

Research Article

# Regulating European Union's Border in Africa: The Practice of Semi-permeable Border in Ceuta and Melilla

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## Abstract

*Ceuta and Melilla are two enclaves that belong to Spain in Morocco and have become the contact points of the irregular migrants coming from Africa that are attempting to reach the European continent. The enclaves have utilized innovative technology and barbed wire, but immigrant crises have occurred over the years. Despite the crises, the Spanish and Moroccan governments choose to perform a semi-permeable border. This article explains the semi-permeable border using the liberal institutional theory. This article argues that a semi-permeable border is chosen by the Spanish and Moroccan governments to fulfill their mutual self-interests. The Spanish government agrees to perform a semi-permeable border to retain the symbolic border of the region. The blurring overlap in the enclaves has put the Spanish government to use help from the European Union to conduct security measures in the region. The Moroccan government agrees to perform a semi-permeable border to retain its influence over the enclaves and uses the immigrant crises as a bargaining chip for the European Union. The European Union maximizes the performance of a semi-permeable border to pursue its interest, which is to conduct the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement.*

*Keywords: Border, Immigrant Issue, Liberal Institutionalism, Morocco, Spain*

## INTRODUCTION

The immigrant crisis in Ceuta and Melilla had started to gain international concern after six people died while trying to cross from Morocco to the Spanish enclaves, shot by border police in October 2005 (Goodman, 2005). The crisis was also followed by 73 (seventy-three) immigrants being deported to Morocco's city of Tangier and another 500 (five hundred) had been sent to a desert in Morocco, near the border with Algeria, with little food or water. This immigrant issue is especially important for the European Union as Ceuta and Melilla are two backdoors of Europe. The enclaves are two remaining European territories in mainland Africa, the last surviving relics of the once vast Spanish empire.

After Morocco gained its independence in 1956, Ceuta and Melilla remained under Spanish sovereignty and continued to perform an "open border" policy up until Spain joined the European Community in 1986 (Driessen, 2010). During this period, the enclaves became a stepping-stone to the European Community for immigrants coming from Africa.

Following Spain joining the Schengen in 1993, double fences started to enclose the enclaves with an 8 km-long militarized barrier three to six meters high (Buoli, 2014). These fences are also equipped with thermal and infrared cameras, as well as razor wire was put in to prevent irregular crossings.

Despite these layered fences encircling the enclaves, the inefficiency became apparent when the borders were still permeable to the illegal flow of people -events occurring back in August 2018 and August 2019 when 752 (seven hundred fifty-two) immigrants in total tried to reach Spanish territory (Canas, 2019). Another 6.000 migrants also reached Ceuta over a single day back in May 2021, who includes about 1.500 minors -they either swam around the border fences that extend out into the sea or they walked across at low tide time (BBC News, 2021). This incursion of thousands of people swarming to cross the border was in effect to the rising tension because Spain allowed the leader of a Western Saharan independence movement to be treated in Spanish hospital for Covid-19.

The attempt did not end there, which in June 2022 between 1.500-2.000 migrants camped in the Moroccan mountains surrounding Melilla hoping to reach the Spanish territory (Hedgecoe, 2022). About 133 migrants managed to reach Melilla and being housed in the city's temporary stay center and examined for their legal status. At least 23 migrants died -while Moroccan officials stated the casualties were 18 people due to injuries from falling out of the barrier ("Spain class deadly migrant rush", 2022). Another news source mentions the number casualties are 37 people, while 77 people remain unaccounted for (Bremner, 2023). Spain intends to seek "irregular migration" to be listed as one of the security threats on the NATO's southern flank as migrants had been seen to be armed with sticks and iron bars.

The Spanish government and the European Union eventually established several co-operations with the Moroccan government through giving assistance -such as INTERREG and POCTEFEX and implementing securitization measures with FRONTEX along with the integrated security system (SIVE), as the enclaves were kept being confronted with the situation of the borders were still permeable (Buoli, 2014). Due to the May 2021 event, Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska sent 200 troops and 200 extra police to Ceuta in addition to the 1.100 forces that were already stationed (BBC, 2021). But after two years the border crossing was closed during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and after a major dispute when Spain allowed the leader of a Western Saharan independence movement to be treated in Spanish hospital for Covid-19, the land borders were eventually re-opened ("Spain, Morocco reopen land borders", 2022). This reopening of the border also marked the Spanish' policy shift toward the leader of a Western Saharan independence movement, hence Spain and Morocco intend to work together again and eased their diplomatic relations (Mohamed, 2022).

Despite these layered fences, the enclaves have been mentioned by several scholars to perform the opposite outcome. Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo argues that the fences have performed a "border acrobatics" regime -dramatically accentuating the logic of softening and fortifying of the European Union's external border (Gallardo, 2007). James Anderson

also sees the border as “selective permeability” and having “differential filtering effects” where the border becomes more permeable to the flow of goods and capital (Gallardo, 2007). The border also welcome seasonal laborers and students from well-to-do families, people doing business, professionals, and other members of the elite to be granted entry (Driessen, 2010). These studies show that the fences have only functioned to defend and block the feared ‘deluge’ migrants -to stop the movement of some categories of people (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017). This condition of “selective permeability” border has influenced everyday live interaction among the locals in Ceuta and Melilla, such as the occurrence of cross-border atypical trade activities as well as the changing of socio-spatial configurations on the enclaves and neighbouring territories -which links to the intense informal trade (Buoli, 2014; Espanol, Cubero, & de la Mata, 2017).

Then the important question is why do Spanish and Moroccan governments choose to perform the semi-permeable border regime in Ceuta and Melilla? To what extent does the European Union contribute to the chosen border regime? And what is the impact of the semi-permeable border regime in Ceuta and Melilla to the local citizens? The main argument of this article is that the Spanish and Moroccan governments are concerned about the mutual self-interests, hence using the international cooperation that is established by the European Union to create such border arrangement. The Liberal Institutionalism theory is used to explain the involvement of the European Union behind the performance of the semi-permeable border regime in Ceuta and Melilla. Moreover, borders in Ceuta and Melilla hold significant geopolitical dimensions -not only for Spain but also for European Union. This explains the changes in regional circumstances, national interests, the balance of power, and the nature of relationships between Spain and Morocco (Saddiki, 2010). Specifically, the national interest concept is apparent in the ruling of this semi-permeable border. Furthermore, this article also suspects that everyday life/activities among locals in the enclaves are determined by this chosen border regime.

## **METHOD AND THEORY**

This article employs qualitative research to answer the research question. Specifically, the case study is used to investigate the issue. A case study is deemed to be the most adequate method to give an in-depth description and analysis of a certain phenomenon. A case study analysis enables this article to delimit the object of the study into what Merriam and Tisdell called a “bounded system” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A case study can also address complex and contextual conditions (Yin, 2013). A case study is also defined as an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program, or system in a “real-life” context (Simons, 2009). This article specifically uses a theory-led case study -which refers to exploring or exemplifying a case through a particular theoretical perspective (Simons, 2009). However, this article does not try to test a specific theory or to take a specific theoretical lens to the study. This type of case study makes use of the benefit of the prior development of theoretical prepositions to guide design, data collection, and analysis (Yin, 2018).

This article uses the Liberal Institutionalism (LI) theory of international relations to explain the reasons behind the performance of the semi-permeable order regime in Ceuta and Melilla and the involvement of the European Union in the border arrangement. The Westphalian notion of territorial sovereignty coexists with the intergovernmental-supranational territoriality performed by the European Union -which according to the liberal institutionalism theory also plays an important role in shaping the enclaves. Using the period of 2005 to 2023, this article tries to capture the vast ranging of actions performed by the Spanish government, Moroccan government, and the European Union to react to the continuous performance of the semi-permeable border. The year 2005 was also the starting point where the three actors put a greater effort to overcome the immigrant situations within the enclaves.

This article utilises the liberal institutionalism (LI) theory to see the border practice in Ceuta and Melilla. One of the most prominent and developed works closely related to liberal institutional theory is by Robert Keohane -which he elaborated on the notions of neoliberal institutionalism. This article also uses explanations from Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin on how institutionalist theory might give a better insight into the benefits of cooperation within (international) institutions. According to the LI theory, states are concerned with absolute gains rather than relative gains (Betts, 2009). States are also assumed to be rational and self-interested power maximisers (Betts, 2009). These two assumptions may explain on how both the Spanish and Moroccan governments use the semi-permeable border practice for their own national interests, which is explained in the first section of the discussions.

This means that (international) cooperation can offer opportunities for mutual benefit, hence creating a positive-sum game rather than a zero-sum game (Betts, 2009). International institutions play an important role in facilitating cooperation when collective actions by the states fail due to the suspicion of the other states who may act as free riders (Betts, 2009). Hence, the international institutions can play a role to reduce such transaction costs and reducing the likelihood of states' free riding.

In addition, Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin argue that liberal institutionalism theory is mainly applied to the political economy -which is also supported by Charles Lipson's observation that political-economic relationships are typically more institutionalised than military-security relationships (Keohane & Martin, 1995). Furthermore, this cooperation between states may create prisoners' dilemma situation caused by the outcomes of the cooperation may not be agree upon. This is when international institutions can step to provide "constructed focal points, that make particular cooperative outcomes prominent", and in the end, the gains are evenly divided. This assumption that the semi-permeable border is the outcome of the preference from the Spanish government, Moroccan government, and the European Union to establish a political-economy relationship rather than the military-security one.

Liberal institutionalism theory has been criticised for having more explanations on the pure inter-state level, but the immigrant issue in Ceuta and Melilla issue is not the case. Liberal institutionalism can also provide an explanation of how international cooperation is seen to fulfil mutual self-interests -which can deliver policy outcomes that

might create an incentive for the involved states to behave differently (Betts, 2009). Moreover, international institutions may enable states to take a longer-term perspective of their interests and thereby change their incentives to cooperate (Betts, 2009). This changing behaviour may explain how the Spanish government and Moroccan government can accept this semi-permeable border once both countries realise the benefit of maintaining such a border arrangement and through the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement.

The analysis of this article is divided into three sections. First, the choice of the Spanish and Moroccan governments to maintain the current border regime is not only because of the historical importance, but also due to the current and future importance of the enclaves -that the border practice is indeed beneficial for the Spanish and Moroccan governments. Second part explains how the border is used by the European Union not only as a buffer zone for migrants but also as an opportunity to gain the economic market in Africa and to institutionalise the cooperation between the Spanish and Moroccan government through the economic framework. The last part of this article presents the effect of the border practice on the local citizens of Ceuta and Melilla.

## **RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

The debate on the border practice of the enclaves does not only involve Spanish government's objectives, but also a continuous attempt from the Moroccan government to bring the enclaves back as its territory, as well as the effort from the European Union to create a "fluid" border to accustomed to their agenda of establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. These dynamics also involve in keeping a stricter border to preclude illegal immigrants to enter Europe -which is seen by the European Union to threaten the Schengen system. In this section, the borders in Ceuta and Melilla will be explained according to Spanish and Moroccan government perspectives, as well as the European Union through the lenses of liberal institutionalism theory. Through the comparison of the three perspectives, this article provides a better picture of how both the Spanish and Moroccan governments pursue international cooperation -through the European Union's framework, to gain their own national interests.

Discourses have been encircled depicting the borders in Ceuta and Melilla -making the borders of having multifaceted fault lines: a colonial/national boundary between Spain and Morocco, an economic boundary between Europe and Africa, a geopolitical boundary between North and South, and the religious boundary between Christianity and Islam (Ribas, 2012). The fences were not only acting as a symbol of both political and economic segregation but also as a "re-demarcation" of the cultural boundaries of Europe toward Africa (Driessen, 2010).

### **Opting for "Semi-permeable" Border Regime in the Enclaves**

Spain and Morocco have acknowledged Ceuta and Melilla as having historical significance, such as the launching point for Francisco's nationalist troops during the Spanish Civil War, a place where Berber historically resided in Melilla and attempted to

retake the enclave from Spain during the battles in 1898 and 1910. This tension for historical claim continued to emerge in 2007 when the Spanish King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia visited the enclaves for the first time. The visit sparked diplomatic tension between the Spanish and Moroccan governments, where both officials gave provocative statements. Prime Minister of Morocco, Abbas El Fassi, stated that Morocco would work "...to recover the two occupied cities and the neighbouring islands", whereas the Spanish Prime Minister stated that the Kingdom of Spain has "inalienable, legitimate rights to the land" (Giles, 2007). Moreover, Morocco also recalled its ambassador to Spain to show its protest towards the visit of Spain's monarch to the enclaves as the Moroccan government still attempts to include the enclaves as its region. In the current edition, the Spanish government has filed a complaint to the Moroccan government for labelling Ceuta and Melilla as "Moroccan cities" (El Atti, 2023).

Despite this tension, there was no hindrances to any bilateral relations between the Spanish and Moroccan governments. For example, trade relations between the two countries remain stable where Spain remained the second-largest trading partner for Morocco (World Bank, 2022). The Spanish and Moroccan governments also still hold High-Level Meetings among them, with the latest meeting occurring back in 2015. Moreover, Spain is still one of the biggest suppliers of defence technology for Morocco (Kavanagh, 2019). These dynamics of the relationship had been long consolidated through the signing of Treaties of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation back in 1991.

From the perspective of Moroccan government, this article argues that the choice for a semi-permeable border is to retain as much influence in the enclaves, as Morocco had been declined several times to put the Ceuta and Melilla onto the United Nations decolonisation lists (Pinos, 2009). The Moroccan government also leaves the Moroccan side of the borders with less strict patrol compared to the Spanish side of the borders, as the Moroccan government argues to do so due to the illegitimate perception of the border of the enclaves from the Moroccan perspective (Gallardo, 2007).

The semi-permeable practice also enables the Moroccan government to boost the economy of the surrounding regions of the enclaves -such as in Tanger-Tetouan-Al-Hoceima, which made the region the third-highest contributor to Morocco's GDP ("Three Moroccan Regions Account for 58% of GDP," 2018). For this reason, the Moroccan government is accused of turning a blind eye to the trafficking of illegal goods from Ceuta and Melilla to the neighbouring regions -which was valued at 600 million Euros per year (Bermant, 2015). Ceuta and Melilla also hold a "special economic zone" -in which commodities imported through the enclaves are not subject to VAT and European Union's custom duties.

This border practice has escalated some issues in the enclaves, especially on the immigrant issue. Since 2018, Spain has become the new gateway for immigrants using the Western Mediterranean route to enter Europe -overtaking Greece and Italy, with 150.000 people arriving in Spain according to figures published by Frontex (General Secretariat of the Council, n.d.). This brings several changes to Spanish domestic conditions -especially in terms of its economy, positively and negatively. A study shows

that real wages in many Spanish regions increase in line with the more population diversity brought by immigrants (Gomez-Flors & Alguacil, 2018), although the poverty rates among non-European Union foreigners remain high -reaching almost 60% in 2013, twice bigger compared to poverty rates among European Union foreigners in Spain (Rodenas, Marti, & Leon, 2017). The situation in Ceuta and Melilla appears to be similar, where the unemployment rate reached 24.9% in Ceuta and 30.8% in Melilla (Sanchez, 2017).

Spain's membership in the European Union adds more complications to the existing complex relationship between the two countries. On one hand, the Spanish government could ask the European Union for assistances to ease up and help the immigrant crises in the enclaves. For example, by providing better border surveillance technology -such as the "Seahorse" satellite network, highly-networked fences, and the Eurosur surveillance system (Andersson, 2016), the implementation of SIVE and securitisation measures by Frontex (Gallardo, 2008), and through the European Neighbourhood Instrument by giving bilateral assistance to focus on priority sectors such as bilateral, regional and cross-border cooperation, economic and investment plan, as well as strengthening the civil society sector. The innovative technology of trench and fences -with motion-activated sensors and cameras and razor wire, Spain built the fences using the European Union funding (Edwards, 2021). The borders are mentioned to cost 72 million Euro -along with SIVE surveillance system costing 230 million Euro from 2000 to 2008 (Femmine, 2017). This shows that the European Union has invested and involved in the border arrangements.

On the other hand, the involvement of the European Union brings a tendency of an asymmetrical relationship because Morocco would appear to have less power than Spain and the European Union combined. Even though the Moroccan government may appear in a disadvantageous position, the Moroccan government uses the immigrant issue as their bargaining chip to negotiate with the Spanish government and the European Union. This article argues that the presence of the European Union might indeed facilitate Morocco to achieve its interest better, especially by having given assistance from the European Union (such as European Union Emergency Trust Fund, Neighbourhood Investment Platform, and so on) and other close cooperation that might help to boost Morocco's economic development and achieve better regional securitisation. The European Union allocated 1.5 billion Euro between 2014 and 2020 to Morocco -including under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and allocated 632 million Euro between 2021 and 2022 under the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (European Union, 2023).

In sum, Spain's possession of Ceuta and Melilla is barely beneficial, except from the historical perspective of the colonisation era and what Jaume Castan Pinos mentioned as a symbolic border (Pinos, 2009). This symbolic border can be defined as a border that is to retain Spanishness and to highlight the division between religion and civilisation between Spain and Morocco. The Moroccan government had claimed Ceuta and Melilla since 1961, but the Spanish government had defended the enclaves for historical, geopolitical, and symbolic reasons (Driessen, 2010). Ceuta had been colonised by Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines, up until Portugal gained control in 1415, and later it was

assigned to Spain under the Treaty of Lisbon in 1688 -although it had been passed as a port to Spain earlier in 1580 (Britannica, 1999). Whereas, Melilla had been colonised by the ancient Phoenicians and Romans before becoming the Spanish territory of Castile in 1497 (Britannica, 1998).

Ceuta and Melilla had gained free-port status and subsequently having an intense trading activity in 1863. This made Spanish interest was increasing in Northern Morocco. During the colonial period (1912-1956), Spain put perimeters dividing Ceuta and Melilla from the Northern Morocco territories under Spanish "protection" -this is why Spain never considered the enclaves as colonial territories (Gallardo, 2008). During this period, these perimeters were fully permeable, and the enclaves were highly interconnected with the hinterland area of Morocco (Gallardo, 2007). Ceuta and Melilla experienced significant development up until 1975, due to tax benefits and the inward orientation of the Spanish economy.

Eventually, the Statute of Autonomy for the two enclaves was approved in 1995 - along with the Spanish accession to the European Union and Schengen area, which brought a new configuration to the borders. Today, this border practice in the two enclaves still holds out with an additional increment of perimeter securitisations through the implementation of more advanced border and surveillance technologies, along with several cooperation mechanisms. The importance of Spanish borders in Ceuta and Melilla is now overlapping with Europe's frontier to the African continent, but Xavier Gallardo also argues that the drawing of the European Union-Morocco border did not automatically erase the border between Spain and Morocco (Gallardo, 2008). Even though it currently seems that the overlap is unavoidable and tends to lead to the ruling by the European Union, the goal is to accommodate the different interests from respectively Spain, Morocco, and the European Union. The goal is to maintain this semi-permeable border so that they will not miss out on the benefits of a globalised economy.

These different interests that are trying to be achieved by the Spanish government and Moroccan government match with the assumption from liberal institutionalism theory that the international cooperation between the two as a mean to pursue states' objectives as well as to fulfilling one's interests. This is apparent, especially in the Moroccan government which tries to gain economically from the cooperation. This is also aligned with the other assumptions from liberal institutionalism that states are concerned with gains (Betts, 2009). This means that the benefits from this semi-permeable border can be accepted by the Spanish and Moroccan governments to compensate for such border arrangements. This also means that as the Spanish and Moroccan government agrees on reaching mutual gains rather than the zero-sum game approach, such border arrangement is possible. Hence, the argument of liberal institutionalism is also proven as the semi-permeable borders are accepted.

### **Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement**

The European Union has a clear objective to conduct border arrangements within the enclaves, as it attempts to "discipline" human mobilities through the externalisation



of border controls and to put layers of additional restrictions on immigrants' bodies (Johnson & Jones, 2016). Furthermore, the responses from the European Union towards the enclaves mainly fall under three policy areas: common asylum and migration policy, cooperation with third countries, and tight border controls (Hedling, 2010). With common asylum and migration policy and tight border controls, the borders become impermeable. For cooperation with third countries, the borders can be both permeable and impermeable.

In this regard, the perimeters within the enclaves are still permeable through the separation of desirable and undesirable people. Using the concept of "immunity", the practice excludes a certain group of people to engage in legal or illegal activity of free-flowing trade and commerce, as well as involve in border work through European Union neighbourhood projects funnel money (Johnson & Jones, 2016). These notions were rooted in the bridging and barrier functions of borders where the enclaves perform contradictory policies between the softening/tolerance for commodities and stricter control on illegal migration (Gallardo, 2007). Based on the notions, the argument of maximising the benefits of globalisation while mitigating the potential loss from immigrant crises becomes salient in the Spanish-Moroccan border regimes (Gallardo, 2008). This dual geopolitical significance of the borders in Ceuta and Melilla is mentioned by Xavier Gallardo as a "post-national" territorial unit where a supranational institution is also included playing a role. Moreover, the borders are also perceived not only as a buffer zone to contain the flow of immigrants, but also as a channel to search for new markets (Bermant, 2015). Hence, the interest in integrating Morocco into the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area is eased through the current performance of borders in the cities.

Africa as a region holds 9.4% of the European Union's total external trade in 2016 (Directorate-General for Trade, 2020), and continue to grow to 20% in 2019 -making Africa the fourth largest trading partner while the Europe Union is Africa's first and largest trading partner ahead of China, Indian and the United States (European Commission, 2022). Although the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area is not solely economical, the aims are also to establish a common area of peace, stability, and shared prosperity in the Euro-Mediterranean region (Directorate-General for Trade, 2020). Morocco signed the partnership agreement back in February 1996 with future negotiations including opening additional agricultural trade, liberalise trade in services and investment, and establishing deep and comprehensive free trade areas among others. This partnership is funded under the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Noting these advantages that are brought by the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement, it is argued that the European Union, as an international institution, has changed the incentives for both the Spanish and Moroccan governments to maintain the semi-permeable border regime. For example, Spain has become the largest European trading partner of Morocco, which historically was France (Rojo, 2023). Trade between Morocco and Spain has been considerably grown over the years, at the average of 10% per year (Rojo, 2023). Spain has also become the sixth largest country to invest in Morocco with the total investment of 4.148 billion Euros (Rojo, 2023).

The Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area becomes a significant focus on the European Union-Morocco relationship as this partnership can provide Morocco with wider opportunities to boost its economies faster, hence can minimise more Moroccans flocking

out their country to Europe. As in 2022, the European Union is Morocco's largest trading partner, accounting for 49% of Morocco's goods trade (Directorate-General for Trade, 2020). The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union has helped Morocco to diversify and sophisticate its exports. While in 2000, apparel and clothing accessories accounted for half of Morocco's exports to the European Union (41%), in 2007, electrical equipment had become the most exported products (21%), followed by the apparel and clothing accessories (18%) and road vehicles (17%) (Berahab & Dadush, 2020). The European Union is also the largest market for Moroccan agricultural products, accounting for 66% (Berahab & Dadush, 2020).<sup>1</sup>

In parallel to the expected economic prosperity of Morocco, the European Union also expects the Moroccan government to provide complementary securitisations in addition to the securitised border that has been explained in the previous section. Between January and July 2022, Morocco thwarted more than 40.000 irregular migrants that were attempting to reach Europe (Rahhou, 2023). Moroccan army also detained more than 1.110 people in the cities of Nador, M'diq and Fnideq between 31 December 2023 and 1 January 2024 that were attempting to reach Ceuta and Melilla (Euractiv, 2024).

The semi-permeable border eventually performs both military/security and the political economy relationship between Spain/European Union and Morocco. This assumes the argument brought by Keohane and Martin to be less useful in explaining the border regime in the enclaves as they argued that the international institutions are typically focused on the political economy rather than military security. In this case, the international institutions might perform for both foci as the European Union tries to balance the military securitisation and the political economy interest through the performance of the semi-permeable border in the enclaves.

### **Locals' Activities within the Enclaves**

Traditionally, trade cooperations within the enclaves with the Moroccan hinterland had been established for ages as has been briefly discussed in the introduction part. The term illegal trading or smuggling came when the border fences were eventually erected in the area. The border practice also draws a wide group of people to take advantage of the situation. For example, wealthy entrepreneurs from Rabat or Casablanca who control the large-scale smuggling of alcohol and tobacco, thousands of women who travel from Fez or Kenitra to work as couriers, etc (Bermant, 2014). The stricter control at the borders makes these wealthy entrepreneurs in favour as they have established contacts, financial resources, and official documents to perform the necessary smuggling business. In addition, the border practice also creates segregation among the local inhabitants economically, such as Christians who work mainly for the state, schools, hospitals, government institutions, or the military, while Muslims who mostly work in the construction sectors or set up a smuggling business.

Alicia Espanol in her study elaborated on a classification of Moroccan border people in the Ceuta/Tetouan border: with *porteadoras* (carriers) being the most frequent to cross the border, traders/smugglers, domestic workers, and construction workers following the next (Espanol et al., 2017). Education students, public servants, and white-collar professionals frequently cross the border are identified as Spanish/Moroccan nationality

to be crossing also frequently. People doing leisure, purchases, border guards, and taxi drivers are the least/non-crossing people. From the classifications, this article then argues that economic discourse is dominant in the activities conducted by the citizens in Ceuta and Melilla and its neighbouring regions.

This smuggling activity emerged as the consequence of the non-existence of important industrial sectors or natural resources to exploit in the enclaves. This made the commercial establishments and local businessmen flourish in smuggling businesses, even encouraged by the border's selective border policy (Bermant, 2014). There is also an emergence of the business of "Schengenised" Moroccan passports increasing in the black market (Gallardo, 2008), as the neighbouring Moroccan citizens who have visa exemption can cross the border from Monday to Thursday from 8 AM to 1 PM. This visa exemption for the residents of regions adjacent to the enclaves becomes an appeal for the locals to take part in the smuggling businesses. This supports the argument that the performance of the border regime affects and brings changes to the local actors.

The minimal activities conducted by other actors -such as border police, and local governments make them insignificant in the discourse's creation. Individuals or social groups are not being the central focus of the border discourse in Ceuta and Melilla. The border regime then defines how the local actors should perform their daily lives through the emergence of individual categories like wealthy entrepreneurs and so on. This lacking the commitment to liberty of individuals and social groups, rather see the individuals in the enclaves as being forced to accommodate the preferences of the states -which to perform the semi-permeable borders.

## CONCLUSION

The notion of Liberal Institutionalism theory is proved to be able to explain the practice of semi-permeable border in Ceuta and Melilla. The notion of Spanish and Moroccan governments chooses the semi-permeable border based on two reasons: the historical and geopolitical importance of the enclaves for the Spanish government and the rational choice from Morocco and the European Union to not be left out of the globalized trade system confirms that the Spanish and Moroccan governments concern to their relative gain in performing such border practice as well as confirming that states still become a central actor in the international arrangement.

Although keeping the enclaves includes high-cost consequences, the Spanish government uses the European Union as the supranational institution to help them with better surveillance systems and by giving assistance to Morocco. This arrangement mainly comes from the blurring overlap of the enclaves -as the border between Spain-Morocco and Europe-Africa. Moreover, when Spain became a member of Schengen, the European Union started to play an important role in shaping out the system of the borders. This is mainly through balancing the military security with the political economy component. The European Union tries to compensate for the performance of semi-permeable in the enclaves by extending its influence on Africa through the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. Morocco to some extent agrees on the border performance in the enclaves, not only to maximize the advantages offered by the Spanish government and the European Union,

economically, but also to keep tight the enclaves as part of its bargain to the opposing parties. The creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area also confirms that the notion of complex interdependence due to the involvement of the European Union in the border regime arrangements.

The local activities in the enclaves are determined by the choice of semi-permeable practice -which historically has been mentioned as having continuous trading activities. Through the hardening of the border, illegal activities emerged from the securitization of the borders -others being the black market for Moroccan passports and the establishment of new wealthy entrepreneurs to do the smuggling activities from big cities in Morocco. The semi-permeable practice of the borders also creates categorization of people who frequently cross the borders. It also confirms the notion that states still become the central actor, while individuals are not, especially in the discourse's creation of the border regime.

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