

Chapter 8

## Symbolic Bordering and the Securitization of Identity Markers in Nigeria's Ethno-Religiously Segregated City of Jos

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### Introduction

Borders have remained an integral part of human political and social life in stark defiance of the predictions at the dawn of the twentieth century that globalization would bring about the emergence of a borderless and deterritorialized world. Borders have not only retained their relevance in our world today, but are adapting to its evolving spatiotemporal conditions. Conventionally, borders delineated the spatial extent of state sovereignty and served mainly as static spatial device for "cordoning" a political territory against potential external threats. However, interdisciplinary border research has witnessed a paradigm shift from such state-centric national security focus to a decentralized society's (human) security concern. Here the state and the population are all active players and shapers of borders. The concept of borders as fixed demarcating lines that are space and time oriented, is now being replaced with one in which borders are defined in terms of bordering, an emphasis on the symbolic and social practices of spatial differentiation aimed at controlling movement of people both into and within a securitized space (Houtum and Naerssen 2002).

This shift to a more fluid and mobility focused border has increased all over the world in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Bordering is now rather employed as a mechanism for isolating and preventing a security risk personified by the Other, seen as a mobile threat that needs to be kept at bay within and without a securitized space. A growing interest in this phenomenon is already taking place (Jones 2012, Popescu 2012).

In this study, we examine bordering in the context of conflict within society. Specifically, the study explores how bordering, as a socio-spatial process, has been employed as a neighborhood security strategy in the ethno-religiously segregated city of Jos in Nigeria. The implications of the symbolic and constructive nature of spatial differentiation of "we" and the "Other" including the production and reproduction of an "enemy picture" through a bottom-up agency are significant. For the segregated residents of Jos, Debrix and Barder's (2009) assertion that there is nothing to fear but fear is instructive in understanding the basis and impact of

this bordering (othering) strategy. In this chapter, we attempt to show how the fear of repeated violence and consistent failure of the state to deliver on its promise to guarantee the security of life and property of its citizens has led the Muslim and Christian communities in Jos to engage in mutual profiling and bordering practices based on socio-spatial differentiation of identities. Two key points are salient here. First, ordinary citizens do not leave their fate in the hands of the state when faced with the threat of inter-group violence and/or terrorism, but try to create barriers to keep the “bad guys” out. The second aspect of the argument of this chapter is that borders that separate the conflicting communities in Jos are not only physical but also discursive. Through border narratives and symbolization the two communities have been able to demarcate themselves into compartments of “us” and “them” as a way of minimizing the risk of attacks. Consequently, in the context of conflict, bordering acts as an enhancer of stereotypes and damaging xenophobia, which sustains mutual distrust and hinders the prospect of peace.

### **The Background of Ethno-religious Conflict in Jos**

Jos is the capital of Plateau State, located in central Nigeria at the intersection of the country’s largely Christian south and the predominantly Muslim north. As its name suggests, Plateau State sits on a plateau—with undulating hills and spectacular landscape—giving it a favorable climate with relatively low temperatures throughout the year compared to the rest of the country due to its high altitude. The state used to be known as a “Home of Peace and Tourism” due to its attraction to local and foreign tourists and its peacefulness. It has also been widely described as a microcosm of Nigeria because it is a melting pot of ethnic and religious diversities, though Christians are the overwhelming majority (Egwu 2004, Ambe-Uva 2010, Higazi 2011). A large number of traditional religious worshippers abound all over the state. Many historical factors that contributed to the cosmopolitan nature of Jos have been identified in numerous studies (Egwu 2004, Falola and Heaton 2008, Abdulkadir, 2011, Abbas 2012). These include the location of Jos as a trading transit route for several centuries, its role as a safe haven for those fleeing from the Usman dan Fodio led Fulani jihad from 1804 to 1808, and as a site for the influx of mining workers in the early parts of the twentieth century. Plateau State was an important mining site for the British colonial government.

By and large, the residents of Jos co-existed peacefully until the last part of the twentieth century (Ambe-Uva 2010: 42). Contestations of the ownership of Jos between two groups—the Berom, Anarguta, and the Afizere on one hand and the Hausa/Fulani on the other—was reinforced by the decision of the military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida to create and delineate Jos North Local Government in 1991, which was perceived by the former as a deliberate attempt to dispossess them of their land and give the latter, who are heavily concentrated in the area, a political advantage (Ostien 2009). Since then isolated clashes have occurred between the two groups around the question of who will serve as the Chairman of

the Local Government. However, on September 7, 2001, there was a conflagration of violence in the city triggered by contestations over the appointment of a poverty eradication coordinator (Ostien 2009, Krause 2011). This confrontation between those referred to as indigenous ethnic groups (the Berom, Anarguta, and Afizere) and those referred to as settlers (Hausa/Fulani) snowballed into a religious conflict because the former are predominantly Christians and the latter are predominantly Muslims (Krause 2011, Higazi 2011). As a consequence, the conflict polarized the population and pitted the groups against each other along the indigene/settler and Christian/Muslim divides. Sadly, since 2001 the state lost its reputation as a Home of Peace and Tourism. Jos became the scene of pernicious cycles of violence that claimed thousands of lives (Krause 2011). Despite numerous peacebuilding initiatives, today the city is a shadow of its past image as a model of integration and remains highly polarized and segregated ethno-religiously. The word “border” has become part of the lexicon of daily life in Jos, not as a reference to Plateau State’s or Nigerian boundary, but to the arbitrary and imagery lines of spatial differentiation between the conflicting parties.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

At the end of the Cold War, and with the fall of the Berlin Wall, globalization inspired among its many enthusiasts the anticipation that the world was moving toward becoming a borderless and deterritorialized place (Newman 2008: 133). This utopian borderless and deterritorialized world was meant to represent the triumph of peace over conflict, inclusion over exclusion, and unity over division. The scenario presupposed that the co-dependence and interconnectedness of human societies will overcome the need for fences and demarcation in the world. Contrary to this, as Newman (2006: 143) asserted: “We live in a world of lines and compartments. We may not necessarily see the lines, but they order our daily life practices, strengthening our belonging to, and identity with, places and groups, while—at one and the same time—perpetuating and reperpetuating notions of difference and othering.” While some borders might have disappeared, or are disappearing, many new ones are being established (Newman 2008). In general, instead of being phased out, borders remain pervasive in today’s world. Jones (2012) notes that even countries considered as consolidated democracies have built physical barriers and the creation of securitized spaces in recent years. In a nutshell, ours has become “A Barricaded World” (Blij 2009: 28).

As reality starkly contradicts the notion of a borderless and deterritorialized world, the study of borders and boundaries has continued to flourish among human geographers and scholars from across many disciplines (Newman 2006, Newman 2008 and Moraczewska 2010). Since 9/11 there has been an unprecedented increase of interest in borders (Popescu 2012). This also means that there is a growing repository of theories and perspectives on the subject. Much has been written about borders and their spatial and social implications

for international relations (Moraczewska 2010), state, and society (Blij 2009); international peace and security (Jones 2012); borderlands (Zartman 2010); and politics of identity (Newman 2008) among many other aspects. The traditional preoccupation of political geography with borders and boundaries had focused largely on the demarcation of the spatial extent of the state, that is, the delineation of the geographical area within which the state exercises sovereignty (Newman 2008: 124). Although this traditional interest still permeates the study of borders and boundaries, contemporary studies are focusing more on the dynamics of borders and the changing patterns in which people and groups relate “within a variety of social and spatial compartments” (Newman 2008: 128). Newman further observes a new wave of interest in the study of borders, which focuses on the discursive and symbolic dimensions. This chapter falls within this discursive and symbolic realm of political geographers’ interest in borders. Looking at borders beyond being mere physical barriers and demarcations of securitized spaces, we examine how border narratives and the symbolization of borders mediate in the construction of identity and sustain the ethno-religious conflict divide in Jos. In their article, “Bordering, Ordering and Othering,” van Houtum and Naerssen (2002: 125) underscore the growing academic interest in the study of “practices of ordering and the discursive differentiation between us and them, seen through the lens of spatial bordering,” since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

In order to explain the practices of discursive construction of identity with its corollary “us” versus “them” dichotomy that have become the order of the day in Jos, we would first attempt to establish the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the nexus between bordering and security and how it relates to this context. We begin by providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the involvement of non-state actors in security maintenance. This allows the reader to appreciate the conditions that have prompted ordinary residents in Jos to engage in profiling the “other” and social-spatially demarcating their neighborhoods by means of border narratives and discursive construction of identities.

In his famous classical work, *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) canvassed for a social contract in which a potential *Bellum omnium contra omnes*, i.e. “war of all against all,” may be prevented through the exercise of force by a central authority. The Hobbesian model dreads the “state of nature,” characterized by civil disorder, and demands citizens to yield their propensities for violence to a sovereign, the state, who should monopolize the use of force in order to prevent the society from drifting towards anarchy. The Hobbesian model found some resonance with the conceptualization of the “state of exception” by the German philosopher, political theorist, jurist, and law professor, Carl Schmitt (1888–1985). Schmitt equated sovereignty with the degree to which the state mobilizes a condition of exception. Thus, for him, “the legal and constitutional order of the modern state must have the capacity to cast itself out through an act or decision of the executive, but also potentially through the actions of policing or soldiering agents, during a period necessary to defeat a deadly enemy” (Debrix and Barber 2009: 399). As Debrix and Barber further noted, the takeaway here

from the Hobbesian “mechanism of ensuring control over fear/danger” and the Schmittian “condition of sovereign exception” have elevated fear into the political realm and defined security over a territorialized space in terms of how the source of fear or danger is controlled.

Borders have become means by which the state territorializes fear and securitizes spaces. In the wake of 9/11, we have seen states increasingly employ the mechanisms of centralization of fear (Debrix and Barber 2009) through stronger securitization of borders (Moraczewska 2010, Popescu 2012). In tandem with this securitization of borders, the very paradigm of security has changed. Popescu (2012) identified the salient features of this change—a shift from national security primarily concerned with the defense of territorial sovereignty to an understanding of security as more connected with daily life. Consequently, the binary distinction between national security and personal security is altered—the former is no longer viewed as merely external concern, to be handled by the military, and the latter not just a domestic concern to be taken care of by the police. Thus, instead of a preoccupation with how to guard against external threats to state territory, securing everyday life has become part of the norm (Dillon 2007 cited in Popescu 2009). As a result, the border has become operationalized as a mechanism for the management of risks to everyday life through its presumed selective permeability, having the ability to prevent incursion by threats (or unwanted strangers) into securitized spaces (see Bosworth 2008). This development has been the subject of numerous studies on security sector reforms around the world in numerous fields, including political geography, peace and security studies, legal studies, and international relations. The privatization of security and border control has increased significantly since 9/11. Private contractors have exploited the growing opportunities offered by the increased securitization of borders including the application of surveillance devices such as biometric technologies (see Schreier and Caparini 2005, Popescu 2009).

The implication of the paradigm shift in the conception of security highlighted above is that risks are defined as “existential threats to the identity of a social group” and that of the security of everyday life of the individual, and a lot of “people feel they experience these threats without the mediation of the state” (Popescu 2012: 92). While classical approaches to national security, which are often obsessed with territorial sovereignty, operate on the basis of the centralization of fear, the new realities of society’s security have made fear dispersed and decentralized among populations. Consequently,

[...] borders have emerged as society’s security guarantors and have uncritically become part of everyday life.

However, borders are more than risk management sites. They are security constitutive as well. Border-making discourses play active parts in the production of societal and human security risks, for it is at the crossing of a border that someone or something can become a security risk. Othering continues to take

centre stage in these discourses, with the caveat that the Other has shifted from the neighboring nation to mobile phenomena. Put differently, the blurring of the inside/outside territorial distinction characteristic of modern states has not led to the disappearance of this border-based power practice. Borders continue to provide the basis for inside/outside differentiation with regard to group membership. What has changed is the type of territorial logic involved in Othering, which has moved now beyond fixity to include flexibility and multiplicity, that is, network membership. (Popescu 2012: 93)

The significance of the change highlighted by Popescu is that it underscores at once the twin processes of bordering and othering. As a potential threat is defined in terms of a mobile risk that seeks to invade a securitized space, discursive bordering lends itself to the strategy of spatial differentiation of insiders (us) and outsiders (them). These dynamics render themselves more intelligible when bordering processes are interrogated rather than the fixed lines of separation. Van Houtum and Naerssen (2002: 126) have, more than a decade ago, made a compelling observation in this regard:

Bordering processes do not begin or stop at demarcation lines in space. Borders do not represent a fixed point in space or time, rather they symbolise a social practice of spatial differentiation. Semantically, the word 'borders' unjustly assumes that spaces are fixed in space and time, and should rather be understood in terms of bordering, as an ongoing strategic effort to make difference in space among the movements of people, money and products.

Therefore, insiders and outsiders are not only differentiated at the port of entry, that is, at the point of crossing demarcating lines, but also often through the spatial construction of identities within a securitized space. Within a given space an individual or a group may be discursively cataloged as intruders and be treated as potential security risks for a society. Spatial perceptions play a mediating role in this process of othering. Glassner and Fahrer (2004) elaborate the concept of spatial perception. They note that it is shaped by cultural conditioning, values, attitudes, motivations, and goals. People develop cognitive maps of places which are imagery, idealized, and stereotyped. On the basis of such mental maps, they construct in-group and out-group identities. Social cognitive theories of stereotyping offer insights into this human enigma and the social construction of reality in relation to social and power relations in society (Augoustinos and Walker 1998). Sociologists have attempted to expand the concept of social stereotype beyond the experience of the individual to the level of social group. Susan Condor analyzed the relationship between social stereotypes and social identities. According to her, social stereotypes can be viewed as: Images formed of and formed by human beings; cultural constructs; shared beliefs; communicative acts; and implicated in social structure (Condor 1990). Due to these characteristics, stereotypes are able to serve the purpose of bordering and othering. The stereotypes built about a people

are represented by symbols and narratives for ease of differentiating in-group and out-group members, making it possible to entrench fear as well as inclusion and exclusion over a space.

In his lecture series, *Society Must Be Defended*, Michel Foucault advanced the concept of biopolitics. He drew a contrast between the biopolitics of fear in the modern state and the classical concept of the politics of sovereign exceptionality. While the politics of sovereign exceptionality is concerned with the fear and exercise of power over a political territory, biopolitics of fear, on the other hand, has shifted the focus from the political territory to the population. By means of governmentalized techniques and procedures concerned with the regulation of a population, fear is redistributed by means of a biopolitical arrangement (Debrix and Barder 2009). Central to the relationship between biopolitics and security is the fraught notion of biopower, a power that focuses on the population and its main preoccupation is to ensure proper governance of life in society. The applications of power across society have thus become increasingly a matter of dealing with differences in a population and not mere territories. To explain the relations of biopower to bordering we turn to Louise Amoore's work. According to Amoore (2006: 338), "Subject to biopower, the crossing of a physical border is only one crossing in a limitless series of journeys that traverse and inscribe the boundaries of safe/dangerous, civil/uncivil, legitimate traveler/illegal migrant." By virtue of biopower, the body thus has, in effect, become the carrier of border. Amoore contends that states have the wherewithal to establish and maintain border management security to extend the regulating of mobility into multiple aspects of daily life through biometric profiling of multiple encoded borders—social, legal, gendered, and racialized borders. This has become the growing trend since 9/11 and as a result of the global war on terror.

This chapter examines how ordinary citizens have exercised biopower in dealing with insecurity, engendered by ethno-religious segregation. The apparent failure of the state, either by omission, commission, or incapacity, to fulfill what Schmitt would call its sovereign prerogative by preventing pernicious cycles of ethno-religious violence, has given rise to social groups and individuals assuming the responsibility of securing the borders of their segregated, confined neighborhoods. With neither the legal right nor the wherewithal to enforce biometric checks on the movement of people into their fear-defined enclaves, the communities use symbols and discourses to construct their own identities as insiders and outsiders that are seen as constituting a security risk to everyday life. Hence, constructed attributes are assigned to the Other. Risk is, therefore, narrowly defined as a probability that threats will be kept at bay by disallowing anyone whose appearance, behavior, or mannerism invokes the attributized enemy image. As discussed in the following section, the conflict in Jos has shown that the process of border formation, which used to be top-down and at the territorial level of the state, is also exercisable by bottom-up agency at the grassroots level.

### The Making of a Segregated City

The city of Jos witnessed eruptions of large scale inter-communal violence in 2001, 2002, 2008, and 2010, which started as a clash between “indigenes” and “settlers” and metamorphosed into a protracted Muslim–Christian conflict (Higazi 2011: 2). Also, between 2010 and 2013 there were a number of terrorist bomb attacks targeting public spaces and churches by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram as well as guerilla style attacks on farming villages around the environs of Jos. The attacks by Boko Haram included the use of suicide bombers and planting of Improvised Explosive Devices in Christian neighborhoods. Generally, violence was geographically dispersed across the city and beyond. Some neighborhoods were not as severely affected as others. It also became clear that the possibility of escaping the carnage was a function of one’s location. Many victims of the early confrontations were vulnerable because they lived in neighborhoods where their group was a minority or got caught up in interface areas or common places. This observation does not ignore the reality that many people were killed or lost their homes and belongings even in areas they considered less vulnerable. A lot of people travelling through the city had also been killed because Jos is a main transit hub that links the country’s South and the North.

The first wave of segregation began in the aftermath of the 2001 crisis. There are suggestions that many residents moved out of neighborhoods they felt were unsafe to those they deemed safe (see Best and Rakodi 2011). With every episode of violence the city became increasingly bifurcated along a Christian–Muslim divide. Even though the conflict has ethnic and political dimensions, it appears that religion was the most potent identity for mobilizing people and creating the strongest sentiment. For example, the Pew Forum found that the majority of Nigerians—91 percent of Muslims and 76 percent of Christians—consider religion as the most important identity and more significant than their identity as Africans, Nigerians, or members of an ethnic group (Few Forum on Religion and Public Life 2006). As residents felt that the security forces were not able to prevent the violence and keep them safe, communal security initiatives began to emerge. Vigilante groups were sporadically established in different neighborhoods. These vigilante groups, comprising predominantly of youths and supervised and coordinated by elders,<sup>1</sup> mounted makeshift roadblocks along the perimeters of and all access roads to their neighborhoods. They searched cars and screened people coming into the area.

License plates are one way these vigilantes patrol neighborhoods for people they think do not belong. Because the plate carries the abbreviations of the registering State and also a Local Government Council, it has become fashionable for people to have plate numbers of their home states and Local Government Councils. Sometimes people prefer registration numbers of certain states or Local

1 Interview with a Muslim community leader, who was working with his Christian counterparts to monitor the vigilante group in Federal Low Cost area in Jos.

Government Councils even though they may not reside in those places. As car registration numbers become stereotyped as suggesting a person’s ethnic origin, Jos residents monitor the movement of cars within their neighborhoods by their plate numbers. Having a plate number associated with the Other’s state of origin when there is tension in the city may affect one’s movement across the segregated city or even put someone at risk of being lynched by a mob.

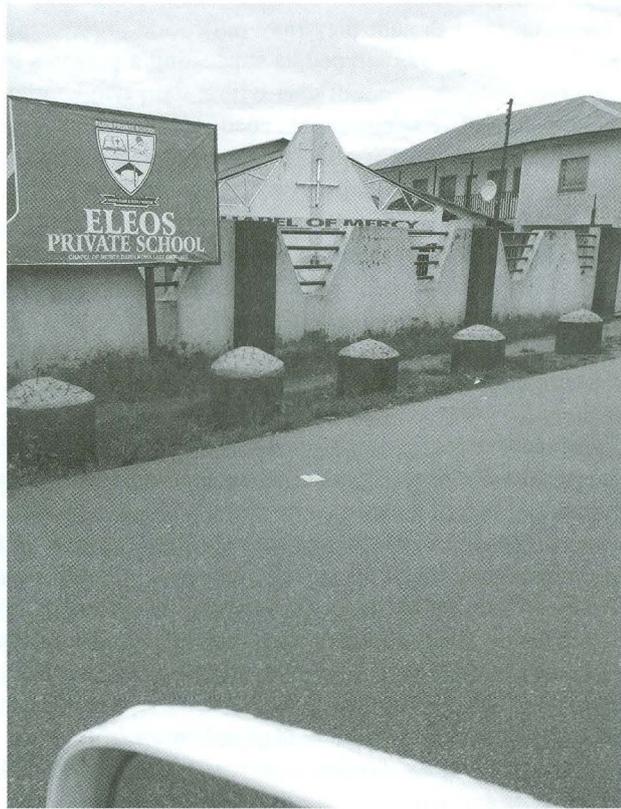
The activities of these vigilante groups remained very controversial. They may be mobilized as militia groups either for self-defense or for reprisal attacks (Best and Kemedi 2005). Best and Kemedi’s study provides great insights into the role of vigilante groups and militias in the Jos conflict. Although the police are making efforts to regulate the activities of vigilante groups<sup>2</sup> their spontaneous, informal, and scattered nature makes it difficult to enforce code of conduct on their operations.

The “borders” inadvertently established by the activities of the vigilante groups and the relocation of people to places they consider as safe havens for their religious communities determine the contours of the socio-spatial segregation that has occurred in the city. As fear continuously becomes part of the security architecture of the communities, the securing of the separating lines, usually road networks, between the conflicting parties was seen as insufficient. To compound this situation, the terror attacks against churches by the Islamist group Boko Haram<sup>3</sup> added another thick layer of fear on the people’s minds. Such attacks against churches were usually followed by reprisals against Muslims by irate Christian youths. Boko Haram has been engaged in an insurgency against the Nigerian State, killing Christians, bombing churches, killing fellow Muslims, and attacking security posts and schools in a bid to create an Islamic state in northern Nigeria (Amnesty International 2013). Increasingly, fear and mutual suspicion characterize the relationship between the Christian and Muslim communities. The two communities resorted to new processes of bordering to prevent possible infiltration of their space by the Other. Christians erected fences and gates, and mounted barriers against potential suicide bombers who might want to crash improvised explosive device loaded cars into churches to harm worshippers. Parking lots were designated in places far from churches. Muslims also erected barricades around their mosques especially during the Jummat prayers. Public buildings and private businesses took measures to secure their building through the use of security barriers and metal detectors.

Security discourses among residents began to shift the emphasis on borders to asking people to be vigilant and report any suspicious movements to the authorities

2 Inauguration of a vigilante group in Jos, *News Agency of Nigeria*, March 8, 2013. Available at: <http://www.nanngronline.com/picture/inauguration-of-a-vigilante-group-in-jos> [accessed: July 7, 2013].

3 The name Boko Haram means “Western education is an abomination” in Hausa language. The group’s real name is *Jamā’a Ahl al-sunnah li-da’wa wa al-jihād* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad).



**Figure 8.1** A church and school compound in Jos surrounded by barriers to prevent bombers from getting close

Note: Photo by Yakubu Joseph, September 2012.

or community leaders in their neighborhoods. This gave rise to profiling and othering across the segregated neighborhoods. For example, Nigeria's highest ranking security officer, the Chief of Defense Staff, Air Marshall Oluseyin Petinrin, on a visit to the troubled city of Jos, called on the residents to be vigilant and security-conscious.<sup>4</sup> Suspicion of any strange looking person may cause panic and irrational reaction from the community. For example, a mentally ill person was spotted in the Rantya area of the city and security agents were called in to apprehend him because residents thought he was a disguised terrorist. When his items were searched the security agents discovered that he was just a mentally ill

4 Petinrin asks Jos residents to be vigilant, *Daily Trust*, December 14, 2011. Available at: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/index.php/news-news/12002-petinrin-asks-jos-residents-to-be-vigilant> [accessed: July 7, 2013].

person picking up garbage. The fear of the Other remained a part of the daily life in Jos. A recent story carried by the *This Day* newspaper reported that a group calling itself Vigilant Democrats, based in Jos, raised an alarm and alerted residents of the restive city about the presence of 30 suspected foreign assassins brought in by the enemies of peace in the state to destabilize the city and to wreak havoc on citizens.<sup>5</sup>

### Symbolic Bordering and the Securitization of Identity Markers in Jos

In this section we analyze the different categories of symbolic and constructed identity markers employed in the spatial differentiation of insiders and outsiders across the city. As the mutual suspicions of the Other mediates the way people perceive security, bordering was adopted as a strategy of gatekeeping to prevent the invasion of "own" space by the Other. Consequently, the construction of identity through spatial differentiation became entrenched in the security discourses. The "life and death" determining question, "*Namu ne ko nasu ne?*"<sup>6</sup> (literally meaning "are you for us or for them?") used by both sides against strangers during the violence was normalized as part of everyday life. The symbolization and discursive construction of identities in space became well packed with stereotypes and derogatory expressions that continue to nurture demonizing perceptions and hostility towards the Other. Such spatial perceptions are accompanied by a mental mapping, that is, ordering and othering of the constructed markers of identity. Residents of Jos cast themselves into Christian and Muslim spatial identities based on constructed and taken for granted signifiers. In her work on the Jos conflict, Jana Krause (2011: 10) concluded that "Ten years of violent confrontations and the extreme brutality of 2010's massacre around Jos left many residents traumatized. Religious identities have become strongly polarized and one-sided narratives internalized." This is a challenge for co-existence, as Kuna (2005: 11–12) points out, the relationship between identity and religion is profound:

People's perceptions and definitions of themselves as adherents of specific religious experiences, in a sense 'in-groups,' against outsiders that do not share the same religious experience or 'out-groups,' and the way in which institutional systems provide each with readily available repertoires that make life that much meaningful are critical elements in the construction of identities. [...] To a very significant extent therefore, religion shapes identity not just in specifying physically recognizable 'signifiers,' but also by imposing notions of membership

5 "Group Raises the Alarm Over Suspected Foreign Assassins in Jos," *This Day*, April 28, 2013. Available at: <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/group-raises-the-alarm-over-suspected-foreign-assassins-in-jos/146148/> [accessed: July 7, 2013].

6 This is an expression in Hausa language. Hausa is the Lingua Franca spoken widely across northern Nigeria including Plateau State.

within a community of believers sharing common beliefs and values, whose lives are that much more organized with, than without religion.

The negative impact of this act of bordering is quite complex. Even for in-group members this is a dicey business because the Nigerian society has loose compartments of identities and is socio-culturally defined by its vast diversities. Therefore, the probability of mistaking people's identities in some instance is very high. Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups. Many of these cultural and linguistic groups exhibit a high degree of mutual intelligibility (cf. Ballard 1971).

Jos residents have adopted physical attributes as identity markers to establish spatial differentiation between those who belong to a place and those who do not. Physical attributes refer to how a person looks in terms how he or she is built, facial shape, skin color, hair type and style, height, and so on. Like racial profiling, residents of Jos try to differentiate their identities by assigning physical attributes to the Other. Hence, physical attributes are stereotyped and used as identity markers. A stranger bearing the appearance attributed to that typical of the Other is treated in an unwelcoming and hostile manner or even likely to be subjected to scrutiny and harassment within a neighborhood. This bordering practice of determining the religious identity of a person based on his or her physical attributes in order to spatially differentiate insiders and outsiders undermines the demographic realities of Nigeria. It is foolhardy to assume that someone's physical attributes would clearly reveal his or her ethnic identity, and one's ethnic identity would suggest a person's religious affiliation (cf. Best and Rakodi 2011: 23). Unfortunately, this fallacy has been imbibed by many residents, as a result of the politicization of fear, in order to close their spaces to the Other. There were reported instances of people harassed for mistaken physical attributes by members of their own religious group. Two persons interviewed during the study recounted how they were almost killed during clashes by members of their own religious group because of their physical attributes in neighborhoods where they were not known.

Language has also become a key marker of religious identity. For example, a middle age woman who met one of the authors (Joseph) in Jos at a car wash a few years ago asked him to serve as a translator between her and a cobbler (a mobile shoe repairer). After Joseph had successfully facilitated the transaction by translating between English and Hausa, the woman felt at home with him and began to share her personal experience directly. Although she belongs to the Igbo ethnic group from southeastern Nigeria, she was born in Jos and lived there all her life. That revelation instantly brought a flicker of shock and bewilderment into Joseph's mind. How on earth would someone born and brought up in Jos claim not to understand the Lingua Franca of the region? Impossible, Joseph thought in his mind. He politely asked her, "Ma, does it mean you understand Hausa language?" The lady replied, "Yes, I used to speak Hausa, but after my family lost everything in the crisis in Jos I decided never to speak that language again." The woman's refusal to speak Hausa after an experience of personal tragedy as a result of the ethno-religious crisis in Jos shows her perception about the language identity of

the Other. In many neighborhoods in Jos, the language one speaks is regarded as a clue of the person's religious identity. There is a backlash against Hausa, which is the Lingua Franca in the North including Plateau, from the conflict as demonstrated by the lady in the story. This phenomenon had been documented by Higazi (2011: 4): "There has been a reaction against this [use of Hausa as a Lingua Franca] in some areas, with a cultural resurgence that is encouraging the replacement of Hausa place names and ethnonyms with indigenous ones, and to a lesser extent the use of indigenous languages rather than Hausa." How a person speaks a language is also labeled. Speaking a language with the accent of a native speaker or a non-native speaker could make a person be identified with a particular ethnic group and by implication be specified a religious identity.

Clothing serves as a third cultural marker of religious identity to distinguish between insiders and outsiders across neighborhoods in Jos. It has been a trend in Nigeria for parents to dress their children in traditional ceremonial attire during festivals or to pose for a photograph on their birthdays. The photos of children dressed in such traditional outfits are a common part of interior decor of many homes. During recent field work, one of the authors (Joseph) visited a family in Jos. The family's living room was decorated with photo frames of important family milestones—such as the couple's wedding, naming ceremonies, and birthdays. Joseph remarked to his hosts that the photo of their ten-year-old son dressed in a legendary traditional dress was beautiful. The response from the parents was not a thank you, but a shocking revelation of the toll ethno-religious conflict has taken on culture, and on how stereotypes serve as the barbed wire of bordering. The parents said their little boy is not happy with those photographs and had refused to wear those dresses ever since he became aware of the othering, the polarization between indigenes and settlers, Christians and Muslims, engendered by conflict. For the young boy, that traditional dress is associated with the Other. The parents had to get rid of three pairs of that expensive garment because their boy had developed a dislike for wearing them.

Part of the cultural resurgence referred to by Higazi (2011) include the adoption of certain dress codes and rejection of others. Some ethnic groups have distinct traditional dressing, albeit many of them share common traditional dress. Since one's mode of dress can be associated with a particular religious affiliation, in the different neighborhoods of Jos residents maintain dressing codes acceptable to their groups. Moving with the "wrong" mode of dress in a neighborhood may attract a hostile reaction from residents. As residents remain "vigilant and security-conscious," their symbolic bordering "telescopes" can easily detect the strange appearance of the Other in their securitized space. As a result of this othering, both Christians and Muslims disguise with the mode of dress of the Other when they are entering the Other's territorialized neighborhoods or interface areas to avoid the risk of being harassed or even attacked.

The potency of the dress code as religious identity marker was further revealed when a top-ranking, female public servant described her encounter with

a powerful politician at a government office in Jos.<sup>7</sup> A meeting was scheduled and she was to be in attendance. While she was waiting for a quorum to be formed, the politician came in. As soon as he saw how she was dressed he remarked to the people he knew there, "Why are you guys parleying with the Taliban?" To contain the embarrassment, one of the persons there said to him, "Honorable, she is one of us." The lady has been part of many peace initiatives in the state and still maintains interactions with her Christian friends. Her family still lives in one of the very few mixed neighborhoods in Jos. During her daughter's wedding, she even made her Christian friend the "Mother of the Day," a big honor in Nigerian wedding celebrations. She felt extremely bad for being cast in a negative light simply because of the way she dressed. Many of these experiences are reported across the different neighborhoods in Jos.

Her story illustrates the fourth cultural marker of religious identity: an individual's network of friends. Bordering in the segregated neighborhoods of Jos has assumed a vicarious dimension. By associating with the Other, a person risks having his or her loyalty to one's religious affiliation questioned. Since the Other is considered an enemy to be kept at bay, any in-group members that associate with the enemy are seen as exposing their community to risk or betraying the hate the Other deserves. This othering practice, in which those who seek to cross the borders of hate and fear, and associate with fellow human beings across the conflict divide are viewed with suspicion and disapproval, has been very difficult for many people who can no longer visit their childhood friends, schoolmates, former neighbors, and colleagues at home. Friendship between men and women from different faiths is frowned upon. Prior to the crisis intermarriage was common between Christians and Muslims, but these days this can even trigger restiveness in the city. For example, there had been reported incidences of violence sparked by protest over a dating relationship between young men and young women from the two religions (Human Rights Watch 2005: 14).

The final key cultural markers of religious identity in Jos are names. Many Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria bear common names because of common ethnicity and the use of Hausa as a *Lingua Franca* throughout the region. Due to the common Abrahamic roots of Christianity and Islam, and the Arabic etymological foundations of many Hausa words, Hausa names of the prophets and ancient religious personalities were commonly used by Christians and Muslims. However, as a result of the conflict and the strong need each side feels for a clear differentiation of identities, Christians have developed a preference for the English versions of biblical names and words that have special meanings. Some of the names that have become trendy among Christians nowadays are Grace, Peace, Faith, Miracle, Divine, Favor, Promise, and Prevail. Muslims, on the other hand, prefer the Arabic and Hausa variants of common Arabic names including Mohammed, Aldulsalam, Fatima, Aisha, Mubarak, and Suleiman. Many daily

<sup>7</sup> This was a personal account given by the lady during an interview in her office in 2011 in Jos.

life decisions that are taken concerning individuals are mediated by how the individual's name is perceived as a Christian or Muslim. The newcomer seeking to rent an apartment, the young man or young lady applying for a job, and the vendor trying to sell a product are all subjected to name filtering to determine whether they deserve a favorable or negative response.

### Conclusion: Bordering and the Challenge of Restoring Peace in a Divided City

This chapter examined spatial segregation and the relationship between bordering and security during a period of conflict in the city of Jos. The inability of the state to prevent the recurrence of violence in the city for the past 12 years and the traumatic impact of the crisis on residents prompted communal initiatives of securitizing spaces across the ethno-religiously polarized city. As the fear of possible invasion by the Other spread throughout the city, both conflicting communities adjusted their conceptions of security from securing the borders of their territorialized social and spatial compartments from perceived external existential threats to spatially differentiating the movement of insiders and outsiders across and within socio-spatially constructed boundaries. This phenomenon has underscored the notion that borders are not simply the fixed demarcating lines between spaces (van Houtum and Naerssen 2002).

Constructed symbolic markers of identity are the "borders" that determine the spatial differentiation of insiders and outsiders along ethno-religious lines in Jos. License plates, language, names, clothing, physical attributes, and even networks of friends are used as cultural markers of religious identity to reinforce stereotypes and sustain an "enemy picture" of the Other. Although bordering and othering practices have helped to somewhat keep the belligerents asunder and to offer the communities the semblance of security without eliminating the underlying fear, at the same time they pose a serious challenge to the parallel efforts by many stakeholders to bridge the divide between the communities in order to bring about healing and reconciliation, and to build sustainable and durable peace in Plateau State. Therefore, in the context of this conflict, bordering is an ambivalent process. It is a two-edged sword that ostensibly reduces security risk to a social group or a territorialized space and at the same time produces socio-spatial outcomes such as stereotypes, hate, and adversarial posturing. Understanding these spatial and territorial dimensions of the Jos conflict will contribute to the development of an integrative security framework (cf. Newman 2008: 134) in which the subjective concerns of both sides would be merged into an inter-subjective goal of creating security for everyone.

The implication is that the nexus between securitization of spaces and peacebuilding must be adequately considered in designing a new architecture of peace in Jos. As this study has shown, bordering can be exercised by both state and non-state actors and can create social and material borders far away from

an international border line. In a situation of conflict, where the state has failed to demonstrate the capacity to tackle security threats effectively, belligerents and ordinary community members may resort to enacting socio-spatial barriers to their perceived enemies. These socio-culturally constructed and context specific socio-spatial barriers are arbitrary and fluid, rendering themselves to abuse and, even though they serve an immediate security need, they may hinder the prospect for reconciliation and peace. It is therefore important for scholars to pay attention to this phenomenon of symbolic and discursive bordering with its attendant othering consequences.

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## Chapter 9

# Border Wars: Narratives and Images of the US–Mexico Border on TV

Reece Jones

### The Cable Television Wars

In 2013, the United States cable television landscape is a place of war. Animal Planet has “Whale Wars,” which documents environmentalists’ efforts to disrupt Japanese whaling operations. There is a “Star Wars” remake on Spike TV. Spike TV also has another show called “The Deadliest Warrior” in which different teams of soldiers face off in competitions. Over on the Travel Channel, “Food Wars” serves up battles between different restaurants to make the best version of a particular dish. Episode titles include “Philly Cheese Steak War” and “Chicago Pizza War.” The Discovery Channel has “Weed Wars,” which documents the lives of people who run medical marijuana dispensaries. HGTV, the Home and Garden Network, has “Design Wars,” in which designers “battle it out” to design rooms in a house. A & E, formerly the Arts & Entertainment Channel, has four war shows. “Parking Wars” follows parking enforcement officers who give tickets to illegally parked cars. “Storage Wars” glorifies people who buy the contents of abandoned storage units at auctions. “Storage Wars Texas” just does it bigger, because everything is bigger in Texas. “Shipping Wars” follows independent truckers who ship odd-sized items. The Food Network probably wins the war of having the most unlikely war show with “Cupcake Wars.” The show’s website includes a graphic of a large pink cupcake with a tank gun protruding out of it. With all of these other vacuous uses of the term “war,” you cannot blame the National Geographic Channel for calling a show about US Border Patrol agents using helicopters, unmanned drones, and machine guns on the US–Mexican border “Border Wars.” Nevertheless, in a nod to the particularly American banalization of war, when the show is broadcast on most National Geographic stations around the world, “war” is dropped from the title and it becomes simply “The Border.”<sup>1</sup>

“Border Wars” was an immediate success and its first episode on 10 January 2010 was the highest rated premier ever for the National Geographic Channel. The show is in its fifth season and is still in production. “Border Wars” utilizes what appears to be a documentary style and follows the experiences of Border Patrol agents and Customs officers over several shifts on the job. The narratives and images in the

1 One exception is in Australia where it is called “Mexican Border Wars.”