

SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN CEUTA, SPAIN: EFFECTS OF A LOW-DENSITY HINTERLAND ON A BORDER ENCLAVE

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Abstract

Located in a strategic geopolitical location on the north coast of Africa, the enclave of Ceuta is a highly-researched border settlement. This is largely due to its specificity and being the unique tangible border between the European Union (EU) and Africa. As a Spanish city it is part of the UE; however, it is located on the African continent and it does not have a land connection with Europe. What is less studied is its development as an urban environment, which is necessary to understand the evolution of Ceuta in relation to the border.

Much of its uniqueness is due to the Kingdom of Morocco's decision to not recognise the eight-kilometre long border and the lack of urban development and density on the Moroccan side of the border. The border and its six meter high barbed wire fence have created a situation where the movement of people and goods has forced the economy to adapt to written and unwritten laws. As a result, the border can be considered as a permeable membrane for informal movements and economic activities, while it serves as a strong barrier that limits the undesired flows originated from south-north migrations.

Due to the shortage of land for growth and development within Ceuta, lack of development on the Moroccan side could be considered an opportunity to resolve social and spatial injustices. In order to improve community conditions and territorial continuity, centripetal strategies to densify and improve the built environment are necessary and these must be taken at the local level, where answers to social and community problems are found.

Keywords: Urban Transformations; Borderland Development; Urban Planning

1. Introduction/Framework

A border is a “line of separation and contact between two or more States” (Lacoste 1995) and occurs when there is a clear discontinuity between political or socio-economic spaces that belong to different countries. The division may not only be a territorial discontinuity, it may have cultural, economic, ethnic, or religious characteristics that may or may not coincide with common geographical boundaries.

Borderlands, the land immediately surrounding the border on each side of the line of separation, are areas of great complexity. This is due to convergent economic, migratory and geopolitical interests, as the recurrent crisis affects some strategically located territories worldwide. Attention on border studies has been evolving since the '90s. However, greater attention has been given to the places where these phenomena are more developed (e.g., border regions, border landscapes). With the more recent definition of border-scapes, border regions have come to be understood as a relational complex; they are seen as vital spaces with multiple dynamics that make a fixed vision outdated. A focus on spatiality is critical to understanding the complex relationships that occur around borders (Kuram Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007, Brambilla 2014).

The central interest of socio-spatial studies has gradually been focusing on cities, where the complexities of human life are expressed and are interrelated. Urban centres, with growing populations and concentrations of economic resources, make cities a privileged place to study and understand the challenges and complex dynamics.

The existence of a border in an urban context generates conflicts and dualities and also exposes the richness of different cultures that live in permanent contact. It is for this reason that urban planning, which is understood as the instrument that defines the spaces where these relationships occur, acquires significance. Urban planning is not only the result, it is the conditioning factor of these dynamics (Cimadomo 2015a). Focusing on the spatial aspects does not mean dispensing with social, political, and anthropological dimensions of any social group and geographical context, assuming that the origin of the current configurations is complex and closely linked to multiple layers that overlap each other. Considering architecture and planning vehicular both to the transformations of the territory and the improvement of the life of its inhabitants--aspects with valuable nuances in border areas--the analysis of the processes in act in Ceuta becomes more relevant (Cimadomo 2017).

Despite specific historical and social legacies, two forms of intervention in borderland urban planning have been recognised. The first is related to the negative identification of the partitioning element. Pre-existing historical and geographical constrictions generate low-density strips, which create a fracture in the territory and everyday life. Both cross-border communities expand their physical fabric away from the border, relegating the contact zone to functions and services of less interest to the city. The feeling of indifference to the 'other' inhibits opportunities that could alleviate poverty and unemployment, forcing individual citizens to devise independent ways to live with border conditions. One of many examples of this form of development is found on the border between the UK and Spain, derived by the existence of the colony of Gibraltar and its counterpart La Línea de la Concepción (Cimadomo 2015b).

The second form of intervention is based on the mutual advantages that twin cities--each belonging to different nations but with direct physical contact--can develop, despite good or bad relations between nation-states. This condition acknowledges the transformations of urban spaces that originated due to different pressures and asymmetries and the borderland that is able to be reinvented as an area where hybridisation and blending of cultures can offer new cultural identities. This does not mean that the many problems that result from immigration, smuggling, and border activities are absent. The Faixa da Fronteira experience in Brazil, a participative program aimed at strengthening links with Paraguayan citizens, is possibly the most noted example of 'good borders' (Sartori de Almeida Prado 2016). The increasing development of twin cities on the US-Mexican border--often based on complementary

activities-is also of note as it permits complementary flourishing of both independent realities despite the permanent political conflict at the base of the growth (Cimadomo 2017, Nugent 2012).

The specific reality of Ceuta is one of the most tense border enclaves. Local border tension originates from the meeting of two countries with different levels of development and the specificity of an external border of the European Community located on the African continent. Turchetti (2018) considers it a geopolitical laboratory where, in addition to experiencing the European Neighbourhood Policy in collaboration with the Maghrebi country, different permeability criteria are experienced on the border with three main actors with often conflicting interests. The situation is made more tense with the permanent claim by the Kingdom of Morocco for the return of the territory of Ceuta along with the city of Melilla (Pérez González 2010). Despite Ceuta not being included among the list of recognized colonized territories in 1975 at the United Nations Special Committee for Decolonization, a permanent situation of political revindication persists. All these factors, together with the repeated attempts of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa to reach European territory, make Ceuta a unique case study for border analysis.

Following the entry of Spain into the European Union in 1986 and the Schengen Area in 1991, the uniqueness of Ceuta increased because it and the Spanish city of Melilla are the only European enclaves on the African continent. Hence, it became a privileged laboratory to examine specific issues in relation to unique border conditions: migrations (Alscher 2005, Andersson 2012, Andersson 2014, Cimadomo and Martínez Ponce 2006, Driessen 1992, Pallister-Wilkins 2017, Pijpers and Van Houtum 2005, van Moorsel 2016), human rights (APDHA 2004, Amnesty International 2006, AEDH 2014), informal economies (Fuentes Lara 2016, 2017), geopolitical effects (Ferrer-Gallardo 2006, Figueredo 2011), and anthropological effects (Moscoso García 2015, Pulido Acosta and Herrera Clavero 2015, González Enríquez 2007, González Enríquez 2008, Koski Karell 2014, Olmedo-Alguacil et al. 2014). It is from the analysis of Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo (2008) that a series of works focusing on the socio-spatial aspects of Ceuta and its territory begin to be developed, and to which this chapter provides continuity.

2. Historical background and theoretical approach to the study of Ceuta's borderland

Ceuta's historic development stems from its role as a Portuguese fortress in North Africa since 1415. It served as a strategic enclave in the Strait of Gibraltar, near the southern coast of the Iberian Peninsula. With a bay protected from the winds, it was a conducive shelter to disembark ships. Its bay, the steep coasts, and the narrow isthmus connecting it with the inland made it easy to defend. Portugal became part of the Spanish kingdom in 1580; however, after Portuguese independence in 1640, Ceuta preferred to remain under Spanish rule and was officialized by the Treaty of Lisbon in 1668. Spain focused on maintaining Ceuta as a strong defence rather than expanding into the African continent (**Figure 1**).

Any further territorial expansion into the African continent could not be carried out without displacing the defensive structure from the isthmus, which would have required a greater effort to effectively defend. Despite its strategic interest, Ceuta's main function was a penal colony for long-term prisoners. This was a function that required small, tightly delimited and controlled spaces and reducing as much as possible the contact with the civil population.

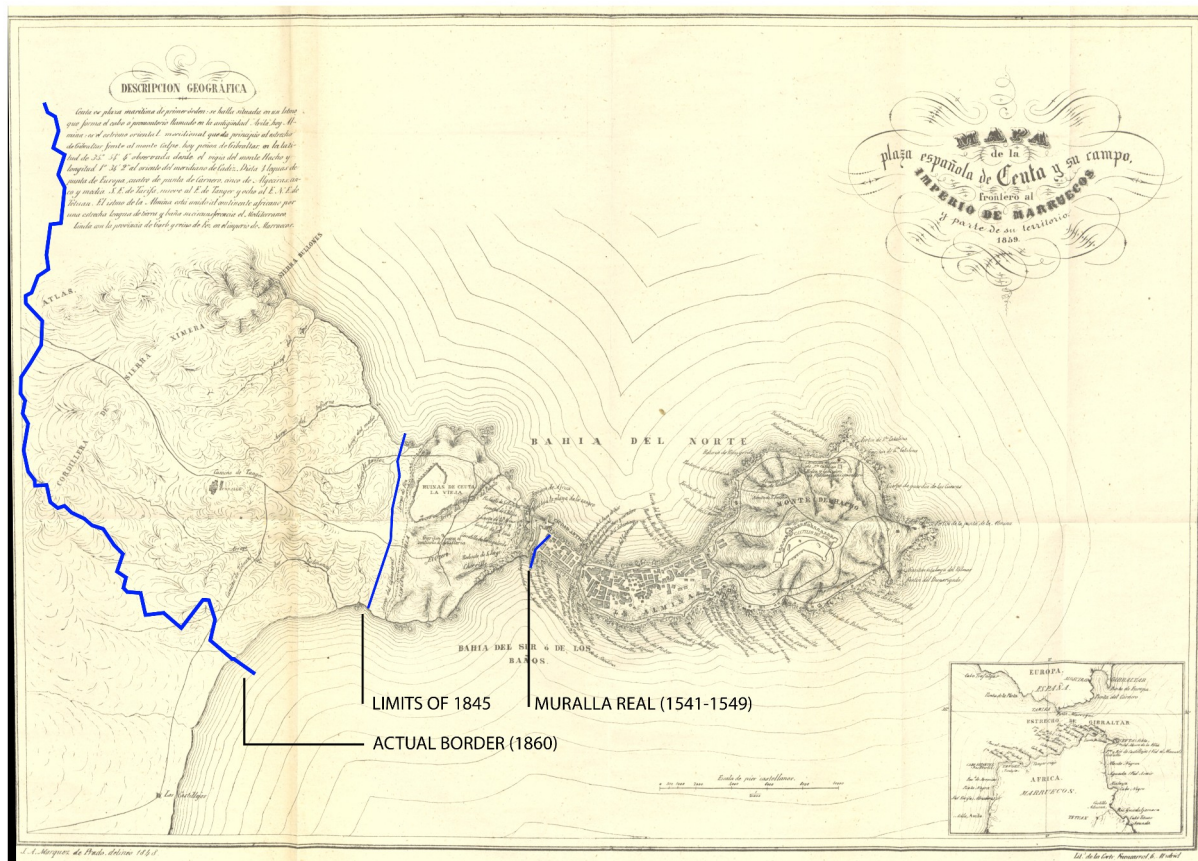


Figure 1. Ceuta in 1856 with borders of different treaties overlaid. Original map by José A. Márquez de Prado. British Library, Public Domain.

The first substantial modification of the spatial context of the city of Ceuta was made at the end of the African War in 1860, which was triggered by a Spanish initiative a year earlier because of the continuous attacks on the troops stationed there. The Wad-Ras treaty of 1860, which ended the conflict, proscribed compensations to be paid by Morocco to Spain and included the extension of the territories of Ceuta and Melilla to Spain in perpetuity. This is the first definition of the Ceuta territory that left no ambiguities; previous agreements (i.e., the Hispano-Moroccan Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1767, the Meknès Peace Treaty of 1799, the Agreement of Limits of 1845) were indefinite, which made interpretation difficult (Reyner 1963). In these previous agreements, there were differences between the Spanish and Moroccan versions that defined the size of the land area ceded to Spain and the transfer formula—depending upon the version, the secession was provisional, usufruct, or outright ownership. The most fundamental challenge was the interpretation of Muslim law regarding the concept of border, which was understood as an intermediate space of joint, nonexclusive use, which is distinctly different from the concept of a border in Western cultures (Vilar 2003:275).

Ceuta flourished with the Spanish occupation of the north of Morocco after the French-Spanish treaty of 1912. Areas north and south of Morocco were assigned to Spain—the Spanish protectorate—and the rest of the country fell under French administration while Tangier received a special status. After 1956, when Spain relinquished the Moroccan Protectorate and it gained independence, the last stage of the city began. This period has been highlighted by insecurity resulting from the disappearance of trade linked to the presence of displaced military troops, the consequent resignation of the private sector to undertake investments, and the chronic lack of consumer demand generated in Ceuta. To all this, we must add the failure of the national urban plans, Plan General de Ordenación Urbana (PGOU), which will be examined later in the chapter. Several international events of the latter half of the 20th century directly influenced the development of Ceuta. These include the closing of the Gibraltar border gate from June 1969 to December 1982, which favoured the commercial development of Ceuta and the closure of the Suez Canal between 1967 and 1975 as a result of Egyptian-Israeli conflict, which meant a drastic reduction of the maritime traffic that docked at this port.

The integration of Spain into the European Union in 1986 is the last point of inflexion. It was preceded by the promulgation of the first Spanish immigration law one year earlier when a large sector of Ceuta's population was illegal residents. The new immigration law negatively impacted them because its rigidity made it difficult to justify requirements to regularize their situation. Although this population was already settled in the Spanish territory, it is the first significant conflict in Ceuta related to migration. From this moment the significance of the border was reinforced as it became militarised to control migration and commercial movement between the two countries. The situation was made more permanent with the Treatise of Schengen in 1991 and further militarization of the border in 1995 (Planet Contreras, 1998).

Despite Ceuta's importance as a magnet for migrants as a part of Schengenland on the African continent, and for the trading of goods thanks to the tax reductions established by the Spanish government, the territorial strip on the Moroccan side of the border is sparsely inhabited (Pérez González 2010). In fact, a first geographic analysis of the territory recognises how the urban development moves away from the borderline, creating a void-close to deterritorialization-for better control of the border (Haesbaert 2005). The Kingdom of Morocco had no interest in border control; its recognition of the border would be politically understood as tacit recognition of its existence. Moreover, the strategy applied makes periodic claims for Spain to decolonise the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. In many ways this contradicts the receipt of significant funding within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy as a compensation for removing migratory pressures from the European border, which is often with summary deportations that are in breach of the most basic criteria of justice and humanity.

Analysing the border from a transcalar approach demonstrates that, at the macro scale, there are no significant effects or valuable results to point out. There are no urban centres on Moroccan land close to the border. The closest is the town of Fnidaq, about eight kilometres from the Tarajal border crossing. It is historically a sparsely populated area with an absence of development that is characteristic of the entire territory. The only cities of relevance are Tetuan and Larache, although at a considerable distance. Even the macro port operation of Tanger Med, closer to Ceuta than to Tanger itself and which is thought to be capable of robbing Gibraltar and Algeciras of their port leadership in the area, does not increase employment and development rates that would boost the economy. Spain's economic strength, which is greater than Morocco's, does not foster an increase in Spanish companies' interest in expanding

activities in the Moroccan territory. The absence of a dense hinterland at the border further limits the dynamics that the asymmetries any border context might promote. No references or testimonies have been found that can support any hypothesis regarding the lack of density on the Moroccan side of the border apart from the historic rural character of the territory combined with a steep topography characterised by mountainous groups that prevail over the plains.

Analysing the microscale, save for legal and humanitarian aspects, there are no spatial features worthy of note. 'Carrier' women, who thanks to an extraordinary Schengen permit granted to residents of the provinces of Tetouan and Nador, can freely enter Ceuta; they have a limited effect on the territory's economy. The industrial polygon of Tarajal, near the border port with Morocco which is not a commercial customs checkpoint due to Morocco's attempts to recover rights on the enclave, receives the visits of the carrier women or *porteadoras*, who return immediately to Morocco to unload the bundles of goods they carry. They repeat this operation as many times as possible until the closing time of the Biutz bridge access, which was built expressly for this illegal but tolerated activity (Buoli 2014, Fuentes Lara 2017). Activities such as this, that Buoli calls informal trade practices, are in reality a planned organisation that takes advantage of a hole in the Schengen agreement. Goods are brought from Ceuta, which has lower taxation than the rest of Spain, to Morocco—with lower macroeconomic indicators—where they are distributed (de No 2008). The only informal aspect is related to the urban spaces where all the related activities are developed. This process has had few effects on the spatial configuration of the border area of Ceuta, except for some conflict close to the Principe Felipe public school located in this area. The proximity of the school to the border and to the area of activity of carriers, brings tensions for the long queues and quarrels, traffic jams and delays to pick up students, or extreme litter (Testa 2017).

The most important character to analyse is related to density, a key characteristic of urban and territorial planning. When related to border environments, density acquires greater interest since it is directly related to the different intervening circulation patterns. The concept of 'arrière-pays,' a geopolitical definition to define a spatial environment towards which a port acts as a provider and with which it maintains exchange relations (Lacoste 1995), is useful for this consideration. A comparison between different border realities with diverse retro-territories shows that those areas with a greater density achieve higher development rates. This demonstrates the importance of having a counterpart with which to initiate common projects and commercial exchanges, or develop complementary strategies, like in the case of El Paso (USA)-Ciudad Juárez (México), where a symbiosis between production on the Mexican side and logistic distribution on the US side exists (Cimadomo 2015a). This counterpart relationship is relevant despite the government-established limitations, tariffs and controls. The effects of the political, social, and economic forces on the territory of Ceuta are multiplied due by the limitations of its location and its physical separation from the rest of the European continent. These effects are especially visible within the urban area of Ceuta. Except for a partial analysis on the preparatory phase of the 2006 Plan (Hernández and Sternberg 2013), there has been no analysis of the figures of planning that have delineated the growth and development of the city. In addition, if border policies are established at a national level, it is at the local level that answers to social and community problems can be given to improve community lives and conditions. An analysis of urban planning developed in the city since 1945 helps to explain strategies that have been implemented to solve or improve the borderland condition or to take advantage of it.

3. Analysis of city planning

The urban development of Ceuta's borderland follows a pattern that was derived from the historical tendency of substitution and displacement from the core of the isthmus (the historic settlement) towards the area outside the defensive wall that was added to the Crown of Spain after the Hispano-Moroccan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. This area, known as the Moorish field (*Campo del Moro* or *Campo exterior* in Spanish), was not occupied permanently by Spain in the beginning and only according to the temporary needs of the colony. Even today the historical defensive system of the enclave (*Muralla de tierra*) is a strong divisive element in socio-economical terms. Immigrants from both Spain and Morocco in the first half of the 20th century generally had low purchasing power and found the Moorish field a suitable place to settle, which generated the neighbourhoods of Benzú, Almadraba and Puntilla. The buildings that they eventually constructed were of very low quality; most often they were self-built. The displacement of the border through time to protect the new possessions also defined the radial development of the neighbourhoods which spread occupying the free areas. This process of displacement generated a phenomenon of expulsion and social inequality, driving the weakest population towards the periphery, a zone with poor infrastructures and services.

The first attempts to structure the growth of the city date between 1927 and 1930 when the north of Africa reached relative peace when the European colonial powers found a balance in their interests in the continent. The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera attempted to resolve the difficulties that Spain permanently faced in Morocco as a way to calm citizens and military forces that were needed to maintain his power. In these years he fostered new investments with railways, highways, new ports and buildings as a way to increase trade and to attract new companies. Many people who abandoned rural Spain found Ceuta to be an attractive destination. Among the urban reforms for the enclave, the winning proposal by Gaspar Blein for the Development of the Plan for the Interior Reform and Expansion of Ceuta of 1930 is remarkable. It proposed expanding the city not through satellite zones as in previous approaches, but with a new centrality, the Plaza de Marruecos. This plaza was a public space connected to the old part of the city and to the outside, fundamentally Tetouan and Tangiers. Blein's plan has been studied exhaustively by García González and Guerrero López (2016) along with the utopian linear city between Ceuta and Tetuán (Daría Príncipe 2008). However, for reasons of economic nature and ownership of the lands of the 'Campo Exterior,' mostly under the control of the army, these proposals failed and were not implemented.

The PGOU of 1945 is perhaps the most significant in the city as the first to be carried out. The plan was by architect Pedro Muguruza Otaño, who at that time served as General Director of Architecture (de Terán 1978:119-125) and was responsible for the development of several urban plans for the cities of the protectorate. Urban planning was seen as a state priority once the Spanish Civil War ended and the Franco dictatorship was established. The objective of the 1945 plan was based on the need to lay foundations for the future growth of the city. Based on exaggerated forecasts of population growth, the plan satisfied predictions with a very dense residential zone for the 'Campo Exterior,' that was diversified with military, industrial, and port functions. The forecasts grossly overestimated population growth from the 60,000 registered in 1945 to 150,000 by the end of the century (Muguruza Otaño 1945), over twice the 75,694 inhabitants of the 2001 census. A relevant and valuable aspect of the planning was its analysis and identification of problems due to the economic interest to increase building in the interior zone, even at the expense of compliance with building codes. The plan looked at

the necessary integration of the urban fabric of the enlarged city with the Muralla de Tierra, which lost its meaning of defensive limit that had characterised it in previous centuries.

Regarding the outer border, no actions were contemplated, as would be logical to expect for the historical moment and the reduced density, still far from the expanding urban area. The concomitant control of Spain over the Northern Protectorate of Morocco also removed pressures and border conflicts. The connections of the city with the outer territory were based on those already existing, which would be consolidated over the years, and on the rail system connecting Ceuta with Tetouan, eventually closed in 1956. Overlapping the 1845 boundaries with the urban fabric of the city, it is possible to recognise how the city's highest density corresponds to these limits, with the outer field being less densely constructed (**Figure 2**).

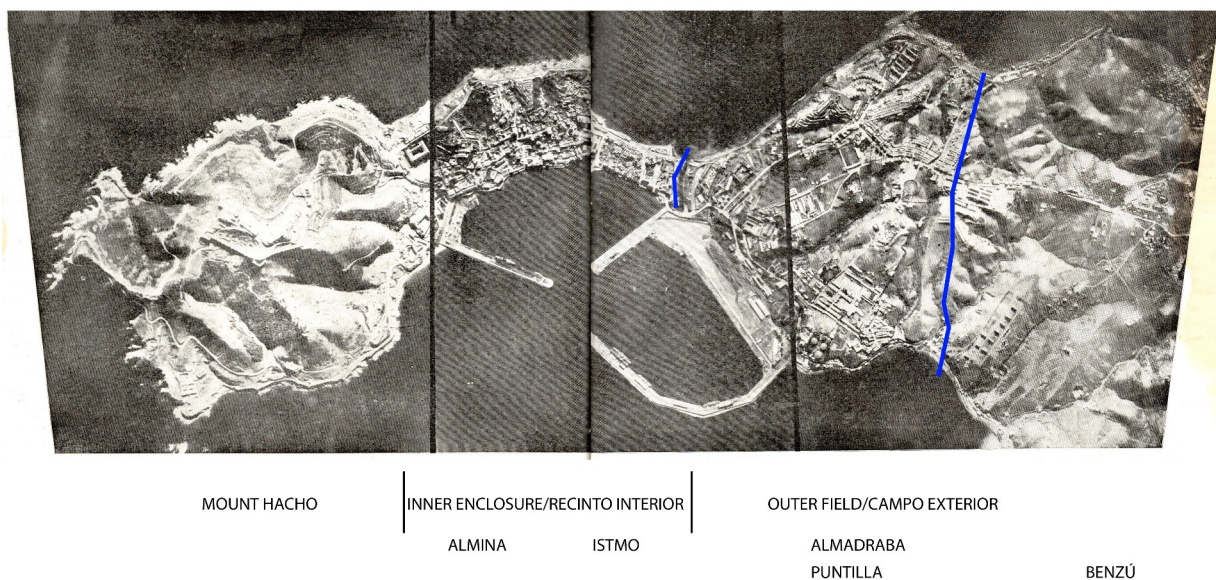


Figure 2. Aerial photography of Ceuta around 1945, with identification of the main areas and neighbourhoods. From *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* 44, 1945. Public Domain.

Remnants of the plan as defined in the technical document are still recognisable. Three distinct sectors are evident: (1) Mount Hacho, the mythological column of Hercules, a topographically rugged area that ensured preservation as a natural space, focused on tourism, and very-low-density uses; (2) the inner enclosure 'Recinto interior,' dedicated to residential and public institutional uses and completely occupied although with meagre quality buildings and in need of new alignments, road connections, and renovation; and (3) the 'Campo exterior,' which was of irregular topography and could be used for new settlements with unbuildable topographic areas reserved for green space. This third area, the 'Campo exterior,' is where port and military installations were located. It is also the area with the potential for the highest building density and the greatest likelihood to consolidate and improve existing spontaneous neighbourhoods (**Figure 3a**). These informal settlements (Benzú, Almadraba, Puntilla among others)

were close to the existing military and industrial facilities, so it is easy to understand their distribution. The plan was completed with the 'Normas Subsidiarias y Complementarias' of 1975, which shortly after, with the National Land Law of 1975, became obsolete.

After several planning attempts in the 1980s, a new plan authored by the architects Fernando de Terán Troyano and Antonio Pimenta Cilleruelo was implemented in 1992. The period when it was developed corresponds with the enactment of the first Law of Immigration leading to the first immigration conflicts in the enclave (Planet Contreras 1998). It is interesting to contemplate the guidelines the plan established about the border in this new context. The significance of this planning also lies in that it was drafted at a time when there was uncontrolled growth of informal neighbourhoods, whose conditions worsened for the increasing number of inhabitants due to the chronic lack of public infrastructures. The problems of the existing marginal neighbourhoods of Principe Alfonso and Benzú and those in closer contact with the south and north border ports were the most complex. Even 'La Cabililla,' a small rural outpost of about 20 families who had to cross the Moroccan border to go to work is identified (Ayuntamiento de Ceuta 1992). Although not specifically mentioned in the planning document analysis, the area's problems were generally due to its proximity to the border and the resulting patterns of circulation. Although the border is a problem of national relevance, it is at the local level where answers can be offered to improve habitability and social wellness. In the planning documents, the border is not analysed; however, it affects urban areas and their population at its southern and northern extremes (**Figure 3b**). This lack of analysis led to limited effects in the improvement of neighbourhoods, as the real causes at the basis of existing marginality are not correctly understood.

In 2014 the preparatory planning phase (Avance) that defines the modifications of the territorial model of Ceuta for the following years was approved. This early phase of planning is required by Spanish regulations to replace earlier plans. It has administrative effects on the policies to implement in the later phases of planning development. In this way it may be seen as a programmatic document that also includes a phase of public consultation. The intentions show the willingness not only to establish strategic axes that allow the development of activities that create greater opportunities for the city with a transformation that completely reconsiders territorial planning, but also to improve the consolidated historic centre with its transformation and requalification. It is valuable to highlight some of the points presented in the memory of the document in relation to the role of Ceuta in the regional context. The most interesting objective of the plan is the aim to establish the city as a protagonist in the territorial rebalancing, seeking "to offer itself as an attractive space to live, to visit or to invest, to citizens of nearby urban regions" (Ayuntamiento de Ceuta, 2014:16).

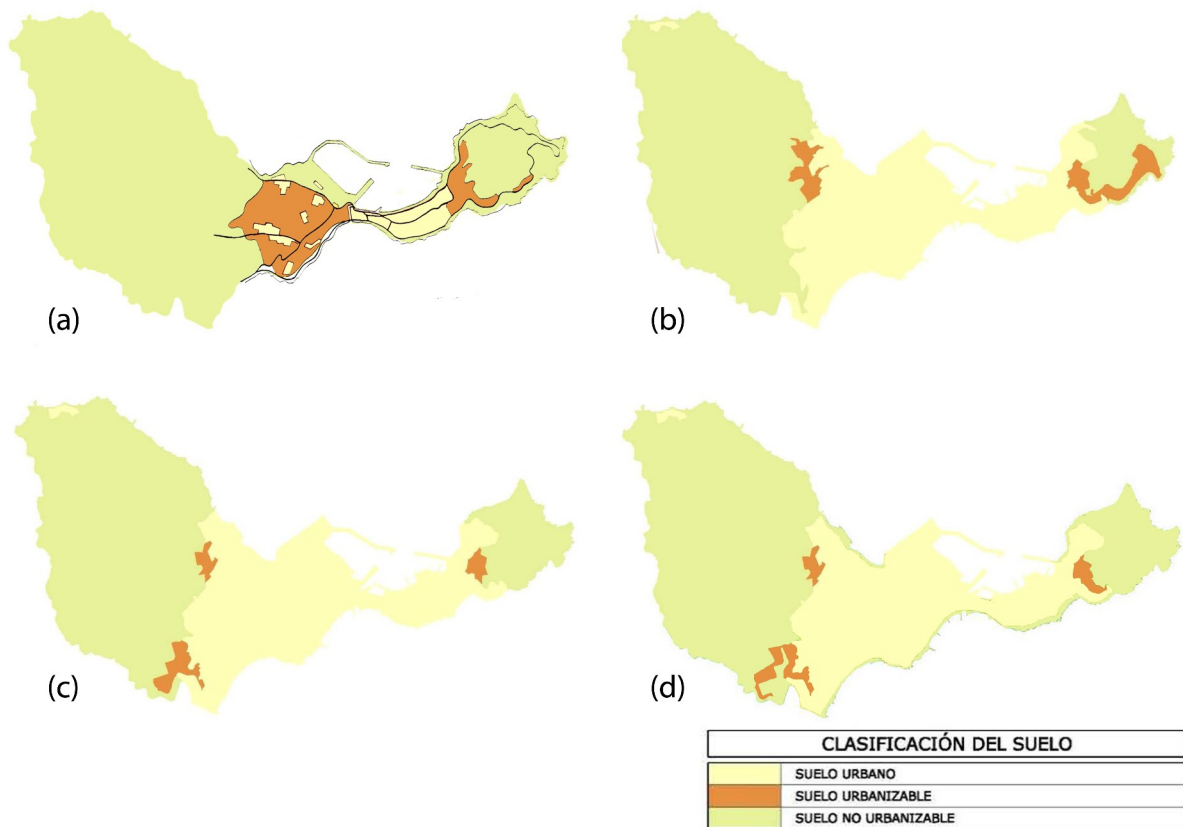


Figure 3. (a) Urban Plan of 1945 by Pero Muguruza Otaño. (b) Urban Plan of 1992 by Fernando de Terán and Antonio Pimienta. (c) Avance of 2014 by PROINTEC. (d) Avance of 2016. Edition of images from the originals published in the technical documents of Ayuntamiento de Ceuta.

The document does not clarify if it refers to EU territory and European citizens of the southern regions of Spain or to the closest regions of Morocco. The model envisages increasing the density of the existing urban fabric, and filling of the voids left by the numerous military facilities. It may be defined as a centripetal growth strategy which, although not clearly stated, shows a preference for the African region. (Ayuntamiento de Ceuta, 2012:44, Cimadomo 2015b).

A single strategic operation in the border environment warrants notation: the plan proposes expanding an urban area between the border and the Principe Alfonso neighbourhood, the most conflictive in the entire city (Rodríguez 2014). The neighbourhood is located north of the custom port of Tarajal and built close to the fort that historically defended the city. Principe Alfonso has experienced a transformation during the second half of the 20th century when an Islamic population replaced original settlers. Self-built on a steep hill, it lacks the most basic services expected in a modern neighbourhood. It has become the heart of informality and segregation, making space for illegal activities and smuggling. Given its

position, it is a neighbourhood where migratory and geostrategic policies related to the border could be tested; it offers much for future research and examination.

This document went to public consultation and, according to the municipality, the acceptance of a large number of inputs from the citizens required a revision of the document, which produced a second initial approval of the Avance plan in April of 2016.

The scope of this chapter focuses on analysing specific strategies related to the problems generated by the border. A centripetal strategy based on the inner built environment of the enclave, places less attention on the periphery, in this case areas closest to the border. This increases the socio-economic marginality of these areas. The differences between the two approved documents (Figure 3c and Figure 3d) can be seen in the redistribution of urbanised areas, reducing the one planned in Monte Hacho, and increasing the future development close to the Tarajal border. As of November 2020 the plan is still pending several authorizations to be fully implemented.

The analysis of the different PGOU's of the city of Ceuta shows how the case of Ceuta does not differ from other border realities (Cimadomo 2015a, Cimadomo 2015b). Focusing on the border area, its problems and effects are not fully approached and therefore not resolved. Not only is the border area not studied in the preliminary analysis documents and in the planning proposals, but the territorial strategies, as stated in the document that was approved in 2014, are centripetal. These tend to increase density of the consolidated fabric of the city and leave areas along the border as marginal. It is significant that these documents are the basis for future development of the city. However, unlike other cases where these aspects have radically negative connotations, in the case of Ceuta a different reflection is necessary. The unique history and development of Ceuta warrant a consideration of how each frontier reality is unique and deserves the development of specific solutions.

4. Conclusions

Regardless of the relations and claims of two colonial strongholds and the difficulty of aligning these with modern policies, planning has not addressed the border element. The limited investment in areas in proximity to the border has exacerbated problems and conflicts. In the case of Ceuta, the historical growth of the city has been radial; occupation of the land furthest from the centre and closest to the border is home to the weakest layers of society. The lack of a density in the hinterland in Morocco's territory has also limited growth opportunities.

The city has followed the dynamics established by outdated earlier plans and the effects of colonial relics; they have not resolved past issues and they are unable to resolve the problems of contemporary urban environments (Odendaal 2016). In recent years, this trend has been somehow reversed: altering previous trends with centripetal interventions served as a measure to protect the environment and increase low urban density. **(Figure 4)**



Figure 4. Aerial photography of Ceuta with outlined neighbourhoods and borders.

Highlighting the humanitarian dimension, the border between Spain, the EU, and Morocco has shown within the enclave of Ceuta the greatest impact these elements have. The absence of urban density in the Moroccan territory means that tensions arising from migratory, economic, and socio-political circulation are concentrated within a limited space, the autonomous city of Ceuta. Reversing the traditional vision for this environment and considering it as an excellent opportunity for the autonomous city through careful planning actions could solve many of these problems. It is worth remembering that the city's statute of autonomy promulgated in 1995 facilitates urban planning developments which do not require supervision of higher entities. Despite this ability, the difficulty of promoting the continuation of the new planning document of the Avance initially approved (for the second time) in 2016 is evident. A coherent design of the determinations of the new urban plan taking into consideration the border and the flows it generates, could be a detonator to improve socio-economic conditions based on labour, social, economic and cooperative activities, under what Ferrer-Gallardo (2011) defined a “territorial continuity.” Ethnic and religious conflicts, particularly between Catholics and Arabs, despite their coexistence and relative absence of significant disorder (González Enríquez 2007, Moffette 2013), could be solved with improvements in transportation and urban fabric, renovation of basic infrastructure, and increase in the permeability of segregated neighbourhoods like Principe Alfonso. These are all aspects that are mentioned in the Avance and are therefore already recognised by the Municipality. They could become a reality of the next plan.

Another characteristic aspect of the Ceuta border is the right of Moroccans to a daily visa to Ceuta. This allows them to transport goods across the border and to engage in domestic service and construction. Although technically illegal, these activities are tolerated under the Schengen agreement since they bring benefit to the Ceuta collective and to Morocco. Despite the potential of these illegal activities to create instability and threaten the life of the city (Gold 2001:171), it would be convenient to address this long-term informality and improve conditions under which these occur. This would increase security and ensure coexistence and benefits for both parties. Better controlled conditions would increase the

acceptance of border activities that many consider chaotic. Defining adequate spaces to develop these activities and providing resting places and eliminating the interference with more traditional activities could easily be accomplished within an urban plan. Taking into account daily movement and circulation of people and goods and areas of the city that are affected, it is feasible to separate them, permit coexistence with other activities, and avoid conflict.

These policies would indirectly improve the conditions of daily migrants and, as a consequence, the socio-spatial conditions on the “other side of the border.” All approaches should be developed through a flexible framework, something difficult to envision in Spanish urban plans. Short-term colonisation and medium-term consolidation strategies following the city-forming protocol would have better implementation results. In addition, it would create a stronger demand and reactivation (Carta et al. 2016). Flexible dynamics and mutant spaces could replace fixed and centralised ideas of space and improve density on the Moroccan side of the border. Falk (2000) considers that a pivotal change is to move from a space-centred conception to one based on time where circulation has a relevant role and decreases the importance of territoriality in defining community identity. Something that has a special value, also if we consider the demographic growth of the Islamic ethnic group. Recognizing the historical difficulties of Ceuta to adopt urban plans that respond to the contemporary and future necessities of the city, approaching solutions to the circulation of flows with short and mid-term strategies, also improving the conditions of safety for the citizens and the development of their activities, could be an innovative way to solve the problems the border cause in this enclave.

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