

"Fanonizing," and "Foucauldian" State Borders: What is it that we fear?**Agnes Wanjiru Behr**abehr@usiu.ac.ke abehr2015@gmail.com*United States International University-Africa (USIU-A)***Abstract**

A state border is ideally inelastic, 'incapable' of expanding or contracting to increase or decrease the geographic territory of each. Yet a state border relies on individuals' conformity to legal rules and, to a larger extent, unwritten rules or norms to become enforceable and visualized. Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault both show how power plays occur. The ability of the power wielder to alter the individuals' behavior creates binding power. In Fanon's "Black skins white masks," the individual conformity to another's norms and practices creates Foucault's de-individualization. Foucault also shows how Panopticon or surveillance shapes the surveilled's behavior, where the policed become the police. Both Fanon and Foucault show the power shifts as a result of a subjective norm, informing the processes that shape an objective behavior. In analyzing behavior and a snippet of the Kenya-Somalia and the US-Mexican borders, the study attempts to answer Van Houtum's question, what is it that we fear? The research shows individuals change substantial cultural differences in adherence, and eagerness to please the orders at the border. The state fears losing sovereignty through individuals' disobedience while the latter fear losing freedom through state punishment by imprisonment as a result of flouting border rules. The research incorporates field findings at the Kenya-Somalia and US-Mexican (Tijuana) border. Amina's border experience and performances in navigating the border fears are teased out as an answer to Van Houtum's question, unmask Fanon's subjects, and locate the de-individualization posed by Foucault's Panopticon.

Introduction

"I often 'ditch' the Hijab when I am traveling abroad because I know it will cause me more pain at the airport checkpoints. In my spirit, I know my God and religion; unveiling does not mean I am Godless." (An interview with Amina, Nairobi 2017).

Janis (1972), in his work *Victims of Groupthink*, sought to explain how de-individualization occurs in group decision making. Whereas Janis's idea was about foreign policy-making, it portrays how an individual ceases to make room for the majority. The purpose of being an outlier subjects individuals to fall in line with the rest, first, mentally, then projected outwards to agree with a popular decision. In the de-individualization, it appears the person 'ceases' while the group

'becomes.' Similarly, Fanon (1952) in *Black Skins White Masks* shows how "All colonized people- in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose cultural originality has been committed to the grave-position themselves in relation to the civilizing language-that is, the metropolitan culture." The colonized attempts to adjust to the colonial culture to fit in, or become social-culturally acceptable by the majority.

Equally, Foucault's (1979) writings in, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, displays how the prisoner under the Panopticon or vigilant eyes eventually falls into a routine of obedience to fit into the norms in prison. Furthermore, Van Houtum and Naerssen (2002), in "bordering, ordering, and othering," shows a pattern in human behavior that results in 'removing' ambiguities in geographic spaces to achieve governance. However, the de-individualization appears to follow an accepted norm that spares the b/orderer some pain should they choose dis/order. Border order, therefore, demands objectification otherwise seen as body borders (Behr, 2018). Noteworthy, body borders carry cultural b/orders. Where an individual decides to identify culturally with the b/orderer space, then a double epistemology appears. Whereby, though the person is ethnically, racially different from the ordered territory, s/he is the same culturally with the de-b/orderer region. De-individualization b/orders and dis-b/orders may, therefore, occur at the same time.

The paper seeks to understand individual mannerisms in b/ordering and the behavioral shifts that accompany the act of or the noun b/order. It does answer the question posed at the end of Van Houtum's (2019) "The Janus of the Monad and the Nomad" what is it that we fear? Frantz Fanon's metaphor of "Black Skin, White Masks," and Foucault's notion of 'Panopticon.' It shows that despite substantial cultural differences or adherence, individuals appear to be eager to please the orders at the border. These orders and borders are either physical and identifiable or mental and only manifest in the individuals' outward expressions and choices.

The 'de-culturalization' and acculturation of the individuals' behavior at the border, one would argue, is a form of obeying the written and unspoken laws. However, some may strip one's identity albeit, temporarily. The requirements at the border create another individual out of the b/orderer. In other words, if all people were a certain way culturally, then the borders would not exist. The

border is there to separate yet unite at the same time. The de-identified give meaning to the b/orders and laws that govern them.

Van Houtum (2019) argues that one of the tests for the bordered is passing the legal requirements at the border. Legally, the analysis is objective, with no room for misinterpretation. However, the state's border test fashions both the legal and illegals to assume the desired mannerisms at given b/orders. The de-individualization could mean dressing in the expected codes as Amina attests in her travels abroad from Nairobi to avoid the extra scrutiny at the borders. Alternatively, to veil up in Islamic countries in order to pass the b/ordering test.

The constant routine at the borders makes it easy to order both people and their luggage. Since the law is not a secret, the people know what is legal and what is illegal. It is in the knowledge of what is acceptable that the mind and body attempt to fulfill the orders at its best.

The bordered follow the 'expected order' and become the normalized group. The alteration of language and culture to favor a particular order allows certain privileges. The pursuit of b/order privileges leads the individual to de-individualize, and as Fanon (1952) observes in the 'wearing of the white mask' by the black-skinned individuals in an attempt to fit in or be acceptable. The bordered stranger performs the act of wearing a mask to attain a social-cultural fit, which would typically allay fears of the legal misfit. The mask and the wearer become one. The oneness gives the stranger the cultural appropriateness required to pass the subjective border checks, tests, and the 'normal.'

Border norms are not always in black and white; hence do not always fall into mutually exclusive category found in positivism. The culture, language, and body-border differences represent the grey areas. Yet in the variations, the state subjects the bordered in seemingly objective tests of legal and illegal, the safe and the suspect.

Body borders are synonymous with body features (Behr, 2018). The physical manifestation of the shape and size of body parts appear to inform of people belonging to a category. Since body

features are arguably genetically informed, it follows a close correlation to Darwinism (Darwin, 1859). Ideally, Darwin (1859) observes that natural selection can lead to a species that is superior to overcome the challenges in the environment. Arguably, 'Malthusianism' (Malthus 1798) views an increment in population as a threat to itself due to the differences between the geometric population increases versus the arithmetic increase in humans' subsistence. Eventually, the poor increase in population in a manner that subsistence cannot sustain and end up depleting the environment. Environmental degradation acts as a counter to the population increase as people die due to lack of food. Darwinism shows the capacity of humankind to evolve to a better version to overcome the challenge. The superior race surpasses those who cannot change, for instance, due to malnutrition.

Arguably, although Darwinism shows essentialism character, it is not possible to conduct the study objectively. If humans evolved from the weaker race to a stronger one, it implies they cannot be classified as 'black and white' due to the process of evolution itself. A category of humankind runs into the other and cannot conclude that the process is over and is no longer taking place. However, body borders that draw from essentialism assume a notion of complete formation of an individual. It categorizes humans into races, into black and white concepts with no ambiguities. Body borders create orders between humans placing each in specific body identifiers, features which then order humanity.

Juxtaposing the legal and illegal individuals render body borders suspect. Whereas Fanon (1952) observes that there are white masks, he also notes that the mask wearers embody a black skin. The positivists' tests would allow one to re-orient in 'whiteness.' Still, body markers/features retain the 'blackness' such that a change in language, mannerisms, such as "to speak like a book," as Fanon (1952) demonstrates in Martinique where residents refer as "to speak like a white" (5) does not change the body features.

Fanon (1952) shows that an individual purposefully moves from the language demarcation "of the 'Martinican' who swallows his r's. He'll go to work on it and enter an open conflict with it." (Fanon, 1952, p.5). A Martinican, therefore, tries his best to sound like the white man an example is that

of one who goes to a café and seeks service by calling out "Waiterrrr? Bwing me a dwink of beerrrr!" (5). The individual in his desperation not to sound like a black person who would typically drop the r's, overcompensates and fails to divide them out correctly. Perhaps what is more telling is that "There is a psychological phenomenon that consists in believing the world will open up as borders are broken down" (Fanon, 1952, p. 5). However, attaining specific objective markers of the other cannot erase the body borders such as objective blackness in a race, or the non-whiteness.

Foucauldian Panopticon and the Border People.

Foucault (1977, 192) indicates that the disciplines mark the moment when the reversal of the political axis of individualization-as one might call it-takes place." Arguably, individualization is at the highest peak where sovereignty is exercised and is found in the most elevated positioning of power. It follows that a person is marked as an individual the more s/he possesses power and privilege. Power and privilege are present where one can practice rituals, written accounts, or visual reproduction. Revisiting Amina's statements shows an absence of all the above, thus dis-individualization.

"The name and the genealogy that situate one within a kinship group, the performance of deeds that demonstrate superior strength and which are immortalized in literary accounts, the ceremonies that mark the power relations in their very ordering, the ostentation and excess of expenditures, the multiple, interesting links of allegiance and suzerainty, all these are procedures of an 'ascending' individualization (Foucault 1977, 192-193).

Foucault (1977) further observes that in a disciplinary regime, individualization is descending. A state exercises power by surveillance, observation, comparative measures that have the norm as opposed to ceremonies, commemorative accounts, and genealogies (Foucault, 1977). The border crossers' self-awareness leads to self-policing. According to Foucault (1980) knowledge informs power. The subject is inherently intertwined with power which manifests outwardly as a norm (Foucault, 1982). In Fanon's (1952) case, the black person looks out for the slightest reaction of others when he speaks. He also listens to himself speak because of a lack of trust in his tongue. In Amina's dress-change case, it appears that.

In contrast, no one orders the tourist, refugee, businessman/woman or everyday border crosser to behave in a particular manner, they all assume a specific behavior perceived to be acceptable by the powers present. The self-policed action aides are ordering at the border. Furthermore, self-policing believes invisible eyes are watching the border-crossers. In a real sense, some borders lack intrusive policing mechanisms. However, the border-crossers/policed become the police due to the assumed Panopticon (Foucault, 1977). Arguably, the presence of visible border police and officials positions the behavior of those crossing to assume someone is always watching. It is the 'invisible' watchers that shape the behavior of people at the border points. Once again, the positivists' or objective b/ordering comes in contact with the post-positivists or subjective in constructing the b/order. It implies that the idea of physically positioning precise surveillance mechanisms leads to individuals behaving in a certain way to fulfill the accepted behavior as shaped by the highest powers in that territory.

People do not always conform to specific accepted or required behavior. However, individuals' failure to submit to high power comes at a price. In this study, observation at border crossings in both the US-Tijuana border in 2016 and the Kenya Somalia border in 2017 revealed specific nuances. In both cases, there were changes in the spoken language, depending on where the passengers headed. For instance, upon reaching the border, at the US-Tijuana (Mexican) border, most of the border crossers, especially Hispanics, switched their language from English to Spanish. The language-switch appeared to make Hispanics from the American side of the border more acceptable to the border policing agents and mechanisms in Mexico. On the return journey, the Hispanic travelers de-individualized, switched from Spanish to English, to identify with America.

The host country does not order anyone to speak the language of the host country at the border, yet border-crossers appear to assume the host language as more acceptable than any other. The researcher observed a similar pattern at the Kenya-Somalia border where a switch from Kiswahili to Somali dialect, and vice versa occurred depending on the passengers' destination. While traveling towards Somalia, the passengers on the bus spoke the ethnic Somali language. Besides, the Islamic Hijab with total body cover appeared uniform to all, especially the female passengers. However, on the return trip, ethnic Somalis switched to Kiswahili as they traveled towards Tana

River, which is the border between Northeastern Kenya and the rest of Kenya. Equally, the female passengers did not wear the *niqab* (face cover). The idea that identification with the host grants a border crosser more leeway simply put is actualizing Foucault's (1977) Panopticon and de-individualization and Fanon's (1952) 'mask.' Individuals behave in a manner that they deem acceptable before the provisions of surveillance of the illegal. It informs why Amina would choose not to wear the Hijab while going through airports in non-Muslim countries despite it being abnormal in her religion and culture.

Border crossing and the accompanying choice of dress or spoken language as the 'acceptable' implies the surveilled 'self-surveilled.' The 'law' at the border draws its viability from the surveilled. The border-crossers no longer look out for the border police because the policed become the police. The assumption of the host culture, language, and body mannerisms empowers the host. It is 'as if' the act of crossing the border empowers and disempowers both the individual and the host state. Knowing how to behave empowers the individual to cross over successfully but, at the same time, dis-empowers in acquiring another identity or de-individualizes. The individuals' self-surveillance, observation, comparative measures, and adapting to state identity empowers the state. However, the state is also dis-empowered because the act of seemingly assuming its' identity by border crossers does not imply security. If anything, the same state norms and order can be used by the illegal or ill-willed border crossers to enable access.

One could ask, what about things an individual cannot change? For example, although a Latino person can speak English, they cannot change the fact that they are Latino by race. Similarly, an ethnic Somali can speak Kiswahili; they cannot change the visible markers of the Somali ethnicity. Both the Latino and the Somali individual wears the mask of the host state because they know that it carries a population similar in ethnicity to their own. It follows that the empowered state is dis-empowered by the individual who plays according to the acceptable norms, yet the norms aide the stranger to become familiar.

How familiar the individual can get depends on the borderlines that separate ethnicities or races within a state. It tells of how far or how long the mask stays. In the case of both US-Tijuana and

Kenya-Somalia border, the masks were short-lived because once the individuals successfully passed the border-surveillance areas, they resumed their native language, in this case, Spanish and Somali respectively. The presence of a community similar to the surveilled informs the short-lived masks across a state border or in the borderlands.

A borderland adjoins the state border. In most cases, the people straddle a border creating a unique culture to the area compared to the heartlands of the states themselves. A culture demarcates and creates thin borders (Haselsberger, 2014).

What b/orders then?

Houtum (2019) observes that states build borders to last an eternity. The death of a border a state's sovereignty as known. The constant fixing of the border has got to be intersubjective. The b/ordered and the state must agree in the existence of a border to create the inelasticity required by the state. Positivists' objectivism crisscrosses with the cultural norms to create points of agreement. A norm becomes objectified as the acceptable behavior which surveils the 'unacceptable.' Borders are present and inelastic, where positivism 'marries' with the norms as Darwinism tends to assume essentialism in humanity as an outcome, although a process. The marriage or objectivism and norms longevity are dependent on the surveilled acceptance of the surveilling mechanisms in 'self-surveillance.' The inelasticity of a border lasts as long as the b/ordered are willing and continue to wear the masks of the host states. States are therefore not static but a constant (re)negotiation between them and those within (Ylonen, 2013) and outside.

In the case of the Kenya-Somalia border, the b/ordered took up arms in 1963-1967 and rebelled against the presence of the state border (Behr, 2018). The rebellion became known as the Shifta War (Castagno, 1964). During the period of turbulence, the surveilled refused 'to wear' Kenya's state masks and insisted on becoming one with Somalia (Whittaker 2014). The Shifta War was the bid to secede by ethnic Somalis in the Northeastern region of Kenya (Weitzberg, 2017) to avoid de-individualization.

Ethnic Somalis sought the 'elastification' of the Kenya-Somalia border (Munene, 2015). Ethnic Somalis were of the view that they are one with the State of Somalia in terms of language, culture, and religion (Lewis 1963). The border lacked self-surveillance. The Somali language was normalized, nomadic crisscrossing at the state border was common, Islamic dress culture was and still is the norm. If Amina were to cross the Northeastern border then or now, she would keep her Hijab because positivists' ways of objectifying the border agree with her cultural orientation. Immediately after Kenya's independence, ethnic Somalis and the Kenyan state lacked an inter-subjective behavior concerning the acknowledgment and meaning of the border. There was a collision between the exercise of power by the Kenyan government through surveillance, observation, comparative measures with that of ethnic Somalis through their norms expressed as ceremonies, commemorative accounts, and genealogies.

In the alternative case of the US-Mexican border, matters of the border acknowledgment by the US appears to portray a picture of the 'elastification' of the US-Mexican border. Although no one defies the US-Mexican border existence, the conformity by the border crossers is done not to elastify the border but to elastify the bordered. Meaning the continual movements of illegal people into the US via the Mexican border disempowers the US while stripping the individuals of their individuality they conform with the orders.

The de-individualization legitimizes the host norms as the dis-empowered border-crossers become empowered by the very mechanisms that acknowledge the state's existence. Where acculturation into the host state threatens the permanency of a state border, the state institutes high walls. In case the person fails to understand that the state belongs to a particular regularized legal, the wall acts as a reminder. In both the Kenyan-Somalia and US-Mexican borders, the suggested solution to the 'chameleonizing' 'self-surveilled' individuals is high walls. The high walls are a reminder that the state remains all-powerful. The walls enforce self-surveillance and the constant 'watch' by the state observably Foucault's (1977) Panopticon in discipline and punish that creates conformity to laws (Foucault, 1979). Arguably, the high walls deliver positivist/observable measures so that the b/ordered can institute the inter-subjective or acceptable norms/behavior required to keep the borders permanent.

The de-individualization though it appears to strip the persona of their culture, it also gives the individual a sense of control. After all, it is the person who decides to 'remove the Hijab and wear a pair of jeans while letting their hair flow with the wind.' It appears that ordering creates permanency of the border and gives the state a sense of control. However, the ordered in de-individualizing gain control on how the state border control mechanisms treat/perceive them. Power is, therefore, not monolithic to the state but goes both ways. It shows everything is connected, perhaps bringing forth the Darwinism idea of a process that connects the weaker humanity to the stronger ones.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome theory shows that everything is connected to something. State control of the border is connected to the individuals' control of their behaviors (Behr, 2020). Amina enforces the state border by accepting the positivist norms, usually carrying the required legal documents such as the passport. However, Amina also controls her behavior by the 'removal of the Hijab', where it produces extra-state surveillance. The inter-subjectivity is in play through the state believes it is in charge of the border and Amina's belief that her action to remove the Hijab controls how the state perceives her.

The Elasticity in the Inelastic Border

The state's desire for a fixed border reflects the need for permanency. Yet the permanency is achieved through the ability of the individual to conform and rebel. If rebellion by the bordered was non-existence, then there will be no point to order. After all, one cannot order that which is already in conformity. The elasticity nature of the bordered creates the inelastic status of state borders. It explains why the bordered would alter their language and dress-codes to fix a border. Inelasticity becomes a result of elasticity, supporting Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) observation that rhizomes exist because of their connection to something. The disconnection of a rhizome would render immediate death to itself. The absence of rebellion in the bordered would make borders dead. After all, Foucher (2009) shows that a good border is a dead border. However, how do we measure good in the dead?

The answer then to Van Houtum's question, "what is it that we fear?" It is different depending on whether the questioner is a state or an individual. To the state, it is the fear of erasing the permanency of state borders. To the individual, it is the fear of losing personal freedom in movements between borders. The state and the individual curb their concern in coming to an intersubjective behavior where the drum-beater and the dancer share a scene. The two agree to others' output to create a full circle and utilize ambiguities.

Does power abhor ambiguity? Asad (1993) offers that radicals are wrong to assume power abhors ambiguity. A state thrives in the ambiguous through the exploitation of the grey areas. The 'lurking dangers' in 'ambiguous' borders empowers the states to utilize power in exploiting opportunities. Given the example of the Kenya-Somalia border and the US-Mexican border, in the difficulties in isolating natives versus non-natives, the state uses power mechanisms to enforce the border. The bordered have no choice but to conform to the requirements enforced. For example, since 1963, Kenya has often imposed curfews during attacks at the border. The curfews are more or less a norm in the North-Eastern Border. Curfews' 'inelastifys' the border subsequently nobody can wander around after a given timeframe. The state suspends the idea of freedom of movement as per the constitution during such times. Ideally, it is the absence of border clarity in terms of the populace given a similar ethnic group straddles the border that creates the opportunity for the state to use force.

Furthermore, it is difficult for the ethnic Somalis to secure Kenyan identification documents due to the ambiguity in their ethnic group. On the flip-side ethnic Somalis from Somalia do acquire Kenyan Identification papers via bribery due to the same ambiguity Focus group discussion, November in Mandera 2017). A Kenyan passport costs up to \$3000, while the Kenyan Identity card costs \$200 (Interview with a Chief, Madera, 2017, Focus group discussion Mandera 2017).

A young man, an ethnic Somali refugee, narrated that given the opportunity, he would acquire the Kenyan identity papers without hesitation (Interview with Hassan, Dadaab, 2017). He was of the view that encampment removed the ability to move about freely, whereas Kenyaness gives that freedom to do so. The ability to change one's identity lies in the ambiguous nature of the ethnic Somali identity in the Horn of Africa. The corrupt nature of law enforcers further supports the

ambiguities. The uncertainty brings to full circle the ability of the state to enforce extra-ordinary measures such as curfews in times of high insecurity.

Furthermore, it enables ethnic Somalis to convert their identity to suit their urgent requirements. Unfortunately, rogue officers utilize the same to 'oil their pockets' at the expense of both the state and the governed. The governed and the state come in a collision where ambiguities at the border allow insecurity to slip through.

Conclusion

Fanonizing and Foucauldian borders sought to answer Van Houtum's (2019) question, what is it that we fear? Frantz Fanon's (1952) metaphor of "Black Skin, White Masks," and Foucault's (1977) notion of 'Panopticon' in de-individualization concerning state powers found at the borders. It follows that the idea of a state border derives meaning from ambiguities. Although a state border is objectively identifiable, subjectivities shape it. The highest powers in the land determine surveillance, observation, and comparative norms but depend on an individual's desire and performance to de-individualize or 'wear masks' in observance of these powers. Therefore, the state fears losing sovereignty through the disobedience of the individuals.

In contrast, individuals fear losing freedom through punishment by the state in most cases imprisonment due to border-rules subversions. Amina's removal of the Hijab as she travels abroad through the Nairobi airport depicts conformity to avoid the fear and adhere to border state powers. Similarly, the border crossers at the Kenya-Somalia and US-Mexico (Tijuana) border point shows a behavioral and cultural change to allay the fears.

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