



Sofie Steinberger

[University of Cologne and University of Meknes]

Mapping belonging: analysing spaces with oral history in the border region of Melilla and Nador

DOI: 10.26774/wrhm.334

Submitted on: 28 July 2022

Accepted on: 26 July 2023

Published on: 3 November 2023

The work is original and has not been published anywhere before.



Abstract

This contribution shows how oral history and the concept of ‘belonging’ can be used for the analysis of spatial notions in borderlands over time. By giving examples of her research in the border region of Melilla (Spain) and Nador (Morocco), the author presents a transnational and intersectional approach and shows how spatial imaginaries can be taken into view from a historical perspective.

Keywords

oral history, border, space, belonging, intersectionality



Introduction

H: The Spaniards were like us. [...] We were like a family. When we celebrated *El Aid* it was like, I don't know, it was different really. They were like us. Just simple. It changed when they joined the European Community. Yes, the change was there. You could feel it! We went to the *Rastro*, we ate anchovies, all the things...

S: *And why did you go to Melilla and not to Nador?*

H: Because Nador didn't have anything. [...] Only a few shops that brought things from Morocco. They were much more expensive than things from Melilla because transport was very expensive in Morocco. The truth is that Melilla was better for us. It was a good time, to be honest. We didn't know what it was going to be like. You can't imagine.

S: *How do you see it now?*

H: It's something else [*laughs*]. It's just because we have a lot of family there. Now you can't go [to Melilla] like before. There are not many things you can do. The other day a cousin of my husband died, and we wanted to go but without a visa they wouldn't let us in. The border police said no: "You have to stamp; you have to do this; you have to do that..." Now the family is cut in two. They have made a life for themselves and those here have made a life for themselves. Now it's very difficult to pass. Sometimes if there's a policeman who doesn't like you to pass, he just says "no," "you can't." So, you can't, and that's it.¹

Here, Hanan M.,² a 55-year-old Riffian housewife, who lives in Nador, the capital of its homonymous Province in the easternmost part of the Rif Mountains in Northern Morocco,³ talks about life between Melilla and Nador in the 1970s and early 1980s in comparison to today (2019). In Hanan's memory, Melilla and Nador – although politically separate entities – used to belong together in the sense that it was a region with frequent interchange, where Riffians as well as Spaniards enjoyed the same

1 Interview with Hanan M., Nador, 2019 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

2 All interviews have been anonymised. The names and any data with recognition value, such as exact age and occupations, were changed so that the interviewees could not be identified.

3 The Rif Mountains, also known as the Rif Massif, are a mountain range in the north of Morocco. It stretches for about 350 kilometres from the Mediterranean coast in the west to the Oued Kiss near the city of Berkane in the east including the region of Nador and Melilla. The Rif is dominated by inhabitants of the Amazigh culture. The Amazigh of the Rif refer to themselves as Riffians. In the following text, when referring to my interview partners, I will use the terms 'Riffian' for Amazigh population living in the Rif region, 'Hispano-Riffians' for Amazigh with a Spanish citizenship living in Melilla, and 'peninsular Spaniards' for Spaniards with European descent. This might differ with some parts of the text when I only distinguish between Riffians/Amazigh and Spaniards, since until 1985 only few Riffians who lived in Melilla had a Spanish citizenship.

leisure activities, consumer goods, as well as cultural habits and were like a ‘family.’ In her view, before 1986 Melilla and Nador formed a social and cultural unity or space. This changed with Spain’s adhesion to the European Economic Community (EEC) when Melilla’s border became a European external border and border control was intensified to the point that the common space and cross-border community was sundered into two separate entities.⁴

Understanding the border as a means to structure space, the analysis of the effect of the border’s development on the everyday lives of local border population and their cross-border activities also means analysing changing everyday spaces over time. In the following, I will show how oral history can help to track these spaces over time and to understand how these spaces have coined transnational memories as well as spatial imaginaries until today. To do so, I suggest the concept of ‘belonging.’ In the first part, I will briefly sketch the history of the border region of Melilla and Nador from a local perspective. Then, I will focus on the concept of belonging in general. In the third and fourth part, I will show why studying ‘belonging’ with oral history method is useful to study space from a historical perspective by giving examples from my research in Melilla and Nador.

Brief history of the border region of Melilla and Nador from a local perspective

Taking a closer look at Hanan’s statement there are other historically grown spaces to identify. She differs between ‘the Spaniards’ – meaning the European community in Melilla – and ‘us’ – the Nadori Riffians – as well as between ‘Morocco’ and ‘Nador.’ She was aware that Melilla was politically Spanish territory. However, she also describes Morocco as an entity different to Nador: Morocco is far away and difficult to reach.

The differentiation between Spain, Morocco and the Rif is very common in Nador and the wider Rif region. It is very present in the region’s collective memory and has its roots in its history. In the Rif, both, the Spanish Protectorate but also the treatment of the Riffian population after the Moroccan independence by the central government are remembered as colonisation in the local Nadori-Riffian memory discourse.⁵ On the one hand, the Spaniards were colonisers, who brutally intruded the region, changed the local property situation, administration, and introduced wage labour.⁶ On the other hand, the Moroccan government enforced the assimilation of the former Spanish zone to the southern economic and

4 The account of Hanan M.

5 Interview with Aomar M. and Khalid J., Melilla, 2019 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher’s private archive; see also *Double loneliness and double belonging*, ‘Cambio,’ vol. 9, no. 17, 2019, p. 53.

6 M. Aziza, *La sociedad marroquí bajo el Protectorado español (1912–1956)*, in M. Gahete Jurado (ed.), *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: la historia trascendida*, Bilbao 2013, pp. 127–148.

administrative system after 1956 ignoring the Riffian historically grown cultural, political, and economic situation.⁷

The border between the Spanish territory of Melilla and the Province of Nador is a result of the constant skirmishes between Riffians and Spaniards. In their fight against Spanish colonisation, the Riffians sought for the support of the Moroccan sultan several times but did not get any positive response. In the peace treaty of Wad Ras 1859, Spain enforced the expansion of the territory of Melilla and the establishment of a border line in 1861. This was the beginning of a slow penetration of the Riffian territory and lay ground for the Spanish Protectorate controlling the Moroccan north.⁸ Between 1912 and 1956, the French and Spanish Protectorate zones developed into economically and culturally differing regions. The north continued to be an agrarian society relying mostly on substance farming, agrarian labour migration to Algeria and trade with the Spanish exclaves, such as Melilla, with a modest transport and communication network. Spanish and the local Tamazight dialect were the languages of daily use. The French zone, in contrast, became more economically diversified, partly industrialised with better infrastructure and French and Moroccan Arabic as the common languages. The differing economic as well as cultural experience and their incompatibility after the Moroccan independence in 1956 led to a Riffian uprising in 1958/59. The uprising demanding the central government's recognition of the Riffian peculiarities and its military contribution to the Moroccan independence was violently suppressed.⁹ This revived the old antagonism between the so-called *bled es-siba* and the *bled makhzen*. Dating back to precolonial times, *bled makhzen* described the area of the Moroccan territory under the Sultan's control; *bled es-siba* was the denomination for areas whose leaders demanded autonomy and rejected paying taxes. Although they pledged allegiance to the sultan, the society of *bled es-siba* was perceived by the Sultan as anarchic and rebellious, which needed to be controlled.¹⁰ This image was perpetuated by European travellers and explorers and used as justification for a military intervention as a 'civilising' mission by Spain and France.¹¹ Later, the image was translated by the colonizers into a differentiation between more accessible, fertile, economically profitable regions, *Maroc utile* (useful Morocco), and less accessible and thus economically less productive

7 M. Aziza, *El otoño de la ira en el Rif. Los rifeños frente al majzén marroquí (1958–59)*, in L. Feliu, J. Mateo Dieste, F. Izquierdo Brichs (eds.), *Un siglo de movilización social en Marruecos*, Barcelona, 2019, pp. 257–276.

8 M.R. de Madariaga, *España y el Rif. Crónica de una historia casi olvidada*, Melilla 2008, pp. 81–118.

9 M. Aziza, *op cit.*, pp. 257–276.

10 K. Mouna, *Identité de la marge. Approche anthropologique du Rif*, Brussels 2018, pp. 31–35; J. Wyrzten, *Making Morocco. Colonial intervention and the politics of identity*, Ithaca 2015, pp. 16–19.

11 K. Mouna, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–25.

regions, *Maroc inutile* (useless Morocco).¹² The Rif region belonged to the latter, which reinforced the image of a rebellious region that could hardly be integrated economically.

In the decades following the Moroccan independence (1956), the Rif continued to suffer from lack of investment in industrialisation, health care, and educational opportunities. Additionally, the educational and administrative system was changed to only French and Moroccan Arabic speaking. Again, complaints and demonstrations, as in 1984 in Nador, were crushed by police and military and led to a general feeling of *al-hogra* amongst the Riffians.¹³

Since the Spanish presence in the region from 1497, geographical and political marginalisation prompted the autochthonous Riffian Amazigh population from closer Kabilas to trade with the Spaniards.¹⁴ This trade relationship, grew into a close interconnection between the region of Melilla and Nador. Throughout the 20th century, Melilla experienced a boost as free trade port. This made Nador the second most important commercial city in Morocco. In the first half of the century, Melilla offered the Nadori-Riffians a variety of work opportunities, educational and medical services, as well as a variety of leisure activities. Growing cross-border family ties fostered social entanglements between Melilla and its Moroccan surroundings. Nador and its Province in turn became weekend escape, food market, and playground for commercial endeavors for Spaniards. These cross-border relations continued after the Moroccan independence in 1956. Spanish continued to be the second language amongst the Riffians after Tamazight.

The integration of Spain into the European Economic Community in 1986 paid respect to the social and economic cross-border relations by adding an appendix to the Maastricht Treaty allowing inhabitants of Nador Province and Melilla free circulation with a personal ID as only prerequisite. However, it soon led to a complete shift regarding the locally grown daily cross-border practices now having to adapt to international rules that soon also affected border control and thus cross-border interaction. In 1998 the first border fence was built, financed by Spain and the European Union.

12 M. Ait Hamza, *Maroc utile, Maroc inutile: mythe ou réalité?*, 2012, <https://gremlr.ma/images/2020/02/Maroc-utile-inutile.pdf> (accessed: 13.07.2023).

13 Z. Rhani, K. Nabalssi, M. Benalioua, 'The Rif again!' *Popular uprisings and resurgent violence in post-transitional Morocco*, 'The Journal of North African Studies', vol. 27, no. 2, 2022, pp. 328. According to Rhani et al. (p. 328), the term "refers to the sentiments of resentment, humiliation, injustice, and power abuses; in short, it designates a shared feeling that the Rifian (sic!) is less than a full-fledged citizen, the pariah of a state of lawlessness."

14 *Kabila* is often translated with the term 'tribe.' They were hierarchically structured territorial and social organisational units often based on family lineage. Kabilas could contain subdivisions, so-called fractions, and unite with other kabilas and form a confederation. Within the kabilas, councils were responsible for jurisdiction and other decision making. The province of Nador surrounding Melilla consisted of about 20 kabilas.

Belonging and space

The social-anthropologist Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka defines ‘belonging’ as “an emotionally charged social location created through the interplay of (1) perceptions and performances of commonality, (2) social relations of reciprocity, and (3) tangible and intangible attachments or even adhesions.”¹⁵ Consequently, belonging is deeply emotional, interrelated and spatial, and – since both perceptions and behaviour can change over time – temporal. When studying belonging it is necessary to differentiate between different layers, such as the individual and the structural level. On the one hand, there is the individuals’ perspective: “[...] the claims and attributions that individuals make about their position in the social order of things, their views of where and to what they belong (and to what they do not belong) [...]”¹⁶ On the other hand, belonging structures societies by creating groupthink and by ‘sorting’ people by categories, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship.¹⁷

In a border region, these ‘politics of belonging’ become even more visible. There, politics of belonging of two national territories converge on one place. In other words, the border separates two national territories with their own politics of belonging including, amongst others, regulations regarding access to the territory, residency and citizenship legislation, cultural policy, and memory politics. At the same time, the border itself creates its own politics of belonging depending on the execution of the regulations and the requirements people need to fulfil to be able to cross it, e.g. if they need to be able to finance ID cards or passports, and its management, e.g. the strictness of the border officials when checking the papers.

In order to put belonging into a transnational perspective, Floya Anthias developed the concept of ‘translocational positionalities,’¹⁸ which situates belonging between the local and the global and enables to combine an intersectional approach with mobility, and different scales in the analysis of ‘belonging.’¹⁹

But how is belonging created? While certain forms of belonging are set by birth (‘ascribed’²⁰), such as citizenship, others develop over the course of a lifetime

15 J. Pfaff-Czarnecka, *Zugehörigkeit in der mobilen Welt. Politiken der Verortung*, Göttingen 2012, p. 12. Translation by the author.

16 *Ibidem*, pp. 491, 498–502.

17 C. Halse, *Theories and Theorising of Belonging*, in C. Halse (ed.), *Interrogating Belonging for Young People in Schools*, Basingstoke-Hampshire 2018, p. 4.

18 F. Anthias, *Where do I belong? Narrating collective identity and translocational positionality*, ‘Ethnicities,’ vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, p. 502.

19 *Ibidem*, p. 510; E. Youkhana, *A Conceptual Shift in Studies of Belonging and the Politics of Belonging*, ‘Social Inclusion,’ vol. 3, no. 4, 2015, p. 12; F. Anthias, *Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality. An intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging*, ‘Translocations: Migration and Social Change,’ vol. 4, no. 1, 2008, p. 5.

20 J. Pfaff-Czarnecka, *From ‘identity’ to ‘belonging’ in social research: plurality, social boundaries, and the politics of the self*, ‘Working Papers in Development Sociology and Social Anthropology,’ no. 368, 2011, p. 9, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-431029> (accessed: 01.09.2019).

(‘acquired’²¹), like a profession or taste of music. Belonging can also be temporary and situational, which means that, depending on the setting, an individual might give more weight to one attachment over the other; belonging is therefore constantly negotiated.²² Thereby, the attachment is not only imagined but also performed through everyday practices that again reproduce and foster feelings and politics of belonging but can also contest them by questioning formal spaces.²³

Belonging is connected to the concept of identity. However, there are important aspects which draw a distinction between the two concepts. From an analytical perspective, an individual’s or group’s ‘identity’ is always understood as the result of a process of othering. Belonging shares this characteristic when it is contested. It usually describes individuals’ and groups’ social relations and focuses on processes of change and permeability.²⁴ These processes of change and permeability make belonging fruitful for historical analysis and suitable to trace spatial changes over time. Investigating contemporary history, oral history offers a productive method to elaborate these changing feelings of belonging and the connected spaces.

Researching spaces of belonging with oral history in border regions

As we have seen before, everyday practices produce and foster feelings and politics of belonging. Ruptures and continuities in the everyday life, thus, influence these practices, these feelings and politics of belonging and, consequently, spatial memories and interpretations.

Spaces of belonging are closely linked to the communicative and cultural memory of groups. The communicative memory is socially mediated in everyday communication, it is relevant to present times. It is based on a feeling of a common present due to a common past, which is connected to the social location of individuals and, consequently to a certain use and perception of space. The cultural memory differentiates between people who share the same idea of a long trajectory from the far past to the present; it is spatial, as it is used to legitimize a dominant memory narrative in a society by the narrative’s institutionalisation

21 *Ibidem*.

22 N. Yuval Davis, *The Politics of Belonging. Intersectional Contestations*, London 2011, p. 15; E. Youkhana, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

23 N. Yuval Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16; E. Youkhana, *op. cit.*, p. 20; V. Bell, *Performativity and Belonging. An Introduction*, ‘Theory, Culture & Society,’ vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, p. 1–10. Politics of belonging are contested by non-hegemonic collectivities trying to be heard and to be recognized as a part of a society. The sociologist Kalpana Kannabiran calls these struggles for inclusion ‘politics of becoming.’ K. Kannabiran, *A Cartography of Resistance: The National Federation of Dalit Women*, in N. Yuval-Davis, K. Kannabiran, U. Vieten (eds.), *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, London 2006, p. 55.

24 F. Anthias, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

and formalisation.²⁵ Consequently, both kinds of memories form part of politics of belonging, referring to performed/experienced and imagined spaces. Oral history as a method allows a thorough analysis of the different layers of belonging and, thus, spaces.

For my PhD project I carried out 65 biographical interviews, composed of 26 interviews with peninsular Spaniards in Melilla, 23 interviews with people of Riffian descent in Melilla, and 16 interviews with Riffians living in Nador. The interviewees' age ranged between 40 and 87; about 30% of the interviewees were women and 70% men; the length of the interviews varies between one and eight hours. The interviews were planned to be conducted in Spanish and Moroccan Arabic (Darija), the mostly spoken and educational language in Morocco.²⁶ For practical reasons it was not possible to learn the local Tamazight dialect Tarifit. However, several of my Riffian interviewees explicitly did not want to talk to me in Darija, because they did not speak it, because they did not want to speak it and preferred Spanish over Darija, or because they were fluent in Spanish.²⁷ Besides, I researched several Spanish, French and Moroccan archives for additional contemporary information on the everyday life in the border region, on border politics, on reflections of international, national and local developments as well as perspectives on the respective 'other' transmitted by media, state institutions and others.²⁸ This allowed to trace contemporary developments and discourses, which, together with secondary literature, at the same time served as reference template for the information given by the interviewees.

25 A. Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*, München 2006, pp. 51–54; J. Assmann, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität*, in J. Assmann, T. Hölscher (eds.), *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt 1988, pp. 10–15; J. Assmann, *Communicative and cultural memory*, in P. Varga, K. Katschthaler, D. Morse, M. Takács (eds.), *The theoretical foundations of Hungarian 'lieux de mémoire' studies* (Loci Memoriae Hungaricae 1), Debrecen 2013, pp. 37–38.

26 F. Sadiqi, *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco*, Leiden–Boston 2003, p. 48.

27 As mentioned before, the region of Nador was strongly influenced by the daily interaction with Melilla, which resulted in a good knowledge of Spanish in large parts of the Riffian population. For a more thorough reflection of the language use during the interviews as well as on reasons for the rejection of Darija as interview language see: S. Steinberger (forthcoming), *Struggles for belonging: Reflections on Oral History interviews, language use and memory in the context of the border city Nador (Morocco)*, Cologne: Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, University of Cologne.

28 In Spain, I researched at the General Archive for Administration (AGA), at the National Foundation of Francisco Franco (FNFF), at the Francisco Largo Caballero Foundation (FFLC), the General Archive of Melilla (AGM), Melilla's Media Archive (Archivo de la Prensa de Melilla) and Melilla's Military Archive (AIMM); in Morocco, I researched at the Moroccan National Archive (Archives du Maroc) the Archive of Morocco's National Library (Bibliothèque Nationale du Maroc), and the Archives of the Haut Commissariat au Plan in Oujda and Rabat; for a third perspective I researched at the Diplomatic Archive Nantes (Archives Diplomatiques), in France.

Drawing on a combination of social-constructivist biographical analysis, figural sociology, and discourse analysis as promoted by Gabriele Rosenthal and Arthur Bogner, I consider biographies as social constructs, which are remembered, interpreted, and produced individually as well as collectively.²⁹ The biographical interviews were used to reconstruct the entanglements of individual life histories and their historical societal context between 1940 and 1998. Additionally, the narratives of the interviews were analysed regarding the “dominant contemporary discourses, but also [...] discourses that were potent in the past, and the way that power balances or inequalities between different groupings have changed over time.”³⁰ This way, I was able to depict the different layers of spaces of belonging and their transformations within the border region of Melilla and Nador.

In order to make more general deductions, I compared the biographical narratives regarding common and differing ideas, assumptions, experiences and activities. Therefore, I followed a 3-step analysis. The first analysis was done in groups regarding the interviewees’ place of residence and ethnicity: Riffians living in Nador, people of Riffian descent living in Melilla and people of European descent living in Melilla. These groups have emerged as the dominant ones during the research. However, several of the interviewees living in Melilla – especially those of Riffian descent – were born or have lived in Nador for some time, and vice versa. This first step allowed to see commonalities and differences amongst the statements and narratives of members of these groups as well as commonalities and differences between the groups. Additionally, this showed if there really were group-specific narratives, experiences, or life trajectories. In a second step, the differences amongst the statements and narratives of members of the groups were looked at more closely. What are the differences and what might be the reasons? By doing this, social hierarchies within the groups became visible. In the third step, overlapping statements by interviewees of the different groups were compared to work out social power structures independent of ethnicity and place of residence. Do people of the same social position within their group share narratives? In which aspects do they coincide with each other, in which do they differ? Why?

This 3-step-analysis helped to elaborate the social complexities within the border region and the hierarchies regarding ethnicity, class, gender, as well as citizenship. Thereby, I tried to answer the following questions: How did the interviewees experience Melilla and/or Nador and the wider region throughout

29 G. Rosenthal, A. Bogner, *Biographies – Discourses – Figurations: Methodological considerations from the perspective of social constructivism and figural sociology*, in G. Rosenthal, A. Bogner (eds.), *Biographies in the Global South: Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*, Frankfurt 2017, p. 17–19.

30 *Ibidem*, p. 36.

their life? What was their everyday life like? What were common and/or important everyday places within this region? Why? What importance did these places have in the interviewees' life? How has all this changed over time? Which events had an impact on their life in the region? In what way? What role did the border play? How do they relate to the region, Melilla and/or Nador? How are Melilla and Nador and the wider region embedded in their memories?

I will briefly sketch some of the results of how oral history has enabled me to trace spaces in my research. A more complete presentation of the findings and a thorough embedding of the local discourses into the local social, cultural, and historical contexts was not possible due to lack of space but will be discussed more broadly in the dissertation project.

Spaces of belonging in the region of Melilla and Nador

First, all interviewees positioned themselves regarding their relationship with the region either based on cultural/ethnic/political affiliation, historical affiliation or both – as they are closely entangled. These affiliations have spatial effects.

Regarding the cultural/ethnic/political affiliation, the interviewees either explicitly self-described as part of a cultural/ethnic/political group, explicitly distanced themselves by categorising 'the other' groups as different to them, or it became clear in the context of individual experiences or collective memory narratives. This grouping or othering became evident in all interviews, for example, when Malik R., a 45-year-old Riffian who lives in the town Beni Enzar between Melilla and Nador, talked about the 1980s, when drug trafficking via Nador and Melilla became an important economic revenue stream:

It was very well known because we have a bad reputation for example amongst the *'Igharbien'*, as we call the Moroccans. We call them *'Igharbien'*, it's like when the Spaniards call us *'moro'*. When we say *'Igharbien'* they feel offended. It means 'those from the west.' It's not an ugly word but when they hear it, they feel offended. But we don't, on the contrary. When they call us *'el rifeño'* we love it because that's what we feel, right? Well, they said "ah... the *rifeños*, these... [*dismissive gesture*]. If it wasn't for the drug trafficking. They don't know how to do anything else than dealing." As if they had universities or made aeroplanes or something [*laughs*]. And that's how it's always been with each other. But I don't think there was a major conflict... With the State [referring to the Moroccan king Hassan II], yes... The State... really... this one's [current king of Morocco] father, I don't like to name his name, was criminal with the *rifeños*. Sincerely.³¹

Not only does he differ between 'Moroccans,' 'Spaniards' and 'Riffians,' he also explains how they refer to each other in a pejorative way. The term 'moro' has

31 Interview with Malik R., Melilla, 2018 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

a long tradition of racialized discriminatory attributions by the Spanish society towards Riffians and Muslims in general. It has its roots in the time of Al-Andalus, 711–1492 AD, the almost 800 years of Arab-Amazigh presence on the Iberian Peninsula. While at first denominating Muslims in contrast to Jews and Christians, it was later reinterpreted and connected to fear of invasion and sexual violence as well as lack of civilisation throughout the centuries.³² In the case of Riffians and non-Riffian Moroccans, the images play with the differing industrial or economic development of the former Spanish and French zones and how they perceive each other due to stereotypes regarding their way of earning their living. *Igharbien* does not only mean ‘the ones from the west.’ More exactly it refers to the coastal plains of the Atlantic as the center of political and economic power. Hence, the denominations ‘*rifeño*’ and ‘*igharbien*’ refer to the already mentioned antagonism of ‘*bled makhzen*’ and ‘*bled es-siba*’ or ‘*Maroc utile*’ and ‘*Maroc inutile*.’ They also perceive each other as belonging to different ethnic groups – Arabs and Imazighen. Nevertheless, in the Riffians’ collective memory they mainly perceive the Moroccan central government as their oppressor. This example shows that there exist different spatial categories linked to nationality and ethnicity but also to historically grown cultural spaces, e.g. based on economic practices or collective memories.

When asked about their historical affiliation to the region, the interviewees drew on different topoi. The interviewees of European descent mentioned their birth and growing up in Melilla or the number of their family’s generations that have already lived in Melilla. They thus focus on the temporary aspect of belonging. Partly, this is also the case for the interviewees of Riffian descent on both sides of the border. However, they emphasize a deeply rooted emotional connection to the land they own or owned. In their perception, this land is directly linked to their ancestors and/or to the derivation of a certain *cabila* that already existed before the presence of the Spaniards. Their focus lies on autochthony and a specific idea of land within their ethnic self-description. This often happened right at the beginning of the interview, like in the interview with Jamal K., a 53-year-old Riffian, who lives in Melilla:

S: Can you tell me how your family came to this area?

J: We didn’t come here. Others stayed... [laughs]

S: Ok, can you explain that to me in more detail?

J: Well, I’m originally from Melilla, I mean my original family. This is their territory, their property.

32 For the history of the term ‘moro’ and its colonial as well as current significance, see J.L. Mateo Dieste, *El ‘moro’ entre los primitivos en el caso del Protectorado Español en Marruecos*, Barcelona 1997.

S: *Melilla as a whole?*

J: Melilla as a whole [laughs], of course, the airport and all that. Even in *Yasinen*, where the border and the water reservoirs are. All of this, where an agricultural area expands. Because there was a boundary between *Melilla la Vieja* – the historical Melilla, the citadel – and the rest. There was a void there until a century and a half ago. And because of protection the border got expanded. Before that, it was a single territory. And in the 19th century the limit was only the citadel. If that is the question, then there are properties that are still in our possession. What happened is that they were donated for historical circumstances, but we have never lost contact to that area.³³

In Jamal's case, his family lost great parts of their land with the peace agreement between sultan Mohamed IV and queen Isabel II in 1860. Skirmishes between the peoples of the Rif and Melilla as well as in the Ceuta region had eventually led to the African War in 1859. The result was an amplification of Melilla's territory by the demarcation of a border line drawn in 1861, the sultan's assurance of Melilla's safety and the expulsion of the autochthonous inhabitants from their land without compensation.³⁴

Second, the interviews showed which historical changes were perceived as such and how these changes affected the interviewees' lives, their everyday spaces as well as the quality of these spaces. They either directly mentioned turning points or they could be reconstructed from the biographies. These turning points helped to understand which events are of special importance in the local memory and to create a local timeline, which might differ from well-known national or international timelines. The interviews also revealed different ideas of turning points respective the interviewees social position. While greater political events, which concerned the border or the process of border-crossing, were mentioned by all interviewees, other events were only relevant for certain people. Also, the same events were evaluated differently by people of different ethnical, political, social, or sexual belonging. The turning points have changed everyday practices and everyday spaces, consequently, spaces of belonging of the interviewees.

To make this more palpable, I will give an example of an uprising which started in Al Hoceima, a city west of Nador, the capital of the Riffian province Al Hoceima, and spread to Nador in 1984. The uprising was caused by rising costs for basic food, such as bread, sugar, and oil after the intervention of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank in Morocco. It was a reaction by the Riffians to

33 Interview with Jamal K., Melilla, 2019 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

34 F. Meyer, *Die Städte der vier Kulturen. Eine Geographie der Zugehörigkeit und Ausgrenzung am Beispiel von Ceuta und Melilla*, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 68–71; S. Steinberger, M. Aziza, *Historia de una frontera europea en África*, 'Illes i imperis,' no. 24, 2022, p. 221.

the continuous marginalization of the region by the central government. Like the uprising in 1958/59 it was violently suppressed by the Moroccan police and military forces.³⁵

From the perspective of Ahmed B., a former Riffian teacher who worked and lived in Nador at that time, this was a very violent and important moment of history, which played part in his later decision to leave Morocco and migrate to Europe:

S: Can you tell me about 1984?

A: About what happened in Nador? Yes. I was in the teacher training centre in Nador at that time, before I got married. I was in Nador, at home. On Thursday I came out of the house, and I saw people crying and so on. I went to the main street. It's called Mohamed V Street. And the people ouhhhhh. A revolution! But at that time the people were very violent. The state was bad... People burned things, broke into banks, it was a conflict that was very... And I went with the demonstration. I thought I had to go to school in the centre at 2 o'clock. At 2:30, when I went, I saw people being shot. People were dying. And the helicopters...³⁶

While Ahmed was struggling with telling his experience of the events in 1984, Bernardo A., a 71-year-old peninsular Spanish military, who was 33 years old at that time and lived in Melilla, barely had any memory of this event. Although living only 12 kilometres from the place of turmoil and repression he stated the following when asked if he was aware of the happenings in Nador:

I think in the 80s there was a revolt and there was an impressive number of people killed there. That's what I've been told. There were unidentified people. But man, you find out about it because someone finds out about it [...].³⁷

The violent interaction between the people from Nador and the Moroccan military was not important news for people of European decent in Melilla. Additionally, Spanish journalists were not allowed to cover the happenings in situ and were stopped at the border by Moroccan police. As a result, there were only few superficial articles about the situation in Nador in the local newspaper. The full

35 A. Suárez Collado, "No solo de pan vive el hombre": *La revuelta de 1984 en Nador*, in L. Feliu Martínez, J.L. Mateo Dieste, F. Izquierdo Brichs (eds.), *Un siglo de movilización social en Marruecos*, Barcelona 2017, pp. 301-320; N. Karrouche, *Memory as Protest: Mediating Memories of Violence and the Bread Riots in the Rif*, in N. Saadi Nikro, S. Hegasy (eds.), *The Social Life of Memory. Violence, Trauma, and Testimony in Lebanon and Morocco*, Cham 2017, pp. 219-237; M. Buehler, *Labour Demands, Regime Concessions: Moroccan Unions and the Arab Uprising*, 'British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,' vol. 42, no. 1, 2015, pp. 88-103.

36 Interview with Ahmed B., Melilla, 2019 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

37 Interview with Bernardo A., Melilla, 2019 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

extent of the violence is still unclear, as the Moroccan government suppressed all intentions to investigate the military intervention and is only starting to account for the past.³⁸ Nevertheless, from the perspective of the European interviewees, the events of 1984 were not part of their concern as it was Moroccan politics.

Omar O., on the other hand, a 62-year-old Hispano-Riffian who lived in Melilla at that time, was not personally affected by the violence but relates with this event as a fellow Riffian:

S: I wanted to ask you about the 1980s and the political movement in Nador. What do you remember of this time?

O: That was in '84... We didn't know what happened, but it wasn't something that... It happened in Al Hoceima, in Nador, the deaths that occurred, the uprising... That occurred in our area because we were fed up with... I'm telling you, we always liked freedom. And with the regime... Yes, it reached us, but we could do little from here.³⁹

Like Bernardo, the events from 1984 did not affect him as much as the Nadoris. However, he identifies as Riffian and with the demands of the Riffian people on the Moroccan government. In his view, the uprising was a reaction towards the general situation of the Riffians within the Moroccan state. He and his fellow Hispano-Riffians knew about it. Nevertheless, living in Melilla, in Spain, on the other side of the border, they were not able to interfere.

In this case, the border played a decisive role regarding the events. The uprising and its suppression affected those on the Moroccan side of the border the most and left many people traumatized, while it kept those, on the Spanish side of the border, safe. Some Riffians escaped to Melilla; some injured people were treated in Melilla's hospital. The limits of national territory and, consequently, governmental influence impacted on people's exposure to violence during and in the decades after the uprising. Despite Morocco's official non-recognition of the political border of Melilla, the spatial political division of Nador and Melilla became clear in 1984. Additionally, the different degrees of concernedness with the events show different spaces of political belonging but also of personal feelings of belonging.

Third, when talking about everyday activities at home, at work, during leisure time, or ways of consumption and the use of educational, medical, and administrative services, the interviewees described the use of public and private spaces. This allowed to gain a detailed understanding of the meaning of certain places

38 M. Aziza, *Memoria e historia en el Marruecos independiente. El caso del rif*, in J.A. González Alcantud et al. (eds.), *Culturas de frontera: Andalucía y Marruecos en el debate de la modernidad*, Barcelona 2019, p. 104.

39 Interview with Omar O., Melilla, 2018 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

in the border region as well as social (cross-border) spaces that emerged through these activities at certain times. This again, differs due to the intersection of categories such as ethnicity, class, gender, age, and political affiliation.

One place that appeared very regularly in the interviews was the '*Rastro*,' a street market close to the city centre of Melilla. Despite the central market and individual markets in the different neighbourhoods, it was one of the most important places to shop groceries, such as vegetables, fruits, fish, and meat before supermarkets gained importance in the 1990s. When studying the references of the interviewees, it becomes clear, that these places are embedded in differing spaces of belonging. In the following quotations, the three interviewees talk about the *Rastro* in the 1960s and 1970s.

Elena F., an 86-year-old peninsular Spanish woman from the middle-class, remembers the *Rastro* as a very cheap market, where Riffians sold their goods. She would even put up with a longer way just to be able to shop there and save money. Here, very clearly, she is the customer, and the Riffians, who had to cross the border to fetch and/or bring the goods, are the glanced down at providers:

I bought all the food at the *Rastro*. In those shops in the *Rastro* that were cheaper. They sold fish and vegetables, and you could always buy it cheaper there. It was a bit far away for me, I used to live further up the street. Back then you could buy better there but now I think it does not exist anymore. There used to be stall shops from the *moros*. All that came from Morocco. The *moros* passed through, the poor ones. Those who were let through customs. And you could buy cheaper stuff there.⁴⁰

Jamila G., an 84-year-old Hispano-Riffian woman, who had moved to Melilla with her family, and who supplemented her husband's scarce income – a war-disabled soldier in the Spanish army – as a water carrier, had a different experience. Also in her memory, the *Rastro* used to be the place to shop for many people, as it was cheap. However, for her, it was a place she could barely go to, as she could not even afford the prices there. She and her family lived mainly on the alms of their neighbours:

S: *Where did you buy vegetables etc. then?*

J: At the *Rastro*. Not the *Rastro* like now. It was different... But there was no money. It was all cheap but there was no money.⁴¹

40 Interview with Elena F., Melilla, 2018 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

41 Interview with Jamila G., Melilla, 2019 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

For children and teenagers, the *Rastro* was, amongst other things, a place to earn some pocket money, as Hamid M., a 65-year-old Riffian, who was born and raised in Melilla but now lives in Nador, recalls:

When there was nothing to do, we would go to the market, the *Rastro*. What did we do at the *Rastro*? Well, some of us had family who sold clothes. On the floor... Clothes and stuff... and we would go and help them. Two hours. And they gave you a penny, two *pesetas*, if you sold something. If not, then nothing. Or we'd go to where they sell vegetables. Every morning those who sell vegetables, fish and so on, would come, and Spaniards would come, old women and so on, who would buy but couldn't carry their shoppings. Some of them have restaurants or bars. So, we would help them carry the groceries home or to the bar. And they paid us. So, every day we earned a living..⁴²

All three interviewees – as well as other people mentioned in the quotations, like Riffian merchants from Melilla and Morocco – experienced this place completely different. Thereby the place became part of differing greater social spaces due to age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, class, and political affiliation. Fourth, intergenerational oral history interviews can show how certain discourses have prevailed, been forgotten, replaced, or even renewed over time. Comparing the statements regarding the use of places in different times and by people of different generations allows to show if and how the meaning of these places and therefore social spaces has changed. It also reflects altering (cross-border) power structures and politics of belonging.

Fifth, adults who, in describing their belonging, draw on historical narratives and events from another time or which they themselves did not experience, show how certain narratives have been preserved over generations and converted into cultural memory. These memory narratives demonstrate to which group they feel they belong to. These memories can be transnational or limited to local cultural memory and may have different impact on national collective memories. This can be shown by the example of the reflection of the battle of Annual 1921. The 58-year-old Riffian interviewee Tarek R., who lives in Morocco but owns the Spanish citizenship, sketched this battle – in his opinion a very important battle for the local but also Moroccan history, since Melilla could have been destroyed and the Spaniards could have been defeated in this war:

What the Riffian leader Abdelkrim Al Khattabi did in Annual... the Spaniards advanced guards lost and started to escape to other guard posts and Melilla. The Riffians, as they were in very high spirits, chased them and gave them a hard time... [laughs]. That was the start

42 Interview with Hamid M., Nador, 2018 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher's private archive.

of the war, the battle of Annual, 21 of July 1921. When the Rifians arrived at the border of Melilla – and this is important – Abdelkrim El Khattabi and his *cabila* that adjoined to Melilla, defended Melilla. Abdelkrim himself did not want to enter Melilla because there were more troops in Melilla. However, as a Spaniard who lived through the war at that time says: “Thank goodness there is a sea between Morocco and Spain, otherwise these *moros* would have driven us out of Spain too”.⁴³

This battle, decisive for Morocco’s colonial history, is the theme of the poem *Dhar Oubarran*, the “most popular text of all the Rif,”⁴⁴ however, it does not form part of the collective memory within the greater Moroccan society.⁴⁵ In Spain, on the other hand, there is a lot of literature about the ‘Desastre de Annual’⁴⁶ discussing its significance within the Spanish national history.⁴⁷ It also forms part of the narrative of the dangerous and hostile *moros* mentioned above. On a local level, the memory, however, is much more personal, as most of the Spaniards living in Melilla and the Spanish protectorate used to be soldiers or be related to one. Consequently, many personal losses are linked to the more than 20.000 Spanish soldiers that died in this battle, as Bernardo A., confirms:

Because, man, I’ve always liked the history between Melilla and... Well, we are the southern border with Morocco. If you have a country next to you, well, ...and hey, I like to investigate as a soldier what happened here throughout the times, the campaigns, ...And especially because I want to investigate the significance of my grandfather’s death.⁴⁸

43 Interview with Tarek R., Nador, 2018 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher’s private archive.

44 M. Abrighach, *España y la batalla de Annual en El poema de Dhar Oubarran (Epopéya poética rifeña de 1921)*, ‘Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea,’ no. 39, 2021, p. 77.

45 *Ibidem*, p. 74.

46 The term ‘Disaster of Annual’ is a commonly used term to refer to the defeat of the Spanish troops in 1921 amongst peninsular Spaniards. The term is broadly used in scientific literature and shows the importance of this event within the Spanish collective memory.

47 See, for example: V. Ruiz Albéniz, *Las responsabilidades del desastre, Ecce Homo, Prueba documental y apuntes inéditos sobre las causas del derrumbamiento y consecuencias de él*, Madrid 1922; P. La Porte, *El desastre de Annual y la crisis de la Restauración en España (1921–1923)*, Madrid 1997; J. Pando Despierto, *Historia secreta de Annual*, Madrid 1999; J.M. Ruiz Vidoondo, *El ‘Desastre de Annual.’ Cambio de política en el norte de África*, ‘Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos GEES Análisis,’ no. 85801, 2021, pp. 1–13; M.R. de Madariaga Alvarez-Prida, *En el centenario del Desastre de Annual*, ‘Viento sur: Por una izquierda alternativa,’ no. 176, 2021, pp. 95–109; M.A. San Felipe Adán, *Cien años del Desastre de Annual: historia de una amarga derrota*, ‘Kalakorikos: Revista para el estudio, defensa, protección y divulgación del patrimonio histórico, artístico y cultural de Calahorra y su entorno,’ no. 26, 2021, pp. 249–290.

48 Interview with Bernardo A., Melilla, 2018 (recorded by S. Steinberger), researcher’s private archive. His grandfather is missing since his participation as a soldier in the battle of Annual. Since then, Bernardo has been searching for historical traces about his fate.

Out of these layers of personal and cultural memories as well as counter memories on a local, regional, national, as well as transnational level various spaces of belonging can emerge.

Conclusion

Coming back to the introductory quote by Hanan and her idea of the society of Melilla and Nador as a 'family,' separate from Morocco and, as a matter of fact, separate from the Spanish mainland, allows to deduct a notion of a spatial entity which encloses Melilla and Nador. Not all the interviews offer such clear spatial narrations. To analyse space in border regions, I suggest the use of the concept of 'belonging' in order to analyse space with oral history.

As we have seen above, 'belonging' is particularly suitable for depicting temporal developments of spaces and spatial concepts in border regions, for tracing the emergence of formal as well as informal spaces caused by emotional attachments, everyday routines, and politics of belonging. Oral history is particularly suited to show the local populations' perspectives and interpretations of the border and the border region as well as the local memory narratives within or in contrast to the national politics of memory. In a border region, where politics of belonging clearly structure formal spaces, the combination of 'belonging' and oral history interviews in combination with archival sources allows to trace various strings of the closely entangled transnational histories. We can do so by seeking for direct or indirect descriptions of self and others; by following biographical trajectories, continuities, and discontinuities in their everyday life; by looking at the transgenerational change of meaning of places within the everyday life; by analysing the border populations' transgenerational memory narratives and their embeddedness in cultural and collective (counter) memories. All this demands a constant awareness of the involved interviewees' changing translocational positionalities. These translocational positionalities and the comparison of their effects on everyday life and memories within the framework of national and international developments allows to deduct spaces of belonging and with it the diverse spatial conceptions of the region that have developed over time.



Bibliography

- Abrighach M., *España y la batalla de Annual en El poema de Dhar Oubarran (Epopeya poética rifeña de 1921)*, 'Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea,' no. 39, 2021, pp. 73–92.
- Ait Hamza M., *Maroc utile, Maroc inutile: mythe ou réalité?*, 2012, <https://gremlr.ma/imagenes/2020/02/Maroc-utile-inutile.pdf> (accessed: 13.07.2023).
- Anthias F., *Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality. An intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging*, 'Translocations: Migration and Social Change,' vol. 4, no. 1, 2008, pp. 5–20.
- Anthias F., *Where do I belong? Narrating collective identity and translocational positionality*, 'Ethnicities,' vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, pp. 491–514.
- Assmann A., *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*, München 2006.
- Assmann J., *Communicative and cultural memory*, in P. Varga, K. Katschthaler, D. Morse, M. Takács (eds.), *The theoretical foundations of Hungarian 'lieux de mémoire' studies (Loca Memoriae Hungaricae 1)*, Debrecen 2013, pp. 36–43.
- Assmann J., *Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität*, in J. Assmann, T. Hölscher (eds.), *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt 1988, pp. 9–19.
- Aziza M., *El otoño de la ira en el Rif. Los rifeños frente al majzén marroquí (1958–59)*, in L. Feliu, J. Mateo Dieste, F. Izquierdo Brichs (eds.), *Un siglo de movilización social en Marruecos*, Barcelona 2019, pp. 257–276.
- Aziza M., *Memoria e historia en el Marruecos independiente. El caso del rif*, in J. A. González Alcantud et al. (eds.), *Culturas de frontera: Andalucía y Marruecos en el debate de la modernidad*, Barcelona 2019, pp. 104–117.
- Aziza M., *La sociedad marroquí bajo el Protectorado español (1912–1956)*, in M. Gahete Jurado (ed.), *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: la historia trascendida*, Bilbao 2013, pp. 127–148.
- Bell V., *Performativity and Belonging. An Introduction*, 'Theory, Culture & Society,' vol. 16 no. 2, 1999, pp. 1–10.
- Buehler M., *Labour Demands, Regime Concessions: Moroccan Unions and the Arab Uprising*, 'British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,' vol. 42, no. 1, 2015, pp. 88–103.
- Driessen H., *On the Spanish-Moroccan Frontier. A Study in Ritual, Power and Ethnicity*, Oxford 1992.
- Halse C., *Theories and Theorising of Belonging*, in C. Halse (ed.), *Interrogating Belonging for Young People in Schools*, Basingstoke–Hampshire 2018, pp. 1–28.
- Kannabira K., *A Cartography of Resistance: The National Federation of Dalit Women*, in N. Yuval-Davis, K. Kannabiran, U. Vieten (eds.), *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, London 2006, pp. 54–74.
- Karrouche N., *Memory as Protest: Mediating Memories of Violence and the Bread Riots in the Rif*, in N. Saadi Nikro, S. Hegasy (eds.), *The Social Life of Memory. Violence, Trauma, and Testimony in Lebanon and Morocco*, Cham 2017, pp. 219–237.
- La Porte P., *El desastre de Annual y la crisis de la Restauración en España (1921–1923)*, Madrid 1997.

- Madariaga M.R. de, *En el centenario del Desastre de Annual*, 'Viento sur: Por una izquierda alternativa,' no. 176, 2021, pp. 95–109.
- Madariaga, M.R. de, *España y el Rif. Crónica de una historia casi olvidada*, Melilla 2008.
- Mateo Dieste J.L., *El 'moro' entre los primitivos en el caso del Protectorado Español en Marruecos*, Barcelona 1997.
- Meyer F., *Die Städte der vier Kulturen. Eine Geographie der Zugehörigkeit und Ausgrenzung am Beispiel von Ceuta und Melilla*, Stuttgart 2005.
- Mouna K., *Identité de la marge. Approche anthropologique du Rif*, Brussels 2018.
- Pando Despierto J., *Historia secreta de Annual*, Madrid 1999.
- Pasini C., *Double loneliness and double belonging*, 'Cambio,' vol. 9, no. 17, 2019, pp. 51–59.
- Pfaff-Czarnecka J., *From 'identity' to 'belonging' in social research: plurality, social boundaries, and the politics of the self*, 'Working Papers in Development Sociology and Social Anthropology,' no. 368, 2011, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-431029> (accessed: 13.07.2023).
- Pfaff-Czarnecka J., *Zugehörigkeit in der mobilen Welt. Politiken der Verortung*, Göttingen 2012.
- Rosenthal G., Bogner A., *Biographies – Discourses – Figurations: Methodological considerations from the perspective of social constructivism and figurational sociology*, in G. Rosenthal, A. Bogner (eds.), *Biographies in the Global South: Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*, Frankfurt 2017, pp. 15–49.
- Rhani Z., Nabalssi K., Benalioua M., 'The Rif again!' *Popular uprisings and resurgent violence in post-transitional Morocco*, 'The Journal of North African Studies,' vol. 27, no. 2, 2022, pp. 326–361.
- Ruiz Albéniz V., *Las responsabilidades del desastre, Ecce Homo, Prueba documental y apuntes inéditos sobre las causas del derrumbamiento y consecuencias de él*, Madrid 1922.
- Ruiz Vidondo J.M., *El 'Desastre de Annual.' Cambio de política en el norte de África*, 'Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos GEES Análisis,' no. 85801, 2021, pp. 1–13.
- Sadiqi F., *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco*, Leiden–Boston 2003.
- San Felipe Adán M.A., *Cien años del Desastre de Annual: historia de una amarga derrota*, 'Kalarikos: Revista para el estudio, defensa, protección y divulgación del patrimonio histórico, artístico y cultural de Calahorra y su entorno,' no. 26, 2021, pp. 249–290.
- Steinberger S., *Struggles for belonging: Reflections on Oral History interviews, language use and memory in the context of the border city Nador (Morocco)*, 'Cologne Working Papers in Cultural and Social Anthropology (KAE),' no. 7, forthcoming.
- Steinberger S., Aziza M., *Historia de una frontera europea en África*, 'Illes i imperis,' no. 24, 2022, pp. 217–244.
- Suárez Collado A., "No solo de pan vive el hombre": *La revuelta de 1984 en Nador*, in L. Feliu Martínez, J.L. Mateo Dieste, F. Izquierdo Brichs (eds.), *Un siglo de movilización social en Marruecos*, Barcelona 2017, pp. 301–320.
- Wyrzten J., *Making Morocco. Colonial intervention and the politics of identity*, Ithaca 2015.
- Youkhana E., *A Conceptual Shift in Studies of Belonging and the Politics of Belonging*, 'Social Inclusion,' vol. 3, no. 4, 2015, pp. 10–24.
- Yuval Davis N., *The Politics of Belonging. Intersectional Contestations*, London 2011.

**Summary**

The border region of Nador and Melilla has seen many changes since the 19th century: from the establishment of a political border between Melilla and Nador, the Spanish protectorate 1912–1956, Spain's accession to the European Community in 1986, to the construction of a High-Tech border fence since 1998.

The changing management of political borders affects the local population's cross-border everyday spaces. The author proposes the method of oral history combined with the concept of belonging to analyse these spaces. By using examples from interviews conducted in 2018 and 2019, the author shows, how an intersectional analysis of local discourses of memory as well as of everyday life and biographical trajectories make it possible to depict everyday spaces and spatial notions from a historical perspective.