



Death spot for Africans: A documentary Borders perception of the relationship between Arabs and Africans in Morocco's Ceuta and Melilla

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The cinema since its inception has been the primary means of factual identification, education, entertainment and enlightenment of social phenomenon as it presents life as it is. Especially the documentary film, representation of actuality has long been used to expose and educate society. Since the Almoravid's conquest of North Africa between the 9th and 11th century North Africa has become a haven for Arabs. As in a sense they started a systemic elimination of the original black population of Mauritania. The aim of this paper is to enlighten society of the European and Arabian perception of the African as a subhuman. The objectives are to create awareness among Africans that the Arabian occupation of North Africa is illegal, and must be reversed as those territories were occupied by force. Research approach is qualitative method while data will be collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the documentary *borders* by Johnny Harris while the secondary will be gathered from books, journal articles and internet sources. The theoretical framework is dialectical materialism, and post-colonial theory. The findings reveal that Arabs treat Africans as sub-humans while they regard their fellow Arabs more than Africans in Africa. This is evidenced as Syrian and other Arabian refugees are allowed free passage to Europe through Ceuta and Melilla. Thus to grasp a clearer picture of the issues the documentary will be used as the primary source of data to portray the real situation of the most fortified territories restricting Africans. The recommendations are that the Arabian occupation of North Africa is illegal as necessitated by European and Arab policies towards the Africans. Thus Arabs must leave Africa for Arabia.

Keywords: Cueta, Melilla, documentary, migration.

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Introduction

From the aeon man has always desired to dominate his fellow man and subject him to perpetual servitude and slavery because of recriminatory greed. For many years the sub-Saharan region of Africa has experienced oppressive governments, dictatorship, and ethnic cleansing from, Somalia to Western

Sahara. This has led to the formation of alliance upon alliance as evidenced from classical times in the prosecution of the Peloponnesian wars, the war of Troy, Punic wars, the European civil wars, to the First and Second world wars up to the Cold war, all fought in man's quest to control natural resources, trade routes and subject his fellow man to servitude and slavery.



This has resulted in a wave of migration and slavery from aeon of man's existence here on earth. (Ikiroma-Owiye,2019). The present wave of migration has resulted from European quest to control mineral resources and their trade routes across Africa and the Middle East and the Iranian desire to Islamise Africa. Hence a proliferation of militant bands of terrorists in sub Saharan African countries. African trade routes to Europe in medieval time's Morocco have now turned to the most prominent route of migrating to Europe from the Middle East, Asia and Africa to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. (Ikiroma-Owiye, 2019)The cause of this phenomenon is Western Europe's desire to create the most fortified border in the world to stop Africans from entering Europe.

Since the 14th century Ceuta and Melilla have become Europe's most fortified border and have been Spanish colonies or enclaves in Morocco. Morocco in North Africa has been a major trading post between Europe and Africa in medieval times which today have become the gate way to Europe by sub-Saharan Africans, and Arab migrants from Syria and other war ravaged territories like Lebanon in the Middle East. Film is one of the most important communication tools that spur the development of the human race. The reason for this is because of its power to critically evaluate the follies of man through the illusion of moving images.

Ceuta and Mellila

The Historical Foundation: From Ancient Outposts to Sovereign Enclaves

The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla stand as brutal, anachronistic monuments to the enduring logic of colonial violence in a supposedly postcolonial age. They are not simply cities; they are intricate mechanisms of power that operate through a lethal trinity of economic strangulation, state-manufactured security chaos, and visceral, murderous racism. By systematically dismantling the cross-border livelihoods of tens of thousands of Moroccans and manufacturing a permanent crisis that

empowers both state-level blackmail and criminal profiteers, the enclaves actively produce the underdevelopment and instability they purport to be protecting against. The grim history from the shootings of 2005 to the massacre of 2022 reveals a consistent, unbroken policy: the externalization of border control to Moroccan forces has allowed the European Union to construct a sophisticated system of corrugated deniability, where mass death is outsourced and budgeted for, thus transforming a lethal force against unarmed civilians into a nauseous spectator sport captured only by the grainy footage of activists' with their phones. For contemporary global society, the enduring lesson of Ceuta and Melilla is a damning moral indictment on Morocco and the European Union. The documentary *Borders* exposes the foundational lie of the liberal international order: that borders are merely neutral, administrative lines rather than active, violent mechanisms for the reproduction of global wealth and racial hierarchy. So long as the affluence of "Fortress Europe" in Morocco is guaranteed by walls that necessitate the calculated impoverishment of a regional economy and the systematic death of racialized Africans at its gates, the continent and indeed, the human conscience will remain trapped in a crisis that is not about migration, but about a profound and terrifying deficit of shared humanity. The ultimate "documentary" of these cities is inscribed not in film, but etched in the unmarked mass graves and onto the souls of those who perish silently, namelessly, on African soil, at the very threshold of a prosperity they are allowed to see but never, ever to enter. Thus to understand why Ceuta and Melilla exist as Spanish territories on mainland Africa, one must look back long before the modern nation-states of Spain or Morocco were formed. Strategically positioned on the Mediterranean coast, these territories have served as pivotal maritime gateways for millennia. Ancient Beginnings: Melilla was originally founded by the Phoenicians as Rousadir, a vital trading post linking ancient maritime networks to the Strait of Gibraltar.

Over the centuries, control of these coastal points shifted between the Carthaginians, the Roman Empire, the Byzantines, and various Islamic dynasties, including the Umayyads and the Berbers.

Through the Spanish conquests sprains presence in Melilla dates back to 1497, when Don Pedro de Estonian claimed the city for the Crown of Castile following the conclusion of the Reconquista on the Iberian Peninsula. Ceuta, initially conquered by the Portuguese in 1415, passed into Spanish hands in 1640 when its local assembly voted to maintain allegiance to King Philip IV of Spain after Portugal split from the Iberian Union. While in a sense historically from aeon these border fortress cities were defined by military might. They were acquired from Africa by conquest. A famous historical precedent dictates how Melilla's physical boundary with Morocco was definitively drawn in the 19th century: Spanish forces fired cannons from the fortress walls, and the maximum trajectory of the cannonballs (roughly 3,000 meters out) established the official perimeter of Spanish sovereignty. While contemporarily Spain has governed these enclaves for over five centuries long before the independent Kingdom of Morocco was formalized in 1956 Madrid maintains that Ceuta and Melilla are integral, non-negotiable, autonomous cities of Spain. Conversely, Rabat officially classifies them as "occupied territories" and remnants of European colonialism, viewing them as geographical anomalies that belong within Morocco's borders.

These are African territories which were annexed during the 14th century as major Spanish trading posts, in North Africa. Ceuta and Melilla have become Spanish territories in Morocco. There has been trading activities between North Africa and Europe from medieval times without boundary or limitation. Due to imperialist policies in Africa poverty has become the norm hence the quest for greener pastures by Africans in Europe.. The easiest way for Africans to migrate to Europe was

through Ceuta and Melilla. But since the Arabian conquest of North Africa sub-Saharan Africans have been denied the relationship they had with Europeans as Arabs have taken over the middle man position of black Africans creating a barrier denying African an easy passage to Europe as experienced by other Arab nations this s primary duty of the Arabian rulers of Morocco.

Documentary

The documentary film since the inception of film as socio-cultural medium have served as a means of symbolic interaction suited in making deep psychological insights into societal reasoning influencing the thought processes of the producing and consuming society (Ikiroma-Owiye, 2014). As a popular mode of entertainment in the 20th century, the documentary film has asserted the greatest influence in documenting, exposing, enlightening and educating society, thus in a sense influencing the psychology of society as it penetrates all aspects of cultural life by revealing the conviviality and abnormalities in human relationships in developing societies. Renov aptly states that

The result of the documentary is the elaboration of a whole aesthetic of objectivity and the development of comprehensive technologies of promoting what is right and what is wrong in the world, and by extension what is 'honest' and what is 'manipulative' in documentary (94).

Renov, here in a sense tells us that the documentary have the ability to capture truth on the run and can actually if well put in use lead to the authenticity of truth that is real situation of things in any society and at any given time. But when manipulated to suit the whims and caprices of the ruling class in governance it gives an illusion of reality. Regardless of the

events associated with personalities presented or ideological forces which films are aligned to?

Almost exclusively American commercial documentaries enact polemical dialogues both ... with previous nonfiction styles and with reigning codes of dominant cinema... technology, as a mode of production, as the quality of instruments, derives and contrivances which characterize the machine age is thus at the same time a mode of organizing and perpetuating (charging) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behaviour patterns, and instrument for control and domination (114).

In contemporary societies a well-made documentary is the surest means of perceiving the real social phenomenon. Because the documentary it is truthful and factual, in a sense also it is a tool that can be manipulated by imperialist governments, despots, and multinationals to create an illusion of reality in the minds of the populace in developing and developed countries. This is because the relationship between the documentary filmmaker and the society in which he makes his films are direct. Because of the documentary filmmaker, reflects the direct relationship between the Moroccan authority's African migrants, Arab migrants and the European Union.

Thus it is with regards to this documentary's *borders* social status in educating and enlightening society on the atrocities committed by the Moroccan government and the European Union against African seeking greener pastures in Europe. Thus we see the relevance of the documentary filmmakers ability lying in his ability to penetrate the forests where these migrants are camped using his art in revealing the living conditions of the migrants and their various attempts at scaling the five tired fences

created by the Moroccan government and funded by the European union. In a sense Renov observes 'documentary'/film ... was seen to offer social service in dealing with problems and issues of national or international' importance and at the same time ... offered itself as an aesthetic object (33). Thus in a sense exposing the living conditions of Africans in an Arab ruled north African country.

Discussion and findings

The quest to migrate to Europe through Ceuta and Melilla to Spain became an important thing for sub Saharan Africans seeking to run away from bad governance, mass killings by Islamic militants, herdsmen, bandits and poverty. This is because once you set your foot on Ceuta and Melilla the two Spanish territories in Morocco you're in European territory and thus can be granted asylum. Once you set foot on Melilla you are in European territory and thus an asylum seeker.

External fortresses in Africa and racial segregation

This domestic harmony stands in stark contrast to the border fortifications that isolate the cities from the rest of Africa, especially the sub-Saharan Africans that have managed to reach morocco. Morocco as the European Union's only land borders with the African continent, Ceuta and Melilla are enclosed by multi-layered, high-tech five (5) layered perimeter fences. These barriers are heavily patrolled by the Spanish Guardia Civil and Moroccan security forces, featuring advanced thermal imaging, motion sensors, and on the Moroccan side fences laced with razor-sharp blades. This border creates a stark manifestation of global class divide, racial discrimination and institutional xenophobia: To ascertain the relationships of the Moroccan government and the European Union to migrant Africans this documentary *borders* has revealed how Africans are treated sub humanly by Moroccan Arabs, while Arabs from Syria and elsewhere are treated fairly in an African country by non-

African's as who got where they are by force experienced in the documentary. Judith Sunderland human rights watch 'It is hardly to say that any sub-Saharan African can be able to do that.'

These dystopian Borders, visually captured by the documentary *borders* shows the disparity in living showing where wealthy European residents play golf on a pristine, green country club course directly adjacent to the towering, rusted border fences where sub-Saharan migrants hang suspended, attempting to cross in to Europe.. The escalation of border enforcement reached a lethal peak during events like the Melilla tragedy, where a mass border-crossing attempt resulted in the deaths of dozens of African migrants due to crushing, asphyxiation, and heavy-handed policing by border authorities. Human rights organizations like Amnesty International have heavily criticized both Spain and Morocco for illegal "pushbacks" (returning migrants without due process) and failing to preserve human rights at the border. Thus we see according to the Moroccans do many respects a lot of sprains dirty work, by preventing African migration. ... It is not an exaggerations that for migrants to succeed they engage in scaling fences, hiding in vehicles or taking to the sea. Humanitarian Violations of Africans as compared to Syrians Arabs from Asia. : The enclaves have become flashpoints for severe migrant crises. And deaths, because desperate refugees from across sub-Saharan Africa flee bad governance war, climate devastation, and economic ruin to attempt mass storming's of the fences, hoping to touch down in Melilla or Ceuta European soil in Africa to claim asylum.

Conclusion

The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla stand as a clear representation of the brutal Arabian and European anachronistic monuments of colonial violence on the African throuth the ages exacerbating in this postcolonial age. They are not simply cities; they are intricate mechanisms of power that had operated for ages as major economic hubs

between Africa and Europe prior to the Arabian conquest of North Africa. This by creating this border in Africa they have succeeded in dismantling the cross-border livelihoods of tens of thousands of Moroccans. Especially Moroccan forces allowing the European Union to construct a sophisticated system of plausible deniability, five (5) tired fence where mass death is outsourced transforming a lethal force against unarmed civilians into a grim spectator sport captured only by human minds to expose the gravity of Arabian and European inhumanity to Africans in African soil. for contemporary global audience. The enduring lesson of Ceuta and Melilla is a damning moral indictment for Moroccans and the European Union. As the documentary *borders* exposes the foundational lie of the liberal international order: that borders are merely neutral, administrative lines rather than active, violent mechanisms for the reproduction of global wealth and racial hierarchy. So long as the affluence of "Fortress Europe" is guaranteed by walls that necessitate the calculated impoverishment of a regional economy and the systematic death of radicalized Africans at its gates, the continent and indeed, the human conscience will remain trapped in a crisis that is not about migration, but about a profound and terrifying deficit of shared humanity. The ultimate "documentary" *borders* of these cities has inscribed not as a documentary film, but an international document that have marked mass graves of Africans onto the souls of those who perish silently, namelessly, on African soil, at the very threshold of a prosperity they are allowed to see but never allowed to participate in..

Recommendations

This paper have taken a cursory look at how this documentary and how it has exposed the treatment of black Africans trying to find greener pastures in the Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla their easiest gateway to Europe. By creating these ideals there is a need for African countries, the European union and the united nations to investigate alternatives to existing social problems and issues, especially

the area of the delivery of democratic dividends like social amenities and relationship between governments and their citizens and multi nationals and host communities, in African countries to curb the influx of migrants to the European union. These territories were acquired by force. The sage Milford Okilo said “whatever you get by force a greater force would take it from you.” (Personal communication 2003)

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