

Pax Regis

Patronage, charisma, and ethno-religious coexistence in a Spanish enclave in North Africa

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Abstract: The people of Ceuta see their town as an exemplary model of coexistence between Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Hindus. This “*convivencia*” is described as the brainchild of their mayor-president, who funds clients to enact his charismatic vision. Anthropology is sensitive to the moral ambiguities of patron–client relations but has overlooked the role of charisma in the reproduction of patronage reproduction. This article explores the theoretical and political implications of a process by which *convivencia*-patronage becomes seen as the extension of the patron’s charisma. Obscuring the historical dimensions of power, charisma blocks nuanced discussion toward the colonial legacy of *convivencia* as a way of controlling suspect minorities. It prevents change by channeling resistance toward the removal of the mayor-president, not the structures that enabled his rise.

Keywords: charisma, clientelism, *convivencia*, leadership, Mediterranean, patronage, religion, ritual

I first visited the North African Spanish enclave of Ceuta in 2011. Ignoring its 86,000 inhabitants, I made straight for its infamous border, interested as I was in the knowledge, goods, and persons (un)made at the gates of Fortress Europe. This changed some weeks into my fieldwork when, heading to an interview, I came upon a curious sight.

It was a gorgeous March evening—just before Easter—and the sleepy border neighborhood of El Príncipe was crowded with people. But not *any* people. Dressed in expensive suits and elaborate dresses, rosary beads in hand, these

were *Christians*, and Christians never went to El Príncipe, fearing it a lawless Muslim ghetto. I asked an elderly man what was happening. “The Ritual of the Relocation (*el traslado*),” he replied. Seeing I was new to the enclave, he proceeded to explain that, once, many Christians lived in El Príncipe. They are long gone, but they left behind the miraculous statue of the Christ of Medinaceli. His shrine is maintained by Muslims, “because in Ceuta we have *convivencia*,” but once a year, the faithful relocate the statue to the town center in preparation for Holy Week processions.



Suddenly, the statue of the Medinaceli burst from a narrow alley, carried on the shoulders of 30 men. The Christ cast his benevolent gaze on his devotees, his hands bound by rope, his face covered in blood, his majestic purple robe swaying in the wind. The Muslims of El Príncipe watched from their balconies, the children waving and the adults sullen. Tears in his eyes, my interlocutor forgot about me and followed the procession as it thundered toward Ceuta's largest mosque. Clad in immaculate white robes, the Imam emerged from the mosque's marbled gate and embraced the leader of the procession, a short man with an easy smile who I quickly recognized as Juan Vivas, the enclave's mayor-president. As cameras flashed around them, the Imam remarked how "in a world dying from religious hatred, Ceuta's *convivencia* is a beacon of hope!"

Vivas replied that "it is moments like this that make Ceuta! Ceuta is greater than the sum of its parts!"

Applauding, the crowd jostled to shake Vivas' hand and take photographs of the Medinaceli statue facing the mosque. The Medinaceli's carriers then performed a *levantà*. Crouching under the heavy statue, they abruptly rose as one and cast the Medinaceli up into the air, catching it on their shoulders as it fell down. The *levantà* is the pinnacle of the art of Spanish Holy Week processions, and the maneuver is often dedicated to those dear to the carriers. The Muslims applauded, recognizing that the *levantà* had been done in their honor, and the procession left for the city center.

My interviewee was waiting, so I dared not pursue. Later, I learned that, as per custom, the procession visited Ceuta's prison. There, an inmate (chosen by the director for his exemplary behavior) had his sentence pardoned. His face hidden under a purple hood, he solemnly emerged from the complex's heavy gates and took his place among the Medinaceli's carriers. My informants urged me not to ask about the identity of the man thus liberated by the Medinaceli. Nonetheless, I was told that "he's probably Muslim.¹ Not that it matters, because

we know that the Medinaceli is father to all Ceutans."

Following the *traslado*, I became fascinated with the relationship between Ceuta's four *culturas*. Eighty-six thousand people call Ceuta home. Officially, no statistics are kept about their ethnic or religious identity. Nevertheless, the Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Ceuta estimated that 40 percent are "Muslim Ceutans" (UCIDCE 2015). Converts are rare. Muslims either trace their descent to Moroccan ancestors who joined Spain's colonial army or are recent arrivals. Combined, the Hindus and Jewish communities constitute 1 to 2 percent of Ceuta's inhabitants. Consequently, only 58 percent are "Christian," a term that locally refers to provenance from mainland Spain, rather than belief. My acquaintances (especially those I knew less) were adamant that Ceuta's *culturas* lived together so well that their *convivencia* may well be unique and an example to the world!² When I asked how this came to be, the answer I obtained was always the same. Unaware and uninterested in Spain's long history of thinking about the governance of ethno-religious diversity, they insisted that Ceuta's *convivencia* was engineered—ex nihilo—by their mayor-president, Juan Vivas. This article seeks to describe how multicultural order comes to be associated with a single charismatic author and explores the theoretical and political implications of such an imaginary.

Indeed, the man I had seen leading the *traslado* locally enjoyed tremendous popularity and gravitas. In the local press, on social media, and in the streets, Vivas was ascribed superhuman powers of diplomacy. Comics, poetry even, were written in his honor. Thus the subject of so much tribute (*homenaje*), Vivas was ubiquitously referred to as "the King" (*el Rey*), for everywhere he seemed to have personal clients installed and/or funded to realize his utopic project for Ceuta. Occasionally, these relationships were described as forms of "*enchufismo*" (lit. to plug in), a derogative term denoting the illicit circumvention of bureaucratic protocols governing political appointment. This view was primarily held by those who were excluded

from Vivas' favor and/or rejected his vision as morally and economically unfeasible. Though increasing, these voices were few and far in between. Most Ceutans instead talked of "friendship" (*amistad*) and "loyalty" (*lealdad*) between people of "worth" (*valor*). They also stressed the visionary aspects of the mayor-president's network. Prior to Vivas' ascension to power in 1999, Ceuta's political landscape had been a mess of short-lived coalitions led by boisterous politicians. Furthermore, after being granted citizenship in 1986,³ Muslims formed ethnic parties to contest the "racism" they felt was everywhere—in the infrastructural neglect of Muslim neighborhoods, in the unwillingness to accommodate Islamic traditions, in police profiling, in the mockery of Islam during carnivals,⁴ and in the imposition of Spanish-style names.⁵ Christians were explicitly hostile to such protest and actively supported parties like the "Grupo Independiente Liberal," which argued for the armed surveillance of Muslims (Rontomé 2012). Vivas was acclaimed to have terminated these tensions. Muslim parties either blended into left-wing ones or were absorbed into his vast inter-religious network of clients. As one minister remarked in an interview, "We now have the good politics of left and right, not the bad politics of Christianity and Islam." Unsurprisingly, his reign has been one of political stability. He has comfortably won four consecutive elections, and his supporters claim he earned the "right to rule for as long as he wants" (El Pueblo 2018).

Talking patronage

In anthropology, patronage is often defined as a personal relationship between a patron (with access to resources, typically through their involvement in state structures) and a client (expected to offer deferential support in exchange for resources). Patronage is said to bloom where states are unable (or unwilling, as in the case of neoliberal economies) to guarantee people's safety or welfare, or where people lack the cultural capital needed to effectively engage with

markets and states (Brković 2015; Pardo and Prato 2011; Wolf 1966).

That said, anthropologists disagree about the function of patronage as well as the agency of clients relative to their patrons. Some argue that clients are pretty good at using public displays of deference to place obligations on their patrons. This makes patrons effective mediators between "State and Community" (Kenny 1960: 19, also Gupta 1995; Littlewood 1980, 1981). As Michael Kelly (1960) suggests in respect to Spanish "*enchufismo*"—the ability for both patrons and clients to make "friends" in strategic positions—patronage works by bypassing bureaucratic obstacles to, as Zinn (2019) argues in respect to contemporary Italy, "get things done." Clients thus secure resources otherwise inaccessible, become socially mobile (Chatterjee 2004; Mientjes 2010), weather socioeconomic crisis or austerity (Bear 2015), and form bonds of solidarity with co-clients (Auyero et al. 2009). Patronage is envisioned as ever in flux, expanding and contracting as clients' needs change. From this perspective, patrons' tendency to compete in displays of strength and daring—by openly cheating bureaucracy (Mitchell 2001) or exercising violence (Gilsenan 1996; Schneider and Schneider 2005)—points to their precarious position. They must reproduce themselves as viable providers for current and potential clients.

By contrast, as Giordano (2012) notes, many anthropologists emphasize patrons' control over their clients, namely by imposing a state of scarcity that only they can alleviate. This results in a mockery of statehood: jobs go to the unworthy, resources are inefficiently distributed, and elections are reduced to petty contests between rival patron-client blocks (Boissevain 1977; Kenny 1960; Weingrod 1968). As clients pursue patronage, they undermine civil society and the possibility for ideological change (Boissevain 2001; Caciagli and Belloni 1981; Gatt and Boissevain 2011; Melucci 1988; Roniger and Günes-Ayata 1994). This theme was further developed by Marxian anthropologists (see Gilmore 1977; Gilsenan 1977; Martin 2014; Mouzelis 1978; Pettigrew 1975; Silverman 1970). In allowing

clients limited access to resources and in couching their relations in the language of friendship, patrons discouraged their followers from thinking of themselves as classes and acting collectively (Blok 1969; Li Causi 1981).

These themes—of ephemerality, bureaucracy, mobility, domination—will reemerge as we explore Vivas’ network. The Marxian position particularly resonates with those who felt that Vivas stood in the way of a critical reevaluation of Ceuta’s socioeconomic trajectory. However, most Ceutans were worried that Vivas’ alliances, which acted as the scaffolding for the enclave’s multi-cultural tranquility and were underpinned by his personality, would unravel the moment he resigned. Much like Max Weber (1947), they wanted to know how to reproduce charismatic authority. Charisma tends to tend to be overlooked in discussions of patronage. As a number of scholars have recently argued (Henig and Makovicky 2016; Ismailbekova 2017), this probably occurs because the analysis of patronage is still anchored in materialism, transactionalism, and Weberian notions of the state (Piliavsky 2014, 2015; Reeves et al. 2013). This means that the language of patronage, which draws on notions of kinship, friendship, affect, and care, is approached with skepticism and understood as a technique of misrecognition (Henig and Makovicky 2016: 7). After all, even Julian Pitt-Rivers lamented that if patronage is a type of friendship, then it is a “lop-sided” one (1954: 140). Nevertheless, studies that take patronage’s discursive aspect as their starting point have described the phenomenon as an extension of kin ties (Lyon 2004), neighborly solidarity (Henig 2012), or religious obligations, where good deeds help believers earn a place in heaven (Benthall 1999; Hart 2013; Henig 2016; Singer 2008). Ultimately, this literature urges us to be sensitive to how patronage interacts with different cosmologies and models of personhood.

Ceutans felt that Vivas possessed charisma (*carisma*). Charisma was a rare, innate quality that gave bearers visionary ideas, exceptional insight into people’s character, and the power to charm others to their cause. This article evalu-

ates Vivas’ patronage not only as the transfer of material resources and the forging of alliances on the margins of bureaucracy but also as the realization, affirmation, and reproduction of his charismatic personality. The latter, indeed, seemed to be the mayor-president’s ulterior goal. From such an angle, the Ceutan case is not dissimilar from Richard Vokes’ (2016) and Hugo Hernáiz’s (2008) descriptions of Uganda and Venezuela, where leaders curate charisma through ostentatious, life-changing gifts that make them look like all-powerful beings with god-like powers (DuPertuis 1986; Joose 2014). Unlike the cases previously described, however, Vivas’ patronage-charisma-*convivencia* is showing obvious signs of duress. As we explore Vivas’ patronage of religious and ethnic leaders, we will note that his charisma-patronage had to be constantly, and exhaustedly, performed and negotiated. What is more; his model of *convivencia* contained numerous contradictions that were reactivating religion as the basis for political mobilization.

Convivencia

When asked what makes their town distinctive, the people of Ceuta, regardless of their religion, said that it is “the *convivencia* between the four ‘*culturas*’: the Christian, the Muslim, the Jewish, and the Hindu.” This was evidenced by the fact that they had “friends from other *culturas*” and had developed a cosmopolitan taste for other ‘*culturas*’ aesthetics, cuisines, and traditions. These street-level ways of presenting the enclave to outsiders are closely lifted from governmental discourse. In official events, the mayor-president celebrates Ceuta as a melting pot (*crisol*) whose *culturas* are indispensable ingredients of Ceutan identity. While Ceuta has achieved admirable levels of cultural harmony, Ceutans must continue in the difficult task of revising old and entrenched models of Spanish-ness. They must recognize that Jews, Arabs, Muslims, and Hindus are all equally viable ways to be Spanish. He asks Ceutans to beware poli-

ticians who set the *culturás* against each other and use religion as a basis for political loyalty and action (e.g., Ceutaldia 2019).

Forging such a utopian imaginary is one thing. Getting people to subscribe to and perform it is quite another. This is where patronage came in. “*Cultura*” was a popular cultural category, which loosely referred to ethno-religious groups and their heritage. Consequently, Vivas encouraged the formation of “communities” (*comunidades*). Fully-fledged legal entities, these owned property and possessed charters that defined their competences, membership, and leadership. In many instances, “communities” were rehashed from existing organizations. The Jewish and Hindu communities, which encapsulated all Ceutan co-religionists, were traders’ associations founded during Franco’s regime (Tarres 2013a; 2013b). The Christian communities were built on Holy Week brotherhoods (*cofradías*), while the Muslim ones each curated one of Ceuta’s 60 mosques. Much of my time in Ceuta was spent with these communities: discussing plans, attending meetings, helping with activities, examining their books, and interviewing their members. This meant that most of my closest informants were men between 30 and 70. Women were very active in communities. Often, they worked behind the scenes (cleaning, cooking, decorating rooms). Occasionally, however, they exercised direct power, and strove to make women’s roles more visible. For example, one *cofradía* was led by a woman, and she allowed girls to carry statues, traditionally a masculine role. Another Muslim community was famous for its female spokesperson, who designed many activities (including a popular religious choir) for girls.

Now, communities could ask the municipal government for funding. There was no formal channel for this, so appeals were informally made. Most community leaders regularly chatted with Vivas and his closest ministers. After public events, the mayor-president always casually asked about communities’ state of affairs and whether he could do anything to help. Generally, community leaders asked for money

to maintain temples, rituals, and cultural projects. These offers were entertained but with one condition: the communities had to make their funded heritage accessible to outsiders. The final deal (*convenio*) took the form of a widely-advertised contract, publicly signed by the community’s leader and the ayor-president (or one of his closest confidants). Thus, in 2007, the Hindus received 500,000 euros to construct a temple in the city center. Likewise, the Hindu, Jewish, and some Muslim communities yearly receive some 70,000 euros to fund their activities, while Christian communities rely on a yearly grant that sees them through Holy Week. Ceuta also saw the proliferation of municipal associations tasked with assisting communities with projects. The largest of these had a yearly budget of around 250,000 euros.⁶

The most visible outcome of this funding are many colorful spectacles that playfully disrupt Ceuta’s urban rhythms. In November 2015, for example, a troupe of girls in glittering saris descended onto Ceuta’s main square, whirling and swaying to Bollywood music. A representative of the Hindu community informed the captivated audience that Diwali had arrived and that all were welcome to the temple! The guests who heeded his call were greeted by the dancing girls, who asked them to remove their shoes and take a seat. The sullen giant that presided the Hindu community—let’s call him Ravi—watched the temple fill up. But his face was contorted with worry: Vivas was late, and representatives of the other communities were already giggling among themselves. When the presidential car finally pulled up in front of the Temple, Ravi almost collapsed from relief. Pushing bystanders aside, he greeted Vivas with a bow that made the enormous man look smaller than his diminutive guest. Ceremoniously taking Vivas to his chair on the front row, Ravi welcomed the crowd, stressing that without Vivas, Diwali in Ceuta would not be possible. He then related the story of the Ramayana, deftly noting how it carried a message of fraternity that all Ceutans should take to heart. Afterward, the president was invited to ritually offer fire to the

goddess Lakshmi (“who will bring fortune to all Ceutans”) and the community representatives were asked to swear to uphold *convivencia*. Finally, the audience received gifts of blessed food and was asked “to keep the lessons learned today close to their hearts.”

Ramadan is marked by similar events. Muslim communities open their doors to anyone wishing to break the fast with them. On the final day, they compete to host Vivas, who makes a lengthy speech about how *Eid el-Fitr* (which paralyzes the city, much to everyone’s annoyance) is an essential aspect of Ceuta’s heritage. Likewise, Ceutans on their evening stroll are wont to stumble into a “Yoga-Iftar Session.” As Hindus and Muslims break their fast after some sunset yoga, spokespersons announce that “in this spiritual time, Muslims and Hindus share traditions and create the shared memory necessary for *convivencia*.” Culinary evenings, fashion shows, music concerts, and film festivals occur on a monthly basis. Needless said, the mayor-president is present at most of these events. He was always received with the greatest deference, and was lauded as the patron of Ceutan multiculturalism.

Money was also available for the revitalization or reinvention of traditions. In 2012, Muslim children, holding exotic-looking placards, marched through Ceuta, chanting in Arabic. The following day, the spokesperson of the Al-Sebta Association, a community that had been formed but months earlier, announced on radio that Ceuta had witnessed was a “*hutma*,” a procession where children thank God for memorizing parts of the Qur’an. The *hutma* looked strange because it had not been performed in 30 years. The community was universally praised for “reclaiming Ceuta’s intangible heritage” (El Faro 2012), and the event has been funded since. Al-Sebta offered Arabic classes, after-school tuition, and singing and dancing lessons. But it was especially adept at salvaging the enclave’s Muslim heritage. It employed researchers to conduct life-history interviews with elderly Muslims, from which they distilled books about folklore (e.g., witchcraft, spells, superstitions, legends and

myths, rhymes) and tradition (e.g., Mawlid, Sufi festivals, wedding practices, the *hutma*). They also exhibited material culture (e.g., cuisine, furniture, tools, dress, etc.) and old photographs of Ceuta’s Muslims. Al-Sebta leaders thought that such projects showed the long roots of the Muslim *cultura* in Ceuta.

My informants talked of these events as “rituals of *convivencia*” in that they sought to highlight the compatibility of Ceuta’s *culturas*. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe them as rituals for *convivencia*, since they sought to create a sense of inter-religious solidarity and commitment to the values of multiculturalism that could endure external attack. In autumn, Hindus celebrate the festival of Ganesh by taking his statue to visit the Sanctuary of the Lady of Africa. There, Hindus crown the Madonna with lotus flowers. Amidst plenty of tears and hugs, Ravi, the Hindu President, informs the Christians that “Ganesh—the Lord of Obstacles—will now return home, taking with him the woes of all Ceutans.” In return, the parish priest reminds all present that “the Lady is mother to all Ceutans!”

But in 2016, the ritual did not go smoothly. The bishop of Ceuta and Cadiz (who rarely visits the town) issued a press release denouncing the “desecration of Ceuta’s holiest site” and forced the parish priest to resign. The backlash was furious. On the press, the bishop, who “knows nothing about Ceuta’s reality,” was accused of “undoing Ceuta’s *convivencia*.” Religious communities wrote letters to the bishop, asking him to revoke his decision. The Hindu community even reported the incident to the pope! After a few days, Vivas himself intervened, and the parish priest was triumphantly reinstated (although the bishop refused to come to the enclave and publicly apologize). Vivas was again hailed for creating a sense of civic solidarity that could stand up to outdated traditionalist authorities.

Now, ethnographers routinely encounter individuals like Vivas, thought to possess a certain magnetism that allows them to change history single-handedly. We know, however, that despite appearing innate (Weber 1947), charismatic

leadership (McCulloch 2014: 3) varies culturally and is lost if not carefully curated (Geertz 1993). Charismatic leaders moreover emerge in moments of intense rupture and change (Friedland 1964; Lattas 2007; Smith 2000), and their revolutionary/prophetic vision is a direct critique of a fallen, inhospitable present whereby people are no longer the center of their own worlds (Glassman 1975; Green 2010; Michelutti 2017; Timmer 2000). Vivas is not unlike a Polynesian cargo-cult leader (Lindstrom 1993), and further analysis of his patronage-charisma requires us to dig into the historical context of Vivas' model of *convivencia*.

Soldier, trader, functionary, beggar?

Captured by Portuguese forces in 1415, Ceuta was to become the staging point for the Christian “re-conquest” of North Africa. This did not happen, and the once-prosperous Marinid city degenerated into an undersupplied prison-fort, constantly under attack by Muslim forces. The Iberian Union of 1580 brought Ceuta under the Spanish crown, although the change in management did little to alter the enclave's fortunes. This changed in the late nineteenth century. Reeling from the loss of its empire, Spain tried to recover its prestige by colonizing northern Morocco.

Throughout European history, the Muslim Moors were depicted as savage, infidel antagonists (Hazbun 2015). In the nineteenth century, however, European and American travelers started complicating this image. The Moor they wrote about was chivalrous, pious, humble, and culturally sophisticated. Moreover, their orientalist eye wandered north to Iberia itself and became fascinated with a nation that barely looked European and was clearly the result of the blending of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish traits—or *convivencia*—that supposedly occurred during the Middle Ages, when Spain was ruled by wise caliphs. Spain's economic vulnerability and religious fervor further evidenced this diluted European-ness. While Spanish historians puz-

zled over the “enigma” of Spanish identity (e.g., Castro 1971; Sánchez-Albornoz 1975), Spain used this “orientalization” to justify its colonial intentions: if Spaniards shared such an affinity with the Moor, then who was better suited to rule them (Dieste 2003; Tofiño-Quesada 2003; Velasco de Castro 2014)? During the Civil War (1936–1939), Franco's forces claimed kinship with the pious, honorable, masculine Moor, mobilizing him against the godless, anarchic, effeminate Republic (Friedlander 1964; Marín 2015; Martín Corrales 2002; Sotomayor Blazquez 2005). In peacetime, Spanish governors, acting for the sake of *convivencia*, actively patronized sympathetic religious elites. This they did by giving them the infrastructure (e.g., mosques, shrines, cemeteries) they needed to expand their influence. Most interestingly, colonial governors also patronized Muslim rituals. They accepted invitations to break the fast, respected Ramadan traditions, and donated sacrificial lambs for *Eid el-Adha* (see Madraiga 2015; Moreras 2015). Vivas' patronage of minority religions in the name of *convivencia* is often described as a contemporary invention. In fact, it seems that it is a tried-and-tested tool inherited from colonial times⁷ as a way to control suspect minorities. The main difference is that *convivencia*-patronage was originally used on colonial subjects, whereas today it hopes to integrate minorities. As we shall observe, this is problematic for both Muslims (who end up feeling like second-class citizens) and Christians (who feel that *convivencia* renders them helpless against irredentist Morocco's asphyxiation,⁸ disruption,⁹ and “Morrocinization”¹⁰ of Ceuta).

The protectorate turned struggling Ceuta into Spain's busiest port, attracting laborers and soldiers from Spain and Morocco, and Jewish and Hindu traders from Gibraltar (Rezette 1976: 70–81). After Morocco's Independence (1956), Ceuta's Hindu and Jewish communities continued to use their global connections to import goods unavailable on the mainland. Thousands visited Ceuta daily, now a wonderland of luxury items and electronics.¹¹ This prosperity did not last. Entry in the European Union forced Spain

to relax its customs duties, and goods previously only available in Ceuta now became widespread on the mainland. Trade with Morocco was heavily restricted, and the fortification of the border against sub-Saharan migrants soon started generating tragedies that ruined Ceuta's international reputation and frustrated efforts to attract tourism. Fearing Ceuta's increasing irrelevance to Spain, local politicians embarked on a campaign that could consolidate Spanish sovereignty and offer economic outlets. Central to this campaign (Rontomé 2012: 48–56) was the rhetoric that Ceuta has been abandoned and misunderstood by Spain. It is impossible to understate the lasting power of this discourse, which Vivas has neatly woven into his model of *convivencia*. As the Ganesh crisis showed, intercultural solidarity went hand-in-hand with distaste for outside interference. Incidentally, some key historians (e.g., Menocal 2003) have also subscribed to this idea that outsiders misunderstand and threaten localized cultures of tolerance.

In 1995, after much campaigning, Ceuta became an “Autonomous City.” When combined with the lingering resentment to Spain, the bureaucratic ambiguities of this new order were perfect spawning grounds for charismatic leaders like Vivas. True enough, Ceuta's new statute gave it significant powers, but these were not as extensive as those enjoyed by the mainland's regional governments.¹² Stated otherwise, Ceuta's powers lie somewhere between those of a municipal and regional government. The mayor-president capitalizes on this ambiguity fully. In 2017, some of his parliamentary members were charged with illegally distributing public housing. They had to resign, but this would have lost Vivas his parliamentary majority. He simply appointed replacements, something that according to him, is possible in municipal parliaments (El Faro 2017). Vivas also regularly appointed “talented” professionals to technical, bureaucratic, and political jobs “*a dedo*” (lit. by finger-pointing¹³; e.g., Ceutaldia 2018), again something that municipalities are said to have more leeway doing. Deals with cultural or ethno-

religious groups were similarly justified. This bureaucratic haziness allowed Vivas to project himself as a powerful man in complete control of his legal-administrative environment. This meant that Ceutan patronage was not simply a matter of cutting through bureaucratic obstacles, as Kenny (1960) suggested in relation to Spain, but involved the complication, reinterpretation, and expansion of bureaucracy.

Ceutan politicians pursued autonomy to alleviate the economic issues created by its jeopardized trading potential. In effect, it allowed Ceutan politicians to ask for subsidies directly from the central government in Madrid, rather than having to go through the Andalusian government, which the enclave was previously (a marginalized) part of. This was another opportunity for Vivas to construct himself as a superb, charismatic negotiator, for the resources that Ceuta so desperately needed had to be routinely renegotiated with Madrid. He did this expertly, even during a recession and when Madrid was run by rival parties. Indeed, his ministers spared no occasion to tell the media that, thanks to Vivas, no public employee was sacked during the financial recession.¹⁴ Furthermore, most of my acquaintances (including the unemployed, start-up businesses, cultural associations, and even newspaper editors) felt that any business venture needed state support to thrive. In their books, this meant seeking Vivas' patronage. Lack of transparency about the way welfare worked¹⁵ and Vivas' tendency to grant *convenios* further reinforced the idea that financial success, patronage, and state support were synonymous. Unsurprisingly, the mayor-president (and his staff) was constantly approached by people offering service. While waiting for an interview in the Town Hall, one elderly lady mistook me for a government official and asked me to take on “her educated son, who would be a good canvasser.” Moreover, in 2017, a group of unemployed Muslim women stormed a parliamentary sitting, begging Vivas to divert patronage away from religious groups and give them jobs instead.

By extension, my informants believed that if they lacked governmental funding (i.e., Vivas' pa-

tronage), their enterprise—be it a start-up company or a religious community—was doomed to fail: first, because it would be unable to finance itself; and second, because it would lack respect from fellow Ceutans. Clearly, their project was not worthy of Vivas' life-giving touch. Accordingly, it was not enough to receive patronage; one had to publicly show one was Vivas' client. Hence, Ravi's anxiety—shared by many community leaders—over Vivas' attendance. Similarly, some months later, Vivas sent an insignificant substitute to attend an event by a small Muslim community. A week later, a partnered community pulled out of plans for a joint project. Their leader embarked on an epic quest, interrogating bureaucrats and canvassers to find out whether Vivas was thinking of halting his patronage. Those who lacked patronage sometimes faked it. My work with the communities put me in contact with Ceuta's innumerable newspaper editors, who often boasted their friendship with Vivas. Toward the end of my fieldwork, one of them confessed that he did so to hide the fact that his paper was in dire financial straits. In fact, he spent most of his day roaming government offices, droning about the influence of his reportage. Senior administrators kept insisting that funds could only be obtained through the proper channel, which he never believed. He then started using his paper to attack Vivas ("he only buys you if you're dangerous!"), but the funds never came. Horrifically indebted, he nevertheless refused to close the paper, which would expose his shameful predicament.

Convivencia, connivencia

Ceuta's functionary-economy had a third problem, which allowed the mayor-president to further express his power and charisma. In order to exercise its autonomous power, Ceuta needed to create new ministries and public companies, build schools and hospitals, and expand its police and security forces. By 2015, the public sector employed half the enclaves' inhabitants

(Observatorio de las Ocupaciones 2016). In Ceuta, public employees enjoy generous wages and comfortable lifestyles. But these jobs were not evenly distributed. Muslims—who generally descended from poor Moroccan migrants—could not effectively compete with their wealthy, educated compatriots for civil service positions. They subsisted on welfare,¹⁶ operated small businesses (e.g., groceries, bakeries), worked in the private or informal sectors (where they competed with cheap Moroccan labor), joined the army, or participated in drug and human trafficking. An increasing number of Muslims were becoming successful professionals (lawyers with clientele, mostly), and some entered politics with the intention of destroying "Ceuta's racism." Their voices were gaining traction, but slowly: most of my Muslim acquaintances insisted (despite lacking proof) that their success was due to their "friendship" with Vivas or other Muslim politicians (including opposition politicians, suspected to be in Vivas' pockets).

Given these harsh sociocultural inequalities, the leaders of Ceuta's ethno-religious communities had to work hard to keep *convivencia*, a discourse of fraternity and equality between religions, a viable narrative. This they tried to do by persuading their followers into seeing that *convivencia* money could safeguard their traditions and allow them to publicly display their Ceutan-ness. However, many of my interlocutors felt uncomfortable with "Others" handling their sacred traditions (ironically funded by patronage money). "I understand the president," one Hindu confessed as he ritually purified the temple, "but the people who came for Diwali came for entertainment, not enlightenment." Likewise, one Imam observed that these rites "trivialized" religion and forced Muslims to do un-Islamic things (like revering idols). Another was worried that "in rituals of *convivencia*, you do not worship God. You worship Ceuta."

These frictions meant that relations between Vivas and the communities were bumpy affairs, liable to explode into "social drama" (Turner 1980). In 2004, the Medinaceli procession was stoned as it approached a mosque. This trig-

gered a quarrel between the municipality and the Church, which wanted the Medinaceli out of El Príncipe. The issue was only resolved when Vivas promised an annual escort of two hundred policemen. Relations with Muslim communities were especially delicate. Traditionally, Islam in Ceuta was monopolized by the “Spanish Federation of Islamic Entities” (FEERI). But around 2005, the “Union of Islamic Communities of Ceuta” (UCIDCE) burst onto the scene, championing a “Spanish Islam” that did not depend on Moroccan religious authorities for guidance. UCIDCE was given funds to rebuild mosques, launch Arabic/Quranic schools, and unify Ceuta’s 60 Muslim communities. Then, in Ramadan 2009, UCIDCE and FEERI descended to the main mosque with their own imams, the former sanctioned by Ceuta, the latter by Morocco. A violent scuffle followed, and since then Muslims have celebrated Ramadan divided. For a while, Vivas tried to patronize both camps. By 2010, however, UCIDCE’s rivals (namely a new association called Al-Sebta, which we encountered earlier) started warning municipal authorities that the community had not only failed in its delivery of a “Spanish Islam” but that its Saudi-inspired (i.e., alien) doctrine was destroying local folklore, downplaying secular education, retreating from rites of *convivencia*, hindering Muslim integration, and even pushing youths into Salafism. In 2013, Vivas’ government stopped funding Islamic communities directly. Instead, it asked Muslim communities to write formal project proposals. This suited Al-Sebta perfectly, staffed as it was by people with ample experience working in Vivas’ administration. They now reliably “win” money for projects to rehabilitate Islam, and is the community “representing” Islam in most rites of *convivencia*.

UCIDCE still commands the respect of a large majority of Muslims but is now openly critical of Vivas’ *convivencia*-charisma-patronage complex. In an interview, one of their young, well-spoken leaders argued that, to outsiders, Ceuta will always be presented as a land of harmonious *convivencia*. But “as an anthropologist,” I must have surely noticed that “we do not have

convivencia, but *coexistencia*: Muslims just exist in the shadow of other *culturas*, which—unlike us—eat from the King’s table.” Unsurprisingly, many of my Muslim informants were flocking to the banner of the Citizenship and Dignity Movement (MDyC). The party was formed in 2013 by a group of young Muslim politicians. MDyC took issue with Vivas’ patronage, especially that of ethno-religious communities. Mocking Vivas’ model as one of “connivance” (*connivencia*), MDyC often argued that Vivas was distracting Muslims from their socioeconomic predicament. By controlling vital resources, he was creating a tame Islam that thinks of itself as folkloristic heritage, rather than a moral ideology that ought to guide political debate. Finally, Vivas made communities grovel for patronage, breaking a unified Muslim vote. In attacking his ability to charm and trick Muslims into ties of patronage, however, MDyC did not question Vivas’ personal power. He was still acknowledged as the (malevolent) prime mover of Ceutan affairs, ultimately responsible for Ceuta’s status quo.

Ceuta’s Christians were also becoming skeptical of Vivas’ patronage-charisma-*convivencia*. The fear that Muslim presence in Ceuta undermines the enclave’s claim to Spanish-ness was not new in the enclave. In 1997, as Ceuta desperately sought solid economic footing and saw the emergence of Muslim-oriented parties, Christians elected into power the *Grupo Independiente Liberal* (GIL). The party, led by the bombastic business tycoon Jesus Gil, promised to turn Ceuta into a tourist paradise and “clean the streets” of Muslims. GIL’s tenure was marked by the selling of public assets to Gil’s companies and was quickly driven out by a coalition of parties that selected Vivas, then a minor politician, to be in charge. Vivas was marketed as Gil’s complete opposite: where Gil was a crass, belligerent businessman who used Muslims as scapegoats, Vivas’ quiet mannerisms allowed him to reconcile conflict and forge a civic identity. On closer inspection, of course, they are different sides of the same coin: both are charismatic leaders with visionary solutions

that spoke to local anxieties and capitalized on bureaucratic ambiguity.

After an 18-year hiatus, however, politicized Christianity is returning to Ceuta's political arena. Not even Vivas could stop people from flirting first with *Ceuta Insegura* (CI), then the far-right party *Vox*. CI started out as a Facebook page where users could report petty crime. In 2016, its admins—a DJ and a flamenco dancer—organized a series of well-attended marches asking Vivas to arm the police and put Muslim neighborhoods under tighter surveillance. The admins refused to contest the election, but their momentum was picked up by the far-right party *Vox*. At the moment of writing, in Ceuta, *Vox* mainly campaigns against sub-Saharan migrants. Nevertheless, many of its sympathizers (some of whom were active members of the Christian communities I worked with) openly hoped it would fight the “Moroccanisation” of Ceuta. How Muslims were actually going to be stopped without breaking their rights as citizens and as human beings was never made clear. Accordingly, their main target of complaint was Vivas' patronage-*convivencia*. Many understood Vivas' pragmatic need to mobilize Muslim votes. But they feared that in patronizing Islam, Vivas was ultimately playing with fire liable to consume them all.

Conclusion

The inhabitants of Ceuta would say that the patronage ubiquitous in the enclave cannot be reduced to clandestine material and political transactions between a patron (hungry for votes) and his clients (thirsty for resources). True enough, the bureaucratic organs of the state were being manipulated to place loyal clients in influential positions. Nevertheless, to both supporters and detractors of the mayor-president, such relations were inseparable from the production of *convivencia*: the idea that, in Ceuta, ethno-religious diversity, harmony, solidarity, and exchange is welcomed and is integral to local identity. From Ceutans' point of view, the tran-

quility brought by *convivencia* was the outcome of Vivas' charismatic vision as well as his innate ability to spot, befriend, and efficiently deploy talent. It was clear that some attempt was being made to free *convivencia* from the scaffolding of patronage. As a pillar of identity, *convivencia* tried to recenter Ceuta as a source of multicultural inspiration. It gave them a narrative to be proud of, and with which to contest larger discourses that depicted Ceuta as an impoverished border fort. As a form of intercultural solidarity, *convivencia* rested as much on the contractual obligations of hospitality and ritual as it did on funding. Lastly, as a form of social order, *convivencia* appealed to the unpleasant memories of the politicized ethno-religiosity of the 1990s. The Ganesh crisis of 2014 indicated that *convivencia* could stand up to challenge from outsiders, but the major question of the age was whether Vivas' charismatic authority would translate into legal or traditional authority (Weber 1947) after his departure.

On a theoretical level, the local salience given to the previously described anxiety tells us something about how charisma works. In making individual personhood the origin of all things, charisma distracted Ceutans from asking critical questions about the historical context of their multicultural strategies. It is true that religious leaders engaged in patronage to enjoy the legitimacy that comes with being part of Vivas' charismatic vision. This gave them personal prestige and authority. It also allowed ethno-religious minorities to stress their Ceutan-ness while keeping their traditions alive. However, this use of *convivencia* seemed unable to shake its colonial legacy and managed difference with a stick as well as a carrot. It did nothing to address sociocultural inequalities. It divided *culturas*, folklorized religion, and sanctioned whoever failed to adhere to its rules. The Ceutan case foregrounds the ephemeral aspect of patron-client ties stressed by transactionalist approaches to patronage. Patronage in the enclave was marked by anxiety and suspicion, as clients struggled to interpret and realize Vivas' vision and wondered when he would find

them politically and financially inefficient. As the case of the newspaper editor indicated, Vivas did not expand his network at all costs and only took clients who knew how to handle the media, organize and market projects, work with other communities, manage funds efficiently, and control one's own community members, cauterizing factionalism before it could mushroom into crisis. In other words, clients had to be people who could realize his vision and reproduce his charisma. Bad choices were possible! As with the case of the Islamic communities, some could become dissatisfied with Vivas' rule and fail to comply with his demand. Once-loyal clients could turn into fearsome enemies. Christians were likewise disturbed by these colonial tactics, which they felt were threatening Ceuta's Spanish-ness. They were returning to monocultural models of Spanish identity, which rejected the possibility that Muslims could ever be legitimately Spanish and thus make claims on Christians and their resources. Vivas' model of *convivencia*, never entirely stable under colonial contexts, was particularly problematic when exercised on Spanish citizens; and yet—because charisma made *convivencia* appear to be Vivas' unprecedented work—there was no discussion about these nuances in the enclave and no real alternative model of multiculturalism.

Likewise, charisma's main trick was to efface the very social processes that created and sustained it. The people of the enclave pinned their hopes and fears on their mayor-president as the local logos. They channeled their political energies to either participate in his vision or survive outside it. No one, however, doubted Vivas' powers of persuasion. Absent was the idea that Vivas' charisma was *ascribed* to him by his followers as they accepted his life-giving resources and materialized his vision of *convivencia*. Most pressingly, Ceutans did not pause to reflect on the social processes that gave rise to charismatic figures like Vivas. While some cried for "dignity" and "citizenship," they forgot that Ceuta's increasing economic and political uncertainty has transformed the enclave into a fertile field

for big men with big utopias that speak to local worries. Vivas was not the first. Chances are that he will be not be the last, either. Until those who seek to radically alter Ceuta's current socio-economic trajectory discover a model of *convivencia* able to transcend its ambiguous blend of domination and fraternity, and until they address the enclave's multi-layered marginality and precarity, it is likely that the killing of the old king will only see a new monarch ascend the throne, with no option but to rule Vivas' web of patronage, inhabit his charisma, and continue his "*pax regis*."

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Notes

1. For political-economic reasons, Ceuta's Muslims have been particularly susceptible to becoming involved in contraband and drug-trading. My informants' statements here reflect a contradiction common in local manifestations of *convivencia*: an affectionate attempt to redeem and integrate Ceuta's Muslims in a way that exposes a system that discriminates against them.
2. This is a common claim on the fringes of nation-states (e.g., Canessa 2019) or in newly independent states with a history of migration (e.g., Eriksen 1994).
3. Entry to the European Union required Ceuta to naturalize or expel Moroccans in its territory.
4. This led to several violent riots. In one of these, a policeman was killed.
5. Upon receiving citizenship, Ceutan Muslims were asked to adopt Spanish, hyphenated surnames (which combine the first surname of the father and the mother). This was alien to Muslims, who often supplied their father's and paternal grandfathers' first names. Aside from producing individuals with names like "Mohamed Mohamed-Mohamed," the system erased local naming systems based on household, nicknaming, etc.
6. Which mostly, go into (good) wages for their three to four staff.
7. Juan Vivas' party, the Partido Popular is a direct descendant of the "People's Alliance," which was staffed by conservative politicians previously part of Franco's military administration. In Ceuta, many members sport nostalgia for colonial times.
8. By regularly closing the border, preventing the passage of goods and people, and by building a Freeport to compete with Ceuta.
9. By allowing the entry of "unaccompanied minors," which Spain is by-law obliged to nurture. Most are, in fact, pins in the drug network. Morocco also makes "security mistakes" that see thousands of sub-Saharan migrants assaulting the border, producing tragedies that ruin Ceuta's reputation.
10. Moroccan women regularly give birth in Ceuta, and their children are given Spanish nationality. Ceutans suspect that Morocco deliberately starves the north, which leads Moroccans to settle in Ceuta where prospects may be better.
11. It is recorded that in the early 1980s, up to a million traders visited Ceuta, and that its trading houses employed up to 90 percent of Ceuta's inhabitants (El País 1982).
12. Important areas, like education, health, and infrastructure, remained in the hands of a delegate appointed by Madrid.
13. A person appointed to governmental positions "by finger-pointing" has not gone through a formal, competitive application process.
14. Despite this, most departments remained underfunded. But no new appointments were made, and retired functionaries were not replaced.
15. For example, public housing is given out in a "lottery" which happens behind closed doors. Clients and kin of ministers frequently appear in these lists.
16. Thirty-five percent of the enclave's population is unemployed. Ceuta's expensive rents also resulted in some unable to cover basic living costs despite receiving benefits.

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