

Boundary-Making and Pastoral Conflict along the Kenyan–Ethiopian Borderlands

John Galaty

Abstract: Boundaries are technologies of power and knowledge that shape spatial and social realities and our understandings of them. This article examines the effects of boundary-making between Kenya and Ethiopia, and investigates the effects of borders on states of peace and conflict among Turkana, Samburu, Borana, Gabra, and Dassanetch of northern Kenya. If borders divide people, people benefit nonetheless from the environmental, social, and political entropy that borders generate by using the energy of spatial differences to advance their own individual and collective life projects.

Résumé: Les délimitations sont des technologies de pouvoir et de connaissances qui façonnent les réalités spatiales et sociales et la compréhension que nous en avons. Cet article examine les effets de la création de délimitations entre le Kenya et l’Ethiopie, et étudie les effets des frontières sur les états de paix et de conflit entre les Turkana, les Samburu, les Borana, les Gabra et les Dassanetch du nord du Kenya. Si les frontières divisent les gens, les gens bénéficient néanmoins de l’entropie environnementale, sociale, et politique que les frontières génèrent en utilisant l’énergie des différences spatiales pour faire avancer leurs propres projets de vie individuels et collectifs.

African Studies Review, Volume 59, Number 1 (April 2016), pp. 97–122

John Galaty is a professor of anthropology at McGill University. He has served as chair of anthropology, associate dean and interim dean in the Faculty of Arts, associate dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and president of the McGill Association of University Teachers. He participated in the formation of the Commission on Nomadic Peoples and was its first secretary, and served as president of the Canadian Association of African Studies. His research on property transitions, land conflicts, and conservation among pastoralists of East Africa has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Fonds de Recherche du Québec–Société et Culture, and the International Development Research Centre. He is currently codirector of a team research project, pursued with NGO and CBO partners on the borderlands of Kenya and Tanzania, called “The Institutional Canopy of Conservation.” E-mail: john.galaty@mcgill.ca

Keywords: Boundaries; pastoralism; conflict; warfare; East Africa; northern Kenya; rangelands

A border indicates less a dividing line between two homogenous sets
than an intensification of crossborder traffic between foreign elements
—Bruno Latour

Introduction

The demarcation of territory is a state-making strategy used by governments to separate peoples and fix them in place. Scott (1998) describes sedentarization and the forging of boundaries as key strategies used by states to make populations “legible,” that is, visible to and controllable by the technologies and forces of order. To be “read,” people must be fixed in place like inscriptions on a page, but they also must—in some critical sense—yield up to an observer what they are all about; they must be made comprehensible. Merry and Coutin (2014:1) propose that technologies of knowledge serve “both to assess and to shape social realities,” and as a result systems of knowledge tend to be “part of conflicts rather than extrinsic to them.” Boundaries represent technologies of both power and knowledge that shape spatial aspects of social realities and our understandings of them. Settling people and fencing them in or out stabilize our sense of who they are, partly eliminating the cultivated ambiguities that surround most people—the more so mobile peoples whom states view as being neither here nor there. One rationale for specifying property rights has been the claim that borders resolve, mitigate, or foreclose conflict by eliminating disruptive ambiguities in the allocation and use of resources.¹ But what have been the actual effects of forging boundaries on relations between mobile pastoral groups, and how do they use boundaries in pursuing their own endeavors?

This article examines the effects of borders and boundary-making on relations of peace, conflict, and land use in pastoral territories in northern Kenya and, to a lesser extent, southern Ethiopia, including the international border between the two countries and district, provincial, and state borders within each country. It investigates the social ramifications of boundary-making between and within Kenya and Ethiopia in the early twentieth century, which, when the international border was drawn—not with a line sensitive to ethnicity, land use, and topography but with a ruler—split communities between the two nations. In conventional development thinking, the decline of mobility in favor of fixity and the movement from ambiguity to specificity capture aspects of inexorable historical progress.² A world defined by places, holdings, and conceptual clarity does seem brightly attractive. But in the vast regions peopled by nomads, who are in motion and engaged in continuous negotiation, paths between places, things shared,

and proverbial rather than literal truths may provide better terms for charting effective lives. What has been the outcome of increasingly fine-grained demarcations for pastoral lands and lives?

Arguably, the enforcement of boundaries is not attuned to mobile sensibilities. The postmodern condition of refugee flows, illegal immigration, transnational black markets, frenetic travel, expanded tourism, and rapid communication via new forms of electronic media is characterized by mobility and fluidity. Among other critiques of society's (and social sciences') overemphasis on values of fixity, boundedness, and rootedness (see Malkki 1997; Gupta & Ferguson 1997; Appadurai 1996), some theorists speak of the new nomadism or even "nomadology" (Deleuze & Guattari 1986). Emphasizing steady states favors values of equilibrium, and interest in structure engenders affection for bounded forms. It is argued, therefore, that a focus on sedentary states cultivates the values of "grounding" in settled soil, marginalizing experiences of flux and displacement that are part of the contemporary condition. If borders are seen as porous and unstable markers of territory, property, and identity, it is a small step to view borders as ineffectual, undesirable, or even iniquitous by imposing arbitrary constraints on their subjects. And if effective borders have never really existed, perhaps—from a transnationalist perspective—we should simply give up on them. If people are now in flux and fluidity, perhaps they have always been so, and borders should slide into irrelevance, as is suggested by Mbembe's (1999) creative work on Africa's axes of connectivity that slice across conventional regions and states—the strong influence of the two northern and southern poles on the rest of the continent, the diagonal line defining an axis of conflict from the Horn through central Africa, and the new peripheral/central forms of resource exploitation, from oil along the West African coast to diamonds and ores found throughout the center of the continent. An axis he might also have discussed would trace zones of aridity across the Sahel and Sahara and southward through the Horn of Africa and beyond, within which national frontiers are especially difficult to monitor and easy to transgress by the mobile peoples who make careers out of accessing resources within diverse borderlands. Arab and Zaghawa pastoralists move from eastern Chad into the contested lands of Dar Fur (Mamdani 2009; Jánszky & Jungstand 2013); Anywaa and Nuer from South Sudan move into the Gambella region of western Ethiopia (Dereje 2011); Somalis cross borders with the statelike entities found in what was once the unified country of Somalia (Somalia, Puntland, and Somaliland), as well as with Djibouti, the Somali National Regional State in Ethiopia, and the Northeast Province of Kenya (Dereje & Hoehne 2010). Borana, Gabra, Dassanetch, and Garre cross the Kenyan–Ethiopian border (Schlee & Shongolo 2012); Pokot, Turkana, and Karamojong cross the Kenyan–Ugandan border (Eaton 2008; Gray 2009); and Maasai cross the Kenyan–Tanzanian border (Spear & Waller 1993; Homewood et al. 2009; Galaty 2013).³

Against the transnationalist metaphysic referred to above stands a realist analysis which sees borderland processes as important because frontiers are

material facts that both shape social and economic realities and are countered by them, as people invent strategies for avoiding, subverting, and profiting from boundaries (Wilson & Donnan 1998). In fact, most of the world's people spend their lives close to where they were born, and only tangentially experience the fluid realities that transnationalism celebrates (Friedman 1997; Escobar 2001). Rising out of this context, a number of questions can be posed: how effective are boundaries, what social impacts do they have, how do people make use of them, and is their strict demarcation and enforcement possible, or even desirable? Against the grain of commonly held views that, especially in Africa, boundaries have placed undesirable constraints and limits on interactions between neighbors who for arbitrary reasons have been placed on opposite sides of frontiers, Dereje and Hoehne (2010) emphasize the opportunities offered to residents of borderlands by often permeable borders, which make them into "resources" for the pursuit or evasion of violence and conflict, and for smuggling, black market, or legitimate trade between regions with different market and currency regimes. Barth (2000:17) has pointed out that political boundaries are rich in "affordances," "fields of opportunities for mediators, traders, and middlepersons of all kinds," while Nugent (2002) proposes that links across borders having different national identities are of value, making transborder ethnic ties an asset rather than the source of loss.

Kopytoff's (1989) pathbreaking work proposes that sparsely populated areas become frontiers because their populations can offer little political resistance to intrusion from the outside. Building on that insight, one can observe that dry lowland areas of Africa, invariably occupied by pastoral communities, are the regions most often transected by borders, many of which, in the Greater Horn of Africa and elsewhere, are roughly equidistant from wetter highland sites of intensive agriculture where capital cities were created. With regard to political geography, borders were originally "borderlands" inhabited by herders and only later sites of fixed boundaries that divided these communities. Elsewhere (Galaty 1999) I propose an entropic theory of borders, which suggests that out of a nondifferentiated physical and social topography a frontier creates a system of political and economic "differences"—sources less of stasis (which, in principle, borders are intended to establish) but of energy and motion. On opposite sides of a border, land use and state policies invariably differ, creating greater or lesser, richer or poorer amounts of pasture, stronger or weaker currencies, more or less attractive market conditions, greater or lesser security or insecurity, conflict or harmony. Although the energetics of borders may seem to constrain mobility, or intrinsically try to do so, in fact they paradoxically create incentives to do the opposite—that is, they encourage people to move back and forth to profit from the social, environmental, and financial differences that emerge within the wider "zonal character of the frontiers" (Sahlins 1989:4). Frontiers of states may provide us with quintessential borderland processes, but similar entropic dynamics occur at all scales of delimiting boundaries.

This article examines the effects of, and creative responses to, boundary-making in the borderlands of Kenya and Ethiopia, from the demarcation of the international Kenyan–Ethiopian frontier to the internal boundaries of districts, provinces, and ethnic states. Does the allocation to a single party of resources once shared across a once continuous geographical space result in conflict avoidance through diminishing political ambiguity or in heightened conflict if precedents and customary rights challenge the legitimacy of a formalized boundary? Are new opportunities afforded when a frontier takes hold as a material fact and differences in territoriality, identity, and property emerge, and do these new differences and the political energy generated necessarily entail some gains and some losses to different people?

Field research on conflict in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia was carried out between 1997 and 2004 under the auspices of two funded projects, with further monitoring of the region and periodic visits continuing up to the present day. Profiles of cases of conflict were built up through interviews with especially informed individuals, members of peace committees, administrators, and perpetrators of raids or armed conflict from among the Samburu, Ariaal, Borana, Gabra, and Dassanetch communities in Samburu and Marsabit Districts and southern Ethiopia. Project assistants helped to make contact with interviewees and to carry out interviews in and across the many languages used in the region.⁴ In between field visits, they prepared conflict reports focused on key sites of strife, most importantly the Samburu–Borana front from Isiolo north to Archer's Post, Lerrata, and Merille, the Rendille–Borana front along eastern Marsabit Mountain near Songa, along the contentious area in western Samburu District between Samburu and Turkana (and sometimes Pokot) near Baragoi, and between Gabra and Dassanetch from Kobi Fora north to Ileret in northwestern Marsabit District. Wherever possible I drew accounts from several distinct sources and opposing sides on sites and episodes of conflict. To gain a historical perspective I reviewed archival materials on Samburu and Marsabit Districts, and consulted published information and both printed and online journalistic sources on an ongoing basis.

From the colonial period to the present, conflicts in the pastoral zone of northern Kenya and Uganda and southern Ethiopia and Sudan have been a source of unease on the part of governments, though it is unclear whether, if we control for population, episodes of violence have increased in number or intensity over the past two decades, or whether the incidence of specifically pastoral violence is greater than that experienced in more heavily populated highland areas or in expanding urban areas (Salvadori 2000; Witsenburg & Adano 2009). Nonetheless, violent conflict between pastoral communities is a source of concern among themselves and by other inhabitants of semiarid regions largely dedicated to mobile livestock raising, including security forces that are often engaged in preventing or responding to conflict (Schlee 2008). Accusations that governments, by ignoring underlying problems, fail to prevent violence and bring the sort of civil order to pastoral regions that citizenship should promise—thus

highlighting the need for mobilizing security forces in sufficient numbers and in a timely fashion (Salvadori 2000)—are met with accusations, not least by the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, about the “backwardness and poverty” of, and ingrained nature of violence in, pastoral cultures, which place the blame on the communities of raiders and warriors themselves (Zenawi 2011).

Several other lines of explanation seek the causes of conflict in other material or social factors. One approach attributes conflict to the dynamics of population growth and competition for scarce resources, a position associated with Homer-Dixon (1999), who nonetheless points to the need to understand the role of contextual factors in explaining the relationship between environmental scarcity and violence, in particular why conditions of scarcity and population pressure so often do *not* result in violence. A common variant of this “scarcity” hypothesis proposes that conflict is stimulated by decreasing rainfall evolving into prolonged drought, which induces scarcity of grazing land and water (Butler & Gates 2012; Theisen 2012). In fact, however, several studies have demonstrated that pastoral conflict is correlated not with the dry season or drought but with the rainy season, when the stress of moving livestock to increasingly dispersed resources is reduced, making it possible for raiders to assemble and engage in conflict without evading their herding responsibilities (Witsenburg & Adano 2009:520, 528). A second analytical perspective emphasizes that conflict rises out of the proliferation of automatic weapons in an area, a failure by governments to provide security in semiarid pastoral regions, especially in the borderlands, and indeed the conspiring of government security forces with local pastoralists in cattle rustling for commercial trade (Eaton 2008; Salvadori 2000). A third and long-standing strand of thinking attributes violence to elements of pastoralist culture and “tradition,” with emphasis given to values instilled in youths—often embedded in age-set systems and actualized during the ritualized life-cycle progression—such as “respect,” bravery, endurance, and earning a “name” through violence, killing, and livestock raiding (Witsenburg & Adano 2009:529; see also Fukui & Markakis 1994; Witsenburg & Adano 2007). This theme has been most fully developed regarding communities in southern Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa (Strecker & Lydall 2004; Gabbert & Thubauville 2010; Hoehne & Luling 2010; Gabbert 2012).

Focused specifically on the development of peace-making groups funded by civil society organizations that operate along the Kenyan–Ugandan border, Eaton (2008) warns us against analytical attempts to explain episodes of conflict in terms of such fundamental factors as resource scarcity and population growth, the availability of arms, the presence and absence of security, and so on:

The focus on the “root causes” of violence is the reason why peace groups have not enjoyed much success. It should now be apparent that efforts to explain raiding through abstract concepts such as resource scarcity, poverty, and small arms proliferation are incomplete, and that peace work specifically targeting those factors is unlikely to succeed. (2008:110)

Rather, Eaton proposes developing more fine-grained agent-oriented accounts that allow participants in a conflict to explain themselves in terms that have local salience and significance. It might be argued, however, that what the micro-account gains through local plausibility it potentially loses in the broader political, historical, and geographic context. Clearly the most adequate accounts addressing the complexity of social action consider the convergence of factors that have nonmechanistic effects at varied levels and scales. Population increase may theoretically underlie conflict, but it may equally be absorbed through urban migration and an expanding informal economy (Galaty 2013); given conditions of drought or poverty, herders may conflict over scarce resources, but they often find solutions to common problems through cooperation or at least mutually choreographed avoidance of violence that would benefit neither party; and arms can be used to mitigate and enforce forbearance rather than to propagate local violence. Resource availability and relative scarcity, population dynamics, and the distribution of traditional weapons and industrial arms may occasion violence, but they do not inevitably do so. A customary institutional armature of age-set institutions, values capable of erupting in strife, social motivations regarding selfhood, and collective identities expressed in terms of pride, “face,” jealousy, and desire for revenge, while standing ready for mobilization, may in fact be kept under control (Gabbert 2012).

Notwithstanding the potential efficacy of these and other factors, this study focuses on the spatial configuration of borders and borderlands as geographical features that bear on episodes of conflict that arise near frontiers, a convergence noted by Witsenburg and Zaal (2012) and Butler and Gates (2012). I propose that we consider “borderlands” as representing a zone contiguous to a formal border where, in Bruno Latour’s (2013:30) words, there is an “intensification of crossborder traffic between foreign elements,” a space where the differences implied by this traffic are mobilized and negotiated. The next section will discuss the historical process of demarcating the international border between Kenya and Ethiopia and cross-border interactions and dynamics of conflict along the international borderlands from the colonial period to the present. Then, focusing on intrastate provincial or district/county (in Kenya) or internal “state” borders (in Ethiopia), the discussion will shift to pastoral conflicts that hinge on the demarcation of administrative divisions that were and are intended to provide ethnic communities with territories of their own, but at the cost of unraveling social linkages between them that have considerable historical depth. Interpreting the ethnographic and historical evidence presented, the article asks what the effects of borders are on states of peace and conflict.

The Kenyan–Ethiopian Frontier

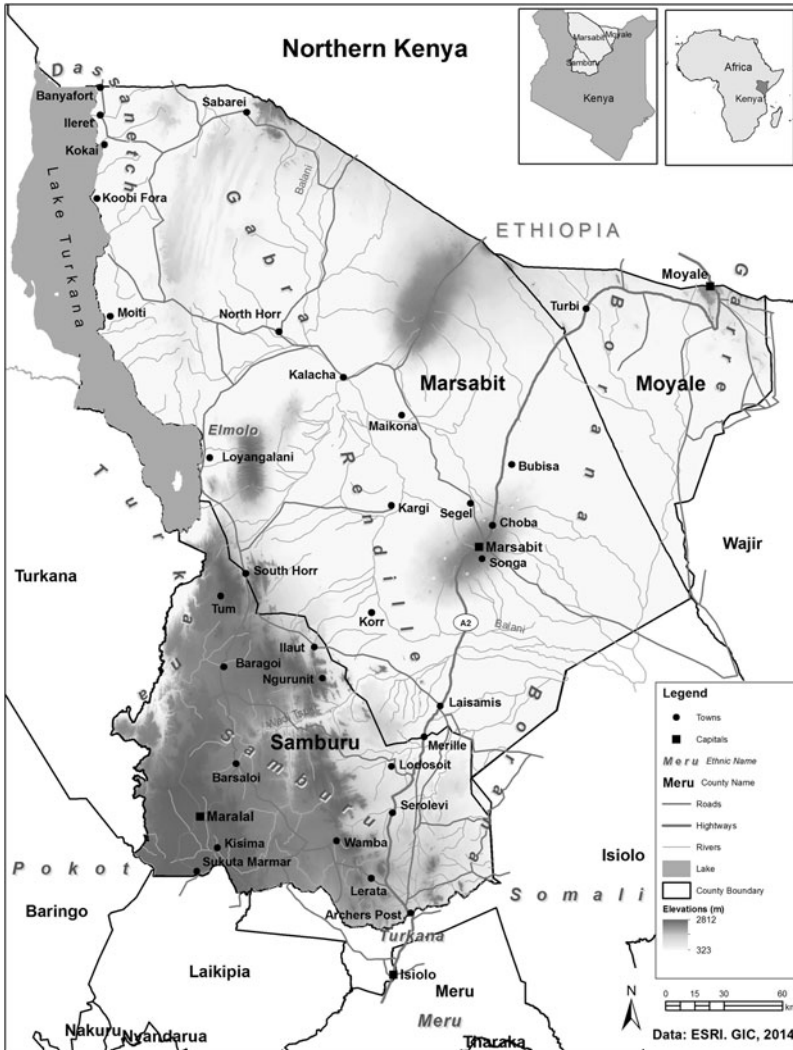
Demarcating States, Dividing Peoples

The Kenyan–Ethiopian frontier is especially pertinent to the general question of borders because of the relative lateness of its demarcation, its permeability,

and the ineptitude of its enforcement, factors that have recurrently brought the efficaciousness of the border into question (see Galaty 1999, 2005a, 2005b).⁵ The border between the Abyssinian Empire and British East Africa was the last to be demarcated in Eastern Africa (see map). Numerous ethnic communities straddle the border—from west to east, the Dassanetch at the north end of Lake Turkana, the Oromo-speaking Gabra, Boran, and Garre, and various Somali clan groups—but the slow process of international and provincial border-making over time affected the specific regions these groups occupied along the borderlands. For Abyssinians who governed the empire's southern Marches (i.e., borders), having an undefined border to their south allowed them to engage in “trading and raiding.” In 1903 the commissioner of the East African Protectorate (which became Kenya Colony in 1920) urged that a frontier be established since the Abyssinians were “flowing southward” in an “aggressive advance” (Barber 1968:48). A general agreement on striking a border was reached between the two parties in 1907, with British posts established in Moyale and Marsabit in 1909 and on the eastern shores of Lake Rudolph (now Lake Turkana) in 1911, matched by Ethiopian posts. Rather than stabilizing expectations, however, the border initiative created uncertainty and anxiety on the part of pastoralists of the region, who, being at home on both sides of the border, were incapable of declaring which side they “really” belonged to, but were quick to cross the border in response to policies adopted by administrators and police from either side.

When the Abyssinian imperial forces sought to assign Oromo groups to involuntary service around 1915, most Gabra and many Borana fled to the British side of the border, where the colonial authorities defined them as “refugees” and in order to protect them moved them farther from the frontier into grazing zones (which they still occupy up to the present day) (Sobania 1979).⁶ Gabra were ordered to “keep away from the frontier” and to move their camels around water holes and deep wells in places such as Maikona in the arid zone between Marsabit and North Horr. Until then, northern Kenyan pastures had been occupied by camel-keeping Rendille and their cattle-keeping Samburu allies, who, as a result of the incursion, withdrew to the southern part of the district (Sobania 1979). To escape persecution by what the colonial records call “Tigre brigands,” Boran from Ethiopia began to cross the frontier in large numbers in 1918, and when this occurred again in 1920 they were moved southward in order to “keep the Frontier clear of natives,” an action preceding a joint “Anglo–Ethiopian effort against the Tigre” operating within the Amhara-dominated Abyssinian empire. At this point, not only do district records clearly distinguish between the “British Boran” and the “Abyssinian Boran,” but the British clearance of the border region also concretized the quasi-ethnic opposition between two nationalities of the Borana (Sobania 1979).⁷

In 1925 Britain and Ethiopia, both anxious and on the defensive regarding the Boran, who were considered by each government as part of “their” people, traded accusations, the British reporting that “the British Boran are watering



in Ethiopia” while the Ethiopians expressed resentment at the “escape” of some “their” Boran to Kenya and affirmed that “any refugee Boran who had moved to British territory since 1912 would be arrested on his return to Ethiopia and his stock confiscated.” To reinforce the ineffectual frontier, the British decided that Borana who crossed the border would be “sent to Marsabit as a *temporary* measure” (Sobania 1979:101; my italics). Today they still occupy the northern and eastern slopes of Marsabit mountain and its surrounds, where they are periodically in conflict with Ariaal Rendille and, in recent years, the Gabra (Adano & Witsenburg 2005). But historically they also occupied territory eastward to Wajir (near the so-called Galla–Somali line), where they have been progressively pushed back by the Somali-speaking

Degodia (Schlee & Shongolo 2012), and southward toward Isiolo, where in Samburu and Isiolo Districts these Wuaso Borana have experienced conflicts with Samburu, Somali, and Turkana (Boye & Kaahus 2011). In 1935 government records observed that the Boran and Gabra “remain[ed] in a fluid state with their kin over the border,” a state that obtains today (Sobania 1979:122).

In short, demarcating a Kenyan–Ethiopian frontier created distinct national categories of groups straddling the border that strategically moved to whichever side of the frontier was to their advantage, as they do today. Today Kenyan or Ethiopian identity cards are used judiciously to allow Gabra, Boran, and Garre to make use of both sides of the border. The border is in principle “open,” and the two countries have maintained to the present an agreement that civilians may “freely cross the border” without official passports or visas (Salvadori 2000:74).⁸ From the British point of view, the border has ultimately served less to keep Ethiopians out than to invite them in, creating patterns of occupation and alliance in Marsabit and the borderlands of Moyale which, as Adugna’s (2010) analysis of conflicts among Boran, Somali, and Garre in Moyale (a key border town) demonstrates, are at play today.

The creation in 1995 of nine autonomous ethnic states in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), after it came to power by overturning the Marxist DERG in 1991, “remapped” the county by applying an ethnic grid in formulating major administrative units (Adugna 2010:47–48). A referendum was carried out in 2004 to delimit the border after a decade of violent contestations in the borderlands between the Oromyia and Somali National Regional States, exacerbated by the common sentiment that communities of one ethnicity would lose access to resources in the lands of another. Voting in Moyale was especially contentious between Oromo and Somalis in part because of the bicultural and binational status of the Garre, who after recently shifting from the Oromo into the Somali orbit (Schlee & Shongolo 2012) moved in the thousands from Kenya to Ethiopia to register in Moyale for the referendum, which as a result of this stratagem did not take place (Adugna 2010). In this instance, we see the inventive mischief done by the Garre’s political use of the “affordances” of the Kenyan–Ethiopian border, and the chaotic challenge created by the political project of creating ethnic states in regions of long-term ethnic mixing, flexible movement, and joint land use by pastoralists and agropastoralists. The demarcation of frontiers initially stimulated a possessive territoriality on both sides, then an ambivalent anxiety regarding national rights in peoples who strategically associated themselves with one side or the other, and finally a vigorous assertion of proprietary rights over lands that groups came to occupy. This boundary dynamic has given rise in the present day to conflicts in Kenya between the expanding Boran and Gabra and the Rendille and Ariaal, who had been historically displaced in northwestern Marsabit. It has also led to conflicts in Ethiopia between Oromo (including both Borana and Gabra) and Somali and Garre in Ethiopia,

as their vital interests in land, resources, and politics diverged in the wake of boundary-making along the Kenyan–Ethiopian borderlands.⁹

The following section examines boundary dynamics farther west along the same frontier, between Gabra and Dassanetch, who both straddle the border.

Borderland Conflicts between Dassanetch and Gabra

Does the international border mitigate or generate conflict, and is it a material factor in how conflict unfolds? Prior to the establishment of the international boundary between what has become Kenya and Ethiopia, the Dassanetch stretched from the Omo Delta, where they farmed, along the northeastern shore of Lake Rudolph (now Lake Turkana) to Kokoi and Koobi Fora (now both in Sibiloi National Park), where they herded and fished. After the international frontier was demarcated, however, the British urged them to remain on the Abyssinian side. Gabra grazing territories stretched westward from the Chalbi desert to the lake, while Dassanetch maintained their claims on pastures southward from the delta along the lakeshore. The British asked themselves whether the Dassanetch should be allowed to occupy land that now lay in British territory, and how they could be deterred from raiding communities under British administration.

In 1914–15 Gabra were attacked by Dassanetch and Ethiopians at Korangogu and Dukana (Sobania 1979), and in 1925 twenty-nine Gabra were killed and four thousand to five thousand camels were taken by forty Ethiopians and three hundred Dassanetch in Moite. The Dassanetch subsequently were defeated by the King's African Rifles, who killed fourteen and wounded twenty, and 117 camels were recovered. After the Italian occupation of Ethiopia during World War II, the British allowed Gabra to occupy Koobi Fora, and allowed some Dassanetch to come south to Kokoi. But Dassanetch, who had grazed near the Gabra for several years, killed seventeen Gabra in a raid in 1947 (Sobania 1979). In 1948 some Dassanetch were allowed to remain in British territory, but in 1952 a Dassanetch raid on the Rendille left seventy-five dead, mostly women and children, and other attacks later occurred. Heavily armed Dassanetch from Ethiopia carried out raids on Gabra in 1955 and attacked an estimated 140–200 Kenyan police when they responded, which led to a twenty-four-hour battle in which three Dassanetch were killed (Sobania 1979). Kenyan authorities routinely demanded that “Ethiopian” Dassanetch “return” north of the border at Banya Lugga, while the Dassanetch in turn consolidated their presence on the lakeshore, fishing and grazing. Dassanetch had historical claim to the region, but they also identified with, and often depended on, their brethren in Ethiopia. They established settlements of greater permanence than did Gabra or Rendille herders, who sought lakeside grazing only before rains came to the Chalbi desert.

But when Gabra communities came to be defined as legitimate residents of Kenya, their seasonal conflicts with Dassanetch south of Ileret gained

national significance. Dassanetch have used their settlements as a haven following raids on Gabra and Rendille pastoralists, and Gabra themselves have been opportunistic in raiding Dassanetch homesteads along the lake. So a frontier delimited in order to strike a political balance between two imperial powers and to establish an ecological division between river delta and lake resources served instead as a pivot around which conflict between two frontier communities turned. Conflicts in the far northwestern corner of the district to some extent limited the extension of Gabra grazing, pushing them southward against Rendille grazing territories.

Conflict between Gabra and Dassanetch continues (Witsenburg 2012). In 1996 the Gabra—newly armed with guns procured from remnants of the Ethiopian army who had fled as the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) assumed power in 1992—came for grazing to pastures along the eastern shores of Lake Turkana. Reportedly they stole some sheep and goats from encampments of neighboring Dassanetch, who warned the Gabra to return the stock within a week. Turkana settlements that lay between the two were warned about an imminent attack and quietly moved away, but the Gabra remained. Dassanetch later insisted that the Kenyan police and administration had also been informed that an attack would occur if the Gabra did not return the stolen animals. At daybreak on the seventh day, Dassanetch warriors attacked Gabra herding camps in the Kokoi area, seizing a great number of cattle and reportedly killing twenty Gabra, including women and children. When Kenyan police pursued them, the raiders hid the animals, lay in ambush, and killed nineteen of their armed pursuers, stealing their uniforms and weapons.

Since some Dassanetch had come from and returned to the Ethiopian side of the border, the episode became an international incident. After many months the Ethiopian government returned the police uniforms, but it was years before its promise to return the animals and compensate the Gabra for their losses was even partially fulfilled. Gabra suspect that Ethiopian police and officials were forewarned but chose to collaborate with the raiders rather than deter them, and undoubtedly the very fact of the raid points out the relatively weak administrative presence of both governments in this remote frontier region.¹⁰ Neither party effectively enforces the border, but the collaboration between Kenyan and Ethiopian Dassanetch in carrying out the raid demonstrates the continuity of ties that link the two sides of the frontier. Nonetheless, the greatest fear of Dassanetch who fled from Kenya to Ethiopia after the raid was that they would not be allowed to return to their "homeland," Kenya. About five years later, following negotiations, they were in fact allowed to return without being prosecuted.

This conflict involved a number of contemporary factors such as borders, security forces, "citizenship" rights, and markets, as well as more long-standing customs and precedents in regard to two groups with a history of violent encounters. Gabra and Dassanetch are said to fight primarily in the rainy season: when it rains, labor demands drop and men have the time and luxury to raid; furthermore, the availability of pasture and water allows raiders

with stolen livestock to cross spaces that are inaccessible in drier seasons. The effects of rainfall strike earlier in the flood plains of the Omo Delta, which receives water streaming from the highlands where most Dassanetch farmers live; the rain then reaches the eastern Lake Turkana shore, and only later the Chalbi and Koroli deserts where Gabra herd their livestock. A Gabra informant told me regarding the Dassanetch that “the rains come sooner, freeing them to raid groups outside of the delta, and with rain they move out of the delta with their herds southeastward into Kenya toward new pastures,” where they encounter Gabra seeking grass after the long dry season (interview, North Horr, February 13, 2002). When rains later come to Gabra territory, the Gabra shift back, away from the lake to the more arid Chalbi, which is inaccessible to the Dassanetch, as they do not normally keep camels. Therefore, recurrent conflicts between the two cross-border groups occur especially during the early rainy season, when pastures emerge in the northern Lake Turkana and Omo Delta but the volcanic rock-strewn Chalbi area east of the lake remains dry.

The borderland setting exacerbates friction that might arise between two local groups sharing and competing for grazing, since the international border gives rise to the social equivalent of entropy by creating a market for stolen livestock or, due to distinct nationalities and a weak international order, a haven for thieves from one group and a deterrence to security forces from another. If different economic systems are in force (such as in free-market Kenya and socialist Ethiopia until 1991–92), price differentials may provide incentives for theft and smuggling. Also, throughout the twentieth century many Ethiopians possessed firearms when most Kenyans did not. The Dassanetch were usually better armed than the Gabra, but, due to their transboundary linkages to Ethiopia, the Kenyan Gabra and Boran tended to have more guns than their Kenyan neighbors, especially after 1991 when the flow of arms through the frontier market and into the hands of the Gabra occurred, resulting in illusory courage on the part of the Gabra when facing the Dassanetch.

Affordances of the Kenyan–Ethiopian Border

The Kenyan–Ethiopian frontier is porous, but its delimitation has created forms of national territoriality that have been relevant for international relations between two states and micropolitical relations in the borderlands. Communities that are divided acquire various citizenship rights, which are not to be taken for granted and become targets of struggle: to schooling, medical services and the vote, residence and land access, and more. The Kenyan–Ethiopian border also created a binational reservoir of resources that groups could exploit when opportunities arose, including grazing and water in cross-border sites. Legal and illegal flows of goods between formal and informal markets allowed traders and ordinary subjects to benefit from differences that arose in the value of commodities, the worth of currencies, and the availability of goods (Bayart et al. 1999). Given political differences

between Kenya and Ethiopia, the frontier allowed dissidents a reasonably safe haven with ethnic coevals, and the Boran and Gabra long had a tacit alliance based on shared language and culture. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), insurgents against the EPLF government, survived and even thrived in southern Ethiopia largely due to protection provided by the Borana of Kenya. If conflict creates benefits as well as losses, the frontier has created havens for bandits and cattle raiders over the last century, allowing groups to prepare in one country to raid into the other and then retreat to the first. Only recently have the Boran and Gabra split over their respective support for or opposition to providing assistance to OLF fighters from southern Ethiopia seeking haven in Kenya.

The most horrific example of interethnic strife in northern Kenya in recent years was the massacre on July 12, 2005, of fifty-three to seventy Gabra, including twenty-one primary school children, in Turbi, a trading center that lies northwest of Marsabit, an event that stimulated the displacement of over six thousand people (Witsenburg 2012). The perpetrators were purportedly Borana, whose complex relations with the culturally and linguistically related Gabra have become increasingly fractious in recent years due to political differences within Marsabit. While many attributed the attacks to competition over pasture that arose from drought conditions and a cycle of livestock thefts (indeed, reportedly 3,000 cattle, 5,000 sheep, and 4,000 camels were taken at that time), the growing tension between the two groups relates to transborder strife, as Gabra of Kenya have not supported the OLF, which is made up primarily of Borana (Mwangi 2006).

It is certainly the case that the boundary between the two states has profoundly affected the shape of ethnic politics, the configuration of conflicts that have occurred, and the nature of social and economic flows within the borderlands (Schlee 2008). Pastoral communities along the borderlands are acutely aware of where the frontier passes and the dangers it poses, but they have learned equally to negotiate the porous space it has created to their own economic and political benefit—with some benefits, like illegal trade, working to the advantage of many, and others, like spoils of conflict and safe haven, operating at the expense of those who lose in the complex transactions of border crossings.

Administrative Borders and Conflict in Northern Kenya

In northern Kenya, districts were used as mechanisms or “technologies” of administration and political control by the state, specifically for demarcating grazing lands and allocating “home territories” to ethnic communities. While the exaggerated claim has sometimes been made that demarcating districts actually brought ethnic divisions into being, the enforcement of district frontiers clearly severed intimate ties between some long coexisting communities and lent some groups a state-based justification for attempting to deny access to others thought to have been allocated homelands elsewhere. So some borderlands between provinces and districts became

long-term battlegrounds periodically tested by herders who felt that historical precedent and social familiarity should allow them entry and residence rights.

Interactions between the Dassanetch and Gabra, as we have seen, illustrate conflict not only across the international borderlands but also between local areas in the northwestern corner of Kenya's Marsabit District. It is noteworthy that on the basis of the 2010 constitutional reforms, defensive boundary processes initiated during the colonial period have recently been reawakened due to the devolution of governance powers to newly founded counties with essentially the same boundaries as the traditional administrative districts. These reforms have led to intense electoral competition over political and administrative positions, accompanied by efforts at pushing members of certain communities out of ethnically mixed areas that others claim as their cultural homelands, since the benefit of devolved powers is not only greater local control over resources but also the exercise of patronage (Schlee & Shongolo 2012). Long-term political tensions over political "ownership" in Moyale (among Borana, Gabra, and Garri; see Adugna 2010), in Marsabit (between Borana and the "REGABU" confederation of Rendille, Gabra, and Burji; see Salvadori 2000), and in Isiolo (among Borana, Meru, Somali, Turkana, and Samburu; see Boye & Kaarhus 2011) erupted most notably in the run-up to the 2012 general elections over the terms that would determine the outcome of devolution politics. While some of the towns mentioned above lie on the international border (Moyale) or near district or county boundaries (Isiolo), thus making control over them spoils in ethnic maneuvering as sites of investment, administration, and trade, they are also objects of competition that leap beyond struggles over borders as such to reconstitute configurations of borderland conflicts within urban spaces.

But in some cases borders are neither contested nor sites of conflict. For instance, the frontier between Marsabit and Samburu districts is noteworthy for its benign status, since the Samburu and the Rendille of the Koroli Desert in central and south Marsabit have long enjoyed a comfortable alliance based on the complementarity of their cattle- and camel-keeping economies, their marital, linguistic, and livelihood interactions having given rise to an interstitial bicultural community called the Ariaal (Spencer 1973; Fratkin 1991, 2012). Samburu, Rendille, and Ariaal (the latter generally being Rendille in the process of Samburu enculturation) have formed a fairly solid alliance against enemies to the north, east, and west. In contrast to peaceful coexistence involving long-term ethnic coalitions, the next sections will review four cases of borderland strife, beginning with the Rendille.¹¹

Rendille versus Gabra in the Koroli Desert of Marsabit

The Rendille and Gabra societies strongly resemble each other in terms of culture and camel-keeping, though they speak quite different Eastern Cushitic tongues. Indeed, it is proposed by Schlee (1989) that the Gabra

represent a historical offshoot of the Proto–Rendille–Somali (PRS) who were assimilated to the Oromo language and political confederation while retaining the PRS cultural complex. Due to the similarities in their patterns of arid land use, the two groups have experienced both conflict over resources in the Marsabit deserts and forms of solidarity and interaction. Conflict between the groups first arose due to the drawing of grazing boundaries within the district (Schlee 1991). As mentioned above, after a period of relative calm, the balance between Rendille and Gabra was again upset when in 1991 Boran and Gabra acquired Russian-sourced AK-47s from members of the Ethiopian government military who fled southward into Kenya after the fall of the DERG government to Tigrean insurgents. Thus reinforced, Gabra and Boran attacked Rendille and stole their livestock. This loss, as well as the death of several people, led the Rendille to seek revenge by killing a Gabra boy. The manner of this death (a spear driven through the boy's head) in turn enraged the Gabra, who from 1992 to 1994 proceeded to kill more Rendille and to steal fifteen hundred of their camels in the area east of Kargi. Overall the Rendille lost an estimated twenty-four thousand camels, about 20 percent of their total, before reconciliation was achieved between the MPs of the two groups. The Gabra advantage over the Rendille that had been achieved by a shift in the balance of armaments was subsequently reestablished when Samburu and Rendille politicians were able to arm their compatriots.

Samburu versus Turkana near Baragoi in Western Samburu District

In June 1996 the Rendille and Ariaal responded to an extended dry season by moving to the region of Baragoi in western Samburu District, where their Samburu allies were concentrated, in order to access the only remaining pastures in the region. Baragoi lay above the escarpment that marked the frontier between Samburu and Turkana Districts, but Turkana had long claimed the right to make use of the highlands and areas northward, to the southeastern shore of Lake Turkana. Indeed they had intermingled and intermarried with Samburu and Rendille, creating a complex bilingual community. The Samburu–Rendille allies were warned that the Turkana would attack, enticed by the thousands of cattle regrouped there, but apparently felt impervious due to their newly acquired arms. The General Service Unit (GSU) force was camped nearby, and as long as their fuel was paid for, the lightly armed local Administrative Police (AP) came nightly to protect Samburu–Rendille herds. When the Turkana struck, on August 26, 1996, neither security force was apparently present, leading many to suspect their connivance with the raiders. Three hundred to four hundred Turkana raiders simultaneously attacked the four major herding camps, shooting to stampede the cattle and eliminate the guards. Many of the Rendille who bravely tried to stop the flight of the animals were killed. In the following three months Turkana carried out nineteen subsequent raids on the Samburu of the region, stealing thousands of cattle and smallstock, but Samburu and

Pokot, with whom the latter struck an alliance, carried out a counterraid on Turkana living near Emarti on December 3, 1996, killing about fifty people (*Daily Nation* 1997). The Turkana turned to Mount Kulal in the north, where they raided the Samburu on December 26, 1996, after which the helicopter in which the district commissioner and senior army officers were riding as they followed the Turkana raiders was shot down. Turkana raids on Baragoi town were resumed in May 1997, with six thousand people displaced, two hundred people killed, and twenty-five thousand cattle, twenty-one thousand goats, and one thousand camels lost. Administrative police fled, and with the GSU refusing to assist residents, many informants said that the government had abandoned the area. It is worth considering whether the failure of government security there influenced the clash between the Gabra and Dassanetch, reported above, that occurred further north.¹²

Samburu–Borana versus Somali in the Isiolo–Marsabit Corridor

Beginning in September 1995, relations between the Samburu with their Rendille partners and the Somali along the Isiolo–Marsabit road deteriorated. Given strife in Somalia, Somali pastoralists had moved into the corridor of land north of Isiolo, which was a borderland between Samburu and Isiolo Districts, and in September 1995 they told the Samburu to desist from using the water sources there. According to the reports of informants, in February 1997 forty-six Somalis killed three Rendille near Laisamis and stole their herds. Informants related that the Somalis had lost many head of livestock near Wajir and Mandera to Boran, which stimulated a raid by Somalis to recoup their losses and a counterresponse by Army troops who traced and killed twenty-six Somalis. After 1997 Samburu quietly moved into the areas between Samburu and Buffalo Springs Game Reserves and Isiolo town seeking grazing land, effectively encroaching on the territory of the Borana, whom they suspected had encouraged Somali to attack them in events that resulted in hundreds of stolen or dead livestock. That these events had even occurred was denied by the District Commissioner of Isiolo District—a denial which, according to the logic of local suspicion, led Samburu to fear that the government was favoring the Somalis, perhaps to weaken the Samburu sufficiently to make the rich Leroghi Plateau area vulnerable to appropriation by members of the then-ruling Kalenjin! As a result, Samburu were afraid to bring their livestock into Isiolo District, while at the same time Somali traders felt unable to come to Samburu District to purchase livestock. In this period, then, Somalis ended up alienating all major groups of the region—Samburu, Rendille, and Borana. In 1998, farther north, Oromo (presumably Borana) killed about 142 Degodia Somalis in the Wajir–Moyale region and stole more than seventeen thousand cattle. Complaints about the failure of the government to provide security led the District Commissioner to call for a halt to “clan fighting.” But the Samburu and Borana secretly met to form a tactical alliance (speaking Swahili as their

common language, I was told) to drive the Somalis out of recently occupied areas claimed by the two groups. After their defeat, the Somalis were refused the right to retreat through Borana territory and had to hire trucks to drive back to the coast from Isiolo.

Samburu versus Borana in the Marti Area of Serolivi

Notwithstanding strife with Somalis, the most consistent and long-term antagonism experienced in the region from Marsabit to Isiolo has been between the Samburu–Rendille alliance and the Borana, who have at various times been allied with the Gabra. Similar to the effects of the settlement of Borana on Marsabit Mountain from the early colonial period, discussed above, the area of Songa, where Ariaal Rendille (who are now mainly Samburu speakers) have been encouraged to settle as small-scale farmers, has become an area of friction with Borana, especially given the ongoing pursuit of land adjudication that would make land occupation definitive (Fratkin & Roth 2005). At the same time, Borana herders have conflicted with pastoral Rendille and Samburu along the district boundaries from southern Marsabit to Isiolo, east of the long Isiolo–Marsabit–Moyale highway. In 2000, with the dry season continuing late in the year, Borana moved across the border from Isiolo and Marsabit Districts into the eastern region of Samburu District near Serolivi to seek grazing land. The Samburu claimed to have received them as guests, but observe that these “guests” soon became arrogant and overbearing. While calling someone a “guest” denotes an act of hospitality, it is also an illocutionary act that proclaims that, as a guest, the group does not have the right to reside in a given area but must be invited to do so. The Samburu established an armed perimeter of home guards to defend their territory against attack or poaching (since the region was a conservation area), and the Borana killed two Samburu warriors who were serving as armed guards. The Samburu then demanded that the Borana withdraw from the district, although the government refused to implement the demand. After much planning, on February 12, 2001, Samburu attacked the Borana, but after a fierce gun battle the Borana, who had more automatic weapons, prevailed. To avert losses if the Samburu were to attack again, the Borana then withdrew from the region but later in the year stole two hundred cattle and other livestock and killed three people.

Conclusion: A Chain of Conflicts in Northern Kenya

There are several conclusions we can reach from this review of episodes of conflict across the international Kenyan–Ethiopian frontier and along the borders between Samburu and Marsabit Districts and the neighboring Isiolo and Turkana Districts. First, the major sites of conflict run along administrative boundaries, which mark divisions between districts (relabelled “counties” in 2010), an association suggesting that borders engender rather than mitigate conflict. Second, there is a history to each of the fields of conflict discussed

here, since all cases presented were preceded and sadly have been succeeded by other episodes of conflict, making the key question processual rather than episodic in nature.¹³ Third, although stable alliances are found in this larger arena of strife in Marsabit and Samburu Districts—most notably among the Samburu, Rendille, and Ariaal—other alliances, such as between the Borana and Gabra or between the Borana and the Ajuran, have proven more strategic than resilient. Fourth, the conflicts reviewed do not just occur as isolated encounters between opposed parties but seem interconnected, representing clashes in more protracted regional experiences of warfare.

The borderland hypothesis is examined here in light of other theories of conflict. The article reviews several skeptical accounts of the “scarcity” hypothesis—the idea that conflict arises under conditions of population growth and resource scarcity—which point out that livestock raiding tends to occur in wet seasons rather than dry seasons, and that conflict is not more pronounced in towns where populations congregate. But these observations do not negate the fact that in times of scarcity grazing and water resources are sought by herders, though these factors do not consistently stimulate conflict. Evocations of pastoral culture strike a note, in that during conflict forms of martial organization, an ethos of bravery and of maintaining “face,” and the social and economic values of livestock provide motivations and mechanisms for pursuing systematic conflict with neighbors. But having an armature of cultural institutions at the ready does not explain why conflict does or does not occur under particular circumstances. Eaton (2008) proposes that each episode requires its own account, since people often experience strife with one another for conjunctural and contextual reasons, as differences between groups escalate and become compounded and small issues explode into larger clashes.

Borders are an aggravation for mobile people who feel they have rights over territory and resources that lie on the far side; this article has demonstrated that this is one reason that borderlands are frequent sites of strife. The borderland hypothesis does not imply that all borders engender conflict, but that where territories are demarcated in regions where communities have long been intermixed, assert historical rights claims, and do not recognize as legitimate the emergent allocations of territory, conflicts may be more likely to arise. Against the proposition that boundaries create identities, some advocate the reverse argument: that boundaries encapsulate identities, and thus that what are at stake are less territorial than social boundaries. While both cases have undoubtedly occurred, colonial administrators who tried to draw definitive lines around mobile and fluctuating social groups were clearly acting beyond their knowledge and capacity. Either way, clearly the frontier stimulates contestation.

The cases examined here do not show that boundary-making mitigates conflict but often the contrary; clearly there is something about pastoralists that doesn't like a fence. Establishing a boundary creates differences, in society or nature. But once barriers and boundaries are in place, the subjects whose experiences we have reviewed make the best use of them in pursuing their

own needs and interests; if a border means anything, it is that the resources on one side will differ from those on the other. Much energy is spent in evading or crossing boundaries, usually for pragmatic reasons: to exploit an opportunity. If we apply a theory of political entropy to boundary-making, it becomes clear that a barrier creates a difference that becomes a source of energy and power and provides economic, social, or political advantages to those who can establish a conduit between, through, or over borders. Differences in currency values, prices of livestock, smuggled commodities, or water and pasture availability illustrate an entropic theory of boundaries, but other examples would include divided ethnic communities, opportunities for raiding, variation in the development of infrastructure, differential access to educational, health, or security services, the genesis of cultural distinctiveness, or the heightened intensity of community identities. The lesson that can be drawn from these cases of boundary-making may be that if borders sever and divide them, people nonetheless benefit from the environmental, social, and political entropy that borders generate by using the energy that emerges from spatial differences to advance their own individual and collective life projects.

Acknowledgments

Research in Kenya was supported by the “Social, Demographic and Health Consequences of Pastoral Sedentarization in Marsabit District, Kenya” project of the National Science Foundation (Elliot Fratkin, principal investigator), and the project titled “Traversing Post-colonial Frontiers: Tenure, Conflict and Identity in the Pastoral Borderlands of East Africa (J. Galaty, principal investigator), supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The research was carried out through affiliation with the Ethnography Unit of the National Museums of Kenya and the Mainyoto Pastoralist Integrated Development Organisation (MPIDO), a Kenyan pastoral land rights NGO, with the authorization of the Office of the President in Kenya. I appreciate the support of Elliot Fratkin and Kevin Smith in facilitating research in Marsabit District, the assistance of Kawab Bulyar, Larian Aliyaro, Daniel Lemoille, Abdirizak Kochale, Korea Leala, Kimpei Ole Munei, and Umuro Godana in pursuing research in Marsabit and Samburu Districts, the help of Judith Mitchell, Caroline Archambault, Julia Bailey, Stephen Moiko, and Anne-Elise Keen at McGill University, and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Salle and the Centre for Society, Technology and Development at McGill University for providing institutional support during the writing of the manuscript. I am also indebted to Elliot Fratkin, Cynthia Salvadori, Kimpei Ole Munei, Hussein Mahmoud, Wario Adano, Günther Schlee, Karen Witsenburg, Felix Girke, Judith Mitchell, and Caroline Archambault for comments on various sections of the article. Sections of the article were presented at the Workshop on Ethnicisation of Politics and Governance in the Borderlands and the

State in the Horn of Africa, which was sponsored by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and organized by Hussein A. Mahmoud, Wario Adano, Günther Schlee, and Karen Witsenburg, Egerton University, Kenya, July 7–8, 2009.

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Notes

1. The classic defense of property rights by Demsetz (1967) points out the pressures toward privatization that occur when transaction costs (i.e., conflict) exceed exclusion costs. But the idea that concretizing property rights by establishing firm boundaries makes people secure is widespread in the literature on property, whether in defense of privilege purchased at the expense of the commons or of the function of land registration in serving the poor and marginalized (Platteau 1996). This article makes the counter case by presenting the conflict engendered by nonconsensual fixing of boundaries (see also Cotula 2014).
2. These distinctions could be placed side-by-side with Olivier de Sardan's (2005:46) contrast between the poles of traditionalism and modernity according to a sociology of modernization and development.
3. Notwithstanding the social complexity that these ethno-terms imply—including internal political differentiation and cross-ethnic ties that have brought linguistic, cultural, and political creolization into being along identity borders—I use them in recounting experiences of conflict in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia for two reasons. First, each is associated with distinct languages and social practices that have considerable historical depth, which means they are conceptual units in terms of which social action is understood in the

regional context. Second, in settings of hostility and competitive interactions, ethnic names are used as emblems of political mobilization and collective action. That said, it should be understood that actions attributed to particular ethnic groups as collectivities are not carried out by entire communities but by individuals, fractions, and subgroups whose actions are often subject to intense debate and criticism by their own compatriots.

4. Site visits and interviews were carried out over a longer period of time, but most importantly in June and August 2001, and January–March 2002. Sources of information include Mark Lmusari, Luka Lmusari, and two Samburu combatants at Lerrata; Mohammed Leeresh, Benjamin Lekeek, Francis Amin, Andrew Lenapuru, and Gerald Ekai from the Nakutuki Self-Help Group and Rebecca Lolosoli in Archer’s Post; Chief Lenaipa Mark Rosket and Chief George Ilpaliwan Lemerketo from Serolivi and Ndonyo-Uasin, Isaiah Ekalo (the District Commissioner of the day), Laurel Lemunyete, Silas Leruk, Lasi Letiwa, and former P.C. Francis Lekoolool in Maralal; Daniel Lemoile, Peter Lolmodoni, Edward Lentonon, and Korea Leala in Marsabit and Songa; Umuro Godana and Tanda Barako of the conflict resolution committee at Gus; Tanda Barako, Bukato Tullo, Alex Tabiye Hirya, James Hakurtulia Nyangaita, and Father Anthony (from the Catholic Mission) in North Horr; Chief Michael Moroto, Higitha Arsalla, Longaye Loitapwa, Lokiria B’akale, Nyawoya Leess, and Christopher Kamate in Ileret; Colin McDougall from the African Inland Church in Ileret; two combatants from Omorate in southern Ethiopia; Tune Ali Duba (working with PISP) in Balesa; Numbatu from El Molo village in Loiengelani; Mohammed Sheikh Adan (ITDG), Cynthia Salvadori, and Kimpei Ole Munei from the University of Nairobi; and John Rigano from the Ethnography Unit of the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi.
5. The relevant frontier is adjacent to Marsabit District (redefined as a county in 2010), Kenya, and to two administrative units in Ethiopia that were known as Gemu Gofa and Sidamo Provinces up to 1994 and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Regional States and Oromiya National Regional State since 1995.
6. The discussion that follows is based on my own review of archival sources for Northern Kenya, but I acknowledge Sobania’s (1979) fascinating and largely unavailable report, which was based on a reading of the archives that preceded mine.
7. “Boran” and “Borana” are interchangeable variants on the name of this Oromo-speaking group.
8. My experience along the Kenyan–Tanzanian border emphasizes the point that border crossings are not intended to impede free movement back and forth of borderland residents, but to enforce visa and customs restrictions on those traveling by vehicles, and restrictions on contraband.
9. For discussion of ethnic dynamics in northern Kenya in precolonial and colonial times, see Schlee (1989, 2008, 2012), and for further discussion of their land use strategies, see Schlee (1991). Notwithstanding observations by Schlee of Garre reaffiliation with Somali communities, recent conflicts between Garre and Degodia Somalis have arisen along the Moyale–Wajir–Mandera axis that have led to the mobilization of the Kenya Defence Forces (*Daily Nation* 2014b). For an account of the ethnic dynamics that ensued in Mandera, Marsabit, and Isiolo during the 2013 elections, see Carrier and Kochore (2014).
10. This was confirmed by my own experience traversing the untended crossing border on February 11, 2002, when seeking interviews in Ethiopia with Dassanetch

who had participated in the raid. My research assistants and I were queried about our presence not at the frontier but only a great distance away, in the town of Omorate on the Omo River.

11. I have also discussed these cases in Galaty (2002).
12. Confirming continuities in northern Kenyan history, it was reported as recently as May 17, 2014, that Turkana continue to fight Samburu over grazing lands in Baragoi, “making the area one of the most insecure places in the country,” and that in October 2012 Turkana “bandits” killed more than forty of the security forces who were pursuing livestock stolen from the Samburu (*Daily Nation* 2014a).
13. Although an extended discussion of conflicts in Samburu District in relatively recent years is beyond the scope of this article, these include renewed outbreaks of violence in 2009 among the Samburu, Borana, and Somalis that resulted in the deployment of a special security force to Samburu District. Ignoring the Borana and Somali, thousands of troops fired on Samburu civilians near Archer’s Post, Kalama, and Lerata (Cultural Survival 2009). The bias shown by security forces is thought to either vindicate the suspicions that Samburu lands are being targeted, or to anticipate the expansion of oil drilling into the district as part of the infrastructural development in the LAPSET program (Lamu Port and New Transport Corridor to Southern Sudan and Ethiopia) (Kenya Vision 2030).