

# The Smuggler and the Beauty Queen

## The Border and Sovereignty as Sources of Body Style in Gibraltar

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This article explores the relatively neglected topic of how borders influence the habitus and body styles of border populations. It extends notions of habitus and performativity to the field of national identification. Using data from the British Crown Colony of Gibraltar, it examines two contexts in which the dominant body styles of men and women are shaped as forms of resistance to political harassment enacted by the neighboring country, Spain, at the colonies border: smuggling and beauty contests.

Smuggling is both economically lucrative and part of the Gibraltarians' struggle for political recognition and self-determination. The image of 'the smuggler' and his or her behaviour have become emblematic of this conflict. Related to the question of sovereignty and the border is the exclusion of Gibraltar from participation in many international events such as the Olympics and the Eurovision Song Contest. The only such event in which Gibraltar participates on an equal footing with other nations is the Miss World Contest, the preparatory heats for which have become major occasions in the Gibraltarian calendar, spawning a mass of local beauty contests. These examples illustrate not only how borders create and maintain national differences and distinctions, but also how such differences can come to be inscribed on the bodies of those who live at borders.

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"You have to be very careful not to criticize. My wife always worries about me because she knows that I find it very difficult to keep quiet. When we had the double filter [a double control post at the border], we stopped going to Spain, but I have a daughter who is married and lives in Marbella [50 km away from Gibraltar], and she needed to have her insurance renewed, so we did it for her. Maribel said, let's take it over to her on Saturday. We went down there, no double filter. You know sometimes it was on, sometimes not. And I picked up the *Chronicle* [local newspaper] and I am reading it and it said that when you are an ordinary passenger car, you don't need the triangle. You know, they used to ask for the [warning] triangle, the first aid kit, for everything. And they said in the paper that they

said with the RAC [Royal Automobile Club], that you didn't need to have it, because you could turn the flashes on. So I said to Maribel, 'look what they say here: they haven't got the right to ask us for the triangle. At that moment, they [the Spanish police] turned up: and we could see the double filter, and she said 'Look, we've only been in the queue for about 20 minutes, when we get to the front, let's go back, home'. I said 'why?'. She said, 'because I know what you are going to do and what will happen. Leave the queue'. I said 'I'm not going home. I'll give you money for the taxi, if you want to go home, I am going through and I am taking the paper to jail'. She said, 'if they ask for the triangle you tell them to sod off'. I said, 'I would'. As it happened, when we went through, it was

alright. But that tension there..." (Informant Stephen Harding).

In the quotation above, Mr Harding talks about the insecurity he and his wife Maribel felt about crossing the border between Gibraltar and Spain in 1995. The trip to visit their daughter in Marbella activates a tension, that itself is heightened by this insecurity. Having decided to cross on hearing that there were no border controls, they once again discovered that crossing was not easy and unproblematic: Shortly before arriving by car at the border checkpoint, the Hardings realized that it had become effective again. The local newspaper had informed its readers that displaying a *triangle* was no longer necessary, but could one rely on this information? After all, experience taught border crossers that 'they' (the Spanish border guards) could not be trusted. Wasn't Spain still laying claim to the Rock of Gibraltar?

Most Gibraltarians to whom I talked raised such topics. In their narratives the border is linked to bodily experience of tension, insecurity, impotence, and vulnerability. This experience is not presented as being peculiar to the Hardings or to other individual informants, but is thought to be the collective experience of all Gibraltarians. It has become commonplace to refer to Anderson (1983) and to Hobsbawm and Ranger (1973) when discussing matters of national identity. However, bodily experience is rather untheorized in their writings. I will argue that the body is a potent metaphor to naturalize national identity, and will show how bodies are related to sovereignty in Gibraltar.

The article is based on data collected during fieldwork between 1996 and 1997 in Gibraltar and especially on the border between the British colony and neighbouring Spain.

I point out the various ways in which the border is linked to bodily experience, both discursively and in practice, showing in particular how this bodily experience is used as a powerful resource to establish a Gibraltarian national identity. The aim of the article is threefold.

Firstly, I will expose the theoretical background of my approach, by focusing on the importance of habitualization and bodily performativity in national identification. I will show that the border situation, being one insti-

tution amongst others, generates the performance of a national habitus.

Secondly, I show that the very special make up of the Spanish-Gibraltar border makes visible processes which are not so easily discernible at many other national borders, especially within the EU. It is a border, where a state (Spain) enacts territorial claims (towards Gibraltar) via its border apparatus, which through intensive control measures inscribes cultural difference into the very bodies of Gibraltarian border crossers.

Thirdly, I will argue that the border is related in multiple ways to the differentiation of bodies outside the actual realm of border crossing itself. I will do so using two examples from my fieldwork: the popularity of the smuggler habitus amongst young men and the boom in beauty contests which have heavily influenced the bodily habitus of young women. Both examples will shed light on the indirect relationship between bodies and borders. It is not my intention, however, to explain both examples as effects of the border situation only – there are other aspects such as economical, status, and class which influence the popularity of these bodily styles. At the same time, their popularity cannot be understood without relating it to the border. As I will show, the particular resonance of both contexts in Gibraltar stems from their relationship to the border and national sovereignty, to which they are related as forms of symbolic resistance to the Spanish territorial claim: smuggling being more than just an economic activity (this 'more' being Gibraltarian 'revenge' for Spanish harassment, a weapon that can be used to harm the enemy); and the Miss Gibraltar contest, which because of the Spanish veto on Gibraltarian participation in other national sporting and musical contexts, is one of the few possibilities to represent the 'nation' as such on the international stage.

## Borders and Bodies

To name, discover, cross and recross cultural borders has become a hallmark of cultural anthropology. Borders create order and orientation in everyday life; they enable people to take a position in society, to identify with the known

and to protect themselves from the unknown. This is not only true for symbolic borders of identity, but of many political borders as well.<sup>1</sup> Remarkably, unlike symbolic borders<sup>2</sup>, political borders have long been neglected as a focus of anthropological research and theorizing.

In his groundbreaking book on the Spanish-French borderland Cerdenya, Sahlins (1989) has convincingly demonstrated that national borders are not passive, peripheral and receptive in the process of nation-building, but rather function as active and central agents. Sahlins revolutionized anthropological thinking about borders, by showing how the inhabitants of Cerdenya functioned not simply as the passive recipients of centralized national politics, but, by using national agents for their own aims, actively influenced the national politics of Spain and France<sup>3</sup>. Sahlins analyzed the national identification of the borderland population as mainly a strategic political act, limited by outer/institutional/socio-structural constraints only. His actors seem to have internalized these outer constraints on a cognitive level, thereby neglecting the importance of bodily habitualization of difference and its conscious or unconscious externalization via body styles. But borders, bodies and states are related in various ways.

First, the dichotomy inherent in the German distinction between *Körper* (as a carrier of signs) and *Leib* (as lived body) is reflected in different perspectives on national borders. The idea of borders as passive, peripheral and receptive is mirrored in the concept of the *Körper* as a readable system of signs only, while the idea of the border as permeable, central and as a source of power is analogous to the concept of the *Leib*.

Second, nations are often imagined as bodies and institutions of the state as its organs, as in Hobbes' *Leviathan*. The border, then, is the skin, which clearly demarcates an inside and an outside, and which distinguishes between insiders and outsiders. The border serves to canalize, to regulate and to control the exchange of insiders and outsiders and is often described as skin.

Third, the state's perspective on foreigners and of border crossers such as migrants and smugglers in particular often conceptualises

their bodies in terms of threat and injury to the state.<sup>4</sup> For example, the organic analogy between body and state is decidedly expressed in the link between borders and the control of epidemics, ascribing to the foreign body a vital (or fatal) role in the carrying and spreading of diseases.<sup>5</sup> Just as skin and border are often associated, so too is the penetration of both and the sexualizing of border crossing.

Fourth, many European borderlands, such as Alsace, South Tyrol, Kosovo and Macedonia, are highly emotional spaces, deeply anchored in national narratives. Without doubt, the Rock of Gibraltar is a symbolic site for Britain (as a symbol of the perseverance of the Empire, British continuity and solidity, and national grandeur), for Morocco (as a symbol of Muslim expansion into Al-Andalus) and for Spain (as a symbol of the loss of empire and national decline); it is deeply burdened with emotion. Borders are cultural sites where the collective memory of national communities is represented and exposed via material artefacts (such as flags, fences, control posts, uniforms) and procedures (controls). Sometimes the physical appearance of borders and the borderland itself carries symbolic meaning.<sup>6</sup> From the point of view of the state, these artefacts and procedures are intended to be the central institution to divide insiders from outsiders and to transmit a different national habitus. Consequently, they are conceptualized as receptacles within which national memory is stored, or, as Jeggle (1997: 77) puts it: "What has been stored as resentments frequently 'comes up' at borders." This 'coming-up' can easily be understood in a physical sense, because what comes up may be physically experienced feelings of grandeur, fear, wrath or hatred; one may be deeply choked with emotion, contentedness or indifference. Even though feelings do not come up 'naturally', they are often perceived to be natural, because it is the body which reacts. As individuals only have direct access to their own physical reactions, these reactions are trusted to be authentic and true.

Of course, there is nothing inherently natural in these feelings, even in cases where we cannot control what's 'coming up'. Recent theories have shown that bodies are not natural

either, but are always shaped by cultural forces.<sup>7</sup> Habitus is culture that has become naturalized. Bourdieu writes (1982: 308) that bodies function as a mnemonic aid for the “deep-rooted values of a group and [its] basic convictions”. As a system of deeply spiritualized generative principles, habitus produces all physical action and behaviour of the individual. As far as habitus is basic to the relationship of the individual to his/her body, its effects are prevalent in “all activities and forms of practice... where the body is involved” (Bourdieu 1982: 339), including for example food habits, bodily hygiene, the way we deal with health, age, and sickness, as well as the “presumably most automatic poses and most insignificant body techniques – how to gesture and to walk, to sit or to sneeze, to move the mouth while talking or eating” (1982: 727, translated by the author).

Habitus is a powerful concept to explain cultural perseverance via its naturalizing effect. It is also able to explain why essentialist concepts are so attractive to many of our informants (and often to ourselves), and why situational-constructivist arguments are so seldom asserted by them: deconstruction is an act of violence, because so much energy has been invested in the acquisition of habitus (by naturalizing social reality).<sup>8</sup> Habitus is not only perceived as self-evident by those who acquire (e.g. children) it from others who teach it (e.g. parents), but by the latter as well. Transmission of habitus is therefore not exclusively based on verbal teaching of knowledge (do this, do that), but on mimetic performativity. Mimesis does not necessarily include verbalized or conceptual knowledge but is mostly based on unconscious perception, transmission and reproduction. According to Perls’ gestalt-therapeutic theory (Dreitzel 1982), bodily performativities of a generation that physically experienced trauma, such as war, famine or, as in the Gibraltar case, isolation, can be perceived and reproduced by the following generation (even though it did not experience the trauma itself). This chain, if it proceeds unconsciously, is what I would call original sin.

The notion of habitus, however, has been forcefully challenged by performativity theory, for habitus acquisition presupposes a waxlike

bodily matrix open to the inscription of hegemonic habitus-creating agencies, such as the family, class or ethnic We-groups, ‘culture’ and state institutions without allowing for the possibility that individuals can accept, affirm, resist, counteract, mock, manipulate or subvert these forces. The notion also presupposes stability, for habitus is often perceived as a product rather than as a constantly negotiated process. Conner-ton (1989) has shown that memories are not only cognitively recalled in rituals, but are also re-enacted and represented through ceremonial embodiment. Preformatted memory is “bodily memory, encoded in postures, gestures, and movements. Repeated re-enactment in such bodily practices entails the use of habit-memory, which consists simply in the capacity to reproduce a certain performativity without recalling how or when this capacity was acquired” (Foster 1991).

Butler (1998) has argued, that the acquisition of a sense of bodily naturalness (in her case: gender identity) is a regulated process of repetition, mediated via subtle mechanisms of power expressed in – often seemingly ephemeral – instructions and orders to behave, sit, eat etc. in the correct way. These discursive mechanisms achieve their goal if they generate the individual’s desire to behave accordingly. Bodily memory therefore is not just “there”, it can be activated or forgotten, manipulated, transformed and reinterpreted performatively, and it is communicated.<sup>9</sup>

It is the memory of the Spanish territorial claim over Gibraltar that is re-enacted and represented through the ceremonial embodiment of border control. Gibraltarians are convinced that border measures are enacted again and again to create a constant feeling of their helplessness, impotence and vulnerability. These feelings keep the claim alive, for they keep bodily memory alive. Every feeling recalls a chain of prior experiences at the border that were similarly unpleasant and creates the seemingly self-evident perception how reality is: Spain will never give up her claim and therefore will do the utmost to harass the local population of the Rock. Narratives about special border crossings are popular amongst Gibraltarians they often invoke prior experiences drawing on

cognitive and physical memory alike and transforming the individual crossing into collective experience.

## The Border between Gibraltar and Spain

To understand why bodily experience is so prominent in narratives about the border, we have to take a closer look at history. In the War of the Spanish Succession Gibraltar was conquered by a British Admiral who fought for one of the pretenders, Archduke Charles of Austria. In 1713, when Charles was defeated and Philippe de Bourbon became Felipe V de España, the Treaty of Utrecht was signed and Gibraltar became part of Britain. The treaty is the basis of the present status of Gibraltar as a British colony (and therefore an important point of departure in any political argument about sovereignty over the Rock), but Spain has never given up her territorial claim which – notwithstanding several phases of cooperation between the two powers in the subsequent centuries in the area – resulted in several unsuccessful sieges of the Rock.<sup>10</sup>

On 8 June 1969, the Spanish government of fascist dictator Francisco Franco closed her frontier gates to the Rock, cutting Gibraltar off by land from its hinterland, the so-called Campo de Gibraltar, and isolating Gibraltarians from friends and relatives on the other side. The closure was a reaction against both the referendum of 1967, when Gibraltarians stated their wish to remain British and to the Constitution of 1969 which strengthened ties between the motherland and its colony. The gates were closed until 1982 when the border was opened for pedestrians. In 1985, it was opened for vehicles. Today, what Gibraltarians least desire is to become part of Spain.

Nevertheless, since the early 1980s Gibraltarians became increasingly disillusioned with Britain: they appreciate the constitutional guarantee which it grants but suffer from the progressive rundown of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which until recently dominated the local economy and guaranteed full employment. In the political arena they decry the fact that Britain did little to counter-act the unpleasant

Spanish checks and controls which Spain introduced when it reopened the border and which Gibraltarians interpret as harassment to make their life as miserable as possible. The Spanish authorities do not even recognize that there is a frontier between Gibraltar and La Línea. They call it *Verja* (fence) and do not use of the word frontier.<sup>11</sup>

Today, Gibraltar is still a British colony at the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula. Through its links to Britain, Gibraltar is part of the European Union but it is not part of the Schengen Territory nor of the EU-Customs Agreement. There is a sense of political stalemate: Britain cannot leave the Rock, even if it wished to. It is subject to two treaties, the enactment of which is likely to be contradictory: the Treaty of Utrecht, which guarantees Spanish sovereignty after Britain leaves, and the colonies Constitution of 1969, which guarantees to honour the wishes of the Gibraltarians. Moreover, Spain still considers Gibraltar to be an essentially Spanish territory which is British only temporarily, until the Rock is decolonized, and even those Gibraltarians who favour self-determination or even independence from the UK cannot realize their aim, because if they were successful and Britain left the Rock, Spain would immediately demand its return according to the Treaty of Utrecht.

The government of socialist leader Joe Bossano (1988–96) was partly elected to counter such political and economical difficulties. His platform was to create an economy not vulnerable to Spanish actions and that countered the effects of the MoD-rundown. With regard to sovereignty, Bossano took a hard position, rejecting all forms of cooperation as long as Spain refused to recognize the right of the Gibraltarians to self-determination in regard to their future. Economically, the alternatives lay in the advantages offered by membership in the EC (but outside the customs union): Bossano's declared political aim was to create an international financial centre and a tax haven.

To back up his economic position, Bossano's strategy had to move in two directions: first, to reduce the importance of Britishness, and second, to increase national homogeneity. Gibraltarians had to be transformed from a pro-Brit-

ish colonial population into a nation. National symbolism and nationalist discourse became major features in Gibraltarian political discourse. Gibraltar being a tiny territory with a heterogeneous society, nationalist discourse had to be grounded in a common and creolized culture. Gibraltarians – who it was often said were more British than the British themselves – had to be persuaded to prioritize their Gibraltarian identity over their British one. In the 1990s, this resulted in a huge wave of cultural and national identity production.<sup>12</sup> Politically, the SDGG (Self-Determination for Gibraltar Group) was founded. This introduced the celebration of a National day and whose aim it was to enhance national symbolism, which included the increased use of the term ‘national’. A national anthem was written, and *calentita*, a local chickpea-dish of Genoese origin, was declared the ‘national dish’.

But Bossano’s economic policy failed. The finance centre did not attract as many investors as expected, although Gibraltar’s GNP benefited from this situation. And unemployment still remains a problem, mainly amongst unskilled youth.

## Crossing the Border, Controlling the Body

From a Gibraltarian perspective, the Rock’s economic crisis is rooted in the Spanish territorial claim. This claim is enforced on several levels, but is most tangible through various measures at the border. That harassment continues has certainly helped to link actual experiences to the prior experience of border closure. Border guards often use physical gestures rather than words to issue commands (Drive right! Stop! Open back door! Go on!). Mere sight of their uniform can be enough to elicit anticipation of such directives – as my informant Samantha McNamara told me: “Even if they [Spanish Civil Guards] treat you friendly or correct... Whenever I see a Spanish uniform, automatically I recall all the bad experiences I made [with them] during all these years [of the closure]”. During fieldwork I collected a number of examples of such “bad experiences”:

- sometimes it takes up to six hours to cross from Gibraltar by car into Spain;
- sometimes regular Gibraltarian passports, identity cards and drivers’ licences are rejected by the Spanish authorities;
- sometimes Gibraltarian citizens who enter Spain from other countries such as, for example, a Gibraltarian tourist returning from Italy who chooses to fly to Málaga or Barcelona, might be refused entry into Spain as a holder of Gibraltarian passport;
- when Abel Matutes became Spanish foreign minister in 1996 he even threatened to close the border again, recalling the closure that Spain did effect between 1969 and 1982.

The experience of the closure years is central to Gibraltarian narratives about their national identity. The closure, so the narrative goes, forced the 30,000 Gibraltarians, irrespective of their ethnic, educational or economic background to live on approx. 6 km<sup>2</sup>. The closure is presented as the big equalizer, and common features caused by the closure are highlighted in narratives: such as the miserable housing situation with three or more generations of a family living tightly packed in a humble apartment; where young couples had no place of their own; where it was impossible to escape social control from family members, neighbours and acquaintances; where the only trip one could make by car was *skalestrics*, driving in circles around ‘the island’ without stopping, once, twice, three times, and always meeting the same people.

Border crossing demands physical and psychological strain, thereby activating feelings of tension, impotence and vulnerability. This is particularly true for those who cross by car (for pedestrians it is much less problematic to cross). The measures that create most physical and psychological strain are the queues, which are the result of the intensive regulation of personal and vehicle documentation (the so-called *double checks*). Queues are a particular problem in summer months; irritability is common, heart attacks not unknown, and sometimes even death due to the heat.<sup>13</sup>

Exacerbating the irritation is the fact that these checks are irregular. Sometimes it is pos-

sible to cross with regular identification, at other times, the same papers are rejected. Gibraltarians like Mr and Mrs Harding never know whether measure checks will be enforced or not.

Indeed, what might be interpreted as a mild nuisance to people who cross or live at the border in a bigger country, has a quite different impact on a territory the size of Gibraltar: border effects are everywhere:

- daily routine such as shopping in nearby Spanish towns, is structured by the degree of border controls; visits to the neighbouring country have to be planned carefully, especially if travelling by car;
- there is always uncertainty as to whether appointments can be kept, and this not only influences individuals, but also and to a much greater degree, the economy. Local politicians, trade unionists and the members of the chamber of commerce on both sides of the border lament the negative influence of time-keeping on economic development. Border restrictions are the main obstacle for foreign investment in Gibraltar, e.g. for the unsuccessful plan to attract enterprises after the handing over of Hong Kong to China;
- the second pillar of the economy, tourism, is also negatively influenced by Spanish border controls, since tourists from the Costa del Sol on a day trip to the colony would hardly wish to spend their day in a queue;
- internationally, Spain vetoes Gibraltar's independent participation in the Olympics, at sports competitions and at other leisure contests;
- what is going on at the border has become the central topos of public and political discourse, which is dominated by anti-Spanish sentiment;
- and, as already noted, people's bodily performativity is shaped by the border situation.

Individual tension, anxiety and impotence is shared by 'the community', because it is expressed in a collective code and communicated via language, symbols or mimesis. In Gibraltar, anti-Spanish sentiment and pronouncements

encode these feelings towards what might possibly happen at the border.

## Resentments that 'Come up'. Heightened Emotions about Spain

Virulent anti-Hispanism is the result of the congruency between objective structures (here: border harassment) and incorporated habitus (here: physical expectation of harassment) (cf. Bourdieu 1977: 51ff). The primary experience of being subject to harassing and humiliating control leads to an identity crisis similar to what Rosaldo (1989: 28) called 'borderland hysteria'. Rosaldo examined the US-Mexican border, a highly controlled and politically hypersensitive region. For Rosaldo, borderland hysteria is the effect of a political border which functions as a barrier to wealth and accessibility to different material conditions of life. This economic barrier does not apply to the Spanish-Gibraltarian border. However, control mechanisms and the symbolic presence of the nation state are equally strong. In the Gibraltar case, it is the permanent performativity of humiliation at the hands of Spanish border agencies which is responsible for creating borderland hysteria. This primary experience is interpreted by Gibraltarians within the context of a long succession of different Spanish initiatives, as yet another attempt to subject them under a fascist regime.<sup>14</sup>

The doxical experience of the social world and the habitual patterns on which this experience is based (in this case: the nation-state as the hegemonic ordering principle of the globe) are confirmed and reinforced, or, as Donnan & Wilson (1999: 131) remark,

"the embodied knowledge of the border guard thus confronts the bodily demeanour of the border crosser in a meeting where the bodily dispositions and performances of the 'protagonists' are structured by the rules of the state and the attempt to evade them".

Anti-Hispanism as a form of permanent catharsis offers the possibility of evading the performativity of (Spanish) nationalism and at the same time reinforces the hegemony of nationalism as a central means of expressing difference.

Border controls and the modalities of border crossing can be described as rituals. Rituals classically have been theorized for the domain of religion; in the tradition of Durkheim as well as of Marxism, rituals have been conceptualized – as Driessen (1992: 11) writes – as “*epiphenomenal, circumstantial, and ephemeral*”. But rituals have their own form and they not only refer to power relationships of dominance and subordination.<sup>15</sup> With its phases of separation (waiting in queues), marginalisation (being controlled) and integration (leaving the control sector), border crossings show characteristics of secular rituals. Through instruction in rituals, initiands are made familiar with the rules and secrets of the new status. Often traumatic physical experiences such as mutilations or ritual death are part of the initiation, the new status being inscribed in the very body of the initiand.

Even if one disagrees as to whether or not border crossings may be compared to religious initiation, they can (if, for example, waiting in the heat is part of the process) stir deep emotions, similar to that of the candidate to initiation. Driver and ritual initiand are confronted with the uncertainty of what will happen during the process of crossing or ‘on the other side’. Similar to the candidate to initiation, Gibraltar drivers have no influence on the ritual procedures. But, in contrast to initiation, they are familiar with what possibly will occur. This enables them to take precautions before crossing to minimize the risk of being targeted: they can call the border hotline or select times for crossing that are considered ‘safe’; they can carry all documents that possibly could be requested and carry along few and easily reloadable pieces of luggage. Yet contrary to the ritual initiand, precisely because border crossers know about the range of possibilities Spanish border guards might deploy, border controls are especially well suited to subject Gibraltar drivers to the power relationship of dominance and subordination.

Unlike the ritual initiand, Gibraltar drivers can never be certain of achieving, once within Spain, a status that safeguards them from harassment. On the contrary, while still in the area immediately adjacent to the border on the Spanish side, they have to expect special

and additional controls by Spanish civil guards. It is the knowledge about the *possible* enactment of these measures, combined with their perceived arbitrariness and the incompleteness of integration, that converts border crossing into a ritual of humiliation and degradation, thereby reinforcing Gibraltar identity and nationalist arguments as forms of symbolic resistance.

Uncertainty and tension as results of the specific border situation are repeatedly activated in the bodies of regular border crossers. This is mainly responsible for the virulence of borderland hysteria, present in anti-Illispanism. In addition to this direct relationship, bodies and borders in Gibraltar are also related in more indirect ways, as I will show in relation to two examples of resistance to the Spanish claim that foreground physical experience.

## Smuggling

My first example is exposing the bodily habitus of the smuggler amongst young Gibraltar men. Smuggling of various goods – mainly tobacco – is an old and central activity in the western area of the Mediterranean,<sup>16</sup> enclosing Spain, Gibraltar and Morocco.<sup>17</sup>

Today, smuggling is not only an effect of economic and political history, but also of Gibraltar’s special economic status within the EU (it is not a VAT area and is excluded from the Customs Union). Moreover, and this is a new phenomenon, it is discursively linked to the struggle for political representation and for self-determination (which is both a fight against Spain and Britain). The image of ‘the smuggler’, and its associated body styles and behaviour, has become a male icon for this struggle even amongst non-smugglers.

As one informant remarked:

“The other day I noticed that they [young local men] behave quite aggressively when parking their car in the parking lot. I could not help thinking of the smugglers, manoeuvring boldly with their pateras [speed boats] to escape the Spanish coast guard.”

The behaviour of Gibraltarians is often inter-



preted in relation to smuggling, both negatively by Spaniards and positively by locals. The informant cited above emphasized her words with her hands mimicking the *pateras*' manoeuvres. Her interpretation of local driving habits indicates the ambivalence of the smuggling topos-expressing both admiration and indignation. Moreover, it reproduces and perpetuates the image of a society intimately tied to smuggling.

In Gibraltar, the smuggler has been an important social image for generations. Since the early 1990s it has been indirectly encouraged as an acceptable image for young men through the politics of Chief Minister Bossano. Bossano's tolerance towards smuggling was a way to counter the negative effects of unemployment among young unskilled workers. It was also consistent with Bossano's position on sovereignty and his refusal to accept and to participate in the regular Anglo-Spanish talks on Gibraltar's future. Rather than accepting a passive role towards the sovereignty question, smuggling was a means of expressing growing self-confidence in relation to both Britain and Spain.

This had several consequences for Gibraltar's civil society. Until the early 1990s, smuggling had been the preserve of a few specialists, but with the growing possibility of purchasing *pateras* through favourable credit, more and more people could participate. At the time immediately prior to fieldwork, about 2,000 people were directly or indirectly involved in smuggling (8 per cent of the population), a new development that I will call 'democratized smuggling'. It is not surprising, then, that, especially in the early 1990s, smuggling carried positive connotations. Conscience about its unlawful character was low, prestige – mainly for young men – was high. A sense of adventure, quick money, male bravado and the sense of harming an opponent imparted to the activity an irresistible aura of sex, money and success.

It is worth noting that, in contrast to many other borders, smuggling between Gibraltar and Spain is a one-way transaction. As a duty free zone, not only tobacco is smuggled into Spain, but also everyday goods, such as milk, cheese, sugar, alcohol and perfume. Smuggling at the border between Gibraltar and Spain is highly gendered. Whilst large-scale smuggling

of tobacco and drugs is mainly controlled by young male Gibraltarians via sea, small scale-smuggling of other goods is dominated by Spanish women.<sup>18</sup>

It is popular among young Gibraltarian men to display the typical smuggler attributes of the cool Mafiosi so well known from Hollywood movies: sunglasses, muscle shirts, lots of golden chains and rings, earrings, tattoos, slick-backed hair. Many of these young men became rich in the early 1990s when smuggling activities were at their height and supported by the then local socialist government.

Initially, 'democratized' smuggling was "like a game", according to one smuggler informant.

"They brought tobacco into Spain, with rowing boats, and made 10,000, 15,000 or 20,000 pesetas a night. With the money they bought *pateras*, which were easily available on credit. Then, the game became serious. Six or seven kids were killed when pursued by the Spanish coast guards."

They bought spacious apartments, jewellery and big cars, with which in the evenings they paraded through the narrow streets of Gibraltar, noisy with ghettoblasters. Everybody knew their names, and their family background. Through the use of a device familiar from Mafia films as a means of concealing personal identities – tinted car windows – the smuggler scorned integration into the tight-knit web of local community. Without an integrative function, tinted windows symbolized something different: "we are the lords of the streets", which means the subordination of all other aspects of public life to the practice of smuggling.

The image of the smuggler is tied to class. As smuggling became more and more visible in public, middle-class Gibraltarians, especially such as merchants, accountants, lawyers and teachers, became increasingly concerned with Gibraltar's international reputation, which was already portrayed by the Spanish media in terms of smuggling and piracy. In combination with Bossano's refusal to co-operate with Britain on the question of sovereignty, the visibility of smuggling, interpreted not only as harmful to the colony's reputation, but also as a take-over

of the public scene by lawless mobsters, were central topics, around which the then oppositional conservative (GSD) and liberal (GNP) parties organized. Both parties criticized the fact that Bossano's strategy towards smuggling would prevent the transformation of Gibraltar's economy into a service-based, off-shore and financial centre, an aim which was agreed upon not only by GSD and GNP, but by Bossano's own party as well.

The GSD in particular worried that Bossano's tolerance towards smuggling and the fact that smuggling had become the main pillar of the local economy, would result in Britain taking a tougher stance on Gibraltar. The parties were afraid that Britain, which the Spanish media portrayed as tolerating piracy in their colony, would introduce Direct Rule from Whitehall, removing Bossano's government and suspending Gibraltar's Constitution. Without that Constitution, which guaranteed the very existence of Gibraltar as a self-governed British colony, Gibraltarians would have no safeguard against Britain's talks with Spain, and, more importantly, no input into possible decisions on the question of sovereignty.

The GSD tried to persuade the public of their position by implicitly distinguishing between 'normal and acceptable, low quantity everyday' smuggling, carried out by almost everyone, from 'bad smuggling'. The latter was synonymous with 'democratized' smuggling. In 1995, under British pressure and the threat of Direct Rule, Bossano himself intervened against smuggling by expropriating most of the boats involved. His action led to local upheaval, the so-called "1995 riots". Nevertheless, under threat of Britain's direct intervention large-scale smuggling was soon brought under control.

When I arrived in Gibraltar in January 1996, there were hardly any *pateras* left with which large-scale smuggling could be carried out. However, the outersigns of democratized smuggling, remained.

To counter the dangers of smuggling by sea, many of the pious young smugglers had been tattooed with protective images of the Virgin. During the time of democratized smuggling, such tattoos became popular even in those segments of society which did not actively partici-

pate in smuggling. Other public images of smuggling similarly persisted. A local designer produced T-shirts that showed a *patera*, followed by Spanish police boats. The smuggler in the *patera* had the face of a smiling shark. The sharklike smuggler is a local icon to counter Spanish discourse on smuggling. These T-shirts were extremely popular amongst young men at the height of smuggling in the early 1990s. When the GSD won the May elections of 1996, their first measure was intended to restore the old status quo of the non-visibility of smuggling by prohibiting the Mafia-like tinted car windows.

And again, even though any talk about smuggling with locals began with a condemnation, positive aspects of smuggling were still present discursively, especially when drawing connection between the border, bodies, and resistance, as the following quotation illustrates.

"It was a formula for economic subsistence which only damaged the all-powerful interests of the State, that mean stepmother who instead of protecting her children squeezed what she could out of them and, without recognising the revolutionary obligation of their citizenship, for many a century simply treated them as mere subjects. What did it matter robbing a State that was robbing one anyway? Contraband was the Robin Hood and the treasury the Sheriff of Nottingham."<sup>19</sup>

The evil and hostile Sheriff of Nottingham is, of course, a synonym for Spain: the noble smuggler, fighting successfully with male bravado, patience and a snare against an overtopping fascistic state machinery. In the Spanish version, the image is reversed: the noble bandit becomes a lawless and disgraceful criminal, whose persecution and punishment is the self-evident duty of any nation.

The Spanish media and officials often describe Gibraltarian smugglers as pirates in the sense of Sir Francis Drake. For example, César Brana, the civil governor of the Spanish province of Cádiz, turns the positive image of the 'noble smuggler's' into a negative one by comparing Bossano with Drake: like the raider of Spanish silver transports in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Gibraltarians under Bossano attack Spain's economy with their speed boats, with drug-



smuggling and money-laundering.<sup>20</sup> Drake has positive associations in the British context, because symbolically he is the one who laid the foundation stone for the British Empire. The Drake metaphor offers a perfect vessel for associations of British maritime superiority, as he is thought of as the hero who successfully defeated the Spanish Armada. As in 1588, small British ships (= Gibraltar speed boats) turn out to be superior to the big Spanish galleons. The Armada image also is evident in another metaphor often used by locals: Gibraltarians as David fighting against Goliath, who, by virtue of strategy, intelligence, smallness and the ability to outmanoeuvre quickly with their *pateras*, they manage to out-wit the sluggish Spanish police armada. This idea has become iconicized in a local series of postcards, amongst them one showing an ape (symbol for Gibraltarians) in a *patera* loaded with cartons of Winston tobacco and displaying its thumb as a symbol for the victory over Spain.

These metaphors and associations not only describe the tactics Gibraltarian smugglers

perform with their speed boats, but, in a way, the tactics themselves become shaped according to these metaphors. Indeed a smuggler's speed boat action is described and rated by other smugglers as aesthetic or as non-aesthetic, as bravado or as timid. In this sense, metaphors materialize as behaviour.

In Gibraltar as well as in the hinterland, smuggling (with the exception of drug-smuggling) is considered a normal and a legitimate economic activity. Gibraltarians and Campo-people share this conviction with other borderlanders.<sup>21</sup> In local discourse, smuggling is considered a legitimate means of resisting Spanish policy which, as already mentioned, is believed deliberately to hamper the economic development. To Gibraltarians therefore, smuggling is one of the very few effective ways of harming the enemy.

James Scott (1990: 44) has suggested that subordinate articulate ideas and values that reverse and negate those generated by the dominant group, via what he calls a hidden transcript. Interestingly, and contrary to Scott, Gi-

braltarians do not resist dominant depictions of them as smugglers by countering those portrayals with alternative and oppositional portrayals of their own design. Although in fear of Spanish accusations, many Gibraltarians often negate the very existence of smuggling to the foreigner, but claim that 'everybody in the region, including the Spanish authorities, is involved in smuggling'; or when proudly displaying the image of the positive smuggler, they draw on precisely those notions and use them to their own advantage.<sup>22</sup>

## Beauty Contests

A second effect of the border on body and habitus is related to the boom in beauty contests in Gibraltar. Again, I will analyze these contests as a form of national identification and of symbolic resistance to the Spanish claim to Gibraltar.

Participation in beauty contests is extremely popular amongst little girls and young women, and, increasingly since the mid-90s, also amongst young men. In the first weeks of my research I was confronted with the fact that the appraisal of physical beauty through beauty contests is regularly reported in local newspapers and magazines. For example, in 1996 I counted 14 female beauty contests, amongst them the election of *Youth Princess*, *Miss Queensway Quay*, *Miss Nestlé*, *Miss Computec*, *Miss Star of India*, *Miss Casino*, *Miss Cover Girl*, *Miss Caleta Palace Hotel*, *Miss Security Express*, *Miss Newswatch*, *Miss Platter* and *Miss Radio Gibraltar*. Participants who do not win such contests can expect to obtain the title of *Miss Photogenic*, *Miss Personality* or *Miss Good Effort*. Moreover, Monique Chiara, *Miss Gibraltar 1995*, was almost omnipresent, now opening this fashion show, now smiling on that tourism fair, now presenting that variety programme.

Beauty contests celebrate a female gender ideal that lauds and reinforces classically heteronormative values, such as the beautiful but subordinated companion of men. Local female beauty standards are strongly influenced by the standards set in the contests. They are, nevertheless, interpreted in terms of their difference from Spanish (and also English) stand-

ards: whilst Spaniards are portrayed as flamboyant, exaggerated and colourful "*Bennetton adds on two legs*", Gibraltarian self-description tends towards unobtrusive, quiet and discreet colours. Burberry textiles are extremely popular, and locals are convinced that Burberry clothing sold in Marbella or in Seville is much more colourful than clothing of the same brand sold in Britain. But compared to British women, Gibraltarian women see themselves as more colourful and flamboyant, and more prepared to wear extravagant jewellery.

Female beauty contests in Spain and Britain are popular only amongst a small sector of society, and in general they have the reputation of being rather outdated and politically incorrect. In contrast, in Gibraltar girls and women participate as a matter of course, untouched by any feminist doubts. Local beauty contests in the 1990s are the result of a development that started in the 1960s, and that is closely linked to the border situation. Informants overwhelmingly portrayed closure of the border as a time when different social activities blossomed, mainly in arts, in entertainment, and in religion and spirituality. This was paralleled by an increasing preoccupation with the body, which men pursued in relation to sport, while women became more and more interested in beauty contests. Increasing preoccupation with the body was explained by boredom with life in the tiny and isolated community. Moreover, the limitations of living in what was then only 6 km<sup>2</sup> of space led to the need to expand at least physically and the need to self-experience.

Although the first beauty contests arose from a need to expand out of small-town boredom, this does not explain why the contests were still popular in 1996 at the time of fieldwork, 14 years after the border was opened, nor why they boom in Gibraltar today.

There are, of course, many factors operating here. Participants may have one set of motivations, their parents another, while participation itself may have very different significance to the different women involved. For example, the contests offer the possibility for a young woman to realize certain fantasies, such as to achieve reputation amongst peers, to become famous locally or to start an international career. It is

important to keep in mind that one woman out of 1,840 (of the age cohort 15–24) will participate as *Miss Gibraltar* in the *Miss World-Contest* – there is hardly a better chance for a young woman in any other country to participate in this well-known international beauty contest. Preparation for contests generally involves all family members of the participants' kinship networks, their friends and neighbours. Mothers, aunts and grandmothers are involved in all kinds of preparations. In contrast to beauty contests in nation states, the organizers, the participants and their families are personally known to each other. Parental and familial control over a daughter's participation and the possible threats to her reputation is guaranteed. Contests reinforce family ties.

The many different local contests operate independently from the original (*Miss Gibraltar*) contest, for they have become an important source of income for the organizing modelling agency, which is run privately by Mrs G., an enterprising lady, who controls all local public-relations for the contest. Moreover, via her weekly column in the local paper (with the title *Life & Style*), she dominates local media discourse on all matters of gender relations as well as on (female and male) beauty. Even though the Gibraltar Government endows all participants in the *Miss Gibraltar Contest* with a certain sum of money, participants (with the possible exception of the winner)<sup>23</sup> hardly win financially, for participation in the various events which precede the actual contest is costly: taking different modelling courses to be prepared for the catwalk is a necessary prerequisite and has to be done in Mrs G.'s agency; a successful application to participate involves sitting a modelling-exam, which costs extra money; and the diploma has to be paid for extra, too. Once the diploma is obtained, modelling practice is necessary, again organized by Mrs G. Two possibilities exist: either, the young women 'job' as hostesses, for example during a conference or when a new shop is opened. The customers (e.g. hotels, shops) pay for hiring the young women, and the women themselves pay for the arrangement. Or, they may participate in other beauty contests (which are also organized by Mrs G.'s agency), which again costs money.

Yet, individual motivation, family cohesion and entrepreneurship do not fully explain why contests receive the high degree of local media coverage and the interest of local politicians. As I mentioned before, participation is not only a major event for the young woman and her family but for the community as a whole, as it offers the possibility of symbolic representation and of resistance to the enemy. Gibraltar's participation in international contests and competitions is almost always blocked by Spain. There are only a few international contests where Gibraltar is not vetoed by Spain, such as the world hockey championship and the *Miss World Contest*. Hence, symbolically, participation in the *Miss World Contest* offers a rare chance for Gibraltar to represent the community as a nation before a global audience. It creates the illusion that Gibraltar is on an equal footing with existing nation states. 30,000 people are represented alongside *Miss India*, that represents 900 million people. Participation offers the unique possibility of collective representation, which is a means to resist Spain and her claim over Gibraltar.

## Conclusion

The notion of the border is one of the basic metaphors of our discipline. Astonishingly, this has not led us to view borders between states as privileged sites to carry out research – a fact which is even more of a surprise given that state borders are places, where many central concepts of cultural anthropology, such as territory, identity and nationality, are exposed and performed, staged and negotiated. In this article, I have analyzed the border between Spain and Gibraltar as a productive element in the habitualization of a Gibraltarian national identity. I focused particularly on how the border influences bodily experience, and how this experience is linked in local discourse to national identification.

Anderson (1983) calls nations 'imagined communities', entities, within which the individual imagines a common 'national' bond with others. The cognitive approach reflected in 'believing' and 'imagining' has to be combined with the phenomenological approach of bodily 'feeling',

bridging the gap between discourse and body. National identification, I would argue, is not simply a cognitive process, but can only be fully understood if we also consider the habitualizing effects of power (in this case: national power) on the bodies (and emotions) of individuals. Emotions as bodily experienced feelings, dislikes and obsessions, the feelings of emptiness and fulfilment, of arousal and indifference, of fear, happiness or hate are more than just expressions of individual experience; they are always embedded in culture and society and therefore able to establish closeness or distance, identification or lack of identification with others. Collective identification in Gibraltar is, as my examples show, strongly influenced by the physical experience of difference at the border. I tried to illustrate this in two ways.

Firstly, by showing how the border functions as a means through which Spain habitualizes the performativity of impotence by subjecting Gibraltarian bodies to constant humiliation, year after year. This border is a privileged site to show how (Spanish) national identity is made physically tangible to individuals, because it is here, that various controls, measures, and harassing experiences provoke emotions of uncertainty, tension, stress and the like. These emotions are communicated in narratives about border experience and in anti-Hispanic rhetoric. Both means of communication generate a feeling of solidarity and help to strengthen the development of a distinctive national identity.

Secondly, I tried to show that apart from being subjected to border controls, bodies, sovereignty and the border are also related in more indirect ways. Smuggling and beauty contests are not only linked to the border as effects of the conflict of sovereignty. They are also forms of resistance to the Spanish claim on Gibraltar, as they are arenas in which the enemy can be challenged and damaged: smuggling being both an important source of income and the very symbol of strength and independence, beauty contests being a means to present Gibraltar as a 'national' entity on the world stage and so undermine Spanish intentions to prevent such an attempt. Moreover, as physical expressions, they embody the very difference between Gibraltarians and Spaniards.

## Notes

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1. Simmel 1992: 221ff; Girtler 1992: 11ff; Greverus 1969.
2. Consider e.g. the concept of ethnic boundary [Barth 1969: 10] or of the boundary of local communities [Anthony Cohen 1986]. See also Müller 1987: 28; Fernandez 1974, 1986; Van Gennep 1986; Turner 1967, 1969.
3. Also see Medick 1991, 1995; Ulbrich 1993: 139-146; Kotek 1996: 23.
4. Borneman [1998] about labelling Cuban Marielitos as 'bullheads'. Also see Donnan & Wilson 1999: 129-151.
5. During the BSE-crisis in the summer 1996, Spanish border police legitimated stronger controls of Gibraltarian vehicles by referring to the possibility that they could illegally export British beef into Spain.
6. Wilson 1994.
7. Using Bourdieu's habitus theory, Bröskamp [1994] has argued that attempts to promote the participation of German and Turkish youths in sport as a means of integration often fail because they assume that bodies are culture-free and so a good basis for transcultural communication. According to Bröskamp, the reverse is true. He shows that bodies and bodily behaviour are culturally shaped.
8. Some further thoughts are offered by Scarry [1985] who contends that torture is a technique that injures and harms the body with pain, just to destroy the naturalized and self-evident values and convictions with the aim of constructing a new habitus; violence in torture shows that much violence was invested in the acquisition of habitus.
9. See Nadig 1998.
10. The Treaty specified that whenever Britain

- should leave the Rock, it must be handed over to Spain. The sandy isthmus that separates Gibraltar from the Spanish border town of La Línea and which is now occupied by the Gibraltar airfield, Spanish Customs, parkland and housing, is not included in the Treaty of Utrecht.
11. It was Spanish Prime Minister, José María Aznar, who revealed in a Freudian slip that the *Verja* is in fact recognized as a frontier by mistake only using the word 'frontera' shortly after his election in May 1996.
  12. The *Gibraltar Heritage Journal* was founded in 1993 and a local boom in publications on Gibraltarian popular history and culture emerged, e.g. on the catholic church, the evacuation of WWII, biographies of great Gibraltarians, the sanitary system, the streets and quarters, theatre plays, aspects of local history and culture, histories and gossip.
  13. Uproar after queue heart attack tragedy, in: *The Gibraltar Chronicle*, 17 May 1997.
  14. Since Britain conquered the Rock in 1704, Gibraltar was subjected to various sieges by Spain in the 18<sup>th</sup> (most importantly the so-called Great Siege between 1779 and 1783), 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These sieges are responsible for the emergence of a siege or fortress mentality amongst local civilians.
  15. Bloch [1989, 1992], for example, shows that the ritual of the royal bath in Madagascar obtains its power through the fact that it was an extension of secular, everyday rites.
  16. Jackson, W.G.F. 1987: 233.
  17. Spanish historian Manuel Sanchez Mantero has argued that in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there were 100,000 smugglers who lived in the area surrounding the Rock of Gibraltar. In those days Campogibaltarenos could only legitimately be priests, infantry soldiers, minions of some Duke, or poorly paid fishermen. The rest, from notaries to muleteers and farm hands, lived directly or indirectly from that black economy which avoided tax, but which offered a good profit margin for the survival of the poor and the not so poor. Gomez Rubio, Juan Jose: Contraband, money laundering and tax avoiding. In: *The Times*, 3 March 1997.
  18. About these women, the so-called *Matuteras*, see Haller 2000: 246f.
  19. Gomez Rubio, Juan Jose: Contraband, money laundering and tax avoiding. In: *The Times*, 3 March 1997.
  20. Hart, Robert: UK between the Rock and a hard place. In: *The Independent* 19 December 1994.
  21. See Flynn [1997] for the borderland Shabe between Bénin and Nigeria.
  22. Gibraltarians pursue a similar strategy of resistance to that used by Brazilian transgendered prostitutes who "oppose and resist hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality that degrade them by drawing on precisely those notions, and

using them to their own advantage in their interactions with members of the dominant group" [Kulick 1996: 3], in this case: males who are perceived to be 'normal', heterosexual men.

23. The Government gives every participant £ 400. Additionally, the winner receives a prize of £ 2,000 as well as £ 1,500 for clothing. Second prize is £ 1,000, and the third prize is £ 500. *Miss Gib £ 2,000 prize*. In: *The Gibraltar Chronicle*, 25 March 1998: 1.

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