Chapter 17

Immobilized between Two EU Thresholds: Suspended Trajectories of Sub-Saharan Migrants in the Limboscape of Ceuta

Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo and Keina R. Espiñeira

When Spain joined the Schengen Agreement in 1991, the North African city of Ceuta[1] started to gradually turn into a key hub of irregular sub-Saharan migration to the European Union[2] (see Alscher 2005; Berriane and Aderghal 2009; Carling 2007; Driessen 1996; Fekete 2004; Ferrer-Gallardo 2008, 2011; Gold 1999; Mutlu and Leite 2012; Planet 1998; Saddiki 2010; Soddu 2002, 2006). Since then, both the increasing securitization of its border and the fluctuant – though persistent – arrival of migrants have transformed the socio-spatial nature of this territory. These transformations have subsequently influenced migrants' perceptions vis-à-vis the destinations and trajectories they take into consideration during their decision-making process. They have had an impact on spatial behaviour in key migration routes towards the European Union.

In this light, the present chapter addresses how the two different borders of Ceuta, the land border with Morocco and the sea border with the Iberian Peninsula, influence the opportunities of migrants en route toward the EU. In so doing, it builds on previous contributions in the field of transit migration to the EU, which have focused on the north of Africa (to name but a few: Alioua 2008; Barros et al. 2002; Bredeloup 2012; Collyer 2007; Collyer and De Haas 2012; Collyer et al. 2012; De Haas 2008; Düvell 2005, 2012; Khachani 2006; Lahlou 2005; Schapendonk 2012). In concrete terms, it puts the lens on the situation of those sub-Saharan migrants who, having managed to irregularly cross the EU-North African border fence, find themselves stranded in Ceuta. The authors argue that, under these circumstances, the city becomes what they define as a limbo-like landscape[3] (a *limboscape*): a transitional zone, a threshold or midway territory between two different borders, between the hell of repatriation/expulsion and the heaven of regularization,

---

1 Ceuta has a surface area of 19.48 square km and a total perimeter of 30 km long, of which 8 km constitute its land border with Morocco. The city is inhabited by 84,018 people (http://www.ine.es, accessed 1 January 2013).

2 The same applies for the city of Melilla. The circumstances of both cities vis-à-vis irregular migration to the EU are very similar. Nevertheless, in this contribution we will focus on the specific case of Ceuta.

3 Limbo:

1) *Roman Catholic Theology*: a region on the border of hell or heaven, serving as the abode after death of unbaptized infants (limbo of infants) and of the righteous who died before the coming of Christ (limbo of the fathers or limbo of the patriarchs)
2) A place or state of oblivion to which persons or things are regarded as being relegated when cast aside, forgotten, past, or out of date
3) An intermediate, transitional, or midway state or place
4) Place or state of imprisonment or confinement. See http://www.dictionary.reference.com, accessed 6 November 2014.

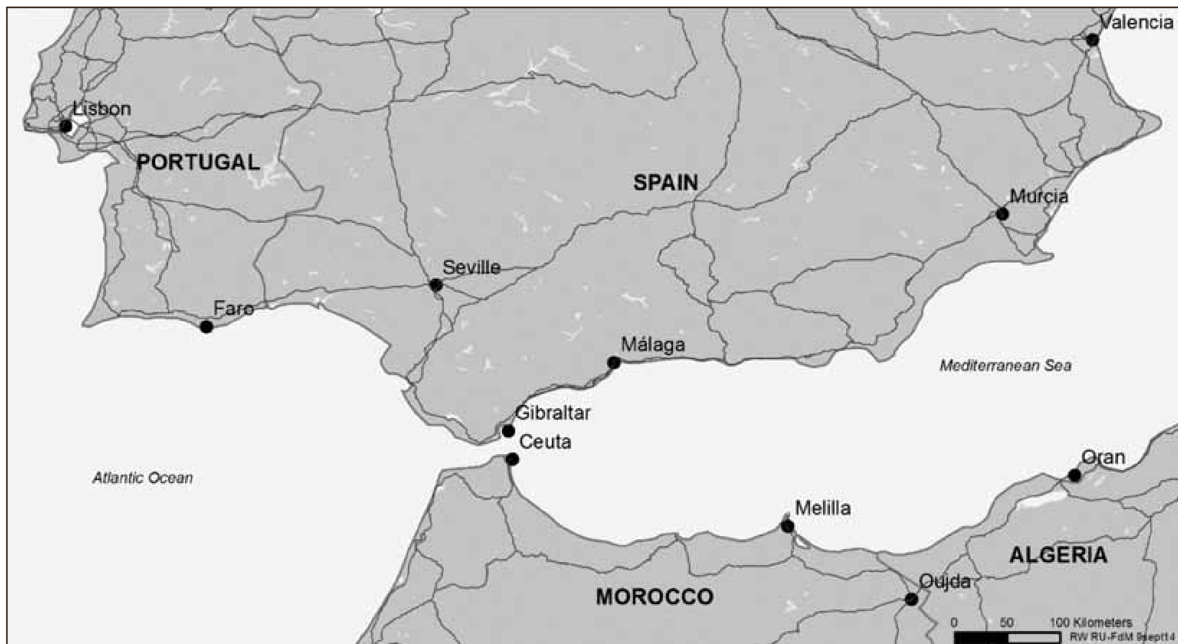

Figure 17.1 Ceuta and Melilla

where the migrants' trajectories towards 'European-EU' are spatially and temporally suspended (see Ferrer-Gallardo and Albet-Mas 2013).

This chapter is structured in three main sections which, to an important extent, coincide with the three basic components of the approach proposed by Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2011) in order to capture the individual spatial migratory behaviour. The components are borders that are constructed as barriers or deconstructed to facilitate mobility, trajectories as the routes people use to cross borders, and people as agents who decide to migrate crossing borders and following certain routes. The first section (*borders*) explores the double-border dimension of Ceuta and its impact on the mobility of migrants. It describes the origins and changing characteristics of the city's border securitization process as well as the political geographical specificities of this EU-African territory. The second section (*trajectories*) addresses how the strengthening of border controls in the southern EU perimeter has affected the trajectories of sub-Saharan migrants heading for the EU. And, in concrete, how the alteration of the routes has been translated into fluctuating degrees of migratory pressure vis-à-vis the city of Ceuta. The third section (*people*) scrutinizes the circumstances of those sub-Saharan migrants who find themselves stranded in Ceuta and are consequently forced to face a complex period of waiting before the (EU) law (see Van Houtum 2010b).

Finally, it is argued that, over the last years, both the increasing securitization of its borders and the variable though persistent arrival of sub-Saharan immigrants to Ceuta has profoundly reconfigured the socio-spatial disposition of the city. The fact that those migrants who manage to cross the border fence are forced to spend long periods of time waiting in the city has provided Ceuta with a new territorial idiosyncrasy. We suggest that the notion of 'limboscape' (see also Ferrer-Gallardo and Albet-Mas 2013) constitutes a useful tool in order to capture this new spatial idiosyncrasy of Ceuta and that, in turn, it helps to illustrate (and conceptualize) the present proliferation of confinement/encampment practices across the EU, as well as its related forced migrant immobility dynamics.

Borders

The Spanish–Moroccan border became an external EU border in 1986. It then started to serve as a key instrument in EU migration policy, but it also became an outcome of the discussion on the essence of European (Union) identity and its territorial demarcation (see Van der Velde and Van Naerssen 2011, 220). When Spain joined the Schengen Agreement in 1991, its visa regime adjusted to the new situation. The range of legal modifications associated to the 'Schengenization' of the Spanish–Moroccan border, and the arrival of newly perceived threats, notably in the form of irregular immigration from sub-Saharan Africa, came together with the implementation of new securitization techniques and the physical reshaping of the border. In order to prevent the entrance of undocumented immigrants, security controls were reinforced all along the maritime and land border between Spain and Morocco with the financial assistance of EU institutions (see Alscher 2005; Ferrer-Gallardo 2008; Mutlu and Leite 2012; Saddiki 2010).

The tough but to a certain extent ineffective attempts to completely obstruct the movement of some 'undesired' non-EU citizens across the specific border of Ceuta contrast with the elasticity that EU legislation shows when it comes to facilitate the free cross-border flow of 'desired' non-EU citizens (see Ferrer-Gallardo 2011). The economic sustainability of Ceuta largely depends on the interaction with its hinterland. For this reason, Spain exempts visa requirement to citizens of the neighbouring Moroccan province of Tetouan. This exception was incorporated into the Protocol of Accession of Spain to the Schengen Agreement in 1991 with the commitment to maintain tight identity controls to those wanting to travel to the rest of Spanish territory (Planet 2002). The fact that document controls are conducted both at the land crossing point between Morocco and Ceuta and at the maritime crossing point between Ceuta and the Iberian Peninsula implies that the entire territory of Ceuta functions as a threshold between two EU borders, as an intermediate space, as a 19.5 square km border zone.

After Spain's EU entrance, the reconfiguration of the Spanish border regime ran parallel to the reshaping of migratory dynamics in the north of Africa. In the mid-1990s, the growing flows of sub-Saharan migrants heading for the EU implied that Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco started consolidating as key transit countries, but also as destination countries. Consequently, migratory dynamics in Ceuta's hinterland experienced huge transformations. The border of Ceuta emerged as a new, but relatively low threshold to be crossed within the trajectories of sub-Saharan migrants to the EU. Increasingly, the Spanish African city would be perceived as a less dangerous irregular gate to the EU. Entering Ceuta would therefore become a safer and attractive alternative to the clandestine crossing of the Mediterranean.

In 1995, the irregular access of sub-Saharan citizens to Ceuta (that were not repatriated to their countries of origin nor allowed to cross the maritime border toward the Iberian Peninsula) had already become a frequent phenomenon. This was the source of tensions in the city, where racist attacks and migrant riots claiming for their rights proliferated (see Gold 1999, 2000; Planet 1998). In this context, Spanish and EU authorities decided to undertake the fortification of the land perimeter of the city. In order to halt the increasing flows of irregular immigration, a double metal fence, which height would later on reach 6 meters, was erected between the city and Morocco. This is how the Ceuta border scenario started to become a paradigmatic example of the EU's sealing-off its outer perimeter. As a consequence, the city would be globally known as an icon of so-called 'Fortress Europe'.

The aforementioned iconic dimension of Ceuta was reinforced by the migration crisis that took place during the autumn of 2005. Prior to the crisis, in 2004, there was a 37 per cent fall in

the arrival of immigrants to the shores of the Iberian Peninsula (EC 2005). This occurred due to the implementation of the System of Integrated External Surveillance on Spain's southern coasts, and also due to greater coordination between Spanish and Moroccan border control practices. Following the blockage of the maritime route through the western Mediterranean (across the Strait of Gibraltar), the migratory pressure on the land border of Ceuta increased remarkably.

Particularly after the year 2000, an increasing number of migrants had converged in the surroundings of Ceuta, waiting for an opportunity to be able to enter Ceuta. Migrants started to gather in informal camps near the border fence, in the forests of Belyounech, Morocco (see Soddu 2006). In this context, during the months of September and October of 2005, illegal entries to the city grew substantially. Border guards, both in Morocco and in Spain, harshly repressed the attempts of entry (Blanchard and Wender 2007). Hundreds of migrants crossed the fence and made it into Ceuta. According to the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs, 5,566 immigrants irregularly entered Ceuta and Melilla in 2005. But there were many more that could not make it. Eleven immigrants were killed and many more were wounded during the events. The crisis reached dramatic proportions and placed the cities under the global focus of media interest.

On the 6th of February 2014 global media attention was focused again on the Ceuta border after 15 migrants drowned while they attempted to reach North African EU soil by swimming from Morocco (*El País,* 15 February 2014). The role of the Spanish Guardia Civil was rather controversial since rubber bullets were used in order to stop the migrants. This opened an intense debate in Spain about the proportionality of securitization measures. The episode also shed light on the irregular push-back of migrants (refoulements) to Morocco that, according to several NGOs, had taken place in the Ceuta border scenario on several occasions (*El País*, 19 February 2014). A new reinforcement of the border fence was announced by the Spanish Minister of Home Affairs, Fernandez Díaz, during a visit to Ceuta on 5 March 2014.

Nearly a decade before that, the events of 2005 had already led to a significant transformation of border securitization practices. The crisis represented an inflection point within migratory and border management dynamics in the EU. The immediate response was the physical reinforcement of the fences and the strengthening of border patrols on both sides of the perimeter. Spanish and Moroccan army units were sent to the border and remained there for a short time. The militarization of the border was temporarily literal. Ceuta and Melilla would thus become the two most heavily securitized border posts of the European Union. Also, surprisingly enough, Morocco agreed to contribute to the monitoring of the borders that, in the Moroccan official discourse, are considered colonial cities, which are still, illegitimately, in Spanish hands. Since then, as Casas-Cortes et al. (2013, 52) argue, Moroccan border and police authorities have increasingly cooperated in managing migrant flows toward the Spanish/EU border – despite the fact that Morocco claims the sovereignty of Ceuta (and hence does not recognize its land border as an official border). Anyhow, efforts have gone beyond the EU land borders in Africa, and have been extended throughout the Moroccan territory by means of Moroccan readmission agreements with various EU member states, the establishment of temporary circular labour migration centres to facilitate temporary legal migration, and other forms of Moroccan cooperation with EU border management imperatives. As denounced by several NGO's and scholarly critical approaches to EU bordering practices, the externalization of EU border controls to third countries has given rise to migration management practices which have not always fully respected the fundamental rights of migrants (see Wender 2004; APDHA 2012; GADEM 2012; Migreurop 2009; MSF-E 2005; Soddu, 2006).

Trajectories

The reinforcement of border controls after 2005 made approaching and jumping the Ceuta border fence increasingly difficult for migrants. Nevertheless, irregular migrants kept on entering Ceuta, using more complex crossing practices, such as hiding in vehicles or swimming around the border fence (Collyer and De Haas 2012). Fortification techniques continued to be developed, but so did ways of subverting them. Despite the gradual strengthening of the Ceuta border, the number of migrants who have attempted and succeeded to irregularly enter the city has not been steady. Quantitative highs and downs vis-à-vis irregular border crossings have run parallel to the fluctuation of migration routes toward the EU. This fluctuation has in its turn been a reaction to the gradual deployment of stricter border securitization measures along the southern EU perimeter. But it has also been caused by the refinement/development of the EU strategy of externalization of border controls (see Pinyol 2012; Zaragoza 2012). As Casas-Cortes et al. (2013, 41) note, particularly after the crisis of Ceuta and Melilla in 2005, and the so-called 'Cayucos crisis' in the Canary Islands in 2006, the security goals of externalization and the creation of policing and geoeconomic regimes beyond the borders of the EU and the Schengen space were given added impetus. To an important extent, this 'added impetus' explains the decrease of irregular entrances in Ceuta and Melilla after 2005 (see Figure 17.2).

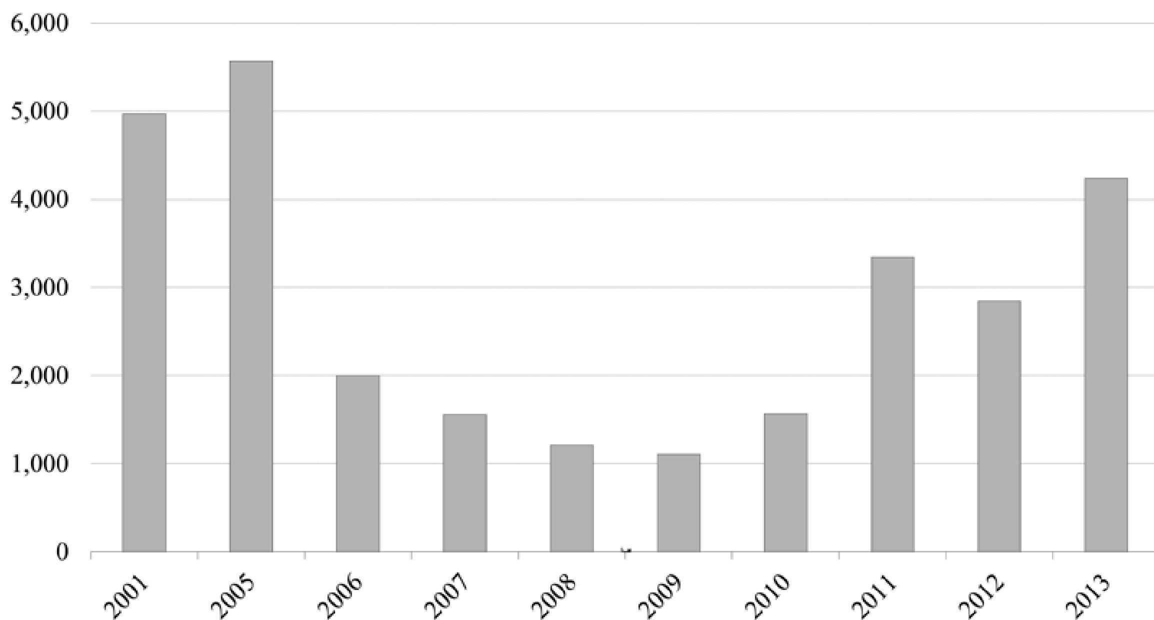

Figure 17.2 Number of irregular entrances in Ceuta and Melilla, 2001–13

Source: compiled by the authors based on data provided by the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs, 2001–13.

Needless to say, the Ceuta border scenario continues to be a paradigmatic example of how the EU tries to seal off its outer perimeter to stop the arrival of migratory flows. However, in the course of recent years, the landscape of EU border fortification has expanded. Ceuta and Melilla are not the only worldwide known icons of Fortress Europe. Spaces like the Canary Islands, Lampedusa, Malta, the Greek island of Lesbos or the Evros river on the Greek-Turkish border have joined the

list (see Cuttitta 2012; Godenau and Zapata-Hernández 2008; Kitagawa 2011; López-Sala and Esteban-Sánchez 2007; Triandafyllidou 2010; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2008). Entry points of irregular immigration have multiplied and diversified along the southern border of the EU. Parallel to that, policies and practices designed to cut irregular migration flows to the EU have also intensified.

After the above-mentioned crisis of 2005, the trajectories of sub-Saharan immigrants en route toward Europe detoured. The perception of the Ceuta border as a more difficultly permeable border certainly influenced mobility patterns. Migrants started to follow alternative routes – first towards the Canary Islands and later across the central (Italy, Malta) and eastern (Greece) Mediterranean routes. The increase of arrivals to the Canary Islands followed the implementation of 'Plan Africa' by the Spanish Government and the development of different Frontex[4] operations (Hera, Minerva and Indalo[5]) on the Atlantic coast of Africa (see Pinyol 2012). As a result, migration decreased in the Atlantic route, moving toward Italian, Maltese and Greek coasts. Immediately afterwards, especially due to the deployment of Hermes and Poseidon operations by Frontex, flows shifted to the land border between Greece and Turkey. In this context, in October 2010 Greece asked the other member states to support the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT) of Frontex. It was the first time that an EU state requested such intervention.

The total number of detections of illegal border crossings outside the EU was similar in 2009 (104,599) and in 2010 (104,049), but increased in 2011 (140,980) (Frontex 2012, 14). Data certified the rechannelling of migratory flows, as well as the fluctuation in the weight of each of the migratory routes to the EU across the Mediterranean (see Figure 17.3). Irregular flows via the

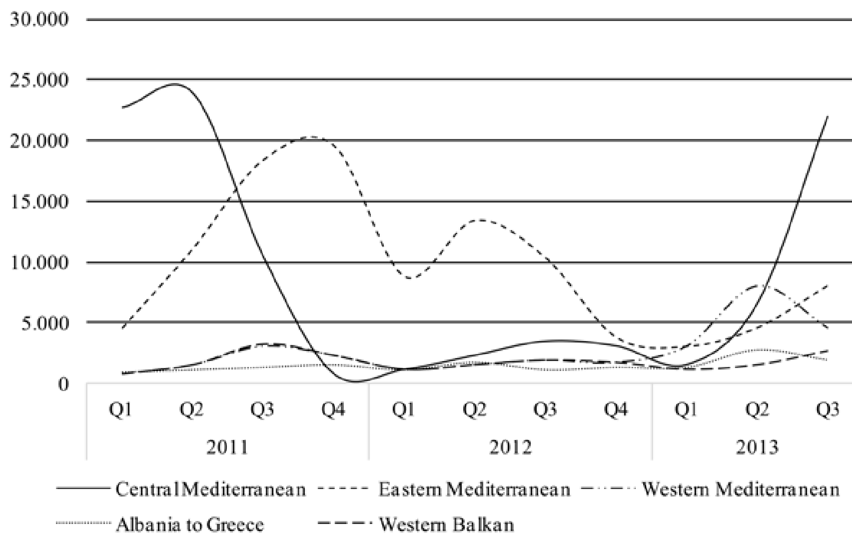

Figure 17.3 Detections of illegal border crossings between border crossing points by main migration routes, 2011–13

Source: Adapted from Frontex 2014.

4 Frontex (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) is the European Union agency for external border security (see http://www.frontex.europa.eu, accessed 28 October 2014).

5 For the scope of Frontex operations, see http://www.frontexit.org/en/docs/13-map-111-operations-frontex/file (accessed 27 September 2014).

central Mediterranean route increased notably due to the influence that the Arab Spring had in border management bilateral agreements between the EU and North African countries like Libya and Tunisia (see Bialasiewicz 2011; Zapata-Barrero and Ferrer-Gallardo 2012). The number of detected illegal border crossings in the sea border of Greece has fallen considerably over the last years: 28,848 in 2009, 6,175 in 2010 and 1.467 in 2011. Parallel to that, illegal crossings at the land Greek-Turkish border followed the opposite direction and increased from 11,127 in 2009 to 49,513 in 2010 and to 55,589 in 2011 (Frontex 2012). The Greek-Turkish land border became the new Achilles heel of the EU border securitization apparatus. In December 2012 a new border fence was erected there (in Orestiada), in a very similar fashion as the Ceuta border fence was erected almost two decades before.

People

Regarding the specific situation at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla, a glance on the data shows how, despite the fortification of the border, the two cities are still paramount entrance sites for a number of irregular migrants en route towards the European Union (see Figure 17.3). In 2005 the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs registered 5,566 irregular entrances. In the following years there was a decrease as a result of the strengthening of the border and the changing trajectories of migrants. In 2009 the Spanish authorities registered 1,108 entrances, which marked the lowest number of irregular crossings to Ceuta and Melilla in the last ten years. But since 2010 the number of irregular entrances has increased again. There were 4,235 irregular entrances in 2013. Although the Spanish and EU authorities (with the cooperation of the Moroccan authorities) have been intensively working on and investing in the fortification of the Ceuta border since 2005, it actually remains almost as permeable as it was a decade ago.

In June 2013 Morocco and the EU signed a Mobility Partnership. The Mobility Partnership with Morocco is the fifth of its kind, following those signed with Moldova and Cape Verde in 2008, with Georgia in 2009 and with Armenia in 2011. The partnership includes 'negotiations between the EU and Morocco on an agreement for facilitating the issuing of visas for certain groups of people, particularly students, researchers and business professionals. Negotiations will also continue on an agreement for the return of irregular migrants' (EC 2013).

Morocco already readmits its own nationals based on bilateral readmission agreements signed with Spain, France, Italy and Germany, but, so far, refuses to sign a readmission agreement with the EU. The reluctance of Morocco to sign a readmission agreement with the EU is mostly linked with an unwillingness to readmit irregular non-Moroccans that have passed through the country before entering the European Union (*Statewatch News Online*, 7 March 2013).

At the moment, given the geographical specificity of Ceuta (separated from the rest of the African continent by the border fence and from the European landmass by the waters of the Straits of Gibraltar), migrants who manage to cross the land perimeter of the city find themselves trapped between two different borders. They are still in Africa but already in EU territory, and they cannot cross to the European side of the EU (the aimed destination for most of them). They have crossed the tough threshold that the highly fortified external African borders of the European Union represent. Nevertheless, Ceuta is not the desired destination for these migrants and they must still face an interval of involuntary immobility and the hard task of crossing a second threshold.

Periods of forced waiting in-between for migrants in Ceuta are variable. The decision on asylum applications, as well as the processes for handling the deportation of irregular immigrants and their readmission by countries of origin, can take several years. During this time, most of the immigrants

are sheltered in the Centre of Temporary Stay for Immigrants (CETI). The CETI of Ceuta was inaugurated in April 2000, it is managed by the Spanish government, and it is intended to provide basic social services and assistance to irregular migrants and asylum seekers on their arrival to Ceuta. The CETI has room for 512 immigrants. Since its inauguration, more than 23,000 people have been sheltered there. The perimeter of the centre is surrounded by a 3 m high fence with video-surveillance cameras on top. It might not look like it but the CETI is actually an open centre. Hence it is not exactly a detention centre. There is a single entrance monitored by private security. Migrants can move in an out of the CETI freely showing an identification card which barcode is contrasted with the reading of the fingerprint (migrants obtain this card after having been identified and registered by Spanish police). But migrants cannot move in and out of Ceuta. The CETI is open to them. But the city is not. Migrants are not confined in the CETI, but they are confined in the city. This makes an important difference between the CETIs and the CIEs (*Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros* [Internment Centres for Foreigners]) to which many migrants will be transferred after their stay in the CETI. Migrants are detained in the CIE, but are sheltered in the CETI.

Asylum application must be processed in one month. After that date, if the application is not successful, an expelling procedure is opened. The opening of an expelling procedure is usually accompanied by the confinement in a CIE that, as said, acts as a migrant detention centre. This means that those migrants in Ceuta who are going to be expelled must be first transferred to a CIE in the Iberian Peninsula, before the expelling is conducted. It is important to note that, since the adoption of the European Directive on common standards and procedures for returning illegally staying third-country nationals,[6] the maximum period of confinement in a migrant detention centre within the Schengen area is 6 months. In the case of Spain, the implementation of the Return Directive extends the period of detention up to 60 days. Beyond that period, if migrants have not been expelled, they are released. They are free but in an irregular situation. They are not deported but their legal status is not regularized. They remain in Spain, but without valid documents to legally stay and work there. They remain in a sort of juridical limbo. For them, the CETI becomes a waiting space that precedes a subsequent waiting space (a CIE in the Iberian Peninsula).

This waiting in-between is an uncertain period of time. The output of this waiting time can imply regularization or the obtaining of refugee status, but can also imply expulsion or repatriation to their countries of origin. Some of those migrants try to find alternative ways to illegally cross to the Iberian Peninsula. Particularly since late 2010, hiding in trucks that transfer trash from Ceuta to the Iberian Peninsula has become a way to exit Ceuta and reach the European continent. Hundreds of migrants have been transferred to the northern shore of the Mediterranean blended with trash (see *El País*, 9 January 2003; *El Mundo*, 11 June 2013). Some of them have died in their attempt to do so. In order to stop this, the boundaries of Ceuta's Waste Transfer Plant are now being patrolled and securitized. This entails a desperate attempt to fight against the uncertainty of waiting and a way to escape the context of involuntary immobility where these migrants are.

Close

In the light of the role it plays vis-à-vis the flows of sub-Saharan immigration to the EU, this chapter suggests that the city of Ceuta can be symbolically depicted as a 'threshold territory': as a space of transit towards the EU which is paradoxically situated already in the EU; as a limbo

6 Directive 2008/115/EC, available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008L0115 (accessed 28 September 2014).

space (a limboscape) between two different EU borders; a waiting area that, despite the increasing danger and strengthening of border controls, still seems to be worth entering for many sub-Saharan migrants. Today, as it occurred during the last decade, when Ceuta's iconic twin metal fencing provided powerful visuality to the Fortress Europe/Gated Community spatial paradigm (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008, 2011; Van Houtum and Pijpers 2007), this non-European EU territory is still (or even more) central in our understanding of how the EU project – as well as (im)mobility dynamics across its external borders – are socio-spatially constructed.

By depicting it as a limboscape, we suggest that Ceuta's spatial allegorical strength helps us deepen our conceptualization of the current landscape of EU external socio-spatial b/ordering. In concrete terms, we suggest that the limboscape profile of this EU territory embodies now an icon of the process of scattered and proliferating spatialization through which the human-blacklisting practices (Van Houtum 2010a) of EU border and migration management operate. It sheds light on the diffuse territorial scenery of what we might define as the process of migrant purgation (the waiting between the 'hell' of repatriation and the 'heaven' of regularization) that the geopolitics of EU b/ordering fabricates.

The CETI of Ceuta is sometimes described as a sweet prison by those who live there. As it has been argued, it is in fact an open centre. It is not exactly a detention camp/centre. It is not a prison. Just almost – a sugared version of it, one might say. CETI residents can get in and out of the centre as they wish. And the city functions as the CETI's backyard. Immigrants can move freely within the city. But they cannot freely leave it. They are trapped, immobilized in Ceuta. Hence, Ceuta as a whole works as an intermediate territory, as a transitional space. It is a threshold, a waiting area of 19.5 square km where the legal status of immigrants (the granting or denial of the right of access to the EU) is to be resolved, and where the interpretation of Schengen's legal apparatus will determine the extent to which they deserve to have right to free mobility. It entails, therefore, a space/time of provisional oblivion between the heaven of regularization and the hell of repatriation/deportation. It is the region of the diffuse margins between EU space and non-EU space that serves as the temporary abode for those who have managed to irregularly cross the EU external border but have not yet received the baptism or the conviction of the Schengen law. It is a limboscape.

The 'purgatory geopolitics' deployed by the EU b/ordering regime on this particular African territory – often adopting much stricter fashions elsewhere – reverberates simultaneously all over the dispersing geographies that currently conform the outer border of the European Union. The Ceuta case, therefore, illustrates the propagation of a deterritorializing archipelago-like EU landscape of limbos (See Ferrer-Gallardo and Albet-Mas 2013). All together, they incarnate a limbo(land)scape encompassing a constellation of EU and non-EU territories where the selection of access to the EU is performed. Transitional spaces where migrants must undergo the uncertain process of waiting before the EU law. That is where the human-blacklisting bureaucratic machinery of the Schengen regime operates (Van Houtum 2010); the grey zones where an essential part of the EU project is socio-spatially fabricated.

As it did during the last decade when the militarization of its land border shed light to the physical reinforcement of the EU external border, today Ceuta also illuminates the logic of sprinkling of territories of exception (of socio-spatial almostness) the EU is currently engaged in. It invites to keep on digging on the debate about the dissemination of ubiquitous waiting areas where EU practices of socio-spatial b/ordering develop.

So far, much scholarly research has focused on mobility dynamics across the borders of Ceuta. In contrast, forced immobility dynamics within Ceuta remain conceptually underexplored and so does the impact it has on the perceptions and preferences of immigrants whose planned or

aspirational trajectories include the crossing the borders of the EU-African territory Ceuta. This contribution has attempted to draw some attention on this regard.

The Mobility Partnership signed between the EU and Morocco in June 2013, which might eventually pave the way to the signing of a Readmission Agreement by Morocco, could transform this border dynamic in the near future. Whether this Readmission Agreement is signed or not will certainly condition the here described limboscape profile of the North African EU city of Ceuta. If it is indeed signed, it might also eventually transform the very essence of the Ceuta border as an attractive threshold to be crossed for irregular migrants in their trajectory to the EU.

References

Alioua, M. 2008. “La migration transnationale – logique individuelle dans l’espace national: L’exemple des transmigrants subsahariens à l’épreuve de l’externalisation de la gestion des flux migratoires au Maroc.” *Social Science Information* 47 (4): 697–713.

Alscher, S. 2005. “Knocking at the Doors of ‘Fortress Europe’: Migration and Border Control in Southern Spain and Eastern Poland.” CCIS Working Paper 126. San Diego: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies.

APDHA (Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía). 2012. *Derechos humanos en la frontera sur*. Sevilla: APDHA.

Barros, L., M. Lahlou, C. Escoffier, P. Pumares, and P. Ruspini. 2002. “L’immigration irrégulière subsaharienne à travers et vers le Maroc.” Cahier des migraciones internationales 54F. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Berriane, M., and M. Aderghal. 2009. *Etat de la recherche sur les migrations internationales à partir, vers et à travers le Maroc.* Rabat: Equipe de Recherche sur la Région et la Régionalisation.

Bialasiewicz, L. 2011. “Borders, Above All?” *Political Geography* 30 (6): 299–300.

Blanchard, E., and A.S. Wender, eds. 2007. *Guerre aux migrants: Le livre noir de Ceuta et Melilla*. Paris: Syllepse.

Bredeloup, S. 2012. “Sahara Transit: Times, Spaces, People.” *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 457–67.

Carling, J. 2007. “Migration Control and Migrant Fatalities at the Spanish-African Borders.” *International Migration Review* 41 (2): 316–43.

Casas-Cortes, M., S. Cobarrubias, and J. Pickles. 2013. “Re-Bordering the Neighbourhood: Europe’s Emerging Geographies of Non-Accession Integration.” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20 (1): 37–58.

Collyer, M. 2007. “In-Between Places: Trans-Saharan Transit Migrants in Morocco and the Fragmented Journey to Europe.” *Antipode* 39 (4): 668–90.

Collyer, M., and H. de Haas. 2012. “Developing Dynamic Categorisations of Transit Migration.” *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 468–81.

Collyer, M., F. Düvell, and H. de Haas. 2012. “Critical Approaches to Transit Migration.” *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 407–14.

Cuttitta, P. 2012. *Lo spettacolo del confine: Lampedusa tra produzione e messa in scena della frontiera*. Milan: Mimesis.

De Haas, H. 2008. “Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union: An Overview of Recent Trends.” IOM Migration Research Series 32. Geneva: International Organization of Migration.

Driessen, H. 1996. "The 'New Immigration' and the Transformation of the European-African Frontier." In *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, edited by T.M. Wilson and H. Donnan, 96–116. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Düvell, F., ed. 2005. *Illegal Immigration in Europe: Beyond Control*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

_____ . 2012. "Transit Migration: A Blurred and Politicised Concept." *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 415–27.

EC (European Commission). 2005. "Visit to Ceuta and Melilla – Mission Report: Technical Mission to Morocco on Illegal immigration, 7th October–11th October 2005." *Europa Press Releases Database*, 19 October. Accessed 27 September 2014. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-05-380_en.htm.

_____ . 2013. "Migration and Mobility Partnership Signed between the EU and Morocco." *Europa Press Releases Database*, 7 June. Accessed 27 September 2014. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-513_en.htm.

Fekete, L. 2004. "Deaths at Europe's Borders." *Race and Class* 45 (4): 75–89.

Ferrer-Gallardo, X. 2008. "The Spanish–Moroccan Border Complex: Processes of Geopolitical, Functional and Symbolic Rebordering." *Political Geography* 27: 301–21.

_____ . 2011. "Territorial (Dis)continuity Dynamics between Ceuta and Morocco: Conflictual Fortification vis-à-vis Cooperative Interaction at the EU Border in Africa." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 102 (1): 24–38.

Ferrer-Gallardo, X., and A. Albet-Mas. 2013. 'EU-Limboscapes: Ceuta and the Proliferation of Migrant Detention Spaces across the European Union." *European Urban and Regional Studies*. Accessed 27 September 2014. doi: 10.1177/0969776413508766.

Ferrero-Turrión, R., and A. López-Sala. 2012. "Fronteras y seguridad en el Mediterráneo." In *Fronteras en movimiento: Migraciones hacia la Unión Europea en el contexto Mediterráneo*, edited by R. Zapata-Barrero and X. Ferrer-Gallardo, 229–54. Barcelona: Bellaterra.

Frontex. 2012. *FRAN Quarterly: Quarter 4 October–December 2012*. Warsaw: Frontex.

_____ . 2014. *FRAN Quarterly: Quarter 3 July–September 2013.* Warsaw: Frontex.

GADEM. 2012. "Recrudescence de la repression envers les migrants au Maroc: Une violence qu'on croyait révolue." *GADEM*, 23 October. Accessed 26 January 2013. http://www.gadem-asso.org/Recrudescence-de-la-repression,147.

Godenau, D., and V.M. Zapata-Hernández. 2008. "The Case of the Canary Islands (Spain): A Region of Transit between Africa and Europe." In *Immigration Flows and the Management of the EU's Southern Maritime Borders*, edited by G. Pinyol, 13–44. Barcelona: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs.

Gold, P. 1999. "Immigration into the European Union via the Spanish Enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla: A Reflection of Regional Economic Disparities." *Mediterranean Politics* 4 (3): 23–36.

_____ . 2000. *Europe or Africa? A Contemporary Study of the Spanish North African Enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Khachani, M. 2006. *La emigración subsahariana: Marruecos como espacio de tránsito*. Barcelona: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs.

Kitagawa, S. 2011. "Geographies of Migration across and beyond Europe: The Camp and the Road of Movements." In *Europe in the World: EU Geopolitics and the Making of European Space*, edited by L. Bialasiewicz, 201–22. Farnham: Ashgate.

Lahlou, M. 2005. "Les migrations irrégulières entre le Maghreb et l'Union européenne: évolutions récentes." CARIM Research Report 2005/03. Florence: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

López-Sala, A., and V. Esteban-Sánchez. 2007. "The Farthest Southern Border of Europe: Immigration and Politics in the Canary Islands?" *Revista migraciones internacionales* 4 (1): 87–110.

____ . 2010. "La nueva arquitectura política del control migratorio en la frontera marítima del suroeste de Europa: Los casos de España y Malta." In *Migraciones y fronteras: Nuevos contornos para la movilidad internacional*, edited by M.E. Anguiano and A.M. López-Sala, 75–102. Barcelona: Icaria.

Migreurop. 2009. *Atlas des migrants en Europe: Géographie critique des politiques migratoires*. Paris: Armand Colin.

MSF-E (Médecins Sans Frontières Espagne). 2005. "Violence et immigration: Rapport sur l'immigration d'origine subsaharienne (ISS) en situation irrégulière au Maroc." *Médecins Sans Frontières*, 29 September. Accessed 18 January 2013. http://www.msf.fr/sites/www.msf.fr/files/2005-09-29-MSFE.pdf.

Mutlu, C.E., and C.C. Leite. 2012. "Dark Side of the Rock: Borders, Exceptionalism, and the Precarious Case of Ceuta and Melilla." *Eurasia Border Review* 3 (2): 21–39.

Pinyol, G. 2012. "¿Una oportunidad perdida? La construcción de un escenario euroafricano de migraciones y su impacto en las fronteras exteriores de la Unión Europea." In *Fronteras en movimiento: Migraciones hacia la Unión Europea en el contexto Mediterráneo*, edited by R. Zapata-Barrero and X. Ferrer-Gallardo, 255–80. Barcelona: Bellaterra.

Planet Contreras, A.I. 1998. *Melilla y Ceuta: Espacios Frontera Hispano-Marroquíes.* Melilla: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia.

____ . 2002. "La frontière comme ressource: Le cas de Ceuta et Melilla." In *La Méditerranée des réseaux: Marchands, entrepreneurs et migrants entre l'Europe et le Maghreb*, edited by J. Césari, 267–81. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose.

Saddiki, S. 2010. "Ceuta and Melilla Fences: A EU Multidimensional Border." Paper presented at the ISA Annual Convention "Theory vs. Policy? Connecting Scholars and Practitioners", 17–20 February. New Orleans: International Studies Association.

Schapendonk, J. 2012. "Migrants' Im/Mobilities on Their Way to the EU: Lost in Transit?" *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 103 (5): 577–83.

Soddu, P. 2002. *Inmigración extra-comunitaria en Europa: El caso de Ceuta y Melilla.* Ceuta: Archivo Central.

Soddu, P. 2006. "Ceuta and Melilla: Security, Human Rights and Frontier Control." In *The Mediterranean Yearbook Med. 2006*, 212–14. Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània.

Triandafyllidou, A. 2010. "Control de la inmigración en el sur de Europa (1ª parte): Estrategias de 'cerco' (fencing)." *ARI* 7.

Triandafyllidou, A., and T. Maraukis. 2008. "The Case of the Greek Islands: The Challenge of Migration at the EU's Southeastern Sea Borders." In *Immigration Flows and the Management of the EU's Southern Maritime Borders*, edited by G. Pinyol, 63–82. Barcelona: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs.

Van der Velde, M., and T. van Naerssen. 2011. "People, Borders, Trajectories: An Approach to Cross-Border Mobility and Immobility in and to the European Union." *Area* 43 (2): 218–24.

Van Houtum, H. 2010a. "Human Blacklisting: The Global Apartheid of the EU's External Border Regime." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (6): 957–76.

____ . 2010b. "Waiting before the Law: Kafka on the Border." *Social and Legal Studies* 19 (3): 285–97.

Van Houtum, H., and R. Pijpers. 2007. "The European Union as a Gated Community: The Two-Faced Border and Immigration Regime of the EU." *Antipode* 39 (2): 291–309.

Wender, S. 2004. *La situation alarmante des migrants subsahariens au Maroc et les consequences des politiques de l'union Europeene*. Paris: Cimade.

Zapata-Barrero, R., and X. Ferrer-Gallardo, eds. 2012. *Fronteras en movimiento: Migraciones hacia la Unión Europea en el contexto Mediterráneo*. Barcelona: Bellaterra.

Zaragoza, J. 2012. "Justicia global y externalización de políticas migratorias: El caso español." In *Fronteras en movimiento: Migraciones hacia la Unión Europea en el contexto Mediterráneo*, edited by R. Zapata-Barrero and X. Ferrer-Gallardo, 143–70. Barcelona: Bellaterra.