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Branding Gibraltar: British, Mediterranean, European, or a Bridge between Two Worlds?

1 Introduction

This article examines the current branding of the British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar as a link between two worlds: Europe/the United Kingdom and Morocco.¹ Various political and civil society actors in the territory are involved in this process, which emerged in the run-up to Brexit and unfolded widely through its implementation. These local processes are embedded in wider geostrategic interests.

At present, we associate the concept of branding primarily with an economic strategy of emphasising the characteristics of a product or – in our case – a place, in order to assign a unique value, a unique selling proposition, in the consumer world. Many anthropological studies have used the example of European regions to work out how, in the course of European unification, special products of a region, especially food, are marketed as “authentic.”² As a rule, these strategies have been interpreted primarily against the background of economic positioning within the European or global market in order to respond to the needs of customers who are seeking more authenticity.

The special contribution of anthropology to the study of branding places and regions is its emphasis on another dimension that goes beyond mere marketing strategies: the creation of cultural stereotypes and identities.³ From this point of view, branding should not be understood exclusively in terms of external presentation; it also has an effect on the inner workings of a community.⁴ Accordingly, the political-historical context, which often plays a decisive role in the branding of places or regions, remains underexposed in the primarily economic view of branding,

1 Thanks to Steffen Wippel, Dunja Moeller, Stefanie Hof, and Seda Sönmeztürk for helpful feedback and bringing this article into a readable English version. It is based on intensive anthropological fieldwork in Tangier and Gibraltar on cross-border, “transboughaz” (*Boughaz* = strait) relations in the context of the Brexit (2019/20) and on previous field research in Seville (1985/86), Gibraltar (1995/96), and Tangier (since 2013). Various publications on the subject bear witness to this research, including Haller 2000a–b, 2001a–b, 2016, and 2021.

2 Cf. Pratt, 2007; Leitch, 2003; Cavanaugh, 2007; Welz, 2016.

3 E.g. Anholt 2008, 2011; Fırat, Dholakia, and Venkatesh, 1995.

4 See Barr, 2012.

as it is able to strengthen cultural, social, and political ties internally and at the same time marks demarcations externally. This double effect was elaborated in detail by anthropologists, historians, and other social scientists, particularly in the 1980s, using the example of nation-state formation,⁵ national myths,⁶ ethnicity,⁷ and borders,⁸ and was incorporated – albeit inadequately – into branding research.⁹

This article takes a look at the example of the branding of the Gibraltarian community, which since the middle of the 20th century has been trying to reposition itself in the power triangle between the United Kingdom, Spain, and Morocco, primarily politically and only secondarily economically. A special role in the current branding of Gibraltar is played by the dense and partly centuries-old relations with the Moroccan cities of Tangier and Tetuan. These relations weakened since the integration of Tangier and the Spanish Protectorate into an independent Morocco in 1956: geopolitically, Morocco and Gibraltar oriented themselves toward different directions: the Arab world vs. the UK and the EU.

The first part of this article examines the preconditions that underlie Gibraltar's current branding. The next part traces Gibraltar's attempts to situate itself as British and, in a further step, as Mediterranean. This part of the text refers to the years between about 1960 and 2015. The third part focuses on the confusion that profoundly affected Gibraltar's self-placement and self-marketing. Due to the decision of the mother country to leave the EU with Brexit, the almost exclusively EU-friendly Gibraltar constituent territory was forced to re-locate itself on all levels – especially politically, economically, and culturally. This re-location revitalised old connections with Tangier and Tetuan and activated new ties to Morocco that emphasised mutual economic benefits and cultural commonalities. The text explores these processes in part four. However, the re-location resulted not only from local or regional initiatives. Therefore, part five elaborates how geopolitical interests have been instrumental in branding Gibraltar as a bridge between North and South.

5 See Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990.

6 Cf. Smith, 1984, 1993; Haller, 2007.

7 Cf. Barth, 1969.

8 Cf. Haller, 2000b and 2001b.

9 An exception is Olin, 2002: 246.

2 Historical Basis

For three centuries, the British Garrison or Crown Colony of Gibraltar maintained close economic, political, demographic, and cultural links with the Moroccan city of Tangier and other places in the Moroccan North. At times, these links were so dense and diverse that one can confidently speak of Tangier and Gibraltar as a single polity.¹⁰ The tourism industry even marketed the two cities as a joint destination already in the early 20th century (Fig. 1–3). But these close ties became unravelled from the middle of the 20th century due to three political events.



Fig. 1 (left): Poster Bland Line Gibraltar–Morocco 1934

Fig. 2 (middle): Gibraltar Airways, Summer Timetable 21 April 1952

Fig. 3 (right): Target Guide Tangier Morocco Gibraltar. Edmonds Guide, 1968

Sources: Chipulina, 2015; Airline Timetable Images, 2022; Photo Dieter Haller, 2020.

On the one hand, Tangier and the Spanish North of Morocco were integrated into the new and formally independent Kingdom of Morocco in 1956. As a result, the North was reorganised not only politically but also economically in relation to the centres that now shaped the country's fate: Rabat and Casablanca. Tangier lost its position as a world trading and financial centre and thus its attractiveness for international banking, also for trade with Gibraltar. With the emigration of Moroccan Jews, Hindu merchant communities, the Hispanic population, and the

¹⁰ Compare Haller, 2021.

British upper class from Tangier and the North of the country, the ties between Morocco and Gibraltar also loosened.

Second, Spain implemented restrictions against Gibraltar from 1965 onwards, culminating in the closure of the border between Spain and the colony in 1969. Gibraltar was now deprived of two hinterlands and found itself in a territorially isolated situation: the established networks to Tangier and Tetuan hardly existed any more, and the Spanish workers from the *Campo de Gibraltar* in the province of Cádiz could now no longer work in the colony. The 10,000 or so Spaniards who worked in the dockyards, shops, restaurants, and households were replaced by Moroccan workers, the majority of whom no longer came from the North of Morocco, but from its southern regions. While in Gibraltar these Moroccans were regarded as strangers who hardly affected the ties to the neighbouring country, Gibraltarians increasingly oriented themselves toward the mother country: whereas young Gibraltarians had previously often studied in Spain and, like their parents, spoke Yanito – a mixed Hispanic-British language – now several years of study in Britain itself were specifically and generously encouraged. This and the development of satellite technology, which now made it possible to receive English television in Gibraltar, deeply anglicised the local population.

Third, Gibraltar joined the European Economic Community as part of the United Kingdom in 1973, while its Spanish neighbour was not yet part of the Community.

3 Branding Gibraltar as British and/or Mediterranean

During these years, Gibraltarians oriented themselves primarily towards the mother country and secondarily to Europe. The tourism industry marketed the small commonwealth as “Britain in the Sun” (Fig. 4). However, during their stay in Britain, most Gibraltarians experienced being perceived there not as true Britons, but as semi-exotic colony dwellers. Subsequently, nationalist currents arose again and again in Gibraltar, trying to establish a new identity: British like the Scots or Welsh, but not like the English; Mediterranean like the Portuguese, Genoese, and Catalans, but not like the Spanish.

I have described this process of branding as “British but different” several times.¹¹ It is reflected in the permanent exhibition of the Gibraltar Museum (now: National Museum of Gibraltar), where the specific ethnic mixture is praised

¹¹ See, e.g., Haller, 2000b.



Fig. 4: Titlecard “Gibraltar: Britain in the Sun” of the documentary on Channel 5 (2013–present)
Source: Wikipedia, 2021. Fair use.

and highlighted. Other components of the Gibraltarian mixture were not mentioned: the highly significant Jewish Sephardic community, the Hindu Sindhis – and the Moroccan Muslims.

Focussing on the latter, Gibraltar has not always cherished its Moroccans, as it does today in 2021, in the community’s self-presentation as an open, multicultural city.¹² Only about 20 years ago, many wanted to get rid of the Muslim Moroccans. In January 1998, for example, the local government announced that it would provide financial aid to encourage the voluntary return of 700 long-term unemployed Moroccans. On the other hand, various political and cultural initiatives tried to strengthen *transboughaz* bonds. For example, the Independent Liberal Forum (ILF) fought for the rights of Moroccan workers from the early 2000s onwards. The ILF aimed “to increase human and social rights for all Gibraltar residents despite the apparent unpopularity of such an attitude in certain quarters on the Rock.”¹³ The Saudi King Fahd Foundation financed the construction of a mosque on the southern tip of the peninsula, which was already planned in the 1970s and completed during my fieldwork in the year 1996/97. But the mosque was not originally designed to meet the religious needs of the local Moroccan population. One of its spokespersons explained to me in 1996 that the Saudi builders had objected to “these underdeveloped hillbillies” even entering the mosque. Many Gibraltarians mistrustfully interpreted the construction as the Saudi claim to symbolically regain *Al-Andalus*, the historically Muslim-ruled Iberian Peninsula. I discussed the idea of constructing a small medina around the mosque that could at-

¹² Cf. GSLP, 2019: 38.

¹³ The Gibraltar Chronicle, 2002.

tract (mostly elderly) European tourists looking for an Oriental experience but too fearful to cross the Straits;¹⁴ the idea was received mostly with sheer incomprehension: Morocco was out of the picture in these years.

Most of these local initiatives did not last long, such as the monthly magazine *Lifestyle*, which was launched in the summer of 1996. After a start-up period, *Lifestyle* was to be published in three languages (English, Spanish, and French), aimed at an intellectual readership interested in culture, and was distributed through a network in Gibraltar, Spain, and Morocco. Other actors, for example Jon Searle, editor of *The Gibraltar Chronicle*, succeeded in founding a long-lasting association of Gibraltarian, Andalusian, and Moroccan journalists.

Whereas these developments became relevant mainly for the local community itself, Gibraltar's branding towards the outside did not stress any cultural specificity. Measures such as the EU cross-border programme Interreg II UK/Morocco/Gibraltar, which aimed to promote cooperation between the two territories, were largely unknown in the 1990s – even among local politicians. A first follow-up programme, Interreg III Gibraltar (UK)/Morocco, ran from 2000 to 2006,¹⁵ but no successive programmes have been launched. In the heyday of neoliberalism and globalisation, Gibraltar marketed itself economically as a tax haven and financial centre for global clients, whether in Russia, the Middle East, or elsewhere.

The motherland, responsible for Gibraltar in immigration matters, exercised its function as guardian of the EU's external border. This concerns any immigration to Gibraltar via the maritime border with Morocco, which became more impermeable not only because of tighter migration control, but also because of the restriction of official transport links between Morocco and Gibraltar. Thus, at the beginning of the 1990s, for reasons of cost and independently of the process of European unification, the regular ferry service between Tangier and Gibraltar was discontinued. After that, travellers from Gibraltar to Morocco had to take either a direct flight across the Straits from Gibraltar Airport or ferries from the Spanish ports of Algeciras and Tarifa.

However, ferry and flight schedules between Gibraltar and Tangier repeatedly changed. On 23 November 1988, flights were suspended after a tragic accident in Tangier.¹⁶ In June 1997, the private airline Rock Air flew to Tangier four times a day on a 20-minute flight. Apparently, however, this connection was also soon discontinued.¹⁷ After some 20 years, regular flights between Tangier and Gibraltar

¹⁴ Cf. Haller 2021: 25–28.

¹⁵ European Commission, 2021.

¹⁶ Cf. Toler, 2013.

¹⁷ Cf. N.N., 2015.

have been operating again since 29 March 2015, twice a week with *Royal Air Maroc*.¹⁸ In 2019, an additional helicopter service was established linking Gibraltar with Tangier and Tetuan, and an irregular ferry operates between Gibraltar and Tangier. Several economic initiatives were successful as well. Most important is certainly the supply of food, raw materials, and other materials, for example through the Gibmaroc Group. In December 2016, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Tourism, and a representative of the Gibraltar Tourist Board toured Morocco to promote Gibraltar as a tourism destination.¹⁹

4 Branding Gibraltar as a Partner to Morocco

I have spent many years researching the border regions around the Strait of Gibraltar. For a long time, it seemed as if the situation had frozen: Spain and Gibraltar within the EU (but Gibraltar outside the Schengen Agreement) versus Morocco, which is outside the EU (linked by an association agreement, but not allowing the free movement of people). Now, with the referendum on the UK's exit from the EU, conditions have changed: however, until the actual exit date on 31 January 2020, it remained uncertain whether and when the UK and thus Gibraltar would leave and what this would mean for the relations between Spain, Gibraltar, and Morocco.

In this context, the growing integration of the Moroccan community into the social and political fabric of Gibraltar is crucial. In Gibraltar, the previous rejection of local Moroccans has changed over the years. In 2013, for example, Maroua Kharbouch became the first Gibraltarian with Moroccan roots to be elected Miss Gibraltar. In his 2019 Gibraltar National Day address, Chief Minister Fabian Picardo explicitly pointed out that most Moroccans who came to Gibraltar 50 years ago have since become British: they had helped to build modern Gibraltar and now the populace faces new challenges together.

Brexit is a traumatic experience for both Gibraltar, where the vote to remain in the EU was almost unanimous, and the Spanish hinterland, but it is less divisive for families and friends than in the motherland. Yet, the Gibraltarian government prepared itself early on for all possible twists and turns of a Brexit, as best it could. In this context, ties with Morocco and a change in Gibraltar's image as a stepping-stone from North to South and vice versa gained unprecedented importance. For the first time, the governing parties' election 2020 manifesto mentioned "further

¹⁸ Gibraltar International Airport, 2015.

¹⁹ Cf. The Maghreb Times, 2016.

commercial ties between Gibraltar and Morocco.”²⁰ The descendants of the Moroccan migrant workers of the 1960s and 1970s living in Gibraltar are now valued as an enrichment and part of the national identity. According to the manifesto, Arabic is to be offered as a school subject,²¹ and a daily flight to Casablanca or Tangier²² and forms of cultural exchange with Morocco²³ are to be established.

Gibraltar is thus increasingly oriented towards new and unproblematic existing business connections. High hopes are pinned on the British-Moroccan Free Trade Agreement of Autumn 2019. It is seen as particularly helpful for Gibraltar’s economy. However, during a radio interview, the British Ambassador in Rabat warned Morocco against establishing too close ties with Gibraltar: “If we talk about Gibraltar and try to forge links between Gibraltar and Morocco, you Moroccans will have problems with the Spaniards.”²⁴ As expected, the Gibraltar government rejected this statement. In April 2020, the newspaper *Panorama* referred to the increased economic cooperation between Gibraltar and Morocco, which is embedded in the British strategy regarding the exploitation of oil resources between Morocco and the Canary Islands.²⁵



Fig. 5: Logo of the Strait of Gibraltar Association
Source: Strait of Gibraltar Association, 2019.

The election manifesto also explicitly welcomes and supports the opening of an office of the Gibraltar and Morocco Business Association (GMBA), which is supported by the Strait of Gibraltar Association (SGA) (Fig. 5). Christopher Bourne, director of the Gibraltar Business Centre, said:

(...) we can obviously start doing more trade through Morocco, they have one of the biggest ports in the Mediterranean, so they have a lot of trade that comes through the Mediterranean and out to the rest of the world, and they come past Gibraltar, so it comes through and some of them use the Moroccan port, they’ve got a free port there. I would think that if we actually did start looking to Morocco; then we would actually be able to trade more easily with the rest

²⁰ GSLP, 2019: 38.

²¹ Cf. GSLP, 2019: 94.

²² Cf. GSLP, 2019: 119.

²³ Cf. GSLP, 2019: 134.

²⁴ Quoted by The Gibraltar Chronicle, 2019.

²⁵ Cf. Garcia 2020.

of the world, it would just be a question of getting things as they are parked there and then bringing them over to Gibraltar.²⁶

The GMBA was founded on 23 March 2019, because it was expected that Gibraltar's supplies would again have to be secured via Morocco and that workers would also have to be recruited from Morocco if Spain closed the land border again after a Brexit. On 8 August 2019, the online newspaper *noticiasgibraltar* published that the SGA president, Clive Reed, other members of the association, and Deputy Prime Minister Joseph García want to open up new foreign markets in the context of the Brexit.²⁷

One day later, the English-language newspaper of Andalusia, *Sur*, reported that the GMBA would open an office in Tangier to boost economic and cultural exchange between the two regions.²⁸ The newspaper twice pointed out that this activity is not related to Brexit, but to the Gibraltarian government's general search for new economic ties. *Sur* referred to a press statement that assumed Spain would not close the border as it did in Franco's time. Both sides – Gibraltar and Spain – would only lose from a border closure, because Gibraltar imports goods and raw materials from Spain for about 1.5 million EUR a year and 15,329 residents of Spain work in Gibraltar.

It is explicitly stated several times that the GMBA is a private sector initiative. This is because Gibraltar is not allowed to launch foreign policy initiatives, which are still the responsibility of the motherland. But the head of the GMBA is a long-time activist of the ruling Labour Party (GSLP). The opening of the GMBA office in Tangier, scheduled for October 2019, had to be postponed due to elections in Gibraltar. However, the GMBA was already active in Tangier at this time. When I visited Tangier in February 2020, no official opening had taken place yet. Signs of both organisations, the GMBA and the SGA, are emblazoned on the entrance door to the building, and the Gibraltarian flag is displayed on a side window, where it is somewhat difficult to see from the street. In general, the *Tanjawis* know very little about Gibraltar, some even think it is an island. Therefore, for the time being, it is important for the GMBA and the SGA to hold events in Tangier to raise interest in the other side.

In Gibraltar itself, the GMBA promotes local initiatives that strengthen ties with Morocco, such as distributing Moroccan argan products in Gibraltar. In March 2021, collaboration with the coordinator of The Duke of Edinburgh's Inter-

²⁶ Sputnik, 2019.

²⁷ Cf. *Noticiasgibraltar*, 2019.

²⁸ Cf. Bartlett, 2019.

national Award, Gibraltarian Saad Benyakoub, was announced.²⁹ In the same month, *Gibraltar Business Magazine* recognised the activities of the GMBA. Also in March, the Director of the GMBA received the Mayors Awards 2021 for his efforts to bring Gibraltarians back from Morocco during the pandemic.

The home of a Gibraltarian couple in the Kasbah, *Dar Henpris*, has become a focal point for Gibraltarians in Tangier and a meeting place for them and *Tanjawis*. The owners are active in the SGA and have an impact on various cultural fields. For example, 22 tablet computers were given to children of single Moroccan women during the pandemic. Joint projects between the two countries were agreed with a Moroccan arbitrator from the Chess Association. Since Autumn 2020, the SGA has also been hosting cultural events on Moroccan-Gibraltarian themes and streaming them online. For example, the sixth event on 23 March 2021 was watched live by 5,000 viewers from California to Dakar, from the Straits and Qatar to the Philippines.³⁰

Other cultural events take place in Gibraltar independently of the SGA, such as a Tangier & Gibraltar Art Exhibition in December 2019 at John Mackintosh Hall, supported by the Gibraltarian Minister of Culture, John Cortes, among other people (Fig. 6). Cortes opened the exhibition pronouncing: “The exchange will marry both communities and integrate through culture the understanding of one another. I am very confident this exchange will be (...) the gateway for future cultural exchanges with other (...) neighbouring towns.”³¹

Communication between the two cities via digital media is another binding force. Several online platforms take Tangier or Gibraltar as their theme; I myself started the Facebook group *TanGib* in the spring of 2019.³² In addition, I posted a video on YouTube in October 2019 on the topic of “Tangier in Gibraltar, Gibraltar in Tangier.”³³ Additional informal or private activities such as “Moroccan Night” by the Waterfront pub are organised, as well. There are also sporting links between the two cities, especially boat rallies.

²⁹ Cf. Gibraltar Morocco Business Exchange, 2020.

³⁰ Cf. Sacramento, 2021.

³¹ YGTV, 2019.

³² Cf. TanGib, 2018.

³³ Cf. Haller, 2019.



Fig. 6: Poster of the Tangier & Gibraltar Art Exhibition 2019
Source: Gibraltar Cultural Services, 2019.

5 Branding Gibraltar as a Bridge to and for Morocco and Africa

If Gibraltar's branding strategy as a stepping-stone between North and South was based on local initiatives alone, a partnership would not be sustainable, as Morocco's interest in the Overseas Territory would first have to be aroused. As Anholt remarked, "It's very hard for a country to persuade people in other parts of the world to go beyond these simple images and start to understand the rich complexity that lies behind them."³⁴ However, the current branding of Gibraltar as a link between the United Kingdom and/or Europe and North Africa not only seeks to ensure the survival of the community after Brexit, it also fits perfectly into larger geopolitical interests.

The three-year process from the Brexit referendum to leaving the EU on 1 January 2021 initially led to widespread shock in Gibraltar. This gave way to agony, as every sign in British politics that Brexit might be avoided was too often dashed in these three years. Locals preferred to stop talking about the issue altogether and ignore it. In public space, neither graffiti nor posters nor bumper stickers ex-

³⁴ Anholt, 2011: 293.

pressed any opinion on the subject. For Brexit not only ran counter to the political and economic interests of the Gibraltarians, it also showed them their powerlessness: there was no possibility at all to influence the politics of the mother country. Thus, two options opened up: either to surrender to one's fate or to try to take it into one's own hands and develop one's own initiatives. Among the latter are the alignment with neighbouring Morocco and Chief Minister Picardo's push to join the Schengen area. Both initiatives were astonishingly courageous and testified to a new self-confidence, since Gibraltar has not yet had any competence to shape its external relations, which are still in the hands of the mother country.

One day before Brexit, it was agreed that Gibraltar would join the Schengen area as a non-EU territory. This decision not only has consequences for the inhabitants of the region (such as freedom of movement for Gibraltarians within the EU, especially to Spain), it also opens up the possibility for the United Kingdom to gain special access to the EU via Gibraltar – whose great importance was already evident on 9 January 2021, when Prime Minister Boris Johnson advocated the construction of a tunnel between Gibraltar and Northern Morocco.³⁵ Such projects – whether tunnels under the Strait or bridges across it – have been planned again and again in the past, mostly failing due to the geological difficulties of the complicated tectonic conditions.³⁶ However, earlier projects focused on the construction of a fixed link between Morocco and Spain. Johnson's proposal presents Gibraltar itself as a site for the first time. The realisation of this project “would secure and strengthen Great Britain's influence on the EU's North Africa policy.”³⁷

The idea of a tunnel fits in with Britain's increased engagement with Morocco and the Strait. In the first trade dialogue between Morocco and Britain in June 2020, Morocco offered itself to the British as a gateway to Africa, and former British minister Conor Burns already announced “the triangulation of Morocco, Africa and Britain.”³⁸ Britons are particularly present in two zones designated for large tourism projects in northern Morocco, Marina Smir near Tetuan and Marchica near Melilla. The forecasts for a cable connection for renewable energies are also ambitious. An electrical cable to Gibraltar is to be laid to benefit from Morocco's renewable energy development. In return, Gibraltar plans to share its experience in the financial sector with the Alawite kingdom. Military cooperation between Gibraltar and Morocco is also to be strengthened. All this is perceived with concern in Spain. For, in addition, cooperation in agriculture is also to be

³⁵ Cf. Urteaga, 2021.

³⁶ Cf. Wippel, 2000.

³⁷ Urteaga, 2021.

³⁸ Moreno, 2020b.

expanded, which would hit farmers in the Spanish province of Huelva particularly hard: “Here we pay salaries and social security, a worker costs more than 60 euros, in Morocco 12 euros. How are we supposed to compete with that?” says the farmer Antonio Luis Martín. In addition to this, the UK sees Morocco as a stepping-stone to the West African markets.³⁹

Britain’s increased engagement in the region should also be understood in the context of geostrategic developments. Through its closest ally, the US has Gibraltar as an ideal base for further engagement in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa. In the last weeks before his departure from office, President Trump recognised Western Sahara, whose status under international law has not yet been clarified, as part of the Moroccan state.

In return, Morocco officially recognised Israel, and embassies were opened. Although both countries have had close unofficial relations since the founding of the State of Israel, for example in the field of intelligence, “official” recognition has not yet been granted – probably in view of Morocco’s role within the Arab world. Since the 1950s, the Alawite kings have always recognised themselves as patrons of Moroccan Jews, even though most of the latter now live in Latin America, France, and Israel. The Moroccan offer to the Sephardic-Moroccan Jewish communities of Ceuta and Melilla not only to invest more in northern Morocco but also to resettle “in the motherland” is to be understood against this background.⁴⁰ The offer was also made to the Jews of Gibraltar.⁴¹ All these communities have close historical, economic, and family ties to northern Morocco. If they were to relocate to Morocco on a larger scale, this would mean a double weakening of Spain and its exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, to which Morocco has always laid claim.

Morocco’s traditional ties to the North (EU) and the East (Arab world) are now being followed by a strengthening of ties to the West (the US and UK, Latin America) after Morocco’s foreign and economic orientation to the South (sub-Saharan Africa), especially in the 2010s. A British Gibraltar as an immediate neighbour is therefore of particular importance for Morocco’s Atlantic orientation. As long as these interests of the UK, Morocco, and the US remain aligned, the branding of Gibraltar as a bridge between worlds will be credibly underpinned and maintained – even if the bridge is a tunnel.

³⁹ Moreno, 2020b.

⁴⁰ Moreno, 2020a.

⁴¹ Cf. Yaabouk, 2020.

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