and mobilised for justice, the authorities continued to shift responsibility to the other side of the border and no justice was achieved (Brandon, 2020; SOS Racismo, 2006). Instead, in an atmosphere of heightened alarm, the response was an increase in border control and securitization on both sides (Carpintero, 2022). In Spain, the fences in Ceuta and Melilla were reinforced physically with razor wire, advanced technologies, and an increase in height from 3 to 6 metres, along with strengthened border patrols (Brandon, 2020; Carpintero, 2022; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b). These measures, which turned these borders into some of the most heavily monitored in the EU, led to a redirection of migrant flows toward the Canary Islands (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b).On the Moroccan side, patrols were also strengthened, and violent raids were conducted in the surrounding areas. During these raids, foreigners - especially those with darker skin - were systematically detained and either deported or abandoned in desert border regions (Brandon, 2020; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b; Human Rights Watch, 2014; SOS Racismo, 2016).

The episodes of 2005 in Ceuta and Melilla, together with the increased flows to the Canary Islands in 2006, accelerated the logics of externalisation that the EU was already developing, merging mobility control with international cooperation, market liberalisation and development funding (Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016; Gazzotti *et al*., 2023; Johnson & Jones, 2018). In that line, the Rabat Process was initiated in 2006, uniting the EU and several African countries, including Morocco, in the management of mobility and fight against irregular migration (*ibid*). As a result of these measures, entries did go down in the next few years (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b).

Ceuta's borders continued to be controlled with a double standard. Workers and consumers were welcomed, irregular commerce eased, and black and Moroccan irregularised migrants, even once inside the city, were repressed by the border regime (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a;

Sahraoui, 2023). In 2009, the Spanish asylum law was changed, making it easier for applications to be accepted for processing (Andersson, 2014). This led the authorities to decide that the yellow card issued at the start of the asylum application process would no longer be a valid document for entering the mainland. Thus, the ways to leave Ceuta and continue the journey to European territory were reduced to either being granted asylum or getting a rejection with an order of expulsion, causing extended periods of waiting (*ibid*). This measure reinforced the containment strategy pursued in Ceuta, while also acting as a deterrence on the right to seek asylum - in order to avoid the long and indefinite waits and get to the mainland quicker, many people chose to not submit an asylum request in the city, waiting to directly get an order of expulsion (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b) -. By 2010, people whose stay in the *CETI* was getting too long started mobilising against their forced immobility and the conditions of stuckness they were subjected to, resulting in several days of demonstrations (Andersson, 2010). These protests ended up with some detentions, deportations with a prior transfer to mainland Spain and a more restrictive dynamic in the CETI (ibid), whose fences were reinforced, as stated before, some months later (Gobierno de España, 2010).

During the following years, Morocco continued gaining importance in international relations with the EU. The Arab Spring uprisings led to a political shift towards the protection of human rights in the country, materialised in a constitutional reform in 2011 and a new migration policy in 2013 - markedly more humane than the previous one, from 2003, highly criticised as too repressive - (Jiménez *et al.,* 2021). These measures aimed at calming social unrest, while positioning Morocco in a more respected position in the international community by aligning to human rights norms, which enhanced collaboration with the EU in several areas (*ibid*). The new migration law, while regularising a significant number of foreigners and promising better treatment, also left room for cooperation with European's interests on border control, easing settlement in Morocco and hindering transit to EU's territories (Benjelloun, 2021; Gazzotti *et al.,* 2023). Cooperation with the EU resulted in a Mobility Partnership signed in 2013, stated to solidify Morocco's role in European externalisation measures, in which closer cooperation against irregular migration was negotiated in exchange of visa facilities and economic funding (Carrera *et al*., 2016; Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2026; Johnson & Jones, 2018).

2014 - 2020: *Tarajal, Ley Mordaza, Marchas por la dignidad* & Border reinforcement

Despite the strengthened control at the borders and along people's routes, entries in Ceuta and Melilla started rising again during 2012, showing, once again, that border securitisation does not stop human mobility, and that this one, irregularised or not, is a structural element not only globally speaking, but especially in the realities of the Spanish enclaves (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b). Dynamics of securitisation merged with a growing humanitarian tissue of aid and assistance kept on receptioning these entries, until in February 2014 another event of extreme border violence took place in Ceuta. Trying to reach the city by swimming from Morocco to the Tarajal seashore - the western

border of Ceuta -, a group of people were intercepted by border patrols before reaching the beach. Spanish authorities deployed the use of rubber-ball shootings, as well as gas bottles, in order to stop them - even if they were already in Spanish waters -, and 15 people ended up drowning (Carpintero, 2022; CEAR, 2024; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a). These actions were merged with the pushback of several people who did arrive ashore back to Morocco without previous identification (ibid).

Amid contradictory statements from the authorities and the evidence of their actions disseminated in images from the events, a group of civil society organisations united in the public denounce of the border control mechanisms deployed in Ceuta's border and their deadly consequences, initiating legal proceedings against the Spanish state and its authorities (Cear, 2024; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a) and procedures to identify the deceased and contact their families (Caminando Fronteras, 2014). While these trials evolved over the next few years, with several closures and reopening of cases [6]- without an achieved sentence to date - the responses of the states were defined anew by further repression.

A year and some months later, in July 2015, the Spanish government, conservative at the time, introduced a new civil security law - *Ley Mordaza* - in which pushbacks in Ceuta and Melilla were legally covered, endowing the enclaves with a greater degree of their already characteristic exceptionality (Johnson & Jones, 2018). Although this regulation mentions the respect of human rights in its deployment, no specificities on how it would be guaranteed have ever been standardised[7]. Although this law, together with the *Ley de Extranjería* - the one on foreigners - are intended to be modified, they are still under procedures during the second progressive legislature in the country.

At the level of civil society, the Tarajal case ignited numerous protests and discourses that confronted the official narratives on how the southern border was and needed to be managed (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a). Several collectives and organisations drawn their attention to the monitoring of the border, advocating all across the state and beyond for the rights of people migrating, against the normalised border violence imprinted in the frontiers and for justice to the families of the deceased - who have not been yet able to recover their remains or get official explanations[8]. Since 2014, an annual march is organised in Ceuta by one of the associations present there, the *Marcha por la Dignidad* - March for Dignity -, in which people and collectives from different locations come to the city to attend a series of round tables and spaces for the analysis of the current state followed by a march through the city asking for reparation (SOS Racisme, 2024).

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[6] https://www.cear.es/caso-tarajal/ (Accessed: 19/07/24)
¿Qué son las devoluciones en caliente? 7 claves para entenderlas (amnesty.org) (Accessed: 19/07/24)
[7] (ibid)
[8] https://www.elsaltodiario.com/migracion/tarajal-los-muertos-sin-nombre-sin-rostro-sin-retorno. (Accessed: 23/07/24)

Next years succeeded each other under familiar logics of border management while the judicial procedures were underway. In 2019, with the progressive parties ruling the Spanish government, a new plan for the reinforcement and modernisation of Ceuta and Melilla's border systems was presented and initiated[9]. Published under a humanitarian discourse, the plan consisted in the substitution of the largely criticised razor wire for other elements that posed less harms to the human body, together with a securitisation of the whole perimeter and the raise of the fences up to 10 metres (Echarri, El Faro de Ceuta, 2020). It is important to note that, at the time when the razor wires were taken down - after years of social and institutional denounce - Morocco had installed a fence topped with razor wire on the Moroccan side with funding from the EU[10].

In early 2020, Strasbourg's European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of Spain over a case of two cases of pushbacks in Melilla in 2014 that had been denounced by CSOs. The state had been condemned for them, but appealed in 2017. This new verdict, with no possible further appeal by the CSOs, served the government to justify the legitimacy of the contested practices that they had criticised when in the opposition[11]. This ruling reinforced the exceptionality that is applied in the territories of Ceuta and Melilla, morally allowing the deployment of repressive measures also under left governments.

2020 - 2024: Covid, closed borders, May 2021 & current situation

March 2020 was marked all over Europe by the official declaration of the health crisis by Covid-19. Under this pretext, Morocco closed the border with Ceuta and Melilla in that same month, alleging protection against the virus as the reason to do so. However, the everlasting tensions between the country and Spanish territories ignited suspicion on the real motivation under this decision (Calderón-Vázquez *et al.*, 2022). Morocco had already set a stop to the irregular commerce with Ceuta some months before, stating that the illegal transfer of goods had been causing damage to the national Moroccan economy for years, as an unfair practice (*ibid*). Thus, the rigid closure of the borders was understood as another step in the stifling of the cities.

This closure lasted for 26 months, in which the cities and its inhabitants recounted multiple problematics, from general economic losses, to *familias transfronterizas* - cross-border families - who got separated, Moroccan workers that lost their job by not being able to enter the enclaves as well as their welfare benefits, and Spanish citizens who lost cheaper labour (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2022).

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[9] https://elfarodemelilla.es/frontera-inteligente/ (Accessed: 19/07/24)
[10] https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2019/04/02/5ca2591e21efa0bc3a8b4695.html. (Accessed: 24/07/24)
[11] https://elfarodeceuta.es/estrasburgo-avala-devoluciones-caliente/ (Accessed: 20/07/24)

In this context of isolation and geopolitical stress, the reception for a Covid treatmet of the leader of the Polisario Front - the armed movement that fights for the liberation of the Western Sahara from Moroccan siege - in Spain, who until that point did not recognise Moroccan legitimacy over the territory, seemed to ignite another action that strongly impacted Ceuta and Melilla (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2022). Between the 17th and the 19th of May 2021, approximately 12.000 people, mostly Moroccans, entered[12]. These events were read as a statement of discontent and geopolitical pressure (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2022). It is worth mentioning that this was not the first time that the human mobility between Morocco and Spain was managed according to uneasiness between the countries (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b).

These events were lived as fully traumatic for the recent history of Ceuta. Among all the people who got in the city, far from the capacities of its migration management infrastructures, many were children and young people below 18, for whose reception there were even less resources already in place than those for adults. Ceuta saw overnight an influx of approximately 15 % of its population, without the competence of managing the situation without orders from the national government, whose president travelled to the city with interior minister the 18th. This visit, together with the recognition that the presidents of the European institutions showed to the city, was highly appreciated by the city, that is used to the impression of being invisible for the higher spheres[13].

After the tragedies from 2005 and, especially, the Tarajal case in 2014, this event was managed and covered showing the humanitarian side of the authorities' work in their assistance to families and children, overcoming the image of repression that Ceuta's border workers had acquired (*ibid*). However, regarding reception, some organisations in the field denounced the lack of commitment by the local and national government to mobilise resources guaranteeing protection and minimum standards (Maakum, Elin & No Name Kitchen, 2021). Orders from Morocco for the identified children to be returned deterred many minors from being identified by the authorities, and the ones who did ended up being hosted in very precarious and overcrowded conditions, with insufficient resources deployed, no protection from Covid-19 risks and a lack of professional assistance and its monitoring (*ibid*). The lack of attention and assistance from any institution to those who stayed in the streets was also highlighted, by stating that it was civil society and volunteer-based organisation and local families the ones that were providing some kind of help and protection (*ibid*). This situation in which resources were mobilised without a clear nor effective plan continued, and in August the authorities repatriated without guarantees 55 minors to Morocco, based on a bilateral agreement with Morocco from 2007 regarding migrant minors[14]. This was rapidly contested by

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[12] https://www.elperiodicodeceuta.es/17-de-mayo-el-recuerdo-de-dos-fechas-historicas-para-ceuta/. (Accessed: 24/07/24)
[13] https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2022-05-16/ceuta-crisis-mayo-condicion-ciudad-fronteriza_3425327/. (Accessed: 20/07/24)
[14] https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2022/10/31/63600d63fdddfff1a48b4589.html. (Accessed: 25/07/24)

organisations who managed to open a judicial process and stop the practice, which is contrary to Spanish and International law regarding foreigners and children's rights (Fundación Raíces, 2022). This case, both in the local and Supreme courts were sentenced as illegal in 2022 and 2024 respectively,[15] and it costed the destitution of the head of the national government's delegation in the city, in an unclear environment regarding how and by who decisions were made as to how to manage the recounted events.

For adults, the transit became somehow easier. In 2021 it became effective what the Supreme Court had ruled the past year regarding transfers from Ceuta and Melilla to the mainland, when processing cases opened by two CSOs present in the cities. According to the sentence, having an asylum request accepted for processing was a valid document for getting to mainland Spain[16]. That way, many of the people that entered Ceuta in May could quickly continue their journey to the mainland after applying for asylum, bringing some dynamism to the situation[17]. Regarding children, some of their cases are still being processed, but their hosting is better organised due to the many reception centres that were habilitated after some months, among which one was only intended for girls.

In May 2022, a year after this events and two years after the closure of the borders, the negotiations for their opening came to an end with some concessions made by Spain, most notably the support for the plan of autonomy under which Western Sahara would become an autonomous region of the Moroccan state (Calderón-Vázquez *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, the frontiers between Morocco and Ceuta and Melilla started their gradual opening in which the 17th EU citizens and people holding Schengen visas could come in the cities, and the 31st of the same month, also the legally recognised cross border workers[18]. This plan had been designed in order to result in a more controlled system of transit of people and goods, as well as the implementation of customs offices, already existing in Melilla but new to Ceuta's economy. This last element was a concession of Morocco, who in previous years refused the establishment of commercial customs and it is not facilitating its implementation[19]. Together with the lack of irregular and regular commercial flows, Ceuta and Melilla are still seeing their economies affected by the new regulations in force, by which only people with visas or legally

[15] https://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-supremo-confirma-devolucion-menores-no-acompanados-ceuta-marruecos-2021-fue-ilegal-20240122141632.html. (Accessed: 25/07/24)
https://fundacionraices.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2022JUN29-NP-Sentencia-del-TSJ-repatriaciones-de-menores-en-Ceuta.pdf. (Accessed: 25/07/24)
[16] https://sjme.org/2021/02/15/el-tribunal-supremo-resuelve-por-segunda-vez-que-las-personas-solicitantes-de-asilo-tienen-derecho-a-una-libre-circulacion-desde-melilla-a-peninsula-en-un-caso-promovido-por-sjm/. (Accessed: 25/07/24)
[17] https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2022-05-16/ceuta-crisis-mayo-condicion-ciudad-fronteriza_3425327/. (Accessed: 20/07/24)
[18] https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/interior/Paginas/2022/120522-frontera-marruecos.aspx. (Accessed: 25/07/24)
[19] https://www.ondacero.es/emisoras/ceuta/ceuta/noticias/apertura-aduana-comercial-ceuta-depende-marruecos_202404116617bab68e660200010bc4c9.html. (Accessed: 25/07/24)

issued work permits are being accepted at the Moroccan side of the frontier, allowing a significantly reduced flow of consumers and workers in[20]. Therefore, although relationships between Spain and its neighbour have been re-established in better terms, some tensions are still being played around the borders at the current day.

During the last months of the current year, possibly due to the economic consequences of the closure of borders and precarity in the areas next to the borders (Fernández, 2020), Ceuta is seeing an increase in the entrances of Moroccan minors through the shore of the eastern border, which has not been open for the transit of people for years[21].

Although not in Ceuta's territory, the mention of a recent event in its sister city, Melilla, is needed to end this chapter with the current state of affairs. The 24th of June 2022, during an attempt in which approximately two thousand people - mainly Sudanese - tried to cross Melilla's borders, the violent intervention of Spanish and Moroccan border patrols resulted in, at least, 27 deaths and several disappearances (Border Forensics *et al*, 2024). From the people who managed to enter the city, almost 500 were pushed back to Morocco without any guarantee, according to an ombudsman's enquiry (link amnesty). Although no official investigation has been conducted, other actors have been trying to shed light over what happened. Therefore, an investigation conducted by a research collective has connected this event with an increased repression that caused daily raids in the Moroccan surroundings of Melilla after relationships with Spain were eased in May 2022 (*ibid*). These operations had resulted in a violent encounter between the authorities and people on the move, which ended with the latter being asked to leave the surroundings of Melilla in 24 hours on the 23rd. As a consequence, several tried to enter the Spanish city being brutally attacked (*ibid*). As previous tragedies, this event has resulted in a strong mobilisation of civil society that is still asking for justice, while the institutional response has been neglectful. The Spanish prosecutor's office has filed the case and no responsibilities have yet been officially established in Spain nor in Morocco. LINKS

This historical overview has aimed at outlining the legal and practical developments that have been shaping Ceuta as a bordering city since Spain joined the EU. Through their review, it is intended to provide a sense of the multiple tensions that converge in the bordering management of the city, as well as the constant changes to which it is subjected in terms of legislation and policy.

II.II. Theoretical overview

As we have already seen, Ceuta and its border character have been the subject of a considerable amount of research. After a brief historical contextualisation of the evolution of its

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[20] https://www.larazon.es/espana/ceuta-melilla-cuatro-anos-cierre-fronterizo_2024031865f7929a9e2a4400012a86cc.html. (Accessed: 25/07/24)
[21] https://www.rtvce.es/articulo/sociedad/entradas-menores-solos-disparan-sobreocupacion-sistema-acogida-300/20240725131937076818.html. (Accessed: 25/07/24).

borders and migratory dynamics, this section provides an overview of some of the main theorisations concerning the city. This outline aims to provide a better contextualisation of the object of study of this work, while at the same time complementing the theoretical lenses through which the findings have been interpreted. In order to do so, some of the most salient concepts that have been used to describe certain aspects of Ceuta's border logic are outlined.

Exceptionality

One of the most important features that are theorised about Ceuta and its border regime is the condition of *exceptionality* that defines the latter. Ceuta is one of the only two Spanish autonomous cities offshore on North African territory. Its integration in the European Union is marked by its non-adhesion to EU customs, and its inclusion in the Schengen Agreement entails passport controls at every border of the city in order to allow the entry of Moroccan customers and workers without visa restrictions (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a). The geographical singularity of Ceuta is closely associated with the distinctive nature of the policies and institutions that govern it, particularly with regard to mobility across its border (Calderón-Vázquez *et al.*,2022). Thus, these conditions have been theorised as a framework of exception that allows and promotes the deployment of logics and measures which lay at the margins of legality with impunity, especially when it comes to discriminatory and repressive procedures against people on the move or border violence (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b).

Externalisation & Internalisation

The analysis of Ceuta's specificities as a borderland offshore has also led to its conceptualisation as a site where practices of *externalisation* and *internalisation* converge. On the one hand, the borders of Ceuta with Morocco are significantly influenced by externalisation measures between the latter and the EU. These measures have resulted in increased collaboration on harder border control, while also giving place to events such as May 2021 (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2022). On the other hand, scholars have identified what they term 'practices of internalisation'. These are defined as surveillance and administrative practices that people are subjected to even once within a state's territory, which serve to detain, expel or retain people on the move, thereby hindering their free mobility (Espiñeira, 2013). Lastly, Sahraoui speaks about *internal externalisation,* aiming to capture the impact of European border and migration policies on the transformation of Southern EU countries into points of contention for individuals in motion (Sahraoui, 2023). In Ceuta, she argues, these dynamics are enhanced, integrating the border into everyday life and constantly marginalising othered communities (*ibid*).

Contention + Carceral geography

Building on these logics of internalisation and externalisation, scholars have highlighted the function of *contention* that Ceuta and Melilla deploy in the management of human mobility to Spain and the EU (Johnson & Jones, 2018; Sahraoui, 2023). On one hand, Ceuta and Melilla's borders, as many others, are constantly securitised in order to stop people from entering the cities, creating a physical and symbolic retaining wall. On the other hand, due to the secondary border control that separates the cities from the mainland, those who enter the city are kept from moving forward until their cases are bureaucratically managed, forcing immobility and serving as an "offshore processing centre" (Andersson, 2014: 173). In her analysis of the southern EU borderlands, Gazzotti puts forth the concept of *carceral geography* in order to conceptualise the intentional transformation of spaces in places of indefinite detainment of people on the move (Gazzotti, 2024)

Limboscape

Ceuta's geography as a European city offshore, merged with the border regime that manages this position transforms it into a marginal space. For people trying to reach the EU, having succeeded at crossing Ceuta's border means arriving in a liminal zone between the border with North Africa and that with the EU. Scholars conceptualise these spaces as *limboscapes*, where people's mobility is suspended in time and space, between the possibilities of advancing and those of being repatriated (Ferrer-Gallardo & Albet-Mas, 2016; Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016). In limboscapes, what Hage names as *existential mobility* - future projection and movement forward in one's life-plan - is suspended together with the physical mobility, promoting a sense of *stuckedness* (Hage, 2009) in which creating any sort of stability is hampered (Dona in Yuval-Davis *et al.,* 2019).

Border spectacle

Lastly, Ceuta has been analysed as scenery where a *border spectacle* is permanently deployed. De Genova conceptualises this border spectacle as a mechanism through which the legally produced illegality of certain mobile people is essentialised and the principles of sovereignty of the nation-state over its borders is enacted (De Genova, 2013). The constant production of images and discourses in which irregular migrants are observed attempting to circumvent border controls, without any visibility of the legal procedures that impede their mobility in any other way, serves to reinforce their status as "irregular", and simultaneously justifies their repression. The responses of border patrols, in turn, provide an assurance of the power of the state. Several authors have analysed how the fortified borders of Ceuta facilitate the implementation of this logic, perpetuating perceptions of crisis and emergency that serve to justify the functioning of the border regime and its violent consequences (Andersson, 2014; De Genova, 2017; Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b).

This brief theoretical review does not cover the analysis that has been done on the irregular commerce and porteo between Ceuta and Morocco, vital for the economic and social life for the city, due to its suspension in 2019 and its lack of presence in the conducted fieldwork.

III.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the general lines of literature that have informed the work behind this Master Thesis is presented. More particularly, some pieces of literature in the field of border studies are considered, by paying attention to four themes. Firstly, the production of migration and different migrant categories is assessed. Immediately after, the dynamic and multi-dimensional aspect of borders is delved upon, providing a sense of what a borderzone entails. Later, the securitisation of border controls is addressed, together with its relation with humanitarian structures of aid. Lastly, civil society is defined, stressing the diverse variety of actors under this label, and assessing the different roles that these can enact in bordered structures.

III.I. BORDERING AND MIGRATION

III.I.I. Migration as a construct

In recent years, a number of scholars within migration studies have begun to critically examine the foundations of this field of knowledge production. As part of what has been labelled the 'reflexive turn', issues such as positionality or the purpose of research have been addressed, along with the very notion of migration that has typically informed our research subjects.

Under the concept of "methodological nationalism", literature has called into question those definitions of migration that base its description on certain types of mobility and settlement among nation-states' borders. According to them, these descriptions often deem the division of human life into nation-states as natural, reinforcing the latter as the essential unit of political organisation (Dahinden, 2015). Instead, this scholarship recalls that the actual existence of the nation-state is historically built and stems from an agreement between European countries during their colonial period, making it a situated and socially constructed order (Scheel & Tazzioli, 2022; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Therefore, while nation-states are the current way in which polities are constituted, there are specific principles on which they are built that need to be addressed when migration is conceptualised.

Firstly, the modern state is supposed to be essentially defined by substantial and fixed borders that determine the inside and the outside of the national policy (De Genova, 2017). Second, it also holds total sovereignty over its inside territory and its protection, which makes border control inherent

to the very existence of the state (Dahinden & Anderson, 2021). These borders do not only demarcate the territoriality of the nation-state, but also contain the people that form its political unit, supposedly socially coherent, deeming the rest outsiders and controlling who is allowed to get in (Bigo, 2002; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Thus, borders are deemed to produce the existence and the distinction between the citizen, who is supposed to hold common national values and norm, and the foreigner, which is othered and constructed in opposition to the first one (Bigo, 2022).

As De Genova states, the bordered constitution of nation-states transforms human mobility into migration when borders are crossed (De Genova, 2017). However, not every type of cross-border mobility classifies the person who undertakes it as a migrant (*ibid*). The literature highlights the filtering character of border control, which makes the mobility of some people a part of routine, while turning the mobility of others into an act in itself that needs to be named and scrutinised (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Walters, 2006b). Therefore, scholars refer to migration and the migrant identity as something that is made or produced, contingent on the paradigm of the nation-states and border control (Scheel & Tazzioli, 2022).

Under the concepts of *migrantisation* or *migranticisation*, scholars make sense of which mobilities are labelled as migration, and under which mechanisms. Bridget Anderson states that it is the mobility that is deemed problematic that is transformed into migration and thus subject to political control, and that this determination follows hierarchies of racialisation and economic inequality (Anderson, 2017). In line with her, Dahinden highlights economic capital as one of the main axes that guides border control, which turns those with fewer resources into migrants (Dahinden & Anderson, 2021). Other scholars build their theorisations on the production of migrant subjectivities rather than categories, and then draw their attention to the *struggles* against border structures that someone experiences in their mobility as the main element that shapes them as a migrant (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Scheel & Tazzioli, 2022).

However, the bordered character of nation-states does not produce a single category or subjectivity of migrant people. Instead, multiple axes of differentiation on the bases of gender, racialisation and capital, embedded in global inequalities and colonial orders, result in a hierarchisation of migrant identities (Tazzioli, 2020). Under logics of border and migration control, these multiple forms in which migrants are categorised then dictate their differential access to their rights and how much surveillance their bodies are subjected to (Espiñeira, 2013). Thus, scholars deem the border structure as a mechanism through which states channel colonial legacies in the ordering of people on the basis of their national interests, producing and reinforcing social inequalities (Espiñeira, 2013; Hess & Kasparek, 2017; Gazzotti, 2023).

Among these multiple categories and subjectivities that borders and their management produce, probably one of the most impactful is that of the *irregular migrant.* Deemed as undesired and undesirable, border controls and immigration laws produce both a subject whose mobility is only possible through risk and to whom deterrence mechanisms are applicable and needed at borders, and subjectivities under constant surveillance and expelling threats (De Genova & Roy, 2020; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Squire, 2011). Following De Genova in his theorisations on how irregularity - sometimes referred to as illegality and definitely attached to its meanings of "threat" and deviance - is produced, the migrant cannot be irregular but irregularised (De Genova, 2019). This production of irregularity is considered to be useful in state's production of governable people, easily subjected to high degrees of exploitation and possible to expel if according to convenience (De Genova, 2019; De Genova & Roy, 2020; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013)

The irregularised migrant has been, in many discursive practices, presented in contrast with other categories of people whose mobility is deemed more legitimate and respected, especially that of the asylum seeker (De Genova, 2013). By international human rights norms, the asylum seeker is to be protected by democratic states where the rule of law applies, and therefore their mobility should be somehow eased. However, scholars have been problematising for years how these categories do not reflect nor apply to reality. Lack of mobility rights and resources make asylum seekers travel through the same routes as anyone else who does not have access to regularised means of entering a country (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Furthermore, the determination of the conditions under which the mobility of a person is deemed forced and for seeking safety are a matter of contingent and subjective judgement. Thus, it is stated that the production and reinforcement of these categories is a mechanism through which tougher control and worse treatment to the person labelled as an irregular migrant is legitimised (Schindel, 2017; Ticktin, 2015).

III.I.II. Borders & bordering

The ways in which borders work and the functions they deploy are the main subject of analysis of scholarship on border studies (Godenau & López-Sala, 2016). Deeply influenced by the critical turn that has been previously introduced, this field meets with migration studies through the analysis of how borders define and order human mobility (*ibid*).

One of the main principles that has been widely agreed upon is that the theorisation on borders should not observe them as fixed and tangible objects, but rather as processes (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001; Yuval-Davis *et al.,* 2019). On that line, they turn the term into *bordering* in order to enhance their dynamic and productive quality. Bordering processes are defined as relational, multi-dimensional and contingent (Yuval-Davis *et al*., 2019). They are deemed relational because they are produced and reproduced by a multiplicity of actors, ranging from governments and public

administrations to civil society organisations, citizens, and people on the move themselves (Fernández-Besa, 2019; Rumford, 2008). These actors reinforce and contest borders through different practices, which describes their multi-dimensionality, and they do so among diverse hierarchies of power and capacities (Walters, 2006b). The different social relations that stem from those hierarchies inform the contingent character of bordering processes, which lies in the fact that they are shaped by contextual meanings, geopolitical strategies and social configurations among and within nation-states (Fernández-Besa, 2019). The need, nature and deployment of bordering processes are highly dependent on the discourses and narratives that construct those (Walters, 2006b).

The conflation of actors, practices and structures involved in the control and management of mobility has been referred to by some scholars as *border regime* or border apparatus (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). These configurations, as stated before, filter commodities and people that are desired from the ones that need deterrence (Rumford, 2008; Walters, 2006b). In doing so, border regimes are informed by racialised and gendered structures of meaning, which result in the reproduction of social hierarchies which follow colonial legacies (Gazzotti, 2023; Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). The border regime, as bordering practices in general, needs to also be understood as a dynamic system in which all these processes are constantly taking place (Youkhana & Sutter, 2017). By pointing at this characteristic of dynamism and fluidity, scholars highlight how border regimes are always adapting to their contestation, reassuring new forms of border control (Hess & Kasparek, 2017; Walters, 2006b).

The control of human mobility that the border regime deploys is possible due to the assemblage of its many mechanisms and actors. Bureaucracy and state's administration, for instance, have been emphasised as rather invisibilized instruments through which bordering processes are constantly enacted (Pérez *et al*., 2021). From the obstacles to people's capacities of moving regularly through visa requirements to the obstacles that hinder people's access to regularisation once in a state, the bureaucratic device is deemed central for the border regime (*ibid*). On another note, attention has been also drawn to the role of civil society and citizens in general in performing and pushing for exclusionary practices and higher surveillance of borders (Rumford, 2008). Rumford conceptualises these processes under the term *borderwork* (*ibid*).

Undoubtedly, literature shows that bordering processes have expanded way far from the actual physical places where fences and border controls take place (Monforte, 2016). As seen, several mechanisms deploy bordering functions inside and outside the nation-state producing intertwining dynamics of exclusion and inclusion (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). However, some scholars still remind that the spaces where bordering processes are embedded matter, using the term *bordescape* to conceptualise the configuration of fluid and multi-dimensional border regimes in geographical spaces (Sahraoui, 2023; Yuval-Davis *et al*., 2019). Although these borderscapes can be even large cities in the centre of the state, the territory where the physical limits of the state are erected still have

specificities as to how bordering mechanisms unfold (Monforte, 2016). These areas are conceptualised in literature as borderlands, and scholarship delves into how their societal structures are closely defined by bordering dynamics (Yuval-Davis *et al.*, 2019). Social identities, economic activities and public policies in these places take specific forms that are highly tied to the processes of inclusion and exclusion that borders entail. That influence is enhanced when the geographical and political border separates states between which there is a bigger asymmetry of power, political and economic stability (*ibid*).

Focusing on what these areas next to physical borders entail for human mobility, literature talks about them as *limbo spaces*, where people on the move, especially those whose mobility is irregularised, find themselves waiting indefinitely either before crossing borders or after doing so and being able to achieve stability (Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016; Yuval-Davis *et al.*, 2019). These spaces are transformed by the border regime into liminal spaces, where waiting time is constantly lying in between chances of getting regularised or expelled (Sahraoui, 2023). People on the move are then forced into a state of immobility defined by surveillance, bureaucratic unclear procedures and the constant threat of being deported (De Genova & Roy, 2020; Ferrer-Gallardo & Espiñeira, 2016). The lack of capacities for future planning and giving the present a purpose is conceptualised by some scholars as producing a sense of *stuckedness,* highly impactful for people's well-being (Hage, 2009).

III. II. SECURITISATION & HUMANITARIANISM

III.II.I. Securitised borders

As it has been previously seen, the main concept of migration stems from deeming certain mobilities as problematic for the nation-state (Anderson, 2017). This is enhanced when those mobilities are labelled as irregular. By processes of othering that are intrinsic to the functioning of border regimes, the foreigner is understood as a threat to the social cohesion that the nation's polity is supposed to embody (Bigo, 2002). Furthermore, the irregularised migrant, categorised as "undesirable", becomes such when the laws that make their mobility unauthorised are broken, bringing in a meaning of subversion and criminality (Squire, 2011). The control of borders and human mobility then becomes a security issue, deployed to protect national society from external disruption. (Bigo, 2002; Monforte, 2016; Walters, 2006b). Therefore, processes of border control become a matter of policing and surveilling, and the deployment of military human and technical resources is enhanced in order to fight the threats and ensure the populations' protection (Bigo, 2002; Walters, 2006a). Moreover, the appeal to the need for protection of these logics produces a constant state of crisis and emergency where exceptional measures are justified (Bigo, 2002; Gerard & Weber, 2019).

Scholarship presents the combination and entanglement of securitisation dynamics and externalisation, especially when addressing European borders and migration management (Sahraoui,

2023). Under logics of externalisation, the deterrence and prevention of 'undesired' migrant flows is no longer just deployed within the state and at its borders, but also expanded over other territories through agreements and international negotiation (Cuttitta, 2022). Through these processes of externalisation, the militarisation of bordering processes is also expanded and transferred over the territory's jurisdiction of the state (Sahraoui, 2023)

The EU has been a greatly analysed example of the confluence of these dynamics. The increased securitisation at its external border has been conceptualised under the name of *Fortress Europe,* highlighting the construction and reinforcement of physical walls that demarcate a clear separation between the Union and its outside (Estrada & Fuentes-Lara, 2020; Sahraoui, 2023). The progressive militarisation of these walls has been accompanied by the proliferation of political discourses in which irregularised migration is portrayed as a major risk. The normalisation of these narratives underlines the increment of political agreements between member states and third countries to collaborate in the contention of people on the move outside of the European territory, enhancing the externalisation strategy of the EU despite the reported violence that results from it (Cuttitta, 2023; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013).

III.II.II. Humanitarian borders

The securitisation of borders has also been widely associated with their consequent humanitarianisation in the literature, giving raise to *humanitarian borders* (Gazzotti, 2021; Gerard & Weber, 2019). The intensified restrictions on mobility enacted by border regimes expose people on the move to heightened risks of violence and precarity along their routes and at their destinations. These conditions are normalised, creating a context in which humanitarian structures emerge to assist their effects (Gazzotti, 2021).

Scholars working on humanitarianism have highlighted its historical ties with military operations and the causes of the adverse conditions it aims to mitigate (Redfield in Gazzotti, 2021). The principles behind humanitarian actions and structures are tied to the moral obligation of saving lives in distress, but they are characterised by a disconnection of the political claims over the causes of that suffering (Fassin, 2010). It is for this reason that humanitarianism is deemed as easily co-opted by states to provide solutions for the consequences of its produced violence (Schindel, 2017). Literature states that, while humanitarian actions are often shaped by political interests - selecting where they are deployed and under which circumstances -, their apparent political neutrality serves as a mechanism for upholding existing hierarchical power relations both at the global and national level (Gerard & Weber, 2019).

When it comes to border regimes, a similar logic is highlighted, in which moral principles of international human rights and their defence lead to the provision of humanitarian services to those

who are exposed to physical harm and insecurity by border controls (Schindel, 2017). These services, usually financed by the state through public funds, do not confront the border regime, but rather assist it by saving lives whenever it is possible (Gazzotti, 2021). Particularly in Europe, this has led to the emergence of what some scholars have called a humanitarian apparatus per se which serves to justify repressive measures and ensure the coherence of European democratic discourses (Estrada & Fuentes-Lara, 2020; Hess & Kasparek, 2017). Helping people on the move without critically questioning the production of their vulnerability is said to enable *humanitarian borderwork* in which the dominant border regime is permanently reinforced by the collaboration between humanitarian NGOs, border patrols and migration management (.Cuttitta *et al.*, 2023).

In addition, critical literature on *humanitarian borders* raises important questions about their impact on the populations they assist and the discourses and meanings they produce. By enforcing political neutrality and emphasising moral duties of compassion, humanitarian action is directed towards an ideal vulnerable and innocent victim (Schindel, 2017; Ticktin, 2015). These logics deprive people on the move of their political agency, as their passivity in their suffering is key to their being seen as deserving (Fassin, 2010; Schindel, 2017). Similarly, calls for compassion do not include claims for social rights, which reinforces the essentialisation of vulnerability as a characteristic of the irregular migrant, usually also racialised. Finally, humanitarian action, by its very nature of assisting distress, is said to respond only to present and immediate needs (Ticktin, 2015). This logic at the borders contributes to an image of tragedy and dangerous routes as crisis or emergency, which, as part of the border spectacle, reinforces the lack of action and the naturalisation of border violence as something that cannot be contested (De Genova, 2017; Estrada & Fuentes-Lara, 2020).

Lastly, it has been argued that humanitarian organisations and actions have become another part of what has been called the migration industry, conceptualising the network of non-state actors on which human mobility and its management depend and whose activities are profitable (Andersson, 2014; Hernández-León, 2013). This suggests that humanitarian borders capitalise on the suffering caused by border securitisation.

III.III. CIVIL SOCIETY

On the basis of the theoretical approaches that have been reviewed in this section, civil society, far from being external and reactive to border systems, constitutes one of the many groups of actors involved in the articulation of the border regime. Before delving deeper into its role inside this structure, it is necessary to determine what civil society entails and how it is going to be addressed in this work.

Civil society has been conceptualised in slightly different ways over the years and among different bodies of literature, and it is assumed to be a rather ambiguous concept whose delimitation is

not easy to draw (Kalogeraki, 2020). However, Ambrosini & Van der Leun provide an account of aspects that can be used to broadly define it as "the web of activities and organisations that are not created by the state, or by its articulations, and are not directly controlled by it (...) are not profit oriented and do not operate in the economic market", making it clear that apart from NGOs, other kind of social movements or unions also adapt to this defining principles (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015: 104).

However, even when adopting a more or less defined conceptualisation of civil society, the literature agrees that this category always includes a great diversity of agents (Cuttitta *et al*., 2023; Kalogeraki, 2020). Civil society can be constituted by organisations that differ, among other things, in their degree of professionalisation as an entity, their size, their motivations and objectives, and the activities they develop (Cuttitta *et al*., 2023). Among these differences, their funding pattern is probably one of the most salient, as it usually determines their institutional capacities, the scope of their actions and the amount of qualified members they can afford (Kalogeraki, 2020)

Narrowing the scope to civil society involved in migration issues, this diversity unfolds to gather entities as diverse as grassroots organisations, social and/or political movements, professionalised NGOs, humanitarian organisations or Human Rights platforms (Kalogeraki, 2020). This diversity in terms of actors is closely linked with the different roles that civil society - from now on referred to as civil society organisations or CSOs due to their collective character - might have in the field (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015; Cuttitta *et al*., 2023). Although there is a spread understanding of CSOs as driven by values that directly confront those that guide state policing on human mobility and border controls, scholars usually problematise this assumption (Rumford, 2008; Sinatti, 2013). On one hand, it is reminded that CSOs can be guided by very different, and even opposing, principles, as there are also social groups who are organised around anti-immigration sentiments and objectives (Cuttitta, 2022). On another hand, even if it is agreed to a certain extent that the enforcement and respect to human right norms is often dependent on the actions of civil society (Barbulescu & Grugel, 2016), CSOs are embedded in structures of power relations where they cannot always challenge governmental actors and their decisions (Bigo, 2002; Cuttitta *et al.,*2023).

Thus, literature places CSOs in a complex position when it comes to migration regimes. Focusing on those that are assembled on human rights approaches, and in line with theorisations on humanitarian borderwork, scholars show how States usually outsource certain functions to CSOs, especially NGOs, on their wider strategies of border management (Sinatti, 2023). Therefore, there is a sustained concern that CSOs might be - even without noticing - an assisting tool for border control and securitisation by humanitarising the border. However, border regimes have also seen the rise of multiple groups politically engaged with calls for freer movement and the rights of people on the move (Cuttitta, 2023) When addressing this issue, there seems to be a common ground of

differentiating NGOs and other organisations that focus on service provision and assistance from those whose main roles are advocating for social rights (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015; Barbulescu & Grugel, 2016), as well as those who receive public funding and those that are independently sustained (Cuttitta *et al.*, 2023).

In border-zones, CSOs whose main activity is assisting people on the move or providing services have been more often viewed as functional to the border regime (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2016; Cuttitta *et al.*, 2023). These organisations are usually funded or co-funded by the State itself, which needs to balance border control with the protection for the people who are affected by it, although their aim can be softening the harmful effects of this border apparatus (Gazzotti, 2021). For example, NGOs that work in the reception system, while probably guided by values of protection of rights and social equality, are inevitably merged with the securitarian structure of the border regime (Perelló & Lacomba, 2020) Additionally, political agendas that drive public funding have been seen to compromise the work that organisations develop, as well as their priorities when they do not meet the funders' objectives (Cuttitta *et al.*, 2023). For these reasons, these organisations seem to fall more often on roles of re-bordering, which means supporting the state on their measures of border control and management, counting on the tensions between coercion and protection being a part of them (*ibid*). On another note, organisations which are independently funded and have a more activist character seem to have a larger room to deploy actions of counter-bordering, which defines those actions that directly challenge the border regime (Barbuslescu & Grugel, 2016). Although these capacities can be hindered by logics of criminalisation and the same tensions between protecting and somehow participating in the border apparatus, it has been stated that advocacy actions can be deployed in much more effective and active ways in border-zones, due to the accessibility of the regime to be contested (Perelló & Lacomba, 2020). Their independency from public fundings normally allows these collectives to be able to openly confront the administration and authorities, and a significant degree of politisation is deemed needed in order to challenge structures as entrenched as the border regime (Pérez *et al.,* 2021)

However, the distinction between service-provision organisations and pro-rights advocate movements is also highlighted as a matter of further nuance, as every CSO present in the field is involved in the construction and contestation of borders (Barbulescu & Grugel, 2016; Sinatti, 2023). Indeed, some scholars remind that, given that CSOs are constituted by people socialised around bordering practices of all kinds, there will always be practices that reinforce them in one way or another, even inside the organisations (Cuttitta *et al.,*2023; Sinatti, 2023). These tensions between compliance with the state and rebordering bring back the previously presented idea of bordering being a dynamic and relational process that is constantly being reshaped.

Furthermore, the different ways CSOs impact the border regimes in which they are embedded are significantly shaped by the particular local context where they undertake their activity (Perelló & Lacomba, 2020). Monforte highlights how spaces can shape how social actions are deployed, and Cuttitta states that how the border regime materialises in every place produces different opportunities and constraints for certain actions to be developed by CSOs present in the field (Monforte, 2016; Cuttitta, 2022; Cuttitta, 2023). Thus, apart from micro-aspects of values, positionalities and motivations of each organisation, the wider structure where they are embedded impacts their configuration (Cuttitta *et al.*, 2023).

IV. METHODOLOGY

IV.I. Reflexivity

I.I. Positionality .

Drawing on Donna Haraway, one of the most important voices in the Western world that has talked about the fallacy of objectivity and the need to "situate" ourselves in the knowledge we produce (Haraway, 1995), Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy conclude their book *Bordering* stating that "as researchers we, like any other people, have each our own social positionings, identities and emotional attachments, as well as our own imaginaries and normative value systems" (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019: 168). It is from there that I have to be aware and transparently inform of my standpoint. I enrolled in migration studies in an attempt to better understand how the diverse structures that govern migration work and legitimise the deep inequalities they embed. After visiting a borderzone in Serbia, my already clear political position against the current border regimes got even more solidified. From then, I have been experiencing multiple confrontational thoughts on my decision to study this field, and hopefully working within it, instead of maybe just leaving it to my activist engagement, due to the risks of, so to say "monetising human suffering", which is a reflection many critical scholars are delving on in migration studies (Gazzotti, 2023). In that same line, issues around legitimacy made the choice of subject of study for my master thesis a really hard task, as I did not want to reinforce dynamics of "objectifying" people in mobile projects nor to force my access and production into areas I did not feel entitled enough to enter. Thus, and aware that I might always reinforce problematic logics as they are the ones we are socialised into in whichever project I embark on, I chose to get informed of bordering processes by the organisations that are embedded in them. I did so in order to work with people who do not see their mobility contested but observe how others' is and might try, in the best cases, to problematize it and have a mitigating impact on that structure - although these assumptions led me to a big bias that I cover in the next section -. Additionally, I depart from the premise of understanding this system in which organisations operate as inherently unjust, violent and

contestable, which, although I draw attention to it to ensure the provision of a systematised analysis, impacts transversally my work.

Shifting towards materiality, Gazzotti's work on reflexivity as a white European woman at Spain's southern border between 2021 and 2022, provides useful insight on how to translate the theoretical knowledge on the importance and relevance of the researcher's positionality to the practical reflexivity of one's specific research. Drawing upon her reflections, and due to the similarities of certain aspects of our social positions and field of study, it should be noted that I have been able to conduct this research due to my condition of white Spanish citizen, with a residence in Tangier due to the job that my mother has from the Spanish Government in the Moroccan city, and a complete ease and legitimacy to cross the border of Ceuta and move within the city and the neighbouring country due to no visa restrictions on my mobility. The conditions that I embody are, at the same time, a consequence and a reproduction of a colonial and racist structure that governs and restricts certain bodies' mobility through border control (Gazzotti, 2023). As Gazzotti states, crossing such a border as a white European person - in my case, Spanish - whose mobility is a given right, reinforces the dynamics of distinction that direct more surveillance over other racialized bodies (*ibid*).

I.II. Access to the field and how my question changes.

My interest in migration and the southern border of Spain got enhanced since I arrived in Tangier for the first time in April 2022. When I arrived there, I had the chance to meet Meme, an anthropologist I got very close with, who had been involved for many years, both academically and as a professional and activist in the mobility of children from Morocco to Spain and the advocacy for their rights. She worked in an agency of international cooperation, and by volunteering in an NGO within the same field and getting a glimpse into the social dynamics of the city, completely marked by colonial times and human mobilities - past and present -, my already existing interest in this phenomenon and its governance intensified. Soon, thanks to my colleague Mario and some of the Spanish networks in Tangier, Ceuta also arose as a relevant place and centre of multiple logics related to human mobility. Since then, combined with the activist groups whose activity I already followed, I got more informed about what certain organisations were doing in terms of advocacy.

During the summer 2023, I tried to volunteer in Ceuta with one of the organisations present, but due to scheduling problems, I ended up joining them in Serbia, which allowed me to live from within how they were organising against the established governance of EU borders in the possible ways, as well as the multiple incongruencies and challenges that marked those attempts.

From this position, and framed within my own political biases, I received a lot of information about Ceuta and contesting practices, especially since 2014 when the Tarajal tragedy took place. I saw an increased mobilisation around Ceuta and the spread of discourses of denounce and resistance to

border control and its consequences, that also covered the days of 2021 in which so many people crossed the borders of the city from a very critical view. From then on, and due to my personal interest in the contestation of borders, I framed my research question around these resisting practices present in the city and how they had been developing with the reference of 2014.

However, when I arrived, I soon understood that the Tarajal case was not as central or relevant in the discourses of the organisations as I had expected, that there was not so much political vindication from within the city and that organisations were not articulated along the lines I had expected but made up a much more complex and diverse network.

This realisation took me to slightly modify my initial question, which was "How have measures of border control over the last 20 years affected the actions of CSOs in Ceuta? Which strategies of resistance and counteraction do they develop?", being very aware of the impact of my previous assumptions on the early stages of my research design. However, the methodological framework from which I had approached my fieldwork, highly explorative and inductive, allowed for the flexibility that this reconfiguration needed (Mayan, 2009).

IV.II. Research design

Given the complexity of the subject that this thesis aimed to study, this research was defined as a qualitative inquiry since its initial phases. As such, it was also designed as inductive, as the objective was to address CSOs and their work as they naturally unfold and build from the gathered information, instead of coming to the field with previous frameworks or hypothesis (Mayan, 2009).

The main interest that informed this work was in border regimes and the different 6impacts that civil society can have in them. Given its singularities as a European borderzone in North Africa, Ceuta embodied a particularly suitable setting for studying how bordering dynamics unfold, and due to the proliferation of CSOs working in the field, also to delve on their impact within the border regime. Additionally, my access to this city was relatively easier than to other borderzones, due to language and travel opportunities. For these reasons, I decided to shape my research as a case study located in Ceuta and studying the present moment as a result of its historical evolution (Tight, 2022). This research is a case study as it aims to understand a bounded case holistically in order to get insight on broader aspects of reality by the combination of knowledge produced on multiple cases (*ibid*). However, due to limitations of time and scope, the conducted research is rather exploratory and gives room for further investigation.

IV.II. Methods

The data that will be analysed in this thesis was gathered by applying a combination of methods during 3 weeks in the field, during which I moved 4 times back and forth to Ceuta from

Tangier, which allowed me to cross the border in different occasions, and stayed in two parts of the town, firstly towards the outskirts in the road that leads to the CETI, and the last days in the very centre. During this time, I conducted 8 semi-structured interviews with members of CSOs and 3 more with key informants from the city. I took part in an activity organised by another CSO together with the university, and I visited the main office of a leftist political party I was taken to by a member of that CSO. Lastly, I had the chance to spend some time with other people from the city and with my interviewees aside from the interview moment, which allowed me to have several informal conversations which tackled interesting points of the subject of research, which, merged with the fieldnotes from my observations helped me understand the context of the city.

IV.II.I. Semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the main method to gather data due to the complexity of the subject aimed to explore. (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Regarding the informants, a purposive sampling was deployed, at first, when contacting the possible interviewees, as the research was centred in a clear group of informants, namely those working or taking part of CSOs working with people on the move. Thus, before arriving in Ceuta, and thanks to the knowledge and contacts that I had from the time in Tangier, I mapped the tissue of organisations present in the city and tried to contact them via e-mail first, and by telephone calls second. Through this first contacting stage, I managed to schedule 3 interviews for my first week in the field. Once I arrived, I tried to contact the ones I had not managed before, either by calls or visiting their sites, and this was a process that lasted until the last week. However, during the time there, some interviews were scheduled through snow-ball processes in which people I talked to led me to either CSOs I had not mapped, or to people as key informants that would be interesting to talk to.

Therefore, I ended up contacting 22 CSOs. From those, I could schedule 9 interviews, among which one was not completed, as the person I was supposed to talk to - the manager - did not come to the meeting. In this case, I just had an introductory conversation with part of the team who gave me an overview of the work they were doing while we were waiting. From the other 8 that were conducted, 6 were recorded, 1 could not be because of its last minute schedule and technical problems, and the last one was not recorded on demand of one of the two interviewees, who did agree for me to take notes. An 11th CSO invited me to take part in one of the activities they organised with the University and one of my interviewed organisations.. Among the CSOs that were contacted but did not lead to any kind of meeting, there were 3 cases of incompatibility of schedules due to the limited time of the informants, 1 case in which no response was received after being asked to send the proposal again for approval from the headquarters of the organisation, and a last 1 who stated they would not be useful as they did not work with migrants due to the existence of the CETI - although they did work with people with residence permits settled in the cities -. It is relevant to note that not every mapped CSO

could be contacted due to the lack of public information on how to reach them, and that many of the contacts once in the field could be made due to being offered their personal numbers through their met networks. Among the encountered CSOs there is a wide variety regarding their character - vindicative, welfare-oriented, humanitarian… - their main activities, their funding strategies, the longevity of their presence or their structure. This diversity, intended in order to get more nuances on the final insights, is presented in the anonymised chart, where information is based either on their descriptions during our interviews or their web pages. Numbers are allocated to the ones interviewed in the chronological order in which the interviews took place, an A is allocated to the CSO where the interview could not take place, and a B is allocated to the CSO that allowed me to visit their activity.

For space reasons, see Appendix nº 1.

The nterviews were designed by betting basic information on every CSO while allowing room for flexibility. Therefore, questions assessed their activities, funding and year of emergence or arrival in the field, their professional relations with other CSOs and institutions, possible obstacles they could identify in their work, how the history of the border had impacted them, and finally, how the relationship with the local population unfolded. Lastly, an open question was asked to give room for them to raise the elements that they found important to address.

Once in the field, I also conducted 3 more semi-structured interviews with other informants that were not part of any CSO, but who I contacted by snow-balling and recommendations due to the interest of their discourse. One of them, a local historian, had been working for decades on the history of the enclave and diverse subjects in Morocco, participating, as I got told, in many research work done in the city. The second was a local citizen who, outside any associative framework, was organised with other neighbours to help those in vulnerable economic conditions and those who transit Ceuta on their migratory projects and find themselves in street conditions. The last one was a worker of a humanitarian entity in Spain with international character, whose juridical and social status separates it from the rest of the CSOs, and who works officially in the whole territory as an auxiliary actor of the State's authorities. The 3 interviews were recorded, and they followed a similar guide as the ones conducted with CSOs, with adaptations for every informant.

IV.III.II.Participant observation

Participant observation has been the main method when conducting ethnographic fieldwork, but it has been widely used in other types of qualitative inquiries as well (Kawulich, 2005). As an immersive access to the field of study, participant observation is deemed to allow the researcher to get more nuances on how the subject of study unfolds and how interactions and social processes develop among participants, allowing important questions to arise from the natural order of things while also enhancing the trust that the researcher is able to build with the people involved in the inquiry (ibid).

Due to time limits, I could not take part as a volunteer in the activities of the CSOs that were open for it although it would have been an interesting way of accessing and observing the field . However, when I contacted one of the CSOs that I got recommended to, the worker invited me to an activity that was taking place the next week at the university. This activity was part of a bigger programme between 3 Spanish cities where an analysis of their collective and specific needs was made regarding citizens' participation and collective wellbeing, followed by a plan with different actions to foster them. The activity I was invited to was one of the "solutions" that were proposed, and it involved the organisation number 9 and the people taking part in it - a worker, volunteers and people on the move - , the worker from organisation B and the students of a master in education and their teacher. It was one of a series of sessions in which students and people on migratory projects worked together on issues around diversity and how to tackle it within education.

IV.III.III. Informal conversations

As a researcher being present in the field, it is common that connections with people outside of the formal framework of interviews and participatory observation arise, leading to conversations in which core information is shared while in a more relaxed framework. Being a commonly used source of data in ethnographic studies, some scholars have also advocated for its use in other qualitative inquiries, such as case studies, especially as a "complementary source of data to supplement or enhance data produced by more structured, or formal, methods" (Swain & King, 2022: 3).

In this particular case, due to the limited time in Ceuta, it was not possible to end up scheduling a formal interview with every informant I met, and with some of those who I did interview, our contact became more natural once the recorder was turned off, even if we kept on talking about the same issues. Therefore, I got a lot of information during informal meetings, time spent after the interviews or the activity at the university. As previously introduced, these data are not going to be used as central information, but rather as glimpses to reinforce or contrast what was extracted from the interviews, although the standpoint taken is the defence of the validity of the information that rises through these more informal settings against an imperative of formality (Swain & King, 2022).

IV.III.IV. Fieldnotes

The production of fieldnotes while in the field and their revision and analysis afterwards are also a method that has been described as useful in qualitative inquiries as they can provide contextual data that completes the understanding of the research setting and the subject of study (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2017). Fieldnotes are also understood to, when working with them critically, provide some nuances from the environment and how the different actors in it interact (Deggs & Hernandez, 2018). It is for these reasons, and given the specificity of Ceuta as a border city, that these notes taken

during my weeks in Ceuta are used in this work as complementary data to strengthen the comprehension of those issues that arise during the semi-structured interviews. These fieldnotes are produced as traditional notes, recorded audios, pictures and the revision of digital newspapers while in Ceuta.

IV. IV. Limitations

As mentioned in previous sections, the work presented in this thesis has notable limitations that should be addressed.

Firstly, time in the field was rather limited. I could experience that 3 weeks were not enough to gather data with the depth that would be desired if willing to conduct a holistic inquiry. Additionally, as it could be expected, my last week in the field opened much more possibilities for further research than my previous ones, as my presence helped me get more trust from the people I met and have access to way more contacts through snowballing. The possibility of staying longer would have also allowed me to take part in much more activities, which would have given me more insights to analyse the way in which organisations are working in the city.

Regarding the interviews, there are two issues to raise: first, they were conducted in Spanish, which means that my translations could take away some of the nuance of language usage; second, the fact that I could not record two of them definitely made their analysis harder than with those of which I had a literal transcript.

Therefore, due to the complexity of border regimes and the nuance that is needed to understand the impact of different actors operating within them, this work cannot be taken as a definite description on how CSOs develop their work and impact border structures in Ceuta

IV.V. Ethics

Any scientific inquiry that involves other people as participants need to take ethical considerations into account (Mayan, 2009). In terms of research ethical guidelines, every participant of this research was previously informed by me on the principles of their consent to being interviewed, their rights to withdraw if desired, not respond to some of the questions, and not be recorded. Everyone agreed to be interviewed, and one of the participants stated her preference for not being recorded. In order to manage ethical considerations when using informal conversations, I made sure that everyone knew that I was there as a part of my research, and that the conversations we were having were part of the data informing the results.

In terms of other ethical considerations, this research did not raise as many delicate issues as others might, given that the people I contacted were not in a position of vulnerability. However, I am

aware that my presence in the field is not neutral, that I was an outsider in contact with people who do a rather delicate work on a daily basis, and that this work is shared with people who are vulnerable in some way. Therefore, I made a conscious effort to adapt to what my participants were more comfortable with in terms of space, time and way of contacting, as well as to avoid any possible negative effect that my presence could cause.

V. ANALYSIS

After introducing a historical contextualisation of the city that encloses the case study that is conducted, and the theoretical concepts that have guided this analysis, I present in this section the collected data as I have systematised it. In order to do so, this chapter is divided into subsections. A brief narration of the ethnographic work conducted during the three weeks in the field will be outlined first, including the reference to some of the pictures that have been taken. Afterwards, the responses of my informants will be presented in order to analyse the configuration of Ceuta as a border city, regarding the arena in which CSOs deploy their activity with people on the mvoe. The information presented in this subsection aims at responding the first/main question, and the results from the interviews will be completed by the data gathered, mainly, in informal conversations. Lastly, this chapter concludes with a last part in which the different responses that CSOs assemble within the previously analysed setting, centring in those that can be understood as *counter-bordering* practices. With this last part, the objective is responding to the second question, to then give place to the chapter on discussion.

V.I. Observing Ceuta.

The first time I ever visited Ceuta was in January 2023, in a 2-day trip made with my mother and a friend of hers, also a teacher from the Spanish school. We went by car and stayed in a hotel in one of the main squares, the *Plaza de África* -square of Africa -. I then experienced the city with the eyes of a curious tourist who got curious by the many stimuli of the city - many names and architecture that evoked colonial times, a huge presence of the military, many symbols of Spanish patriotism, a lot of people speaking *Dariya* in the streets… - but did not get a deep understanding of it. We crossed the border that time by car, spending long times queueing and getting through the controls with ease by the presentation not only of the Spanish passport, but also the *Pasaporte de Servicio*, which showed that my mother and her friend worked for the Spanish government transnationally - before they took it out of service this year, the usage of this passport was always the centre of (half) jokes suggesting that a better treatment would be gotten by the authorities, especially the ones on the Moroccan side -.

This time, I travelled from Tangier to Ceuta on my own. I did so by taking collective taxis in the Moroccan city - *grand taxi* -, that gather in a field with different destinations and wait until filled with 7 people to start the way. The trip goes from *Tangier* to *Fnideq - Castillejos* in Spanish -, costing 40 Dh (4euros), and drives all along the coast to *Tangier Med* - the huge international port that Morocco opened in 2007 transferring its commerce from the city's shore to the outskirts - and the mountains of *KsarSeghir* where quite some police controls are present until arriving at the last Moroccan village before the border with Ceuta. There, a normal taxi - *petit taxi* - is taken, again, collectively, to reach the very border of the Spanish enclave for 5 Dh (50 cents). This route is undertaken by a high number of people on a daily basis, due to working reasons, leisure - if your nationality allows you to - or to deal with bureaucratic or procedural issues if doing so in Spanish territory is needed or easier than in Morocco - I shared my last trip with an Argentinian guy that worked in Morocco and went regularly to Ceuta in order to not overstay in the country and send money back to his family -. During all these travels, specifically in the area of Tangier-Med, I saw a relevant number of children either waiting on hills next to the roads, wandering where the trucks are parked or slowly moving and along the roads, more present in the afternoon rides I took than in the morning. Apart from trying to get in Ceuta or Melilla, it is more common that children and young people - mostly men - who are trying to get to Spain try their luck at the port. Meme told me that, prior to the opening of Tangier-Med, these dynamics happened in the main port next to the Kasbah of Tangier, which made the contact with the children easier to establish for collectives, associations and people concerned with fostering their well-being.

While arriving to the borders of Ceuta, the fence stands out in the hilly landscape that can be observed for a while along the road. The taxi then comes down the hill and reaches the beach, which it runs along until the very border. Moroccan Gendarmes and their vans are present all along the beach, and the first thing you are confronted to when coming to the frontier is the barbed wire that precedes it at the floor level. If going by foot, you then enter a small building in which the Moroccan controls take place, first of luggage and then of passports, leading you to a long corridor whose walls are white and around 3 metres tall, so nothing can be seen apart from the way ahead. At some point, a big Spanish flag is portrayed in a structure and the wall gives place to fences that lead you to the passport control of the Spanish authorities. Lastly, you go in a smaller building where they check your luggage and then go out in a part of town that is, nowadays, pretty much deserted. There, you can either be picked up, take a taxi, a bus whose timetable is not the most accessible information or walk a very long distance until you reach the centre of the city. This border is the one in the Tarajal, that separates the beach where the tragedy occurred in 2014, is the only one open to the people and is next to the area where the flows involved in irregular commerce took place until 2019. When crossing this border in the other direction, the process is a similar one: long corridors, with fences in the Spanish side and white walls on which there is barbed wire on the Moroccan one after passing through the passport

controls. When finally arriving to the other side, a road with multiple parked cars and taxis awaits in order to reach again the village of *Fnideq*.

The first day, an ancient teacher from the school of my mother took me to see some parts of the city in a car. With him, I could go next to the other border, the one that separates the Spanish neighbourhood of Benzú from the Moroccan village of Belyounech, although their buildings and architecture are visibly connected. This border has been closed since 2002 and thus composed only by fences that enter the water for some metres, and a little cabin that belongs to Moroccan authorities, contrasting a lot with the Tarajal border. Due to a lower presence of Spanish patrols, and the lack of resources from the Moroccan ones to go out in the sea when the weather and waters are risky, many children and young people have been trying to cross to Ceuta through this side of the town. During my stay in the city, 3 articles in the news reported arrivals through the sea, one of them being a disappearance. Until this day, the numbers of mostly young men swimming through this border has gone up, and this route, although it could visually look safer, has been causing multiple deaths and disappearances.

The first accommodation I stayed in was a studio located in the northern coast of the city on a road that goes along the coast until Benzú and serves as the way to reach the *CETI* . Coinciding with the centre's opening hours, small groups of black people would be seen walking in the direction of the city or back to the institution - I notice how I get into dynamics of racial profiling when observing my surroundings in the city and the area -. One of the nights, the night of the 23rd to the 24th, a lot of authorities' vehicles - national police, the civil guard - went in the direction of the CETI, firstly in high speed and afterwards at a really slow pace. Next morning, news was reporting that a big fight had happened in the centre, exceeding the capabilities of its security officers to handle it and therefore bringing the authorities in and detaining four individuals[22]. During the next few days, no follow-up on the undertaken measures was published.

Apart from their enhanced presence that night, seeing authorities' vehicles was not extraordinary in the streets of the city of Ceuta. Since the beginning I could notice a strong presence of national police and *Guardia Civil - civil guard-*. Both are state's security bodies, with complementary but different functions, and, while the national police belongs solely to the Ministry of Interior, the *Guardia Civil* is managed also through the Ministry of Defense, as it is of military character. In a simplified explanation, while the National Police controls the border and its bureaucracy, the *Guardia Civil* surveilles it. Next to these authorities, the presence of the military in many of its divisions is also something that stands out in the city. Notably, there are multiple barracks and buildings that belonged or still do to the military services, (Johnson & Jones, 2018). As a common characteristic that is probably enhanced in Spain, the presence, symbols and narratives

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[22] https://elfarodeceuta.es/policia-nacional-desplegada-ceti-tras-reyerta/ (Accessed: 25/07/24)

deployed by the military presence have a strong association with nationalistic sentiments and claims, that somehow get enhanced in Ceuta by the fact that many of these services are there to control the borders and develop their duty, the national defence.

In contrast - as it could be argued -, the Arabic and Moroccan presence and influence in the city is very observable as well. Some restaurants, supermarkets and stores have an offer with a clear mixture of Moroccan and Spanish origins, and *dariya* - the Arabic that is spoken in Morocco - is widely spoken in Ceuta's streets as well. However, there is a visible concentration of people speaking Arabic, veiled women, Moroccan stores and sites and mosques in certain neighbourhoods in comparison to other areas of the city, especially its centre. I could make these observations, as some of the interviews that were held took place in offices in peripheral neighbourhoods. The man I knew from the city, who took me for a ride the first day, told me that some of these neighbourhoods - Los Rosales, San José or Hadú, are normally the most "conflictive" ones in the city, a discourse that is widespread. The highest exponent of these spatial and narrative logics is the neighbourhood of *El Príncipe*, which is known as one of the most dangerous areas of the whole Spanish state and subjected to a very bad reputation (Bcn a pie de calle, 2021). Depicted in a Spanish show some years ago, it is understood as being the home of many people living irregularly and an area where illegal activities are held, and it is close to the Tarajal border, up in a hill quite separated from the rest of the city. Two of the interviews I conducted were held there, and when I asked for directions while walking there the first day, I got told by a policeman to "be careful". Both times the interviews were held around mid-day, and I did not feel unsafe at any point, although the way to reach the neighbourhood was not clear-cut and quite irregular regarding the infrastructure, and it is visible that the state of many houses is very precarious.

My first accommodation was hired through air-bnb. The owner was a Spanish woman, and the technician who was present in the building was Moroccan, travelling to his country almost every weekend. Many statistics place Moroccan workers in Ceuta mainly occupying jobs within hostelry, care work and different construction and technical fields (Fuentes-Lara, 2018). This is visible throughout the city, especially in the peripheral neighbourhoods. My second and third accommodations were two different hostels in the main avenue of the city centre. There, at least the people in charge of the cleaning were Arabic-speakers, as I could hear when they talked to each other.

Ceuta is shaped as a wide territory - the one bordering - that becomes narrower and gives place to a peninsula with a hill where mostly military buildings are placed, and the centre is located basically around the isthmus. In this last central location, the environment that surrounded me was quite different. With a lot of historical and institutional buildings, the middle of Ceuta experiences a big movement of people, both around stores, in restaurants and bars, or doing what looks like daily activities. In the centre, there are a lot of hotels and hostels prepared for tourism, as well as the main

stores. Although there are a lot of people in this area, I did not encounter as many black people as I did when I stayed by the beach road, although the movement of Arabic-speakers was still pretty present along the streets and in establishments, with a bigger presence as workers than as consumers in bars and restaurants. The presence of police and other authorities was also somehow lighter than outside of the centre, probably also influenced by the number of pedestrianised streets. The only interviews I did conduct in the city centre were with people that I met in a bar or terrace, due to the lack of an office where their organisation was based or the impossibility of using it. Already in the outskirts of the centre, leading to the hilly area, is where the university campus is placed.

By being in the isthmic area of the territory, Ceuta's port is really visible from the centre. The marina area is part of the central city, but the commercial one is already placed in its surroundings, with a more industrial character. There, some black people begin to occupy more space, although it is mostly in the gas stations of the road, where they seem to give some services. I notice I do a lot of racial profiling in the city, which at the same time helps me to understand its dynamics but entails a racialised logic in which I would not be comfortable in other places. In order to reach my first accommodation, I walked several days along the port and through the industrial warehouses of its surroundings. Although I got told that it was a common place where people in street situations would stay during the night, I did not have the chance to walk with other people in order to observe the dynamics. However, and even when the last measurements regarding Moroccan entry to facilities have significantly reduced the number of homeless people, I could hear voices from an area in the very shore where lots of big rocks were placed to delimit the industries and the beginning of the sea. As a last remark when covering this part of the town, it is relevant to say that, unless there is a lot of fog in the city, the shores of Spanish mainland are shockingly visible from Ceuta's port, as well as from the northern part of the city, where the border with *Belyounech* is and also the road leading to the *CETI*.

V.II. Understanding Ceuta from perceptions of CSOs.

While I was making sense of all these impressions I was gathering from my time in the city, I started conducting the interviews with my informants. As presented in the previous chapter on methodology, these were 8 CSOs with high diversity regarding their funding, work, motivation, structure and political engagement, and 3 with other relevant actors from the city, namely the director of the rescue team that assists authorities when a person arrives irregularly, a historian from the city, and a woman who organises solidarity actions with her neighbours. In this section, the main results from the 8 interviews will be addressed, completing that information with relevant data gathered from the other 3 and the informal conversations held with them and other people during my stay. From these 8 principal interviews, only 6 could be recorded, and due to the lack of their literal interventions, the information from the 2 unrecorded ones will be presented as quotes from the taken notes. In this

section, the gathered data will be analysed in order to extract the bordering practices that can be identified in the discourses of the CSOs when describing their work and the context in which it takes place. While some of them have been directly presented as challenges by the organisations, others have been recognised in their more general discourse. When delving into them, some specific literature that back up these reasonings will also be presented.

V.II.I. MIGRATION INDUSTRY

Something central that came up in interviews with most of the organisations that participated in this research was the amount of money that they felt or were certain was being invested in migratory issues and structures in the city. However, more than reported in a positive way, it was mostly problematised.

'You realise that, yes, there is a lot of immigration aid coming here, from the European Union... but there is still a lot to do (...)And I tell you, if there is no will, there is nothing. I think that here the will sometimes fails because here, and I say this in general, in Ceuta, the priority is to request, request, request. There is a lot of European aid, you know, and if there are no problems, there is no aid' (1)

Firstly, it was implied that the fact that money is being invested in migration assistance structures does not fully translate into better solutions or the disappearance of problems. Instead, the previous quote suggests that the very dynamics of investment contribute to reinforcing the problems they are supposed to solve by feeding agents along the way. In other words, they eventually turn the problem into their source of livelihood. This is not a new complaint, as critical literature has already identified this issue as intrinsic to the third sector in several areas. Turning to the field of migration, the concepts that problematise the rise of a migration industry become helpful in understanding this exposed critique and making sense of the logics it presents. (Gazzotti, 2023; Ticktin, 2015)

This idea of funding not being translated into solutions seems to correlate with the fact that, despite the agreement that Ceuta receives large funds, there are still not enough resources to properly cover the needs of the city in relation to the arrival of foreigners in its territory, especially when it comes to their reception.

'Do you see anything positive in the fact that Moroccans can now enter the CETI? - To be honest, I understand that they have to come in, but there will come a time when everything will collapse. We have a problem, because we don't reach all the people. We have a problem because in the end we don't reach all the people who have to arrive, who enter the CETI (...) We don't have enough infrastructure, that's the only problem' (5).

Since the opening of the CETI in 2000, complaints about its conditions of overcrowding have been systematically exposed, either as a claim in reports advocating for better conditions in the

reception of migrants, or as a problem that the city has to deal with in news. Its capacities were enlarged in order to accommodate more people in 2004, going from 480 to 512, but this did not prevent the installation of additional modules and tents that have had to be set up on a regular basis. The regularity of this lack of space in the centre could be merged with Ferrer-Gallardo and Gabrielli's argument when they state that the arrivals of people in Ceuta is, despite the attempts to stop them, structural to the city (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b). Therefore, considering the funds that the city receives, the fact that the resources available are still considered insufficient in 2024 suggests that this shortage is part of the strategy followed in Ceuta to manage its migration.

This same critique of shortfall is highlighted when addressing the resources that are set up for the reception of minors. Before 2021, there was just one reception centre, and in May that year, when lots of youngsters entered the city, their reception was chaotic out of the lack of resources. Since then, at least 4 centres have opened, but they are still overcrowded and one of the workers states that she thinks they would not be enough for dealing with something similar.

'It is true that with minors it was very different and it was chaotic. It is true that maybe we had it easier, we work with adults, we have the CETI (...) It's just that there was no infrastructure. We at least had the CETI, there was something' (5).

'And would you say that since then the fabric has become more solid in terms of minors? - I think that if the same thing happens again we are not prepared'. (5)

Although both systems are deemed as scarce, the reception of minors is different from the ones for adults, both in terms of the legislation behind them and their main bodies of management and funding. While the CETI belongs to the national Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration and it is this institution the one that controls its economic resources, the reception of minors is managed by the delegation for minors of the government of Ceuta, which locally channels the funding it gets, apparently getting many resources from the EU.

'I don't know, here I do know that there is a lot of money being spent (from the EU). Here there is a lot of money with Morocco and with the autonomous city itself. The management of the reception of migrant minors involves a lot of money' (2).

Even though these two reception structures relate to different levels of governance, the logics that can be extracted from the comments regarding both match pieces of theorisation that have been built in border studies. There is a body of literature that states how the securitisation of borders entails investment in humanitarian structures that are supposed to take care about human life and therefore justify border management as something that is not as deadly and hurtful as its control measures can be (REF). While many scholars do criticise this humanitarian logic as another part of the same

damaging structure as securitisation, Ticktin highlights the principle underlying it of governing through "crisis" as one of the most problematic ones (Ticktin, 2015). This way, the structures that are put in place to deal with migration are based on contingent situations, as something extraordinary that needs immediate and unplanned action, instead of being organised ahead and taking into account mobility as a constant element and not a concrete emergency (*ibid*). The fact that resources in Ceuta are proved insufficient, and this insufficiency is not addressed by reinforcing them but rather described as continuous "critical" moments aligns perfectly with the dynamic that Ticktin highlights.

'To tell the real story. I mean, there are a lot of people working on migration, but we are going around like a chicken with its head cut off. Why? Because we haven't taken the time to stop and check what is really needed' (7).

However, while the management of migration that is governed at the national level is understood as negligent and their ruling administrations as not accessible, the significant investment that the delegation for minors gets at the local level has been described as something that fosters the willingness of the administration to be open to dialogue and transformative suggestions.

'The only ones that are open to talk to us on the part of the administration is the area of minors. I also understand that because it is in their interest, I mean, it is not only an interest of ours, but also a message that the City Council is doing well, because in the end it is a lot of money that comes for the management of the reception of minors' (2).

With this previous quote, it seems that the administration at the local level is somehow more accessible and open for dialogue than at the national one, but it is also suggested that this is motivated by their need to report their good management of the received funds from the European Union. In contrast, this same organisation that exposes their attempts for dialogue state that those resources that are ruled at the national level have never been open for conversation so far.

V.II.II. CONTENTION

This observed difference between the local and the national level of governance, and the dynamic of big investments and not enough resources or solutions for reported problems could be understood as a proof of the strategies of bordering in the city. Several scholars working on Ceuta and Melilla have stated that the national and supranational levels of migration management use the enclaves as places of contention rather than reception (López-Sala in Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018a).

'Here there is aid for MENAS, for immigrants... because this is not financed by the city, it is financed by European funds, money so that they can contain these people, take care of them and so on'. (1)

In this previous quote, the word "contain" is explicitly used to describe the objectives of the funds that the migration apparatus received in Ceuta. This aim of contention, reviewed in the context chapter, could be arguably related to two of the realities mentioned in the interviews. First, the shortage of already existing resources could reinforce the narratives on the exceptional nature of migration flows, which constantly pressure and challenge the city that can never be adapted to their reception. By reinforcing these discourses, the deployment of deterrence mechanisms and higher militarisation is activated. Second, this function of contention seems to motivate the lack of creation of resources that do not yet exist, even if needed given the social reality of the city, as they would be enabling settlement in the city.

'The CETI is financed by concerted action for international protection and humanitarian reception. But here there cannot be protection housing as such, there cannot be (...) because in the end, this is a totally different reality from one in which you want to include a person in society (...) Nor shelters, of which there should be at least one, because people cannot be expelled from the CETI because they are left in a street situation. But I don't think that shelters can be set up because otherwise people wouldn't go to the CETI, they would go to the shelter' (7)

On the one hand, the above quote shows that the resources set up in Ceuta are mainly aimed at providing temporary assistance to people who arrive, rather than responding to other settlement needs. On the other hand, the quote makes it clear that resources other than the structure of temporary reception and migration management are not desired. This idea coincides with the assertions of some scholars who claim that institutions such as the CETI are mainly tools for controlling migration flows and ensuring that national interests in migration management are met (Andersson, 2014).

'Things don't work the same way here as they do on the mainland. They have many more options, many more tools to be able to deal with different problems that have to do with immigrants. Both legally and in terms of housing... There are many more. (1)

The principles governing Ceuta and the rest of the Spanish state seem to differ, as the mainland is understood as being more prepared and resourceful when it comes to the presence of foreigners. The extract above belongs to an interview in which the social educator states that in the mainland there are more alternatives: not only more reception centres, but also protection housing, shelters, supervised flats for minors who turn 18… which allow organisations to find additional resources for people when a principal fails for whatever reason.

Holding on to the issue of unaccompanied minors who turn 18, the local and the national governments seem to complement each other. While the delegation for minors seems to be doing a better job, in the words of my participants, by at least assessing certain needs that organisations present, their job stops once people are legally understood as adults. At that moment, it is the national

level that begins to be responsible for these people, and there it is where the assistance and resources fall short.

'In Ceuta there are no emancipation flats (...) The area of minors is for minors. And if you are over 18, well, it is not interesting, because it is really an 'efecto llamada', because... because it is not convenient (...) There is no will, not in Ceuta, I tell you, but at the state level' (5).

The workers from an organisation that works with minors highlight how their treatment differs significatively between Ceuta and the rest of Spain. In the above quote, the interviewee draws attention to the lack of needed services in Ceuta for when the foster children turn 18, and makes it a direct consequence of the migration management that the national government deploys. In the extract below, she describes that, apart from lacking resources within Ceuta, the children that are sheltered in the city also see their access to resources in the mainland hindered once they are no longer minors. By doing so, she accentuates the differential treatment that people who arrive in Ceuta get in comparison to those that arrive to the mainland, where their needs seem to be better covered by the public structure.

'What happens is that in Ceuta, it's the same, with minors in Ceuta it's not the same as on the mainland. That's why you meet many people in the street who tell me 'I get on a boat, I go to the mainland as a minor, I go to a flat and I can study, and when I turn 18, they send me to a supervised flat on the mainland'. Here in Ceuta, when you are 18 years old, you go to the street, and when you get to the mainland, since you don't belong to the Community of Madrid, you can't enter, and since you don't belong to the Junta de Andalucía, you can't pass. And then, you have far fewer possibilities than other children with the same profile on the mainland' (5).

Many organisations highlight the huge impact that the lack of resources has on the lives of young people for whom no plans are made after they turn 18 in Ceuta. Since 2022, the interviewed organisation number 3 has been managing, with its networks in the mainland, follow-up plans for these young people: the children in this project are trained while in the reception centres in Ceuta, and a job and accommodation are found on the mainland for the moment when the person has to leave the facilities for minors. Although this practice has been very well received and the organisation is trying to expand the programme, it has not yet been able to cover more than a few cases.

Going back to the *efecto llamada* mentioned before is highly relevant, as it appears in every interview as a principle governing the migration issues in the city. According to the statements of the interviewees, Ceuta's regulations differ from those in the mainland, and these differences are caused by the intention, presumably from the national government, of actively avoiding more people to come to the city. That way, the logic of contention does not only refer to the management of the flows of

people that are transferred to the rest of Spain, but also to the practices that try to shield the city from potential immigrants.

'On the mainland it is much easier for you to marry a Moroccan and soon after you can do the family reunification, bring your mother or your mother-in-law. In the case of Ceuta it is not, because of the proximity they tell you that it is an 'efecto llamada'. That's the word that defines it all, 'we don't do this because it's efecto llamada'' (1)

These practices that are designed under the principle of avoiding the *efecto llamada*, far from being centred in the control of the physical borders of the city, are mainly found in bureaucratic and administrative procedures. Thus, the influence of this logic can be observed in obstacles to access certain resources or the higher amount of documentation that is required for certain processes to be undertaken in the enclaves in comparison with the rest of the country.

V.II.III. EXCEPTIONALITY

Managing migration prioritising the avoidance of an *efecto llamada*, is related to what scholars have already analysed as a state of exceptionality that Ceuta, as well as Melilla, are embedded in (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2018b). This exceptionality, that stems from the conditions that have been exposed in the contextualisation chapter, especially its particularities within the Schengen agreement, are supposed to justify and legitimise an arena in which legislation and political decisions can be made without full alignment with national standards.

'Ceuta, although it is part of the Schengen area, is an exception, and this means that there are certain legal circumstances that mean that, for example, we have two borders, a physical border and a bureaucratic border at the port, which is what conditions the freedom of movement of people arriving in the city. This also means that there are certain exceptions that are not so regulated, illegal, which means that, for example, people cannot register in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla and cannot access the regularisation of basic rights' (8).

One of the most relevant aspects from these exposed dynamics is, as this quote explains, the limitations and difficulties that surround the registration in Ceuta's administration.

'This happens in Ceuta and Melilla and it is exclusive here. In all Spanish cities you can register only with your passport, you don't need to be in a regular situation to do so. Well, here you have to have a visa that allows you to be in a regular situation or you have to have a regular residence card or be a person with asylum. In other words, you have to be legal to be able to register. The excuse of the Ceuta and Melilla administrations is that since the border had an agreement with Morocco in which people could enter and leave during the day, if they could, everyone would register' (2)

The requirements that impede access to the census are aimed at preventing people living and working in Morocco from deceiving the administration and taking economic advantage of the autonomous city. An apparent major concern in Ceuta, due to its proximity to Morocco and the freer mobility that residents from the surrounding areas of the neighbouring country can enjoy, is the possible registration in the census of Moroccans who do not live in Ceuta. Registration as residents of the enclaves would ensure access to certain benefits, such as economic subsidies, which would be abused by people whose livelihoods develop in Morocco in ways that the Spanish administration would not be aware of (Calderón-Vázquez *et al.*, 2022). However, besides this - which happens in many cases anyway (*ibid*) - the lack of registration leaves many people living in Ceuta without access to basic services such as healthcare or education (Sahraoui, 2023).

'Not only talking about recent migrants, for example, you have here the neighbourhood of El Príncipe, and in the end, second and third generation, all the migration and all the lack of resources has made a big damage for future generations (...) I had a lot of children who lived in Ceuta and they could not go to school when education is a fundamental right, because they had no papers and they could not go to school' (1)

Since registration is a fundamental requirement for accessing services and social rights, the barriers to it become discriminatory tools that reproduce social inequality for people with a foreign background (Fernández, 2020). Procedures such as this, that affect mainly people who are settled in Ceuta or spend a significant time in the city, are based on the same logics of exceptionality that also govern the rights of people who are transiting the city with the objective of reaching other places in Spain or the European Union. The main right that is subjected to changes and unclarity is that of free movement. As seen in the contextualisation, the proof of having an asylum procedure open has been accepted and denied as a valid document at the border checks when getting to the mainland, and the time of waiting for resources to be mobilised through the structures of protection is always unknown. However, access to healthcare, to the asylum procedure or other basic resources are also at stake. Additionally, being able to register in a Spanish census could be used in future claims for regularisation as a proof of time of residence in the country. As this registration is not possible in Ceuta without being regularised first, the time spent in the city does not count for future procedures. For this reason, many organisations talk about administrative or bureaucratic repression as one of the main tools of border violence deployed in the city - as well as in Melilla - (de Armas et al. 2024).

'An important aspect is the administrative issues. In Calais, or on the Balkan route, there is a lot of violence, also from the police, a lot of visible violence. Here there is no such visible violence, but there is administrative violence, I think. So there is administrative discrimination'. (4)

The administrative discrimination that the previous quote refers to has an additional aspect that makes its reach wider and its defeat harder, as stated by some of the organisations interviewed. Due to the exposed arena of exceptionalism and the narratives that still make Ceuta a place in danger where human mobility needs to be stopped and contended, bureaucratic procedures, legislation and practices are in constant re-adaptation to the reality of the moment and the tensions that arise between border control and humanitarian claims.

'Then also the specificity of Ceuta, which is not a Schengen area, which is a border, is like a ticking time bomb (...) It is a context that is in constant change on the part of the administration and that tries to readapt itself to avoid what they call the Call Effect (...) You are fighting something that you have not yet finished fixing when you are going to have to fight against something completely different (...) The administration is simply in a position of rejection, so it is readapting itself all the time' (2).

'One obstacle that is more of a reality is that many things change, the migratory reality (...) things change a lot here very quickly, so... how to say, to propose a project with everything defined is very difficult, you have to be open to changes (...) Most of them are changes in administration (...) it is always something administrative'. (4)

The reality that these comments expose is also further evidence of what border studies literature covers when scholars explain the dynamic aspect of the border regime. Every practice that challenges border control, either deployed by people on the move who find ways to circumvent it or by CSOs that fight its procedures, is met with updated and intensified border repression.

Something that has been changing significantly during the months prior to my arrival in Ceuta, was the normative that regulates access to the *CETI*. Until this year, 2024, the *CETI* was open for every foreign adult entering in Ceuta irregularly but for Moroccans. This procedure, justified as something to avoid, once again, the *efecto llamada*, left many Moroccan adults in the street, which had been something deemed as problematic in Ceuta for many years. Apparently, this changed some months before my arrival, although the reasons were not known nor have been found during my desk-research.

"That's because of the so-called 'call effect' at the end. That's why there is this... everybody talks about it so loosely now, and that's why it was said that Moroccans could not enter the CETI, unless they had a protection interview, but that has changed, also because there were a lot of people on the street" (7).

Nowadays that Moroccans do have access to the CETI, they can do so under certain regulations, which are still in the process of getting defined.

'Also access to the CETI. All non-Spanish people can enter the CETI, all foreigners, except those from Morocco, who have to prove not only their nationality but also a situation of vulnerability. That cannot be whichever one, it can only be the one that the Ministry of Inclusion determines, which are being very old, having an illness, being a single mother, being an applicant for international protection. This has been the case for the last 3 months, because until now Moroccans could simply not enter. Now at least those who can prove that (...) but now they don't know what document they have to provide, because before the appointment was enough, now they say no, that it has to be the receipt of having formalised the interview..... And it's constantly changing, you know' (2).

Both the differential treatment of people's access to the CETI on the basis of their nationality, without consideration of their common needs for shelter and protection, and the rapid changes in its rules would not be possible in contexts where the rule of law operates normally. The deployment of these practices depends to a large extent on the legitimacy that the condition of exceptionality gives to the border regime and how it unfolds in Ceuta.

V.II.IV. MIGRANTISATION & DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION

The restricted access to the *CETI* is probably the most obvious example of what some of the organisations exposed as a problem that was, in their opinion, not sufficiently reported or talked about. They observed a particular discrimination towards Moroccans over people on the move from other nationalities, which seems to be connected to the prominence of the *efecto llamada* in the management of human mobility in the city.

'They could not enter the CETI at the time, because of the so-called efecto llamada - that is, the efecto llamada sometimes affects Moroccans a little more - Yes, yes, it is only for Morocco' (7).

Administrative barriers as the access to the *CETI* was linked, by some of the informants, to strong prejudices describing Moroccans as smart profiteers and liars, who would come just across the border to take advantage of the Spanish system without a real need. This, as the next quote exposes, could be easily understood under the historical, colonial and geopolitical backgrounds that several scholars have analysed regarding Ceuta and notions of Spanishood and its relation to Morocco and the Arab world (Espiñeira, 2013; Gazzotti, 2023). A strong identity formation in opposition to that of the Moroccan would be then merged with the fear of getting attacked by a country that claims the territory of the city as theirs, where there is already a significant part of the population with Moroccan origins.

'The discrimination suffered by Moroccans who come seeking protection just because they are neighbours from the other side of the border. I mean, what we talked about before, the fear that the people of Ceuta have of an invasion, of a green march, of being deprived of their privileges for living

in Ceuta and so on, means that society and the administration here have an enormous racist prejudice against Moroccans. So this makes the people who come to Ceuta from Morocco be completely unprotected (...) And it is not only that, I mean, part of the collectives that work here with people on the move also have this prejudice against the Moroccan who is sneaky (...) It's not that we work very well with other nationalities, but well, that is an added discrimination' (2).

The above quote and the discrimination it describes show the different forms that racism can take at the Moroccan-Spanish border. Although the border regime in Ceuta subjects every darker body - in comparison of the assumed Spanish whiteness - to surveillance and restriction, it produces what Tazzioli calls migrant multiplicities (Tazzioli, 2020). In this production, skin colour merges with the prejudices that depict the Moroccan as the opposite other of the Spanish who is always trying to get Spain's territory and resources. Thus, the figures of the Moroccan Arab and the black African - normally referred to as sub-saharan in Ceuta - are significantly separated, probably also influenced by the racist structures that already project otherness and darkness onto black Africans in Morocco.

Although Moroccans now can access the centre and are therefore more protected from being in the streets as they were before, one organisation states how, nevertheless, their access to the asylum system is hindered. Apparently, the website through which appointments were made was hacked during some months, asking for lots of money to get an appointment with the asylum office. Therefore, while people inside the CETI could get the procedure started through the centre's lawyer, Moroccans needed that appointment in order to get in, leaving them in a vulnerable position towards people with lucrative interests.

'Sub-Saharans have been given preferential treatment. The door to the CETI has been opened to them, they have no problems with the residence permit (...) Moroccans are left in a street situation if they are older. Minors go directly to a reception centre, but if they are older, they stay on the street. They say 'just as you came across the border, you go back, your country is next door'' (1).

When addressing the situation of children arrived in Ceuta in relation to the rest of the Spanish state, research participants state that barriers to find alternative resources for Moroccan kids are also present in the mainland:

'Racism towards Moroccan children here is deadly. I mean, there are centres that have told me 'no, we only take sub-Saharans (...) "We don't want Moroccans because they are very conflictive"' (5).

This double standard that is exposed by the interviewees could be understood under literature on the construction of migration and the figure of the migrant, in which scholars state that border management creates different categories in which people are put depending on certain systems of value (Espiñeira, 2013). Additionally, literature on logics of humanitarianism comes also as useful

when showing how humanitarian claims are usually based on certain ideas of the deserving migrant opposed to the one that holds the meanings of threat and danger (Ticktin, 2025). In this case, the Moroccan, who also embodies political struggles between Morocco and Spain, would be that who is a risk to the city, while the black african would be seen as a more legitimate receptor of aid, also stripped of their agency to carry mostly ideas of pity. Undoubtedly, matters of islamophobia are also present in the direct discrimination towards Moroccans and their depiction as the Spanish' main "other", although they have not been as salient during our fieldwork.

This sort of layered discrimination could also be linked with the fact that, towards black bodies, it is Moroccan authorities that deploy the highest repression in order to constrain their mobility towards Spanish land (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Therefore, there is a rejection that has already been activated at the other side of the border, filtering people arriving and deploying othering mechanisms over them. Meanwhile, it is only in Ceuta that Moroccans are migranticised and it is only there that they are susceptible of getting filtered and deterred, which fosters their depiction as risky in order to promote higher securitisation. The black body could be then, as an opposition to the fierceness suffered on the previous pathway, a direct subject of the humanitarian industry that humanises the European border. (Johnson & Jones, 2018)

Even if these differencing dynamics were exposed, this layered discrimination does not seem to take away a general ambience of racism, as reported by the CSOs, that permeates both society in general and the administration.

'There is a lot of racism in the street, well, and in the institutions too, obviously (...) There are institutions, organisations or individuals who express it directly or there are others who simply discriminate you, you know? Not against me, but against the person I accompany (...) This fear that they have of the border and of losing their privileges here in Ceuta and all that, permeates in a personal way, well, they are people, of course, all their work in the administration' (2).

In the above quote, the informant describes a discriminatory treatment for the person she accompanies, without specifying differences between that person having Moroccan or other African origin, as she's comparing them to her - a white Spanish woman - and the rest of Spanish citizens. When the comparison is made with the national white citizen, both Moroccans and black Africans seem to stand out as the migranticised other and be treated as such. When they get individual treatment, or are "sorted out" by the border regime in different groups among themselves, the meanings attached to their skin and origin are revealed as differential.

A general ambience of rejection is also not surprising given the definition of Ceuta as a Spanish border city. The strong presence of Spanish symbols and institutions that praise nationalism

(Sahraoui, 2023), and the discourses that place the city at risk of Moroccan forces and an invasion of foreigners can easily enhance a position of defensiveness.

"We knew that normally, because it is a border city, there is an attitude of fear that gives rise to a certain hostility (...) A generalised response from society that still prevents them from understanding that they are the same as us (...) It is understood that it is still complicated because the idiosyncrasy of the city itself is complicated, and this complexity is transferred to the migrant population and is detected, but we have to fight" (8).

Although some of the organisations highlight the solidarity of Ceuta's population, this environment of racism is portrayed as one of the main obstacles on the way of creating an environment where the rights of foreigners are respected and guaranteed, also when looking at the national level.

'There are still many barriers and we are trying to ensure that their rights are respected, that they are able to exercise their rights... but well, we find barriers everywhere or in the country, even in the country, a lot of prejudice, a lot of racism' (5).

This ambience of rejection has also been portrayed as causing certain isolation to foreigners during their time in the city. While the administration has been called on their discriminatory actions against people of Moroccan origin, there are still strong logics of separation and racism that make black people the target of bigotry from many different societal groups.

'There is a lot of racism on many sides. The Christian with the Muslim, the Muslim with the Christian, with the immigrant...' (5).

Therefore, although people from black Africa are supposed to have their access to services more guaranteed than Moroccans, the social conditions of their reception seem to reinforce the promoted temporariness with detachment from the rest of the city. These descriptions provided by the CSOs match the dynamics that could be observed during the first week in the field:

'These people don't really have any relationship with the rest of the city, you know? I don't know, the city doesn't interact with them and they don't interact with the city' (1)

'There are a lot of barriers. The other day we did an activity that said 'make the map of Ceuta' (...) And then it came out very simple: Go through the border, I get to the CETI, from the CETI I go to the police, from the police I go back to the CETI, I go to the hospital, back to the CETI, I come to 8, back to the CETI, I go for a walk on the beach, and not much more. They don't really mix much in the city either because they don't feel welcome' (8)

Literature has analysed how reception centres are normally placed at the outskirts of cities, already prompting a separation and the invisibilisation of those who are hosted there (Gazzotti, 2023). As Agier states in his analysis of camps, these institutions also work in a way in which people are actively portrayed as displaced and uprooted, which serves to reduce them to their identity as irregularised migrants (Agier, 2016). These dynamics, merged with the temporality of their presence within the city and the racist logics that pervade it, provide a rationale for the lack of contact that has been described.

V.II.V. SURVEILLED ADVOCACY

These practices of administrative and social discrimination seem to translate in a lack of advocacy that is deemed general when talking about the general population, but also reported as something that defines the activity of CSOs.

'Here in Ceuta people don't mobilise because of migration. The people live here, the people are here, the citizens are here, and that's it. Migration... We have all been migrants at some point, but it seems that we have no historical memory' (5)

When referring to the society in general, there are several people that do anyhow emphasise that solidarity is a strong feature of Ceuta's population, ready to gather money or necessary items, as well as to mobilise when there are more critical episodes, as the one in 2021, when so many people entered the city. In one of the reports made, organisations highlighted how the reception of children by local families was much more effective and decent way of reception than the one organised by the public services (Maakum et al., 2021). However, this solidarity does not seem to translate in a political mobilisation for the rights of foreigners to be guaranteed and respected.

'(Talking about defending the rights of people on the move) It has to be done, as it is done in Ceuta. There is nothing else, but it has to be done. - And the way it is done in Ceuta is... - Pfff, not doing it. (...) It is true that, for example, when there was this massive influx of people, they went out of their way to help, to look for space (...) But then it is true that you say, why don't we demonstrate so that the Spanish government makes more investment, or makes visas, or safe-conducts so that people can come and go?' (7)

This same logic was visible in the interview with the local woman who organised solidarity actions with her neighbours. Although she was highlighting not only the activities she had been a part of but a general ambience of solidarity in the city, when at some point I asked if she would consider herself as an advocate or defender of people's rights, she said:

'Let's see, I don't defend them. I can help them, yes, but I can't defend them, because I don't know their situation either, you understand? I give him the sandwich, whatever he is or isn't... I can't defend

him because I don't know who he is. Defender of human rights... we would have to see who the human being is, which is not what interests me either. Because I'm telling you, if I have to give him a sandwich, I'm going to give it to him' (local woman)

The extract above exposes quite clearly a disconnection between solidarity and assistance to those in need and the defence of their social rights. Following critiques that have been done to principles of humanitarianism which appeal to compassion with political neutrality (Schindel, 2017), the discourse of this woman who has been visiting and providing food and other items to people on the move in street situations leaves aside any claim for their rights to be respected and guaranteed. While solidarity is assured, their social rights seem to be conditional on who they are and what they have done. This logic is in line with the principle of deservingness that drives the protection offered by humanitarian border regimes (Ticktin, 2015).

Focusing back on the lack of involvement of CSOs in advocacy, the reasons given in the interviews seem to vary. Overall, there is a very visible logic in which the organisations whose activities are wholly or partly directed towards advocacy are independently financed. Additionally, the people who founded them were not born and raised in Ceuta, but arrived there precisely for the purpose of demanding fairer treatment for people on the move.

'The people who work here for migrants' rights are almost always outsiders, even if we work in collectives (...) most of the people who come here to do advocacy, that is, not direct assistance, but advocacy to change policies, are not from here. So we are all rejected in the professional vision we have of the issue, as if to say 'you don't understand, you haven't lived through an invasion, this can't be managed like this'' (2).

In the above extract, it is stated that the same condition of being a foreigner is sometimes deemed as invalid when judging and making claims on the way migration is handled in the city, which at some point could suggest that the socialisation that takes place in Ceuta itself could interact with the predisposition of its population to claim for the rights of people in migratory projects - although there is not enough information to state this clearly -. What seems clear, is that a presence that is openly politicised and confronting the border regime is not very well received by many different local actors.

'We are not accepted. We are allowed because everything we do is legal. We try not to do anything illegal, we ask for permits and... I mean, we try not to be offensive in the sense of people who are at the level of government, but we defend rights that everyone knows are being violated. So what this does is to have an attitude of saying... 'well, with them, be careful'. But not only from the government, but also institutions that to a certain extent depend on the government, such as associations that depend on subsidies and things like that' (8).

According to the interviews, the lack of advocacy among CSOs also seems to be directly linked with the way receiving public funding restricts the freedom that organisations have when considering raising their voices. Although it has already been proven and theorised that many CSOs' motivations and activities are just not politicised or directed towards advocacy work, it is relevant to present the potential significance of certain logics that were exposed:

'In Ceuta there are at least eight organisations that work with migrants, and none of them are in the circle of silence. It should be said that in this sense, we feel that the government does not applaud that. On the other hand, as we do not receive subsidies from them (...) they cannot attack us in this sense either, as they have done with some associations in Ceuta, taking away their subsidies so that they have had to close down. This has already been done' (8)

These circles of silence that are mentioned in the above quote are monthly small demonstrations that are undertaken in a public space of the streets of Ceuta. These organised protesting events are apparently only attended by the organisation that runs them and another one, but never count on the presence of the rest of the CSOs present in the city.

The organisation that they refer to when stating that the government has already taken action against those who confront was mentioned in other interviews, and seems to be a case well known among the CSOs in the city. Interestingly, this organisation whose funding was taken away was not portrayed at any point as too radical, although their involvement in the city's mobilisations appears in a paper covering civil society's contestation in Ceuta (Perelló & Lacomba, 2020). Apparently, they had created, among other services, a schooling system to provide education to those children that fell out of the public structure. When asking further for the reasons that were presented as the justification for cutting off their funds, people told me there were none declared.

'It seems that if you make demands, you are bothering them, and if you are bothering them, maybe they want to take me away (...) Here it is accentuated. Of course it happens to the third sector because in the end we depend on what we depend on, but there are other places where if you have to say certain things, you say them' (7).

It seems clear among CSOs in Ceuta that those organisations who are mainly financed by public funds are prone to deploy a more compliant attitude, or at least avoid publicly confronting the work of the administration and security forces. However, the workers of these organisations are not seen as the only ones responsible for this attitude, but rather caught in a logic in which mechanisms of control have incited the fear of seeing their fundings cut and thus losing their jobs. This dynamic fits in perfectly with Gazzotti's theorisations about humanitarian organisations, whose capacities of action in the field are closely controlled by the State that finances them to heal the violence produced by its institutions (Gazzotti, 2021).

These logics of fear of speaking up match perfectly with what has been said, mainly during my informal interviews, about the sensation of surveillance that prevails in Ceuta. At least 3 people who have been involved in movements or actions openly opposed to border control and its administrative management have told me that they have been questioned by authorities many times, learning that they have to maintain a low profile if they want to keep being present in the city. These statements are not surprising, due to the size of the city, its isolated condition, and the size in terms of employers and investment of the border control apparatus.

'There is something that happens here too, and that is that if I have my leisure time with you, that you are from that place over there that doesn't interest me, then it also influences my work life. My personal life also affects my professional life because, in the end, everyone sees you here' (7).

'There is a lot of fear because the government controls everything, because people here are very traditional and so there is a lot of fear that at any moment you could lose your job (...) I mean, there really is an impressive poverty when it comes to advocacy. Well, not even when it comes to advocacy, when it comes to relating to each other' (8).

The first extract that is quoted provides a more general description of the sense of lack of privacy that can be experienced in Ceuta due mainly to its size. The worker that exposes it feels its materialisation when she notices that things she does, or people she frequents during her free and private time, are somehow known and have consequences in the relations with the people she works with. When combined with the second one, in which governmental control is highlighted, it becomes clear that there are certain dynamics in the social tissue of the city that can give a feeling of needed caution with what one does and the potential consequences it can have in their workplace. Funding cuts and surveillance have been theorised, among other tactics, as strategies through which the State shrinks spaces for civil society constestation (della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021).

Additionally, those organisations whose funding comes from the public institutions, especially those who depend on the national government, work hand in hand with the administration and authorities in many of their activities. Therefore, it has been stated that participating in certain advocacy actions would also bring an uncomfortable position of conflict within their work, as suggested in the next quote. Again, Gazzotti's work on humanitarian NGOs backs up these allegations, as she exposes how organisations often need to compromise advocacy for their presence in the field, as being too salient as advocates can hinder their vital relationships with authorities (Gazzotti, 2021).

"In the Tarajal march, there are no organisations there. There are some, but the large entities are not there, and they are only defending safe routes (...) There were more people from outside who came precisely to the march (...) The entities are not there because those who have been there all their lives,

well, there is also a political issue that in the end the Guardia Civil was involved, and what, are you going to stand up against them? Because at the end of the day, you're pointing the finger". (7)

This extract rounds off the strong influence that the authorities of the border regime can have on civil society organisations. The work of those who are more closely linked to the public institutions of the state may find their actions constrained by the protection of their main economic livelihood, as well as by their relations with the authorities, which are necessary for their presence in the field. This last part brings us to the next subsection, which examines these relationships between actors.

V.II.VI. ALLIANCES AND FRICTIONS AMONG ACTORS

Delving deeper in the networking structures from the previous quote, it has been seen in the interviews that the way in which organisations work among themselves and with other actors changes from one to the other, as well as their assessment of how those connections function. However, there are certain similarities that can be drawn.

Firstly, it is relevant to note that establishing networks with Morocco is not at all common among the organisations present in Ceuta. This comes up as rather surprising, due to the interconnection between Morocco and Spain when managing Ceuta's borders. Some of the organisations that provide direct assistance to people on the move see themselves more detached from what happens in the Moroccan side, especially now that the borders are closed to people without visas. However, some of the organisations have had an operational contact with people in the neighbouring country at some point, and two of them still value the importance of having a network in Morocco.

'With Morocco right now we are doing a round of collectives, because when I arrived there was no one to talk to, and what we are interested in above all is to look for collectives that can inform us when there has been a violation of rights in which Spain is involved (...) and like that we can reach people, provide support and get their testimony if they want to share it' (4).

'The follow-up of some of the cases is eased by the fact that the worker is Moroccan, and so has direct connections to the country and specific knowledge about how things work there. This gives the possibility of contacting families, accessing to administrative documents that are needed in Spain from back home, and to provide the kids or youngsters with a more holistic support' (notes from interview with 3)

In these two quotes, we can see that transnational work brings a better ground both for advocacy work for human rights guarantees and the provision of a more effective assistance. In the first case, establishing a contact between people at both sides of the border gives the opportunity to track better how this border is managed, and support people despite the restrictions to their mobility.

In the second one, understanding and having access to the social and bureaucratic tissue of both countries gives the opportunity of supporting people in the continuity of their mobility. Recalling the ideas of Abdelmalek Sayad, one does not become an immigrant of somewhere without becoming an emigrant from their origin country (Sayad, 1999), and these practices of transnational work in a borderzone like Ceuta help reconcile and follow up the needs that come from that complexity.

Coming back to Ceuta, the feeling of lacking a more solid or articulated structure seems to be shared by three of the interviewed CSOs.

"There is very little associative network, in the end there is little real sense of community intervention, or social intervention for that matter. It is more of an individualised assistance (...) So I think that this really makes the associative fabric almost non-existent (8).

When trying to explain why this happens, some relate it to the same logics of governmental control that were highlighted in the previous section, stating that they hinder a more organic cooperation among CSOs. There is one informant, who used to work in the mainland before arriving in Ceuta, who explicitly states that the way funding is distributed and managed in the city forges an environment of competitiveness in which assuring one's job is more prioritised than a predisposition to cooperate with others.

'If we work with the dynamics here, working in a network is complicated (...) What we talked about at the beginning: it's a cake, we're going to split it and why you have more than me, and don't even think about putting the icing on it all of a sudden (...) Then there is also a monopoly here... when you try to get in there, it's like 'no, this is already being done by these people', but several of us can do it, as if there were not people who need attention, and dignified attention' (7).

However, organisations do work together, especially those with similar activities, motivations or structures. It is openly reported in the interviews that organisations in Ceuta that have a clear aim of advocating and are trying to foster political changes do work together, as it can be also seen in their collective publications of reports (Maakum et al., 2021). On another note, all CSOs seem to have operational relations when working with the same profiles of people or in similar projects, either as official collaborations, ways of keeping up with the latest regulations that affect them or referring cases to each other.

'Well, we have more contact with organisations that work with people living on the street (...) We know that if they meet people who may need this service, they send us these people (...) if there are people who need a shower, laundry and now also a night shelter, they call us, they tell us these things' (4)

This type of collaboration is presented by almost every interviewed organisation, as their work does overlap with others even if they develop it with different objectives. Drawing on this overlap, one of the CSOs prompted a relevant mechanism of fostering networking some months before my arrival in the field. This organisation was run mainly by volunteers until they hired a professional lawyer in order to have a stronger strategy for their advocacy. It was this lawyer who, seeing that there was not a common structure of cooperation, started contacting CSOs in Ceuta and the mainland to organise a *mesa de protección [literal translation]* - a series of meetings in which all organisations are present to discuss the encountered problems and find common solutions -. When contacting the UNHCR in Spain, they asked to run the organisation of this *mesa de protección*, and since then, a worker from the UNHCR is present in Ceuta once a month to conduct these meetings with every organisation that is in contact with mobile people - 16 in total -. It is relevant to note that this type of collective work was initiated by one of the organisations that arrived later in Ceuta, and that it was the UNHCR delegation in Spain the body that asked to be, and feature as, responsible for it. This could be linked to their wider access to informative, legal and human resources, which makes them more capable of organising something like the *mesa de protección*, but it could also be read as an interest of appearing as the body that fosters good practices related to the mobility and reception of potential and actual asylum seekers. Regarding the date as to which this mechanism was set up, one of the interviewees highlighted it as a proof of a general lack of cooperation, as she thinks this should have been thought of before.

"Now there is a meeting where we talk about needs, and now one of them is the issue of the electoral register (...) What happens is, is it today, 7 May 2024, that we start to work on that? To get people together for that?" (7)

Nevertheless, this recently assembled instrument seems to open up the floor for further collective organisation. One of the interviewed associations, though, raised an obstacle when referring to this *mesa de protección,* namely the attitude towards institutional actors and the relationship with them.

'There are some limitations to the networking among organisations, due to their different views and approaches. They deem institutional participation vital, and confrontation as an added obstacle that hinders needed collaboration, while other organisations are more confrontational' (notes from interview with 6).

This previous quote introduces an issue that is directly linked with what has been presented in the previous section concerning advocacy, and that brings into the analysis the different ways in which organisations relate to the institutional actors in Ceuta. Every organisation gets in contact with institutions and authorities at some point, given the nature of their activities. However, those that

work mainly with people on the move and do not receive public funding - 4 and 8 -, have less encounters with official bodies, and these stay linked to operational permits or occasional negotiations. Another organisation whose funding is independent - 2 -, does anyhow get in contact with the administration and the authorities following a strategy of open dialogue. Thus, they try to establish communication with the official body that is responsible for the situation they want to claim before taking further action. However, if this body - administration, police, guardia civil… - does not ease the communication or provide a solution, they do take legal action and contest it in their political claims.

'We have as a rule, before we start anything, that is, confronting, we try to have a dialogue first. So there are administrations with which dialogue is easier and is flowing. For example, the department for minors, from the first day, wanted to sit down with us and listened to what the children we were accompanying wanted to tell them (...) To a certain extent, it is a transforming relationship. That doesn't mean that if the department for minors, suddenly something happens and they don't see the need to act and we do, that doesn't mean that we won't take the corresponding legal action, but at least we try that route first' (2)

This same route of action is deployed by an organisation that does have public national funding while working with minors, who is not based in Ceuta but in the mainland. This organisation, which is the one in charge of finding future plans for when minors turn 18 in Ceuta, was behind a judicial procedure that stopped the devolutions of children to Morocco in 2021. Thus, their worker states that, although they have to work hand in hand with the department for minors of the city, they do not hesitate to take legal action against it if it is needed at some point - this approach to advocacy will be tackled more in depth in the last section of the analysis -.

'They have to be in close contact with the administration and it is a rather good relationship, because they know the organisation is doing a good job and fosters collaboration. However they do not hesitate to take legal actions if something is not well done by the administration, they have no fear' (notes from interview with 3)

These organisations do state that they have a good relationship with the delegation of minors even if they take charges against them when needed. However, every person that has been involved in confronting actions with their organisation has described, especially during our informal conversations, that that has left them in a position in which they feel more surveillance and suspicion from authorities, who with relationships are then not that fluid. In short, it seems that it is easier to establish a good cooperation with the delegation that acts locally, but the contact with those institutions that depend on national governance is more conflicting.

Apart from the one presented in the previous quote, the rest of the organisations whose fundings come from public institutions do have a relationship with the administration and security forces that does not seem to have room for confrontation. These relations are depicted as positive and functional at both the local and national levels, although it is also indicated that this fluidity is connected to a certain degree of dependency. Additionally, those organisations which are bigger or have been working on migratory issues for a long time in Spain do mention their seniority and career as aspects that play a role in their eased relationships with official figures.

'Yes, on the part of minors, the collaboration is very good. And the same goes for us, at the end of the day we have been there for many years, this foundation does works very well, it has a very good reputation (...) It is true that even with the police, with the cases we have, that is why the collaboration has always been quite good (...) we have always tried to get along well, because at the end of the day, we all depend on each other' (5)

'There is a relationship because it is good for us to be with them, yes, good, because also, keep in mind that in our case we have been working for many years' (7).

This operational relationship was also portrayed by the person who worked for the aid agency that assists the authorities, who highlighted the good and humane work of the security forces. These allegations raise up a point of divergence when compared with the denunciations that advocates do in their discourses and reports. While the latter ones see the security forces in Ceuta as agents of repression and violence towards people on the move, their activity is portrayed as generally non-problematic by the organisations that work closer to them. This difference is of course related to the dynamics of funding and compliance that were previously exposed, but also to the different motivations and activities that organisations deploy. In actions aimed at providing direct assistance, the role of security forces is probably seen as less problematic, or having less impact than in those who have a more politicised aim targeting border management and what constitutes a violation of rights for mobile people. However, regarding border violence, it is worth analysing the multi-level governance of border control and how local communities perceive the distribution of responsibilities.

V.II.VII. MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

During two of my additional interviews, namely with the worker of the aid organisation and the historian, I felt there was a certain attitude of defensiveness surrounding their discourse about Ceuta. It was presented, especially in the first one, that the city did not have any problem with foreigners or human mobility, as it had been a historical feature of its idiosyncrasy. When asked about obstacles to their work in Ceuta, the aid organisation worker immediately answered defending the city against what he understood as prejudices that state that there is an anti-immigration environment. In his speech, he highlighted the role of Europe in how the border is managed.

'The fence is not ours, that is to say. Forgive me for going back to the anecdote, but I said once to a journalist from France Info:"look, you see that bit there on the left, well, that's yours". He says "it's the Bay of Ceuta". "No, no, honey, that piece is yours. This is paid for by the European Union and this is yours, this is not mine". We live with the fence, because well, it is there and we can neither remove it nor put it up, no, but for us immigration is not a problem. It is not. For the migrants when they arrive here, this is for them a plane carrier, they arrive in Ceuta and they leave because they can't do anything here, they can't work, they can't eat, they can't... It's not good. But the problem is not Ceuta and the fence, the problem is how Europe approaches immigration' (Aid worker)

This intervention requires unpacking. Firstly, there is an intention of neglecting certain problems that do take place in Ceuta regarding human mobility due to its specific history and characteristics. The multiple layers of racism that were previously described are not a product of Ceuta, but do unfold in the way they do because of the geopolitical situation of the city, the meanings that surround Spanish identity and the migrantisation dynamics produced by the bordering management of this specific territory. The weight of the right and the far right in Ceuta's assembly, with the anti-immigration discourses that characterises the latter, also show that there is a part of the city that does see migration as a problem (Ferrer-Gallardo & Gabrielli, 2022). However, his reference to the EU as a principal actor in how mobility is managed in the city, as well as how the border is set up, points to a factual reality. In his speech, though, Ceuta is portrayed as a separated territory that only hosts European funds and decisions rather than as part of the Union. In the interview with the historian, although with more complexity and nuance, he also highlighted the weight of the national and European governance on migration as the main problem Ceuta had to deal with.

One of the people I could meet and have a discussion about my research with, was a person who was working for the national government delegation in Ceuta. During our conversation, it became clear that not many decisions - almost none - can be made by the people who work for the local administration or the government delegation. It is instead the national government that gives directions that need to be implemented in the city. This can also be observed in the case of the previous government delegate that was removed from office after 2021 when devolutions of children to Morocco were denounced by some CSOs. Then, the national government stated that the delegate took some wrong decisions on her own, raising suspicion as to which extent this was really the case or they authorised it and did not want to take their responsibilities.

Drawing on this, Ceuta seems to be in a critical position, as its complexities as a Spanish city bordering North Africa are mainly managed by levels of governance that are not present in the territory. Border management, from passport controls to the patrolling of the fences are conducted by national security forces, either under the rule of the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Defense. Its legal regulations and bureaucratic procedures depend on the Ministry of Interior, and the management

of the CETI depends on the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration. Unless the reception of minors, everything related to human mobility is governed at the national level. However, it is the people in the field that have to undertake instructions, face their consequences and also appear in the media coverage of certain events. Even the CSOs that are closely related to the institutions seem to possibly be caught in similar logics. During an interview with the coordinator of one of the organisations that work in the *CETI*, she mentioned the procedure they took in May 2021, in which the CSOs had to wait for instructions before taking steps further.

'People say that the massive jump was very heavy (...) All the staff went up to the CETI to see what could be done and also to make themselves available to the Ministry, because in the end it is not only the entities, we are collaborators, collaborating entities. But the management is the Ministry's. In these cases you can't predispose yourself, you have to make yourself available' (7).

It is therefore this logic that is highlighted by some of the interviewees when talking about border violence. Next to the constraints that funding and institutional relations seem to pose to confrontational actions being taken, some actors present the argument that security forces are just implementing decisions taken by their superiors.

'The state forces in the end, the police, civil guards and so on, they have orders and in the end they say 'take this one' and so on, if not, you are going to pay the price, in the end everything comes from above. It's pure and simple politics, and that's what politics does, it plays with both sides' (5).

In this quote, it can also be seen that there is a separation in the discourse between the "political level" and the people who are implementing instructions. Although this worker provides a seemingly critical view on how migration is managed in a rather unfair way at the political level, she does not see those who are working for the State as responsible for the actions they comply with. Given that several organisations work hand in hand with the institutions, this logic could be read as a way to separate themselves from the harmful impacts that those same institutions have on the lives of people on the move. However, it could also be read as a way of describing their everyday work, in which they do not feel capable or with any chance of making changes on how things are dealt with.

'(talking about the administration) I think that in many cases the law has to change, because they always hide behind what the law says. So it is no longer the social fabric of Ceuta, or those in charge here, but it would be at the national level. I believe that each community, depending on its needs, should have a different framework' (1).

This worker describes how certain agents, namely CSOs and street-level bureaucrats, cannot really take actions outside of what laws and regulations state. She then highlights that changes need to be done at the national level, which is the one in charge of those regulations, but also that Ceuta

should have procedures that are specific to its context. When talking about how represented another worker sees CSOs in Ceuta at the national level, she states that certainly not enough, which reinforces a certain feeling of being "abandoned" by the rest of Spain.

"No, it is not as represented as it should... I don't think so. I don't think it is, I don't think that, in this case, I don't think it is represented at a national level, but it is not represented at all (...) And it is also noticeable in what we were talking about before, regarding the disconnection that the people here feel with the mainland, it is true" (7).

In this same line of thought, one worker highlights how Ceuta does not feel as part of Spain in some aspects and Spain does not take Ceuta into account more than to deploy some mechanisms of migrant contention. In her speech, she connects this not only to the way in which human mobility is lived or conceptualised by people in Ceuta, but also to the lack of proper services and reception towards the people who arrive themselves. Again, these consequences seem to be attributed to the way in which the national government deals with the city and its borders.

'Because here in Ceuta migration is something bad. - You have to take into account that Ceuta is not considered Spain, and I think that's one of the problems there too, isn't it? That Ceuta is like 'come on, these people are the ones who put up with this', such and such, I don't know what, a bit of a barrier... and a migrant who arrives in Ceuta is not really protected in the same way as a migrant who arrives in the mainland' (5).

Thus, it seems that there is a certain feeling of detachment between Ceuta and the rest of the Spanish state. Although this might come as confusing, due to the presence of nationalist symbols and the fact that the State is Ceuta's major employer, it makes sense when looking at how human mobility is managed. The physical isolation that Ceuta suffers due to its geography seems to be enhanced by the lack of attention received from national institutions (Calderón-Vázquez *et al.*, 2022). This could also be observed in chapter 3, when the news reported how appreciated and seen as extraordinary was the visit from the Spanish president during May 2021. Migration issues, then, while central to the city of Ceuta, seem to be at the centre of both a national and European obsession with security that oppresses the foreigner, and a sometimes overlooked issue that abandons the frontline workers.

V.III. Observing the strategies of CSOs in Ceuta.

In the previous section, different bordering practices have been extracted from the descriptions that CSOs have done on their work and the context in which it takes place. Complemented by information gathered from online reports, informal conversations and the additional interviews that were conducted, the analysis has aimed at providing a description on how

the arena of borderwork is configured in Ceuta. This section's objective is to revise how the CSOs respond to these bordering practices and operate inside this arena, and which major strategies they deploy as actors of this border regime.

As literature on border studies has stated, CSOs working on migration issues are important agents of the border regime, but they differ vastly on many aspects (Cuttitta *et al*., 2023). Their motivations, the way they are funded and their working structure dictate in many cases if their actions are driven towards practices that counter the border regime, are neutral to it, or assist its functioning (*ibid*). In the case of this work, no CSO had a political position against immigration, and although not all of them had an openly stated political stance, it is safe to say that all of them worked under values of anti-discrimination and equality. However, the aforementioned differences were noticeable and had an impact on how interviewees described their work within the border structure of Ceuta. Drawing on this, three main strategies were outlined to describe the different approaches and activities that were observed and reported.

V. III.I. Adaptation

Although it could be argued that every CSO present in the field working on migration issues adapts to the bordered context to some extent, some of the organisations seemed to do so as their major strategy in order to be able to deploy their work. These organisations are mainly those that receive public fundings from European or national institutions, are constituted by professionals, and they work in close contact with the public administration and, to a lesser extent, with security forces.

The word *adaptation* has been chosen to designate this strategy out of a quote from an interview conducted with one of these organisations, given its applicability to their way of being in the field. While these organisations work with objectives of prompting the well-being of the people they work with, they are focused on the delivery of services and could be defined as welfare-oriented following the work of Perelló and Lacomba (Perelló & Lacomba, 2020).

'In the end, this border is political. The opening and closing, now I open it, now I close it, now I ask you for one thing, now I ask you for another, the jumps that there are, the attempts to jump. In the end it's all politics and how they do it, pressures from one country to another... and how they do it, well, with people. - And how do you adapt to all these things? - With a lot of patience. There is no other way, we, for example in CETI, which we have been in for 10 years, we have always said it. You just have to adapt' (5).

Most of the organisations whose work first with this analytical category develop in their discourse a political reading of what happens at the borders. However, the consequences of their management are not necessarily confronted, but they are another element to deal with at work. Both in

this quote and the overall observed working strategy of these organisations, there is not a sense or objective of possible change being promoted by them. It seems to be assumed that they would not have the power to do so and thus they need to adapt to the effects of what is not in their hands.

This position, merged with the previously analysed relationship with security forces and the administration and the lack of advocacy actions, suggest that, despite being driven by values of equality and defence of human rights of people on the move, some organisations adopt an attitude of acceptance towards the border regime in which they are embedded, in order to be able to deploy their work (Perelló & Lacomba, 2020.

"People say that the massive jump was very heavy (...) All the staff went up to the CETI to see what could be done and also to make themselves available to the Ministry, because in the end it is not only the entities, we are collaborators, collaborating entities. But the management is the Ministry's. In these cases you can't predispose yourself, you have to make yourself available" (7).

This quote shows that these organisations do not have total room for making decisions about the actions they undertake, as they are economically dependent on the State and thus working for it. These conditions, despite allowing them to be present and try to ensure some kind of protection for people on the move, leaves them in a position in which they do need to adapt to what is required for them as the guiding principle of their activity.

V.III.II. Creating a parallel system of assistance

Among other organisations whose activities could also be labelled as welfare-oriented, as they do provide services as their main objective and do not have an open aim of confronting the border regime, a slightly different strategy is observed. Instead of adapting to what the administration and State rule as guiding principles, the two organisations that have been regrouped under this category try to conform their parallel way of assisting the people who are uncovered by the official corridors of assistance. Both these organisations are openly religious and rely on some volunteers to work, but they differ in other aspects.

One of the organisations is currently developing their actions through the presence and work in the field of an external association from Italy. This association is linked to a catholic congregation and is working with their own fundings. That way, independently from the State, they were working on a small shelter for people in street situations, with a special focus on people on the move who cannot enter the *CETI*. Their aim is to be constantly updating with any changes on the regulations of the CETI to cover those that fall outside of it.

'The arrival of 4 is a bit due to the fact that many people were arriving (...) And the priestshave arrived and so have we (...) because we have seen that here there is a possibility of being useful (...) also because there is a need, otherwise, if there were no people on the street here we would not be here' (4)

'To be able to support people who cannot access CETI for one reason or another... it changes a lot. So we always have to keep up to date with what is happening in the CETI at that time and that is why the network with the other organisations is very important' (4).

The second organisation also has a religious character, but in this case it does receive public funds, mostly from the local administration but also from the EU, which allows them to have more professionals working. In this case, their main activity is the delivery of food in multiple forms to those that are deemed "vulnerable" in terms of economic resources. While in order to get their project funded there are several documents that are needed from the people who get this food, they find their ways to also cover those who do not have access to that documentation - mainly because of their condition of foreigners -.

"Nothing, if they live in an irregular situation, if they don't have documentation (...) that person can come to eat every day, we don't deny food to anyone. We ask for all the documentation mostly because once a month we deliver the shopping basket, and it is an aid from the European Union. For auditing... for justifications. But notice that they ask us for the census registration. But they send you pallets, and then you organise it. So we arrange things, and what we manage to spare is for the families who don't have a census. You have to find your own way to have a plan B" (1).

"Look, we don't have accommodation, but over there where the warehouse is, we had to make a double roof, put some stairs and throw 5 or 6 mattresses, with their blankets and pillows and so on, a washing machine downstairs, and in the corner there is a bathroom. And we've had 5 or 6 children in there at the same time. And it's better to sleep in that storage room on that mattress, with a shower, a washing machine and hot food, than on the street" (1).

Additionally, this worker also states how, depending on the circumstances, they do mobilise their resources in order to provide a service that is not being covered by the State, as it is the shelter for minors that are expelled from reception centres after turning 18. In this case, they are able to do so relying on donations, their social networks and their own funds, as these activities are not covered by subsidies.

V.III.III. Counter-bordering

In order to analyse those strategies that can be seen as counterbordering, as they represent a challenge to the current Border Regime, the work of Barbulescu and Grugel on civil society activism

in Spain is followed (Barbulescu & Grugel, 2016). Analysing the responses to certain abuses towards unaccompanied minors, they outline different forms in which CSOs can challenge the current actions of the state on border control. Their contribution is combined with that of Pierre Monforte on spatial protest against borders in Europe to make sense of these observed countering activities (Monforte, 2015).

Within this categorisation, three interviewed organisations are gathered. Two of them are mostly volunteer-based with a few professionals present, arrived in Ceuta from other parts of Spain with the objective of doing advocacy, and are fully funded by private donations. The third one, which is a professional organisation publicly funded that works in Ceuta without a local office, is included in one of the strategies observed. Additionally, the work of an organisation which is no longer active in the field is touched upon, given the impact of their presence in Ceuta and its salience during the interviews (FOOTNOTE).

Documentation of abuses through reporting

Three of these organisations have been documenting border violence in numerous reports. Ranging from a general gathering of the development of border control in the city to concrete events such as May 2021, they publish this information which aims at exposing State's actions that violate certain laws and human rights norms (Barbulescu & Grugel, 2016).

'We have been trying to provide accompaniment to carry out advocacy, that is, to document violations of rights (...) Until I arrived, no legal advocacy had been carried out. What we did do was political advocacy with the preparation of reports in which all this information was compiled' (2).

'There was quite an important collaboration with other groups in Melilla and in the Canary Islands, with whom a report will soon be published on institutional violence (...) And locally in Ceuta, we worked very closely together, making the impact that could be made locally, that is to say with communiqués, manifestos and so on, and street actions, both with 8 and with - maakum -' (2).

In this way, they develop a close monitoring of authorities, which is challenging due to their exposure, but also to potential future legal changes when this information is gathered in wider platforms such as Border Violence Monitoring.

Legal/Judicial activism

This practice has been referred to by both one of the volunteer-based organisations, and the professionalised one. With the need of professional lawyers within the organisation, these people mobilise their networks in order to take legal actions against practices that clearly violate the law. Referred to as institutional border activism, these practices have been stated to have a strong influence

on the protection of social rights for people on the move (Barbulescu & Grugel, 2016; Fernández-Besa, 2019).

'They did start a judicial process with a network of lawyers as soon as it was known that the administration was returning children to morocco after May 2021, and they managed to stop it the next day' (notes from interview with 3)

'When I arrived, the approach changed a bit (...) we could have a more powerful approach to the strategy of denunciation (...) that these experiences of abuse and violence were taken to the courts or to the relevant political institutions - And what changed? - Well, to begin with, the specialised knowledge, the fact that I know what can be denounced and through which channels helps a lot (...) I also knew a lot of people from the southern border, so I am a lawyer, but we have a slightly wider network of lawyers who are closely linked to this project from their own. They are lawyers who work for collectives on the peninsula, and we form teams to present the lawsuits' (2).

In the two previous quotes the importance of the collective network is highlighted in order for the legal process to have more weight and develop a more sustainable strategy. In the second quote, it can be seen that this practice, as much as it is deemed useful, needs the presence of professionals with specialised knowledge, and could not be possible if a collective is fully volunteer-based or does not have anyone skilled in the legal field.

'I came here because it seems to me that it is a city that gives you the power... the power to be a Trojan horse, you know? I mean, it is easier here than in other cities, I mean, in border cities, to stand up to a racist administration (...) because here it is like the violations of rights are much more visible, much more accessible also for a collective like ours, which can lend a helping hand' (2).

In this quote, one of the members of the advocate organisation states how being present in the field of a borderzone as Ceuta gives the opportunity to directly identify border violence and be able to act on it. The presence of skilled and engaged people is vital to contest the exceptionalities that are often accepted in bordering cities.

Changing narratives

Another strategy that is deployed as a way of counter-bordering is the spread of alternative narratives on human mobility and people on the move than the one that is produced by the border regime itself. One of the organisations state this as one of their objectives, and undertakes awareness-raising activities with several groups, such as the one co-conducted in the University.

'We believe in migration as a richness and not as a problem, and what we really try to do is to provide new narratives about migrants, and we try at all times when we do activities with other

groups to have equal relationships (...) because we don't want them to be used only to tell their tragic story' (8).

Reviewing this strategy, it is worth mentioning a project that the organisation that is no longer active produced some years ago, in which Ceuta was analysed with multiple actors and experts. This project, called *Ceuta ciudad de fronteras,* resulted in a report, a website, and a series of round tables that are still published in *Youtube*. Not only did this action provide different narratives to the general public, but also helped to bring organisations and actors together, go through an overview of what has been going on and how Ceuta is articulated, and promote the dialogue and reflection on how to go further. Within a border regime that produces a constant state or urgency and emergency, the opening of these spaces is vital for the construction of strategies on how to keep on challenging the border and its updates.

Public mobilisation & demonstrations

Lastly, the organisation of demonstrations needs to be addressed. Demonstrating is deemed as a vital practice of contestation to border regimes, as it challenges the often invisible practices that they undertake, giving visibility to them and contesting their impunity (Monforte, 2016).

'Today, for example, we have a circle of silence where we read a statement denouncing the situations of violation of rights, we are present for a while and a song is played. The statement is read in Arabic, French and Spanish (...) and then we have a very important day which is the march for dignity, which we do every year and we invite other organisations (...) and we have a day of remembrance so as not to forget what happened, and of denunciation and awareness-raising (...) Then we publish statements when situations of rights violations occur, of denunciation through the networks' (8).

This organisation, highly based on volunteers and with one of the longest presences in Ceuta, sets up monthly demonstrations in which a statement is read and the volunteers, members and other people gather to make visible their opposition to the border regime. By promoting the presence of people on the move, adapting the language of the statement, but keeping the target of the demonstration at the border regime itself, these demonstrations seem in line with that Monforte explains as making visible the production of irregularity and repressed migrant identities as something contingent and contestable (Monforte, 2016).

'Well, after the Tarajal, after the march we did for dignity, there was a moment when perhaps the organisations were a little bit more united against what was happening (...) Yes, that fact gave rise to a little more visibility of the migratory issue in Ceuta' (8).

Apart from these monthly demonstrations, a bigger event is organised yearly, motivated by the anniversary of the Tarajal case. This event has been going on already for ten years, and has

managed to raise awareness all over the Spanish state on the situation of the border management in Ceuta. It is still a mechanism of keeping the legal and social fight alive, not forgetting the tragic consequences of the border regime, and continuing raising awareness on the exceptional measures that are structural to border control and containment.

VI.   DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This section of analysis has ended with a short classification of the type of strategies with which CSOs develop their work within the Ceuta border regime. In it, the distinctions between organisations that were reviewed in the theoretical framework can be observed. A clear pattern emerges among those organisations with a clear advocacy objective, which are independently funded and manage to take advantage of the opportunities of being at the border to denounce it. On the other hand, organisations whose objective is the provision of services seem to fall within the theorised dynamics in which the state itself, which produces precarious migratory realities, funds the existence of CSOs that address this precariousness. Even with a critical discourse on the border, their activity does not contain a political struggle to promote change, but rather adapts to the reality that other institutions dictate.

Following the literature on CSOs in frontier areas, we see that organisations can indeed occupy differentiated roles. However, following those contributions that focus on the contextual circumstances in which organisations find themselves, this analysis has sought to take a closer look at the Ceuta context and the conditions it fosters for CSOs. In this way, the first section of ethnographic narration provided the current picture in which the historical review of chapter 3 is situated, situating us in space. In the second section, the dynamics that run through the associative fabric are unravelled.

Thus, we see that the border regime is indeed a complex apparatus from which several borderisation processes emanate. Within those processes that were identified but are not directly connected to the second question of the paper, are those processes that, as a result of the physical and symbolic borders, create a social dynamic that in turn reinforces them. Thus, firstly, we see that the border and its evolution have created various logics of separation between people. Irregularity is differentiated from legal citizens, but there are also separations between nationalities and skin tones. Within the Ceutí population, there is a certain division between those of Moroccan and Spanish origin, highly informed by religious differences. Within the irregularity produced, the Moroccan who crosses the fence instead of entering through the border is administratively mistreated, while anyone with black skin is reduced to the category of sub-Saharan and irregular, provoking rejection or pity.

These logics of separation are embodied in the legislation and procedures in which the work of CSOs is carried out. Focusing on the processes that most directly affect the associative fabric, we observe, on the one hand, the clear condition of exceptionality theorised in the studies of Ceuta and other borderlands, which places the city in a context of constant uncertainty. Combined with the atmosphere of vigilance that seems to prevail in the city, it seems logical that there is a certain atmosphere of fear of losing funding from the administration, or that working conditions are subject to change, on the part of the organisations that depend on the public institution.

This has been seen to prevent, perhaps more markedly than in other locations, the involvement of organisations in activities of contestation of the border regime. Moreover, this is compounded by the lack of clarity in which institutional bodies are responsible when rights violations occur, as local, national and regional levels of governance are blurred in a city that is an enforcer but not a decision-maker on the management of migration. These different levels of governance can also be observed when it is noted that the care of persons on the move over 18 is directed and financed by national ministries, as well as border control in general, but the management of minors is held by the local administration. It can be seen how, while the delegation of minors is more accessible and seems to be generating more resources, when minors become a national responsibility, resources fail. This lack of resources, together with the management of the *CETI*, often said to be an overcrowded place of retention in which until some months ago multiple people could not enter, responds to those who state that the national strategy in Ceuta is one of containment. In that way, the organisations that are paid for migration-related issues are not primarily financed for solving problems, but rather to assist the containment apparatus.

Although CSOs are responsible actors within the border regime, these findings show that the conditions for the activities of those associated to the State are rather restrictive. No space for decision, not only in the organisation but also within the local institutional structures, a clear national strategy that still seems to ignore local needs that arise, and a restrictive space in which surveillance takes on easy make up conditions in which, in principle, these CSOs have to choose between existing as they do and adapting to the structure, or contesting it and risk their stability. In that context, opportunities for counter-bordering arise for those organisations who can be independently sustained, to who the field, although hard to navigate, brings the possibility of effectively denouncing, socially or legally, the multiple violations of rights that take place.

Thus, although further and more detailed research is definitely needed, these results seem to highlight the power and scope of border regimes to reassure their status quo, the capacities for contestation that arise in parallel, and the influence that the spatial and political context has in the configuration of CSOs working within migration-related issues.

This thesis began with the objectives of reaching a deeper understanding of Ceuta's border regime and its consequences on the configuration of the city in general, and of the CSOs in particular. Through a short fieldwork, constructed with information gathered through multiple methods, it has been possible to briefly trace how this border regime is articulated and the effects this has on the configuration of civil society. Furthermore, it has been possible to observe the different strategies that can be followed to contest border regimes, and the circumstances that seem to be necessary for this to be possible.

Additionally, several issues that need further scrutiny have come to light during this research, such as the multiple logics that activate different modes of racism and social separation in the city. Because of this, the multiple changes that are taking place in the city, and the complexity of the chosen subject, further research is highly recommended to continue understanding Ceuta and its border condition.

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Appendix 1. Chart of interviewees

Nº	Date Interv. details	Character of the entity	Main purpose	Presence in Ceuta	Volunteer-based/ professionalised	Funding
1.	22/04 Recorded interview	Local religious NGO	Assistance and aid to population in vulnerable conditions	Founded: 2001	Started with volunteers and has been increasingly being professionalised	Public national and local funding Own funds
2.	23/04 Recorded interview	European independent movement	Support and accompaniment of migrant people for legal and political advocacy against border violence	Arrival: 2022	1 recently hired lawyer and temporal volunteers	Private donations and independent funding
3.	24/04 Non-recorded interview	Foundation	Integral attention to unaccompanied migrant minors & defence of their rights	Arrival: 2022 (but a network already present before)	Proffessionalised organisation	Public national funding
A.	26/04 Unsuccessful interview	Local association (part of a national federation)	Social Inclusion for non-EU migrants and people in vulnerable situations	Arrival: 2017	Professionalised with volunteers	Public European, national and local funding Private funding from a foundation
4.	26/04 Recorded interview	National religious association linked to the local diocese (now, association on the field related to an Italian congregation)	Attention to young and migrant people who first arrive or who are already settled	Arrival: 1995	Priests, professionals and volunteers.	Public fundings depending on the project, private donations, church funds. Currently unclear.

5.	29/04 Recorded interview	National Foundation linked to a religious congregation	Social integration for people in vulnerable situations	Founded: 2013	Professionalised	Public European and national fundings
6.	30/04 Non-recorded interview	National NGO	Social attention and promotion of social rights. In Ceuta: attention to regularised migrant women victim of GBV and racialized people.	Arrival: 2021	Professionalised	Public national and European fundings (in Ceuta's projects, only European)
B.	06/05 Participant observation in activity	National cultural association	Urban intervention, social research and community dynamisation	Arrival: 2022	Professionalised	Public European & National funding + private one (per project)
7.	07/05 Recorded interview	National NGO (one of the principal ones running the protection system in Spain)	Social attention to people on vulnerable situations	Arrival: 1998	Professionalised	Public European, national and local fundings.
8.	08/05 Recorded interview + Participant observation in activity	Local NGO linked to a religious congregation	Reception and integration for migrant people, sensibilisation and social advocacy for their rights	Founded: 1999	Volunteer-based with few professionals	Private donations and independent funding

Appendix 2: Interview scheme

(Spanish version)

APERTURA:

- Agradecimiento

- Explicación

- Consentimiento informado

I) PRESENTACIÓN

- Quiénes sois

- Qué hacéis

- Cuánto lleváis en Ceuta, por qué os formasteis/llegasteis

- A qué colectivos acompañáis/con qué perfiles trabajáis

- Cómo os financiáis

- Os consideráis defensores de derechos de las personas en contexto de migración?

II) TRABAJO EN RED

- Con quién trabajáis (otras entidades) a nivel local, nacional, europeo, transnacional…?

III) OBSTÁCULOS

- Qué barreras u obstáculos encontráis en vuestro desempeño en el día a día?

- Estos obstáculos han ido evolucionando, son cambiantes?

- Cuál es el papel de la red de trabajo en el sorteamiento de estos obstáculos?

IV) RELACIÓN CON ESTADO E INSTITUCIONES

- Qué relación existe con el gobierno ceutí? Y con el nacional? Espacios de escucha en la toma de decisiones?

- Cómo diríais que afectan a vuestro trabajo los acuerdos y relaciones diplomáticas entre España y Marruecos?

V) HISTORIA

- Qué momentos de la historia de la frontera ceutí crees que han impactado en mayor medida vuestro trabajo? Y el tejido asociativo de la ciudad?

- Cómo os movilizasteis en esos momentos?

VI) POBLACIÓN

- Cómo percibís vuestra relación con la población local? Están involucradas en vuestras acciones?

- Respecto a la defensa de derechos, sentís que las personas en movimiento tienen el espacio y la posibilidad de defender sus propios derechos en la ciudad? Es algo que intenta promover la asociación?

CIERRE:

- En tu opinión y desde tu experiencia, qué te parecería importante que se dijera en una investigación sobre Ceuta que quizá no se dice? A qué deberíamos ponerle más atención?

(English version)

OPENING:

- Acknowledgement

- Explanation

- Informed consent

I) PRESENTATION

- Who you are

- What you do

- How long have you been in Ceuta? Why did you start/arrive?

- Which groups do you accompany/which profiles do you work with?

- How do you finance yourselves?

- Do you consider yourselves advocates for the rights of people in the context of migration?

II) NETWORKING

- Who do you work with (other entities) at the local /national /transnational level…?

III) OBSTACLES

- What barriers or obstacles do you encounter, if so, in your daily work?

- Have these obstacles evolved? Do they change?

- What is the role of the network in overcoming these obstacles?

IV)   RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STATE AND INSTITUTIONS

-     What is the relationship with the government of Ceuta? And with the national government? Are there spaces for listening in the decision-making process?

-     How would you say the diplomatic agreements and relations between Spain and Morocco affect your work?

V)   HISTORY

-     What moments in the history of the border in Ceuta do you think have had the greatest impact on your work? And the associative fabric of the city?

-     How did you mobilise at that time?

VI)   POPULATION

-     How do you perceive your relationship with the local population? Are they involved in your actions?

-     Regarding advocacy, do you feel that people on the move have the space and the possibility to defend their own rights in the city? Is this something that the association tries to promote?
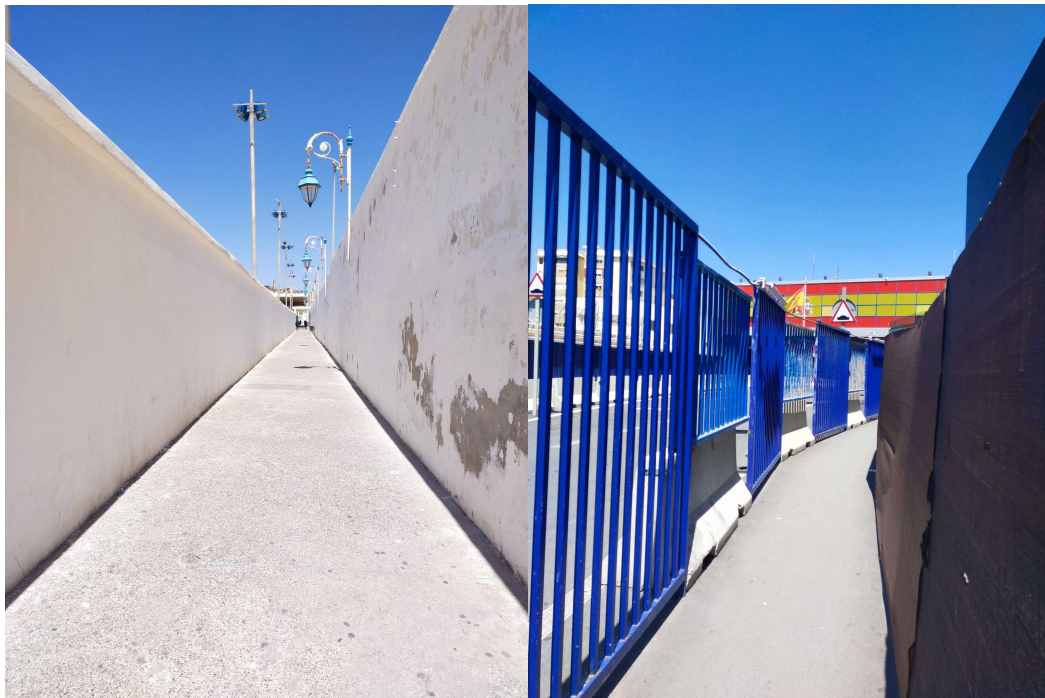
CLOSURE:

In your opinion and from your experience, what do you think would be important to be said in a research on Ceuta that perhaps is not being said? What should we pay more attention to?
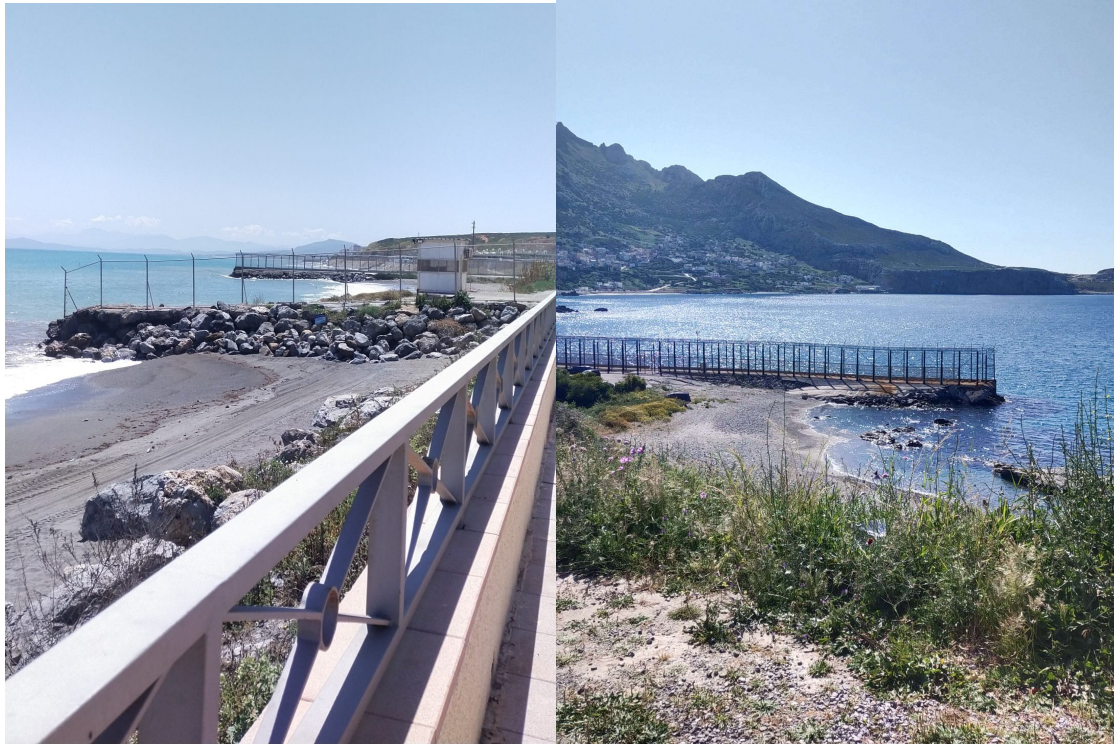
Appendix 3: images

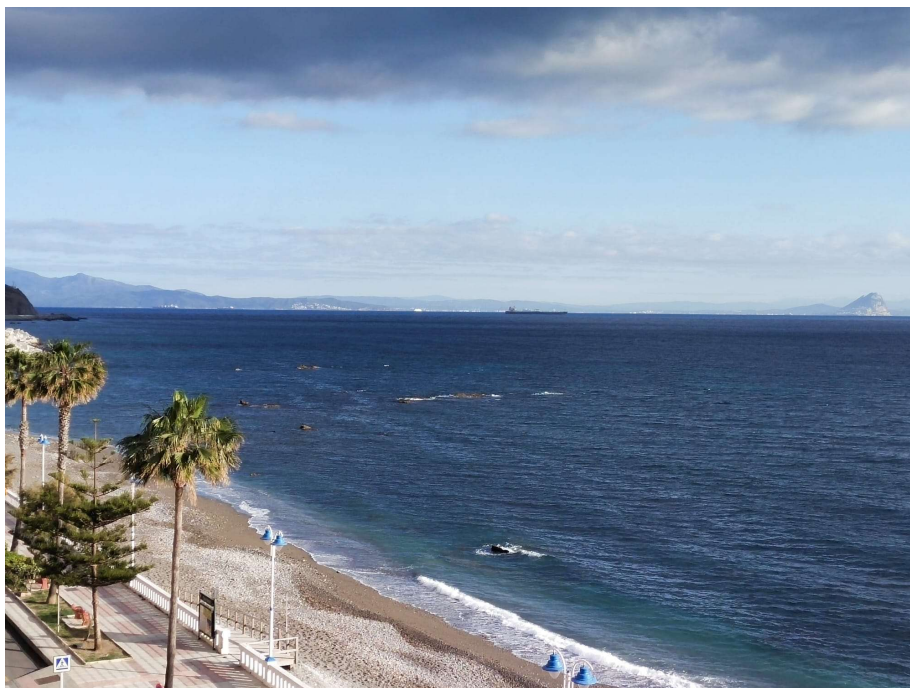1. *Map of Ceuta (source: https://www.britannica.com/place/Ceuta)*

2. *Border crossing from Morocco to Ceuta (own source: 22/04/2024)*

3. Fences over the sea: Tarajal beach on the left, Benzú on the right (own source: 22/04/2024)

4. Spanish shore viewed from the road to the CETI (own source: 26/04/2024