BORDERLAND DYNAMICS IN EAST AFRICA

Cases from Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda

Edited by
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Organisation for Social Science Research in
Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA

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Preface

This publication is based on work done within the project "Borderland Dynamics in East Africa." The project is a network of programmes for capacity building within departments of social anthropology in the universities of Khartoum, Addis Ababa and Makerere. Also involved in the project are three partner institutions, The Department of Social Anthropology at University of Bergen, the Chr. Michelsens Institute based in Bergen, and The Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) based in Addis Ababa.

The project was funded within the NORHED programme area (The Norwegian Program for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development), a NORAD based initiative for collaboration among institutions of higher research and education in Norway and various countries in the South. For the Borderland project, the specific aims of the work related to three major areas:

1. To challenge the current state centered focus on borderland processes and offer more "soft" issues into the debate through building capacities of higher education institutions.

2. To strengthen the university-based capacities within research and teaching relevant to borderland issues.

3. To strengthen the link between universities and various processes of public policy formulation around borderland issues.

In this preface we want to present the general background to the process of collaboration and also reflect on how we saw the project as a contribution to current developments in the involved countries. We see this as an important aspect since this project is not the first experience of collaboration between the partners but represents rather a long history of collaboration in which the earlier phase of research provided a basis for what is going on today.

University Collaboration

The present NORHED application is a continuous building of competences based on long-term academic collaboration funded by Norwegian development resources. All the partners have a long history of collaboration built on the experiences and competences from earlier collaborative programmes based on various forms of Norwegian development funding. The Sudan-Bergen link in social anthropology goes back to the early 1960s, but was considerably developed through the 1970s (the Savanna Project) and 1980s (through the wider Sudan Programme that included other disciplines). The Sudan-Bergen and the Ethiopia-Bergen collaboration in anthropology was expanded in the 1980s through the so-called SSE-programme (Sudan-Sahel-Ethiopia Programme) which was a Norwegian programme to contribute to the understanding of the African drought of the 1980s. The Department of Social Anthropology in Bergen continued to

develop the links with the sister department in at Khartoum, while the Chr. Michelsen's Institute in Bergen developed links to a newly established Department of Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University. The activities within the SSE-programme continued into the 1990s within a new framework for Norwegian development funding for higher research and education; The Norwegian Universities' Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU). Based on NUFU funding, the East African Dryland Programme was set up in which the collaborating partners were linked in a regional programme administered by OSSREA. In this programme, researchers from Makerere University also joined directly into this anthropology-based collaboration. During this period, the Department in Bergen also established an M.Phil-programme (also on Norwegian development funding) in which participating students could study, some of them proceeding further for Ph.D studies at Bergen.

We elaborate this history in order to make several points. First, to point towards the productive collaboration between universities and research institutions in Bergen and NORAD, the main agency for Norwegian development aid in which all parties contributed into a process that over time turned out to be very productive in terms of competence and capacity building in all participating institutions. Second, the productiveness indicated was in the form of a building of anthropological competence on the East African region in Bergen, while at the same time Bergen could be a partner in the continuous building of anthropological competence and eventually in the building of Departments of Social Anthropology in the three universities of Khartoum, Addis Ababa and Makerere. A third point relates to the long-term development of a tradition of applied anthropology through the funding and competence building mentioned above. The anthropological work within the collaborative links have all the time been characterized by attempts to formulating important anthropological research questions related to basic applied and developmental issues of the day. Students could then pursue studies in which they combined their own competence building as students within the discipline of social anthropology with a contribution of knowledge on specific issues of relevance to broad developmental processes in their home regions.

The fourth point follows from the first three and brings us to the current Border project. It is important that this new form of Norwegian funding, now brought together in NORHED, has made it possible to continue the above collaboration within the field of social anthropology. A new and very significant part of the NORHED programme is that for the first time it allows the universities in the South to run the projects, and the universities in the North to assist through links of partnership. This is also the model for the Border project. Organizationally and legally, it is based in the three universities. It is of further interest to note that two out of the three local project leaders have obtained their degrees in anthropology in Bergen, thus representing direct links back to the earlier years of collaboration.

The NORHED model has thus made it possible for the Border project to be run from the three national universities in Khartoum, Addis and Makerere, with the anthropology department and the Chr. Michelsens Institute, both in Bergen, and OSSREA in Addis Ababa, as partners. Taken together the general efforts are aimed at promoting scientific research on social development issues in East Africa, to foster policy dialogue, to increase the influence of research on development planning and implementation, and to build the capacity of higher learning institutions for research and publication. Specifically, this project focuses on the borderland issues, with the aim of increasing competences on the specific aspects of borderland situations, such as human rights, women rights, the rights of marginal borderland groups, environmental concerns as well as human health and general human development concerns.

The NORHED Border Project

As mentioned before, in part, the programme was to increase capacities within universities; strengthening of teachers' capacity in teaching and research, making available to them materials, equipment and resources for fieldwork. and creating new and specialized competences by offering Ph.D and Masters' students an opportunity to undertake research on issues of relevance to the borderland situations.

We also saw a need for the universities to strengthen their ability to operate and contribute to a wider enabling environment by offering insights and alternative thinking to national and regional governments, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, women and youth groups. At the time of the start of the programme, there was already a demand from such stakeholders to universities to contribute, yet while the universities were able to offer general advice, the special focus of borderland problems was not well covered. As this problem of borders and the livelihood of borderland populations were understood to be one of the key issues for future development in these countries, it was agreed that it should be given attention.

In deciding on the direction of such a competence-building exercise, it was necessary to combine the demands of university-internal processes in high quality teaching and research with priorities within the higher education sector as well as general national priorities. Furthermore, changing the ongoing processes of marginalization of the borderland areas would require the production of competences that could improve the quality of debates and policies and actions relating to war and peace, gender development and sustainable environment.

Linking to Capacity Building- What Can Universities Offer?

As indicated, border related issues are often presented in a top-down way. This means that borders are understood as state matters, in terms of security, control and sovereignty, reflected in federal policies and the various levels of regional power and influence, and the work in various

border commissions in which border matters are handled by military, police and security operatives. On the wider East African level, regional organizations such as IGAD seem unable to have any effect on the situation in any positive way. The very factors that have a potential of fostering integration along the borders (shared ethnicities, identities and cultures), have become sources of conflicts and act as major impediments to integration. Lack of economic diversification and resource scarcity also adds to the conflicts as do the involvement of external actors. Recognizing such obstacles to peaceful integration, we still need to seek better solutions. We suggest that the capacity we are building can be engaged, not to solve all problems that nation states, regional and global organizations seem unable to deal with, but we can inject new perspectives and new relationships into the debates around the issues. One key effort has been for the project to organize workshops and seminars in which we invite and engage important actors involved in the borderland dynamics, positive as well as negative dynamics. Such actors are regional authorities, civil society organizations throughout these areas, business people, local media and women organizations. They have all been invited to become active participants in building up borderland integration in order to help these areas to reflect upon and to deal with their problems. An important aim of such discussions was to identify the factors that could foster integration as well as factors that impede the same integration. Furthermore, discussions should focus on how regional integration could contribute to mitigate the various types of conflict.

Given the regional dimensions of these problems, several countries will eventually be involved. In such a situation, the capacity built through this project, with a regional focus of collaboration between Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia will also produce linkages of collaboration that can help in dealing with the particular regional dimensions of the problem in East Africa. In the same way as Norway makes use of research milieus, NGOs and civil society organizations to maintain links in situations in which diplomatic ties may be problematic, in the same way the capacity built through this project will produce persons who can act in many useful roles in the future.

Sites of Field Studies

1: Metemma Yohannes town: Chapters 2, 3, 4

2: Kassala town: Chapter 5

3: Mai Ainy refugee camp: Chapter 6

4. Jodah town: Chapter 7

5. Busia town: Chapter 8, 9

6. Moyale town: Chapters 10, 11

7. Kassala area: Chapter 13

8. El Salam Locality: Chapter 14

9. Sudan-South Sudan Border Areas: Chapter 12

10. Gambella town: Chapter 15

11. Amudat: Chapter 16

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13. Lwakhakha town: Chapter 18

14. Kitgum: Chapter 19

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Map 1: Locations of field studies.

Chapter 1

Borderland Dynamics in East Africa:
General Introduction
Leif Manger

Introduction

As indicated in the preface, the central focus for the Borderland project we discuss in this publication was to study the dynamics between state processes, mobility and territory at the margins of the various nation states of Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda. Thus the topics related to central advances within the so-called "borderland studies" that were evolving in the international research agenda on borders as part of state-society interaction. Some key concerns will be highlighted here.

Borders are of key importance to nation states since the modern nation state is based on territorial sovereignty, and that this sovereignty is the basis for the inclusion and exclusion of many types of rights, the most basic of which is the right to citizenship. According to Stephen D. Krasner (1999) there are four general types of sovereignty, domestic sovereignty, which is about controlling one's own territory; second, interdependence sovereignty which is about the ability to control trans-border movements; third, international sovereignty, i.e. being recognized by other states; and finally, Westphalian sovereignty, which is about the ability to exclude external actors from domestic authority configurations. For all four, a border and the ability to defend it, is important. Borders thus have both territorial as well as human consequences.

Seen from the states a focus on border communities raises the issue of the "territorial integrity" of the states relating to the issue of external sovereignty. In our three countries the historical processes of territorialization have taken many forms; military conquest, agricultural transformations, deportations, socio-economic differentiation, religious adaptations, population management, securitization and privatization. In this perspective we see that border regimes produce territorial margins and margins in relation to citizenship regimes. Thus we need to focus on how the states invoke authority in such border areas, opening up for a perspective on internal sovereignty, with the different aspects of state-society interaction in border areas.

In this perspective, we also need to inject both the border-landers themselves, and the actual borders along which different groups that make their living here. This brings us more directly into a focus on the border areas in themselves, with the different groups living there and the life projects they pursue. Communities that live along the borders are engaged

in various activities, some are cultivators, others are pastoralists while some engage in cross-border trade, still some are engaged in militias against the national government, and perhaps supported by the neighboring state. In all cases there is a need for a better understanding of what the driving forces behind these empirical patterns are. The activities relate to a series of problem fields in the region. We can mention some of the important ones, such as the problem fields of legal and illegal trade, smuggling of arms, intergroup conflict/security, land disputes between pastoralists and agriculturalists, the oil and other resources, trafficking (human, children, women), drugs, refugees/migration, cattle raiding, migration, spreading of epidemics (among animals as well as human populations). Here we see that borderland problems relate to women and children, as well as marginal groups. Many of these areas are also areas of environmental challenges, such as drought, overexploitation of the available meagre resources, climate change and so on. These problems are present in all the three countries, with the added problem relating to the north-south border conflict between Sudan and South Sudan.

Pursuing this kind of argument brings a new attention to the borderland situation, the centre of analytical attention no longer being on the state alone but on activities and dynamics in the margins that reflect the interaction and processes of both the state and the margin. This interaction of dynamics relating to different scales is precisely what our project is about. Borders are often conceived of in somewhat negative terms, as a repressive framework on movement, interaction and social relationships that otherwise would be un-regulated and therefore "free". In contrast we argue the need to investigate what such borderlines produce. In this effort we need to expand our perspective to include the state-society interaction on one side of the border, but also look across the border to include dynamics on the other side, into the neighboring state. An important reality in many of the border situations studied in this project is that the same ethnic and tribal groups may live on both sides of the border, thus providing a particular dynamic to the border crossing. This dynamic is affected by the relationship between the state centres involved. Good relationships may mean an open border whereas bad relationships mean a closed border. But local conditions also have an effect. The blocking of movement across such borders may have disruptive effects for inter-community contact and the maintenance of family relations, but it may also open up new economic, political and religious opportunities for other actors who may form new networks of interaction which ultimately shape relationships of power and socio-economic differentiation.

Thus, the border should not be seen exclusively as blocking movement, it should also be considered as a more or less regulatory system of mobility across state-defined boundaries. The bureaucratic, legal and political processes of boundary making that state processes entail can be viewed as representing multiple attempts to order, shape and channel flows of people, as well as material and immaterial things; these are flows that can be

monitored, and from which resources can be extracted. Furthermore, flows across the borders are interpreted and politicized; sometimes as emancipation and economic enrichment, other times as posing a threat to national and global security. But all the time this situation is met by the borderlanders themselves, with their own strategies. This produces an "everyday life of borders" that often is hidden to the state authorities, or simply ignored. The border areas are thus areas characterized by a multiplicity of realities, from legal crossing and legal trade, to illegal crossing and illegal smuggling trade. The effects on the border areas and the groups of people living along borders must be studied empirically in order to uncover the complexities involved.

A final general point is about the border itself, and to avoid a total dichotomization of how we conceptualize the border. A dominant view in the literature is to see the state notion of a border as a line, providing a clear-cut impression of what is inside and what is outside the border. In this view the nation state borders are in a modern situation represented by a physical line with a material expression in border crossing points, where the states assert their presence. Against such a clear-cut view a counter-argument exists that claim that historically, this line might not have existed, and that in a past of pre-nation states we talk more of frontiers, not signifying lines but rather open spaces. Still, it can be argued that the frontier also indicated a division between political units, implying an aspect of inside and outside. Against this, and to maintain the difference between the border as a line and a frontier, we can argue that unlike the line which represents an overlap of territorial integrity and a supposed ethnic and national uniformity, such frontiers were often characterized by permeability and fuzziness making up transitional zones. Such frontier zones were defined more by the practices of local people than by the actions of state centres. Still walls and fortifications indicated that states did not particularly favor this permeability and fuzziness so typical of frontier communities. The focus on natural barriers like rivers and mountain ridges indicate the same.

As we indicated above, it is important not to see such differences between the different senses of borders and frontiers as two opposite conceptualizations represented by the difference between state centres and local populations. Local people might also have different senses of how a border area should be understood. Settled people engaged in agriculture would probably have a natural feeling of "borders" demarcating their fields that was different from the notion held by pastoralists who are always on the move and are more concerned about securing access to their lines of migration. The pastoral migrations through different types of territories, or the movements of hunters and gatherers, have always represented a different notion of borders to what was found among settled people. And, some of those notions might also contain a notion of the line. Perhaps Tim Ingold (2007) has a point when he argues against a linear and a non-linear dichotomy and rather proposes that we are looking at different kinds of

linearity. In this perspective what we see is not a historical replacement of a non-linear world by a linear world. Rather, we see different kinds of lines being imposed one on top of the other.

We see the different logics and understandings in the relationship between "local groups" like pastoralists and cultivators. In all these cases the point is not that for some people lines did not exist, but rather that the lines that were there represented different types of lines to different types of people. Coherent lines to some, whereas to others the line was made up of a series of points making it into a sort of "galaxy". We draw on Tambiah here, with his "galactic states" (1977) in which the pre-colonial state formations Tambiah tries to conceptualize emerge as political units made up of different lower level units. These lower level units are radiating out from the centre, defined not by the borders, but by their relationship to the centre, often defined by kinship in which the senior kinsman was at the centre, lower level kinsmen were heading the lower level units such as "provinces". Perhaps we can make use of the same logic in understanding the different logics between different adaptive groups. Rather than straight lines we see a "galaxy" consisting of villages and nomadic camps, or points like specific trees, stones, hills and so on, demarcating territorial divisions between tribal sections, sub-groups of clans and lineages.

The point is that the territorial divisions are not represented by a clear-cut line, but rather by the accumulated effect of all the points. This accumulate effect provides people with a clear understanding of what their territory is and how it is being divided between different groups, but this understanding is open ended, dynamic and pragmatic, allowing the groups to live together. What we are looking at is therefore not a situation in which local people lack any understanding of the limits of their territories. Nor does it mean that different groups living in the same territory will claim the same rights to the territory. Rather, what we see is a situation in which the understanding of borders is defined by the necessity to accept the presence of many groups in a territory. The pragmatism is expressed in negotiated relationships between the groups in which the groups claiming ownership to land can allow others, like passing pastoral groups, to make use of the land, as long as they make no claims to ownership. On a general level, it is easy to understand that in such a situation it is difficult to use modern technology to demarcate the line. An indication of this difficulty is not only seen in situations in which administrative borders are made into national borders, but also when state centres seek to change administrative borders within the territory of the state. To make sense of such problematic border situations we need empirical information about how local people conceptualize the points and how they make the points not into clear-cut lines but into galaxies of many points. And with this we turn to our empirical studies carried out within the project.

Border Ethnography – Presenting the Community Case Studies

It is important to develop individual studies within broader comparative frameworks. Within our project, comparative issues such as cross-border trade, issues relating to forced and voluntary migrations, national boundaries affecting access to resources or ethnic relationships between groups, gender issues in various contexts, resettlement of people after war, cross border health related issues, are just a few key concerns that need renewed attention within a borderland perspective. But there are also social boundaries, of various types, that take on certain forms due to the border related problems, such as wars.

It is also important to remember that in each of the three countries, we are not talking about one homogeneous border, but rather a patchwork of sub-border regions, with different dynamics, on different levels, that produce different effects. Looking at such sub-sectors will again land us in a lot of ethnographic detail that can only be approached through more detailed studies.

Papers presented in this publication represent a selection of studies undertaken within the project. Thus there are cases from various border areas in the three participating countries, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda. In our presentation of the cases we will describe them in comparative terms with a focus on what thematic foci they represent. By this we will put together studies from each of the participating countries as they relate to the broader themes within our border studies. We reiterate that this presentation relates to the papers presented in this publication, we do not describe the totality of studies produced within the project.

Section I: Movements and Connectivity: Studies of Migrants and Refugees in Border Towns and Refugee Camps

In Ethiopia several studies have concentrated on the border town of Metema, a town on the bordering Gedaref state in eastern Sudan. This town, (with a "sister town" across the border called Gallabat), represents an old historical border town between the two countries with both peaceful and more violent relationships going far back in time. Today this history is visible in various ways, but we also see an added contemporary importance of Metema as a major hub for refugees from the Horn of Africa moving into Sudan on their way to Europe. Kiya Gezahegne's paper "*Movements, relations, and land contestations along the Ethio-Sudan Border in Metema Yohannes*" presents an overview of the border dynamics between the two countries, including army and police relationships but also relationships of temporary labor migration and conflicts over land ownership along the border. The paper also develops a perspective on the more recent aspect of refugee movement through the town. The second paper, Tsedale Kinfu's "*Borderland entrepreneurs or victims of gendered mobility? Commercial sex workers in Metema Yohannes town*" deals with the sex workers in this border town, in which Ethiopians and Sudanese border operators in trade or

other activities make use of the sex market. The paper sees this from the perspective of the women and thus provides a view of their positioning in the wider sex market. A third paper from Metema, with a focus directly on female migrants is by Zeynaba Zakir. The paper "*The dynamics of cross border migration along the Ethio-Sudan border: Ethiopian women migrants and the Metema route*" shows how women become migrants from their home areas in Ethiopia, how they travel towards Metema and further into the Sudan. The paper is based on women who have arrived in Metema and gives an overview of movement and connectivities among actors involved in the movement, from the women themselves to the operators recruiting migrants and organizing their transport to Metema. To understand the predicament of Ethiopian women on the Sudanese side of the border we include a paper on Ethiopian women in Kassala town. Ibtisam Satti Ibrahim's paper "*Ethiopian women in the Sudan: a case from Kassala-eastern Sudan*", can thus represent an example of how those Ethiopian women who have managed to settle for a long period of time in a Sudanese town manage, not far from the border towards Eritrea and Ethiopia. The paper discusses the inter-ethnic relationships between these women and the Sudanese town people of Kassala. What emerges in the discussion is the existence of a series of anti-migrant sentiments among the Sudanese, a situation the paper puts in an ethnic identity context of stigmatization.

The papers presented above present insights into border areas in which we see both regular migrants as well as refugees crossing the borders, but the foci was not on refugees. Such a focus on refugees is seen in Mulu Getachew's paper "*Moving in the face of uncertainty: Eritrean refugees' en-route flight experiences across the Ethio-Eritrean border.*" The paper deals with the flight of Eritreans towards the Mai-Ainy refugee camp in Tigray in norther Ethiopia, and deals with a refugee situation that relates to the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the later problematic situation for Eritreans in their home country, especially for young people eligible for compulsory conscription into military service. The paper uses the concept of "social navigation" to explore the experience of the uncertainties the refugees face while running away from their home country.

Also related to the issue of refugees is a paper by Rania Awad Madani, "*Strangers in their own countries: the problem faced by southerners who remained in the Sudan after the secession of the south in 2011.*" In this paper the author discusses the coping strategies for people living in Jodah on the border between the Sudan's White Nile State and the Upper Nile area of South Sudan. This is on the newly established border between Sudan and South Sudan. For obvious reasons such a situation of a border between two countries that until recently was a united country produces a focus on how the people living along the border experience this change from an administrative border to a national border, and also how the new border affects the mobility of refugees as well as the more permanent

residents. The paper describes the complex situation of the Shilluk, some of whom were residents in the town before the division of the Sudan, thus considering themselves "locals" but being considered as South Sudanese by the government in Khartoum. Then there are refugee camps in which other Shilluk, "regular" refugees from the Shilluk home areas to the south of the border, interact with the local Shilluk population. This interaction between people and various types of institutions is discussed in the context of various "coping mechanisms".

Section II: Livelihood Strategies along Borders: Studies On Cross Border Trade and Adaptations in Borderland Towns

In Uganda Busia, a border town on the border between Uganda and Kenya (with a sister town by the same name on the Kenyan side) is represented in this publication with papers on cross border trade, the famous "magendo trade," and other activities related to the trading activities. The paper by Rita Nakanjako, Robert Kabumbuli and Eria Olowo Onyango, on "*Magendo is our life, the border is our home." Informal cross-border trade at Busia*" deals directly with the cross border trade activities. The magendo trade has a long history back in the 1970s. It has always been a smuggling economy and always been formally illegal, but has increasingly become a way of life for many people along the border. The paper presents traders and their adaptive strategies, and shows both the actual border crossing and the dealing with border officials, but also discusses relationships between traders and the formal Busia authorities and also relationships between groups of traders. What emerges is a complex network of relationships that produces adaptive strategies by which the traders deal with an informal and corrupt type of activity. A second paper from Busia town, authored by Brenda Birungi with Eria Olowo Onyango entitled "*An ethnography of everyday life in Busia: being a boda-boda operator at the border*", the life of the boda-boda motorcycle drivers is described in detail. The boda-boda operators play an important role in bringing trade goods and people across the border. Like the magendo trade itself the boda-boda operation is an activity between formality and informality in which ethnic identities and political relationships define the opportunities the operators have, whether male or female.

In a paper from southern Ethiopia, from the border town of Moyale, also with a Kenyan Moyale across the border, Ashreka Hajisano presents a paper entitled "*Informal cross border trade along Ethio-Kenya border: the case of women informal cross border traders in Moyale*". This paper has a focus specifically on the female cross-border traders. By using the concept of niche, the paper presents the trading activity as a series of "niche dimensions" whereby the viability of the trade is decided. It is by managing problems and finding solutions within the opportunities and constraints presented by the various niche dimensions that success or failure can be explained. Again, the management of network relations emerges as a key factor deciding outcomes.

Section III: State Developments, Border Conflicts and Pastoral Predicaments

The next groups of papers focus on the relationship between border communities and the nation states they live within and how the pastoral groups that are dominant in these border areas, are affected by the possibilities or constraints found within such larger systems of power in their home countries and also how border crossing play a role in defining the relationship between groups and their states.

The first paper is also from Moyale in Ethiopia. The paper, co-authored by Yehualaeshet Muluneh, Fekadu Adugna and Ayalew Gebre, is entitled "*The tyranny of borders: politics of identity and conflicts around the Ethiopia-Kenya borderlands.*" In Moyale Oromo Borana and Somali Garri groups co-exist in the Moyale border area. This co-existence has produced tensions and violence on local levels, between groups over access to resources, but also a violence triggered by decisions made in larger Ethiopian state systems. These state systems have varied in different historical periods characterized by different regimes pursuing different types of policies vis a vis pastoral groups, some policies reducing conflicts other increasing the risk of conflict relationships. In the current state context the issue of identities have become of increasing importance. As part of the adaptation of the groups is to cross borders into Kenya the Kenyan state situation is also of importance. In Kenya these groups meet members of groups that are also of the same ethnicity, both Oromo Borana and Somali Garri. With unrest also on the Kenyan side the Moyale border area emerges as a territory filled with protracted problems. Recent policies of commercialization through Chinese and Indian road building and open border policies might offer some hopes but the paper warns against any belief in easy solutions and plays the ball back to the table of national Ethiopian and Kenyan leaders and their wisdom.

To further illustrate the complexities involved in state and border making the paper by Munzoul Assal focuses on the new national border between Sudan and South Sudan. The case is particularly interesting for the simple reason that this border represents the latest example in the region of a nation state that was divided after long periods of civil war. The split of Ethiopia and Eritrea is an earlier example of the same. The title of the paper is "*Borders and Boundaries: Possibilities and Challenges along Sudan and South Sudan Borders*" and in it the split between Sudan and South Sudan is a starting point for a reflection by the author in which he offers conceptual clarification of that particular border situation, but also presents his views on how a potentially violent and conflict-ridden border might develop into a more peaceful type of relationship. Such relationships are both between the two new state centres in Khartoum and Juba, but also for people living on both sides of the borderline itself.

The paper by Rawan Hanafi Abdalla Mohammed, "*Those who ignore borders – the Rashaida in Sudan*", presents a case of a pastoral group who

are without a "homeland" and has become famous for the group's movement across borders and for their capacity to "ignore" borders. In that case we see perhaps the opposite dynamics from what we saw in the first two examples in the section. The Rashaida comes historically from Saudi Arabia and the paper discusses how they came to leave their homeland, how they crossed the Red Sea to the Sudan and how they have adapted in the Sudan obtaining grazing areas but also supplementing their incomes from pastoralism with smuggling. Discussing their current home area in eastern Sudan a series of adaptive strategies are described. The paper also shows how the participation of the Rashaida in the Sudanese civil war opened up for a possibility to become linked more closely to the formal post-conflict politico-administrative system in Sudan and that these emerging linkages indicate ways the Rashaida have been benefitting from the civil war itself, partly benefitting from their ability to cross borders.

A fourth paper, also from the Sudan, takes us again to the border areas towards the new South Sudanese nation state. In the border areas in the White Nile state the paper by Hager Hassan Moddathir entitled "*From administrative to national borders: consequences for the dual identification of the Silaim*" the author shows how the change from an administrative to a national border between Sudan and South Sudan has left the Arab pastoralist group of Silaim in a double squeeze. During the Anglo-Egyptian colonial period in Sudan (1898-1956) they were allocated grazing rights in the part of the territory that is now within South Sudan. After the succession of the south the Silaim have lost their grazing rights, both in the new legal framework of the new southern state, but also in the eyes of their former Shilluk neighbors. With continued fighting in the independent southern state the Silaim pastoralists moved northwards for security reason. But in entering the "new" Sudan they discovered that they were also marginalized there. In spite of their Arab descent they found that their tribal leadership had lost out in the historical changes that had occurred in the north, the most immediate change being the shift of power from Native Administration type of political system in which tribal elites were important to one in which power and influence went through membership in the ruling party of the Omer Bashir regime. These developments by which the borderline between north and south Sudan changed have left the Silaim doubly marginalized and the members of the earlier proud tribe today find themselves scattered around in the border areas north of the border, with a status that varies between "guests" and "refugees", living in camps, all representing new threats to the traditional tribal identity.

Also focusing on the border with South Sudan, but this time from within Ethiopia, the paper by Roza Asrar Yenus entitled "*The dynamics of cross-border cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan border: the case of Gambella regional state*" describes a different border situation. As indicated by the title the focus here is on the cattle raiding as well as child abduction that have been part of a traditional relationship between the south-Sudanese tribes of Murle and Nuer and also different Nuer clans

while both lived in the Jonglei part of South Sudan, but which now is going on across the border into Ethiopia. People from both groups are now also settled in Gambella region of Ethiopia, and given the proliferation of modern weapons such skirmishes take on a new and enlarged scale of violence and atrocities, making them into war-like events of concern to the nation states involved. Links to armed groups that are involved in political opposition and armed resistance against the nation states on both sides of the border also add to the involvement of the central states. Through processes of commercialization cattle raided and children abducted are now also increasingly sold in clandestine market oriented exchanges and no longer represent flows within traditional clan structures of the tribes involved, related for instance to bride-wealth and marriages. Attempts at disarming the groups have largely failed, and while successful in the more organized state of Ethiopia, the failure to disarm groups in the more anarchic South Sudan creates an increased vulnerability for people on the Ethiopian side of the borders. What the paper describes is that the traditional activities of cattle raiding and child abduction have now transformed into a complex and increasingly violent political process in which the national border shows a potential both to limit the violent relationships but also to enhance them.

Section IV: Health and Family Related Border Issues

Yet another group of papers presents human health issues as well as domestic relations. The first paper in this group is the one by Chris C. Opesen entitled "*Balancing actions on many "borders": experiences of mid-wives delivering infibulated teenage mothers at the Pokot Kenya-Uganda border corridor*". The paper focuses on the various choices made by mid-wives who are involved in the practices of female genital mutilation among the Pokot, choices that are affected by dynamics within many different "borders." One is the balancing on a national border between Uganda and Kenya, dividing the Pokot tribe into citizens of two states, thus having access to two different health systems with different bio-medical standards. Another balancing act for the mid-wives is how to handle the borderline between their own professional views and the views of the traditional Pokot female individuals who are involved in the activities related to female genital modification. The "balancing" between the medical capacities in the two countries and the force of traditional ways of carrying out the necessary actions is a key focus in the paper. As the activity is illegal in both countries the mid-wives are also up against legal systems that affect their choices as they balance between a formal legality and the spiritual and moral requirements of tradition relating to disease and death. All these balancing acts affect the result of the cutting involved in female genital modification, affecting the involved actors in multiple ways.

The paper by Bateganya Fred Henry, Aguto Opoya Yolam and Mukama Raymond is entitled "*Reality of Hepatitis B in Uganda: an anthropological investigation of access challenges to services among truckers and*

commercial sex workers at Malaba border" is again a border case between Uganda and Kenya. In this paper the focus is on Malaba border town which is a transport hub on the highway between Kampala and Nairobi in which a cosmopolitan inter-ethnic milieu of long-distance truck drivers, sex workers, clearing agents, boda-boda riders and local people engage in various activities. Such a border site will show a number of health related challenges, but the focus in this paper is on Hepatitis B, which emerges as a major cause for mortality and relates primarily to interaction between the truck drivers and sex workers. By interviewing people and observing various forms of interaction the paper uncovers how the awareness of the illness among the actors is very low, and that the illness is not limited to the actual actors involved in interaction but that it also spreads across the locality in ways that a deficient health system cannot cope with.

The third paper is this category is by Christine Tricia Kulabako and Peter Atekyereza with the title "*Families across borders: Effects of spousal migration on family relations among the Bamasaba-Babukusu in Lwakhakha.*" Here we get a broader discussion of the effects of cross-border migration by people from Lwakhakha border communities into the sister town by the same name on the Kenyan side of the border and further into Kenya. The result is, according to the authors, a reconfiguration of the family. Empirically we see that the ongoing migration is dominated by young women who mostly seek work as house maids in Kenya and that their absences negatively affect the family life back home. Children lack attention and husbands find themselves entering new and unfamiliar roles within the family without being able to replace the mothers. This also means a break in the traditional transfer of gender specific knowledge and attitudes to the children. Rather, fathers may take in a housemaid and start new sexual relationships. Children may also be left to the care of neighbors, especially in cases where such a neighboring family has a woman in the house. But mostly children tend to leave school and are left to spend the days along the border engaging in various activities there, some also illegal, thus being directly affected by life along the border. Cultural contexts also change for the family, by people leaving their traditional culture engaging in new forms of religion, both Islam and Pentecostalism, and leaving the traditional rituals that helped keep families together across gender and generation. The money brought in by this tradition of migration is rarely enough to cover for expenses back home and the general situation in Lwakhakha is one of increasing tensions, negatively affecting children.

Section V: The Tension between National Borders and Social Boundaries

As we saw in the case of Lwakhakha there are various kinds of social consequences of life along a national border, for instance as seen on family life. But the two last case studies presented in the book show other social effects as well, effects related to the border crossing and to how such border crossings interact with the social framework within the groups in

focus. The papers are thus important to the project as they provide us with detailed analyses of the interaction between "borders" and "boundaries." The first paper with such a focus is from the border areas between northern Uganda and South Sudan. The paper by Stevens Aguto Odongoh and Eria Olowo Onyango entitled "*Polluted bodies and border crossing among the Acholi*" gives us a vivid description of how young Acholi were abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army and then forced to engage as child soldiers in the civil war with the Ugandan government. After years away from home, and after having participated in unspeakable atrocities against their own people, some of these surviving kids return home, and the paper is a description and analysis of how they are reintegrated as "proper" Acholi. The rituals that signal such reintegration are both focused on the individuals in question, but also deals with the wider concerns about "pollution of the land", meaning that the civil war has left dead bodies on the land, and the land has seen atrocities which have polluted the ancestral tribal territory. There is thus a need also to cleanse the land itself and thereby provide a basis for the reestablishment of proper Acholi social relationships. Without proper ritual handling the Acholi will find themselves "betwixt and between". A detailed discussion of the various belief systems, rituals and social mechanisms whereby this homecoming and reintegration take place is put in the conceptual context of classic anthropological contributions by Mary Douglas and Victor Turner on ritual and social boundaries, more than the currently dominating literature on national borders.

The second paper is by Jerome Ntege, from Uganda, this time from Bundibugyo on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. The paper "*Social distancing in indigenous health-seeking knowledge for epidemic control used in Bundibugyo ebola outbreak*" is a detailed analysis of how various social mechanisms are set in motion to deal with a serious ebola outbreak in this border region. Such traditional mechanisms vary among the different tribes in the area, particularly local traditions in handling dead bodies. Such variation produced many deaths within one group, while another groups had few deaths, leading to accusations about one tribe poisoning the other and general accusations of witchcraft. Thus the paper brings the issue of ethnic groups and boundaries as an important explanatory factor for the local effects and local understandings of the epidemic. But whatever was the effect of local traditions, the "traditional" understandings were in tension with the modern medical understandings of what mechanisms were necessary in order to deal with a contagious disease in the area, thus also linking up with various understandings of traditional and modern knowledge systems. Thus local traditions of ritual and social organization were in tension with global medical science, organized in hospitals. This tension was perpetuated as people die both in the mountain villages and in the hospital wards, making impossible any verdict about which "health seeking knowledge" was most effective.

Comparative Aspects of the Studies: Some Generalizations

Having presented many of the case studies that were produced within our Borderland project, let us continue this introductory chapter by summarizing the contributions we have presented in some general categories in which we can see more clearly where we think the contributions lie. Based on the discussions in the various chapters we start by summarizing four points that we see as important in how our studies can point towards more general insights.

First, through comparative studies of the historical development of borderlines and boundaries of the three countries (Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia) we can elaborate on various cultural-historical backgrounds of the border areas. This will enable us to map the local political and economic adaptive forms that have emerged through periods of empires and nation states, or through periods of local tribal independence, in order to document local, regional and long distance exchanges of people, commodities and ideas, and to see such processes during various historical phases of globalization. Such a broad historical ethnography brings us beyond a "before and-now" type of historical perspective, and opens up for seeing the border processes along a "mobility-enclosure continuum", in which the opening and closing processes are ongoing, and defined within particular historical contexts.

Second, by comparing various types, degrees of stability and intensity of border-regimes, the categories of people and goods involved in border crossings, and their destination and purposes we can better understand the tension between local, everyday activities and concerns among border populations shaping their local realities, and their citizenship status within the various nation-states under study. Border areas take on new meanings and can provide both obstacles and new possibilities. The obstacles may be in the form of passports and visas, and even more violent ways, such as the mining of border areas to control and block movement. New possibilities may come through the legal opening of markets within new globalized economic contexts, or in the illegal activity of smuggling in which smaller actors try to capture some of the benefits from the same type of markets. Such new realities all result in the emergence of new imaginaries, new local organizational forms taking hold and new moral systems emerging. In the wake of such developments conflicts have also erupted and affected both internal and external sovereignties.

Thirdly, a comparative view on the impact of borders on identities is also important. This point relates closely to the point above, as the reformulations going on, in terms of sovereignties, and regimes of control, become contemporary examples of the problematic relationship between the political centres defining citizenship and the many local identities emerging along the borders that are the focus of this project. Seen from the perspective of the centres and their efforts at defining citizenship, such tensions emerge as the states link security concerns with various types of

threats. In this situation, borders are "securitized", with increased control. However, such "threats" may look differently when seen from the perspective of local border populations. Rather than focusing on the "external threats" local people might turn against the center and seek new languages for expressing their resistance to what they see as corrupt and exploitative regimes. In such a local perspective the relationships to groups on the other side may not represent threats but longstanding relationships of kinship, marriage and friendship. Or the groups across the border are "enemies" with violent tensions that border authorities cannot control. Linking such local cross-border realities with macro processes within the fields of religion and politics, be they Islam or Christianity, are seen to have profound implications for the different "identity games" occurring along borders.

A related dynamics can be seen in the economic field with reference to the effects of borders on local livelihoods. Thus a fourth point is to be aware of how new markets and new commodities bring new types of moral economic debates, and changing economic realities produce new forms of inequalities, challenges to old winners, bringing new groups to the table of privileges. All embedded in local understandings producing imaginaries charged with new meanings. This might help us challenge current views that see problems in regions such as ours as defined by a narrative of "incomplete transition" to free market economy and so on. What is going on is not any evolutionary "transition" but a battle of many social and political forces represented in the regions, forces being local, regional, national and international and global and related to gender, social organization and various principles of stratification. We are not looking at transitions, but at power games that take place in small places, but are concerned with big issues.

A fifth point could have been added here. We could state that the studies have shown that the border areas in the three countries are areas in "crisis." Rather than jump to this conclusion we see a need to problematize the concept of crisis itself. Our conclusion on this point is that the usefulness of this term is limited. This is so because people are not "adapting" to the crisis, they are shaping the crisis itself. Hence, rather than join the crisis-discourse, we should rather look in the direction of Stephen C. Lubkemann's argument in his book "Culture in Chaos" (2008) in which he shows how people pursue their life projects, engage in interpersonal negotiations and participate in social struggles, also in the so-called periods of crisis. Local people live in communities that have been "knocked about" by a series of instabilities, shortages, constraints and blockages, some external in origin, others from within, but all promoting incoherence to an extent in which it is difficult to know what is "normal" and what is part of the "crisis." To local people it is a game about life and death, for themselves and for their families, and it is a game that is continuous. Hence, people's reactions are no longer part of extraordinary survival strategies during times of crises, but rather regular ways of doing things.

Take cross-border trade as an example. Soldiers, policemen, militias at checkpoints or elsewhere, commodities of legal or illegal types, all require dealings with relevant individuals, some public others non-public, some subject to laws others not. The whole notion of public power changes in the process and daily transactions become a constant dealing in which the threat of transgressions of rights or physical abuse have to be dealt with in various ways, mostly characterized by corruption, like bribing officials, or by paying for rights that should be available in public services. What we see come out of this are the so-called "do-it-yourself bureaucracies." And the civil servants are also part of the game. The lack of regular payment in the public sector represents an insecure context for civil servants, obliging people to negotiate solutions to their uncertainties and instabilities. In sum, a situation of extraordinary tension and nervousness prevails, forming subjectivities. We can thus not "save" the people from the crisis because they are the crisis. But the states in these areas nor the international community do not see this. They see people without agency, being in the middle of a "crisis", needing our help. Or they see "rebels" that threaten the state form in the countries, a threat that both the local states and the international community regard as dangerous developments.

As we recognize the complexities in this we do not conclude that our project can solve all problems pointed out. But we do think we have produced relevant information and knowledge that can play a role in the wider understanding of the various border related problems the papers have dealt with. This relevance has been seen both in the increased attention to border studies within the three anthropology departments engaged in the project and into the wider university contexts of the three universities. But most of all it was seen in the meetings we had with border populations and the border officials during the "border meetings" between our staff and students and local border populations and border officials that were organized in particular areas. Our experience was that the studies have contributed to debates on the specific border related problems in different borderland areas. We also saw an increasing awareness among local people that such discussions should not be allowed to be dominated by the powerful elites but that a university based project such as this one also might open for the participation of and give voice to local and marginalized groups. Clearly, there is a need for a counter-narrative to the security and sovereignty oriented discourses of the states.

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Section I

Movements and Connectivities: Studies of Migrants and Refugees in Border Towns and Refugee Camps

Chapter 2

Movements, Relations, and Land Contestations along the Ethio-Sudan Border in Metema Yohannes
Kiya Gezahegne

Introduction

On July 03 2018, the Borkena news website reported 'a skirmish along the Ethiopia-Sudan border', which left five Ethiopian farmers dead and many others injured on both sides of the border. It also led to a brief confrontation between Ethiopian and Sudanese military forces. Such episodes of irregular and unpremeditated conflict between farmers and/or soldiers are common in the border town of Metema Yohannes and its neighboring areas. For the border between Ethiopia and the Sudan has not been demarcated, "the cause for such conflict is the claim over the arable land", says the head of West Gondar Zone, Ato Zelalem Lijalem1. To put an end to these conflicts, attempts of border demarcation were made several times, in 2008, 2012 and in 2016 but consequently failed.

In the meantime, the borderland communities along the Ethio-Sudan border whose lives are shaped by the simultaneous interaction along and across the border and the free flow of people and goods take advantage of the social and economic benefits the border provides. In fact, the communities on both sides of the Ethio-Sudan border exhibit a common border culture and identity. The connection, network, knowledge and information by different people is established through movement across and along the border which define and reshape the relationship between the two communities living along the border, both in Metema Yohannes and Galabat. Both Metema Yohannes and the town of Galabat on the Sudanese side have served as transit points for many who cross into the Sudan and Ethiopia. They have also been a destination for internal migrants who later make their living in the towns. Thus, in Ethiopia, such movements have defined the social, cultural, economic, and political foundation of Metema Yohannes. As residents of Metema Yohannes say, "the town is not of the Amhara or the Oromo. It is a town of all Ethiopians. You find all cultures that people bring with them to this town. That is why we call it "Little Ethiopia".

But, not all movements are welcomed along this border. Of this, settlements and other movements that push the 'alleged' border on both sides are countered with violent responses. It is for this reason that residents of Metema Yohannes have urged the government to demarcate the border

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[1] https://www.borkena.com/2018/07/03/skirmish-broke-out-between-sudanese-soldiers-and-ethiopian-farmers-along-the-border/

between the two countries. And this paper discusses how different forms of mobility across the border are related to different types of processes; some peaceful others violent. Before proceeding, however, few caveats are in order. Most of the data included in this paper is an account from one side of the border, from Metema Yohannes. Many of the claims are made by the public residing in the town and are in most cases unsubstantiated by documents. However, these claims are part of the popular rhetoric and sometimes taken as a cause of conflict across the border.

Situating the Metema Border

In the present administrative structure, Metema Yohannes town is part of the west Gondar administrative zone of Amhara National Regional State. Located about 975 Kms northwest of Addis Ababa, Metema Yohannes became a town administration in 2015 after being governed for many years as a *kebele*2 under Metema *woreda*3. The *woreda* as well as the town are mainly characterized by the border shared with the Sudan. Though the administrative boundary of the town is not clearly identified, the *woreda* is said to share more than 60 Kms of its boundary with the Sudan. On the other side of the border lies the Gadarif state of the Sudan. Connected by an asphalt road across the border, Metema Yohannes and the corresponding Sudanese border town of Galabat or otherwise known as Suk El-Gallabat exhibit the long shared history and trade relationship between the two countries. For long, the two towns have been a corridor for the long distance trade that runs through the western part of Ethiopia.

Though the town is mainly known as a trade center, the livelihood of the surrounding areas is predominantly based on agriculture. A majority of the population in the woreda are agro-pastoralists who depend mainly on rain-fed agriculture that occurs during the summer period between June and September. Since the town is mainly found in the lowland agro-ecological zone, the area entertains high temperature throughout the year with a mean annual temperature and rainfall of 32.98°C and 924.2mm respectively. In such climatic condition, the vegetation in the area consists of acacia tree, gum Arabic and bush scrubs. Regardless, the plain landscape of the area and fertile soil, together with irrigation, makes it possible for large-scale agricultural production of cash crops such as sorghum, sesame and cotton. The woreda has in fact been the major center of cotton production in Ethiopia since the 1950s.

As a consequence of the rich agricultural resource, Metema is known as the "Golden state". Given the existence of large-scale sesame and cotton plantations, the area contributes significantly to the export market. Besides cash crops, Metema is also known for its incense and gum production. For these reasons, there are more than five investment zones surrounding the

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2 *Kebele* is the smallest administrative unit in the Ethiopian government structure

3 *Woreda* is district level administrative unit, next to *kebele*

town of Metema Yohannes. Contraband trade and human smuggling is also one of the main livelihood sources for people residing in Metema. Furthermore, commercial sex is also prevalent.

So far employment opportunities for the youth, as is in other parts of the country, have been non-existent. This is further exacerbated by the low literacy level of the youth in the town. As a solution, the government is planning to build an inland port at the border, 1.5km into both countries. Though this is believed to displace settlements such as Jingera4, the government insists the inland port will create job opportunities for the youth and other residents. It is also expected to make the active import/export transaction across the border smooth and more suitable for businessmen.

Though not well developed, the town's proximity to the *woreda* and zone center, Gende Wuha, has enabled it to be provided with infrastructures such as water and electricity and personnel to fill government positions in the town administration. This otherwise would not have been possible because of the mobile population of the town. In fact, the volatile nature of its population has been considered as an impediment to government's attempt in providing services.

The total population of the town has been highly irregular and unpredictable because of the constant flow and movement of people from and to the town. Therefore, it has been difficult to have a concrete figure of how many residents live in the town each year. The town's economy is predominantly based on trade and service, which is related to the large numbers of migrants that come to or cross through Metema Yohannes. As the town is located on the transit to the Sudan, Metema Yohannes has a significant satellite population of migrants. During the rainy season, when there are farm activities, the population increases dramatically following the influx of daily laborers who come to the town to work on plantations and farmlands.

Records at the *woreda* office show that in the year 2015/16, Metema Yohannes had a total population of 25,008 of which 12,658 were male and 12,350 females. The demographic statistics of 2017/18 were yet to be revealed by December 2018. Resettlement of people from other parts of the region to the woreda in the years of 2003, 2004 and 2005 is believed to have further increased the total population of the area. In any case, however, Metema woreda still has the lowest population density in the region of less than 100 persons per square kilometer.

Among the population, the three largest ethnic groups living in the town are the Amhara, the Qimant, and people from Tigray Region. However,

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[4] Jingera is a neighborhood in Metema Yohannes adjecent to the border where majority of commercial sex work establishments are located. The area is also known for its active economic transaction in trade and other service sectors.

because of unrest in the area in the year 2015/16, the number of people from Tigray National Regional State decreased considerably as many of them were believed to have fled from the town. The establishment of a new kebele, unofficially acknowledged for the Qimant5, on the other hand increased the number of Qimants living in the town. The growing trend of migration from Oromiya National Regional State is also adding to the Oromo population in the town, which was previously insignificant in number. Though historically it was the Gumuz who were considered to be the original inhabitants of the area, new settlers have pushed back members of this ethnic group. They now account for 2.1% of the total population in the woreda, residing in only three rural kebeles, namely Aftit, Tumet and Shinfa.

Local Border Crossing

Contestation over where the border lies is a cause of serious tensions and conflicts that occur at different times and places between Sudan and Ethiopia. As a recipe for peace, the Metema community has been pushing for the border demarcation, but no such demarcation has occurred since the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. According to local elders of Metema Yohannes, because of the contested border on both sides, names of places are now being changed to avoid claims over lands within the Ethiopian territory. For instance, the *woreda* capital, which is locally called and widely known as Shehdi, an Arabic name, was changed to GendeWuha in 2004.

According to officials in the *woreda*, border conflicts have been observed since 1996 in particular, when a Sudanese military camp was established in Mendaya, within the Ethiopian territory. This was a result of the change of regimes in Ethiopia6, a change that left the border unattended and exploited by the Sudanese. In these areas, things further escalated in 2013, 2014 and 2015 when conflicts erupted between the Sudanese military force and Ethiopian farmers over land claims.

Land therefore emerges as a key factor in the border conflicts and should be explored together with the dynamics related to this. For people whose livelihood is mainly based on agriculture, the average land a farmer has in Metema woreda is five hectare. Except for investors, local farmers' landholding is reported to be insignificant compared to the landholdings in

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5By the time this article was written, the region was to approve 69 *kebeles* as part of Qemant special zone. Of these, eight of them are located in Metema *woreda.*

6 This time in the history of Ethiopia is when the transition government took power after the fall of the military Derg regime (1974-1991) in 1991. The transition government stayed in power for five years later handing it over to EPRDF in 1995 reconstituting the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

the past[7]. Land registration by the government in 2013 has left many with few and insufficient hectares of land since many failed to register all the land they owned in fear of government confiscation. In other parts of the country as well, particularly in the Amhara National Regional State, land shortage has been observed. Small landholdings of less than a hectare or absence of land coupled with environmental factors has pushed farmers to seek for land elsewhere. The option for many is what is locally known as "*Mofer Zemet*".

Mofer Zemet[8] is a practice of farming on 'unoccupied' land in Metema and its surrounding areas, and on the Sudanese side of the border. Due to lack of money to rent land on either side of the border, farmers resort to *Mofer Zemet* which enables them access land for free. However, the farmers engaging in this risk getting evicted or getting their crop destroyed by residents who have claim over the land.

According to Metema town administration and security affairs officer, the Ethiopian government allows *Mofer Zemet* so long as it is within the Ethiopian territory. Nonetheless, because of land certification and land lease programs, there is no more open land accessible to the *Mofer Zemet* on the Ethiopian side, and this has forced them to cross over and farm on Sudanese land. The absence of a physical border demarcation and historical claims by Ethiopians over land on the Sudanese side, are both taken as justifications for acts such as the *Mofer Zemet*. Consequently, farmers therefore push into the Sudanese territory and cultivate land they claim is part of Ethiopia, which, according to them, has been 'unlawfully occupied' by the Sudanese. The *Mofer Zemet* farmers move about 30km into Sudanese territory in search of farmlands. Every year, from unofficial government records, it is estimated that up to 1000 Ethiopian farmers farm on Sudanese land illegally. The numbers increased in 2015 when the government allowed and encouraged *Mofer Zemet*.

Besides scarcity of 'open' land, which drives the practice of *Mofer Zemet*, land is also taken as an identity marker. When defending the land, residents of Metema Yohannes believe they are also defending their own identity. Linking this to the historic Battle of Metema[9] where Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889) fought for the sovereignty of the country (Bahru 2001), it

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[7] At present, the average landholding of farmers in Metema is above the country average, which is one hectare. This, however, is considered to be low relative to past landholding, in which the smallest amount was 10 hectares per farmer.

[8] The word *Mofer Zemet* not only refers to the practice of farming but also to the people/farmers who are engaged in such activity.

[9] The Battle of Metema (March 1889), sometimes called Battle of Galabat, was fought between Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia and the Dervishes/ Mahadist Sudanese. The war ended with the death of the Ethiopian emperor. This, the death of the emperor, in the local narratives, is taken as martyrdom to defend the country and the Orthodox Christianity religion.

becomes the duty and responsibility of the border people to fight back Sudanese who have been encroaching into the Ethiopian territory. *Mofer Zemet* is, thus, acknowledged by the public as a way of taking back what was once part of Ethiopia.

This attitude is also directed towards the Ethiopian regime. It is believed by many that Ethiopian land was 'given' to the Sudanese by the EPRDF government. The recent encounters between Ethiopian and Sudanese military forces over a settlement of the Sudanese in Delelo10 were taken as evidence to this claim11. Regardless of the historical contestations over the border, taking over farmlands and livestock raiding across the border became a common phenomenon in the area over the past two decades under the EPRDF regime.

Seasonal Workers: The *Saluge*

Another common type of people crossing the border are daily laborers known as the "*Saluge*". They arrive in the town of Metema Yohannes mainly during the different farming seasons to work on large-scale plantations and farmlands both on the Ethiopian and Sudanese side of the border. These are usually young men whose numbers increase in July when schools are closed and when the rain-fed agriculture begins. Many of them are students mainly from South Gondar and Gojjam area, who come to Metema to earn some money to cover school expenses.

Among these daily laborers, newcomers to the area are called *Gofer* until they are well networked and become more familiar with the area and the language. After a while and with familiarization during the second season, they become *Saluge*, indicating they are no longer "newcomers" but rather well experienced and connected daily laborers. The *Saluge*, compared to the *Gofer*, thus, are more efficient in negotiating terms of employment with the Sudanese and Ethiopian employers. They also minimize risks that can be encountered while crossing the border. Some of them ask for a legal contract agreement and use *Tasrih*12 to get to Sudan. In most cases, however, workers contact employers informally; and thus many cross the border illegally, disguising themselves as Metema residents. In such cases, it is reported that many lose their lives or come back home empty handed. The Sudanese militias, who are reported to be working in cohort with Sudanese investors, usually corruptly, appropriate the wage earned by the

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[10] Delelo is one of the investment zones in Metema *woreda,* located close to Metema Yohannes town.

[11] https://www.borkena.com/2018/07/03/skirmish-broke-out-between-sudanese-soldiers-and-ethiopian-farmers-along-the-border/

[12] *Tasrih* is Sudanese temporary residence ID, which is processed by the Immigration Office in Galabat. The ID is usually issued to Ethiopians who seek to enter the country temporarily for court cases or family reunification. Pastoral border communities who search for their livestock on the other side of the border are also given *Tasrih*.

Saluge during their stay in the Sudan. The number of deaths, among the *Saluge*, has also increased through the years. One elder in Metema Yohannes explains the situation as follows. "If you walk through the desert just across the border, you will see dead bodies of these young workers; bodies that are unaccounted for. The desert of Metema Yohannes is full of corpses. Only God knows how many have lost their lives trying to get money. No one knows about their journey and no one knows about their status either. Sometimes I wonder what their families are feeling, not being sure whether they are; alive or dead". The cause of their death, many believe to be ethnic conflicts between the *Saluge* themselves.

Human Smuggling into the Sudan

Following the 2013 mass deportation of 'illegal' Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia, with the closure of official private employment agencies/bureaus that used to facilitate labour migration to the Middle East, what is called "the western route" to and through the Sudan has become more significant among migrants. The number of Ethiopian migrants using this route to the Sudan and Europe increased remarkably from 2014 onwards, regardless of the danger and human right violations experienced along the route (Carter and Rohwerder 2016).

However, migration through this route to Sudan and further is not a recent phenomenon. Mass flow of people through Metema was observed during the Derg regime because of famine, civil war, political instability and the repressive political rule in the country (Faiz 2013; Hailemichael 2014; Grabska 2016). The resettlement program in Metema and other nearby woredas bordering the Sudan further made this route easily available as a gateway out of the country. According to Bariagaber (1997), political conflict and war with Eritrea created displacement of thousands of people, particularly Eritreans, who migrated to the Sudan through Metema Yohannes. These migrants of the 1980s and 1990s, according to Grabska (2016), are refugees and political migrants, unlike the present 'economic' migrants. With the discovery of oil in the Sudan in the 1990s, the rapidly expanding economy in that country emerged as important pull factors for such economic migrants (Faiz 2013).

In addition to the longstanding migration trend, the cultural similarity and geographical proximity encouraged migrants to use this route to the Sudan. According to a UNHCR study conducted in 2013, an estimated 50 to 100 Ethiopians crosses the Ethiopia-Sudan border in the northeast everyday (Zakir 2017). In 2011, ILO reported the number of Ethiopian migrants travelling to Libya through Sudan to be around 75,000-100,000 annually (Anteneh 2011). In 2014, the number of migrants using the western route was reported to be between 18,000 and 37,000 per year (Frouws 2014). Zakir (2017) puts this estimate at 14,400 to 32,400 migrants annually in the year 2015.

During the militarist Derg regime (1974-1991), people fled the dictatorial administration and unlawful prosecution to the Sudan and further to Europe and the States. Though many expected the route to be of less importance to Ethiopian migrants after the downfall of the Derg and the return of many of the political refugees back to Ethiopia, migration through Metema to the Sudan has shown no decline. In fact, in spite of the strict border control set by both governments, Metema still continued to be the chosen route for those who aspire to go to the Sudan and further to Europe. Irrespective of the risks faced along the route, which in most cases are anticipated and well prepared for by the migrants, the number of people moving to and across the Sudan has increased over time, no matter what actions have been introduced by both governments in response to irregular migration.

As Triulzi (2013:215) noted, "every 'closure' of a route simply means the opening of an alternative one, usually more costly in terms of financial transactions and human lives". Triulzi further argues that migration routes are established and reestablished according to the different security and economic situations, a claim that is confirmed by developments along the Metema route to the Sudan.

For irregular migrants, according to an assessment by IOM (2017), there are mainly four human trafficking sites identified in the woreda, which includes of Metema-Galabat, Delelo-Sennar, Lominat-Fogera, and Tumet-Mendoka. Of these, the main exit routes for migrants have been identified to be Metema Yohannes, Shenfa, and Kokit.

In terms of convenience and ease in crossing the border, migrants prefer Metema Yohannes as this gives access to the main road from Addis Ababa to Khartoum. Maneuvering the given freedom to move within the country, potential migrants cross the different check points along the road using this constitutional right. But the relevance of the border in Metema Yohannes town as a free gate for irregular migrants has now also been widened. Irregular migration is now to be found in the neighboring border towns such as Shenfa, Kokit and Humera, where border control is relatively absent. These migration outlets are, however, usually preferred by migrants whose destination is Libya or Egypt and travel across the Sudan without getting to Khartoum. The selection of these routes taken by migrants also differs in accordance with the place of origin of migrants. Faiz (2013) documented that many Ethiopians usually use the Metema-Galabat route, whereas for Ethiopians from the north and Eritreans, the Humera border is more favored. Further south, the Damazin border is used mainly by Ethiopians from Benishangul Gumuz.

Shinfa was also once popular among irregular migrants who crossed to the Sudan, though the town is distant from the border and migrants are expected to walk five to six hours on foot through the desert. For those who use the Delelo-Sennar route, Kokit was the center of migrants who have to walk to Delelo and then cross the border mixed together with daily laborers. In 2015, according to an IOM (2017) report, migrants used to be

smuggled across Delelo by using tractors. Alternative routes were also established in the outskirts of Addis Alem for those who wanted to avoid the towns along the Delelo-Sennar route. Recently, however, after the 2016 and 2017 state of emergency and the crumbling of the Sudanese economy in 2018, the migration flow to the Sudan has declined giving way to other routes such as South Africa.

The Process and Experiences along the Routes

There are three main ways identified in Metema through which migrants cross the border, namely short term visa, *Tasrih*, and the desert route. Irregular migrants with false documentation as Metema residents can exploit the easy access to short term visas for entering the Sudan. Large numbers of migrants leaving the country, however, are deemed 'legal', with temporary tourist visas issued at the Sudan embassy in Addis Ababa. Processing a visa at the Sudan Embassy takes only five days and costs around 980ETB (36 USD) 13 . Other costs include passport fee (600ETB/22USD) and transportation (1400ETB/52USD) when using a direct bus from Addis Ababa to Khartoum. This sum is reduced to around 500ETB /19USD if people use local buses from one destination to another. On a daily basis, 40 to 90 Ethiopian migrants enter the Sudan by using these temporary tourist visas (Zeyneba 2017). Of the migrants taking this route using visa, the majority are women. The Metema route, according to Anteneh (2011) and Jamie (2012), served mainly women going for domestic work in Sudan. Some Ethiopian women in Sudan are also engaged in selling tea and coffee on the streets and some are involved in commercial sex work (Anteneh 2011; Shewit 2013; Zakir 2017). Young Ethiopian men, whose destination is Europe through Libya and Egypt, also exploit the tourist-visa option (Kuschminder and Siegel 2012; Frouws 2014; Strachan 2016).

A second 'legal' option for these migrants is to cross the border with *Tasrih*. This is a temporary Sudanese ID, which costs less but requires network with Sudanese government officials/employees/police officers/ citizens. This ID can be obtained at the Immigration office in Galabat. The process of getting *tasrih* can take from a day up to a week and usually involves bribing Sudanese officers. The ID is issued to Ethiopians who seek to enter the country temporarily for court cases or family reunification. Members of herding border communities who search for their livestock on the other side of the border are also given *tasrih*. These circumstances and opportunities are, however, exploited by migrants to get into the Sudan where the ID enables them to travel freely in the country and search for temporary jobs.

But such legal options do not imply that irregular migration and human smuggling has stopped or declined. Networks of brokers are well established in Metema Yohannes and different routes and mechanisms are

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[13] 1USD≈27ETB

used to cross the border which makes it difficult to track and control migration flow by concerned government bodies. This represents the third option of border crossing, the irregular routes through the desert, with the help of brokers.

The network of brokers stretches from migrants' place of origin up to Metema and further in the Sudan and Libya/Egypt (Faiz 2013; Barasa and Fernandez 2015; Majidi and Oucho 2016, Zakir 2017). Their activities are linked to a chain of local brokers, government officials, police/ border security and customs who are all involved in forging kebele IDs for migrants, inform on security checks and offer assistance that may help individuals cross the border undetected. Brokers do not only serve fellow Ethiopians. Migrants from Eritrea and Somaliland are also provided with Ethiopian residence kebele ID to help them navigate freely in the woreda and Metema Yohannes town.

According to the accounts of Metema Yohannes town chief of police, with the desert border crossing, a recent phenomenon in Metema Yohannes has developed of selling migrants as slaves among traffickers and brokers. A single migrant can cost up to 20,000ETB (740USD) when sold to traffickers on the Sudanese side. Besides selling of migrants, another new development observed in the town and its surrounding areas is brokers protecting themselves from the police and security forces by carrying guns and heavy arms. Sometimes, they exchange fire with security forces while smuggling people across the border through the desert. Many people die following such shoot-outs.

To avoid such confrontation with security forces, migrants steer clear of the main roads and walk on foot through the desert, which begins close to the Ethiopia-Sudan border. They stay in safe houses largely located in rural settlements along the road. These safe houses are also found in Metema Yohannes town. Residential houses and hotels are used to hide migrants during the day before they commence their journey in the evening. They also stay in these safe houses until all migrants within a broker's network reach Metema Yohannes. For such services and their discretion, house owners are paid around 500ETB (18USD) per migrant.

Once out of Ethiopia, the Raishaida, a pastoral ethnic group living in Eritrea and Sudan, are known for trafficking migrants into and across the Sudan (Trieber 2013; Majidi and Oucho 2016). They are also accused by woreda police officials of being involved in organ trafficking. Many migrants avoid the desert and choose to make their journey through Metema Yohannes to avoid the Raishaida. Migrants also avoid the desert route during the rainy summer season. The flow of Gwang River, the dense and long thorny bushes in the desert make movement difficult for migrants during this season.

According to Triulzi (2013), migrants know from the start that the journey through Sudan is long and difficult. And thus they prepare themselves for

the risks anticipated along the route and at various destinations. Though many succeed in reaching Sudan, some migrants return to Ethiopia unable to continue their journey through the desert because of thirst, hunger, sexual abuse and language barrier; some also get arrested by security forces on either side of the border. Metema Yohannes has thus become a place where stranded migrants either in Ethiopia or in the Sudan are detained. As a result, emergency migration response center was set up in 2016 by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to assist Ethiopian migrants and deportees. IOM, however, only provides this service to migrants who are willing to return to their place of origin. Those who refuse to do so are detained in the police station for a while and then get released. The Metema Yohannes community also financially and emotionally supports victims of irregular migration and stranded migrants who come back from the Sudan.

In this situation of increased movement of migrants, the woreda department of labor and social affairs in collaboration with IOM, police, immigration and customs office are working together to stop irregular migration and smuggling/trafficking of people across the border. Awareness creation and sensitization programs were launched to educate people on the risks migrants go through and thus to encourage potential migrants not to get involved in migration nor in the trafficking of other migrants. There is also the use of local community structures to expose brokers and smugglers. For instance, to assist legal migrants into the Sudan, in 2014, the government established associations of individuals who previously used to be *sheqaba*14. The associations nowadays receive migrants at the bus station and take them to a temporary shelter near the border and immigration office. They then assist them with currency exchange and take them to the bus that goes to the Sudan. If needs be, they take them to hotels. These associations are thought to keep migrants safe and away from brokers. However, because of corruption, migrants are smuggled through the irregular channels established through the interaction developed between traffickers and 'assistants' who claim to provide the services of legal agencies.

Regardless of the risks and government efforts, throughout the year, migrants have been observed crossing the border into and from the Sudan. In 2017, as seen in documents from immigration office, 77 to 120 legal migrants crossed the border daily. Irregular migrants who use the desert route are also large in number, though the statistics is unknown. Recently, however, given the economic turmoil and inflation in the Sudan, the number of legal migrants who cross the border into Sudan has drastically decreased. In turn, the number of Ethiopian returnees from Sudan has increased in the past five months.

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[14]*Sheqaba* is a term popular in Metema Yohannes to refer to young people who are engaged in any kind of brokering. In this case, the *Sheqabas* are intermediary brokers who assist migrants to cross the border. They sometimes blackmail main brokers when found smuggling migrants across the border.

Border Crossing in Search of Sex

In Metema Yohannes, Jingera area is known for the large number of commercial sex workers in the bars located in the neighborhood. Otherwise known as *yeqeletew mender*, the red zone neighborhood entertains not only the Saluge but also Sudanese men who are the main customers for most women working there. In fact, these women have settled in close proximity to the border to accommodate Sudanese customers. Because of the open border crossing, there is large number of Sudanese men who come into Metema Yohannes. These men are seen as tourists and are believed to boost the town's economy, especially in the service sector. 'Sex tourism' and hotel services have nowadays became common in the area, accounting for the bulk of income earned by residents.

This booming business of commercial sex lures women from other parts of the country into the town. Most of the women engaged in this line of work are returnees from the Sudan who decided to stay in Metema Yohannes. Others usually have escaped from other places to the town for different reasons but end up working as commercial sex workers. There are also commercial sex workers who only come to the town during peak season, usually following the Saluge. And thus, during the farming season, a large flow of commercial sex workers from neighboring towns is observed. It is also noteworthy to mention that many of the women engaged in commercial sex work in Metema Yohannes are not locals. They themselves are internal or international migrants, who take on this line of work while moving along the routes described above.

Commercial sex work is also illegally and informally practiced on the Sudanese side of the border. Following the free movement across the border, more than half of the female population from Metema Yohannes, though not statistically supported, work in Galabat during the day selling tea, coffee and juice. They are reported to earn up to 4,000ETB per month. Some of the teahouses, however, are used as a façade for commercial sex work establishments.

A History of Mobility and Cross-Border Activities: Border Relations of Friendship

Movement and mobility in the town of Metema Yohannes is its very existence and because it is a border town, movement across the border is a basic factor in the town's development. For example, the town became well known after returnees who fled to the Sudan during the Derg regime were resettled in Metema Yohannes following their arrival in 1991. The lagen, as they are called, and other government resettlements from other parts of Ethiopia breathed life into Metema Yohannes as an important border town on the Ethio-Sudan border. Historically, Metema is also known as the western outlet for the long distance trade that runs from Ethiopia to West and North Africa. Thus, throughout history, movement of people across the border had its own mark on Metema Yohannes.

At present, mobility of goods and people strongly affect the socio-economic structure of the town. The Sudanese come to the town for trade and entertainment while Ethiopians spend their day in Galabat selling tea and coffee. Contraband trade takes place across the border every day and provides necessary goods for Metema Yohannes residents. Import/export traders spend most of their days between the two countries custom offices trying to get their goods across the border. Aspiring migrants come to Metema Yohannes with the hope to get to the Sudan and change their lives. Returnees' come home through this border point. Daily laborers seek for jobs on either side of the border. People from other parts of Ethiopia come in search of 'open' land for farming. In all these interactions along and across the border lie conflict and/or tension. At the same time, one can observe strong cultural, social, and economic ties.

In spite of the problematic and often violent examples of cross-border mobilities that have been discussed in this paper, I want to end with the observation that for the people who actually live on the border, and in Metema Yohannes town, there are strong cross cultural and economic engagements between communities on the Ethiopian and Sudan border. The two border communities of Metema Yohannes and Gallabat have a long history of intermarriages and shared cultural and social understanding. Locally, the problems are blamed on 'outsiders', the *Mofer Zemet*, the *Saluge*, the recent waves of migrants and commercial sex workers. They all represent 'outsiders' who pose a threat to the relatively peaceful coexistence between the two border communities. The government is also to be blamed, according to locals. The alleged transfer made by the ruling party of Ethiopian land to the Sudanese has also caused a problem that has negatively affected the local cross-border relationships. The Sudanese are also blamed since not all who come from across the border come for legal trade but for sex, thus contributing to the widespread prevalence of commercial sex work. This in turn has led to a high divorce rate in Metema Yohannes, as the widespread practice of commercial sex work is believed to have encouraged infidelity. Or as the saying goes: "Metema marriage is like Chinese goods; it won't last long".

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Chapter 3

Borderland Entrepreneurs or Victims of Gendered Mobility: Commercial Sex Workers in Metema Yohannes Town

Tsedale Kinfu

Introduction

"Commercial sex work" (CSW) has been manifested in different ways across time and space in human history. The practice has been known in Ethiopia since ancient times. Some sources associate the beginnings of CSW with the movement of kings, nobles and warlords, the establishment of cities and the development of trade. According to Pankhurst, there are indications that an institution related to 'prostitution' existed at royal camps of the Middle Ages, at the seventeenth century city of Gondar, and later at commercial centers on the periphery of the empire (Pankhurst, 1974:159). Among the factors that contributed to the expansion of CSW in Ethiopia, trades and events around borders can be mentioned. As Taylor, a British traveller (in Pankhurst, 1974) stated, the growth of trade in the border of Sudan and the presence of Egyptians in the boundary of Ethiopia and Sudan led to the development of a relatively highly commercialized 'prostitution' in the area. By then, even though there are debates on how 'prostitution' was professionalised in Gondar town, travellers' journals noted the presence of 'prostitution' and explained Gondar as a 'town of pleasure' (ibid). The women, during this time, were regarded as courtesans and known for their elegance. They were neither shamed nor degraded for what they did (ibid:160). As mentioned above, the history of CSW in Ethiopia started in Gondar, which is only 191 kilometers (kms) from the study area, Metema-Yohannes, a town situated along the Ethiopian and Sudanese border. As historical studies have shown, Metema was serving as a route for trade, slaves and CSW, and I see continuities in all fields. As Pankhurst (ibid) discussed, it was the Ethiopian women who used to cross the Ethiopia-Sudan border to sell sex, but this is not the case in the present time. Now, it is the Sudanese men who cross the border to have pleasure with the Ethiopian women. This border town was also serving as a route for slave trade. While slave trade is over, currently, the town is a prominent town used for illegal migration by Ethiopia women and men who are crossing the border to the Gulf-states and Europe (Jamie, 2013). The failure of women's journey to the destination country or facing financial problem may result in joining CSW in the town. Likewise, the existing trade transaction between the two countries, Ethiopia and Sudan, is also playing a role for the high prevalence of CSW in the study area. Therefore, this paper sets out to describe the features of CSW at the border, specifically in Metema Yohannes town. Let us start by describing the research site.

Research Methods

Metema Yohannes is a border town of Ethiopia. As shown in the map presented in the first chapter the town is located in the Northwest part of the country situated in Metema Woreda, North Gondar Zone of the Amhara Regional State. During my research stay there I made use of different types of data collection, both secondary and primary data sources. The bulk of data were gathered through fieldwork conducted in two phases from 1st-31st August 2015 and from 1st March 2016 to 15th April 2016. The ethnographic data were generated through a combination of qualitative research methods involving systematic observation, ethnographic conversations, in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and extended case studies.

The systematic observation was conducted to capture valuable information on how CSW has been practiced and the day-to-day interaction of CSWs among themselves, with their clients (Sudanese and Habesha) and the local community. The ethnographic conversations were held with some people while walking in the study area, in entertaining places, and other occasional places where the situation allowed us to do so.

The in-depth interviews (IDIs) were held with 32 key informants (16 CSWs15 and 16 community elders and religious leaders). The IDIs were conducted based on separate interview guides prepared for CSWs, community elders and religious leaders. The length of each interview session ranged between 45 and 90 minutes, and it had been conducted in different places including dorms of CSWs, bars, night clubs, church yards, Kebele and Mahibrehiwot for Social Development (MSD) offices. Moreover, five focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with CSWs, female teachers, religious leaders and community elders. The first group discussion was held with home-based CSWs, the second group was with establishment-based CSWs, and the third group was held with CSWs who visited Mahibrehiwot for Social Development (MSD) to get services. The fourth FGD was held with female teachers at Metema Yohannes Primary School and the fifth FGD was held with religious leaders and community elders at the Kebele office. Each of the five FGDs had 5-8 members and each FGD was conducted based on separate FGD guides prepared for CSWs, religious leaders and community elders. The purpose of conducting FGD with different parts of the society was to have insights on how different members of the society (including CSWs) have seen the issue at hand. Finally, seven extended case studies were conducted with

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[15]In selecting 16 CSWs, I used the NGO-MSD (Mahibrehiwot for Social Development) that works to address the problems of CSWs. I also used snowball technique to get CSWs who did not come to the centre. The criteria used for selecting CSWs were willingness to share their experience, staying in the business at least for six months in the study area, and having interaction with different clients.

CSWs to demonstrate complex factors contributing to CSW and CSWs' lived experiences in the study area. All the IDIs, FGDs and extended case studies were conducted in Amharic language and the data were documented through intensive note taking and voice-recording with the consent of the study participants.

Socio-Demographic Background of CSWs

The age of commercial sex workers (CSWs) who participated in the study ranges from 16 to 43. Among the 34 CSWs who participated in IDIs and FGDs, 27 are found within the age range of 18 to 25. This shows how young females are more vulnerable to enter into CSW. Among the 34 CSWs, only one attended higher education; four attended preparatory education; the relatively largest number (13) attended secondary education; and four attended primary education. However, 12 out of the 34 CSWs who participated in this study did not attend school.

With regard to marital status, the majority (22 out of 34) of the CSWs are divorcees. Based on the information gathered through FGDs and IDIs, more than half of them reported that they were married and got divorced before they entered into CSW. Most of these divorcees reported that their age at first marriage was between 13 and 15 though there are some who got married at the age of seven. Among these divorcees, there are women who were married more than once. The second category includes single girls, which accounted to 11 out of 34 informants.

The "Where" of CSW

CSW has been conducted at Metema Yohannes in different places mainly at "home" and in specific "establishments".

Home-based CSW is defined as the business undertaken in a house either owned by the sex worker or rented from private house owners. The rent might be on a monthly basis or for the duration required to welcome the clients. The houses vary enormously in their size, in their equipment and in the way they are decorated. They range from simple bedrooms with a bed to elaborate 'pleasure palaces' with lavish fantasy themes. The structure of the house conveys a message about the status of the CSWs, their clients and the money they have. Most of the houses are located behind the main road of the town.

According to the informants, most of the home-based CSWs are women whose "best days" are behind them, or by those who find themselves in financially difficult situations. However, the CSWs do not accept that their time has gone. Rather, they consider themselves to be doing the business in a perfectly good manner. One of the CSWs shares her feeling as follows:

> I personally do not want to work at a hotel or bar. That is because most of the CSWs who work at hotels, bars or nightclubs are dressed improperly. Sometimes, they are forced

to wear their clothes with the only interests of the owner of the establishment because it is taken as a strategy to attract clients, especially Sudanese men. I can say that they are almost naked, which is disappointing.

Before working independently as a home-based CSW, many home-based CSWs had started the business in establishments such as a hotel, a bar, or a nightclub. According to the home-based CSWs, the shift is not optional but can be related to the existing high competition from younger girls and thus for a failure of surviving in the business in such establishments. Also, some women prefer the more relaxed environment a private home can provide.

For the establishment-based CSWs hotels, bars, nightclubs, restaurants are included as establishments for CSW. According to Girma et al (2014), the number of CSWs covered by this category has reached 1,231 (16), which is relatively higher than home-based CSWs. In each establishment, it is common to find 8 to 10 CSWs. Most of these establishments are found directly on the main road of the town. Almost all bars, hotels and nightclubs are engaged in CSW. Their number is estimated to be around 334.

CSWs who work in establishments are much younger compared to home-based CSWs. Among 23 establishment based CSWs interviewed, the age range was from 16 to 24. Being young, these girls are usually recruited either by 'formal' brokers or relatives, friends and neighbors who are referred to as 'informal' brokers. Upon their arrival, the girls are treated well and in a special manner to make them feel safe and welcomed. However, after months of stay in the business, when new faces come to the establishments, these treatments stop and the girls are treated like those who stayed in the CSW.

This shows that sex work is a competitive business, especially in the establishments. The competition among the women tends to be rough and merciless (Bethlehem 2005). There are unwritten laws that dictate that a woman cannot take another woman's client. If a woman violates this law, she will be socially isolated from other CSWs. Other than social isolation, there can also be revenge such as beating, pushing the 'culprit' out of work or leaving her unemployed. One of my informants, for example, showed me big scars on her face, which she got because she slept with her friend's client.

The "When" of CSW

One of the unique features of Metema Yohannes's CSW is the time when sex work is done. The town is very busy in CSW day and night. This was the main message in an article in the Amharic magazine called 'Addis Guday' in 2011 entitled '*Dreams of Metema: when is the time to stop*

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[16]This number might not cover all establishment based CSWs. Some of them are mobile and use to move to other places when their clients are moved from Metema Yohannes,

sufferings?' As described in the article and based on personal observation, Metema Yohannes is a place where sex is traded twenty-four hours a day (the day for *Sudanese* and night for *Habesha*). Although this is an opportunity for CSWs to earn money, it is an annoyance for the neighborhood. An elder shared how people felt in the neighborhood.

> We are tired of the music. It starts before we get up early in the morning and continues until late mid-night. We cannot sit in our home. It is very difficult to treat sick people at home. We do not have a place to go to complain about it.

The above quotation elaborates how the local community is negatively affected by CSW. It also shows the intrusion of the CSW to the daily life of the community.

Another unique characteristic of CSW at Metema Yohannes town, compared to other places, is its seasonality. Although CSW takes place twenty-four hours a day throughout the year, there are seasons when the business gets particularly high. That is mainly because CSW in the town is highly dependent on migrant workers who come to the town seasonally. Thousands of migrant labourers, locally referred as *Saluges,* come there as daily labourers on sesame commercial farms around the town. CSWs from other areas are also attracted by the market created by the high numbers of agricultural labourers, businesspersons and foreigners who are sexual clients of CSW (Derseh et. al. 2015; Kassa et. al. 2013). Therefore, June to January is the peak season. In contrast, February to May and the month of Ramadan is the lowest season. A CSW whose clients are Sudanese men explain the seasonality of CSW at Metema Yohannes (especially a village called *Jingera* where Sudanese men usually visit) as follows:

> I work with Sudanese men. There is work throughout the year. But I do have more clients on the months before and after Ramadan. I sleep with four to six men per day on these months. In contrast, there is no work during Ramadan. Most of the days during Ramadan pass without seeing Sudanese men let alone having sex with them. Sudanese men who have lovers come after 6.00pm and spend the night with them. There are also Sudanese men who do not fast. However, their number is small.

Most of Sudanese don't visit Metema Yohannes and CSWs in the month of Ramadan. Except CSWs who have special relation with Sudanese, the rest stay out of the business by then.

Though CSW is practiced twenty-four hours a day, there are peak days and hours in terms of the number of clients. According to CSWs, whose clients are Sudanese, 10.00am to 5.00pm in the day time are when they get busy. That doesn't in fact include Friday—the day the Sudanese go to the mosque.

For those whose clients are Ethiopian men and work at establishments, their work begins after 7pm, which is almost similar to home-based CSWs. For both home and establishment based CSWs, weekends and Thursdays are reported to be peak days when they are visited by a number of clients.

How CSWs See Themselves in the Business

At Metema Yohannes, CSW is categorized based on the time CSWs spend on the work, means of income, and the money they earn from it. According to Girma *et al* (2014), Metema Yohannes CSWs are categorized as self-identified (SI) and non-self-identified (NSI).

The self-identified CSWs (SI-CSW) recognize themselves as persons who take CSW as work and a source of livelihood. They secure the necessities they require in life through sex work, openly negotiating price for their services (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005). Either home or establishment based, they depend on sex work as their primary source of income and are engaged in this work full-time. The non-self-identified CSWs (NSI-CSW) do not engage in sex work for pleasure but as their only means of livelihood. Though SI-CSWs are engaged in CSW as their means of livelihood, the women do not choose it willingly or enjoy the life. They, however, speak out about their work. They do not keep their work a secret. Compared to NSI-CSWs their number is higher. Explaining a related experience, one of the CSW informants recounts,

> I do not want to veil myself since it is known that I am a sex worker. Being exposed as a sex worker has both advantages and disadvantages. If you are identified as a CSW, the society might try to understand the problems that you face because of the work and will look for a solution. In addition to this, they can protect you from dangerous conditions. In contrast, you will be stigmatized and seen as a devalued person. Besides, you cannot fool yourself about what you are doing.

In the categeory of Non-Self- Identified CSWs (NSI-CSWs) we find women whose sole or primary source of income is not coming from sex work. For such individuals, obviously with low or irregular wages, CSW provides additional income (Bethlehem, 2005). These women do not identify themselves as CSWs but emphasize that they are engaged in regular types of employment. These women do not want to be labeled as CSWs. A case in point is an excerpt from a participant engaged in the practice:

> I don't exactly know how old I am but I guess I am in my early 40s. I am from 'Dabat' [a place] found in North Gondar. Twelve years ago, I went to Sudan as a domestic worker and stayed there for some years. I came back to my hometown and started living with family. Eight years ago, I came to Metema Yohannes and started selling food and local drinks- 'Arakie' and 'Tella'. I got married and gave birth twice, but it was not successful. The

> babies died. For this reason, my husband left me. I started living by myself doing the same work. But eventually life became difficult. My income decreased from time to time. So, I was forced to occasionally engage in CSW to support the income from selling food and local drinks. Most of my clients are farmers and brokers who are relatively older people. I do not consider myself as a sex worker because selling sex is not my priority in terms of income; rather it is selling food and local drinks.

In this category, there are also women who sell sex covertly. These women engage in CSW cover-up as selling of tea or coffee at *Galabat*, a border market town on the Sudan side. One of the informants explained the situation as follows:

> These women spend the whole day working at Galabat though their home is at Metema Yohannes. Their main job is selling tea or so... But they are also engaged in CSW with Sudanese men who do not cross the border. The house they use to sell tea is partitioned by curtain, which hides the CSW activity. In these houses, they sell both tea and sex.

There are also 'call girls', who work at Metema Yohannes via telephone, but their work is neither home nor establishment based work. 'Call girls' generally obtain clients through recommendations from other 'call girls', pimps or hotel owners. 'Call girls' either entertain their clients in their own home or go to the residences of their clients (Rosenblum, 1975). According to the key informants, the clients of call girls are usually Sudanese men. There are also specific hotels at Metema Yohannes, which facilitate such services, i.e. connecting the girls/women and their clients.

Different Actors

CSWs are the main actors who are involved in sex trade. It is difficult to get the statistics on CSWs in Metema Yohannes, as I discovered both through information gathered during the interview with different stakeholders, and analysis of the available secondary sources. However, I learnt that internal female Ethiopian migrants comprise the majority of the CSWs in the town.

Although most of the female migrants are from Amhara region, there are potential migrants whose interest of crossing the border to Sudan or other Gulf States failed. As a result, they remain in Metema Yohannes and enter into CSW. Returnees from Sudan who were unable to attain their hopes in Sudan also stay in Metema Yohannes to get more income through CSW instead of returning to their home community.

Many of the women who sell sex earn a substantial amount of money in a short period compared to others with low paid jobs. This has thus

motivated them to sell sex twenty-four hours to their clients in return for money.

In addition to the women themselves, the people involved in the field of sex work in Metema Yohannes include establishment owners and brokers. Among clients we find men from within the local community but mainly they are residents of the surrounding area from both sides of the border, mainly Sudanese men and migrant workers, truck drivers, civil servants and border policeme. They are all occasional and seasonal clients of CSWs.

Sudanese men are among the most frequent clients of CSWs in Metema Yohannes. Due to the border agreement that prohibits both countries' citizens not to stay on the other side of the border after 6.00pm, Sudanese men visit CSWs during the daytime. Compared to other clients, Sudanese men are known for paying good money, which can range from 400 to 500 *Omla*[17]*,* which is around 800-1000 ETB for one time service. Most of them refuse to use condom, considering it *Haram* (Taboo). Thereby, they offer more money to have sex without condom.

Next to Sudanese men, the largest numbers of clients are daily labourers, locally called *Saluge.* Though they come from different corners of the country, most of them are from Amhara region. The *saluge* come alone, leaving their family in their home community. Aged between 20 and 30, they are frequent visitors of CSWs at Metema Yohannes town. *Saluge* are also known as 'three days rich' meaning they get more money and spend it within few days. One of the key informants explained them as follows:

> They get thousands per week. But they do not save the money they get. They do not think about the future. They spend it all with CSWs within few days. These young people have lost touch of the culture of self-preservation. They have forgotten the values of recognizing health as a priority, beyond temporary pleasure. *Saluge* and CSWs are the same in some ways. They are both migrants who came to the town to change their lives. But they end up with no positive change. They do not think of the future; they just want to live today.

Many *Saluge* abuse CSWs. They are reported often to be mean, brutish and very abusive. Most of the CSW informants who participated in the interviews described to have experienced abuses in the hands of *Saluge,* which come in various forms. According to CSWs, the 'mean-spirited exploiters' refuse to make payments after receiving their services.

Yeketema Sewoch[18] includes truckers, businessmen, local youth, and civil servants. Since most of Metema Yohannes residents are temporary, these men also come from different parts of the country. Compared to other clients, according to CSWs interviewed, *Yeketema Sewoch* are described as relatively good hearted and understanding.

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[17] It is a name given to Sudanese Pound equivalent to $ 0.2 and ETB 3.50. The word means "currency".
[18] It refers to urban resident

Moving from clients to brokers, the brokers at Metema Yohannes are known by the label of *Hayasosts*.[19] They are among the actors who play the most important roles in CSW at Metema Yohannes. Ghimire (in Qayyum et.al, 2013:3) pointed out, "in most cases pimps lure young women into the business of CSW". To make the girls leave their home place the brokers may deceive them into marriage, or they give the girls false hope of a better job. But abductions also happen, but in all cases the girls are sold on to one of the establishments.

The owners of such establishments are also key actors involved in CSW business. According to informants, considerable numbers of establishment owners are women who used to work as CSWs at Metema Yohannes or elsewhere. Establishment owners attempt to control the CSWs who belong to the business. They do this by demanding different sorts of payments from the girls. Here is one story:

> I live in one of the dorms at a hotel. They have classes in the back and I pay 500.00 *birr* [ETB] per month for the dorm. I do not have monthly salary. I serve the hotel's clients. Whenever I go with a client, I have to pay the owner of the hotel. If I use the hotel room, I will not pay. It is the client who is charged for the bed. If I go to another hotel or somewhere else, I will pay for the time I am not in the hotel. The owners are very mean. I sometimes go to another place after my duty hour to look for business. However, I am not free from the 50.00 *birr* payment. If I do not have the money to pay her when I leave, it will be registered as debt on the exercise book called debt exercise book *Yebalege debeter*. It is very disgusting. They increase the money at our expense.

Establishment owners also provide loans for CSWs when they are sick and cannot work, or are unable to find clients. With such loans, these women find themselves drawn into debt. They are not free to leave the establishment until all debt is paid back with interest.

Though CSW is publicly condemned by the local community, some members of the local community are involved in CSW. By renting out their homes for establishments and providing residential houses for home-based CSWs, local residents gain income from the business. There are also house owners who request additional money other than the house rent if a CSW brings a man to her home. These house owners rent their home only to residents, and not for CSW. Other types of house owners are characterized as beneficiaries of the business by renting their house to sex work but not allowing the CSWs to sell beer or other alcohol. This usually happens in villages where Sudanese men entertain. Since the price of beer is higher than other drinks, they want to earn additional money.

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[19] A name used to call brokers who involve in CSW. The name *Hayasost* is given to the brokers because of their ability of convincing both the CSWs and their clients by any means, especially the Sudanese men.

Why do Some Engage in CSW?

O'Connor and Healy (2006) presented social, economic and cultural causes as contributing factors for women and children to take CSW as an option to earn a living. Let us look closer at some of these causes.

Capitalizing on the importance of the social milieu, Blerk's (2008) findings depicted that most girls' decision to join CSW were based on factors including escape from traditional cultural practices such as failed marriages, early marriage, pregnancy and the associated stigma of having sex out of wedlock. Blerk's observation has been noticeable in the study as well. The study revealed that girls mainly join CSW due to dysfunctional families, divorce or/and death of parent(s), early/forced/arranged marriage, peer pressure, sexual and physical abuse, stigmatized sexuality towards women within the community, and failing school. Here are statements from case studies illustrating the different social factors mentioned. First family break-up:

> …I used to live with my father and my stepmother. My parents broke up when I was in Grade Eight. My mother could not afford to raise me and sent me to school. Thus, I was forced to live with my father. After breaking up with my mother, he got married to a woman who had a daughter a little older than me. I had a hard time living with my stepmother… finally I found myself in CSW business.

Another social factor which contributes to CSW is early arranged marriage. Most of the interviewed CSWs (24, i.e., 22 divorced and 2 widowed) got married at an early age (between the ages of seven and fifteen). The majority of these girls' marriages ended up in divorce and they were unable to run a household on their own. The following case shows how early arranged marriage forced a girl to migrate to Metema Yohannes and then enter into CSW:

> I first got married at the age of 13. My family forced me into the marriage. After the wedding, I stayed with my husband's family for a year. After that, my mother-in-law told us to live by ourselves. Initially, my husband refused to do so since I was not old enough to manage my home. At that young age, it was very difficult for me to manage and maintain the home. My husband always tried to find fault in everything I do. He used to beat me. When he was unable to care for me, he gave me back to my family…

Several studies also argue that sexual abuse makes women more susceptible to CSW because they are easily able to earn a living using their bodies (Rosen and Venkatesh, 2009). In most cases, as mentioned by informants, either family members or acquaintances inflict sexual abuse and the abuse forces them to enter into CSW. The following CSW in Metema Yohannes joined the business as a result of sexual abuse

committed by her brother-in-law:

> Before I became a sex worker, I used to live with my older sister at 'Shehidi'. I was from a relatively well-off family. My sister brought me with her to Shehidi, promising to my parents that I would be attending a better school and I did. One afternoon, when I came back from school, my sister was not in the house. Her husband was there with his children. He sent them away to play outside and he raped me. I did not tell my sister or my family about what happened that day. If I had told her, I feared she would leave him and her children would grow up without their father. Thus, I preferred to run away from home ….

In general, the aforementioned cases reveal that parental divorce, early marriage, and sexual abuse are the major social factors forcing girls to enter into CSW.

Obviously sex work is as a means to escape poverty and must be related to economic factors. Nkala's (2014) research finding showed how low economic status forced many women into sex work. As was the case with Nkala's subjects, owing to lack of capital and skill to start other income generating activities, most of the young women in this study resort to selling their bodies. The poverty faced by women in Africa has been a major factor to take the decision of becoming a CSW and support their children (Qayyum et. al., 2013). Poverty is the motivating force to sacrifice their lives and their bodies for the survival of the family. Low income and destitution force the women to look for options, which can provide them with income to support their family. The life testimony of CSWs proved this.

> I will be 16 in few months. I am the eldest in my family. I have three brothers and two sisters; we are six in total. I was a 6th grade student but I could not continue school because of financial problem. My parents could not afford to buy me school materials and cover other school expenses. I went to 'Shehidi', a nearby town from here, and stayed there for five months working as a housemaid. However, the money was not enough for me let alone to send to my family. I had heard about CSW in Metema Yohannes while I was in Shehidi. Hence, I decided to come to Metema Yohannes to work as a CSW and earn better money to support my family and myself.

Finally, life at the border may in itself be a cause for entering sex work. Borderlands are both opportunities and challenges for those who live in it. As noted by Derje and Hoehne (2010), people have to strive to realise the opportunities entailed by borders and borderlands. Since Metema Yohannes is a border town, economic opportunities are available to the local residents as well as the migrants. Both legal and illegal border trades are quite common. People engaged in illegal border trade work either for

them or for others to be paid based on the item they cross. Another opportunity that is available in Metema Yohannes is running a hotel. Since a number of migrants and returnees are staying in the town, the need of small hotels, restaurants and snack houses are high. Therefore, the location of the town has its own role in the expansion of CSW.

Another reason for the expansion of CSW is the payment made to CSWs. Compared to other nearby towns, the payment for CSW services is relatively high. That is particularly the case especially in the peak season mainly due to the presence of Sudanese men. Sudanese men pay two or three times more than Ethiopian clients. However, negotiations are made between clients and CSWs depending upon the sexual request, the time they spend or the place they provide the service. For 'short,'[20] a term for a service in a limited time of the day, clients pay 200 to 300 ETB. If clients spend the night, the payment could be 500 to 700 ETB.

Socio-Cultural Effects

CSW can have both positive and negative impacts on those who are in the business and the society they live in though the focus of this study is depicting the negative effects. In what follows, I dwell on the major effects that I have uncovered in the course of our study.

One of the social effects of CSW is divorce and family breakup. An interview held with a judge at the social court, for example, reveals that the number of divorce cases seen by the court has increased. Community elders and religious leaders also engage every day in mediating between husbands and wives. In most of these cases, the reason for requesting divorce is reported to be infidelity with CSWs. The prevalence of CSW and easy access to establishments are taken as a factors that make it tempting for men to cheat on their wives. In contrast, women (wives) are also taking CSW as an option to escape from men's dominance at home. Recent trends show that wives are not as tolerant and as patient in their marriage as they used to be in previous times. According to informants, it has become common to hear women complaining during mediations: "Why should I waste my time with him when there are more options around me?"

Aside from splitting of couples, divorce also has an impact on children. Family breakup is believed to psychologically, emotionally and financially affect the way children are raised. Being vulnerable, these children, according to informants, take the path of CSWs when they grow up.

The study has also indicated that the prevalence of early marriage has re-emerged in Metema Yohannes. Parents give off their daughters at an early age in fear of their vulnerability to CSW. According to the informants, parents are afraid daughters will be lured into CSW through brokers and the attractive income the business has in the town. Girls wrongly assume CSW to give them freedom in the way they dress, entertain and live their life.

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[20]The term 'short' refers to the brevity of time stayed/spent in sexual intercourse

Fearing this, parents marry off their daughters at an early age with their and their daughter's dignity intact. An example of this is a story of the fiancé of one of the informants--a Grade 8 student aged 14. By marrying her to him, her parents believed they could avoid her risk of getting sexually assaulted or ending up as CSWs.

Although early marriage is considered to be a harmful traditional practice, in Metema Yohannes, it is taken as a coping strategy and as a solution from the prevalent practice of CSW.

Though the number of students who drop out of school for CSW is low, teachers in Metema Yohannes primary school, the only government school in the town, reported an increasing number of school dropouts compared to previous times. It could be argued that family breakup and easy access to money in CSW have contributed to this increase of student's dropout. Rather than learning in school, students aspire to get easy money by engaging as a CSW. According to the information gathered from teachers, sex work is influencing the teaching learning process. The girls' club representative in Metema Yohannes primary school explains the situation as follows.

> As a matter of fact we did not do any research on this. But from my observation and as a head of the girls' club here at the school, I have the information. I cannot say that there are no students who engage in CSW but their number is limited. Usually these students register at the beginning of the school year, attend a few weeks of class and then quit school. I think this is because they cannot simultaneously manage school and CSW. Besides, there are students who drop out of school for marriage. Families put pressure on students to get married not to be spoiled or ruin their life by getting into CSW.

Another consequence brought by CSW in Metema Yohannes is women being reluctant to engage in religious practices. Although all CSWs who participated in the study are followers of Orthodox Christianity, they are not strict followers of the religion. According to the church, it is forbidden to have sexual relations with people of other religion. One of the key informants who is a religious leader at EOTC explained: "It is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with a person whose religion is different; it is a sin. A person who did this should confess and take a special baptism called *Qeder*[21]. However, CSWs whose clients are Sudanese men are not obedient to the rule and the religious dogma". Regardless, though the church forbids it, the women couldn't stop sleeping with the Sudanese men.

Interestingly, the church has become very flexible towards CSWs. In the past, CSWs were not allowed to be buried in the church. Nowadays that has changed. But even if they are now given the right to be buried in the church, they do not get full prayer services.

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[21] *Qeder* is a special baptism that is done to purify oneself from different types of sinful behaviour.

Churches have also other complaints. The day and night noise pollution (mostly loud music) from establishments where the CSWs work interferes with church services. The prayers at the church and the music in the surroundings are mixed up.

Effects on the CSWs themselves

Most CSWs may initially appreciate the sex work since it provides good income and special approach by clients and owners of establishments. Gradually, though, most begin to dislike the work because it exposes them to different health problems and unfavorable social conditions, including violent clients and house owners.

As implied above, CSW has also negative impact on CSWs' religious life. Because of their work, the women keep themselves away from church, even though the church does not marginalize them. When they go to church occasionally, they tend to be conservative in observing the rules. Unlike other followers, they take off their shoes before they enter into the church compound. This is to publicly confess their 'impurity' and lack of entitlement to the church. It is also their way of asking for repentance from God. Here is what a participant has to say on the issue:

> I go to church if I do not sleep with men, which is very rare. On the days I go to church, I do not enter the church compound because I feel that I am impure. I stand outside, pray and come back home. I do not even have confession father. I am still in the life of CSW. Why should I confess?

For Metema Yohannes CSWs who work and live in the same place, there are no distinctions between personal and professional life. They are 'on duty' almost all the time. For CSWs who are socially, physically and geographically confined to the world of the sex trade, the business of CSW becomes their world. For them, sex work becomes more than an occupation. And as succinctly expressed by Evans (2000), it becomes a way of life. Evans' explanation works for several of CSW informants at Metema Yohannes. They are always 'on duty' and unable to cope with a different environment.

Men buying sex are more likely to commit sexually coercive acts and other acts of violence against women. And they often demonstrate misogynist attitudes. It is reported that men enjoy the feeling of power over the CSWs. Men also believe that once they pay their clients, they can do whatever they want with the woman they have 'bought' (Schulze *et al* 2014). It is in fact quite common for CSWs at Metema-Yohannes to deal with drunken or violent clients who insisted to have sex on their preferred style. The CSWs asked to have sex based on the desire of the men. It is the CSWs responsibility to satisfy her clients as per his request of having sex either in normal or different way.

Most CSWs also have experiences of clients who refuse to use condoms or deliberately split condoms either for their own pleasure or because they are angry at their status as STD or HIV carriers. There are instances CSWs mention of men leaving without paying. These problems are common for most women regardless of the means through which they engage in business (Blerk 2008). The following story shows how the clients abuse CSWs,

> One night I negotiated the price with a client. The sum was small. It was around 150.00 *birr* [ETB) for a night. We entered the room and I started getting ready to have sex. However, he refused to use condom. I tried to convince him but I could not. Finally, I put on my clothes, stood up and tried to leave the room. He grabbed me and started beating me. He punched me on the eyes. I shouted for help. The owners of the hotel came and forced him to open the door. Upon their arrival my client requested me to give him back his money but I refused. The owners insisted that I should give him back his money. I had no option but to return the money.

CSWs are also denied legal protection by the police. Most of CSWs reported that the police favor the male clients. They all complain that the police harass them and always consider them as conflict perpetrators. Sometimes police officers even ask them for sex in return for the legal protection they provide. The following is the case in point:

> It is very difficult to get help from Metema Yohannes police. Personally, I don't want to go there since the police officers do not want to listen to me. When I go there to report what happens to me, instead of solving my problem, they nag me and even insult me. They shift the blame towards me and consider CSWs problem creators and cheaters. Because of that, I prefer negotiating with the clients to going to the police.

Social isolation is another effect of CSW on the women who are in the business. They are given a degrading name, *Shermuta,* by the society. The term literally means prostitute and it reflects a denigrating identity (Lynggard 2002). The women in the business regard CSW as a survival strategy, which gives them an opportunity to increase their income. They do the business neither willingly nor to have fun. "I am afraid to participate in social activities," says one CSW, "because I feel that they label me as *Shermuta* which I am not. I am here to raise my child and not to be dependent on my family."

Health is an issue for CSWs and many frequently suffer from chest infections, back pain, uterus infection, STDs, and HIV. Some visit the health station to get medication. Yet, most of them do not get treated because of reluctance or not having the knowledge. Most girls are worried of their HIV status (Blerk, 2008). All CSW informants who participated in

this study indicated that their health is always in danger for different reasons and engaging in unsafe sex is reported to be the major reason. And as discussed earlier, clients' refusal of condom use is attributed to clients' desire to have sex with CSWs with a sense of pleasure. Some clients go the extent of deliberately tearing or poking the condom they use in the middle of intercourse. These acts expose the women to STDs and HIV.

Unwanted pregnancy is also another health effect, which leads to unsafe and repeated abortion. This has negative effect on their later life if they enter into marriage or in relationship.

Because of CSW, society's perception and clients' violation, CSWs suffer in different ways. Post-traumatic stress disorder, severe depression (George et.al, 2010), damage to reproductive systems, physical injuries, sexual and physical assaults, and sexually transmitted diseases are just some examples to mention.

Conclusion

The social and economic realities in Metema Yohannes are strongly influenced by the fact that the town is a border town. The town is, therefore, characterized by a fluidity that affects the people who are living there as well as those who pass through. Many people just stop for a short while, while waiting to move on. Thus, the life and what people get involved in also takes on a short-term quality. The commercial sex work type of activities described represents a typical example of this kind of fluidity.

Based on the findings of this study, almost all the CSWs who participated and to whom I talked are engaged in the business to support themselves and their dependents. To do so, they had to accept many abuses like verbal, physical and sexual assaults. The abuse can even go to the extent of being killed in the hands of their clients, by brokers or by owners of establishments. They are also susceptible to different health problems that affect their social and personal life. They are also exposed to addiction and become depressed and live lives withoup hope for the future.

It can thus be argued that for those who are stuck in the town, and for those who are stuck in the activities of CSW, the short-term "freedom" quickly turns into a more "long-term" constraint, with various ill consequences. Having observed these long-term consequences, and listening to how the women talked about them, I think an answer to the question I posed in the title of the paper – whether the women are "Borderland Entrepreneurs or Victims of Gendered Mobility?" - is becoming increasingly clearer. CSWs have turned out to be victims of the business despite gaining money for their survival out of it.

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Chapter 4

The Dynamics of Cross Border Migration along the Ethio-Sudan Border: Ethiopian Women Migrants and the Metema Route

Zeyneba Zakir

Introduction

Ethiopian women engage in both national and international migration. A sizeable number of Ethiopian women move out of their country for countless reasons, including the search for a better life. They often leave Ethiopia using both regular and irregular routes such as Metema, Moyale, Dire Dawa and Bossasso to cross borders into neighboring countries (i.e., Sudan (west), Kenya (South) and Somalia (East)) as either destination or transit post (ILO 2011; ICMPD 2008). Of the surrounding neighbor countries, the Republic of Sudan shares relatively the longest international boundary with Ethiopia (i.e., more than 725 Kms).

The Metema corridor, which is situated along this long boundary, is one of the major cross border migration routes used by women migrants to migrate to the Republic of Sudan (ILO 2011). Historically, the original settlers of the town are thought to be Gumuz people, who are now confined to two rural kebeles (the lowest administrative tier) i.e., Afitit and Tumet. Later people from drought prone areas of the Amhara region began resettling in the area (Hailemichael 2014; Kindie 2007). Galabat or Suk El-Gallabat (The market of Gallabat) is the corresponding Sudanese border town in Gedaref state of Sudan.

Metema town has been serving as an escape gate for many Ethiopians who flee the country for different reasons. Nowadays, many individuals, especially women from different corners of the country arrive in Metema to cross the border of the Republic of Sudan. Crossing the border is not necessariy an end by itself. Instead, it is a means to get into the Middle East, Libya and to reach further into Europe (Hailemichael 2014; ILO 2011).

Statement of the Problem and the Objective of Study

The contemporary cross border migration by Ethiopian women migrants towards the Republic of Sudan is becoming more dynamic, complex and intertwined with different forms of challenges and prospects (Hailemichael 2014; Jamie 2013; Shewit 2013). Every year, thousands of women migrants go to Metema town for the purpose of crossing the border into the Republic of Sudan. Many of them also use this route as a means to get into Libya

and then to reach into Europe (RMMS 2014; ICMPD 2008; Ahmed 2009). Nevertheless, little is known about the motivating factors of migration, the risks and challenges that women migrants are faced with while travelling to and staying in Sudan (Bariagaber, 1997). Most of earlier studies on these issues approach aspects of migration from a human trafficking point of view and also from the perspective of human rights. While this is important, it means that the issue of voluntary migration has been overlooked. This study aims to correct this bias by focusing on the challenges experienced by women migrants who decide to migrate, both in the place of origin, along the way, and at the place of destination. The aim is to provide a better understanding of the life-world of the women migrants and study in what ways the life experiences of women migrants make them migrate. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore the current trends of cross border migration across the Ethio-Sudan border along the Mettema route;
2. Examine the major motivating factors of migration to Sudan as seen from the perspective of women migrants;
3. Examine the opportunities and challenges that women migrants encounter at places of origin, transit and destination.

Research Methodology

The study is based on an ethnographic approach in which the lived experiences of the informants were in focus. All observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and the collection of individual case histories were all carried out to imporove the understanding of how the women experienced their situation that made them make the decision to migrate.

In-depth interviews were made with fifteen women migrants (both current and returnee migrants) and with fifteen representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations and residents of Metema town and Khartoum city. In total the study undertook thirty in-depth interviews with knowledgeable informants (of which eight were regarded as key informants) who have broad experience and insight into the migration process. In addition, informal interviews were also employed.

Focus group discussion (FGD) was also employed to collect data on the overall migration situation, its dynamics and consequences. Six FGDs of four to ten participants were conducted with women migrants and residents of Matema town. And case histories were collected to illustrate and better understand the lived experiences of migrants. Seven individuals were selected from among the participants, and with their consent they offered narratives about their life experiences and their migration histories.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Migrants

According to information collected at Metema Yohannes Town Police Office migrants who were found transiting through Metema town to enter the Sudan in legal ways were quite diversified in terms of sex, age, religion,

ethnicity, educational background, marital status, places of origin, and legal status. In relation to sex profiles of migrants, the number of female migrants out-numbered that of male migrants, and most of the migrants were young, in the age range of 18 to 30 years old. But there were also more exceptional cases in which child migrants, between 9 to 12 years old, were found to cross the Ethio-Sudan border. With regard to the migrants' place of origin, the majority of them were mainly from rural areas of Oromia, Amhara and Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples State (SNNPS) Regions. Besides, there were significant numbers of migrants from Somalia Region of Ethiopia. In addition, migrants from neighboring countries mainly Eritrea and Somaliland arrive at Metema town in order to enter Sudan and then to travel to other third countries.

Cross Border Migration Trends

Apart from the data from the police office information sources obtained from other government officials and also from residents living in MetemaYohannes town confirm that many migrant cross into Sudan in legal as well as illegal ways. The same informants also confirmed that girls below the age of 18 arrived in Metema town to enter Sudan. Also, that grown up women came, who had left their children with their families back home. I conducted interviews with three such women (Sitina, Rumia and Zalika), mothers aged 25, 31 and 37 years old respectively who migrated to Sudan while leaving their children with their families.

Migration Routes

According to data from different sources, Ethiopian women migrants enter Sudan mainly using major land routes such as Metema, Humera, and Damazin. Those who migrate to Sudan along the Metema route often use two major ways: the Metema-Galabat route and the desert route.

On the Ethio-Sudan border, there is a bridge (see picture) that separates the two border towns of MetemaYohannes and Galabat. The bridge has been serving as a gateway for migrants to enter Sudan and it is commonly known as the Metema-Galabat route. It is one of the major routes for Ethiopian migrants who legally enter Sudan using a short-term visiting visa or *Tasrih* (Sudanese temporary ID card). This route is also open for the residents of MetemaYohannes and Galabat towns in which people from the two neighboring countries have been visiting the market centers during the day time to exchange goods and services.

In addition to people who enter the Sudan using a short-term visting visa and *tasrih*, illegal migrants cross the border and enter the country through the desert route. According to information from government officials and residents of Metema town, there are different desert routes in Metema *woreda* (an administrative division at zonal level) that have been serving as major gateways to enter Sudan. Some of the desert routes found in Mettema *woreda* are Dololo, Shinfa, Korjamos, Workamba, Chilga, Dambia, Ganda,

and Arbajira. Migrants who come from Eritrea and Somaliland often use the Dololo desert route which is reported to be one of the dangerous desert routes in the *woreda*. Moreover, according to my respondents, in addition to the above stated desert routes controlled by the police and border guards, there are also other unknown uncontrolled desert routes migrants use to enter Sudan.

Ethiopian legal migrants crossing the bridge making up the Ethio-Sudan border along the Matema route.). Photo by: Zeyneba Zakir.

Illegal migrants often use the desert route to cross the Ethio-Sudan border and enter Sudan with the assistance of brokers. They arrange themselves as a group ranging from 30 to 70 people and then travel from 3 to 5 or more days on foot to arrive in Khartoum. It is usually done with great caution because if a migrant is caught while crossing such a desert route illegally, she/he is forced to return to her/his place of origin. A case in point   is what Fekria [22] (aged 20) experienced when she migrated to Sudan through the desert with her friends and entered there two years ago:

> After staying three days in Metema we (a group of 60 persons) started our journey through the desert. For fear that we would be caught by the border guard or the local Sudanese residents we would travel during the night and sleep in the day time in the bush. We traveled on foot and the journey was very painful and exhausting.   After many challenges, we arrived Khartoum by travelling 5 days on foot and one on the back of a lorry.

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[22] The names of informants or any possible identifier were not mentioned. Pseudonyms were used.

Another woman migrant whose name is Damanech migrated to Sudan using *tasrih*. But after staying and working for three months in Khartoum, she was deported to MetemmaYohannes town. "As I was afraid to go back to my family," she recalls "I preferred to stay in MetemaYohannes town. Then after collecting some money by working as a domestic worker, I was able to cross the border and enter Sudan using the desert route by paying ten thousand Ethiopian Birr".

Sources obtained from government officials and residents of Metema town show that in spite of the risks encountered and the costs incurred, many women migrants are still crossing the Ethio-Sudan border illegally through the desert routes. Key informants revealed a wide range of reasons for their choice of illegal routes of migration into Sudan. The long process of getting visa, lack of awareness about the difficulties of irregular migration and shortage of money are found to be the main reported reasons for choosing the desert route as a means to enter into the Sudan.

Why Do They Migrate?

Various factors are mentioned by the participants of this study that urge Ethiopian women to leave their homes and migrate to other places. Many of the factors which are mentioned by the migrants are unique to each individual migrant depending on the place where they come from. Thus, the major push and pull factors are organized as follows in terms of economic, social, cultural, and other reasons.

According to the key informants and FGD participants, the prevailing poverty, lack of job opportunities and the low payment for domestic workers in their locality and the desire for a better life are the major economic reasons for many women migrants to migrate to the Sudan. More specifically, the desire to change their livelihood and that of their family, migrants report, is the main reason that drives them to migrate. Different sources show that personal and family poverty is the main reasons that urge women to leave their homes and look for a better living elsewhere. However, according to information from residents and government officials of Metema, most of women migrants make a decision to migrate not only because of poverty at home but also due to the desire to get a better life. During the focus group discussion with residents of Metema town, one of the participants mentioned the following with a sense of surprise:

> In most cases, migrants argue that they decide to migrate for economic reason and [get rid of] poverty. However, when you see the lot of money they pay for the brokers, it is difficult to believe that they come from poor economic families. However, according to the migrants perception they are poor and this perception is mainly created by the brokers.

Alfia and Yusuf are spouses whom I contacted in Metema Immigration Office while they were returning from the Sudan. What the wife shared

with me clearly shows how the search for a better life pushes people to migrate:

> We had farm land and were living our lives as farmers. In our area, Gonder, Qolladiba many people migrate to the Sudan. We see our neighbors who have been in Sudan return home and we notice that they have money. And they can own a modern house. So we think that to be better off someone need to migrate somewhere….why not also us go and come back being better off. We see migrants are better off in everything… their clothing…living condition….so why should not us also change ourselves…and return being better off. Then I migrated first and worked for about five years. Then my husband came and we worked together for three years.

But push and pull factors are also social. General social pressure from society is also a factor contributing to women migration. Influence of friends, families and relatives; information flow and presence of deceptive brokers; and migration culture and positive perception of their locality towards migration are all factors that push women out.

Fozia, a key informant from Jimma Zone of Oromia Region, indicated how pressure from her friends and her destitute family situation are factors that motivated her to make a decision to migrate:

> I have friends in Sudan. They would phone me many times and tell me to go there and join them. They would tell me that there are better work opportunities and it is easy to get money in Sudan. When they came back home, they told me good things about Sudan. They also persuaded me by saying, 'Why not migrate and change your life instead of suffering due to poverty'. Finally I dropped my school at 8th grade and ran away from my home and migrated to Sudan illegally.

Peer influences also often push women to migrate, as stated by Birhane who is one of the key informants for this study. "In addition to my poverty," says Birhane, "lobbying from my friends in Sudan urged me to migrate. They would phone me many times and tell me to go there. When they send money to their family and when they return, they would tell me it is better for me to go instead of entering school".

But brokers also play an important role in influencing women's choices. Data from key informant interviews show that the existence of large numbers of local brokers with networks extending to countries of destination play an important role in the decision making relating to migration. Though some migrants decide to migrate by themselves or are influenced by their families, most of them are initiated by local brokers. The local brokers persuade potential migrants and their families to opt for migration by going door to door especially in the rural areas. The brokers

use the story of successful migrants who have changed their life by working in Sudan and other countries. According to the participants of this study, many women migrants, especially women from rural areas are easily deceived by the wrong information given by local brokers. Concerning the role of brokers in influencing decision making related to migration, one of the participants of FGD conducted in MetemaYohannes towns has this to say:

> The main reasons for many migrants [to migrate] are brokers. Many women decide to migrate influenced by the false and deceiving information they receive from brokers. Brokers and friends inform them that they can have many good things and a better life when compared with their current situation. They also look at persons coming back with some money and visible materials. The brokers tell them only the positive and good things and opportunities they would get and enjoy; not the challenges they would encounter. Then they believe and follow them.

The study participants stated that there are networks of brokers along the routes, starting from migrants' original places all the way to their destinations. One of the key informants in Metema reported that brokers are everywhere even in rural areas of the country and their network extends from rural village to Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Gondar, Metema, and Sudan. The local brokers commonly called *leqami* [23] are found at places of origin and they are the ones who make first contact with potential migrants. While brokers in MetemaYohannes town are called *Shekaba* [24] ("receiver brokers"), while "guide brokers" who assist migrants to cross the border are known as *Mangedmari* [25]. The local brokers often go around and convince potential migrants in different rural areas of Ethiopia. They then handover them to the *sheqabas*. The *sheqabas* in Metema town receive migrants from the bus station and then take them to a place prepared for them to stay until their departure to the Sudan. Most of the time, they rent hotels or residents' houses where women migrants are to wait for their numbers to reach 60 to 70 and until a deal is concluded between Ethiopia and Sudanese brokers. Participants of the study indicated that local brokers who recruit potential migrants from different places transfer them to the brokers in Addis Ababa. The brokers located in Addis Ababa in turn transfer the migrants to the *shekabas* in Metema town and finally the *shekabas* handover the migrants to the *mangedmari*, guide brokers who help migrants cross the Ethio-Sudan border. The final handover is then made to the Sudanese counterpart. In this

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[23]*Leqami*: a term used to refer to brokers in places of origins.

[24]*Shekaba* - a term used to call local brokers in Metema town

regard, the head of Metema *Woreda* Labor and Social Affair Office (WOLSA) explained the situation as follows:

> Many migrants from different rural areas of the country, especially from Oromia and southern region, come to Metema to enter Sudan illegally. Sometimes even children under 18 come to the town to cross the Ethio-Sudan border via the desert. Before they come to Metema the brokers persuade them by telling them the good things and opportunities in the Sudan. After that, they leave their home and come to Metema. At this time, they know nothing about the challenges awaiting them ahead in the transit town and on their travel to the destination country.

A community leader in Metema town who participated in the FGDs also agrees. In an interview conducted with the returnee women migrants, it was found that pre-departure is full of hope with positive expectation in the Sudan. The brokers persuade potential migrants and their families to make a decision. The remark of Ikram, a returnee migrant, is indicative of that:

> Before leaving our local areas the brokers tell us positive things about our travel and about life in the Sudan. We are treated well before reaching Metema. They promise us that we will travel by car and reach Sudan within two to three days. What we encountered in Metema, during the journey and at the destination was, however, the reverse of what we heard from the brokers. We began experiencing many difficulties in Metema before leaving our home country. After we arrived in Metema, the brokers kept us in a locked room for long days until we started the journey to Khartoum. We started the journey after a week or more. We then had a long journey on foot during the night. After we arrived in Khartoum, it was very hard to get a job, especially for new migrants.

This finding is in agreement with that of previous studies (Hailemichael 2014; Jamie 2013) that demonstrate how many migrants make a decision to migrate deceived by information obtained from local brokers. Local brokers persuade, these studies indicate, potential migrants in the rural villages and small towns by telling people about the availability of well-paid jobs and through painting a rosy picture of life changing opportunities in the Sudan. If they succeed in convincing potential migrants, they bring them to Metema town using public transportation.

In the same studies it was also found that some of the migrants decide to migrate due to a disagreement with their family and also because of dissolution of marriages. According to key informants, widows and divorcees often opted for migration in order to cover their children's

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[25]*Mangedmari*- a term used to refer to guide brokers

educational cost or as a transition period to start a new way of life. Conflict within the family was also found to be another push factor.

The positive socio-cultural attitude towards migration and development of migration in the society is the other main factor contributing to women's migration from Ethiopia. Cross- border migration and the migrants' material success has contributed to the creation of new role models for the potential migrants (ILO 2011). Such a combination of pressure from families and society and the increasing emphasis on migration as a positive thing in the local imagination make many individuals, especially women decide to migrate (Hailemichael, 2014). According to Abebaw (2013:110), indicators of the migration culture and chain of migration are:

> Relatives or friends from the same area often migrate together. A person will attempt to migrate several times even under harsh conditions…. Other indicators of the migration culture are the presence of many brokers in the locality … and the presence of many migrant returnees in the area.

Different sources also show that the growing 'culture of migration' in the society is one of the important factors for women migration in some parts of the country such as Jimma. In interviews of women migrants in Metema we saw that most of them were from Jimma Zone of Oromia Region, and also that these women had many friends and relatives already living in the Sudan. Women from Jimma were involved in a chain migration that reinforced the culture of migration in the area. Kenzi, aged 18, stated how this culture of migration and peer influence pushed her to migrate to Sudan:

> In our area, Jimma Sarbo, everybody talks about Sudan as rich country and as a place easy to get work and money. So many young women, married and unmarried migrate to Sudan. I know of many mothers who migrated to Sudan by leaving their children and husband alone. In addition, one of my friends who returned from Sudan repeatedly told me the good things of Sudan and convinced me and my family. Then, though I am from a well-to-do family, I dropped school at 3rd grade and migrated to the Sudan. I was 15 when I left my home country. After working for 3 years I returned because I couldn't bear the work load.

Fozia, another key informant from Asendabo town in Jimma Zoneand a returnee migrant, has a similar story to tell:

> I migrated to the Sudan when I was 17. My brother was in Sudan. He would phone me repeatedly and tell me to go to Sudan with him. He also influenced me by saying it is better to go than stay for the local education. Finally, he convinced me and I decide to migrate to the Sudan by dropping out of school at 4th grade. I ran away from home and went to Metema. I only told my family after I arrived at Metema. My brother covered

the payment for the broker and my travel. Then I crossed the border to Sudan via the main gate by wearing the Sudanese dress called Tob to look like a Sudanese lady. In Khartoum, my brother got me employed in a Sudanese family as a domestic worker. Having learnt Arabic language, I started working as a tea lady by renting a veranda of one restaurant in Khartoum. Now, after I collected some money, I came to Ethiopia to visit my family. I may return to Sudan depending on the condition at my home place.

Related to this culture of migration, another informant, Zalika from Asandabo stated how the social construct of migration influenced her and many young girls to migrate:

In our locality many families believe that sending their children abroad gives a high status and having children overseas is considered as a big success. As a result, everyone is going to the Sudan. I also know and heard about many previous migrants who have changed their livelihood. Hearing and seeing these success stories made me decide to migrate to Sudan to change myself and my family's life.

Talking about why many young women migrants are from Jimma, she added:

In our locality children grow up listening to stories about opportunities abroad and successful stories of relatives and neighbors who migrated abroad. If someone's daughter or son went abroad and sends money and did something good economically and improved her/his own and her /his family's life, the potential migrants want to do the same.

Some of the migrants have attempted to migrate repeatedly. The key informants told me that if one tries to migrate once and fails, he or she will retry several times. Even after they migrate and return, many of them want to go again for different reasons. According to a representative from Meheberehiwot for Social Development (MSD), a local NGO based in Metema town, if one family sends a daughter or son by selling an ox and if the migrant is not as successful as expected, they may send the same person again or another one to get their money back.

Failure in school is also another stated push factor for women migrants. The case histories of two informants, Fayo and Rukiya, from Shashamane and Jimma respectively, show how failure in school makes people migrate. When they left for the Sudan, Fayo was 15 while Rukiya was 17. Both worked in Sudan for about 6 consecutive years. Both recall that they migrated to the Sudan because they couldn't pass the 10th grade exam. Kamila, another migrant woman I interviewed in the Sudan, in Gadarif town, has a similar story. She is from Limmu *woreda* of Oromia Region. She decided to migrate because she was unable to pass her 10th grade

national exam. She has been in Sudan for five years and now she is working as a waitress in one of restaurant in Gadarif town and earns about 2000 ETB per month.

A remark by the head of Metemma *Woreda* Labor and Social Affairs office explains well how academic failure makes women migrate:

> Many females, especially in rural areas do not pass the national exam. Even if they pass the exam, their score/grade is very low and they could not continue even the Technical and Vocational education. If they do not succeed in their studies, many of them think that they don't have any other alternative in the country. They consider migration to Arab countries as the only option to earn a living. Then they decide to migrate to any of the countries to work there and come back to open their own business or if they succeed to remain there. Failure in education is usually expressed in a high degree of pessimism about the chances of succeeding in education at all and in getting employment after graduation. This reason is reported to have pushed many young girls and boys to consider migration as the only viable option to further personal goals in their lives. If the students are not successful in their education, they decide to migrate rather than look for other options within their country. They do not give attention to their schooling and a number of females do not feel they can improve their life working in their country.

In addition to the push factors, there are many pull factors that motivate women to migrate. Some of the pulling factors are availability of job opportunities with relatively better payment as well as conducive working environment, accessibility of short-term entry visa to the Sudan and opportunity to transit into other third countries, and accessibility of road transportation from Addis Ababa to Metema and from Gallabat to Khartoum.

Asked about why she migrated to Sudan, a key informant responded:

> My name is Miskia and I am from Agaro in Jimma. Now I am 38 years old and have three children. I want to live and work here in Ethiopia. But we could not get any job opportunities and suitable work environments. In Ethiopia, even if we want to work as a domestic worker the payment is very low and we are also mistreated by our employers. In Sudan, the payment for domestic work is better and the people are kind and treat us well unlike the Ethiopians. In Ethiopia, even if we want to be involved in petty trades like yejebana buna (traditional coffee making) we are asked to pay tax. In Sudan, we can also engage in any petty trades like tea and coffee selling without paying tax. We are usually allowed one day off a week or every two weeks, when we would go to a place rented jointly with some friends to

> take rest, socialize and get treatment. Moreover, in Sudan there
> are opportunities of entering Europe or other Arab countries. So,
> we prefer to migrate to Sudan to get the aforementioned and
> other opportunities. Thus, we consider Sudan our second
> country. I have been in Sudan for about eight years.

The above quote shows how women migrants often make a comparison between the opportunities and constraints in Ethiopia and Sudan. The conclusion is that sEthiopian women may have some success in petty trading in Sudan. One reason for this is that they make their products more attractive by adding distinctive Ethiopian decorations. But they not onpy succeed in as petty traders. A study by Ahmed (2009) indicates that in Sudan Ethiopian women also have work options in domestic work and in working as waiters in a restaurants and cafeterias. Some also succeed as tea sellers in the streets of Khartoum and other Sudanese towns, where they are found working alongside Sudanese women.

Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Ethiopia Women Migrants

Cross border migration, despite its opportunities, is not an easy task for women. Many experience multiple risks and challenges, in their places of origin, while on the road, and in their final destinations (Abebaw & Waganesh 2015; Bisrat 2006; De Regt 2007; Horwood 2009). I saw the samne in Metema. The empirical data I collected in the field show migrants, especially illegal young women migrants, experiencing multiple problems. The challenges of women migrants begin at home already in the pre-departure phase. Some of the pre-departure experiences mentioned by the migrants are the challenge of raising a large amount of money to finance the travel cost, challenges of adjusting to different transit places and the deception as well as financial and sexual exploitation by brokers and the consequent vulnerability to unnecessary expenses and mistreatment.

Women migrants pass through different transit places including Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Gondar and Metema. They usually travel from one to three days to arrive in MetemaYohannes town. As the participants of the study indicated women migrants begin to experience various challenges from the time they arrived in Metema town. During this time women migrants face different problems including mistreatment and rape by the brokers or other people. They are forced to sleep in crowded rooms in which they are also exposed to various health risks. One of the key informants in Metema Yohannes town who returned from Khartoum explained the challenges she experienced in Metema:

> From Jimma to Metema town, I traveled by public bus and
> arrived on the third day. It was midday when I arrived in the
> town. As soon as I reached the bus station, the broker received
> me and took me to the rural village by bajaj. Then he put me in

> a small room with the other migrants. We were locked in this stuffed small room for three weeks without enough food and water. We were not allowed to leave the room and we could not even have a shower.

The experience of Astalu, a 20 year old migrant who came from Gondar, is also quite comparable:

> As I arrived in Metema, the broker put me in a small room with the other migrants. Some of us were from Amhara but most of the migrants were from Oromia. The room was extremely hot and we almost suffocated because of the hot weather condition of the town. Sometimes we were left for days without having something to eat or drink. Some other times the brokers would come at night and take the girls they want to another place and do whatever they wish.

According to information from the residents of Metema town and respondents, there are times when brokers rape girls and if they refuse they are beaten seriously and sometimes their journey could be delayed or canceled. The comment made by the *kebele* chairman of Metema on this issue is quite telling:

> After they come to Metema, migrants are often kept in a room and are locked up until their travel arrangement to Khartoum is made. Hotel rooms and houses in the town as well as in the rural villages are used as a holding place for newly arrived migrants. During this time migrants, especially girls and young women, are mistreated and raped by the brokers or other people.

In an interview conducted with key informants, it was learned that women migrants have been experiencing a wide range of problems on their journey. Migrants who cross the border through the desert spend several days and nights to reach in Khartoum. To avoid risks of being caught by border guards, they often travel during the night time and during the day they hide in the bush or in a store house rented by the brokers. The migrants experience a variety of challenge including painful journeys, hunger and thirst, rape and sexual abuse, beating and robbery, imprisonment and deportation, sickness and even death. In an interview made with key informants including public officials and residents of Metema town, it was confirmed that girls are raped and sexually exploited by the brokers and even by some local residents of Metema town and by some Sudanese.

As indicated by the migrant informants, most of the time women migrants are raped by the Sudanese brokers and by the local Sudanese people living in the desert. Any migrant or even the brokers i.e., the Ethiopian brokers who try to interfere will be beaten severely. There are even cases in which brokers bargain with the local Sudanese people or border guards to give girls they want as an exchange for allowing them to pass through the desert.

The remark below by Ikram, a returnee migrant, is illustrative of the sexual abuse migrants undergo while travelling to Sudan through the desert route:

> The local Sudanese people are very cruel. If they come across females who refuse to do so what they ask them to do, they beat them deadly. Sometimes, these people single out the girls and women they want from the group by bargaining with the brokers or by force. Nobody helps each other since those who try to interfere will be beaten deadly, too. These local people, after they take the females, do whatever they wish… rape, beat, rob… and leave them in the desert. If they want, they can make them their house maids or their second or third wife.

An interview with kebele chairman of MetemaYohannes town also revealed similar incidents of sexual harassment. He said that rape is a common problem and many girls and young women migrants are raped by either the Ethiopian or Sudanese brokers or people living in the desert. On the other hand, it was learned that there are also honest brokers who assist women migrants while crossing the border and get them employed after their arrival in Khartoum. They even do their best to protect women from any attacks by Sudanese brokers or other people. There are cases in which women migrants entered Sudan without encountering any serious problems in transits as well as during their journey across the desert route.

In an interview with key informants, I was told that women migrants have been experiencing a wide range of problems on their arrival at their various places of destination. The problem is much more severe for those new arrivals due to language barrier, low skills and their inability to easily find jobs. Migrant women newly arriving in Sudan also report that the moment they arrive there, they often find it hard to find a job. For instance, the experience of Zimam (aged 16) who arrived in Khartoum with no friend or relative reveals the difficulty of getting a job:

> I could not speak any Arabic when I first arrived in Sudan. As soon as I arrived in Khartoum the *Samsari* [middle maa n or broker] put me in a store house with the other migrants. The brokers would gather the newly arrived migrants there and then they would wait a few days until getting them a job. For this each of them pay 800 ETB as a rent. After spending three weeks, with the help of the *Samsari*, I finally got a job as a cleaner in one household.

Some of the major challenges faced on their arrival at places of destination include: adjustment problems, work overload, under-payment, stigma, imprisonment, deportation, and other psycho-social problems. Regarding work overload, women migrants stated that as a domestic worker they often work six days per week with one day off and most of them complained about the long working hours and the backbreaking nature of the job they do. "I was 18 when I arrived in Khartoum. I had to work in two places, one

in the home and the other in the beauty salon," complains a key informant, "I work for long periods but sleep for a very short time".

Kenzi, aged 18, is one of the returnee migrants who was interviewed at Metema Immigration Office. She is from Jimma Zone and migrated to Sudan when she was 15. She said that she was working as a domestic worker in a Sudanese house for about three years with a monthly payment of 1500 ETB. She decided to return home because she could not withstand the workload. Some women migrants also reported that as domestic workers they face sexual abuse and harassment by their employers usually by the head of the household. A case in point is the story of Birhane, aged 22. She said she was sexually abused while working as a domestic worker in one of the Sudanese households. "When the wife was not around and sometimes at night," says she, "the father of the family would always ask me to sleep with him. Because of this, his wife suspected me and began ill-treating me. Following that, I decided to leave without even taking my salary".

Other challenges experienced by women migrants at the place of destination, especially in Khartoum town, are how to get work, how to get a stay permit and how to work legally. It was found out that most of them have no legal status that in turn exposed them for high risks, including subject to detention and deportation. Astalu is a returnee migrant whom I met in Metema town working in a bar as commercial sex worker. She stayed in Sudan for two years and was later deported to Ethiopia. She shared her lived experience as follows:

> I was working in one of Sudanese house. Unfortunately, I was caught by the Sudanese police when I went outside the house to bring something. Then I was immediately taken to prison and told to stay for three months. When I tried to escape from the prison, they saw me and beat and tortured me severely. After that, I was more or less unconscious for two days. I found myself in a hospital with my body aching all over. They returned me to the prison again after I got treatment and recovered. Finally, after one month, they deported me and handed me over to the Metema immigration office.

Another case story about detention and deportation of women migrants is a 19-years-old returnee migrant whom I met in Metema town. She expressed her experience in the following way:

> I worked only for three months when I was caught by the Sudanese police and got into prison. After staying four months in the prison, one of my relatives who know them well gave them 3000 ETB. Then they released me after receiving the money. At that time, many Ethiopians, Somalis and Eritreans were in the prison. The prisoners suffered a lot. They were beaten up and tortured. Some were even sentenced to death

> without having committed any serious crime. There is no chance
> to be released once you are detained unless you have money or
> you have someone who can help you.

The challenges that women migrants face are not only at the places of destination and in transit. The problems follow them after they return to their place of origin. Some of the major problems that women migrants experience in post return periods are problems of adjustment, low self-esteem and stress. Other problems related to post-return migration experiences are stigmatization in which they could not easily find partners because males are usually not interested to marry returnee migrants. In this regard, Grabska (2016) explains about migrating girls and young women who face high levels of insecurity and vulnerability due to their youth and gender. Those who have experiences of physical or psychological violence during their journey and in their stay in Khartoum often suffer from profound post-traumatic stress.

Regarding marginalization of returnee women migrants, the FGD participants in Metema town stated that returnee women migrants are stigmatized for their previous work status as domestic worker and the associated sexual abuse by employers or other people. According to participants, returnees are often unable to get married because males assume that those who have migrated are sexually abused. As a result, many of them prefer to migrate again either to the same place or to a different location. If they are not successful, they end up as commercial sex workers.

In spite of all the problems, female migrants who find fortune and are able to withstand the challenges are contributing both to the community of the origin and destination (Horwood 2009). As the study participants mentioned, there are various opportunities obtained by Ethiopian women migrants from cross border migration. Some of the opportunities for Ethiopian women migrants at place of destination include learning new skills and language and finding jobs with a relatively better payment which would in turn enable them to send remittance to their families back home.

Domestic work is usually the type of work that women migrants easily find in Khartoum. Most of the interviewed women migrants reported that they woked as resident maids in Sudanese houses. They start with low salaries but as they acquire more skills and start speaking Arabic language they begin getting more job opportunities with better payment. Although the payment depends on the types of job migrants are engaged in, the average monthly payment for a domestic worker in Sudan is about 1750 ETB a month, ranging from 1500-2000 ETB (68 to 90 USD). On the other hand, waiters obtain an average salary of 2250 ETB that ranges from 2000 to 2500 ETB (90 USD to 113 USD) per month.

Key informants stated that tea selling and working as waitresses are the other common types of jobs that many Ethiopian women migrants are able

to get in the Sudan. They engage in these jobs after they learn Arabic language and after having enough savings to run their business. This is also confirmed by Grabska (2016) who stated that many Ethiopian young girls and women are visible on the streets of Khartoum as tea sellers. I also observed that many Ethiopian women migrants were working as tea sellers in different corners of Khartoum, along the roadside, in the city's market centres and in cafeterias run by both Sudanese and Ethiopians.

Moreover, I had the chance to have informal discussion with some of the Ethiopian women migrants working in Gadarif State, Sudan. I conducted an interview with Beletech, a 20 year old female migrant from Wolayita Zone who was working as a tea seller in Kiyari town of Gadarif State. I met her while she was selling tea and coffee in front of a restaurant. She stated that she had been working as a domestic worker for a Sudanese family in Khartoum. After learning Arabic she started to sell tea by setting up her own tea stalls. Some of my other informants also stated that Ethiopian women migrants often establish a small business for selling tea and coffee. This is because selling tea and coffee is more profitable and has more freedom as compared with working as domestic worker. It was learned that a tea-seller earns relatively better payment ranging from 4000 to 5000 ETB (220 to 240 USD) per month.

Opportunity to Enter Other Countries

According to respondents in Khartoum and Metema town some Ethiopian migrants have an opportunity to enter Europe and Middle East. Many Ethiopians often go to Libya through Sudan and Egypt with a strong desire to go to Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea (RMMS 2014). Migrants first travel to Sudan for the sake of saving money so that they could cover their travel expense. The following case story clearly depicts the intention of female migrants who migrated to Sudan:

> My name is Kezina, and I am 25 years old. I am from Sokoru town of Jimma zone. I migrated to Sudan with my husband. My brother who was living in Sudan was the one who covered our travel expense. I was living with my husband in Khartoum a. After staying for 7 years I got pregnant and returned to Ethiopia to give birth to my baby. While I was in Ethiopia my husband left Sudan and entered Italy by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. He reached Italy within 3 months. However, as he could not get job in Italy, he travelled to Germany. After that, he got a better job and a stay permit in Germany. Now I and my baby boy are waiting to reunite with him. If we cannot succeed to migrate through legal means, we will take the risky journey by crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

Another key informant is Miskia who was 30 when she first migrated to Sudan. She is from Agaro town of Jimma Zone and she stayed in Sudan for 8 years. She said she got entry visa to Beirut while she was in Khartoum.

She travelled to Beirut legally, gping by air, assisted by her friends. She got a house maid job in Beirut and stayed there for five months.

Moreover, one of the residents of Metema town revealed that most Ethiopians who cross the Ethio-Sudan border are not interested to stay there. They say they want eventually to go to Italy and Germany. The informant further notes that he knows many people who were able to make it to Germany, to Israel and to other countries. Many of the study participants also mentioned that the intentions of the migrants is to either get a better work in a place where they first arrive or to go on further to a place where they can earn better income.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) indicated that though migration to some Arab countries was banned in 2013, people have continued migrating to different parts of the world including the Sudan. They migrate illegally by taking a flight from Bole International Airport or via different land routes. So far, no study on migration, particularly through the Metema route has been conducted by the Ministry.

Conclusions

This study represents an attempt to provide a better understanding on the dynamics of cross border migration by Ethiopian women migrants along the Ethio-Sudan border with a particular emphasis on the Metema route. The findings of the study show that Metema town is one of the main land routes serving as a major transient corridor for both legal and illegal Ethiopian women migrants. Women migrants who chose the Metema route as a transit to enter Sudan were quite diversified in terms of factors such as age, sex, education, and ethnic and religious background as well as in their marital status, places of origin and legal status. Some of them migrate legally using a short-term visa and *tasrih* (temporary ID card) while others travel illegally mainly by crossing the Ethio-Sudan border using the desert route. The proportion of women migrants outnumbers that of their male counterparts.

The contemporary cross border migration by Ethiopian women migrants towards the Republic of Sudan is influenced by many inter- related factors. Although the factors that push and pull migrants to migrate differ from individual to individual, the most stated factors are found to be economic and socio-cultural actors. The desire for a better life and ambition to support one's family back home, lack of adequate job opportunities and low payment in their locality are all reported to be major factors that push many women migrants to migrate to the Sudan. On the other hand, the demand for women domestic workers with relatively attractive payment at the place of destination is identified as one of the major pull factors for migration to the Sudan. Besides, the migrants dream to move on from Sudan to third countries, mainly to enter into Europe and the Middle East. This longing for Europe and the Middle East make up an important additional pull factor of migration.

The existing migration policies and laws at both sending and receiving countries towards cross border migration as well as the loose border control system coupled with the practice of corruption by border guards are blamed to be the key factors to explain the increase in illegal migration. The broader international trends and the current integration of global economies such as advancement of modern transportation and communication systems and the fast flow of information have made it easier, cheaper and faster for people to move from one place to another. That in turn creates conducive environment for cross border migration.

The study further further indicates that Ethiopian migrants, especially illegal young women migrants, have been experiencing multiple challenges in the process of migration starting from pre-departure to post return stages. For instance, before departure, they are deceived, mistreated and exposed to unnecessary expenditure mainly by local brokers. On their way to the Sudan, they travel long distances on travels that last three to five or more days on foot. Their journey is full of pain such as hunger, thirst and sexual abuse. In addition, they are beaten, raped, robbed and some even die in the the desert. On their arrival at destination, they often encounter different psycho-social problems such as work overload, underpayment, loneliness, imprisonment, and deportation. Returnee women migrants usually face problems of adjustment, low self-esteem and some of them are vulnerable to stress and trauma.

On the other hand, women migrants who are fortunate enough to arrive safely at places of destination enjoy different opportunities. Successful migrants who are able to find work send remittance back home that might improve the livelihoods of their families. Some of them also acquire new skills that could be transferred into their country of origin. Thus, the findings of the study give insights to policy makers and development practitioners related to the current migration trends and the challenges and opportunities associated with cross border migration along the Metema route.

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Chapter 5

Ethiopian Women in the Sudan: A Case from Kassala-Eastern Sudan
Ibtisam Satti Ibrahim

Being Ethiopian in Kassala

It was an early Sunday morning. The taxi driver dropped me in *Souq Gargaf*. This *Souq* is a new market place where the old Kassala market is relocated. The market was still being built but some shops were opened though they were still under construction. While walking in the market one day the sound of Ethiopian songs attracted me to one of the coffee shops that ws open. The place was clean although the furniture was modest, with a few chairs and tables. A water container and some tea and coffee cups were placed on one of the tables where Ethiopian coffee was being made. The smell of the coffee seemed to attract some young men who entered into the coffee shop while chatting with each other. They found their places around one of the tables and called for the waitress.

The waitress was a young Ethiopian lady who was also preparing the coffee. She was wearing a Sudanese *toab*[26]. As I had also had entered the shop around the same time as the young men I ordered a cup of tea and started chatting with her while she was preparing tea and coffee for all of us. I commented:

> Your *toab* is beautiful and you seem to wear it properly, just like Sudanese women.

Smiling, she answered:

> I have been here in Sudan for two years. I was working for a few months in Khartoum, where I used to dress "normally". When I came to Kassala my friends told me that I should wear *toab*, otherwise the police will not let you work in the market.

I asked:

> What do you mean by "normally?

To this she quickly returned:

> Just like what I used to wear when I was in my country.

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[26] *Toab* is the traditional women dress in Sudan

One of the young men who was listening to our conversation commented as he was looking towards her:

> This is "natural". They should respect our culture, or we will not let them work here.

At that point I didn't want to continue the conversation. I thanked her for the tea and went out of the shop. But two words stuck to my mind - "natural" and "normal", and I wanted to find out more about what people meant when they used such words. What was natural and what was normal, for instance with reference to how people dressed? The brief exchange in the coffee shop had provided a first answer. For the Ethiopian girl who was comparing Ethiopian and Sudanese ways of dressing her use of "dressing normally" was referring to her cultural identity as an Ethiopian, whil the reaction of the Sudanese boy was an example of how a Sudanese person perceived of her. Realizing I was entering into the field of identity and ethnicity I decided to collect more information.

Already in the evening of that day I met with six Ethiopian women - Aregash, Gennit, Maharet, Makhalish, Rahowa and Salam- in their home for a group discussion. I asked them about how they dress when they go out for work. Most of them said that they wear either *Abaya*[27] or *Toab*. Salam, a nineteen year old girl, said:

> I wear *Abaya* in the Souq to protect myself. I have no trouble with the customers. Most of them are young men. I am not a Muslim although I pretend to be so.

I commented:

> But not all Sudanese women wear *Abaya*?

Aregash and Rahowa added:

> We do it also because of our fear of the police. In our country we are free to wear whatever we like. Here it is different. We are not free.

Gennit who is 26 years told me her story when she was walking with her friend to the church on a Sunday. She was wearing her national Ethiopian dress, she said, but then something happened:

> Unfortunately we were caught by the police and we had to pay money to be released. Only if we dress like Sudanese we can move freely. We don't want to get into troubles. We decided not to go to the church any more.

Here I saw that reactions relating to dress were different depending on what people were involved in the interaction with the girls. Which again affected their response. Interacting with ordinary customers could be undramatic, or

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[27] *Abaya* is the dress that Muslim women in different countries wear to cover their bodies.

they could feel the pressure from Sudanese customers to dress in a Sudanese way. But even if the customers reacted negatively nothing much happened. But when the police was involved things changed and the girls had to think about their security.

But even if not all of the girls were ready to adapt to such pressure they accepted that they had to accept that reality. Maharet who is 27 reacted to the arguments of her friends by saying that:

> I don't want to wear the Sudanese Toab, I do not feel I am Sudanese. I sometimes pretend to be a Muslim just to be able to live without being offended.

Makhalish, a Tigray woman 55 years old, came to Sudan more than 30 years ago during the Ethiopia – Eritrean independence war. She owns a small hotel near Kassala old market where she receives those who come to Kassala for the first time. She was listening to the discussion without saying a single word. I asked her about how the new-comers from Ethiopia to the hotel dress and behave. She commented:

> I usually receive Ethiopian girls who come for the first time and try to help them in finding work through my personal contacts or sometimes through a Sudanese broker. They don't usually wear a scarf (*tarha*). Some wear trousers. I usually advise them to mind the cultural difference especially in the way they dress and communicate, but some of them do not care. I do not blame them because they are young. Time is changing. But they should not ignore the opinion of the community which rejects them and classify them as undisciplined. For me, I see myself as a Sudanese. I wear *toab*, make *hinna*[28] and visit my neighbors on their different festive occasions. We respect the Sudanese and we adapt to their customs and traditions, their values and their culture. If those girls want to live peacefully in Kassala they should take care of their behavior in the street.

Nardos, who was reluctant to accept what Makhalish was saying, sadly argued:

> I was not thinking of migrating to Sudan, but when my father died I had no other choice as I was left with my sick mother and my sisters. If I could collect a good sum of money, I will go back to my country and start a business there. I love my country. I still wear *Zoria*[29] when I go to the church- which is rare - or when I visit my friends. I work hard and I spend the whole day working- from 7am to 6 pm. So I have no time to visit friends or to entertain myself. I hope to go back to my homeland to be myself. I feel I am in a prison.

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[28] *Hinna* is a Sudanese hand and foot decoration specially for married women.
[29] *Zoria* is the Ethiopian women traditional dress.

After that discussion I again recalled the words "normal"and "natural" that had started off my inquiries. It was evident that these words were closely related to the social identity of individual persons, and that such an identity was linked to the feeling of belonging to a place and to a group. Furthermore that the type of clothes the girls were wearing were funtioning as a marker of such an identity. Identity for them was thus expressed through the use of markers such as language and dress, and also how they behaved and where they chose to move. But being in Sudan they were also experienced how their choices were seen by the local people and by the representatives of Sudanese institutions, such as the police. And what the conversation about these things hadshown was that even if they did not agree on the implications of this, the Ethiopian girls were all intensively aware of the fact that there existed markers, such as dress, that helped create the boundaries that defined similarities or differences between themselves and the Sudanese. And, this awareness of similarities and differences produced an acute feeling of who they were or who they wanted to be. Or to put it in an anthropological way – the experiences the girls were discussing produced awareness about the "Self" and an awareness that such as self was established socially through a set of discourses which are both discursive and practical.

Views on Ethiopian Women among the Sudanese

To follow up on this I decided I needed more information from the other side, meaning the perception of Kassala community about those Ethiopian women. To get such information I discussed with two groups from Kassala, one group of seven women and another group of six men. My main concern was to find out their perception of the Ethiopian women who lived in their town. In the meetings the men's group immediately started pointing at the difference of cultures, religion, and language. The women group, on the other hand, added to these differences by strongly emphasizing both their fear of losing their husbands to the Ethiopian women, and also a fear of the diseases which they believed that those women were carrying.

Hanan, a married woman elaborated on her position:

> I think we are different, we have different values and beliefs and different cultures. We even speak different languages. I don't trust those women. They can easily steal our husbands, or tempt them to have sex. They spoil our youth and attract them to drink coffee and to eat their food which they sell in their restaurants. We do not know what else they offer. They should not be allowed to work in the market or even to enter the country.

But when talking about more general and "neutral" issues such as music, the people I talked to in Kassala, and I think it goes also more generally for people in Sudan, expressed that they liked Ehiopian music. And Ethiopian coffee is highly regarded. Even more so, in Kassala we even see the introduction of Ethiopian food, especially at occasions such as weddings.

This paradox means that we are selective in our views about the Other and that the Sudanese are not agreeing among themselves about how to regard Ethiopians. And it opens up for a sace in which the Ethiopian girls can maneuver. And in this maneuvering we can also see elements that become a basis for the Sudanese views of the Ethiopians. For instance, with her full make-up and elegant dress working in a restaurant near Kassala old market, Mihiret frankly explained that she used her sexuality and her sense of agency to assert herself and to cross the identity boundaries:

> All our customers are young men who like the Ethiopian songs and coffee. We try to entertain them as they are generous to us. We do not have any problems or clashes with them specially that most of them are regular customers. I don't like to wear the Sudanese toab or even Abaya as I don't feel I am Sudanese. We are also competing to attract customers, so we should take care of ourselves. If there is any problem with one of the customers, the policemen will protect us. This is why we pay them.

Mihiret works in a restaurant located in a building near Kassala old market called *Assafina* (the ship) where many tea and coffee shops are found. Many young Ethiopian girls work there, fashionably dressed with full make up. Their tea and coffee equipments are nicely decorated, with a special *Bakhour* smell in the air. Most of the visitors are yung Sudanese. You can hear the Ethiopians songs as soon as you step in. The words and the signs exchanged between them and their customers are different from that in other coffee shops and in such places deals for commercial sex are organized. People know about this and it helps produce stereotypes about all Ethiopian women as being involved in selling sex. In this way sexuality is ethnicitized and racialized and become linked to other elements that make up the views the Sudanese I met expressed about Ethiopian women.

Which brings me to an end of my brief empirical inquiry about how Ethiopians and Sudanese see each other, and how they interact socially in a place such as Kassala. And, as expected, what I found was that rather than a single view or a unified attitude there is a complexity and a variation in the views and in the experiences different people have that takes us beyond the simplistic sterotypes about "us" and "them". But the stereotypes are also there and will affect the interaction.

To sort out this complexity I turn now to a more conceptual discussion in which I argue that there are contributions in the anthropological literature that can be of help in provonding a better understanding of the empirical complexity shown above. Let me point at two major ones.

Interaction, Signs and Meaning: the Debate over Identity

One useful position to me is represented by Fredrik Barth, who argues in his book "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (1969) that the critical focus for investigation should be "the ethnic boundary that defines the group rather than the cultural stuff that it encloses". By this Barth wanted to break down

the understanding of the individual as a coherent whole subject into a collection of various cultural identifiers or markers. And according to this logic, individual identity is about presenting oneself in certain ways while interacting with others. Social identity emerges as an aggregate result of the individual's many choices we can observe in wider fields of interaction, as they emerge in "ethnic groups".

Such group-making thus requires the presence of at least two groups and the issue of inclusion and exclusion becomes important. One is a member of one group, which provides a positive feeling about one's own identity being a member of a group, while members of other groups represent difference and even danger. Thus, the ethnic process contains a process of reification whereby the group feeling of the group can be imagined as real and solid, while in effect it is an imagination of the group making process itself in which "objective" criteria are at work, such as common ancestry and common biological characteristics. This position is clearly "constructionist".

An alternative direction for my reflection comes from a more psychologically oriented perspective, related to the thinking of Eric Eriksson. In his argument personal continuity, also called personal persistence, is the uninterrupted connection concerning a particular person to his or her private life and personality. Personal continuity is the union affecting the facets arising from personality in order to avoid discontinuities from one moment of time to another time. Personal continuity is an important part of identity, ensuring that the qualities of the mind, such as self-awareness, and the ability to perceive the relationship between oneself and one's environment, are consistent from one moment to the next. Personal continuity is the property of a continuous and connected period of time.

> ..a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image. As a quality of unself-conscious living, this can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found himself as he has found his communality. In him emerges a unique unification of what is irreversibly given--that is, body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals--with the open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered, mentors met, friendships made, and first sexual encounters (Erikson:1970).

To Erikson identity is something that shifts and grows throughout life as people confront new challenges and tackle different experiences. In Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, the emergence of an identity crisis occurs during the teenage years in which people struggle between feelings of identity versus role confusion. (ibid) But in my cases from Kassala we also see that such identity crises can occur under different

circumstances, as shown by the Ethiopian migrants in their interaction with the Sudanese.

Linking Perspectives – "Self" and "Person"

I think it is possible to link the two perspectives elaborated above. Following Richard Jenkins (2004), in sociological elaboration we may define the self as:

> An individual's reflexive sense of her or his own particular identity, constituted vis-à-vis others in terms of similarity and difference, without which she or he wouldn't know who they are and hence wouldn't be able to act. (Jenkins, 2004:27).

The quote takes us in two directions, towards the "Self", being the individual's private experience of herself or himself, and towards the "Person", being what appears in public, in and of the world. Given the problem of differentiating between the inner and the outer dimensions of self and person, it is also basic that we should see selfhood and personhood as completely implicated in each other. The autonomous and reflexive self is always there, but together with external structures of custom, discipline and power.

Bourdieu's "habitus" also comes to mind here as a useful concept pointing at this interaction, habitus being "a corpus of dispositions, embodied in the individual, generative of practices in an ongoing and improvisatory interactions in, and encounters with, "social fields" of one kind or another" (quoted in Jenkins 2004:34). This conceptual framework allows us to see the self as dynamic, and in a process of being constituted in constant interaction with the "other". As we see in the interaction between Ethiopians and Sudanese, relationships across socio-cultural boundaries and political-administrative borders, (ethnic, religious, political, economic, national) will make a difference to inter-communal practices among and between people. The habitus of a person is composed of the intellectual dispositions inculcated to him or her by family and the familial environment, and are manifested according to the nature of the person. As such, the social formation of a person's habitus is influenced by family, by objective changes in social class, and by social interactions with other people in daily life; moreover, the habitus of a person also changes when he or she changes social positions within the field (Bourdieu: 1986:56).

My case material shows the importance of how people define themselves and how they define themselves vis-a-vis various others. Identities then are formed, maintained and changed through experience, action and interaction. Messages are sent and received and interpreted. Identity formation is a dynamic process, creative and contextually based. If this is the case, identity games are then in a basic way are also games involving meaning. Our representation of ourselves and our understanding of others involve the sending out and receiving and interpreting signs. For this process to be sustained over time it is required that these signs have

meaning for the participants. The meaning is not identical to all participants, and signs may not be interpreted the way the sender intends. But meaning is basic if communication is to work, and meaning emerges in dynamic "sign-games" that become crucial for identity formation: the sending and receiving of signs; signs being interpreted in the way it was intended by the sender or interpreted in different ways. But in all cases, the interpretation of such signs is based on the experiences of the receiver. Thus self and person comes together and both become social and public. Communication in this perspective is a kind of negotiation and the meaning coming out of it is processual, being a product of such negotiations.

Two conclusions stand out; Social identities are formed as results of a process, they are in the making. Second, it is possible to deal with individual identities and collective identities within the same framework that of a dialectic interplay of processes of internal and external definitions of "self" and "person".

Stereotypes and Predictabality

My cases also contain examples of stereotyping. If social life is to continue within the parameters outlined above it is important that there should be a degree of predictability (Cohen 1996). Communal identities, imagined or not, are socially real in that they provide a framework for action. Anthony Cohen argues for one kind of consistency. According to Cohen community membership depends on a symbolic construction and signification of similarity. This similarity is imagined and does not consist in social structure or in social behavior. The imagining depends on the existence of symbols that allow for the creation of this kind of feeling in people, and among people who in fact might understand community in different ways. This produces a kind of conformity that also renders interaction predictable.

Mary Douglas is of course a leading theorist here in her work on classification and her basic claim that without classificatory systems social life is unthinkable. In my context here a special type of classification is of particular interest, that is stereotyping. Being an everyday cognitive process that allows for information management such stereotyping facilitates institutionalization in which individual Ethiopians become a collective "those Ethiopians," and vice versa, the individual Sudanese become "those Sudanese". Thus stereotypes are powerful symbols that help to create the group conformity we have talked about above. What is interesting here is that such stereotyping represents classification in interaction and in practice. The very act of stereotyping should therefore be treated within the same generative framework that I have argued for above. Stereotypes enter the ethnic identity game by way of significational processes through which certain categories of people objectify their sense of distinctiveness, thus embracing an ethnic identity. We see both Ethiopians and Sudanese do this.

Conclusion

Researchers have attempted to address the question of why people engage in discrimination, why they tend to favor those they consider as part of their "in-group" over those considered to be outsiders. Recognizing individuals in spite of their differences is indeed the basis for equal respect and dignity. The challenges that surround diversity stem rather from the misrecognition of difference, and/or the use of identity difference as a basis for exclusion from rights access (Tonkiss: 2013) Negative stereotyping of the external (Other) go on, but in my view it will not serve to reinforce the collective self of the (in- group). Nevertheless, we tend to reject the (others) fearing of losing our identity.

Anti-migrant sentiments represent one example of such stereotyping and the arguments against migrants are many. Migrants in this logic are seen to reduce the per capita size of land of the native country. They may also bring infectious diseases from their home countries. Some go further to argue that they contribute to higher crime rates as they bring their culture with them including uncivilized and undesirable religious practices. Border crossing can also be seen through the prism of gender practices of migration in which women who seek to cross the borders illegally for economic, family or other reasons are seen as always engaging in sexual acts as a strategy, thus not only engaging in criminal border crossing, but also in immoral sexual acts.

All of this represent forms of ethnic stigmatization, and should be counteracted. Martha Nussbaum, in her work on global citizenship (Nussbaum 2006), has reflected on the need to deliver global citizenship education which can instill in young people a sense of respect for and empathy with the Other – because '[a]wareness of cultural difference is essential in order to promote the respect for another"(Nussbaum:2006). Justice as equality should be provided irrespective of group membership, simply in virtue of humanity.

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Chapter 6

Moving in the Face of Uncertainty: Eritrean Refugees' En-Route Flight Experiences Across the Ethio-Eritrean Border
Mulu Getachew

Introduction

Bordering Eritrea in the north, Ethiopia hosts a large number of Eritrean refugees and serves as a transit hub for many Eritreans. As a signatory to both the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention, the Government of Ethiopia provides protection to refugees from various countries. According to the UNHCR (2016), Ethiopia is the second largest host country for refugees in Africa with more than 700,000 refugees. The majority originate from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. As of May 2018, there were 169,252 Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2018). Every month, 2,000 to 5000 Eritreans flee to Ethiopia and Sudan (International Commission on Eritrean Refugees Report to UNOHCHR 2011; Samuel 2014; RMMS 2016). The arrival of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia started with the brief border war in 1998-2000. Since then the Government of Ethiopia upholds an open border policy towards Eritrean refugees and grants them refugee status on prima facie basis. These refugees usually settle in the Northern region of Ethiopia, in a region that borders Eritrea and Sudan.

The Ethiopian-Eritrean Border War of 1998-2000 not only marked the outflow of large numbers of Eritreans to Ethiopia but also the transformation of the porous border into a wall that obstructed established movements of people and goods (Dias 2012). Regardless of the physical and political barriers that exist between the two countries and the Eritrean government's policy towards those caught trying to escape many men, women and children cross the border surreptitiously and find their way to the border camps in Ethiopia.

Unfortunately, the moment of departure and the en route flight is characterized by the presence of security forces and unpredictable outcome of crossing the militarized border. The subsequent camp life is anticipated with varying degrees of unease as a result of unpredictable future and protracted situation. All make the social environment of the refugees uncertain. Based on the experience of Eritrean refugees residing in Hintsats and Mai Aini refugee camp in northern Ethiopia, this study seeks to understand how Eritrean refugees experience and deal with uncertainty during their flight.

Refugee Flight and Uncertainty

Refugees and forced migrants undertake journeys, which are often long and difficult. There are abundant examples in this regard; the Jewish journey to Israel; the movements of millions of Hindus and Muslims across the Indo–Pakistani border in 1947; the flight of the Hmong people from Loas in the late 1970s and 1980s; the flight of the Vietnamese 'boat people'; the conflict in Syria which causes many to displace across borders; the civil war in Sudan between the North and the South causing many to flee from their habitual residence etc. (Benezer and Zetter 2014; Zolberg et al. 1989).

Despite the fact that these flights are familiar, for long, they form neither a focus nor a coherent body of research. The flight, be it as a "lived experience, concept, metaphor or construct" has received less attention in the scholarly literature (Benezer and Zetter 2014:301). For instance, Colson's seminal summary of anthropological studies in the field of forced migration failed to mention both the issue of flight and its neglect by researchers (see Colson 2003). The main reason behind this is our emphasis on either the causes or the consequences of forced migration which seem relatively static than the flight itself. What happens in between, the actual flight process is deemed marginal to the refugee experience as a whole (Ċetta and Noelle 2016; Benezer and Zetter 2014).

Yet, the flight is not only a significant process of 'becoming' and 'being' a refugee, it is overwhelmingly formative and transformative, and a 'lens' on the newcomers' social condition (Benezer and Zetter 2014). Powerful processes occur during journeys, which affect the individual as well as community in life-changing ways. From the moment of departure, the flight can be compounded with separation, the risk of death, incarceration, further persecution, sexual abuse, trafficking or sexual exploitation etc. For those who withstand these journeys during exile, the experience is not only highly significant in itself but may continue as such throughout their lives (see Benezer 2002).

Recently, survivors' accounts of land and sea journeys, and the evidence of bodies washed up on Europe's Mediterranean shores or the Gulf of Aden raised international concerns. Both refugees and migrants' flight has also been getting special attention. However, scholarly works and reports on refugee's flight or /and journey in Africa predominantly focussed on asylum seekers fleeing the continent to Europe (Collyer 2007; Hagen-Zanker and Mallett 2016; Hamood 2006; Schapendonk 2012; UNHCR 2015). Basically, focusing on the most famous land and sea routes and transits to Europe such as Libya, Morocco and/or the Mediterranean Sea, these studies predominantly address the number of individuals attempting to enter Europe irregularly and their stories. They hardly investigate the earlier stages and initial points of flights that take place further away from the European borders.

On the other hand, the few studies and reports on the flight of refugees from Africa either focus on the irregular nature of these movements or the causes and consequences of such flights; the dangerous conditions and human rights abuses along land routes (Cummings et al. 2015; Horwood 2015; Horwood and Kate 2016; Humphris, 2013; Laurie 2013; RMMS 2015). However, the actual exilic process and the refugee experience of the journey itself, from the country of origin into the immediate neighbouring country - en route predicaments, precariousness of such journeys often fraught with uncertainty, and how these refugees manage and move on within such uncertain social environment are under researched.

The issue of recent refugee influx from Eritrea has also been a subject of discussion in literature of different interests and purposes. Among these include, factors behind the refugee haemorrhage from Eritrea (Kiberab 2013; O'Kane and Hepner 2009; WRC 2013); identity (Conard 2006); human smuggling and trafficking of Eritreans far away from the Eritrean border (Humphris 2013; van Reisen 2016; van Reisen, Estefanos and Rijken 2013); how globalization has facilitated the flow of refugees from Eritrea (Bariagaber 2013); transnationalism (Al Ali, Black and Koser 2001); the right to asylum in Ethiopia (Awoke 2011); the experiences of individuals seeking resettlement to a third country and human right consciousness (Harmon-Gross 2009); acquisition and transformation of knowledge during migration (Treiber 2013); Eritrean migrants experience in Khartoum and Addis Ababa (Treiber 2014) among many more. Most if not all of these studies, conducted outside refugee camps, fail to adequately address the journey of those refugees across the Ethio-Eritrean border which is militarized. However, the majority of these refugees experienced flight under circumstances where fleeing is regarded as an act of treason and desertion, where ways and means are usually limited and restricted - with high presence of security forces, a 'shoot to kill' policy by the government of Eritrea and a militarized border, often fraught with uncertainty.

Looking at literature on uncertainty in displacement circumstances, the uncertainty people face during flight is often associated with the conflict that initiate people's flight and predominantly focused on their pre-departure experience. In this case, uncertainty is related to the risk of dying, unpredictability of the future, as a result of conflict that creates feelings of insecurity and fear of ambiguity and contradiction (Horst and Grabska 2015). After flight, particularly while in refugee camps, uncertainty is associated with the 'liminal' nature of the refugee camps, the unresolved relationship that displaced people have with the temporal and spatial aspects of their situation (See Griffiths 2013; El-Shaarawi 2015; Horst and Grabska 2015). Focusing on refugees en route flight experience of Eritrean refugees residing in Hintsats and Mai Aini refugee camp in northern Ethiopia, this paper intends to explore the contexts and causes of uncertainty, and how refugees experience and deal with uncertainty during their en route flight and how they manage and move on within it.

The Notion of Social Navigation: Moving Within Uncertain Social Environments

Given the current Eritrean refugee flight experience, a framework and analytical lens is needed, one that is able to capture the complexity of their en route flight across the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea and simultaneously address the agency and the structure that inform the refugee flight.

Henrik Vigh (2009) coins the concept of social navigation, a notion that has been increasingly popular in anthropological theory, serving as a metaphor for practice. Illuminating the concept of social navigation, he not only makes its implicit value explicit but also moves the notion from 'the map' on to 'the social environment' and demonstrates its theoretical as well as empirical value in the analysis of practice within anthropology (Vigh 2009). Vigh defines the social navigation as the way in which people living in the context of insecurity assess the changes within their socio-political environment, evaluate the emerging possibilities within this environment, and consequently, direct their lives in the most beneficial and advantageous ways. The concept is not only about a mere survival however, it also points towards both making one's way through immediate difficulties as well as directing one's life positively into the future. According to Vigh (2010: 150), the term encompasses both the "*immediate* assessment of the dangers and possibilities of one's present position as well as the ability to envision, plot and actualise an advantageous movement from the present into an *imagined* future ". It is about both immediate survival and the drawing of trajectories into the imagined future.

The term navigation literary meaning 'to sail, sail over and go by the sea' depicts a special type of movement, 'a movement in a moving environment'. Here, the concept differs from the type of movement on landscapes or solidified surface (Vigh 2009). Or as he puts it, the notion of navigation emphasizes "motion within motion; it is the act of moving in an environment that is wavering and unsettled" (Vigh, 2009: 420). When applied to light up social life it guides our thought to the fact that we move in a social environment of actors and actants, individual and institutions that involve and "move us as we move along" (ibid: 420). Hence, the concept gives us a different lens to see practice and the intersection between agency, social forces and change.

For the Eritrean refugees who crossed the fortified border and subsequently reside in refugee camps in Ethiopia, crossing the militarized border is characterised by a heightened sense of insecurity. Social navigation as an analytical lens is thus, useful in exploring the complexity of their flight across the border, at the same time addressing refugee's agency and the structure in to consideration. The concept allowed us to look at how refugees manage and move on with a condition of insecurity and uncertainty, far from being passive or powerless. In other words, despite having to contend with challenging contexts and complex social status, the

concept allows to explore how refugees consciously and deliberately navigate the precarious terrains that surround them. At the same time, it brings our attention to the ways they thoughtfully, strategically and actively assess and engage with their surroundings, in order to enhance their well-being.

Navigating the Complex Terrain of Flight

Manned by thousands of troops, the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea is heavily guarded on both sides. In addition to the border which is already militarized, the Eritrean government represents an added barrier for those trying to escape as it considers them as deserters and enemies of the state. To stem the flow, the government allegedly imposed a 'shoot to kill' policy for deserters and retaliation against their family. The government has erected migration barriers through its policy not only towards those who escape from the state but also those who facilitate it.

Along the border area, incidents of injury, death and capture of Eritrean refugees attempting to flee the country are common (ICG 2014; Treiber 2014). An unknown number of people have been shot near the Eritrean border with Ethiopia (Treiber 2014). As a result of this, many agreed that crossing the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia is far more difficult and dangerous than crossing the border to Sudan. However, for the majority of my informants, life in Eritrea is more dangerous than crossing the border. Most of them face military conscription, religious persecution, arbitrary detention and torture. *Sigiredob* is the term used by Eritrean refugees to refer to their clandestine crossing of the border – while *sigire* is derived from the word *segere* meaning to cross, and *dob* means border. For the majority of my informants, their path was not linear. Hiwot for instance who is an Eritrean refugee in her 20's tried to cross the border two times. She recalled how she was caught with four others and what happened to her along the border in her first attempt:

> ... It was bright moonlight and we were left with 20 minutes to cross Mereb [a river between Ethiopia and Eritrea border] and three spies came to us.... when they said 'sit down' we sat down. But the two, because they knew the area, turned back and ran. So, they [the soldiers] started firing at them. One of them was looking after us and the other two went chasing those who turned back. The one who was looking after us told us to take off our shoes and we did. He tied up our arms from behind. Then, they took as to a town called Adi Gebru[30]. It is some deserted area. When it was 7am in the morning, they asked us if we were trying to go to Tigray and who the other two were. I said that I don't know them. This was so because prior to our departure, we had agreed that if some of us get caught and some

[30] The names of the towns were deliberately changed or removed to maintain confidentiality.

of us made it, we would say we don't know about those who
escaped not to be caught if they are back to Eritrea again. But
the official said, 'send the other girls but let her stay'. He tied
me up to a stone and sat me down out in the sun the whole day.
They would come and interrogate me again and again, asking
me how the other two were. .... They would mention the names
of the two who made it saying 'how about Samuel and
Michaele?' but I just said I don't know that.... Later on, he came
to me and said 'tell me. If you tell me, I will let you go' and I
told him 'what is there to tell?' Then he said that he can do
anything to me so he put out his gun...pointed at my forehead
and he told me not to make any noise. But I fought so much, so
much. I even have a mark right here, [touching her right arm].
He did whatever he wanted and left. I was crying all night and
all day; my eyes were swollen. ... A water tanker came and he
said 'take her'. ... When I got to Adi Kuala, the higher official
asked me what happened to me there. I told him that the official
there raped me but then he said 'you dirty, who would want
someone dirty like you' and came and slapped me in the face.
He intimidated me 'if you say this to anyone, I will hunt you and
kill you'.

Hiwot was able to escape from the place where she was imprisoned and
went back home. After careful studies as to how to safely reach Ethiopia,
being with other two girls, she set out again and eventually succeeded in
crossing the border.

Likewise, Azeb is a recently arrived refugee in Hintsats. She is a mother of
four (2, 5, 8 and 10 years old), who crossed the border to join her husband
who lives in Holland. She narrated their first attempt as follows:

.... It was a lot of us and he [the smuggler who was arranged
through her husband] was not there. He would call us through a
phone ... tell us to go to him. After walking for so long, we all
went our own ways and we did not gather up. There was no one
that collected us to one place. So many young girls, so many
mothers just like me... Can you imagine, with four of my
children, walking all through the night where we cannot see
where we are stepping? We do not know what is going to meet
us in the dark with little children, very young. ... Two-year-old
girl on my back. When the other girl got too tired because she
needed rest, I would carry her in the front. Carrying one in my
back and the other in the front...

They [the soldiers] told us to 'freeze' and [we] stopped moving
because [we] knew it is them and we are mothers. The young
run and they keep running. They get shot at but they just run. If
they got shot, they fall and if they are lucky they run away. ...I
cannot escape like others, what can I run with? Because if I try

> to escape, I can only escape for myself and my kids, I would lose them... He [the smuggler] did not organize us well and, also it was not the will of God, some of us were caught and others left.

Like Hiwot, Azeb also succeeded in crossing the border later on. But this time around, it was with the help of another smuggler, a professional 'pilot'[31] with a good knowledge of the territories around the border, whom her husband paid 150,000 *Nakfa*[32]. Even with a professional smuggler, the terrain where flight was conducted is precarious and very difficult, Azeb says:

> ...They [the smugglers] just got us to Mereb and that is it. They did not step into the land of Tigray. They said to us, 'go straight and do not look back, just walk straight'. When it is 3am in the morning hearing the hyenas from both sides and thorns and our feet dipping in water we just walked in... It is such a bushy area, very bushy. We were worried that the hyenas will snatch our kids from us. Although it was called the land of Tigray, it was a wide wild place before we saw any human being whether shepherds or anyone.... you know we hear at home, when you cross Mereb and walk for about 30 min or an hour you will see shepherds, so we expected to see them and they would direct us and give us water and all. ... All day, starting from 3am to mid-day, we walked and we did not find anyone. We were scared. We thought 'Oh no! Maybe we lost our way' and we turned back and our hearts went cold... We were not sure if we made it, if we are in or not; if we are going back or going forward because we did not know the place. We took turns and all.

Escapees are not always successful in their attempts to cross the border, they encounter many serious dangers such as, imprisonment, rape and few witness the death of others. Most of the refugees succeeded after they attempted to flee Eritrea more than once. Some of them had been caught on their way and experienced jail for some time. Some had been arrested more than twice and suffered in prison. The most terrifying danger and uncertain situation they faced was the attack opened against them from the soldiers along the border. Abrehet recalled the situation when she got caught as one of the worst days in her life while she was in Eritrea:

> … it was when I was trying to cross here [to Ethiopia] and I got caught. I was pregnant. There was a lot of firing and shooting. So, we were caught. One was shoot dead, three escaped and the

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[31] 'Pilot' is a term used by Eritrean refugees to refer to the smuggler or the guide that escorts escapees by walk across the border.

[32] *Nakfa* is an Eritrean currency. While I was collecting the data USD1= 15 *Nakfa* at official exchange rate.

rest of us got caught. I was not hit by a gun but I fell. Then they
would beat me so badly although they knew that I was pregnant.
I cursed the day I was born. I hated to be alive that day.

Awot, escaped the poorly paid and protracted national service as he was
unable to support his sisters who depended on him after they lost their
parents. He used to regularly evade the national service. As a result, he had
a hard time dealing with continuous round ups and imprisonment. He took
the advantage of being posted to a mission along the border to set off in the
dark:

> I set off at 4:30am and after walking for about 30 minutes, it got
> really dark because it was becoming a morning so I stopped so
> that it will be a little bright. When it got a bit brighter, around
> 5:20am I continued my journey. There were spies, I did not
> know which way they came from. There were spies from where
> I was too but these I did not know where they were and they
> said 'hey, hey' …. I was thinking about my journey and forward
> so I just kept walking. Then they loaded the gun and shot at me
> and the bullet just passed by the side of me. I just sat where I
> was. I had no idea where it was coming and from which side
> they were shooting, left or right, front or back so I chose to sit.
> Because the area was bushy it helped me. That made the place
> suitable for me. … I lost my shoes on the way but all I cared
> about was running away. … I hear them saying 'go this way'
> and 'go that way' but I listened to them quietly. Then it was just
> God that they just returned and started returning back.

The majority of the refugees came to Ethiopia through many entry points
on the Ethiopian and Eritrean border from Bure to Humera, either in groups
or individually. Many of them arrived in Ethiopia by either crossing the
fortified areas or the risky terrains and mountains, by foot and at night to
avoid detection because of the risk of being shot or detained by Eritrean
border guards. The length of the journeys ranged from hours to days
depending on the physical strength of the refugee, security situation at the
border and the path they choose. For many, crossing the border which is
highly militarized and thus impossible to do by any means of transportation
was the most important and difficult part of their journey. Of course, there
are individuals who crossed the border without facing substantial challenge,
particularly those who live close to the border, as they have good
knowledge of the area. For the majority, however, *sigiredob* involves
sneaking through the trenches along the border, or facing the difficult
terrains of the region, confronting the fierce hyena of the wild and wrestling
with the overflow Mereb river. It involves palpable fear and distrust of
anyone and everyone along the journey, particularly the authorities that are
supposed to 'protect', but instead, abuse. It also involves walking through
secluded fields and developing blisters on the bottom of one's feet. Above

all, if caught attempting *sigiredob*, it involves the risk of imprisonment, torture even death.

According to the literatures on uncertainty in displacement circumstances, the uncertainty people face during flight has much to do with the conflict that initiate the flight and predominantly focused on pre-departure experience while en route flight experience is largely neglected (Horst and Grabska 2015). Based on the data from my interlocutors, en route uncertainty is manifested because of predicaments along the way during the actual exile. Particularly, as the result of the unresolved political situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea; fleeing Eritrea was considered treason. Ways and means were usually limited and restricted. There is a high presence of security forces and a 'shoot to kill' policy along the Eritrea side of the border and a militarized border which is guarded on both sides. The terrains of the region are difficult to manoeuvre and there is the fear of sexual abuse. Although refugees heard rumours or knew what had happened to other people, and what lay along the border, there was limited access to clear or definite information. The environment is often dominated by rumours, ambiguous accounts and horrific speculations. Not knowing where one will end up and what will happen along the way, my informants were in a very uncertain condition during their en route flight.

Navigating the Precarious Terrain of Flight: Moving Within Uncertain Social Environments

For the Eritrean refugees who crossed the fortified border and subsequently resided at the refugee camps within the Ethiopian border, crossing the militarized border was characterised by a heightened sense of insecurity and uncertainty. However, my interlocutors far from being passive or powerless and despite having had to contend with a challenging context, consciously and deliberately navigated the precarious terrain that surrounded them. They thoughtfully, strategically and actively assessed and engaged with their surroundings to enhance their economic, social and physical well-being. Their pre-departure and en route flight environment was dangerous but they come up with different ways and strategies in an attempt to insure their survival.

Use of Social Networks

Refugees accessed various flight specific resources such as information, finance and practical assistance using their social networks. While financial support enables them to get forged documents and payment for smugglers; information and advice enable them to get a reliable smuggler whom they call the 'Pilot' and to know safe directions. Using their social networks refugees also facilitate payment for smugglers[33]. Moreover, social networks

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[33] As refugees were uncertain about their success in crossing the border, they did not bring money or valuable items with them. Thus, payments are usually transferred from family members in Europe, the USA and other parts of the world to the account of the smuggler.

also provide them with someone who practically escorts them in crossing the border. Gebremariam recounted how the information he got from his uncle enabled him, his wife and their three children cross the border without being caught:

> … it was my uncle who took me to collect wood out from the fields and we took two donkeys with us. We went to the border and there was the soldier with his weapon but we just went and collected woods. He showed me the road and the valley that I should be going through and all the way. Then after three days, we both went again to bring a tree that would fit to make a plough, and we went very far away and he showed me again and I studied all the routes because I did not know the place first, I did not grow up in that area. And for the third time, I took three donkeys and went out to collect woods and then made my study of the area and how to cross. Who would be the guard and what time they will switch and all that. So that is how I started my journey…that is how I learned of the direction and finally made it. If I hadn't done that, I would have been caught.

Refugees, who came from areas relatively close to the Ethiopian border, usually, cross the border by themselves without the assistance of others. But people leaving far from the border, in most cases, are unfamiliar with the territory and unaware of the best routes to reach their destination. Thus, they often use the support of others, a close relative, a friend or a smuggler. To establish contact with the smugglers or to get a reliable one is not an easy task. It must take place in secrecy, as it is highly prohibited. People establish most contacts through personal connections; usually a family, a close friend or a close relative who reside either in Eritrea or outside.

For Tsega, a mother of one, the smugglers who facilitated her flight two times were contacted through her husband, from Sweden. However, both smugglers were not successful in helping her escapee. She got caught both times. She crossed the border on her third attempt, but this time around it was with the support of a friend:

> I asked this person … He is kind of a friend… I went and asked him 'please help me a little. I do not need much. I just need you to tell me a bit about the direction and I will just go whatever I face. Tell me where those people [the soldiers] are and which way is the shortest and all the information I need'. He is kind of a soldier, I think he was a former soldier, he knows the place quite well…. He just gave me the direction, he didn't come with me.

Escapees also use relatives and friends who live along the border area. They are not only good sources of information; in few cases they provide practical support in crossing the militarized border. Living along the border area, they have a good chance of observing the border area, while looking

after their cattle, working on the farm or collecting fire wood near the border. Without being suspected by soldiers. In recalling his pre-departure experience Gebremariam says:

> I collected so much wood that I do not need… It is because I had a plan, I did not want to go bare handed or they will suspect. But because the place has good wood for fire, they would not suspect that you are after something else. They will look at you lightly. If you go with nothing, they would suspect and when you do it twice and three times, they will arrest you immediately.

Like Gebremariam's uncle, people who live close to the border knew safe directions and areas where solider are not stationed. People such as him employ their knowledge of the area during their own flight or provide practical assistance to close family members and relatives in crossing the border.

Refugees are expected to reach areas near the border by any means of his/her own. It is from there many set off the journey in the dark. The same is true with smugglers, once a contact was established, and price negotiated, smugglers and refugees meet in border towns. Until the day they meet, communication is facilitated through the phone.

Pretended Visits

However, moving from place to place is generally very difficult and every traveller must have a pass permit paper (*Menkesakesi*). In most cases, they use forged documents to pass the different posts. Having passed the different posts, if seen in border towns they can be an easy target. Once suspected, they could be identified as escapees and arrested. Some mentioned that they had performed that they were visiting families living at the border. Women dressed like people living at the border and carried gifts as if they are visiting a family, or relatives at the border. Names, and addresses of people living at the border towns were memorized, in case they are stopped and asked by soldiers or a security. This was a strategy employed by Tsega:

> …well I dressed up like the people in the area and carried a bag that people in that area carry. I had had my hair braided so I just looked like the people there. My son was walking; I did not carry him. We walked slowly just pretending like we are the people of that area and because there were many small towns there. We would see the soldiers and greet them 'how is your day?' and go on. So we really looked like the people from that area. But I was so scared inside.

Meanwhile, others waited for convenient periods to move to the border area, such as *Nigdet* - annual celebrations and Saints' feast in the orthodox churches and monasteries in Eritrea. Such festivals are attended by people

from different parts of the country. Families visit families, with gifts as a gesture of goodwill and love. Thus, escapees also used such opportunities to move to border areas.

> … it was a yearly celebration when we planned to take off… the celebration was the next day, so we went to [a certain] town and spent the night there. The next day we took a bus that go to [the next town] it was full of people who go to celebrate… from [there] you can see Ethiopia, from afar… I spent the day with my aunt because she was going to the yearly celebration too… There were soldiers there but not to be suspected we were drinking saying 'let us celebrate and all' …We left at night… It is a border town and there was the celebration so we pretended as if we were attending the celebration.

Making One's Flight Clandestine

Many kept their plan of leaving Eritrea secret until the actual day of their departure. The level of secrecy is very critical. Some leave without even telling their families except for close friends who decided to flee together. Secrecy is important even en route, as we can see in the case of Hiwot, mentioned above. Secrecy is very important for the safety of the escapees and their family members who remain in Eritrea, as the government detain and arrest relatives of suspected and actual escapees. Geberemariam emphasise the importance of secrecy during one's flight:

> … You have to be bold. You do not trust anyone. Who do you trust? I cannot be telling you that I am planning to cross a border. Because I will be caught, they will go ahead of me and catch me before I hit my goal and I would fail. You only talk to yourself day and night. You get me? Why do you think I collected all the wood that I do not need?

Use of Contraceptives

Being a woman and trying to cross the border under such circumstances is very difficult. Women are very uncertain regarding what will happen to them along the way, they fear possible risks such as rape, unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS by their own companions, smugglers, and border security guards. In fear of this, as a precaution some of my informants were injected with contraceptives before their departure, while few brought condoms with them. Miheret told why she was injected with contraceptive at the pharmacy before she departed;

> When you are coming here, spending nights in the wild is mandatory. So, you have to be injected. We were five while we were coming and all of us were injected. Because the smugglers make us stay in the wild.

Miheret told that as they were married what they feared most was how they would be dishonoured if such things happened to them, as most of them were fleeing to reunite with their husbands, who had already fled and settled abroad. The contraceptives are available at the health centres in Eritrea, but they are expected to take their husbands to the health stations if they have to get contraceptives. Thus, most of the women were injected at pharmacies paying 150 *Nakfa*.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the flight experiences of Eritrean refugees into Ethiopia. For the Eritrean refugees who crossed the fortified border and subsequently reside at the refugee camps along the border or go beyond. Flight is neither linear nor premeditated. Rather it is a terrain characterized by hardship, insecurity and uncertainty, making their flight a constant struggle. Being dynamic, volatile and precarious, it also makes careful navigation essential. As they navigate this precarious terrain, my informants came up with various strategies which also reflected their ability to quickly evaluate their often very limited possibilities and skilfully plot their trajectories. In other words, despite grave threats to their safety and extreme hardships endured, refugees do not passively accept the course of their flight. Rather, they continue to negotiate and manoeuvre, exhibiting a degree of agency. However, the refugee does not act completely "freely," but instead respond to particular social contexts. In this sense, navigation points our attention to the fact that they move in relation to 'the push and pulls, influence and imperatives, of social forces' (Vigh, 2009, p. 432). By encouraging a nuanced exploration of how this navigation occurs, the notion of social navigation simultaneously recognizes the discursive 'push and pulls, influence and imperatives' that inform the context of flight, and acknowledging the ingenious tactics of the refugee to circumvent them. Along similar line, by effectively drawing attention to the intersection of agency and structure, the concept also facilitates a more nuanced understanding of actions that might otherwise appear problematic.

Uncertainty in conflict and displacement circumstances predominantly associated with conflict that initiate peoples' flight and predominantly focus on pre-departure experiences. However, the study revealed that people face uncertainties while en route, even in a condition where there is no actual ongoing conflict. In this regard, the interviews revealed that the presence of security forces, unpredictable outcome of crossing the militarized border, not only makes the flight of the refugee more complex but also heightened uncertainty already created as a result of displacement. Thus, depending on the various stages of displacement, the type of uncertainty experienced in a refugee context varies.

By the same token, the flight is as complex and significant as the other phases of refugee experience are, and have important implications for other phases as well. Eritreans formed the fifth largest group of irregular arrivals in Europe, constituting 6% of the overall number (UNHCR 2017). If we are

to make sense of the long and dangerous journeys undertaken by migrants in main migration routes to Europe and the Mediterranean Sea we need to look at such initial flight experiences, that often takes place further away from the Europe's borders. Long before they arrive at the doorsteps of the global north, most of them had to survive an arduous journey such as this one, across many borders. For the majority of my informants, particularly those who use Ethiopia as a transit and bound to Europe, their flight across the border is not simply a temporary experience across the border. It is only a start of a long dangerous journey that change their worldviews and attitudes while also violating their bodies in the process.

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Chapter 7

Strangers in Their Own Countries: Problems Faced by Southerners Remaining in the Sudan after the Secession of the South

Rania Awad Madani

Introduction

For more than fifty years, north and south Sudan were unified as one country despite being divided internally. Before it separated into two states of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011, undivided Sudan constituted the largest country in Africa. The separation followed decades of a civil war broadly described as a conflict between the "Arab" Muslim north and "African" Christian and animist south (Ahmed, 2012: 5). Despite peaceful referendum and separation processes, the two countries continue to experience conflicts and political disturbance with devastating impact on ordinary people, women and children in particular.

Prior to the secession, millions of South Sudanese were either internally displaced persons within Sudan itself (Assal 2004, 2008) or refugees in neighboring countries. When Southerners were given the right of self-determination, they overwhelmingly chose to secede from Sudan, hoping to have their own peaceful and prosperous country. To their dismay, in December 2013, just two years after secession, war broke out in South Sudan and it is still going on. Atrocities were committed in South Sudan and hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese were forced to cross the border back to Sudan. In 2015, a peace deal was negotiated by the IGAD countries with the hope that this deal ends the civil war in the fledgling country. The IGAD peace deal didn't, however, stop the war and South Sudanese refugees continue to enter Sudan. But as they enter their former country, they now discover that they are treated as foreigners and refugees.

However, since not all Southerners left to the south, there are still communities remaining in the north, what is now the Sudan, in which people are of southern origin. Because they never left the Sudan, they are still looking at themselves as Sudanese citizens. One such group is found in Jodah Province in the White Nile, and they are the focus of this paper.

The main arguments here are first, that the people who remained in the Sudan are also affected by the new political situation. They might experience that they are no longer treated as full Sudanese citizens, and find themselves marginalized on a racial basis as "southerners". But they still have their assets such as houses, land and animals and they are therefore

able to maintain themselves by way of their traditional adaptations. They also have friends and different types of relatives (kin, in-laws) and friends in the area, providing them with networks that can assist them vis-a-vis the discriminatory actions of the Sudanese authorities. Those Shiluk who remained in Sudan are in a positon to help and assist the southerners who are returned from South Sudan, thus informally contributing to relieve the desperate situation the refuges coming from the south are facing. To analyze this situation, I use the literature on "coping strategies" as a point of departure.

Conceptual Framework

Coping strategies have often been defined as a short-term or immediate response or reaction to unusual event or habitual stress or decline in access to food (Davis et.al. 1999; Birkmann 2011). Jacobsen (2002) has revealed that many refugees cannot establish or maintain their livelihoods because they cannot exercise the rights to which they are entitled under international human rights, humanitarian law, and/or refugee law. Often, refugees suffer from the absence of civil, social and economic rights including: freedom of movement and residence; freedom of speech and assembly; fair trial; property rights; the right to engage in wage labor; self -employment and the conclusion of valid contracts; access to school education; access to credit; protection against physical and sexual abuse; harassment; unlawful detention; and deportation.

Durieux and McAdam (2010) argue that a large number of states lack the resources to immediately grant the full range of refugee's rights as stated in the 1951 Refugee Convention due to sudden large influxes. It is common feature of mass influx situations that refugees are denied many of the economic and social protections stipulated by the Convention. Nevertheless, while some rights restrictions may be justifiable during the initial emergency stage of a mass influx. Durieux and McAdam further contend that protection should improve over time rather than being stagnate or deteriorate.

Apart from economic limitations, other factors may limit the pursuit of refugee livelihoods. For example, although the refugee certificate issued by the Government of Gabon implies the right to engage in income-generating activities similar in all ways to that of a Gabonese national, refugees encounter considerable difficulties. Nor are they allowed to carry out economic activities due to restrictions imposed by the local authorities and employers. The refugee certificate issued by the national government does not seem to be recognized by all arms of the government services leading to harassment at barriers and check-points.

In such difficult conditions, people, however, make efforts to improve and enhance their situation. As explained above, household strategies are the ways in which households deploy assets and use their capabilities in order to meet their objectives and are often based on past experience. Coping

mechanisms are special kinds of strategies used during difficult times. We need to look at the livelihood /coping strategies developed by refugee households to access and mobilize resources. Since every refugee population and situation is different, an effort has been made to determine general trends such as: seeking international protection; receiving humanitarian assistance; relying on social networks and solidarity; engaging in agriculture or trade and services provision; falling back on negative coping strategies; and adopting new gender roles.

As reported in a number of studies (for example, Conway 2004; Dick et.al. 2002), refugees sometimes employ negative coping strategies due to lack of limited resources. Some of the refugees are, for example, forced to sell off vital assets such as domestic items, clothes and part of the food ration. Others resort to crime, violence and loans they are not able to repay. Some others reduce the intake of food and selling of food provisions in order to cover the need of non-food items not considered in the assistance package. Negative coping strategies range from illegal access to natural resources (firewood, theft of crops, cattle) to selling sexual services to make a living. Conway (2004) and Levron (2006) note that one of the most frequent means for refugees to survive in a protracted situation is the exploitative sexual relationships, either by commercial prostitution   or through relationships in which a woman or girl receives goods and gifts from a consistent sexual partner (Dick, et.al. 2002). Research in Guinea (Kaiser, 2001) shows a consensus among women and youth that selling sexual favors whether formally for cash or on the basis of a kind of support, is a function of poverty and an absence of alternative income generating and attractive livelihood strategies.

Experiences of refugees in creating and maintaining livelihoods are different. Several studies (Conway 2004; Dick et. al. 2002; Turner 1999) demonstrate constraints and insecurities faced by them are different. Besides, there are changes in gender roles and socio-economic status. In addition, old authorities lose control and new authorities – humanitarian organizations – appear to have control over resources and ideological formations. According to Turner (1999), the UNHCR's policy of equality between men and women can challenge the existing hierarchies of authority and power and can become a factor that influences refugees' coping strategies. Turner further explains,

> Old values and norms about essential issues such as relationships between husbands and wives, between parents and children, and between rich and poor are being challenged by the camp regime. Old authorities are losing their grip and a new authority – represented most strongly by UNHCR – is in control of resources, livelihoods and ideological formations (e.g. the ideology of equality between men and women).   (Turner 1999:7)

Lindsey (2001) also mentioned that in a refuge situation women have often taken greater responsibility for their families because men are absent, disabled or reluctant to do the lower status and lower paid jobs that are available.

Coping Strategies of South Sudanese Refugees in Jodah Area: An Empirical Analysis

Jodah is located in south White Nile state in Sudan, and north upper Nile state in South Sudan, in the eastern side of the White Nile. It includes many villages such as Dabbat Alfakhar where Nazzi tribe is the most prominent group. The village is currently regarded as a conflict area between Sudan and South Sudan. The area also includes Jodah Aladl, Kilo 4 and Altabun, which are considered important centers of mechanized farms and livestock. Tribes living in this area are Dar Muharib which includes Nazzi and Waghadab tribes, the area also comprises a large agricultural scheme.

The group studied consists of 26 participants (nine males and 15 females), from different ages interviewed in the study area. Most of the participants are from the Shiluk because this area used to be one of the Shiluk areas for long time before the secession of South Sudan. There are some villages which were occupied mainly by the Shilluk. They have had their own houses and cultivated lands, which were inherited from their ancient grandfathers. These people have decided not to go to South Sudan after secession because they think that they are at home, and this is their place, and that they have no relation with the South. For instance, a 45 year old woman said:

> We haven't gone to the South. We have been living here for long time. We were born here. Our fathers and grandfathers were born here. We are staying in our own place. This is our own land.

Another 64 years old man agrees:

> I am from here. This is my land and it is registered in my name. I am Sudanese, and it is my grandfather's land.

This perception is not only found in the responses of elderly people but among young people as well. A young man stated:

> I have no relation with South Sudan,I have been living here, and I am Sudanese.

The farm lands were the base of their livelihoods in these areas. They used to cultivate these lands. That makes them satisfied independent people. After the secession, some of them have lost their land as noted by one woman:

> We used to have our own farm lands, but, it was taken from us. Now we are working as wage laborers with Arabs who own the

land now. They give us a piece of land to cultivate for a percentage of productivity.

However, those who lost their farm land were able to keep their houses and were given opportunity to work as wage laborers. But some of them were obliged to leave their villages and sent to the camps and their houses were taken away. In the words of a young woman:

> There were many South Sudanese living here before, but now they are very few. They were driven from here because they were producing alcohol. They were sent to the camps with the belief that they would damage the neighborhood if not removed.

There are some intermarriage relationships between the Shilluk group and other ethnic groups, namely Arab tribes in the area. This has provided a kind of protection for some of them, especially in keeping their houses. The experience of a young girl aged 16 is indicative of that. The girl recalls:

> We are staying in the house of my aunt's husband. People here tried to force us to move and take the house, but my aunt told them that I am married to one of the Arabs, and the husband came and talked to them, then they let us stay.

These different patterns of harassment have affected the refugees' livelihood differently with different impacts on their abilities to help other South Sudanese who came from the South after the conflicts. Some of the Shiluk who remained in Jodah prepared separate places or houses for the refugees to stay in until they complete their procedures and move to the camps. They accommodated them during that time by providing them support and care particularly to children and pregnant women. A young girl said:

> Before they settled in the camp, we accommodated them for weeks or months until they settled in the camp.

Some others provide them some money, clothes or food items. Those who have good networks helped their relatives in finding jobs. In relation to that, a girl recounts that her father helped her uncle to get a job in Jodah market. However, there are also other factors that help South Sudanese in this area keep their properties and get access to work opportunities, such as activism and affiliation to Islamic organizations (for example, Islamic Da'awa Organization) and having relations with security people and policemen. A young woman working in the organization said:

> This is our house. We have two others and we have a plot of land for cultivation which no one can take away. These are our people and we work with them… I can travel up to Khartoum and nobody asks me or stops me. I usually go to Gabalian and Rabak and nobody stops me.

Although most of South Sudanese who stayed after secession claim that they are Sudanese, when it comes to official documents, they face challenges. They lack National Number or Sudanese nationality. Some members of this group have no Sudanese or South Sudanese official documents and in effect they are stateless. Socially and culturally, they belong to Jodah the place where they, their fathers and grandfathers were born and grew up. Politically, though, they are South Sudanese. They have to belong to the South if they want to have official documents. The story of a young girl is quite telling:

> I have never been to South Sudan. I am living with my family here. My father is working here and this is our house. He was born, grew up and got married here… We don't have migration card because we aren't migrants. We are staying in our home land. At the same time, we don't have national number. We are in between now. I intend to have South Sudanese nationality. At least I will have official document.

The idea of in-between is more obvious when a woman says:

> We have never thought about going to the South ……we are different from them in our traditions and customs. They don't accept us because we are different.

This situation has impacted on their accessibility to services such as education and their right to legalize their ownership of property. People claim that houses are not officially registered even before secession; and this applies for Southerners and non-southerners alike, but after secession things became more difficult and Southerners are not allowed to register their houses on their names, which means they cannot own land. A middle age woman explains the situation well:

> We used to have our own land, but now it was taken from us. Part of it is used for the fuel station. My husband and other men tried to talk to them and stop them, but there is a powerful man from Sabaha tribe who gave away our land. Now officially the occupiers have documents. Another part of our land was taken by people from other ethnic groups… We can say nothing about that.

At the present time, there are few South Sudanese staying in their own houses in the different villages within Jodah area, and in most cases these are extended families. This may reflect the pre-existing land ownership system in which few people could own farm lands and the rest of the people work with them as wage laborers. As is the case in most Third World countries, especially in rural areas, land ownership is always connected to power relations. An old man said:

> We have been living here since the Mahadiyya. This is our own place. There were no Arabs here. Just us …… but now it is only our family.

Another woman noted:

> Here is only our family; there is no other South Sudanese.

In other villages, there are many Shliluk families, but most of them have left and came back after conflict. Some of the returnees stay in their houses (which they left behind), others rent houses, while some others are given places to stay in by South Sudanese relatives, or Sudanese people in the area, and yet others were given building materials to build houses.

However, some of South Sudanese people in Jodah were able to keep their houses and cultivation land which was registered on their names and they have their official documents. Those people mostly didn't inherent this land they bought it. Some of them were living in Khartoum or other urban areas in Sudan. For example, a young girl working as tea seller in Jodah market said:

> We have been living in Abu Gebaiha. We then moved to Jodah where my father bought a Genainah [a farm land]. He   is now working on it.

Working as wage laborers in agriculture is the common economic activity for most of the South Sudanese people in this area. That is especially the case in agricultural season when there is a need for more laborers in major agricultural schemes. An old man said:

> We work as wage laborers in agriculture in the agricultural season. Merchants come here and take people to work in schemes in Gazera and Gadarif.

They used to work in these seasons, but after the conflict and flow of refugees to Sudan, their wage has become lower than before. There are also other challenges like not being paid their wages at the end of the season. This arose after the new situation of South Sudanese who have become officially refugees. Even when they get paid, they pay policemen in stations along the road until they arrive to Jodah area. So they remain with little money, and it is no longer a good opportunity for work, but they continue doing so due to lack of options. Women also work as wage laborers in farms and as domestic workers. It is, however, important to note that domestic work is not common in the poor communities in which they live. Where there is no high demand for their domestic services, a young woman noted:

> We work as wage laborers in agriculture for 20 – 30 SDGs (approximately 1 USD) per day.

Most of South Sudanese in this area are registered in the refugee's camps and they receive aid monthly (food items like oil, flour, and lentils). This

can be considered as one of their coping strategies because it helps them in their daily life and it is also regarded as a backup strategy if they were moved from their houses. Some of the men also work in fishing in addition to working in agriculture. For women, selling alcohol was a main source of income, but now they are no longer able to make it as before due to their fear of police and popular committees.

Concerning education, it is noted that it is not a priority. That was not the case even before the secession. When they send kids to schools they only continue for few years in the basic level of education. Sooner or later, they leave the school to work and get married. Lack of educational services is also a factor that contributes to illiteracy and low level of education. At the present time, lack of National Number and official documents is a constraint that forbid students from pursuing their education. They can't sit for the basic and secondary school exams as noted by one woman:

> My daughter has studied up to grade eight, but she didn't sit for the exams because she doesn't have Sudanese national number and the other one also couldn't sit for secondary school certificate exams for the same reason.

Many of these people talked about their good relations with the other people in their communities. They say they have been living there together for a long time and even have intermarriage relations with other ethnic groups. A young man said:

> We have good relations with people from South Sudanese and non-South Sudanese people. There are no problems and I am planning to buy a piece of land for my family and stay here.

A young woman also told me she had a sister who is married to one of the Ja'aliyyin men who is living in Kosti. Some of them also stressed that even those who went to the south came back after the conflict. People (southerners and northerners) have welcomed them and allowed them to stay and helped them. However, in other cases people have expressed their suffering in terms of their relations. A young man noted:

> We have good relations with people. We visit them and participate in their different occasions. But those who came recently from Khartoum don't even greet us; and if we say *salam*, they just keep silent.

Another middle age woman agrees:

> We have problems with people here in Jodah, and when we have rights, even the authorities will not stand on our side. If we try to defend ourselves, they take us directly to jail. We just keep silent.

The story of another young girl is even bleaker:

> Sometimes, people come to our house and threaten us, saying that 'we can take you to the police and tell them you make alcohol.

Since refugee camps provide services to the refugees inside the camps and to the host communities as well, these people also benefit from that. They receive aid, medication services and their kids study in the schools established for the camps.

Most of the Shilluk who remained in Jodah do not intend to go to South Sudan even if the conflict is over and there is peace in the south. Besides, their belief and perception that this is their homeland makes them to develop a negative image about South Sudan seeing the situation of those who went and came back. Most of them are now thinking about staying here and creating their new families while others want to go to Khartoum or other urban centers in Sudan.

A young woman exclaims:

> We will never go to South Sudan, because conflict will start again; it will never end between South Sudanese.

These people have decided from the beginning not to go to South Sudan after secession. Some people have left because they thought that they would have better life and better livelihood options in the new state. There were some who were convinced or forced to go after secession. Others were forced by their families and were taken to the south. A middle age women said:

> After secession, there were people who came here looking for South Sudanese. They were asking about kids and youths. My husband told me to go with them but I refused. We went to another village and stayed with his other wife for nine months, and then we came back to our house.

Conclusions

South Sudanese in Jodah area mainly consist of Shilluk tribe because this area is historically occupied by them. They have stayed there for a very long time. Therefore, many of them consider themselves Sudanese, and they claim that they have no relation with South Sudan. The secession of the south has affected South Sudanese differently. Those who choose to stay in Sudan either lose their cultivation lands and keep their own houses and get better opportunities to work as wage labors in agriculture. Alternatively, they lose their houses and are forced to go to the camps. Few of them were able to keep their registered houses and farm lands. Intermarriage has served many of South Sudanese in keeping their property especially their houses. It is considered as a protection strategy for them. There is a big change in their livelihoods which has impacted negatively by the secession and conflict in South Sudan. However, they make use of aids and services provided by the camps although they are not staying inside it.

Lacking official documents has affected their accessibility to social services, especially education. The relationships between South Sudanese and other ethnic groups in the area seem to be generally good, but there are other challenges mentioned by some of South Sudanese participants.

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Section II

Livelihood Strategies along Borders: Studies on Cross Border Trade and Adaptations in Borderland Towns

Chapter 8

"*Magendo* Is Our Life, The Border Is Our Home."
Informal Cross-Border Trade at Busia

Rita Nakanjako, Robert Kabumbuli and Eria Olowo Onyango

Background

Cross-border trade is the buying and selling of goods and services between businesses in neighboring countries, with the seller being in one country and the buyer in the other country (Nkoroi 2016). It involves official and unofficial exchange in commodities and services between neighboring countries, taking place close to the borders (Ogalo 2010; Titeca and Flynn 2014). Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) comes in different forms or is known by different names (e.g., illegal, unofficial, underground, parallel market activities, black market activities, smuggling or hoarding). It is characterized by not being entered in national accounts (Ackello-ogutu and Echessah 1997). This makes regulation difficult since a large section of the informal trade is elusive of state control [and Uganda is no exception] (Little and de Coloane 2005; Titeca and Flynn, 2014). Because of these many different forms or names, several scholars have come up with various definitions and descriptions of informal cross border exchange depending on various contexts.

In '*Gender Analysis of Motivating Factors for Joining Informal Cross Border Trade'* (Lawan et.al 2017) the authors define ICBT as informal transactions taking place across international borders representing a normal market response to cumbersome documentations, time-consuming customs regulations and regional price distortions for border communities. ICBT includes imports and exports directly or indirectly escaping the monitoring by government for taxation. It often goes unrecorded or it is erroneously recorded into official national statistics(Ogalo and Mungai 2012; Titeca and Flynn2014; Muthee, 2015) making it illegal.

In Africa, ICBT is common and constitutes a significant part of the developing country economies providing income mainly to people without formal education (Jawando, Adeyemi and Oguntola-laguda, 2012). Accordingly, ICBT provides the traders with a significant means of subsistence(Titeca 2012) there by serving as a key surviva mechanism to borderland communities.

In East Africa, ICBT is crucial for the supply of commodities to the countries in the region in general and the borderland communities who are without adequate provision of household commodities especially foodstuffs in particular.

Magendo as Part of ICBT

At Busia, along the Uganda–Kenya border, ICBT was named *magendo*. *Magendo* is a concept that was coined in the 1970s to mean unauthorized trade transactions taking place across this border. This trade is done mainly through the use of informal paths locally referred to as *panya* routes which refer to the informal dirt paths that spread around and far from the customs point; which are used by traders with the intended effect of evading border revenue officials. There is ease of entry and exit into the business; use of foreign exchange, and the commodities originate from both formal and informal sectors. *Magendo* is "illegal" in both Uganda and Kenya mainly because by avoiding official procedures, both states lose revenue. This is in tandem with several researchers' argument that *magendo,* like ICBT in other borderlands is considered "illegal" because it avoids official procedures and channels (Little et al. 2010; MacGaffey 1988; Manger, 1984; Titeca and Herdt, 2010) with its traders unregistered and exchange small quantities of commodities which are moved across the border several times a day.

Even though *magendo* involves unregistered trade, it is a source of survival for many people in the border and consequently it plays a significant role in developing the country. However, regardless of the many benefits from ICBT, the state interprets informal trade as illegal and has always dealt with informal traders with suspicion.

The Busia Borderland Context

Busia border is located in Eastern Uganda along the border with Kenya. This border shares two active towns spanning either side of Uganda and Kenya border sharing the same name, Busia. This borderland area is largely inhabited by the Samia and Luyia ethnic groups living on both sides of the border. The Samia and Luyia are fused by culture and ethnicity but divided by the border; meaning that they share common cross border society(Allen 2013; Okumu 2010; Onyango 2010). However, this border is also a home to many other peoples like the Itesots, Basoga, Baganda, Karimojong, Jopadhola and Bagisu among others who particularly reside in the urban area of Busia municipality. Most of its Samia population lives in the rural area largely engaged in farming, growing crops like beans, soy bean, millet, cassava and maize (Foundation for Human Rights Initiative 2009); Wekesa 2010). Additionally, Busia border town has been sparkling with *magendo* since the early 1970s. The town has been flourishing with movement of agricultural foodstuffs to Kenya and industrial merchandises to Uganda.

Magendo stands out as a key survival mechanism for the people living in close proximity with the border. It is a means through which people benefit from being at the periphery. As argued by Kabumbuli and Kiwazi (2009), people's need to benefit is usually influenced by poverty, which drives many people to exploit any available resources for survival. Likewise, the

engagement in *magendo* by people living in the margins is driven by their need to subsist in the face of minimal livelihood alternatives.

When the East African Community (EAC) collapsed in 1977, the economic sanctions imposed on the Idi Amin's regime resulted in a severe scarcity of important supplies like sugar, salt, soap, fuel and farm implements. This was later to produce a deeper crisis in agricultural production in Uganda (Doi 1979). This encouraged the people living within close proximity to the border to become resourceful to survive in their locality. They started finding ways of informally earning a living from Kenya informally giving birth to *magendo*. The process involved smuggling merchandises across the border through *panya* routes (Ackello-ogutu & Echessah 1997; Doi 1979) to as far as the capital in Kampala.

Eventually*, magendo* became entrenched in the border people's way of life, progressively evolving into a new way of life- a culture at the border. Overtime, *magendo* became vibrant, constantly created and re-created by the actors' regular interactions and the different social institutions (Onyango 2007; Taylor 1997). Furthermore, unauthorized dealings are constructed on trader based networks founded on ethnic, familial and friendship relations. These are driven by trust which guide the traders to the merchandise and buyers. Gambetta (1988) and Little and de Coloane (2005) argue that, informal cross border trade requires mutual trust to function, where trusting somebody assumes following the agreed outcomes and there is no cautious monitoring of one another. Besides, these networks and relations within agents' webs are significant in sponsoring the unsanctioned businesses at Busia. This is in agreement with Ensminger (1992) and Sørensen (2000)who argue that most of the credit used in the informal exchange is obtained informally from kinsmen, friends, money lenders and associates.

The Context of *Magendo*

Magendo has persevered along the Uganda-Kenya border since 1970s. The Ugandan state has tried to clamp down on these unauthorized cross border businesses using various approaches but to no avail. The 1970s through the 1980s saw stringent measures put in place by the state to curb informal cross border trade. Among other things, these measures included death by firing squad and long jail terms but this did not wipe out *magendo.* In 2005, the East African Community (EAC) partner states of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi drew a Customs Union charter aimed at augmenting formal cross border trade (CBT) but all this failed to restrain *magendo.* In 2010, the EAC heads of member states took an extra step to liberalize trade across their borders. They embraced a Common Market Protocol which was signed in 2013. This protocol in principle allowed the free movement of labour, capital, right of residence and the right of establishment. The protocol also allowed freedom of cross border trade estimated below two thousand US dollars. Regardless of all these provisions in the protocol, *magendo* has continued to flourish relentlessly.

Therefore, this paper is centered on establishing the factors responsible for the perseverance of *magendo* and the motives of the actors in such businesses.

Drivers of *Magendo*

Informal cross border trade at Busia involves several actors including: traders (women and men); transporters (tricyclists, the *boda- boda;* bicycle and motorized); money changers, Uganda revenue enforcement officers; the police and emancipated minors known as the *chokolas*[34]. Several significant features emerged from the study which clarifies the sustained increase of *magendo* along the border. In the first place, Jane, a trader in Busia municipality narrated to us the opportunities motivating many trading actors to do *magendo* even when many constraints and threats exist. Jane recounts:

> My name is Jane. I am a half Samia and half Luyia resulting from a marriage between my Samia father and Luyia mother. Such cross border unions are common occurrences here because Samia and Luyia share common ethnicity, a common culture and speak a similar language across the border. Consequently, almost all of us in Busia have relatives on either side of the border. That is why even in case of death and inheritance, a Kenyan can easily become an heir in Uganda and vice versa. Certainly, having relatives on either side of the border makes doing *magendo* easy and because of being the same people, the border is imaginary to people like me. Besides, there is no physical barrier separating us. So we easily cross from one country to the other. After all, we are the same people with different tags. Some labeled as Samia while others Luyia. Consequently, the border only exists when we are threatened. For instance, when the revenue officers intimidate me, I escape to my relatives in Kenya. Additionally, during harvest season, many of us sell food stuffs like vegetables, cassava and maize across because Kenya lacks food and Uganda has plenty of food. But, on the other hand, Kenya has a lot of industrial supplies which I buy on my journey back. I hawk them in Uganda and earn money for my children's school fees (Jane, trader- Busia).

From Jane's narrative, it is evident that common ethnicity across the border is a vital facilitator of *magendo*. Barth (1969)argues that ethnicity is the state of belonging of an individual to a social group that has a common cultural tradition. This is in agreement with the argument of Brunet-Jailly (2005) that although international borders divide stateless nations, borderland communities may remain unified by culture – ethnicity, language and/or religion – or by the nature of local political institutions.

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[34]*Chokolas* is a term used to refer to child migrants from different parts of the Uganda especially from Karamoja who end up at Busia border town.

Indeed, at the Busia border the Samia of Uganda and the Luyia of Kenya share a common language, descent, social, and traditional practices. What is more, is that the histories of these two groups' show they existed as one ethnicity before the colonial boundary separation.

And the findings of this study can be justified by Little et al.'s (2010) arguments that a singular ethnic group straddling both sides of a border is a common occurrence in many border regions of East Africa. Alusala (2010) also established that it is impossible to secure *panya* routes used by traders in ICBT. This results from the high number of routes along the border and the fact that villages inhabited by the same families sometimes straddle most East African borders. Indeed, the shared ethnicity at Busia greatly increases informal cross border trade. It makes it easy for the agents from either side of the border to easily communicate with each other (Little and de Coloane 2005). Therefore, these shared cultural nuances give traders the flexibility to network across the border under the guise of visiting relatives.

The imaginary nature of the border due to the lack of a physical barrier for the biggest part of the border also supported *magendo*. Undoubtedly, before the border existed, the Samia and Luyia were one and they didn't need permission to cross to either side (Abimanyi 2013). Moreover, even at the sanctioned crossing point with a physical fence, some agents still cross which exacerbates the risk. This calls for resourcefulness on the side of the merchants. In this sense, the border becomes abstract—constructed and deconstructed by the traders as and when they see it fit. We can also argue that in this sense, the Samia/Luyia culture is shared within the border society regardless of where the members are located (Onyango 2007). And indeed many of them feel that speaking a similar language is enough to consider them the same people whether there is a border or not. In such circumstances, these community members begin to live in Benedict Anderson's imagined community. Even if they do not physically know each other and reside on different sides of the border, sharing common ethnic ties and speaking a similar language makes them one people (Anderson 2006). Hence, the actors consider their engagement in *magendo* as exchange between kins folks regardless of their location. Consequently, any inhibitions or regulations given by Uganda revenue authority (URA) only interferes with the normal way of life of this community as one URA enforcement personnel at Busia explained:

> There is a lot of intermarriage between Ugandans and Kenyans here. This results in off -springs that have dual citizenship. The dual citizenship gives them advantage in crossing to and from one country to the other. For them, the border does not exist and even when confronted by the URA anti- smuggling unit, such people are easily protected by their relatives on the other side of the border. This is one of the obstacles inhibiting our regulation of cross border movement of people and trade. Traders easily change their nationality as and when it suits them. It is a

common occurrence in this community to find a person with a mother from Kenya while the father is from Uganda and vice versa. It is these relatives from either side of the border that protect these people from trouble. And traders always exploit this ambiguity arising from the border (URA enforcement officer, Busia).

In addition, many agents, especially women, engage in informal exchange for subsistence. This is compelled by the inadequate finances at their disposal. Besides, as stated by Afrika and Ajumbo (2012), it is almost impossible for traders who lack working capital and tangible business assets to sustain their families. This category of the population resorts to informal trade to escape poverty. However, there are a few others who engage in these transactions purely for profits.

During fieldwork, there was a fight between Uganda revenue enforcement officers and the women traders (Jane inclusive) along *Sofia* road. Revenue officers were trying to confiscate commodities of smugglers and arrest them. There was a serious fist fight. It ended with confiscation of the merchandise but not arrest. The next day, Jane had this to say,

> Many women engage in *magendo* for subsistence. In my case, for instance, there is no other way I can generate money for school fees for my children. I have to do *magendo*. It does not matter how many times these government people abuse us. I will continue to do *magendo* because it gives me good profits. Look at me, I am a widow, I am not educated, and I do not own land. I got nothing when my husband died. His relatives took everything away. They said women do not share the husband's land in this community. Land upon death of a man is taken by the man's family. Besides, among the Samia, the men are in charge; women are not allowed to inherit neither their fathers' nor their husband's property. Hence, this leaves many of us landless without any means of survival. As a result, *magendo* is very significant for us. It is the only way we find help. So tell me, if you were in my shoes, with children, no land, no husband to look after you, with no capital to start business and you're living right at the border, wouldn't you do what I am doing? There is no other way I can raise my children except this one. So, like I said, I will do *magendo*; it is the only life I know. You have to understand; *magendo* is our life, and the border is our home! (Jane, trader-Busia town)

It is true that some traders do *magendo* for subsistence. Such people are only looking for how to feed their families and ensure good health and education for their families. This is against the background that many agents in East African borderlands participate in ICBT to feed their families (Berner et. al. 2012). Related to this, Aluoch (2014)observes that many traders engaging in informal cross border exchange are survival traders

who are necessity driven, requiring low capital, skills and technique. And the border exchange is usually female dominated. As argued by Stuart et. al. (2018), many workers in the informal economy are in a highly precarious economic situation with women being disproportionately 'at the bottom of the pyramid' thereby facing the biggest challenges (ibid:2018).

Additionally, the border at Busia is porous making crossing to and from Kenya easy for the local inhabitants. Besides, in some areas of Busia like Buteba Sub County, the border between Uganda and Kenya is marked by a road and no observable physical obstacle. So crossing from one country to another is easy. The permeability of the border resulting from lack of a barricade fuels *magendo*. And as Alusala (2010) also noted, the entry/exit points along Uganda-Rwanda border, and indeed the entire EAC borders are not confined to the official border crossing infrastructure where the immigration officials, police and revenue authorities are located. But the borders also   include several unofficial entry/exit points commonly known as *panya* routes. Consequently, the border patrolling by security agencies is hardened, and certainly, identifying everyone who enters or leaves the country or even which commodities get in or out of the country is a difficult task which greatly threatens each country's cross border security. That is because the same *panya* routes bringing *magendo* can equally be exploited by terrorists.

Furthermore, the corruption in these parts of Africa also contributes to enhancing *magendo*. There are situations where immigration officers exploit the ignorance of the poor merchants and take bribes. The existence of corruption reduces the risk of sanctioning. Moreover, official border operation is very slow with complex paper work and high costs. Regarding this, Ackello-ogutu and Echessah (1997) observed that such inappropriate malpractices inhibit formal trade linkages in the East Africa region, distorting commodity prices and resulting in all forms of unrecorded cross border trade. All these non- tariff barriers push traders further into *magendo* where the *panya* routes appear more appealing. Besides, corruption is worsened by influence peddling where state officials several times use their positions to evade payment as claimed by one senior government officer:

> One time I found the District Police Commissioner chasing a truck filled with *magendo*. I asked myself, since when have the police started acting as revenue officers? This man was pursuing the truck like his life depended on it. When I confronted him at Busitema road junction and asked him, who or what he was chasing; he said, 'My friend this is a consignment to Bombo!' And he laughed. Anyway when we had a conversation days later, he confessed he was offering protection for his boss's *magendo* [a senior government officer]; but he never mentioned the boss's name of course [laughs]. Consignments to Bombo is a code name for goods of government officials that do not pay taxes but disguised as army consignments meant to be taken to

> the Uganda army headquarters in Bombo. What you need to
> know is that many of the state officials meant to regulate
> *magendo*, are key beneficiaries of this trade working in the
> shadows in order not to be exposed. So, many state actors
> pretend to curse *magendo* in public but in actual sense, they are
> key architects of this trade and thus greatly contribute to its
> persistence. (District officer, Busia)

In addition, the micro-macro linkages between the survivalist agents and
the big-time actors in the trade who equally evade payment of taxes also
influences *magendo*. To the state, the trade is a source of revenue. Thus,
any cross border business that occurs without taxation is a loss to the
government. Titeca and Herdt (2010) argue that ICBT is considered
"illegal" in many countries of Africa because of eluding sanctioned
processes. But, Titeca and De Herdt add that it is important to stress that
strong feelings of legitimacy support *magendo* trade. Although most of this
trade happens illegally, it is seen by the people living in the precincts as a
licit option while the actions of the government are considered decidedly
illegitimate (Ibid). The survivalist merchants carry small quantities across
the border on a daily basis. From this point of view, *magendo* may not
seem to cause an enormous loss of revenue to the state. However, this may
not be wholly true since from the field observations it was noted that the
agents assist the big actors who are known evaders of tax. Wanyama's
story below is a case in point:

> My name is Wanyama, a trader here in Busia. I am lame as you
> can see, but I live on *magendo* using my cycle here to transport
> people's merchandise from Kenya to Uganda. I have done this
> business for close to twenty years now. In this business,
> everyone needs someone to live so we have to trust one another.
> For instance, when my *mugagga* (my rich client) wants his
> goods to cross from Kenya to Uganda, I get some of my fellow
> *balema* (Disabled) friends with tricycles to help me bring the
> goods. Can you imagine, recently five of us brought fifty bags of
> rice and filled up a pick-up truck in one day! [He laughs]. I
> know it sounds crazy but we did it! All we had to do was bring
> at least two bags each time. We did that until the truck was full!
> (Wanyama- Disabled person, Busia)

Further still, many traders expressed ignorance of the policies of the East
African common market protocol 2010 (EACMP). As pointed out earlier,
this law allows free cross border trade for commodities whose value does
not exceed two thousand United States dollars for any commodity
originating from any of the East African community member states. But
many of the actors at the border are either illiterate or ignorant of this law.
They do not know about the East African Community Simplified
Certificate of Origin Declaration form, which is a requirement for one to
benefit from this law. In addition to the illiteracy, there exists long

bureaucracy within the administrative system which discourages the few who know about the protocol from benefiting from its provisions. Indeed, as Afrika and Ajumbo (2012) note, it can take many days and costs a sum of money for one to go through clearance and obtain the documents required. Allen (2013) equally argues that at other times people completely circumvent physical borders via *panya* routes because landforms, legal loopholes, and economic imperatives form valuable conduits of stable, resilient connections. Certainly, all these shortfalls push the people into embracing *magendo*.

In addition, the varieties of merchandise on either side of the border also encourage *magendo*. Uganda has an abundance of agricultural food whereas Kenya is rich in industrial supplies. The supplies from Kenya are also relatively low-priced compared to the same type of goods if they are found in Uganda due to market forces. As a result of these differences, dealer's crisscross to either side of the border to exchange what they have for what they do not have. Aluoch (2014) confirms this by asserting that agricultural products such as dried cereals cross to Kenya in ICBT from her neighbors because of Kenya's insufficiency in food. On the other hand, manufactured goods such as electronics are mostly sourced from Kenya to her neighbors because of her proximity to the sea.

Furthermore, the difference in currency value between the countries is another stimulant for cross border engagement. The monetary differences within the region are the main thrust to informal trade activities and smuggling due to price differences (UBOS 2006). Leamer (2007) suggests that borders function as barriers between two unequally "filled" containers representing the need for goods and services and if the barrier is raised, then the levels should equalize. Allen (2013) also observes that until this equality happens, people will continue crisscrossing to either side of the border to take advantage of both real and perceived differences. In the case of *magendo,* such differences arose from the devaluation of the Ugandan shilling against the United States dollar while the Kenyan shilling remains strong.

Subsequently, the Kenyan shilling fetches more money at the exchange market causing Ugandan traders at Busia border to prefer the Kenyan shilling as the monetary medium of exchange for commodities over the Ugandan shilling. This ultimately means that Ugandans purchase Kenyan merchandises at a cheaper price and then sell the same commodities at a higher price in Ugandan shillings. That makes them even more beneficiary because they do not pay taxes. As Allen (2013) observes, by exploring everyday informal exchange at the Uganda-Kenya border, we have demonstrated how residents view the border as a marker of differences in terms of price and availability of goods or services. Accordingly, the differences in currency value make it profitable for those that engage in the informal trade.

Conclusions

Hence, understanding the perseverance of *magendo* can be hinged on appreciating the need for subsistence and role of social networks in linking individuals who have an important bearing on the establishment of survival schemes. Besides, the differences in types of merchandise on either side of the border, differences in money value coupled with the porosity of the border work together to encourage *magendo*. Regardless of its illegality, *magendo* plays a key role in the everyday livelihood of border people. This trade contributes to the improvement of the welfare and income status of the people at the margins which in itself is good enough to keep this practice going for as long as the citizens around the borders have to survive.

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Chapter 9

An Ethnography of Everyday Life in Busia: Being a *Boda-Boda* Operator at the Border

Brenda Birungi and Eria Olowo Onyango

Introduction

With porous borders, there are usually cases of existing relationships between the two adjacent border communities (Flynn1997;Dodson 2000), save for a few exceptions (Cole & Wolf 1999). It is not thus unusual to find an informal means of transportation that is carefully crafted by the locals to fit the purpose of crossing through the porous border routes. Examples of such informal means of transportation include the *bomalayisha* of Southern Africa (Bamu 2015) and the *boda-boda* in Eastern Africa (Mutiso and Behrens 2011; Howe 2002). For this paper, the *boda-boda* in Eastern Africa is the focus, in a description of the daily life as lived by the operators at the Uganda-Kenya border. The concept of informal transportation, as defined by Cervero (2000), refers to the modes of transportation that have little or no government control, flexible routes, unregulated entry or exit in to the industry, with forces of demand and supply determining the fares. The *boda-boda* in Uganda is an example of such an informal transportation and the term *boda-boda* refers to a bicycle or motorcycle taxi used to ferry individuals and commodities for hire (Mutiso and Behrens 2011; Howe 2002).

The *boda-boda* began in the late 1950s or early 1960s as an informal cross-border means of transportation in Busia, a border town shared with Kenya in the East of Uganda. The town was split into two by the border creating Busia Uganda on the Ugandan side and Busia Kenya on the Kenyan side. The focus of this paper will be on Busia Uganda.

Understanding Borders

Understanding the everyday life at a border requires an understanding of the structures at a particular border. Borders are almost homologous spaces with a tendency to share a basic functionality of constructing an awareness of differentiation. In so doing, they mark standards of entry or exit either by zoning off geographical spaces (Cohen 1985) or constructing imagined boundaries (Migdal 2004). The shared basic functionality almost makes border. life similar yet different at the very point where daily border life is experienced. Borders are constructed by distinctive structures, which are either physical or cultural that play a significant role in dictating cross-border interactions, thereby negotiating for different experiences. Some

borders are surrounded by physical structures (Vallet 2016).Alternatively, borders could also be porous with very scanty indication of physical separation especially the borders in Africa as is the case in the Uganda-Kenya border, which is the case for this paper.

With its porous nature, the presence of the Uganda-Kenya border may seem to be blurred in the everyday border life especially for those who live and work at the border. However, the presence of the border is hard to ignore because the experience of being at the border gives life to it. The mobility and consciousness of being across or the ability to identify a difference accompanied by the daily discourses all make it hard for the border to be ignored.

The Problem

At the Uganda-Kenya border in Busia, the *boda-boda* is the only reliable, affordable and available means of cross-border transportation used by the locals. At this border, the *boda-boda* operators are the link to understanding and interpreting the frequent cross-border mobility of persons and goods, since they frequently cross this porous border. However, there is limited academic literature that focuses on the daily life of these cross-border transporters. The literature available is mostly from the media, while the academic literature is broadly quantitative. This paper portrays an in-depth description of the everyday life of the *boda-boda* operators at the border, as it is guided by an ethnographic research design to give a breadth interpretation of being a *boda-boda* operator from an emic perspective.

Methodology

The research used an ethnographic design. It employed participant observation, ethnographic group discussions and ethnographic interviews. The fieldwork lasted for a period of three months: June to August 2015 and it took place at the Uganda-Kenya border in Busia district. The study area was Busia municipal council. The reason for choosing Busia municipal council was the massive cross-border mobility that occurs in the area using the *boda-boda*. The research was informed by the *boda-boda* operators, the police and the public.

As the *boda-boda* operators were the main informants of the study, participant observation was used to get closer to their daily life in order to gather an in-depth understanding of their life condition. The nature of work of the *boda-boda* operators involves transporting people and goods, therefore they are mobile. However, participating as a passenger made it easy to create rapport while also observing their interactions. While participating as a passenger*, boda-boda* operators were randomly selected and their information was noted down to compile a contact list of the *boda-boda* operators.

From this contact list, two *boda-boda* operators were followed to their respective stages and it is at these stages where the ethnographic group

discussions were held. There were two ethnographic group discussions held, one was with *boda-boda* operators who staged at reyo stage and the other was at the border stage. These two stages of operation were chosen because of their closer encounter with the border. Each stage had more than ten *boda-boda* operators. The ethnographic group discussions where held three to four times in a week at both stages of operation, for the duration of the field work. This was done to acquire an in-depth description of their everyday life and ascertain data validity.

The informants for the ethnographic research interviews were purposively selected because of their position and informed knowledge on the subject matter. For instance the officer in charge of the border police and the two chairpersons of the *boda-boda* industry. . Then three ethnographic interviews were held with three participants selectively chosen from the ethnographic group discussions. The ethnographic interviews with the *boda-boda* operators begun in the second week of the field work and lasted until the field work was concluded. Each informant was visited twice in every week to verify the data collected.

The findings in this paper are presented in three sections. In the first section life at Busia border is described. More specifically, the context of what happens at the border is presented with emphasis on the shared border life in terms of commodities and services which requires the need for daily cross-border mobility. The second section deals with the experience of being a *boda-boda* operator at the border. This section elaborates how being a boda-boda operator is affected and effected by politics, ethnicity and economics. The last section of the findings has to do with how life at the border and being a *boda-boda* operator construct everyday life for the operators at the border.

Life at Busia Border

The presence of the border at Busia has been almost invisible, at least to those who live and work there. It is normally ignored yet manipulated to their advantage, as characterized by a shared cross-border life where families lived on both sides of the border and everyday basic commodities were distributed from either side. Therefore, cross-border mobility was an everyday occurrence for most especially for the *boda-boda* operators.

Commodities are distributed on either side of the border and the locals know where to locate them. They, for instance, know fresh fruits and vegetables as well as cereals like beans and maize are easily available in Uganda while manufactured items such as vegetable oil, wheat flour, salt, paraffin, petrol, and medication are cheaper and presumed better in Kenya. Education and employment opportunities are also shared. Kenyan students could attend secondary school in Uganda, while Ugandans could attend primary school in Kenya. Therefore life at the border necessitates an available, affordable and reliable mode of cross-border transportation.

The *boda-boda* contributes significantly to the interdependence of life at this border. It is reliable, available, cheap and accessible. It is a common mode of cross-border transportation to ferry both commodities and individuals for hire. The bicycle is mostly preferred since it is cheaper as compared with the motorcycle and it could easily maneuver through the porous border routes. There is an unprecedented social bond between the bicycle *boda-boda* and Busia border community. Unlike the other regions in Uganda where motorcycles outnumber the bicycle *boda-boda*, the opposite is true of Busia border community. Using a bicycle *boda-boda* is considered "respectful" because of the slow pace it rides. In spite of that, the relationship between the bicycle and the existing culture of informal cross-border trade should also not be ruled out. The motorcycle was considered "disrespectful" by the elderly especially when used within the town for it rode at a high speed, therefore it was mostly used as a connection between the border town to villages in the outskirts or even across the border to ferry heavy load commodities that needed urgent transportation.

The *Boda-Boda* between Formality and Informality

Classifications between formal and informal means of transportation as described by Cervero (2000), classify some traits of the *boda-boda* industry as a formal means of transportation. For instance it has a structure of leadership and the operators are registered before joining the industry. However, the *boda-boda* industry lies within the informal sector. The term industry as used in this case is a sum of all the structures that construct a space of possible functionality for the *boda-boda* operators involving both the direct and indirect participants. And participants include chairpersons, leadership committee, those who print numbers on the uniform and those who make and sell the uniform.

As the literature on the informal sector indicates, the sector is not lacking in internal organization. Since its appearance in the 1970s coined by Keith Hart (Hart 1973), the informal economy and its role in economic development have been hotly debated. Some observers view the informal economy as a "pool" of entrepreneurial talent or a "cushion" during economic crises (Hart 1973). Others (e.g., Porta & Shleifer 2014) view it as some kind of obstacle arguing that informal entrepreneurs deliberately avoid regulation and taxation. Still others (e.g., Cervero 2000) see the informal economy as a source of livelihood for the working poor. Despite these different observations, the *boda-boda* operators are certainly entrepreneurial in their operations, and in their border-crossings. They most certainly avoid regulations, and the activity itself is operated by the poorer segments of the population, and can thus also be seen as an economic cushion. However, an early argument about informal sector activities as being less organized than those in the formal sector is no longer much to be seen.

While the *boda-boda* activities in Busia illustrate all of the above perspectives, it nonetheless lacks formal internal organization. And as in any other business, the organization reflects various solutions to the problems the operators face. For the *boda-boda*, activities are born out of the needs along the border, and the structure of the emerging *boda-boda* operations and ways of organizing such operations are adapted to such needs. For instance, there was a need to identify the Ugandan *boda-boda* operators from those on the Kenyan side. To solve this, the Ugandan bicycle *boda-boda* were requested to wear a uniform which varied in color. And the uniform also had meaning within Busia municipal council. Within the municipal council, the uniform which was normally used was a shirt colored bright pink or orange with white stripes, while in the outskirts of the municipal council the colors varied. The uniforms help the *boda-boda* operators to get passengers and also helped the passengers identify the operators since each operator is given a unique number which is printed on the uniform. However, some operators argue that the uniforms are only used to exploit them. This is because their chairperson, who does not wear uniform, still levies a fine on the operators who are found ferrying passengers without the uniform.

In order to work in Busia Uganda, the operators are obliged to register in the *boda-boda* office, where they pay a fee whose amount is not fixed and could vary from operator to operator. Some operators claim to have paid higher amounts of 50,000 Ugshs while others only paid 26,000 Ugshs. The amount of payment has been attributed to the status of the individual operator or to those who are connected with him. If an operator is capable, he would pay more while those who have less would pay less, but they all pay a fee regardless of their economic status.

Being a *Boda-Boda* Operator at the Border

Being a *boda-boda* operator at the border encompasses participation in politics, economics and social affairs. Below is a statement of what it meant to be a boda-boda operator at the border, from the perspective of one of the *boda-boda* operators:

> I am not a native of Busia, and I had never planned to come here. Neither did I plan to become a *boda-boda* operator. I resorted to the *boda-boda* because it was my only way of survival. I joined the industry with a borrowed bicycle *boda-boda* and I was ashamed to let my family know that I was a *boda-boda* operator and even worse, a bicycle *boda-boda* operator. I am scared of public opinion about my life as a *boda-boda* operator. Most often, we (*boda-boda* operators) are insulted and accused of having nothing better to do than waiting around for 500 Ugshs. Not only are we insulted by the public but we also suffer from ethnic discrimination here in our industry because we are from different ethnic groups and some feel more superior to others.

Many of the *boda-boda* operators at the border are not natives of Busia. They are attracted to the industry because of the active cross-border mobility. Whereas some consider this opportunity to be lucrative, others join the industry for it was their only means of survival. As narrated by the informant above. The participants reveal that joining the industry is easy, especially compared to getting employment in the civil service or the skilled labour sector. The only requirement needed to join the sector is the ability to ride a bicycle and in some cases a motorcycle. Although a great deal of people make a living out of the industry, they still consider themselves unemployed and always hope for the government's intervention to assist them.

Socially, the operators are never considered to be of a high social ranking. Especially in the borders, they are normally regarded to be an amalgamation of uneducated persons who have failed in life. This is the stereotype attached to the operators that kept most oprators from telling their families about the work they do at the border. It is, however, worth noting that some are educated and join the industry to diversify their income. The quick access to money also enables them to provide better living conditions for their families.

Dynamics in the Field of Ethnicity

Ethnicity plays a significant role in the lives of the operators. In their *boda boda* business the ethnic belonging influences the space from where they operate. Stages of operation are strategic physical spaces that a group of *boda-boda* operators occupy as they wait for passengers. The location of the stage of operation also influences the daily income of an operator; those who are close to the border make more money than those far away from the border. The operators have a tendency to cluster themselves according to their ethnicity. Groups such as the Basamia are native to the area. Other operators have already settled in Busia and they represent a number of different groups including the Luo, Banyankore, Baganda, Basamia, Basoga, Bagishu and Bagwe, and Karimojong. The ethnic clusters stage themselves in locales with persons of similar ethnicity. Since the border community is multi-ethnic, people tend to trust those they share ethnicity with, especially when they want them to ferry their commodities across the border.

This of course comes at a price. Especially for the Karimojong operators who have always been discriminated against and who miss out on opportunities in Savings and Credit Co-operative Organizations (SACCOs). Customers also carry a mistrust towards the Karmojong to ferry their commodities across the border. This mistrust stems from social stereotypes about them as drunkards and drug addicts. The Banyankore also make up a special cluster. They are thought of as spies because they share ethnic identity with most of the border police officers who are also Banyankore.

Below is an excerpt from an interview with a Karimojong operator:

> Passengers normally prefer *boda-boda* operators of a different ethnicity than ours. They would ask, SSHow can a drunkard ferry me?" So they prefer to leave us aside. The leaders of Busia also treat us as if we were not Ugandans. Whenever we report to them problems we face, they don't help us; they accuse us of being drunkards therefore causing the problem ourselves. For example if we are involved in an accident they blame us for it and say it is because we are drunk. It is not easy to get someone to trust a Karimojong operator but we also come to the border to work.

Links to the Political Sphere

Politics also influence the *boda-boda* industry. Politicians perceive the operators as vote banks (Goodfellow and Titeca 2012), because of their high numbers. The relationship between the *boda-boda* operators and the politicians is more of a "devil's deal" (Goodfellow and Titeca 2012) in which politicians influence policy in favor of the *boda-boda* operators in order to secure their votes. During the time this research was conducted, the desire to gain from political parties had divided the *boda-boda* industry into two political blocs: the National Reistance Movement (NRM) *boda-boda* and the opposition *boda-boda*. The former was newly founded in 2014 while the latter was the original *boda-boda* office. The argument for the division was allegedly that the *boda-boda* industry was not getting enough money from the then NRM because it was headed by a chairperson who supported the opposition political party. Therefore, the NRM *boda-boda* office arguably started as an initiative to benefit the industry.

Below is a quotation made by the NRM *boda-boda* chairperson about the cause of the divide:

> When the president could come, money was not coming to the *boda-boda* office because the leader was Forum for Democratic Change (FDC); so the money was being given to the operators at the different stages. A car with sacks of money could stop at every stage and supply money directly to the operators instead of dropping the money off in the office as was the case before. The money was given to the operators in exchange for their votes and time. That was because when three hundred *boda-boda* operators ride before a politician, the town comes to a standstill and the politician is noticed. The *boda-boda* office was missing out! When I shared this with the state minister, he advised me to get a leader in line with the NRM government if we wanted to make some money. So we mobilized *boda-boda* operators, and this group was formed and named the NRM boda-boda association.

From an externally placed perspective, the "devil's deal" relationship seemed to equally benefit both politicians and the *boda-boda* operators. But it was also evident that the political division of the *boda-boda* industry caused confusion amongst the ordinary *boda-boda* operators. For instance, some operators complained that they end up paying a fine for one offence twice. If they are found riding with no uniform by the NRM boda-boda chairperson he collects a fine from them, while if on the same day the chairperson from the original boda-boda office also found them with no uniform he could also require them to pay a fine. Such confusion was resented.

Other Dynamics and Challenges in the *Boda-Boda* Field

Economically, the cross-border trade economy in Busia has rapidly developed due to the ease of cross-border transportation provided by the boda-boda operators. As a whole, the boda-boda industry has constructed livelihood opportunities not only for the male youths in Busia but also for women who earn their livelihoods by feeding directly or indirectly to the boda-boda industry (Birungi & Onyango 2018). In a country where youth unemployment according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics is at about 36 percent (UBOS 2016), the boda-boda industry is an alternative means to lessen the unemployment rate (Nyachieu 2013), by escalating the number of youth in the informal employment sector to 91.8 percent.

Women contribute to and benefit from the everyday life of the operators at the border. They are the main customers for the *boda-boda* (Ochieng and Egessa 2003; Birungi & Onyango 2018). Therefore, they contribute money directly in to the industry on a daily basis. Since the society at Busia is patriarchal, women are culturally forbidden from operating either the bicycle or motorcycle as a *boda-boda*. However, there are women who own bicycles and motorcycles which they acquire through inheritance from their deceased husbands or by directly buying them. Such women hire out their bicycles/motorcycles to *boda-boda* operators (Nyachieu 2013; Birungi & Onyango 2018). Some women managed to purchase bicycles because of their active participation in the informal cross-border trade that boomed at Busia border (Masinjila 2009). Some of the women also own eating places that sell affordable meals specifically prepared for the *boda-boda* operators. Since these eating places are situated near the stages of operation and the border, they make the lives of the operators easier by saving the time they need to travel back and forth from their homes for meals (Birungi & Onyango 2018).

Being a *boda-boda* operator at the border also requires a certain amount of security consciousness. Because they are the transporters of both commodities and persons across the border the operators are always cautioned by the border security agencies to be aware of who and what they ferry for fear that they may sometimes ferry persons wanted by the border security or even contraband items. Despite these warnings, the operators reported that the competition for passengers, makes it difficult for them to

ask questions about who or what they were ferrying. A *boda-boda* operator stated the following about their work with the police:

> Sometimes we work with the police but of course not against our fellow operators. But the problem with helping the police is that they arrest us first as suspects even in cases in which we are giving them information. We know a lot of things that happen around here because we are everywhere at the border.

The border police also acknowledged the help from the *boda-boda* operators. In some cases, the police claimed that the operators have helped in reporting suspicious persons who happened to be terrorists. Also that the security agencies had aligned with the operators in an initiative against child trafficking through Busia border.

Everyday Life for the *Boda-Boda* Operators at the Border

Below is a description of everyday life as narrated by a *boda-boda* operator at the border:

> I usually start my day at 6:00am, I normally go to the junction along Tororo road to wait for passengers who want to cross the border, I can get maybe one or two (passengers) and then I will have to leave and go to my stage at Reyo. From the time I come in the morning, I only return home after work late in the evening at about 8pm. Every-thing we need is here. I have my breakfast and lunch here. There are these women who even move around with groundnuts or yellow bananas for us to buy. What we go through with the passengers differs on a daily basis. The passengers also differ. Sometimes it is so hectic that I think to myself maybe I should get another job, but there is no other job for me to do, so I just hang in there. Here at the border, there is money because we are the only ones providing transport, but we are too many so we compete with each other. That is why we cannot charge the passengers what we think is fair because they can get another one. But really the distance we ferry the passengers and the money they pay us is not fair. It is too little. There are times when some passengers do not even pay us. They rob us. This happens because we ferry people we do not know. We are even insulted by these people. As the original inhabitants in Busia the Basamia passengers especially keep reminding us that we are on their land and that we need to go back to our home areas. On a good day, I can make 5000 Ugshs or above. While on a bad day I can fail to get even one person to ferry. Sometimes when I am in need to make more money, I wake up at 3am in the morning to work and yes, I can get passengers at that time, because we are at the border and people travel every time. The problem with riding at 3am is that there are no security lights so the streets are dark and thieves can easily rob

us and take our money or even our bicycles or we can get
knocked by trailers.

The ever growing number of *boda-boda* operators creates competition
challenges amongst them. The people to ferry are there, but the physical
space to stage and wait for the passengers is limited. Howe in his work,
emphasized that because of the corrupt nature of the *boda-boda* leaders,
they do not regulate the number of new entrants to the *boda-boda* industry
(Howe 2002). The people ferried by the *boda-boda* can be categorized into
two groups: customers and passengers. The customers enjoy a closer
relationship with the *boda-boda* operator for they trust the operator to run
errands for them without any supervision. Such trust is nurtured over time
and good relations between both the individual and the *boda-boda* .
Passengers on the other hand, are different. In most cases they share no
relations or trust with the *boda-boda* operators. The passengers are mostly
unknown to the operators.

Because of the competition for passengers the *boda-boda* operators protect
their stages of operation. They attach themselves to a particular stage of
operation and chase away competitors. If operators enter without
permission they are fined. Also, to survive the competition, operators must
make strategic decisions all the time. For example, the informant quoted
above, stages at Tororo road junction by 6:00am, to target early morning
cross-border passengers. Then after ferrying two or three passengers, he
proceeds to his *boda-boda* stage at Reyo. Operators also take advantage of
the cross-border market days and strategically locate themselves to get
passengers. The market days are Monday and Thursday. On such days,
very early in the morning, the operators target passengers who are going to
the market from within the villages of the Municipal council, then by 2pm
till late in the evening, the operators flood the border to target the
passengers who are returning home from the market. These market days
have also arguably increased the competition for passengers among the
operators (Ochieng & Egessa 2003).

Below is an excerpt from the ethnographic group discussions highlighting
the daily challenges the *boda-boda* operator's face:

> We lack toilets but we do our "business" in the bush but when
> the chairperson finds us, we are forced to pay a fine. Even if we
> pay money to join the industry. The chairperson and the
> municipal council should use some of that money to build us
> toilets. They make a lot of money out of us. For example, we
> cannot work when we are not in uniform but this uniform is paid
> for and the chairperson himself does not wear uniform but he
> fines us for not wearing it. We now have two chairpersons and
> maybe three *boda-boda* offices and they all function. We have
> the original *boda-boda* office, then the NRM *boda-boda* office
> and the one at Sofia market, and we do not know what all these
> offices do. The Municipal council is also threatening to charge

> us a daily permit fee ranging from 300 Ugshs-500 Ugshs. This is different from the taxation because we are supposed to pay the tax once. They claim we are the ones who make the town dirty with sugarcane peels, but are we the only ones who eat sugarcane? So why should we pay for the town's general maintenance?

> Transporting people across the border is better for us. We are paid more money and sometimes in Kenyan currency. But we mostly don't engage in *magendo* but we ferry people who are involved in it. There are two kinds of *magendo* that we ferry, the ones we ferry through the customs and the ones we ferry in the *panya* routes. We charge higher the one through the *panya* routes.

The question of accountability of funds received by the *boda-boda* leaders and municipal council still echoes in the quotation above. This is an indication that although the *boda-boda* industry in Busia is internally structured, it lacks formal structures to make the leaders accountable. With over 15,000 bicycle *boda-boda* operators in the region (Pessa 2018), the municipal council is still hesitant to construct decent toilet facilities for them. Even if the operators pay a fee to the *boda-boda* office at the time of joining the industry, 5000 Ugshs is forwarded to the municipal council.

Most operators preferred to ferry persons across the border. Because they were paid higher wages especially if they were transporting *magendo*. They do not fully engage in the informal cross-border trade but they transport the people who are involved in the trade. Some *magendo* is ferried through the customs point, with this one, little taxes are paid by the owner of the *magendo* to the customs officials at the border point. Other *magendo* is transported through the *panya* routes. The option of transporting through the *panya* routes is preferred by the boda-boda operators since they earn more from it compared to using the customs point. When using the *panya* routes, the owner of the *magendo* gives the operator some money to bribe the border patrol officers who normally ask them for *kintu kidogo*, which translates to a small sum of money.

On a daily basis the operators rely on the daily wages they make. Little is saved for later use. Due to the informal nature of the *boda-boda* operations, it is difficult for them to attain financial assistance from banks like loans. Therefore they resort to saving SACCO's for financial assistance. Telecommunication companies like MTN Uganda and Airtel Uganda introduced avenues that enable telecom users to save money on to their phones, locally known as "mobile money". Since most of the operators find it challenging to open bank accounts because of the paper work involved, mobile money services are a reliable alternative for most.

The life at the border and being a *boda-boda* operator define the everyday life as lived by the *boda-boda* operators at the border. Because the cross-

border communities are interdependent, the everyday life of the operators comprises daily cross-border mobility. The operators are aware of the benefits that are associated with staging at the border. However, because of the multi ethnic life at the border, the operators are led to stage in locales of their ethnicity in order to increase their chances of getting passengers and customers. Because there is a fine that operators who do not wear uniforms have to pay, the operators find themselves with no option but to wear uniform in order to work at the border.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the everyday life of the *boda-boda* operators is constructed and influenced by the life at the border and what defines an individual *boda-boda* operator in terms of ethnicity and political affiliation. However, there are other dynamics that influence the everyday life of the boda-boda operators at the border. For example, the presence of women in the industry, who cook for the operators save them time.

Most of all, being a boda-boda operator at the border requires the knowledge of the physical routes within and across the border since their major job is to transport individuals or goods within and across the border.

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Chapter 10

Informal Cross Border Trade along the Ethio-Kenya Border: the Case of Women Traders in Moyale

Ashreka Hajisano

Introduction

Reading existing literature in the Horn of Africa on how women participate in informal cross border trade (ICBT) reveals overall that little attention has been paid to this field. Various studies have been conducted regarding livestock trading centering on the three countries of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya (see e.g.,Little, 2005; Aklilu & Catley, 2010 Mahmoud, 2010, Pavanello, 2010; Abdurahman, 2006; Habtamu et al. 2014) but little has been said about women's engagements in such activities. For example, Pavanello (2010), focused on the structural issues behind livestock trading in Kenya and Ethiopia. Aklilu and Catley (2010), examined benefits derived from livestock export trade. Mahmoud (2010) emphasized the importance of livestock and the dynamic nature of Ethiopian borders in livestock trading. Abdurahman (2006) analyzed the relationship between livestock trading and conflict in pastoral areas of Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya. Habtamu et al. (2014), examined challenges and prospects of both formal and informal cross border trade as well as petty periphery trade.

The aim of this paper is to put into focus women's engagement in cross border trading activities in Moyale town in southern Ethiopia. Moyale town is a busy market place situated in the Southern part of Ethiopia bordering Kenya. The town was divided into two administrative regions. One part of the town is in Oromia Regional State and the other part is in Somali Regional State. The study focused on the town itself not the surrounding administrative areas. The town has inhabitants from different parts of the country and the total population projection for the town in the year 2015 was 41, 600 (CSA, 2007).Groups from outside, with a presence in the town are Gabra, Guji, Arsi, Konso, Amhara and others (Bernabini, 2012:88).

Moyale also serves as a border town between Ethiopia and Kenya. The town on the Kenyan side of the border is also called Moyale but is locally called 'Gambo' which means 'the other side' in Swahili language (Bernabini, 2012). The same ethnic groups (Oromo: the largest and Gari) live across the border sharing similar livelihood systems with people on the Ethiopian side. Major languages spoken in the town is Afan Oromo (Oromo language) and Somali languages (Ibid).

Ethnicity is an important factor and is emphasized in the area. It is an important source of conflict in the town, not only among individuals but

also along administrative-ethnic boundaries. As a result, there is a hostile social relation among ethnic groups in the area besides a long history of conflict around Moyale due to clan disputes over land and pasture (Asnake, 2002 in Lubo, 2012). Hence, conflict is likely to happen along accross these bordes areas. Conflict among the clans at one side of the border might trigger conflict on the other side of the border as well (Abdurahman, 2006; Schlee, 2008; Tigist, 2014). Tigist (2014) argued that the ethnic regionalization that divided the Borana and the Garri living within the same province was the main cause of conflict between 1992 and 2004.

But as often happens, and as we shall see in areas of conflicts and during periods of conflict, trade still goes on across borders. It is to such trading relationships and the contexts of trade I shall now turn. I start by presenting a perspective for my analysis.

Conceptual Choices

The success or failures for women engaged in informal cross border trade depends on many factors. Thus I need a conceptual framework that allows me to deal with the intersection of institutional, environmental, geographical, social and economic factors. One such possible perspective is the well-established concept of "niche". This is a concept from evolutionary ecology, but Fredrik Barth (e.g. 1961) introduced it into anthropology and used it in his early studies, for instance on the Basseri nomads in Iran. A niche in Barth's usage has different sets of dimensions, abiotic and biotic, and together they define the natural environment defining the niche room. In addition, there are niche dimensions defined by economic and political dimensions that also must be understood to have adaptive consequences. I am not looking at the adaptation to a natural environment, but rather to a socio-economic field like cross-border trade. However, the focus on inter-linkages is useful as it helps me to isolate specific factors in a society that can explain both how certain people engage in cross border trade, and also better to understand the dynamics coming out of such an engagement. And this is what I seek to do in the discussion in the paper. I start by discussing what factors make women enter and engage in cross border trade, organizing the factors into "push-factors" and "pull-factors". Secondly, I focus on what factors affect the dynamics of the cross border activities, thus defining it as a dynamic field in which the women are actors that make choices under varying types of opportunities and constraints. The point of the discussion is to understand the empirical unfolding of cross border trade as a consequence of an interaction of a complex set of factors in which some women come out as winners, others as losers. To illustrate this complexity I present certain diagrams that provide flow-charts in which the summarized presentation of factors in indicated.

Reasons for Prevalence of Informal Cross Border Trade in the Moyale Area

The first reason for ICBT prevalence over time is related to the existing shortcomings in the formal cross border trade. The Revenues and Customs proclamation 859/2014 of Ethiopia states that residents within the Ethiopian-Kenyan border customs zone shall be entitled to transport goods necessary for their living. But such legal cross border trade is not focusing on the local communities along the border. The goods are taken to central parts of the country without being distributed in Moyale town. Rather other goods imported through other borders brought to Moyale market, but at a higher price due to longer distances of transportation. Hence, the informal and partly illegal cross border trade flourishes to fill the demand of the Moyale market.

In the year 2000 there was an attempt by the government of Ethiopia to introduce border trade or petty-periphery cross border trade. This initiative was intended to improve the supply of basic goods at a time when there was a general shortage of basic goods in the area. However, the initiative was terminated after a year, in 2001, as the bureaucratic rules made trade unprofitable (Habtamu, et al., 2014). Such rules were related to the amount of capital allowed for the importation of goods, which at the time was only ten thousand ETB *Birr*. Also, the license to trade across the border only allowed such trading activities to take place twice every month, and then only within a trading radius of 200 kilometers (ibid: 2014).

The legal mechanisms relating to informal goods also put serious constraints on the informality. The main strategy used to control informal goods from entering the country is a straightforward confiscation of such goods. Goods are confiscated through body or baggage search (*fittasha*) and based on information provided by informants (*tikoma*). The search begins at border crossing points and can continue also inside the country. This is so because it was proclaimed in Proclamation no.859/2014 that customs territory is the territory of Ethiopia and that informal goods can be confiscated at any place in the country. Revenues and Customs authority and customs stations are administered by federal government. This condition created tensions between local people and federal police, but it had little effect on curbing the flow of informal goods into the country. Rather, the flow of ICBT into the country is increasing, but with variation between high and low trading seasons. For example, data from the Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority, Moyale Branch, indicated that the estimated value of goods confiscated from July 2014 to June in 2015 was 91 million ETB while from July to December in 2015 was 54 million ETB. Informants from ERCA Moyale branch estimated the volume of goods escaping from confiscation using informal routes to be 5 to 6 times larger than the volume of confiscated goods. Previous literature also show that informal trade across Ethio-Kenyan border is by far larger than what is

seized by authorities and reported by Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority. Again, its volume is increasing (ibid: 2014).

Women Informal Cross Border Traders

The ages of the women who participated in the study ranged between twenty to sixty nine years. About 80% of women informants fall into working age of 20 to 50 years while 20% of them fall above this age. Younger ages dominated the business as the nature of the work requires stamina. The number of years spent in ICBT ranges from 2 to 26 years. The number of years they spent in ICBT shows that some of them might have started ICBT as young as at 15 years old. The older the women traders, the longer the number of years in ICBT are. This suggests that ICBT is a long term job rather than temporary engagement.

The nature of informants' marriage was both monogamous and polygamous in which 42.86% were in monogamous and 57.14% were in polygamous marriages. Widows and the divorced constituted the majority in the business. ICBT is the main means of survival for women headed households. Women who constituted 93.33 % of WICBT informants were engaged in ICBT after marriage. A majority of them (86.67%) had no formal education. Only four women (13.33%) followed formal education up to grade five, six and eight.

Women informal cross border traders are not homogeneous but vary according to their level of income, availability of social and family networks and background, gender dynamics, education, ethnicity, religion and culture (Lee and Piper, 2013, p. 3). In this study, women were categorized based on type of ICBT they engaged in.

Women belong to a category based on their different identities. These identities are defined by the human, financial and social resources. Based on this, they engage in the type of trade that fits their identity. For example, a mother with young children without a babysitter, with no startup capital and without an alternative source of income but has the opportunity to take credit, is likely to prefer trading within the town itself. Women who trade on credit also prefer to trade in the town out of fear of confiscation. The aged, the pregnant and the sickly, prefer to carry goods between shorter distances due to their inability to carry heavy merchandise. Younger and relatively healthier women, and those who have pack animals, are seen to transport goods over longer distances. However, this does not mean that all categories are exclusive of each other or fixed. Rather women prefer what best fits their situation at that moment. The table below shows the general categories of women and how they engage in trade.

Categories of WICBT
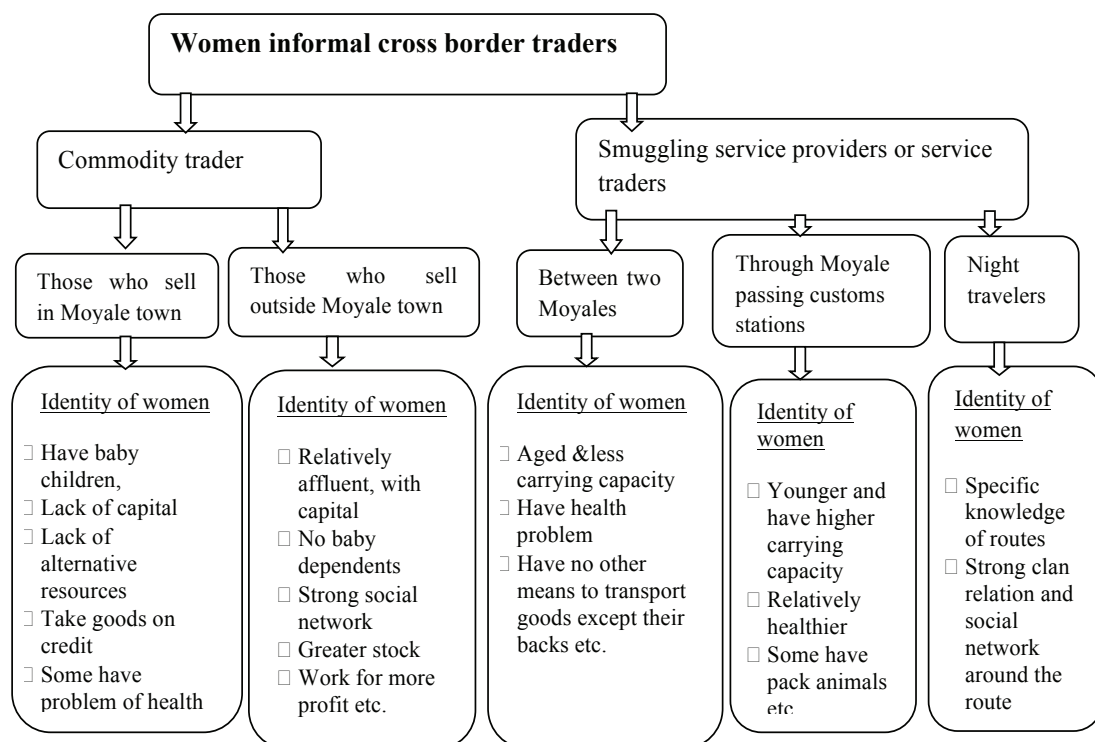
Source: field data

Women's Engagement in Trade: Push and Pull Factors

There were a number of push and pull factors that made women participate in ICBT. The main and initial push element to ICBT was economic. One such economic push factor was lack of an alternative source of income caused by the environmental conditions in and around the town of Moyale. The area around Moyale town is dry and in a constant food deficit situation. Climate change is a recent phenomenon threatening the livelihoods of pastoralists around Moyale by making the survival between dry seasons and rainy seasons harder (Bernabini, 2012). This is a challenge to pastoral life, and pushes people to look for alternative means of income (ibid). Prolonged periods of drought push people into impoverished lives in the town.

One informant, a charcoal trader, told me the next:

> We used to follow livestock; our wealth was livestock; drought destroyed our livestock. That is why we came to Moyale to survive as daily laborers. We have lived here in Moyale for eight years.

As a result, the feeding the family ended up in the hands of women. Chen (2012) argued that women are increasingly found as the main or chief breadwinners in families where men cannot find work. Fatuma, a key informant, also told me that:

> …I have six children. I did not attend any formal education. My husband has three wives including me. I was his first wife. He stopped looking after me and my children after he married his two other wives. He abandoned me with six children for five years being in his wedlock. My children used to sleep without having dinner. They cried for food. Finally I got divorced, after waiting for five years. I choose to carry goods on my back across the border because I have no money to do other business, nor do I have a donkey to load on. Now I feed my children from what I earn from carrying goods across the border. I have carried goods on my back for eighteen years. It is a must for me to carry goods on a daily basis in order to have a meal for my children.

The study also identified that around Moyale it is taboo for Moyale men to get involved in activities that are considered to belong to women. Women organize all the domestic work with the help of their unmarried children. Petty trade was one activity that was considered as women's work.

Another push factor was dynamics in the social environment of women. Divorce and the death of husband both forced women into the trade. One woman in the focus group discussion said:

> Moyale men change wives in the way they change their clothes. Marriage is easy and divorce too. What made us not to develop was that men marry two to four women and expect the wives to feed the family. Do you know that in Islam women are not forced into income generating activities in order to feed the family? It is prohibited (haram) in Islam unless on her own free will. Men eat what is forbidden (haram) for them.

Mijuu, another informant said:

> …My husband died five years ago in a Garri and Borana clan conflict in Moyale. During his life time, since he had no money, I used to collect and sell firewood. He used to accompany me on the journey to the forest but now the forest is too far away from us and I fear to go alone to collect firewood. I have no money to start other business. I do not want to take credit from people as I

> am afraid not to be able to pay my loan back to the owners. If
> my loan is not paid back it is bad for my soul. I prefer carrying
> things on my back. …The government officials also tell us to
> take credit with interest. I do not want to take it because my
> religion does not allow me to pay or receive interest.

The push factors for Mijuu were poverty and the death of a spouse which
further worsened her condition and made her shoulder the whole family
responsibility. Over time environmental degradation also made her
previous earnings from firewood inaccessible. As a woman she could not
collect firewood from far-away places because of insecurity. And, as we
see, her religious (Islamic) doctrine and strong religious affiliation to this
doctrine prevented her from taking loans with interest thus she was pushed
into ICBT.

Some government employees also engage in ICBT to supplement their
monthly income. They participate in the trade over weekends and in their
free time.They work on network basis using the telephone. However, they
did not go more than 200 kilometers during the weekends, in order to be
able to return back to their jobs. For these government employees,
underemployment and the need to supplement their earning (pushing
factor), availability of social and technological network and accessibility of
ICBT intersected and made them enter into ICBT.

Habibo, a government employee, told me this:

> My mother always warned me to stop trading contraband, as she
> knew women face many problems on the way. However, I
> couldn't stop because it supplements my 800(eight hundred)
> monthly salary which is too low to survive on.

As a result of all these intersecting factors women made up a majority in
business activities along the sides of the streets in Moyale. They can be
seen under the shades of shops and in open market areas. An informant
from the government office told me that such women were called
'duugdaan nyaattee'. This is an Oromo language phrase used to express a
woman who makes a living from what she earns carrying things on her
back. But in general terms the word is used to refer to women 'laborers' in
Moyale.

Similarly, intersections of various pull factors attracted women to ICBT.
Social, geographical and institutional conditions were the main pull factors.
Social factors are related to the presence of the same clans on either side of
the border. Women who have relatives or members of their clan with shops
at Gambo have no problem in starting ICBT. Women, who have no
relatives, also have the possibility of getting credit by approaching shop
owners through intermediaries. Such relationships could even facilitate
trade all the way up to Nairobi as it made possible for the women to obtain
Kenyan identity cards.

Women commodity (milk) traders and those waiting for informal goods to come from Gambo (photo by Ashreka Hajisano)

But the major geographical condition that attracted women to ICBT was close proximity of the border crossing between the two towns, and it is a border that is permeable. Proximity and the easiness of border crossing are factors argued for by different researchers like Gor (2012).

A study by the World Bank (2007) stated that geographical proximity of borders helps trade participants in reducing or avoiding transportation costs. This study also indicated that trading across such borders did not require the cost of transportation especially for those entering into trade for the first time. Hence, it attracted women.

The functionality of both currencies (Ethiopian ETB and Kenyan Shilling) made trade easy and pulled women towards ICBT. There was no need of going to banks to find foreign exchange. If you go to any shop in these towns you are only asked whether buyers have ETB or Kenyan Shilling. Sellers keep both currencies in both Moyale Ethiopia and Moyale Kenya. At Kenyan Moyale/Gambo it is easy to find stores of goods immediately after crossing the border. There is no need of going far; Kenyan traders bring everything needed by Ethiopian traders close to the border.

Profit maximization also emerged as another pull factor in the sense that success could lead a trader to go for more profit by expanding the trade activities. Williams and Round cited in Alouch (2014) argued that the "necessity driven" informal traders could act as a seed-bed for "opportunist" traders. Thus, after the basic needs for survival are met, women involved in ICBT could expand their trading activities and reach higher levels of profit, also compared to profit levels in formal trade (Alouch, 2014). Figure 2 below shows the summary of how push and pull factors cooperate for presence of women in ICBT.

Management of Problems and Solutions in Cross Border Trade

Having explained what women are engaged in cross border trade, I turn to discussing what factors the women face in their management of their trading activities. I have mentioned some already, but in this section, I will try to present some major ones systematically. Again, the picture is one of

complexity, ranging from micro-factors relating to personal skills, to wider social processes relating to social relationships, to macro and state-oriented factors. These involve the police, customs and security institutions that are present and affect the trade, and the legal context in a country like Ethiopia that defines what legal trade is and what is illegal trade. These are all what I termed "niche dimensions" that the women have to deal with. Let me present an overview of some major factors and how the female traders navigate through them. I present what the actors themselves have to say about their experiences in dealing with their context.

The most common goods traded included products such as clothes especially for women; sanitary items such as soaps; cosmetics, shoes of all types (new and used), small size electronics material like mobile phones, solar light devices, household utility materials; drinks such as sodas and juices were all the focus of women's trade. Agricultural products such as oil seeds, vegetables and cereals, and animal products especially milk were widespread. Also cooked food items, such as baked *enjera* (Ethiopian cultural food), *bonna* - coffee in coffee pots or thermos, and any available food items were informally traded across to Kenya.

Some prior studies on cross border trade items indicated that women only traded in products from small ruminant animals. For example, Zekarias and Teshale (2015) argued that cattle traders are only men and suggested that gender is a leading factor to decide entry into cattle trade. However, this study found out that in addition to small ruminants, there were women who engaged in livestock (cattle and camel) trade at the Moyale border. The women I interviewed told me that as long as they had the money to start a business, there is no hindrance in trading in large animals, within the country or across the border. The only problem was that since men had dominated this business for a long time, women had limited access to the market networks across the border. Consequently, they often traded in the domestic markets, where their major domestic markets being Moyale and Finchawa.

An important part of the trade activity is crossing the border itself. Here the women have many strategies. The pay "bribes" to border guards on both sides of the border in order to pass goods across the border. Also here there is a "market dynamic". The bribes vary based on what kind and volume of goods and the means transportation. Expensive materials require more money than cheaper products. Bribing at the border is institutionalized, and is paid without much ado. But "begging" the border guards was also a strategy in which women cold try to negotiate less payment. In such cases the bribing became very public. But in both cases the motive of the border guard to engage in such strategies was his own lack of income. The following are the words of a border guard:

> Our lives totally depend on what we receive here. We sit here to collect this money because we have no other salary. We do not hurt them and they do not hurt us.

Although there was open bribery, there were times when guards freely let women cross the border with their goods, without paying. This included vulnerable women: elderly women who carry products on their back in order to survive; women whom they knew from elsewhere and thus knew their family situation and how poor they were; also some widowed women whose deceased husbands had been former member of the border guards and thus had been friends of those still in active service.

Push and Pull facors summarized.

The first figure shows how push factors of various types intersected and lead women to ICBT.

The second figure on the next page shows the intersection of pull factors to ICBT. Whole figure shows cooperation of both factors in creating WICBT in which one pushes and the other attracts women to ICBT

unemployment and underemployment

Polygamy, marital conflict, divorce and death of spouce

Lack of resource, lack of starting up capital and high family responsibilty

WICBT

Drought and institutional problems

Lack of alternative job opportunity

WICBT

These kinds of border crossing, depending to a large extent on local relationships between the traders and the officers turned out very differently when the traders were moving away from Moyale to other towns in Ethiopia. Also on such travels they had to pass various customs stations. At these stations the traders would meet federal police and federal agents of a different type than the local officers in Moyale. Bribing was more secret and difficult here, and an alternative strategy was to wear the commodities, such as clothes, and pretend they were for personal use. They could also hire fellow travelers to wear clothes, and they let their own children do the same. An alternative strategy was to pay drivers of the buses to negotiate with the officers. The drivers passed through the check points all the time and knew the officers. Hence, they could do what the women were able to do themselves back in Moyale. But, at other times they simply had to hide to avoid being caught by the police. Karo, a commodity trader told me the following:

> We were four women taking goods to Dubluk (a town on the way to Yabalo). The driver identified custom officials from far away and informed us. We immediately jumped off the car as we were carrying some expensive goods with us. As we ran into the bush two custom officers who had been hiding along the road, shouted and ordered us to stop running and to sit down by the side of the road. And I stopped but not the others. He ordered me not to move and followed the other three women who kept running into the bush. The two custom officers

> brought those women back, while beating them violently. They took us to Dubluk police station. We were questioned but we denied that we were informal traders. We managed to convince the officers that we brought goods for personal use. Finally they confiscated our goods and let us go.

Some women use their female children to pass goods custom stations. They are preferable in passing goods since they can wear more clothes, one item over the other, and cover their hair with shawls, wear jewelry and other things that could be carried on the body.

A girl in the interview narrated her experience of participation in informal trade as follows:

> My mother was an informal cross border trader. I always accompanied her since I was twelve years old. She made me wear children's clothes, one over the other. I was very happy to wear many new clothes of different colors at a time. One day, on the way to Fincawa, my mother suddenly dropped off the bus and took a footpath in the bush. She left me in the bus telling me to stay close to a woman sitting next to me. I wore ten under-wears that day. When we arrived at Dubluk town the custom officer came for the check-up. He looked carefully at me and approached me. He started counting what I was wearing. He asked me: "who bought this many clothes for you?" I replied: "my mother". He was laughing and asked: "where is she?" My answer was that she had left the car and walked into the bush. The officer shook his head and left me and the car laughing.

Other women traders could use specific routes in the bush, either during day time or night time to evade being searched by customs officers. They informed me that such forays were made in groups of three or more women. Some traders used vehicles that left Moyale at night either accompanying the drivers or simply sending trusted drivers to their customers with the merchandise. At all checkpoints within the country, exchange of bribes is the norm though not as overt as at the border point. People use the Oromo language term *'fittatashaa woluma dhageennee dabarra'* which is literary translated as "*we negotiate [with customs station officers] and pass the customs stations.*"

The difference in attitude between the local border officers and those representing institutions administrated by the federal state could be seen in Moyale town as described above. The presence of federal government officers at the border often causes panic among the traders as well as the customs officers. This usually happens when there is a security threat along the border and federal officers are sent over to beef up surveillance. In such situations, the traders and border customs officials become wary and little activity is witnessed at the border crossing. The tension is also felt by local authorities. They are trapped in between two responsibilities: controlling

contraband trade and addressing the needs of the community. The dilemma can be summed up by one official from ERCA:

> It is becoming very difficult for us to enforce the law regarding contraband because of people's violent reaction to customs officials and federal police. Residents of the town have seen us as outsiders who come here to violate their normal way of living. They do not want to cooperate to control contraband; rather they prefer hiding such goods from us. In fact, when we think as human being, there are times when we feel pity for the people because they have no other options to rely on than engaging in the trade. I believe the government should do something for these people to eradicate contraband.

But only feeling had nothing to do with what is happening. What happens is better formulated by a woman I met who said:

> Rich today and poor tomorrow. You see, you may be rich today and poor tomorrow. Why? Because of the confiscation of goods.

There are times the traders are forced to leave the buses and run into the bush or some deliberately use the bush routes to bypass the customs check-points. But in either case the bush constitutes challenges that they must to deal with. One lady said:

> A very bad day in my contraband history was the day I took an informal route through the bush. That day I started journey to Mega using a route in the bush around 2:00 pm. I paid for the bus at Moyale to pick me up at a place we had agreed on, a place after the bus had passed the Moyale customs station. I started walking in the bush carrying eight dozens of chewing gum that I bought from Gambo (Moyale Kenya). As soon as I arrived at the place of appointment, I called another woman informal trader who was a passenger in the bus. However, she told me that the bus already left the point we agreed to meet. I was so disappointed for having chosen that route and decided to continue my journey to the nearest town. The problem was that I did not know the exact route to the town. Thus I simply followed foot marks on the ground. After I walked for half an hour I found a diversion of the road. I took the diversion to my right. After some distance the foot marks on the ground disappeared. I was lost in the bush and I decided to come back to the asphalt road, realizing that by that I might get caught. But I chose to risk lose my goods rather than myself. Finally, I reached the asphalt road around 5:00 PM. I was so tired. I stopped being careful and tried to stop a car coming from Mega. Fortunately, the people in the car were not customs officials, but a driver and other passengers who knew me from before. They, helped me load my goods on the car, and took me to the town

where I arrived around 6: PM. It was after I arrived at this town that I realized I passed the town I originally was going to. That day was unforgettable in my life.

This woman only got lost. Others were not so lucky when they lose their goods to customs officers or to gangs that operate within the bushes. Some conmen pretend to be intelligence officers from ERCA thus extorting bribes from their victims. Another big risk is sexual harassment

One lady told me:

----- look at that driver who wears red cap. One day he spoke to me on my mobile phone and told me that he loved me. I replied that I have a husband and I do not want to engage in such activity. After two weeks, I arrived at this bus station while his bus was loading to go to Mega. He started insulting me while I was trying to load my goods saying "You have contraband, do not load your goods on this car. And forget about your goods, no one needs even you." We shouted at each other and I took my grievance to the elders but the case is not settled yet…... prays for me that he will not tell this to other drivers. They can also reject my goods in order to hurt me more.

Clan and kinship relationships on either side of the border are very important. This helped the traders to cross the border not as traders but as regular people who wanted to visit relatives. The interconnection between clan and relatives on the other side of the border also helped women informal traders to get information about what was in demand on either side of the border. One border guard told me:

When we ask all people, who cross the border about where they are going, their immediate answer is that they cross to Kenya to visit their relatives at Gambo. We cannot prevent them from crossing the border.

A study by Fekadu (2006), cited in Dereje and Hoehne (2008), indicated that many Ethiopian Moyale inhabitants have Kenyan ID cards allowing them to operate more freely on the Kenyan side. And the dangerous activities and problematic journeys described above also needs secret networks.

Conclusion

This paper has shown some of the challenges inherent in the informal cross border trade undertaken by women in Moyale. What we see is that they are push and pull by factors that are related to institutional, environmental, geographical, social and economic factors. Gaps in the formal cross border trade laws and their enforcement mechanism; assumptions about cross border trade as being an illegal activity, ignoring its importance to society; less attention given to livelihood system of border areas and ignoring the

voice of border inhabitants in deciding about issues concerning cross border trade.

The women in Moyale are faced with a dilemma of eking a living through the informal often dangerous ICBT or towing the governments line. The engagement in illegal activities is borne out of a survival instinct. What is everyday life for these women represents illegality to the government and leads to sanctions. Different strategies were employed to escape from such sanctions. But given the options the women have to make a living, there is no reason to believe that their engagement in cross border informal trading activities will decline.

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Section III

State Developments, Border Conflicts and Pastoral Predicaments

Chapter 11

The Tyrrany of Borders: Politics of Identity and Conflicts arount the Ethiopia-Kenya Borderlands

Yehualaeshet Muluneh, Fekadu Adugna, and Ayalew Gebre

Introduction

In an interesting book, the editors Dereje Feyissa and Markus V. Hoehne focus on how borderlanders in the Horn of Africa "make the best of being divided" (2010:1). The editors had in fact made an outline of their main argument in 2008 (Feyissa and Hoehne 2008). The authors used four analytical tools (political, economic, identity, and status and rights as resources) to show the benefits of a border as resource in their 2008 and in their edited book (Feyissa and Hoehne 2010:13-17). In each case of the four analytical tools, the border presents particular potential advantages for certain groups by which they can pursue their interests. And it follows that such "interests" are seen in various political aims, economic strategies, developments related to identities. According to the authors, developments along borders also allow different marginal groups to benefit from changes in border dynamics, for instance, new refugee camps that can be exploited also by a local population. With the aim of maximizing their divergent interests, the authors further argue, both state and non-state actors compete among themselves to make use of opportunities offered by borders as resources. Nevertheless, the direction of such competition is open ended. The various border "games" can produce peace, but also violent relationships. They can produce economic development but can also bring about poverty and increasing inequality. Border populations might feel their identities are strengthened. At the same time, they may feel stigmatized and marginalized and thereby organize resistance. And access to rights and resources along the border might be one factor that can affect the direction of events towards peace or war.

With this introductory remark, the present chapter seeks to adopt the above mentioned conceptual and empirical leads as an insight to expound on the situation along the Ethiopian-Kenyan border in southern Ethiopia, more precisely in the immediate vicinity of the town of Moyale.

Moyale – Contested Identities and Multiple Flags

The border town of Moyale is situated 775km south of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa and nearly at the same distance north of Nairobi. Administratively, the Ethiopian border has two districts with fully-fledged overlapping administrative structures based in the same town. These are the Moyale district of Somali Region Regional State overwhelmingly inhabited by the Garri Somali, and the Moyale district of Oromia Regional State

largely populated by the Borana, an Oromo group. In principle, the districts are one for the Ethiopian Somali region and the other for Oromia region, but they are geographically situated in the same town of Moyale. Each district has a mayor, a police force, a court, a prison, a local administrative unit, a customs office and its own inland revenue. A third "indigenous" group in the area is the Gabra who have been divided between the Oromo and the Somali, though the overwhelming majority still claims to belong to Oromo. There are also other minority groups such as the Burji, Amhara, Gurage, Wolayta who live in this border town.

In the following a brief description of the three major groups is presented. As shall be seen later, the groups are not confined to the Moyale area. They are found in several provinces in Ethiopia and across the borders in Ethiopia's neighboring countries. It is thus not surprising that the description of the local situation in Moyale represents the beginning of a longer and more complex story.

The Ethiopia-Kenya borderlands east of Lake Turkana are mainly inhabited by groups belonging to the Oromo and/or the Somali. The Moyale borderlands are inhabited by three major pastoral groups: Borana, Garri, and Gabra. The Borana are predominantly cattle pastoralists who inhabit the Borana and Guji Zones of Oromia National Regional State in Ethiopia, and Marsabit and Isiolo counties in Kenya. Notwithstanding their long history of interaction with the Somali, the overwhelming majority of the Borana have remained monolingual, speaking only Afaan Oromo. Except for the Isiolo Borana, who were Islamized in the 1930s and 40s, the Marsabit and the Ethiopian Borana have until recently resisted Islamization and hence stuck to their traditional religious beliefs.

The Garri on the other hand live in the Dawa Zone in Ethiopia, Mandera County in Kenya; and Gedo Region in Somalia. A bilingual group speaking both Somali and Afaan Oromo languages, the Garri have territorial claims in all the three countries. In addition to the standard Somali, the Garri speak two dialects: the dialect of the Rahanweyn clan (their neighbors to the south in Somalia) and the Garri Kofar (a dialect related to the former but different and spoken mainly in Kenya). This further demonstrates their geographical stretch in all the three countries (Ayalew and Fekadu 2007; Fekadu 2009, 2010; Markakis 2011. Coupled with their mixed Oromo-Somali cultural markers, this linguistic diversity gives the Garri a unique advantage of switching between ethnic groups and countries (Schlee 1994; Fekadu 2009).

Ethnic identity is equally fluid among the Gabra, the third group straddling the Ethiopia-Kenya border in the Moyale region. Based on their location, the Gabra people are divided into Gabra Miigo and Gabra Malbe. While the former live in southern Ethiopia, the latter inhabit in northern Kenya. Although geographically divided, the two groups maintain kinship and other cooperative relationships in the socio-cultural and political contexts. With a long history of nomadic life and cultural adaptation, the Gabra are

endowed with thick cultural markers that help them fit into both Oromo and Somali ethnic groups. Whereas they speak Afaan Oromo language and practice the age-set system closely linked to the Borana *Gada* institution, their house building style and camel-based cultures associate them with the Somali. This fluid identity in between Oromo and Somali becomes precisely the kind of "resource" that can be exploited by the Gabra, particularly by the elite group who can skillfully switch allegiance between the two other groups based on politico-economic opportunities (Fekadu 2009).

In Moyale Town, the Borana, Garri and Gabra live in geographically and socially segregated neighborhoods, a segregation that is also expressed in the politico-administrative field. The general trend has been for Borana to use the Oromia National Regional State offices and for the Garri to use the Somali National Regional State offices. And as noted earlier, the Gabra are divided between the two.

An examination of the territorial borders and the interplay between the territorial borders and conflict in the case of the Oromo-Somali border areas shows how the emphasis on the ethno-territorial borders may also accelerate ethnic identification processes. In this regard, Tronvoll (2003:66) was accurate when he said that in the endeavor to "politically, militarily and symbolically demarcate a territory and a nation draws attention to the processes of boundary mechanisms in order to distinguish between one's own land and that of others (enemy). Such a distinction is relevant not only for territorial rights, but also in the realm of identity negotiation." A good example is how the Gabra residing in Ethiopia find themselves divided by the conflict represented by the general Oromo-Somali identity boundary. The following extract from an interview with a Gabra elder who also present himself as the community representative shows how the Oromo-Somali competition played out in relation to the Gabra ethnic identity:

> We have been living on this land since our grand...grand fathers: the Sidam (Ethiopian state) came and said this land belongs to Ethiopia. They forced us to pay tax…When the Somali got flag (independence), they told us that this land belonged to the Somali and that we are all Somali… Ihadeg (EPRDF) the current ruling party in Ethiopia] came and divided the land and the people into Oromo and Somali. Borana said that they are Oromo, and the Garri followed the Somali. We [the Gabra] are divided between the two. Look, this village has two flags: that of Oromo and that of Somali. Now it is more than ten years since we lived under these two flags. In the last ten years alone, we have run away from this village twice because of the conflict between the Oromia and Somali [ethno-regional states]. Two years ago, the president of Oromia invited the Gabra elders to Addis Ababa.…We discussed with him the problems the Gabra are facing under these circumstances. The President told us that

we are as Oromo as the Borana and the Guji are. A month after our discussion with the President of Oromia, we were invited by the Somali president and we travelled to Jijiga [capital of the Somali regional state]. The Somali president told us that we are Somali both by our origin and way of life… Back from Jijiga, we discussed with a few other Gabra elders in Moyale, and I was delegated to travel to Nairobi and seek for advice from Dr. Godana Bonaya… I met him in Nairobi. He had shown sympathy and concern about the Gabra (the Ethiopian Gabra). I asked him: Who are the Gabra? Who to prefer, the Oromo or the Somali?

This situation of the Gabra reflects the politics of identity of the peoples who live at the boundary of different but competing nationalisms, domestic political and the international borders. In the interview quoted above, the informant referred to the Ethiopian occupation towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Somali argument of decolonization and irredentist war of the 1960s and 1970s, and the current Ethiopian ethnic-based federalism. The informant related the current contestation and negotiation of identity to the two flags in the village, which symbolize the representation of the Oromo and the Somali. The elder himself has been travelling between Moyale, Addis Ababa and Jijiga, negotiating the identity of his group with the two ethno-national Ethiopian states: Oromia and Somali. When the pressure intensified, the elder travelled to Kenya for consultation about their identification with a fellow Gabra who was then influential on Gabra issues. This was done irrespective of the fact that the Kenyan Gabra live across the international border.

Thus, we see that the situation and the problem fields we discuss in the paper are related to issues beyond the local Moyale context, which makes it necessary for us to look into processes on higher levels of scale. It is to such discussion we now turn, starting with the internal Ethiopian dynamics of different regimes organizing Ethiopia in different ways. We will then, in general terms, discuss how the Moyale issues are linked to the national borders, thereby involving Kenya and Somalia as neighboring nation states.

Ethiopian National Systems of Governance

In the pre-1991 era of both the imperial and Derg regimes, Ethiopian Moyale was placed under the Borana provincial administration, and served as the capital of the Moyale district. Throughout those periods, the Borana elite enjoyed politico-administrative privileges, and controlled key pastoral resources. Although the Borana were labeled as the hegemonic group by their neighbors, the three groups (Borana, Garri and Gabra) have lived peacefully together for many years, cooperating as communities and negotiating on how optimally utilize and collectively share their pastoral resources. However, in times of conflicts that have transpired particularly in the 1960 and 70s, we see a foreshadowing of later problems. During those periods of conflicts, while the Borana supported the Ethiopian

government, the Garri sided with Somalia. On the Kenyan side too, the Borana supported the Kenyan government and the Garri sided with Somalia. The Gabra, however, as has been the case all along the line, pragmatically kept changing their positions. For instance, in the initial conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia in the 1960s the Gabra supported Ethiopia, only to change side in the 1970s to support the Somalis (Aguilar 1996; Belete 2008; Fekadu 2012).

In 1991, a socialist military regime that ruled Ethiopia for seventeen years was overthrown by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), an umbrella organization of four ethnic based political parties: The Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO), and the Southern Peoples' Democratic Movement (SPDM). The new government changed a century old unitary state to a federal state, and divided the country into nine ethno-linguistic-based federal states and two autonomous city administrations. The EPRDF, the architect of the system, justifies the necessity of decentralizing power along ethnic lines as an adequate response to the past centralism and ethnic domination. The late Prime Minister of the country and a long-time head of the EPRDF, who was assumed to be an engine behind the system, had once this to say:

> From a purely legal point of view, what we were trying to do was to stop the war, and start the process of peaceful competition. The key cause of the war all over the country was the issue of nationalities. Any solution that did not address them did not address issues of peace and war. People were fighting for the right to use their language, to use their culture, to administer themselves. So, without guaranteeing these rights it was not possible to stop the war, or prevent another one" (cited in Vaughan, 2003: 36-37).

The ethnic conflicts the new system was meant to diffuse have, however, continued, and in some cases in more aggravated ways. But, the conflicts are kept far from the center and have mostly been confined to the periphery between the new ethno-national states and within the constituent states. As discussed above, one of these new conflict hotspots has been Moyale that fall on the contested territory at the border between the Oromia and Somali regional states "owned" by the Oromo and Somali respectively.

As soon as the ethnic federal structure was put in place, the Oromia and Somali regional states engaged in prolonged claims and counter-claims of territories along their nominal but indistinct borders. At the height of their claims and counter claims, 430 *kebele* (territorial units of the lowest level of administration) were contested between Oromia and Somali national regional states. The 1995 constitution, promulgated by the new government, contains the mechanisms of resolving boundary-related conflicts arising among regional states. It stipulates, "All state border

disputes shall be settled by the agreement of the concerned states. Where the concerned states fail to reach the agreement, the House of the Federation shall decide such disputes on the basis of settlement patterns and the wishes of the people concerned" (Article 48 (1)).

One expression of this came in 1997. The background has to do with the emergence of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in 1973. The OLF is an ethno-nationalist insurgent group having its strongholds in southeastern parts of the country that began guerilla warfare against the Ethiopian ruling elite. Thus, a new Oromo 'nationalism' and attempts at alternative state making, emerged as a dangerous problem to the state controlling regimes in Addis Ababa. The OLF demanded the creation of an independent Republic of Oromia, with new borders. Like Somali nationalism, Oromo nationalism celebrated cultural features, while rejecting existing territorial borders. The emergence of OLF as a political actor, with a newly imagined map, therefore collided with both the Ethiopian and the Somali nationalists. These three nationalist bodies claimed overlapping territory around the Oromo-Somali boundaries in general and the Ethiopia-Kenya border of Moyale in particular. Their claims even transcend the international border into the Somali and Oromo inhabited areas of northern Kenya (Fekadu, 2012)

This situation had direct implications for Moyale. In 1991, when the new Ethiopian government came to power, Moyale was undisputedly a part of the Borana territory. However, in 1997, when the Borana were suspected of supporting the Oromo Liberation Front's insurgency, the Ethiopian government allowed the Somali Regional State to open an office for its newly formed district, thus producing a situation that led to the establishment of two districts in the same town. Since then, we have witnessed intensified ethno-territorial disputes being manifested at two levels: between Oromia and Somali at the state level; and inter-communal fighting between the Borana and Garri on the ground.

Thus, the re-mapping of the country had two basic outcomes on identity politics and the contestation of territorial spaces. First, ethnicity not only played an instrumental role in the restructuring of the Ethiopian state along ethnic lines, but it also interrelated with the distribution of resources. Second, the fact that the Ethiopian model of ethnic federalism identified ethnic groups with their corresponding administrative units contributed to the creation of rigid ethno-territoriality and ethno-administrative borders (Fekadu 2012). That was especially the case in areas such as Moyale where all the Borana, Garri and Gabra rural communities who are engaged in competing claims of either belonging to the Oromo or Somali identity are all pastoralists. This fact adds to the complexity as the groups also meet each other in their pastoral movements, which is also a competition in their search of pasture and water. To the pastoralists themselves, this is the base of their survival and thus a matter of life and death. When border making has become the state's agenda, people started scrambling for territory out of

fear of exclusion by the winning group as the border was being drawn. In relation to this, it is worth quoting a Borana elder:

> The main cause of conflict in our region is *dinber* [Amharic term for border]. The government said it is going to make *dinber*. But we opposed. We do not have *dinber* with Garri. We do not have *dinbe*r with Marehan. We do not have *dinber* with Digodia. We have *dinber* with Eritrea. We have *dinber* with Somalia. We have *dinber* with Kenya. We do not have *dinber* with our neighboring *gosa* 'tribes'. Meles Zenawi is our Prime Minister.… Do the Garri have another Prime Minister? No. We both have one Prime Minister. Thus, we do not want *dinber*… Last time we spoke in a meeting here in Negelle that the referendum will cause more war.

For this elder, the border making project, which the state designed as a solution for the conflicts, is itself a major potential cause of conflicts. Such serious undertaking of domestic border delimitation was new for the peoples. In 2002, after a local NGO brought together fifty Borana and neighboring Somali elders (25 from each group), they petitioned to the office of the Prime Minister protesting against the border making project and resolving the conflict in the area through 'referendum'. Their argument was that they are pastoral communities who migrate depending on the changes in the dry and wet seasons, which would thus make difficult for them to abide by a solid border.

Regardless of the peoples' opposition, a referendum was ultimately organized which was supervised by the National Election Board. This referendum was held in 2004. Basically, the choice posed was to decide which administrative region (Oromia or Somali) each contested area would be assigned to. Inevitably, as politics and ethnicity are interwoven (Nagel 1994), the mobilization of voters became essentially a mobilization based on ethnic identity. More than 75% of the voters in Moyale preferred to be part of Oromia National Regional State. However, that majority vote did not bring smooth bordering processes. Occasional skirmishes between the two regions or the pastoralists who live around the border have continued. For example, in 2009, a deadly war on the border of the two ethno-regional states resulted in the death of more than 300 people. Additionally, about 70,000 people were displaced and had to run to the Kenyan side. The conflict was triggered when the Oromia regional state initiated a drilling of a borehole around the contested border. In July 2012, fighting again erupted in the town of Moyale and continued for three solid days. Residential houses, offices, shops, and other business centers including a bank owned by the Oromo were attacked. A year after, from 3rd to 7th December 2013, the same groups fought in the Kenyan Moyale town turning the whole town into a battle ground. The conflict reached its climax in September 2017 when hundreds have lost their lives; more than half a million inhabitants of the Oromia and Ethiopian Somali border areas have been displaced due to

the war. Mimicking the Ethiopia-Eritrean border war (Tekeste and Tronvoll 2000), the Somali National Regional State evicted and expelled more than 75, 000 Oromo from their region.

Links to the Wider Region – the National Borders and National Processes

Having outlined how local Moyale developments are linked to larger Ethiopian processes of national governance systems, we will continue by expanding our arguments even further. We also argue that it is important to relate the local processes with the national developments not only within Ethiopia but also in the two neighboring countries of Kenya and Somalia. Moyale is on the Ethiopia-Kenya border and is thus directly affected by national border policies in the two countries. But as shall be seen later, since one of the groups in Moyale is of Somali ethnicity, it is worth noting that the Somali national policies (especially the notion of a "Greater Somalia") have also a role to play. Let us deal with each situation in turn, but given the spatial proximity, we give more attention to the Ethiopia-Kenya border, including outlining a longer historical view. However, it is important to note that this history has also affected all the three countries.

The Ethiopia-Kenya border agreement was signed in 1907 between two empires: Ethiopia and British. The Ethiopian Empire, after its major victory over Italy in the battle of Adowa in1896 in the north, was countering the northward expansion of the British from their colony of Kenya and the Italians who occupied Southern Somalia (Helland 2002). In the post independence period, this political process turned the region into the geographical frontiers of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Accordingly, the Oromo and Somali were divided by the borders and became marginal members of these states. The fact that borderlands are margins does not mean that there is less presence of the state. Especially, in the areas where the borders are securitized like Ethiopia-Kenya-Somalia borderlands, state institutions and structures are visibly operational, and cross border checkpoints and controls are often stronger (van Wolputte 2013). To ensure the state's presence in the newly incorporated marginal areas, administrative and security apparatuses were laid down. In the strategically important cross-border points, well-defended garrison towns or *ketemas* were founded. These garrison settlements gradually grew into key administrative, economic and security centers. Moreover, they became nucleus of cultural diffusions, symbols of citizenship and national sovereignty. Accordingly, Moyale was established as garrison towns to serve different purposes at crossing post of the Ethiopia-Kenya borders.

Initially, for post independence border wars between Ethiopia and Somalia, and similar territorial disputes between Somalia and Kenya and recently in relation to Islamic group al Shabab (accused of terror attacks), both Ethiopia and Kenya stationed their army in this borderland. Indeed, the border town of Moyale hosts the biggest army base and complex security

structures in Southern Ethiopia. In that sense, though geographically margin, this borderland has always been the centre of complex bureaucracies.

The Position of Somalia

As indicated above, a particular problem between Somalia and both Ethiopia and Kenya was that part of post-independence Somali nationalism that focused on the idea of a 'Greater Somalia'. This was a notion aimed at unifying all Somali-inhabited territories of Northeast Africa that had been divided as a result of colonialism. The notion of 'Greater Somalia' thus posed that these Somali dominated areas should be included into a unified national state of Somalia. The Somali irredentism movement disregarded state borders and glorified cultural uniqueness of the widely dispersed Somali groups across the Horn of Africa. Obviously, this grand project of creating a united Republic of Somalia collided directly with the status of the neighbouring states as independent nation states, and was considered with great hostility in both Ethiopia and Kenya. The conflict then developed along the following lines. While Ethiopia and Kenya strongly rejected the Somali move and sought to maintain the colonial territorial borders as defining their nations, the Somali tried to remove the same borders as they considered them as dividing the Somali nation (see also Fekadu 2012). This growing Somali irredentism can be illustrated by the following statement of the first Somali Prime Minister. In his introductory book published by his government, this is what the Prime Minister noted:

> Our misfortune is that our neighbouring countries, with whom, like the rest of Africa, we seek to promote constructive and harmonious relations, are not our neighbours. Our neighbours are our Somali kinsmen whose citizenship has been falsified by indiscriminate boundary 'arrangements'. They have to move across artificial frontiers to their pasturelands. They occupy the same terrain and pursue the same pastoral economy as ourselves. We speak the same language. We share the same creed, the same culture, and the same traditions. How can we regard our brothers as foreigners? (GSR 1962: vi).

Ethiopia and Kenya on one side and Somalia on the other side had, however, very different concept of "border" and of course "nationhood". The forceful implementation of these 'competing national missions' (Clapham 1996: 241) led Ethiopia and Somalia to fight one of the bloodiest wars in the Horn of Africa in the late 1970s.

The Kenyan Side – The Flip-Side of Ethiopian Moyale?

The introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya in 1992 and the 2010 constitutional reforms thereafter contributed to the escalation of ethnic-based conflicts in Kenyan Moyale, the Moyale town that is placed on the Kenyan side of the border with Ethiopia. Reforms made under the 2010

Kenyan constitution established 47 counties along ethnic lines and devolved power to the county and district governorships. Competing inter-ethnic claims and counter-claims of controlling administrative units, ethnic territory and contested boundaries were taken as prime political agenda by candidates to rally support and secure victory during the Kenyan general election. The rationale for ethno-political groups to demand control over administrative structures and boundaries during election is to benefit from the devolution of power that bring resources in the form of political power, economy, infrastructure and provision of basic services. The fact that the same groups of Borana, Garri and Gabra compete on the Kenyan side intensifies the problem. Regardless of the international border, these groups essentially share common ecological niches, livelihood systems and migratory patterns. As a result, the conflicts have always tended to have spill over effects; these pastoral groups are often drawn into violence in alliance/solidarity with affected fellow clansmen on either side of the common border (Ayalew 2016).

Since 2011, the frequency of conflict and the number of human loss has increased and it reached its peak in 2012 and 2013. The last and the most violent conflict took place in December 2013 when the entire Kenyan-Moyale was a battleground as the Gabra fought Borana, and the Garri joined the conflict in support of the Gabra. At the climax of the war, well-armed Borana and Gabra militias from Ethiopia crossed the porous border to support their kin fighting on the Kenyan side[35]. The Kenyan security forces were reportedly outnumbered and outgunned. According to Kenya Red-Cross Society's report, 580 houses were set on fire and more than 57,000 people fled the war. Most of them took refuge in the Ethiopian Moyale, mostly among their kin. The magnitude of the conflict and the intensity of animosity between the groups have significantly increased over the years and that has, in turn, affected the free movement of people and therefore their livelihoods. On the 11 December 2013, IRIN reported the following from Moyale that summarizes the discussion:

> The violence, which has broken out intermittently since late 2011, has paralyzed business and transport activities. Abdi Wario, a Moyale trader, spoke of the hardships businesspeople are undergoing. "No vehicle has left Moyale for a week now. Some retail traders have nothing to sell, in my case; I have a lot of goods to sell but no buyers" (IRIN, 11 December, 2013).

This intensive identity politics and contestation over ethnic territory has produced consequences that we see both at the local level of Moyale Town in Ethiopia, but also consequences that indicate a reorganization of communities along the border, characterized by the emergence of new

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[35] This is not the first of its kind. Cross border support for the kin on the other side of the border is a well developed practice. They support each other during wars, elections, drought etc (see Fekadu 2010).

actors. The various factors that feed into the situation are many. The effects of chronic droughts produced life-threatening dangers to the pastoralists, resulting in an increasing number of people to drop out of the pastoral livelihood system. Former pastoralists who were thus sloughed off from pastoral practices have turned themselves into townspeople. Moving to surrounding urban areas such as Moyale, they have been contributing not only to changes in the local demographics, but they have also been engaged in illicit activities depending on local opportunities because of their poverty (Ayalew 2016). Into this local situation, we see a larger problem field emerging in which the area see the influx of an increasing number of weapons, a situation that is linked to state failures in Somalia and South Sudan. The problem of availability of weapons as well as the wider political problems are related to the presence of armed opposition groups such as the OLF and terrorist activities by Al shabab, Alitahid al Islamia and the like (Tesfaye 2015). As a whole, all this is prone to make the border areas in and around Moyale into volatile spaces in which violent conflicts may occur all the time. Such conflicts, which may be ignited by very local conflicts can easily get out of hand and spread to wider regions. As shown above, these local conflicts can affect different states and thus produce processes of destabilization within larger regions.

A New Hope? Moyale as the "Dubai of Africa"

Is there a way out of the problematic situations described above? What we see is that the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments have chosen to stick to a rather conventional and simplistic explanation of the state of affairs, in that underdevelopment of infrastructure and poverty are seen as causes of these conflicts around the border. In 2015, they thus initiated a cross-border development program called, *From Barriers to Bridges: Transformation of the Kenya-Ethiopia Border Region.* Its stated objective is "to foster peace and sustainable development in the cross-border area"[36]. In December 2015, the Kenyan President and the Ethiopian Prime Minister met in Moyale and declared the launch of the UNDP and EU-funded program[37]. In his speech during this visit in Moyale, President Kenyatta expressed his hope by saying, "The program will see Moyale being turned into the Dubai of Africa".

A highway from Addis Ababa to Nairobi is also nearing its completion. The Chinese and the Indians are constructing the roads. Kenya has also initiated a new transportation corridor known as LAMPSET[38] (Lamu Port-

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[36] http://www.ipsnews.net/2017/03/from-barriers-to-bridges-transformation-of-the-kenya-ethiopia-border-region/

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] In its initial plan the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor project would be transformative, enormously expensive, and very invasive, linking a major new port development on Kenya's Indian Ocean to South Sudan and Ethiopia with [mostly parallel]…oil pipeline, railway and highway. Current circumstances make it unlikely that the pipeline will reach South Sudan or that the railway will be completed within this decade' (Browne, 2015:5).

South Sudan-Ethiopia Transportation) Corridor that would pass through Moyale. The heads of the states of Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan launched its inauguration in March 2012, at the site of the project's proposed port, Kililana, Lamu County, Kenya. This megaproject is seen as a model for an infrastructural revitalization in Africa in general and East Africa in particular, with the sources of international investment generated from both the east and west. The corridors opened up through this grand project are envisioned to offer new economic opportunities in terms of employment and job creation by private entrepreneurs.

However, without deeming the development initiative unimportant, the conflict in the Ethiopia-Kenya borderlands derives from larger and more complicated reasons than poverty and infrastructural underdevelopment. Changing the current situation demands both governments and other stakeholders to address the national policies the respective governments that have politically and economically marginalized the population, and turned the borderland into security concern. Therefore, besides positive optimism, there is a growing fear that the new policies of neo-liberal economic development may affect land use system, pastoral livelihoods and thereby create a worsening of local tensions in the already conflict-prone areas of the three countries (Browne, 2015). The development initiative could end up causing more conflicts. In fact, attempts to control the areas through which the LAPPSET corridor would pass, as a potential business opportunity, has already started to cause violent conflicts.

Conclusion: the Affordances of the Border

In this chapter, we have discussed disputes over domestic Ethiopian territory around the borders of the Oromia and Somali domestically, and the Ethiopia-Kenya international border, with the Somali border always being part of the problem. These protracted conflicts were not only territorial but they are also linked to social and symbolic boundaries, ethnic identity and nation building. We have also discussed how Moyale is becoming an outlet for rebels or other political dissidents. Overall, a reasonable conclusion could be that the area is desperately entangled in conflicts with guerilla warfare, with illegal smuggling of goods, with easy access to firearms and so on.

But, there is also an alternative side which brings us back to the perspectives of Feyissa and Hoehne presented at the beginning of our discussion in this work. We also see Moyale as an area in which we can see the presence of the four possible scenarios for how borders might play into local situations among border populations. Even within the constraints we have discussed above, cross-border interactions take place everyday. For instance, in Moyale many hundreds of school children cross everyday to attend Kenyan schools. Thousands have double identity cards to use alternative opportunity structures on both sides of the border. Kin across the border support each other during droughts and shortages of food; they

support each other during elections and they help each other during wars (see Fekadu 2010).

In other words, borders seem to be less problematic at the local level than at the state or sub-state levels. Indeed, in peace times, informal cross-border trade takes place along the border between the two countries, with significant quantities of goods flowing in and out with great ease. In the process, the Borana, Gabra, Garri and Burji (a minority business community), are major actors. A large number of these are fully engaged in such business, having abandoned the pursuit of cattle herding. In Moyale, cross-border trade plays crucial economic and social roles. It is a critical source of livelihood for the inhabitants of the town as well as the surrounding pastoralists (see also Mahmoud, 2010; Ashreka 2016). For an outsider arriving in Moyale during a peaceful period, what would be most striking are the amount of imported goods, new and second hand, and the ease with which such items cross the border between the two countries.

This leaves us at a concluding point that borders can be problems as well as opportunities, violent as well as peaceful. The direction of things is, as we have demonstrated in our arguments, complex and affected by many factors at different levels of scale. What brings hope is that the most negative scenarios can be avoided, and that both peace and development are possible opportunities. Where we are heading is dependent on the wisdom of the leaders in the countries involved. And a significant part of that wisdom is a willingness to listen to the voices of the borderlanders in the respective areas we have discussed.

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Chapter 12

Borders and Boundaries: Possibilities and Challenges along Sudan and South Sudan Borders

Munzoul Assal

Introduction

Almost eight years after South Sudan got its independence, the border with Sudan has not been demarcated, and many contested areas of the border were not resolved despite many agreements signed by the two countries. The border region is endowed with resources- oil, minerals, and grazing resources. The same region has also been the location of proxy wars where the Sudan government has long supported and armed militias (de Waal 1993). Clashes in the now border areas between the two countries have destabilized relations between communities that have long coexisted. Due to the secession of South Sudan, borderlands were transformed from zones of encounter to zones of division (Craze 2013), although there are possibilities reciprocal and peaceful coexistence as this chapter shows. This division also points back to problems that were built into The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the Sudan Government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The agreement put an end to the longest civil war in Africa and also allowed the people of South Sudan to exercise the right of self-determination that culminated in an overwhelming vote for secession of South Sudan, which was officially recognized in July 2011. South Sudan has since then been an independent country. But the model on which the CPA was built did not aim for this secession, on the countrary, it envisaged a peaceful, prosperous and united Sudan, after an interim period of six years (2005-2011). Peace and unity in Sudan was thus supposed to be the agenda of the two signatories of the CPA during the interim period. But the rhetoric about an attractive unity in the CPA turned out to be a mere lip service, with the important result that the CPA remained silent about how the secession that was in the making could be made peaceful. The results of the referendum sparked emotional reactions: people in South Sudan were euphoric about the results. In Sudan, emotions were mixed; with some people jubilant to the extent of killing bulls in expression of joy that Sudan had finally got rid of the South, while others, those who believed in Johan Garang's vision of a new Sudan were saddened by the referendum results. In all cases, nonetheless, a new country came into existence; an international border was created and neither of the two countries can fold its borders and walk away.

In hindsight, then, we see that the CPA had many shortcomings and pitfalls, and the events that unfolded after the secession have also shown that the ruling elites in Sudan and South Sudan were not prepared to make

secession neither attractive nor peaceful. But this paper is not about crying over the spilt milk. It focuses on one of the key issues neglected by the CPA mentioned above, the question of borders of the two Sudans. But the focus of this paper is not on the technical aspects of borders. It is about processes in the borderlands between the two countries. Borders entail possibilities and challenges for the two countries but also, more so, to the communities living on either side of the borders. The border issue is of course far more complex than any simple technical demarcation of territories (Concordis International 2010). One important factor that is required in order to have peaceful coexistence between communities across the border is a political commitment for peace and good neighborliness at the state level. This is particularly important on this particular border, as, according to Concordis International report on Sudan (ibid, p. 9):

> The idea of 'separation' is unfamiliar within populations who have interacted for centuries in the absence of substantial local administrative or border governance. Pastoralist livelihoods and increasingly consumer societies depend upon a soft border to allow freedom of movement of peoples and goods.

It goes without saying that borders that guarantee this are needed. This is all the more needed for the two Sudans where the CPA ended up in transforming boundaries into borders (Johnson 2010).

In this paper I want to argue that such an open border situation can be pssible and I put focus on the positive possibilities and challenges along the border of the two Sudans. I argue that despite ongoing wars in the two countries, possibilities for peaceful coexistence between communities along the border abound, as some reports have shown (cf. Concordis International 2010). But I also caution that there are challenges, which need to be mitigated.

But first, since there is some lack of clarity in academic discussions on borders and borderlands when it comes to terminologies, I start with a conceptual discussion that focuses on the delineation of 'borders' and 'boundaries.' A conceptual clarification is needed, especially as my approach is anthropological and is foused on the dynamics at community levels, but without totally neglecting macro-level processes that affect micro ones. After this I move to discuss possibilities and challenges along the border of the two countries.

Borders and Boundaries: Some Conceptual Notes

In recent years, a considerable interest at academic levels has been shown in borders, boundaries, frontiers and margins. More specifically, anthropological research focuses on borderlands, which are seen as places demarcated and defined by state-designed boundaries (Chan and Womack 2016: 95). In this paper, I distinguish borders from boundaries. Borders are spatial boundaries of a nation-state, while boundaries are lines that divide entities. Van Assche et al (2008: 116) distinguished between three main

types of boundaries: spatial boundaries, social boundaries, and conceptual boundaries, where "social boundaries delineate and separate social groups, spatial boundaries mark the end of spatial entities (with or without political relevance), conceptual boundaries form concepts." Since my approach is anthropological, I focus more on boundaries.

Boundaries are first and foremost conceptual in that they are drawn in people's minds in the first instance. The Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth saw different regimes of boundaries as part of a process of definition and also part of a need for maintaining a distance- a boundary (Barth 1969). People maintain boundaries and make them relevant time and time again. This means that boundaries are lines, which are made by people, and over which they communicate, and it goes without saying that such communication takes different forms and without communication, boundaries do not function. In other words, it is the dynamics of 'us' and 'them' that makes boundaries relevant. There are of course mechanisms of boundary construction and this is the case with social groups, political entities, and even academic disciplines.

Barth (2000) also argues that boundaries can be dividers, but also connectors. Looking at boundaries as such allows us to acknowledge that boundaries are non-linear, which brings us to the notion of frontiers (Donnan and Wilson 1994), ethnic groups straddle state borders, and economic interests and networks do not recognize boundaries. This situation led scholars (Van Assche 2004) to embrace notions of boundary zones and frontiers, which can be sites of exclusion but also places of hybridization and innovation. In the case of the nation-state, the force of the centre will be clearly felt at the border, while on both sides of the border, connected margins can exist, escaping innovations that affected the centre long before, leaving room for other innovations, difficult to explain in the discursive environments of the centre. The tendency now is to stress the productive functions of boundaries and to celebrate the hybrid cultures and identities of border zones. The concept of tamazuj (tantamount to hybridization) is embraced in the case of the two Sudans; for border communities (Saaeed 2010). The idea of *tamazuj* in the border zone of the two Sudan has been discussed at the Sudanese Program Conference at St. Antony's College Oxford in May 2015 where a number of papers were presented and discussed. Without going into details, suffice it to note here that tamazuj is indeed a framework for peaceful coexistence and integration along the borders of Sudan and South Sudan.

Boundaries mark difference and delineate entities and in this sense they create identities. Regardless of their types, boundaries have history and those boundaries with histories tend to persist. The situation of Abyei (Johson 2010) is a case in point. And here my focus is on social boundaries, where people use objects, ideas or names to mark their identity and difference from others. At times people over communicate difference while at others they do the opposite. Oftentimes boundaries are dormant until

something drastic happens, or until some history becomes relevant in a given situation. The secession of South Sudan was one drastic event that reinforced social, spatial and conceptual boundaries; it reinforced 'us' and 'them' (Eriksen 1993).

Social anthropologists are interested in looking at borderlands because these are the areas where marginalized and minority groups are found, intriguing cross-border state relations and human interactions and mixed and blurred identities (Chan and Womack 2016). Through studying borderlands, anthropologists provide rich ethnographies and interesting stories of alternative voices and views of state relations, history and culture that do not resonate with what the state wants (Chang 2014, Harris 2013, Manger 2015).

Looking at the macro level, it is true that borders, defined earlier, define and delimit state power and sovereignty; they at the same time challenge and negotiate state power. Horstmann and Wadley (2006) and Walker (1999), among other scholars, argue that borders and boundaries are often imagined as hard and enclosing, yet many of them are in reality porous. People at the border cross such borders constantly. They use their skills to challenge the control exerted by state agents.

Finally, borderlands are places of contact. For Chan and Womack (2016: 96):

> ….its realities on the ground are not simply outcomes of national policies on each side, but instead creatively interact with opportunities and constraints. Borderland communities are often skillful at appropriating and posing canny challenges to state authorities and policies. Whether viewed from the perspective of a single border trader or an entire bi-national region, they are lively, fluid places.

While contingent on their national definitions, the identities of- and within-borderlands shape themselves as they navigate between the opportunities opened by contact and the constraints of their situation (Donnan and Wilson 1999). For Chan (2013), border regions often form a frontier thermometer that detects changing inter-state relations.

The foregoing conceptual discussion was meant to provide some clarity with regard to borders and boundaries and provide a basis to the forthcoming discussion about possibilities and challenges at the Sudan-South Sudan borders. In talking about possibilities and challenges along the borders, I made use of available material on the subject (cf. Saaeed 2010, Johnson 2010, Concordis International 2010) as well as my involvement in the Borderland project of which this publication is a result.

Challenges and Possibilities along Sudan-South Sudan Border

Discussions of the border between Sudan and South Sudan focused on the question of where the boundary line is to be drawn. An exception to this,

and an important contribution, is Douglas Johnson's (2010) When Boundaries Become Borders, in which the author examines a different, but equally important issue: the potential impact of the new boundary on the peoples of the borderlands and political developments at the local level. In a comprehensive survey of archival sources and current research, Johnson summarizes the history and present situation of the communities each side of the north-south boundary. Johnson examines the situation of the key communities that coexist along north-south boundary, and also communities along international borders with Central Republic of Africa and Congo, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. While the report was published before the referendum in 2011, some of the negative implications the author discussed have indeed occurred. For instance, inhabitants of borderlands experienced a change of status as a result of secession of South Sudan and, indeed, north-south boundaries became borders.In a similar, but more comprehensive manner, Concordis International (2010) has produced a rich report: *More than a Line: Sudan's North-South Border*, which is a comprehensive analysis of drivers of conflict and its mitigation in nine areas (five in the north and four in the south). Like Johnson's (2010), Concordis report was published before South Sudan referendum, but its findings and conclusions are pertinent in as much as conflict drivers are concerned. Conflict along the then boundaries was already intensive and Concordis report has shown that the CPA and the forthcoming referendum have intensified local and national conflict over land along the north-south border. The report (ibid, p. 11) noted that traditional mechanisms for negotiating relationships over land use are under stress. The cumulative grievances of unresolved disputes represent a significant challenge to resolving current local disagreements. Nuer and Dinka communities in Mayom and Abyei said that the situation had gone 'beyond traditional cattle raiding' and questioned whether local mechanisms could control volatile elements. However, traditional mechanisms are fruitful elsewhere. For example, Rizeigat, Misseriya and Malual Dinka undertook peace conferences in 2008 and 2009 which have done much to re-establish working relationships. Migrations between White Nile and Upper Nile are also based on ad hoc but functional grazing agreements made between a successful combination of traditional chiefs and administrators. The Concordis report alluded to the fact that on both sides of the disputed line, border populations lack basic services, schools, infrastructure and security. Consequent perceptions of marginalization combine with a militarized culture, the availability of arms and a history of shifting alliances to generate threats to stability, in particular in the Southern Kordofan/Abyei/Unity triangle. Communities and local leaders are aware that Sudan's wealth derives largely from resources in their areas and they expected the CPA to deliver development and opportunities. These expectations have not been met during the interim period. The consequence is heightened resentment towards Khartoum and Juba as well as towards their local wartime adversaries whom they perceive to be gaining greater benefits from the peace than themselves. Moving beyond the current

fixation on "state construction," Chris Vaughan et al's (2013) edited volume explored regulatory authority in South Sudan's borderlands from both contemporary and historical perspectives. The contributions in the volume show how emerging governance practices challenge the bounded categorizations of "state" and "non-state." One of the contributors to the volume, Eddie Thomas, addressed the border between Bahr el-Ghazal and South Darfur. Thomas challenges the notion that borders simply create opportunities for borderlands. He also challenges the notion that state formation is a locally negotiated process. According to Thomas, Western Bahr el-Ghazal has been a site of much overt violence and coercion between state and society. For Thomas, the periphery remains a place of violence, marginalization and exploitation. Thomas looked at different historical periods, e.g. Darfur Sultanates, the Egyptians, the Mahadist State and the British colonial government to show the capacities of the state to create boundaries that create differences and divisions, and entrench inequalities between and among borderlands societies. People resist this by moving across borders but more often the state imposed borders define group identities and status in ways that facilitates the state's exercise of coercive power.

Some Optimism

The above contributions lean towards a pessimistic view of the borderlands along Sudan-South Sudan border; no doubt with good reasons. But perhaps it might be helpful to look at the borderlands as a frontier or a belt (Saaeed 2010). In a detailed report by Abdalbasit Saaeed (2010), the Sudan-South Sudan borderline was conceptualized as "a green belt" with significant potential not only for border communities but also for the well being of Sudan and South Sudan. It is important to highlight some of Saaeed pertinent points as they open some positive avenues for coexistence at local and national levels.

The borderline belt has an estimated length of 1936 kilometers. It also takes the shape of a rectangle and covers three latitude circles (9:30 – 12:30). An estimated 1355 kilometers (70%) of this border lies in Southern Darfur and Southern Kurdufan States. This sector of the borderline belt comprises the west-central hinterland of the White Nile River. The eastern hinterland of the White Nile River, along the borderline belt, is comprised of White Nile State, Sinnar State and Blue Nile State. The borderline belt has an estimated land area of 436,000 km2, equivalent to 20% of the total area of Sudan. The borderline states are home for 13 million people, 33% of the total population of Sudan. Average geographic population density is 28 persons per km2, almost double the national average of 15 persons per km2, according to 2008 census. It encompasses ten states of the country on both sides of the border separating North Sudan from South Sudan.

According to 2008 census, the five states to the north of the borderline are home for some 8 million residents - equivalent to the whole population of South Sudan. Their number is double the population of the four states that

face them across the border in the South. The five borderline states of South Sudan contain an estimated 50% of the total population of South Sudan. In terms of resource endowments, the borderline belt encompasses ten borderline states, facing each other with 13 million people, all active oil production in Sudan today, the greater part (80%) of the land area covered by semi-mechanized farming, over 66% of the national livestock herd during the dry season as well as majority of wildlife and game reserves. Extensive mineral resources include gold in Kurmuk in the Blue Nile State, oil, natural gas, iron-ore and bauxite in Southwest Kordufan (inhabited by Misiriya and Ngok-Dinka agro-pastoralists), as well as Uranium, gold and copper in Hufrat-en-Nahas in South Darfur State. Overall, some 80% of Sudan's population is said be dependent on direct use of natural resources, mostly through the production, processing and marketing of crop and livestock products, and other natural products from economical trees such as Gum Arabic from *hashab* tree gardens, ziziphus *nabag*, Balanites Egytiaca *hijleej*, *Baobab tabaldi* and wild-cereals.In terms of development potential, the borderline belt has annual average seasonal - June-October - rainfall in the range of 400mm to 800 mm. In terms of surface resources, the belt is home for savanna grasslands, poor/rich, and forest cover.

1. The ten borderline states house close to 70 percent of the national livestock herd of the Sudan, particularly during the lengthy dry season that extends to seven months Mid-November to Mid-June each year.

2. The borderline belt is home for all wildlife and game reserves of Sudan. It is suitable habitat for wildlife, forests and economical trees, as well as fertile land for agricultural production and pasture for livestock migrating from North to South across borderline belt in dry season.

3. The borderline belt enjoys varied soil types, and fertile alluvium soils suitable for many crops, including cereal crops (sorghum and millet) and 'oil seeds' as cash crops (sesame, groundnuts, as well as watermelon seeds and sunflower).

4. Inland perennial water bodies are also encompassed by the borderline belt, including Lake Abyad and Lake Kailak in Southern Kurdufan, as well as Lake Kundi and Lake Kalaka Natural Depressions in Southern Darfur.

Like Concordis International's (2010) report, Saaeed also stressed the fact that despite the rich potential of the borderline belt, living conditions of the communities along the border are difficult often leaving them as marginal areas. Still the border areas play important roles in a number of ways.

One important aspect that must not be overlooked while dealing with borderlands is the question of governance and how the borer areas, in spite of their alleged marginality can affect developments in important ways. For instance, while government authorities can be seen as unitary, governance involves different levels and different venues of authority and requires interaction with local population. This is also true for borderland

governance, and in this case we see what kind of agency the borderland population might have. For instance, what happened in the borderlands of Sudan and South Sudan after the secession of South Sudan was that the Sudan government attempted to seal off the border. But in spite of the government's pledge of "shoot to kill," smuggling of goods across the border never stopped. But smuggling is only one example. Along the Sudan-South Sudan borders there are different forms of peaceful exchanges that include trade, marriage and migration. This means that people along the border have a myriad of relations and create their own social spaces. In this sense, we need to move beyond looking at top-down policies, border control regimes, and political discourses around these issues and start to include the agency of local people. We need to emphasize how different actors at the Sudan-South Sudan border interact with each other. By this we will see that the frequent interaction people are engaged in at the Sudan-South Sudan border brings about a familiarity of interchangeable identities and mixed ways of life. Which is not to say that developments are always peaceful. Intensive interactions may indeed also lead to conflicts. But the interaction goes on.

What is problematic with the secession process and the establishment of the two countries of Sudan and South Sudan is that this crossing of borders and the ongoing interaction becomes further complicated by claims of sovereignty of the involved states. Elsewhere (Assal 2014, 2019), I have discussed the implication of secession on citizenship and on groups that traverse Sudan-South Sudan borders. There are groups that actively conduct border crossing (for family reasons or trade) and create their own social space. Macro legal frameworks may not cater for the development of spaces based on cross-borer interaction due to kinship and marriage ties, trading links or pastoral movements. It is here that the dynamism and opportunities of the borderlands come to represent challenges to the nation states involved.

Conclusions

In conclusion then, Sudan and South Sudan will continue to be neighbours and they should be viable countries living side by side in mutual peace. Borderlands or what Saaeed (2010) calls borderline belts provide an opportunity for peaceful coexistence and prosperity for the two Sudans. But for this to be realized, the two countries need to come to terms with their own internal problems that include corruption and civil wars. A country that is at war with itself cannot be in peace with its neighbours. A further requirement, upon attaining internal peace, is to have the political will and implement the 'framework agreements' signed by the two countries in 2012. These agreements allow for, among other things, free movement of people between the two countries. Given the dynamics and opportunities along the borderline belt, guaranteeing free movement will no doubt entrench peace and may eventually remove long and historically entrenched tensions and marginalization experienced by borderlands populations.

But the obstacles are many. In December 2013, civil war broke in South Sudan with much devastation in the country and hundreds thousands South Sudanese crossed the border to Sudan as refugees. The war raged for five years; with the African Union failing to stop it. It was only in 2018 that Sudan, ironically, succeeded in brokering an agreement between South Sudanese antagonists. The civil war in South, along with the presence of armed rebellion in Sudan in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan- both areas bordering Sudan, inflict suffering on communities along the border.

And, just as arrangements for the implementation of the peace agreement were underway, a dramatic change took place in Sudan. In December 2018 riots started in Sudan and continued for four months. In 11 April 2019, president Omer Al-Bashir was forced to step down; after thirty years in power. The removal of Al-Bashir from power came as a result of a sit-in of hundred thousands Sudanese at the army headquarters in Khartoum. A military council was established and is negotiating with the leaders of the riots on ways to transfer power to a civilian government. It is too early to predict the implication of the change in Sudan on Sudan- South Sudan relations given that it was under Al-Bashir's rule that secession took place. But it is likely that relation-ships between the two countries become better if the transition to democracy in Sudan goes smoothly.

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Chapter 13

Those Who Ignore Borders – the Rashaida in Sudan

Rawan Hanafi Abdalla Mohammed

Introduction

Borders, boundaries, and borderlands constitute multiple possibilities as well as obstacles, and dealing with borders is a skill that certain groups command in better ways than others. The Rashaida, our group of concern in this paper is a perfect example of a group that emerges as "experts" in border crossings, and hence also can benefit from operating in different countries. As with all adaptive competences, the Rashaida's skills in dealing with borders is developed over long historical periods, as a consequence of the various challenges the group was facing and the ways it solved those challenges at different times. This paper focuses primarily on the Rashaida in Sudan, it seeks to discuss both the evolving historical circumstances that brought the group to Sudan, and also to discuss the various ways by which they have solved different types of challenges in Sudan. Throughout this history of adaptation, the crossing of borders has remained important.

The Rashaida

The Rashaida are a group of Arabic speaking nomads, who claim to descend from the famous group Ghatfan. They are the latest Arabic group that migrated from the area of the Arabian Peninsula to Sudan and elsewhere and the only migrants known to be accompanied by women in their migration journey. It is agreed upon that the Rashaida's original homeland is the Arabian Peninsula. All of my Rashaida informants whom I met in Kassala, Kashm Algerba and Atbara, along with those of the Red Sea areas, agreed on the Arabian Peninsula as their original homeland.

The Rashaida is a group that up until recently did not recognize borders. This is evident in their former leader's Sheikh Nafaa's famous saying "*Nhna Bldna Alsahab O Almatar*; "our country is the clouds and the rain". This causes extreme difficulty in precisely locating their whereabouts geographically. However through my informants and other references I was able to conclude the following; the Rashaida can be found now mainly in; Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Palestine, Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, and Sudan. But, who are they really?

Defining the Rashaida's Historical Identity and Movements

There are various sources and ample debates not only over the Rashaida's origin but also on the group's name itself. The group is known by two names; Zebydyah and Rashaida. Hassan (1975) points out that the reason

behind the mystery, and controversy surrounding the Rashaida's origin is due to several factors: First of all is the matter of the double name, the most common name "Rashaida" and the less known "Zebydyah". The second name "Zebydyah" is drawn from the name of the Islamic sultan Haroun Alrasheid's wife Zubayda. A small number of the Rashaida believe that they are descendants of Haroun Alrashied and his wife Zubayda; therefore, they are named Zebydyah naturally. According to Mac Michael, (2012), the Rashaida and the Zebydyah are two different groups, and that the latter was named after the city of Zebid in Yemen and is a branch of the Hejaz group Bani-Harb. It is important to note that most of the Rashaida I met in various localities and from various branches deny both possibilities. Therefore they refuse to use the name Zebydyah about themselves. As a way of combating the dual name Sheikh Mubarak Abdallah, one of the prominent Rashaida leaders, issued a fine for any member of his group caught introducing himself as Zebydyah. In spite of both names being applied there is no doubt that the group is most widely known as Rashaida.

The strongest and most agreed upon reason behind the Rashaida's migration to Sudan is to be found in economic problems. Members of the community refer to such causes, as do most of the historical sources. Prior to their migration to Sudan and elsewhere, economic life in the Arabian Peninsula became difficult and people lost their herds. My informants stated that their ancestors came to Sudan looking for better pastures due to the droughts that occurred in their homeland, thus resulting in huge animal losses. Some mentioned that after the loss of their animals some of the Rashaida in the Arabian Peninsula were forced to become water sellers in Jeddah. It was in Jeddah, the story goes, that they heard about the rich pastures in Sudan from the Sudanese men working in the boat business there. After that, they sent scouts to validate the information, before migrating with what was left of their animals and their families.

The timing of this move varies but in general Mac Michael (2012) indicates the 1840s as a time when some Rashaida branches settled in the area between Tokar and the Eritrean -Sudanese border, while others headed west. Young (1987) estimated the Rashaida migration to Sudan to take place in the 1860s. However, my informants argued that there were several waves of Rashaida migrations to Sudan and that they arrived via different entry points. Even if the exact dates are uncertain it is most likely that the migration took pace in stages. And it is also likely that the Rashaida did what they always used to do while arriving in a new area – they would arrive to a certain place, and then send scouts to check other possible areas nearby before bringing the rest of the goup.

The Rashaida branches in Sudan believe that they share blood and traditions with other Rashaida groups living elsewhere. They mention especially other Rashaida in the Gulf areas, in Kuwait and Saudi-Arabia, and also those in Eritrea. Young (1987) modifies this by pointing out that even though the Rashaida group claim to have originated from Hejaz, and despite the fact

that there are indeed a number of small nomadic groups living in the vicinity of Mecca who today call themselves Rashaida, this alone is not proof of any prior historical connection. In fact, there are at least a dozen small communities with the same name scattered along a huge area that begins near Mecca, continues northwards along the Red Sea coast, curves northeast through Jordan and northern Saudi -Arabia and ends in Kuwait. In Jordan alone there are four distinct groups called Rashaida, although they do not claim a common historical origin or a common descent like the Rashaida of Sudan. However, they do claim to have originated in Hejaz.

The strongest support for the Rashaida's claimed descent lies in their shared cultural and social features. This is quite clear in terms of language as they speak the same dialect as groups around Mecca. Another supporting feature is their clothing style. From the time of their arrival to Sudan until now Rashaida women cover their faces from the nose down with a special style of fabric called *Burga* or *Gena'a*. In addition the men's "*Jalabya*" the traditional men's dress, is different from the one worn by Sudanese men. Many Rashaida also add the known head garment "*Shimag*" worn by men in the Gulf to their costumes, especially in occasions and celebrations.

But again Young (1987) issues a warning. He argues that the names of the Rashaida's three main branches of social organization, "Zunaymat, Baratech, Barasaa" are not known in the Hejaz. Thus, it seems uncertain whether the Rashaida were a single unified group before their migration to Sudan, I agree with Young that it is possible that a number of separate groups with no close relations migrated to Sudan at the same period, and only later started to call themselves Rashaida. Such a unification might have helped them penetrate the coastal territories of Eastern Sudan for example and resist the counter-attacks of the indigenous Beja groups of the area.

Rashaida in Sudan

In Sudan, the Rashaida are scattered and spread in the Eastern Region east of Atbara River. Their localities start in the north from Seddon and Shalaten up to Gedaref and the Ethiopian Sudanese borders. After the start of the Sudanese-Egyptian dispute over Halaib, grazing became hard for the Rashaida of Halaib. Up to recently the Rashaida of Halaib were deprived of citizenship rights, unlike other nomads in the area they lacked basic rights like "education, settlement, etc. but never the less the rest of them in Egypt possess full citizenship rights.

Even though the fact that the Rashaida are widespread all over the eastern region, Kassala represents the center for the Rashaida group; precisely Abu-Talha and Mastoura villages, where the Rashaida's administration was established in the late nineties in what's known now as west Kassala rural council.

In addition, it is useful to note that although the Rashaida are centered in eastern Sudan, sheik Alweikh of the Zulymat mentioned that his branch has sub-branches in the area of Wadi Salih and Kutum in Northern Darfur. It is

estimated that the Rashaida sub-branches in western Sudan migrated from Barber to West Sudan in approximately 1846 and that they were approximately 2000 families. There are also Rashaida in northern Chad and they intermarried especially with Zaghawa groups.

The Rashaida, like all the other pastoralists in the region, are members of a group whose identity and membership is based on an ideology of patrilineal descent. There is also a division within the tribe between the status of "free" and "slave". However, the lines between slave descendants and "free Rashaida" were not visible, especially to strangers. The Rashaida's three branches are also linked to a number of subgroups who are thought to be allies and not "true Rashaida ". Such groups accompanied the Rashaida in their migration to Sudan and are currently under the administration of the Zulymat sub-branch.

Before we can discuss the contemporary adaptive strategies employed by the Rashaida and how the border factor played a significant role in their economic and political empowerment, we need to describe the two sides of their surrounding environment; that is social and ecological conditions.

The Rashaida in Kassala

Kassala state is one of three states; with the other two Gedaref and Red Sea states that form the Eastern Region of Sudan. It constitutes 330,860 km2 or 13 % of the country's total area. Kassala state lies between 34-40 and 37 E and 14-45 and 17-40 N, with a total area of 42,330 km^2. It borders Eritrea from the east, Gedaref from the south, the Red Sea state from the north, and Khartoum and Nile River state from the west. Kassala's climate is semi-arid and arid, with annual rainfall ranging between 150 - 300 mm. Heavy rains fall in the southern part of the state and allows for mechanized farming. However, rainfall in the northern parts of Kassala state dwindles to 150 mm per annum and makes rain-fed agriculture difficult and unsustainable.

Environmental degradation in the south and rapid growth of mesquite tree cover further undermines the land resources available to rural producers. Of the total area of the state, there are about 2.8 million acres of arable land and 6 million acres of grazing lands. The annual average area under cropping is about 1.125 million acres. Animal resources are estimated to be around 650,000 cattle, 1,300,000 sheep, 1,140,000 goats and about 600,000 camels. The previously mentioned huge natural resources had been exposed to many shocks and disasters during the last century, due to several successive droughts between the years 1890 and 1969 and then things got worse starting from 1972 until 2000. (Ahmed & Manger, 2009)

Earlier the Rashaida had no access to land, as they were and still are considered a "*Dar*-less" group, mening "homeless" and seen as a "visting group" in the Eastern Sudan region. However, they adapted to their situation through agreements with the region's indigenous groups, first the

Beja and later on by forming friendships with branches of the indigenous Shukriyya group.

 In addition, they gained access to the border grazing areas with the aid of their kinship ties to Rashaida on the other side of the border. Therefore, the Rashaida have multiple places to graze from and practice their fully nomadic life. The most important grazing grounds for the Rashaida in Kassala however was and still is the Butana area. Geographically the term Butana refers to the whole area between the main Nile, the Blue Nile, Atbara River, and the Ethiopian borders.

Locally the term Butana refers to the low and flat stretch of land lying in the middle of the great Butana plain, in which pastures are available the physical properties of the soil in the wet season permits easy animal movement, and in which the climate conditions are healthy enough to allow animals to stay and graze. Such characteristics, however, are not found over the whole region especially during the wet season. The Rashaida like other pastoral groups, for example, Allahawien, Kwahla, Bisharien, and many others come to spend the "*Kharef*", the autumn or rainy season, in the area of Butana, particularly what some researchers refer to as central Butana region. (El Tayeb, 2010).

West Kassala Rural Council (The Rashaida's current Nazra)

There were 39 known villages in the council up to my fieldwork date. However, new villages are being established rapidly, as the Rashaida's community demographically is one of the fastest growing groups in the area which is probably related to their early marriage and tradition of polygamy.

The list below may not contain all the Rashaida's villages as new villages might be left unrecorded due to the group's increasing number of settlements. For example (Sidieg, 2010) mentioned two villages "Alatgya and Alsdygah" of which I found no record of. However, the most prominent villages are Mastoura, Abu Talha, Abu Dahan, Mansoura, in addition to Hay Alarb and Fngoga inside Kassala. The latter are parts of the Kassala's Rashaida who settled permanently, although they keep their herds around the area.

Rashaida's villages and population

No	Villages name	Population count
1	Abu Talha	8,632
2	Allaloba	852
3	Alhila Algdeda	787
4	Dar haysh	2,477
5	Alabadya	1,381
6	Almalwya	1,406
7	Abu ashr	7,697

No	Villages name	Population count
8	Hafir mater	1,587
9	Brkat	5,948
10	Alrshdanya	1,852
11	Alagbnya	1,503
12	Alkrmatya	1,710
13	Alkberyat	1,768
14	Nazlt Alomda	1,652
15	Om Ashosh	1,465
16	Alhajez	1,510
17	Hamzeb	213
18	Alnafya	2,484
19	Abu delif	632
20	Alkobry Aloswad	858
21	Grtat	174
22	Kradear	2,155
23	Om setyba	587
24	Om yoy	1,413
25	Alswyail	852
26	Khor Allaban	787
27	Abu se'ada	613
28	Om gdad	477
29	Abu Dahan	10,806
30	Helat Nora	471
31	Helat Musa	877
32	Reba Alshahenat	206
33	Kater Alawayda	542
34	Om bamoy	361
35	Algarnya	271
36	Helat sidieg	203
37	Shwya	1,587
38	Goz Alhanzal	1,413
39	Altanzny	1,240

Source: Kassala Rural Council 2016

Rashaida's main branches and their sections

No	Bratech	Brasaa	Zulymat
1	Alawamra	Zo Amry	Zo Aed
2	Krefat*	Algladen	Alhlamat
3	Zo Meny *	Alkeakat	Zo Bergeth
4	Almnafer	Zo Hayan	Alhwegat
5	Aldhman *	Shrouq	Hwegat Mtnflen
6	Alzlgan	Almrazeg	Alnegeshat

7	Sota	Alfearat	Aldkhanen
8	Albhegat	Almlayga	Alwgha
9	Albtahen	Algdawya	Algzayza *
10	Alhbatya*	Shamen	Alawazim *
11	Almfalha*	Alemerat	Alarnat Or Erynat *
12		Alhsanya	Zo Sahl
13		Alghanya	
14		Almtran*	
15		Almtrat*	
16		Alenyza*	
		Albtahen*	

Source: Kassala Rural Council 2016

Geographically the distribution of the branches varies. The Bratech are mainly found in the Red Sea area and into Eritrea, the Brasaa are found in Kassala and its surrounding, while the Zulymat are in areas around Atbara river and its surroundings. And relating to the sub-groups listed the symbol * is used to refer to certain special groups within the lager lineages. These special groups are the groups that generally are not considered as true Rashaida. Some of them came as early as the original migrations from Saudi Arabia but have not been completely incorporated in the Rashaida system. Others have joined them later on and established alliances with them. Each sub-branch has a couple of subsidiary groups included under in its administration. From the previous table, it is noticeable that the Bratech are the smallest group between the three, perhaps because they are divided between Eritrea and Sudan. But overall the Barasaa represent the biggest Rashaida sub-group whether historically or currently, and the size is one of the reasons that support their claim on the leadership of the Rashaida group along with their economic superiority over the other two sections.

Facing Challenges

To rural communities generally and especially to nomads, land is a central issue, along with their herds it represents everything to them. It is not just a material source from which they benefit economically; it is also a source of identity, a mean of social reproduction and a symbol of the group's pride and power. The fact that the Rashaida did not have land rights was thus a constant source of frustration to them. The reason for this was that they were considered as ''newcomers'' to the area. Only the "indigenous grups" could claim full legal and traditional land rights. For the Rashaida it meant they stayed within the area of the native Beja. In spite of historical tensions over this issue it was only in recent history that the goup obtained such rights to land. Before that their access to pasture and water had to be negotiated with the Beja or other groups with whom they interacted on their long migrations.

The Rashaida were always on the move, and since they have kinsmen across many borders, they got help in selecting their migration routes and in finding economic income. In Egypt, for instance, they got incvolved in the camel trade with Egypt. Through their connections, they were able to sell their camels, as well as act as brokers for other camel owning groups, for example, Bisharien and Allahawien. Their lucrative camel trade business did not just enhance their livelihood, but also saved them from the continuous trials of the indigenous groups to banish them from the area. Their increased wealth also represented a good taxation source for the rulers of the countries in which they operated, be they colonial or independent rulers.

The greatest competition for pasture did not come from other groups, but rather from the expansion of the mechanized farming (Shazeli and Ahmed, 1999). With this development, in eastern Sudan strting from the 1950s, the competition over resources sharpened and the Rashaida were pushed into the territory of other groups. This forced them to sign a grazing agreement with the Beja which restricted them to limited vicinities of land and burdened them with paying more tributes. Again the border areas became important. The Rashaida adapted to the new grazing restrictions and tribute obligations imposed upon them by the agreement by crossing the border and grazing in Eritrea, in aeras in which the Eritrean Rashaida already had access (Manger 2001).

The series of droughts that affected the region in the 1970s and 80s also hugely affected grazing resources, leading to catastrophic losses for pastoralists all over the region. As a result, competition over the increasingly meager grazing resources honed, which meant a double-bonded situation for the Rashaida whose access to resources was already contested and limited by the local indigenous *dâr* owners. This time the Rashaida did not have Eritrea as an option as it was also affected by drought, so they resorted to their alleged ancestral homeland, Saudi Arabia. The Rashaida started engaging in intensive labor migration to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries where they found jobs there easily due to their cultural resemblance and kinsmen relations.

Apart from the legal adaptive strategies the constant crossing of borders also promoted possibilities and skills in smuggling. This became a profitable activity to the Rashaida. For instance, they used to smuggle tobacco from Sudan to Eritrea in exchange of firearms. They also smuggled weapons from Jeddah in Saudi Arabia to Sudan. In addition, they smuggled perfumes, fabrics and also camels to Egypt and goats to Eritrea. The smuggling was a major reason for their troubled relations with the British colonial government in Sudan. The British tried to keep them away from the borders and attempted to gather them in a controllable area, in this case the Goz Ragab area.

Becoming Sudanese? Moving towards a Separate Political Representation

The drought effects opened the Rashaida's eyes on their fragile situation. And they saw that the solution was in getting more involved in the political systems within which they operated. In Sudan this translated into a strategy of "buying off officials". In addition they began a process of integrating their leaders and tribal notables in the state's apparatus through acquiring positions in the existing rural councils. The strategy was clear. They wanted their own administration separate from the Beja, and to get rid of their tribute paying duties.

The political context into which they entered had evolved over decades and had changed with the different regimes in power.in Sudan. Liquidation of the native administration was one of the first decisions of the May 1969 revolution, and President Nimeiry replaced this colonial system with a pyramidal system of "people's councils" from which former members of the native administration and of traditional political parties were excluded. Through this abolition of native administration the Beja's tribal elites were weakened and their traditional control over grazing resources diminished. This opened a possibility for the Rashaida to claim equal rights in land, but it took a long time before such claims were recognized. But the strategy had some early effects, for instance when the Rashaida's newly formed educated elites started to campaign for their tribe's right to have an independent representation for their tribe within the political-administrative system. This resulted in the Rashaida acquiring a separate council, which they got in 1971, despite the Beja's furious objections.

In the 1980s, during the years of drought, many Rashaida men enrolled in the United Emirates army as paid soldiers. Naturally, their economic status was enormously enhanced compared to other pastoralists in the area. The Rashaida used their newly found revenues to reinvest in and develop their pastoral economies. They invested in available land, bought animals and acquired water tankers for watering. They also brought fast vehicles that made them more efficient in their smuggling activities. The Rashaida's new wealth boosted their political relations with the state leading to their own separate "*Nazra*" in 1989. This implied being a recognized group in the area, with independent land rights. This was expressed by having a leader of the tribe, a *Nazir*, who was recognized in the political system. It is important that this political system was the post-Nimeiry system that lasted from 1985 to 1989 and in which a parliamentary system was in place. In this system the Rashaida could offer votes to political parties in exchange for this type of recognitions. And this is precisely what happened. And as expected, the other Beja tribes in the area violently objected to this new recognition of the Rashaida rights. But before they could act the Sudanese state was taken over by a new regime, the fundamentalist Islamic regime of Hassan Turabi and Omer al Bashir.

Opposing the Government and the Rashaida's Armed Rebellion

The start of the new political regime in Sudan in June 1989 saved the Rashaida from a planned armed attack by the indigenous groups, who resented the previous regime's decision of granting the Rashaida their separate *Nazra*. They saw this as an infringement on their ancestor's homeland. But even though the new regime stopped the planned attacks, the Rashaida victory was not complete. Also with the new power-holders the Rashaida-government relationship continued to sour. A crisis evolved in the relationship in 1991 which came to mark a great setback in the Rashaida's relations with the government. In the Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict of the First Gulf War, the Rashaida contradicted the Sudanese government's choice of siding with Iraq and Saddam Hussain and publicly announced their support of Kuwait. The Rashaida's notables offered both financial and physical aid to Kuwait. After the war, the Kuwaiti government allegedly rewarded this support by giving the Rashaida about 400 off-road vehicles, which many of them imported back to Sudan and used them in smuggling activities.

Later in the 1990s the tense relationship between the Rashaida dnd the Ggovernment resulted also in a series of government initiated measures to combat smuggling activities. It started with confiscating a large number of Rashaida vehicles, herds and houses. In addition, the government allegedly embarked on a series of random arrests and assassinations of key Rashaida members.

These conflicts piled up and resulted in fueling a process of ethnic mobilization amonf the Rashaida, which eventually led to the foundation of the Rashaida's resistance movement "The Free Lions." The complaints submitted by the new opposition group were as follows:

- Objection to the limited access to land, especially after the deterioration of cross-border grazing opportunities in Eritrea due to the Eritrean –Ethiopian war.
- Objection to the high amount of taxes the government enforced on the Rashaida.
- Objecting to the extreme case of general underdevelopment in the east generally and the Rashaida's localities especially.
- Objecting to the ban on private ownership and import of off-road vehicles which greatly hindered the Rashaida's cross-border activities.

The intense resentment and shared feelings of marginalization united different Rashaida together under the leadership of Mabrouk Mubarak Salem, who founded the Rashaida's Free Lions Movement (FLM) and its army on 1/1/1999. The FLM's goal was to fight for Rashaida's fair share of resources and political power and lifting their current case of marginalization. What was new was that the Rashaida framed their demands with reference to their rights as Sudanese citizens. This was also

what other groups in opposition to the government also argued, and this became a platform for joining the military units from the Beja groups. Thus moving from an earlier situation in which they competed with the Beja as pastoralists in seach for pasture and water, to a new situation in which they joined military forces against the regime under a shared understanding of themselves as marginalized Sudnaese citizens.

The Border Factor as a Supporting Factor of the Rashaida's Armed Movement

The FLM's army was relatively small and weak in comparison to the other rebel groups of Sudan at that time; it was composed of about 4000 Rashaida soldiers only. However, many factors interplayed and enhanced the position of the FLM. One of the most prominent factors was the foreign support that their leader Salem was able to secure from Eritrea. Salem benefited from the deteriorated relations between Sudan and Eritrea and established his military camps near the Eritrean borders. He had strong relations with the Eritrean president Afeworki, while also benefitting from his fellow Rashaida on the Eritrean side of the border.

As the military conflict evoved into the 2000s the Rashaida started shifting and re-arranging alliances. At first, they joined the Beja Congress and later on formed the Eastern Front. It was the Eastern front, with the Rashaida as an important member that signed the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) in 2006. In this process the Rashaida gained support from their wealthy Kuwaiti kinsmen, and also from the former Libyan president Gaddafi, whose first wife and mother of his children is allegedly from the Rashaida's branch in Libya.Thus, such relationships illustrate how the Rashaida have developed many relationships with far-away places, and that such relationships can become important in specif circumstances.

The Rashaida gained various benefits from the ESPA, the most conspicuous was their newly found position as a strongly recognized tribe of eastern Sudan with increasing rights in land and with significant political representation. In addition, they gained influence by being included in the political peace agreements with concrete benefits and positions. For example, Mabrouk the (FLM) leader was appointed to the post of the Minister of Transport, Roads, and Bridges and now he has been transferred to the Ministry of Animal Wealth. In addition to land they get increasingly involved in obtaining resources such as education and health services.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the movement of the rashaida from Saudi Arabia to Sudna, and also how their adaptation has been affected by a variety of factors in their new home area. All through the Rashaida history in Sudan the border has been at the center of the Rashaida's economic, political and social life, providing opportunites that the members of the group have exploited to the fullest extent. Thus the Rashaida managed to

transform themselves from a landless group marginalized by the indigenous population into a powerful one with access to power and resources.

In achieving this the Rashaida applied different strategies at different levels and scopes; economically they have strategically invested their incomes. The incomes have come from their herds, but also from wage labor migration and camel export as well as from smuggling. They have invested in buying off officials thus establishing their position in the area. Socially they have emphasized different identities at different times, sometimes presenting themselves with an "Arabic identity" as in the 1980s, into an "eastern Sudanese identity" in the late 1990s.

Politically the Rashaida used their economic power in securing the support of the government's political leaders to further their own interest in gaining political power in order to match the power of the indigenous groups in the area. This they did by having their own *Nazra*. Even though their *Nazra* was contested by the indigenous groups of the area, they managed early on to become part of the political set up via their own rural council. Later on, they joined the opposition at the right time to get an important share of the power and wealth distributed through the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement. The story of this chapter ends therefor with the Rashaida as one of the definitive winners in the battle for influence in eastern Sudan following the Sudanese civil war. But the price of winning might easily produce a situation in which the Rashaida will experience the border in new ways, perhaps more constraining on their future opportunites, and less as a phenomenon to be ignored.

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Chapter 14

From Administrative to National Borders: Challenges for the Dual Identification of the Silaim Pastoralists

Hager Hassan Modathir

Introduction

Borders and boundaries are concepts that are used to indicate national and ethnic-cultural differences. They delineate at once territorial limits and socio-cultural spaces. Ownership of a specific territory by a specific ethnic group marks it as their homeland and it is consequently also a measure of identification. Territoriality may also be an important factor in strengthening groups economically and politically as land may be the most vital source of livelihood and important element of the social system which also may affect the political position of such a group within a wider political system. Anthropologists and other researchers have considered territoriality an important aspect that made tribes formidable political units in much of African societies for a long time. In the case of Darfur Abdal-Kareem and Abdul-Jalil concluded that:

> "Homeland (or territory) has commonly been acknowledged to be one of the key criteria of group identification in the Darfur region" and they continued that "tribal identity and solidarity depend first and foremost on some sort of association between the history and geography of the group". (A. Abdal-Kareem & A. Abdul-Jalil, 2015)

Abdul-Jalil argued also that the issue of ethnic identification must be seen as a dynamic process which puts him in the camp of those who support a situational approach in identity classification. He emphasized territory as a factor of identification, and concluded that "using the criterion of territory, different units of populations can be included or excluded from the definition of an ethnic group". He also made special emphasis on self-ascription or the insider's view which can change according to changes in outside circumstances. The other factor discussed by Abdul-Jalil is the occupational criterion, which is related to the economic activity practiced by the specific ethnic group. This is relevant when a specific economic activity coincides with a specific ethnic group and specific territory (e.g. the Baggara). Because economic activities represent a changeable criteria it may consequently also produce changes in life-style, as Abdul-Jalil stated:

> People establish new identities as soon as they have
> successfully adopted a new economic career (Abdul-Jalil,
> Musa, 1984)

An interesting case of such changes in identities as a consequence in
changes in the economic adaptation, is presented by Haaland (1969). He
studied "nomadization" among sedentary Fur cultivators in western Sudan
and tried to isolate factors that pushed members of Fur to leave their settled
socio-economic system and join the pastoral adaptation of the Baggara.

After describing the economic system of the Fur as farmers, Haaland
showed how some Fur started buying cattle as a profitable investment, and
left such cattle with Baggara friends. But, when the number of cattle
increased, the Fur tended to become nomadic themselves. This happened
when someone had from five to ten heads of cattle. Haaland argues that
when the Fur joined the Baggara camp a change of identity followed.
Nomadized Fur had to adapt to organizational changes to cope with the
new system. For example, the pattern of individual household of Fur
farmers was inadequate to solve all tasks in the nomadic system. The
change was not only a physical change from settled life to a life of
movement, but also a social change including the use of Arabic language,
and a change in dress and so forth. But, Haaland also stresses that this
process of identity change is a dynamic one, and the identification of
"nomadized" Fur depends both on how they define themselves and also on
how different actors within the Fur and Baggara community identify them
(Barth, 1969)

This case is also made use of by Abdel – Jalil and it thus helps to confirm
his later argument that identity is characterized by flexibility and may
change according to changes in surrounding circumstances with respect to
economic activities, territory, social interaction and self-ascription.

I also support a similar argument which states that there is a strong
relationship between economic activities, place of settlement (geographical,
territorial) and cultural patterns. For example, rural villagers and nomads,
who are forced by circumstances to change their economic activities and
stay inside or around towns, most often adopt new life-styles, with changes
in clothes, food, shelter and sometimes language. Such changes gradually
also produce changes in wider elements of a group's cultural system, and
also a group's identity.

The Difference between Political Borders and Administrative Borders

A political border between nation states may also create changes of the type
indicated above. In the debate of group identity or group identification the
"borderland" concept offers new possibilities for theorizing and
conceptualizing social space and identity. Renato Rosaldo considered
borderlands as:

…ways of redefining the concept of culture, It should not be regarded as empty transitional zones but as sites of creative cultural production that require investigation, such border zones are always in motion, not frozen for inspection." (Rosaldo, quoted in Berdahl, 1999, p.7).

 According to this debate, borders can represent an important identification criterion. This is so because crossing nation-state borders is a territorial passage which implies identity transformation from citizen of your own country into a foreigner in the country you enter. This happens as an individual crosses the border, but when this individual returns he or she also returns to an identity of citizen. But such border-crossing can also be more permanent and it might not be only an individual who crosses the border but an entire group. This paper is about one such group, the Silaim in the White Nile Province in the Sudan.

What is special in the case of the Silaim is that the border they are crossing is the one between the Sudan and South Sudan, a border that up until 2011 had been an administrative border between northern and southern provinces within the same country. Now the Silaim find that the border crossing represents a crossing between two nation states, with implications quite different from the ones they were used to in their crossing of administrative borders. It is to this new border crossing and its implications we shall now turn.

The Silaim and Dual Identification

The Silaim represents one of the pastoral groups that live in the borderlands between Sudan and South Sudan having moved freely between north and south for decades, before the cessation of south Sudan created a new condition for such crossings. The pastoral Silaim had dual identity in the past, one through their historical affiliation to the group of Baggara Arabs of White Nile area, the other through their existence in south Sudan for long time through which generations were born and lived in the South. This indicates that Silaim had to find strategies that allowed them to maintain themselves as a northern Sudanese group, while also adapting to the southern groups that were dominant in the areas of south Sudan in which they spent most of their time. Now, following the secession of the South in 2011, a new process of identity change from southerners to northerners is taking place. While the former balancing act was made in a context of economic and ethnic strategies, the latter change is caused by the emergence of two new nation states and the emergence of serious economic and political disorder that not only led to drastic socio-economic changes but also to changes of citizenship.

The Historical Background for the Pre-2011 Situation

During the Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule, the White Nile region was the area known as White Nile province which was later, in 1939, annexed

to Blue Nile to constitute one province. Now, White Nile State is bordered by Khartoum State from the north, Gezira state from the east, Sinnar from the south-east, North Kordofan from the west, South Kordofan from the south west and the new South Sudan nation state from the south.

Pastoralism was the main mode of living in White Nile where the Kawahla groups living in the north raised sheep, goats and camels. Baggara groups in the southern part of the state practiced mainly cattle breeding. Agriculture was the second economic activity which was predominantly practiced by sedentary groups. There are two types of agriculture in the state: a) traditional rain-fed subsistence agriculture, usually small plots for production of food and cash crops and; b) large scale mechanized agriculture for local consumption and export. Trade was a secondary economic activity practiced for the exchange of local products. Baggara did not engage much in trading activities as cattle was their sole source of livelihood (Abbdul Hameed, 2004)

The area on the western side of the Nile extending from south of Kosti to El Rank was also inhabited by pastoralist Baggara groups including Gimmie, Dar Muharib, Ahamda, Shankhab, Silaim, Bani Garrar and Taishaa. The neighboring tribes in South Sudan were the Dinka on the east bank and the Shilluk community on the west bank of White Nile River. These communities maintained long tradition of peaceful co-existence reinforced by economic exchange and interdependence in livelihood systems (Amir, 1970).

In the south part of White Nile state (area settled by Baggara groups) the dominant tribal group today is the Silaim and their main administrative center is Al Naeem town in El Salam locality. After their arrival in Sudan from the Arab Peninsula – through Egypt - in the late fifteenth century and beginning of sixteenth century, Silaim settled in the southern part of White Nile neighboring Upper Nile area which represented the homeland of the Shilluk tribe. At that time, there were alliances among Baggara groups on the west bank of White Nile. As a result of competition over the natural resources, a dispute emerged between Silaim and Gimie which was resolved by the General Governor of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan who moved Silaim to Fashoda in the Upper Nile area. The colonial government decision led to geographic and administrative separation between the two groups. This incident represented the starting point of Silaim existence in the South. In the past, the homeland of Silaim extended from Al- Ridase (south Kosti) in the north to Fashoda in Upper Nile state in the south and from White Nile River in the east to Kordofan in the west (Amir, 1970, 75). After separation of South Sudan, the last point for Silaim in the south became El Kwake which is located on the international borders between the two countries.

Silaim people maintained good social relations with neighboring groups like Ahamda, Awlad Hassan and Shilluk in south Sudan, where inter-

marriage prevailed among them and Shilluk language was spoken and understood by Silaim tribesmen.

During these periods Silaim people practiced mobile pastoralism. They owned big animal herds which were mainly cattle (seen as a source of power and prestige). They moved from one place to another in search of water and fresh pasture. Long time ago, Silaim used to move with their animals covering large areas in South Sudan in the upper Nile area, especially around Mapan. These spaces were very rich in terms of water and pasture. The existence of the tsetse fly affected the movement to the north. So they spent about nine months in the south (October up to July and August). When the rainy season started in the north, they moved to areas around Kosti, namely Um Dibaikrat, Abu Rukba and Mahbouba (Makharif), where they spent the period between August to October. These movements were defined routes, within corridors determined by local authorities and native administration, to avoid conflict with local farmers (F. Al Tom, 2012).

The tribe maintained its power from the native administration in which tribal leaders such as "chiefdoms" (*Omodias*) and "headships" (*Mashaikhat*) were under the responsibility of the *Nazir*, the paramount chief. There was also a *Nazir* for all Arab Tribes in South Sudan in the past. These tribal positions interacted with the colonial powers in the system of native administration, or indirect rule.

The internal tribal divisions of the Silaim included clans and lineages. Also today the tribe is composed of two major groups which are further sub-divided into clans and lineages. The diagram below shows the tribal composition of the Silaim:

Silaim Experience in the South of the Sudan

As mentioned above, the existence of Silaim in the South was centered on the area of Fashoda. Although it was generally known that the homeland of Silaim was the south part of White Nile state, some documents indicates that it was extended to upper Nile state in southern Sudan. Silaim people themselves – especially mobile pastoralists- believed that their homeland was upper Nile area, as they were born and lived there throughout their lives.

In the colonial era, the government demarcated borders of Silaim land in Kadok in the South. The law of closed areas (the Closed District Ordinances) imposed by the British colonial power-holders put the separation mark between north and south in El Mitaimir, which was perceived by Silaim as the borders of Sudan after the separation. Since that

time, about 80% of the tribe settled in Upper Nile area, especially those Silaim who owned large number of herds. Only 20% lived in White Nile state. They defined their areas in the south as Wad Dakona, Al Bushara, Al Dabba El Ghabsha, Mitaimir, Mang (Kaka – Kadok).

Internal division of clans and lineages of the Silaim

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Source: *(Amir, 1970)*

* The word (*Nas*) used among Silaim to indicate lineage.

Silaim existence in the south was not only as cattle herders who move seasonally in the area, but also as owners of agricultural land, acacia forests, storage facilities, houses… etc. which was justified by the fact that they were at the time Sudanese citizens, and thus were living within their own country. Silaim practiced crop farming on their own lands, gum

tapping and nomadic pastoralism in addition to engaging in work as wage laborers, as traders, butchers and manual workers. They also represented the major part of the labor force in the government institutions and the services sector.

Despite the religious and cultural differences, Silaim experienced peaceful coexistence with neighboring southern communities. They maintained strong alliances with the Shuluk, alliances that were strengthened by inter-marriage relations. These relationships were expressed in names of some lineages of the tribe, such as Poro, Jok and Paul Show. These social interactions resulted in smooth movement between White Nile state and Upper Nile for different purposes including livestock grazing, trade and other activities.

Traditionally Silaim living in the south were considered part of the general *Nazirate* of Baggara Arabs that had their center in *Kaka Tijaria*. Silaim developed a strong tribal administration in the south. This tribal system included a number of *Omdas* and *Shiekhs* and the system was agreed upon and accepted by the *Mek* of both the Shilluk and the government authorities. This past native administration of Silaim in South Sudan played important roles in the past. It represented a native "diplomatic" institution that assures good relations with neighboring tribes. It also took the responsibility of conflict resolution within the tribe or between tribes. Thirdly the system made possible the collecting of taxes in a systematic way. And, finally, in a general way it supported participation of the Silaim in social occasions in the area.

Effects on Silaim Identity

In reference to the above context, the identity of Silaim can be analyzed using the set of identification criteria I introduced earlier in the paper. First, it is linked to "territoriality" – as being land owners in South Sudan for pasture and agriculture. Thus, according to their folk model the Silaim people believe that their homeland is south Sudan; hence they belong to that area. Second, according to the "ecological approach" Silaim practiced pastoralism as their adaptation strategy because they were in a situation of moving north and south in search of pasture for their animals. Therefore, the Silaim created a type of belonging to the South based on ecological factor. During field work a number of interviewees expressed that Silaim's cattle cannot stay in the north as it would not taste the grass; hence, they are afraid to lose it. It was also mentioned that if cattle was brought to the north it would go back to their grazing areas in the south without the support of herders. This shows how Silaim and their cattle were much connected to South Sudan; Silaim can be identified as "southerners".

Cessation and a new Civil War in South Sudan

With the new post-2011 situation in the Sudan, with the south becoming a separate country, the Silaim immediately came to experience a new

situation. After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and declaring the 2011 referendum, Silaim registered to vote as southerners, thus indicating how they saw their own identity as being closely related to their history of living in the southern home areas. But the south Sudanese political leadership refused their participation because they considered them as northerners. When the separation took place, with this position among the political leaders in the south, the Silaim found themselves in a totally new situation.

Once the declaration of South Sudan cessation announced in 2011, Silaim became foreigners in the new country. Their neighbors from southern tribes (the Shilluk) dealt with them as strangers and the deeply rooted historical ties were completely denied. These tensions made some Silaim to flee their areas in the south, leaving their properties and belongings behind, thus losing land, household assets, stores, animals and furniture.

The situation of Silaim in South Sudan became even worse after the outbreak of the civil war in 2013. Southerners started actively abusing those who remained by looting their property and belongings, and even killing them. As they were labeled foreigners, Silaim had to pay migration fees, tax and *zakat* for the government of South Sudan. They also had to pay the rebels (anti South Sudan government groups) to avoid attacks. Payments were basically made to ensure safety and security of animals and persons.

As a result of escalating conflict in South Sudan, Silaim moved north into Sudan, mostly because they had no other option. In Sudan, they saw themselves as "guests", as they had no land, no cattle and no source of living. Their main belongings had been in South Sudan. Their lands were formally registered in the south, and their legal documents were all issued by southern authorities. And in the places in Sudan where they settled first they found that land historically owned by their ancestors in White Nile state had been subsequently registered as part of agricultural projects run by new investors from outside the area. Being without land, which was the main factor of production, the Silaim people were scattered within White Nile State.

One of the sites where Silaim returning from South Sudan currently live in is *Farig Showk*- a suburb area near Kosti town. This shanty area was formerly inhabited by Shilluk who left for South Sudan shortly after the separation had taken place. Ironically, Silaim families coming from *Al-El Kwake* boarder point with South Sudan took shelter in *Farig Showk* as displaced persons. Some relatives and members of these families settled in other places in White Nile State as the neighborhood could not accommodate all of them. This settlement in *Farig Showk* has, of course, created distortion in the socio-cultural fabric of the group.

Although insecurity and instability in South Sudan had negative impact on Silaim's socio-economic conditions, some Silaim, those who had big herds,

even hundreds of cattle, kept their animals in the south. They did this despite the risk it entailed, primarily because there was not enough water sources and grazing land to accommodate the cattle herds in the north. But those who kept their herds in the south had to change their strategies of managing their herds. While the elders stayed in the north with the families, the young men and shepherds stayed in the south with the herds. Modern communication (through mobile telephone network) and transportation means are widely used to facilitate communication and interaction between separated family members.

Another dilemma emerging as a consequence of the separation of the Sudan and which directly relates to the Silaim is the issue of the destiny of the offspring from Silaim-Shilluk intermarriages. As individuals with a "Creole-identity" of mixed origins their identity as either southerners or northerners, and hence to which country they should belong, is at best unclear. Hence it is also unclear where they can find their permanent settlement. While some of them settled in White Nile State, others stayed in the south, also when their relatives from Silaim had to return to the north. If they come with them they can't gain the national identity as Sudanese, and in the south they may be discriminated against. Hence, people of such mixed identities among the Silaim experience what similar people of mixed, or "Creole identities" experience in many other places, the "belong" in many places but can't find a place in any of them

Marginalization of the Tribal Leadership

One important consequence of the move to the north, into the Sudan, is a marginalization of the tribal leadership structure I described briefly above. Tribal leaders, such as native administration members who came from South Sudan partly lost their authority because they lost their wealth (cattle and land) and also because their people became scattered in different areas in White Nile State. But the tribal politics also changed. As mentioned before the native administration of Silaim in the South was sanctioned and legalized by tribal leaders and local authorities there, and with the move north these leaders lost their political legitimacy in the new areas of arrival. In their new areas of settlement they found other people, with other tribal leaderships in place, and the Silaim, as new arrivals, found that their traditional leaders had no role to play. When committees of Silaim returnees were formed in the new areas of settlement, formal tribal leaders and native administration members were excluded because of alleged bias to their clans and lineages which could cause some conflicts. Hence, the link between a tribal leader and his clan or lineage or geographical area became less important. Instead of the political authority of tribal leaders, what the Silaim found was a new structure of political authority and legitimization that was dependent on political affiliation to the governing party. Corruption affected even the role of tribal leaders which in effect affected the administration in Sudan. This had profound effects on the internal power structure of the tribe and created new types of conflicts over

political positions particularly in a situation in which the new leadership positions were in control of the distribution of aid and of the general assistance for returned people, for instance through NGOs and civil society organizations. The domination of new groups of leaders, based in their links to the regime in power of the Sudan and their relationships to the new types of organizations, undermined the role of native administration of the Silaim.

The most notable case is the situation of people of *Farig Shoak* in the outskirts of Kosti. They were forced to move from Al-Kwake to area by the commissioner of the locality. This happened in 2014 due to political competition. Al-Kwake was the constituency of his rival in the national assembly elections A people's committee was formed to serve the new arrivals away from the influence of their native administration. Such committee succeeded in the provision of some services.

This new situation of the Silaim people poses clear challenges to how the group is to be defined as a group. If "economic activity" is considered as determinant factor in the group's identification, Silaim has been forced to change their economic activity away from nomadic pastoralism. Accordingly, it is to be expected that their life style that was related to pastoralism would be changed. As for "territory" as a determinant of group identification, Silaim lost their home land in South Sudan, and accordingly, they have lost one of the most important assets for identification of tribal communities. Living in permanent settlements near urban centres, as they do now, will imply major changes in adaptive patterns of individuals which may gradually weaken the cultural system by which the tribe identifies itself.

Finally, while the Silaim coming from the south consider themselves as "displaced" in the north, other groups living in the area consider the homeland of the pastoral Silaim to be in South Sudan, and hence, in the White Nile they are considered as foreigners and refugees. Thus having lost the two main criteria for their tribal identity, economic activity and territory, the only criteria that remains unchanged, of course, is the name of the tribe and the genealogical system. But over time, the knowledge of the genealogical system might disappear, and we might see new generations of individuals who identify themselves as Silaim to live their lives without much knowledge of their past history.

Conclusion

While some researchers view group identity as fixed, based on one single factor, others consider such an identity as being reproduced in a flexible process that depends on different internal and external factors and which evolves through long periods of time. Economic activities, territory, self-ascription and the continuity of important cultural patterns are in this perspective perceived as the most important determinants of group identification.

None of the above mentioned criteria of identification seem to be relevant to the present situation of the Siliam. My presentation has shown dramatic changes in the life conditions of the Silaim and due to these changes they have to start constructing a new identity in a new setting. References to old historical realities do not work in the new situation in Sudan, and the Silaim must enter the difficult road of adapting to new realities that necessarily must imply significant changes. A.B. Bakhit (2015) has the following to say about people in similar situations:

> Ultimately they craft a new invented identity through practicing a life-style based on all the different options available and already adopted by various lifestyle groups.

Also for the Silaim, there is a need to examine new ways of group identification emerging from their new realities. We do not know the outcome of this but we most certainly shall need further studies of the adaptive strategies and the everyday circumstances that the Silaim find themselves in.

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Chapter 15

The Dynamics of Cross-Border Cattle-Raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan Border: the Case of Gambella Regional National State

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Friday, 15 April, 2016

On this day deadly cross-border cattle-raiding and child abduction operation from Jonglei State of South Sudan into Ethiopia's western Gambella region left more than 200 dead, more than 100 children abducted and over 2,000 livestock stolen. The raids targeted 13 villages in two Weredas of Gambella; Jikaw and Lari. Of the approximately 80 injured people who arrived at Gambella town's hospital, more than 50 were women.

The raiders were armed with Kalashnikov rifles of good quality and had plenty of ammunition. Survivors of the raid confirmed that the raiders wore military-style uniforms and many of them had the same Army-type model of plastic white shoe.

Ethiopian officials blamed Murle tribesmen from Jonglei State of South Sudan for the deadly attacks and the Ethiopian authorities said they were prepared to pursue the raiders in South Sudan. According to the survivors, a few Nuer community militia members with guns retaliated, killing seventy Murle raiders.

Introduction

Cattle-raiding and child abduction have long been common across the border between Ethiopia and Sudan but never on such a scale as the one on April 2016.The scale, organization, and brutality of this raid was unique, since the people in the area had never experienced such a raid. To me, as an anthropologist, this links well to a general argument that the traditional cattle rustling practices that are so common around East Africa, and which is seen as a deeply historical phenomenon, is indeed undergoing significant changes. We see this also in the local context of Gemballa. Informants told me that before, among the Jikany Nuer in Gambella, cattle raiding was carried out during the day and the magnitude of the raid was fairly small, with the number of heads of cattle and other livestock raided equally small. The raids were carried out mainly in the dry season because it was easier to travel and drive the animals through the bushes and wilderness when it is

dry. Also, it was difficult to get across the Akobo River with animals at times when the water levels were high due to the heavy rains. And there were also social constraints on the raiding. The planning for and blessing of raids was done by elders and Nuer prophets and executed by the youth under the directives set by the elder leaders. Weapons such as arrows, bows, and spears were used in these raids; Traditional raiding and warfare also required long training and special skills with the number of youths involved in the activity was also limited.

In recent times, and as indicated by the sad story above, many factors have influenced the earlier forms of raiding and counter-raiding. The influx of modern weapons has transformed the traditional way of cattle-raiding into a modern war-like situation with an increasing number of casualties. The traditional rules that governed raiding between the pastoralists have changed and have been partially replaced by more random and violent raids. The need for traditional training has also disappeared as modern weapons can create havoc irrespective of how the raids are organized and carried out. The raids have become warlike since the attackers confront communities and who are equally well armed with modern weapons to defend their property, the attacks leave behind deaths and injuries leading to retaliatory actions of revenge in which further violence is meted out. In such tit-for-tat type of conflicts no-one is spared, unlike in the traditional raids in which non-combatants such as women, children, the sick and elderly were spared.

A second significant change in the cattle-raiding operations is that they are now purely for commercial reasons. This means that young people raid cattle to sell in the local markets for income. We also see that the Ethiopian authorities intended to pursue the raiders into South Sudan. Which indicates yet a fourth change, not in the raid itself but in the way it is drawing the attention of national governments, and thus, in a border area such as the Gambella, the raids across the border can develop into border conflicts between nation states.

My paper seeks to deal with these changes, and show empirically how they unfold in one particular border region of Ethiopia, the Gambella. This empirical case also shows that we need to problematize the anthropological understanding of cattle raiding in the region.

Anthropological Perspectives on Cattle Raiding

I have already indicated major dimensions of change. The April 2016 violence is one example of such change. Thus the 'redistributive' cattle-raiding practice which we knew in the past and which sought to replenish lost cattle has given way to the more violent predatory and commercial raiding. These new dynamics along the Ethio-South Sudan border thus also points towards the need to re-visit our perspectives on such activities. Fukui and Torton (1979: 9-16) identified many variables as a motivation for cattle-raiding among the East African cattle herders. These include the

desire for prestige, to claim victims in association with the death of favorite oxen, for retaliation, for trophies and looting and aim to acquire more cattle or for the purpose of replenishing lost stocks, and finally, but very importantly, the need for cattle as part of bride wealth payments. These are all perspectives that can be said to belong to a traditional "ecological functionalism model". However, as far as a cattle raiding today along Ethio-South Sudan border is concerned, it is not characterized by ecologically functionalism but rather "ecologically dysfunctional". This is so because the cattle stolen in raiding in Pagak, Lari Woreda is not for circulation within the clan but rather for commercial circulation within markets in Gambella or markets in South Sudan, and the cattle is being bought by butchers to be slaughtered and sold as meat, rather than bought as live animals by pastoralists to be put into alternative pastoral herds.

Finding such research results, my study pushed me into questioning the existing established assumptions about cattle-raiding as 'ecologically functional'. Certainly there are still some elements from what can be called a more traditional situation of cattle raiding, but overall what my study showed that cattle-raiding as it is being practiced today along the Ethio-South Sudan border, is characterized by change. We need to look for alternative explanations that take into consideration the involvement of other actors, other than pastoralists, in cattle-raiding. Also we need to understand how the penetration of the market economy affects both the motivations for engaging in raiding and also the distribution of animals. And we need to understand how the use of sophisticated weapons among pastoralists and other actors involved. It is with a focus on change that I now turn to. Using the case of Nuer, as a community that still practices raiding traditions, I shall start with one such factor of continuity, the link between raiding and the need for cattle for bride wealth as well as look at the important dynamics of change.

Bridewealth and Marriage

The Nuer is a pastoralist people whose lives are built around cattle. The social importance of cattle among the Nuer is expressed in many ways. People are named after the favorite bull; others are named after the bull slaughtered when they were born. For instance, names like *Tuut* (bull) and *Thak* (ox) are common among the Nuer male in Lari and Gambella. When they become young and ready to marry, cattle are indispensable for that social institution.

Kuen (marriage) is an important social institution among the Nuer, legitimized by the payment of the bride price, and cattle makes up a key element in that bride-wealth. Thus, it is possible to draw a connection between the need for bride wealth and the practice of cattle-raiding in the area.

> You are not poor if you have more girls than boys. Small
> girls are so helpful in the house. They help me in cooking,

> fetching water and taking care of the cattle. They are also
> wealth when they grow up. We will receive cattle, as a
> compensation for our loss of her role in the household,
> when someone comes to marry one of them.

This local understanding, expressed by a local informant, indicates the importance of girls in the household and of cattle in bride-wealth. The rationale for bride-wealth payment is first, because the family of the future wife has to be compensated for their loss of a daughter. Dolek Tang, an elder with an eleven-year-old daughter, stated:

> Why should I produce and take care of my daughter if I am not
> going to benefit when she leaves my house?

The bride price is supposed to compensate the family of the bride for the would-be services they would get from her, in terms of her labour in the home, but also for the expenses the family has incurred in terms of feeding and educating her. Daughters are considered pragmatically as future assets among the Nuer of Gambella. That is because, when she is given away in marriage, the family will receive a number of cattle which then can be used by her brothers to marry. When the brothers marry and pay their bride-wealth, also in cattle, this means that through the institution of marriage and bride-wealth the whole community is involved in exchanges of cattle that represent basic relationships within the community, tying the community together. This importance is further expressed in *Puth Kuen*, i.e. "the blessing of marriages". The marriage is blessed in the presence Nuer elders after an appropriate number of cattle has been paid. Such a blessing gives the marriage legitimacy and also legitimizes the product of the marriage; children.

It should be clear then, that with such a relationships between marriage, bride-wealth and cattle, the phenomenon of cattle-raids can be understood as an activity that can bring in animals for the payment of such bride-wealth. It is therefore of interest to find out how the number of marriages develop, and also the payment of bride-wealth. For this purpose I conducted a survey which showed that while the number of marriages had increased, the bride- price in Pagak had declined in the last 20 years from an average 49.6 heads of cattle in 1996 to 20.1 in 2015, a decline of 60% over the past twenty years. One possible explanation for the decline in number of cattle in the bride-price might be a shortage of cattle. But even if the bride-wealth is reduced, for the individual young man who wants to marry it is still a challenge to get the needed number of cattle. Such a shortage might be filled with cattle brought in from raids, but it was also expressed by informants, that raided cattle should not be used in bride-wealth payments. But there is little doubt that raids and the stealing of cattle was part of the strategies used to get enough cattle to get married. This could indicate a change of morality in such matters.

This change in morality relates to how people understand "proper" raids,

and raids for stealing. First, the two types of raids are understood by different names in the community. *Pech-hok* is proper cattle-raiding, and is used by people when they talk about the historical as well as some of the contemporary raids between tribes. Thus this term is used when talking about raiding between Nuer and Murle, or between Nuer clans like the Jikany and Lou. The new types of raids, which are understood as stealing, are called *Kuel-hok*. In contrast to *Pech-hok,* the stealing is characterized by less organization and less extensive than the larger cattle raids. Such raids can be between local villages and the number of cattle raided is smaller. Therefore, *Kuel-hok* is used for inter-village cattle stealing.

This is actually the word informants prefer to use in a discussion about the link between cattle-raiding and bride wealth arrangements. "Stealing" is the word informants use to indicate the link that stolen cattle are sold in the market and that people buy them to pay their bride-wealth, mainly in Lari and other Nuer towns. Some young boys, who do not have sisters and relatives to help them with cattle, steal cattle from another community to pay the bride wealth at once.They might steal cattle from far away villages and bring them for their bride- wealth payments. But since the community knows them, mostly they sell the looted cattle somewhere and they buy other cattle here. People these days learn how to loot so that they pay the bride-wealth at once easily.

But the moral dilemma is also visible. A former village head, explained:

> Now-a-days, some young men are using this stealing as a means to collect cattle for their bride-price. We do not allow stolen cattle to be used for bride-price. We (elders) do not accept that. Women married with stolen bride-price will be barren and their children will not be blessed.

Let me now return also to what I put as an important aim of the paper, to discuss other forms of changes in raids, both their motivation and their modalities, and their effects. I start with the commercialization of the cattle raiding, which relates directly to the discussion above, on the emergence of new moralities concerning cattle raiding.

Markets and Cattle-Raiding in Lari

Saturday, Tuesday, and Thursday are cattle markets days in Lari, Saturday being the biggest. Lari cattle market was established in June 2010 and is a confined place in the northern direction of the city. A separate wooden fence that covers a total size of half a hectare is where the potential buyers, cattle, and sellers meet and negotiate. The two trading partner; buyers and sellers come from different places to this confined market. They come from Gambella, Itang and Jikaw (tax collector who levy taxes on cattle).

What caught my attention while visiting the market was not the cattle inside the market, but the occurrence of irregularities in the animal trade of the market.This was a consequence of my inquiries about where these

cattle come from and how traders conducted trading in cattle i.e. what are the rules and mechanisms in cattle trading? What are the bases of trading and how is trust developed between buyer and seller? These questions and the answers brought me into the issue of raiding and selling of looted cattle, which is becoming a serious problem in Lari.

I had already noted in police reports that there had been cases reported to the *Woreda* police about looted cattle being sold in Lari market, and that the *Woreda* Police had made 76 arrests in 2009 and 2010. Those arrested were accused of looting cattle and selling them as being "legal" in Lari Market.

This took me into a discussion of "trust". The way trust is built in this small market is through an institutional form of an authority that has a legitimate power to give a guarantee for both buyers and sellers that the cattle they are trading are not stolen. One such legitimate authority is represented by the regional police. But their presence is more about keeping a peaceful market place, more than having any insight into the status of the cattle in the same market place. The institution that can decide on such issues with any authority is the *Qeret Sebsabi* (tax collector) and the paper he produces at the end of each transaction. At the end of the negotiation, buyer and seller should have to go to the *Qeret Sebsabi* who produces a paper which guarantees the legitimacy of the transaction. The *Qeret* (tax) is a means of legitimization of the transaction among the three actors. The *Qeret Sebsabi*, is a legitimizer who is a representative of a regional state, and he levies taxes on both sellers and buyers. He collects six percent of the total transaction. Majak Chol, my informant, explained that three percent of the tax is for the town administration and the other three percent is to the Lari *Woreda* finance department. Three copies of all papers are produced. One for the buyer, one for the town administration and one for the *Woreda* finance. The copy given to the buyer is a guarantee that he buys the cattle in a legitimate trade, and by paying taxes to the government the transaction is also accepted by them. The copy of the paper also guarantees the buyer that he is not buying stolen cattle.

My observation inside and around the market indicated that business most of the time was going on as usual. However, a kilometer or so outside Lari, along the way to Pagak, I noticed people make negotiations and trading cattle before they reached Lari town cattle market. This happened particularly in Blumkun *Kebele*. Here trade was conducted mainly for two reasons; to avoid the paper control by police, and also the avoidance of tax. As there was no tax to be paid, cattle in these peripheral "market places" was cheaper. However, there is also an added and interesting aspect of the transactions going out in these peripheral places. The main reason why cattle are cheap in this market is the source of the cattle. Every potential buyer going to this market knows that he may buy looted cattle. Moreover, the potential buyers have more bargaining power but fewer guarantees given the fact that the seller is ready to sell it as soon as possible.

Transaction along the road to Pagak is more swift and quick and no paperwork and check-ups. Since no guarantee is produced here, most of the potential buyers are traders who take cattle to other markets and traders who provide cattle for restaurants and hotels in Lari and Gambella town.

My informants in Lari address cattle trade along the road to Pagak as *Guit-guite.* Someone who is planning to marry but fail to put together all the bride price will be advised to go to *Guit-guite. Guit-guite*. This is a Nuer phrase that stands for young men who do not have a father or close relatives and hence relay on cattle-raiding or looting to accumulate cattle. *Guit-guite* is one of the ways of getting cattle in a more affordable way for poor young Nuer who want to marry.

So the term refers to both looting and market and it became a common term used for the multiple incidences between 2006 and 2011 in Lari, Jikaw, and Akobo in which an increasing number of looted cattle was made available in the shadow markets. This increase in numbers during the period between 2006 and 2011 was due to a series of raids in different parts of the Nuer *Woredas*. Places like Lari, Jikaw, Makuye, and Akobo were highly affected by the raids. Later on, the Gambella Regional Police with the help of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces made many arrests. In Lari alone more 76 young men from different *Kebeles* were arrested. They were suspected of looting cattle from different villages and *Kebeles*. Similar arrests were made in other *Woredas* that suffered from the same raiding problem.

> These young men are actually engaged in the raiding of cattle in our Woreda but transfer what they looted to other fellow young men in other Woredas, particularly to Makuye Woreda. There was a small group of Guit-guite who engaged in cattle looting and selling. The ones in our Woreda loot here and transfer them to their fellow Guit-guite in Mekuye Woreda. In return, they receive cattle from the group in Makuye who also engaged in looting in their Woreda and then brought them here as legitimate cattle and sell them here.

What is interesting here is that the phenomenon of *Guit-guite* is characterized by better organization and in a very efficient and market-oriented manner. This indicates a departure from the previous *Giut- guite* practices. As the *Woreda* Deputy Administrator indicated, they are dealing with small groups of organized young men across different *Woredas*. They loot in their respective *Woreda* but transfer cattle to their fellow young men who sell the cattle as normal and legal in another *Woreda*. And in the same way, they receive the same number of cattle from the other *Guit-guite* in another *Woreda* and bring them inside their own *Woreda* to sell them in the market. After the regional government discovered the organized movement of the *Guit-guite,* it introduced a means of control for inter- *Woreda* and inter-Kebele cattle control in 2008. The new means of control demanded anyone walking with cattle to produce a letter of

approval from his *Kebele* chief. The letter of approval should state from which *Kebele* to which he is moving with cattle. But it was possible to avoid this by paying bribes. Or also to claim that the cattle was not for sale but was being driven to watering places, as was common among pastoralists anyway.

Since 2010, an additional measure was introduced to control cattle theft. This measure was to have a central cattle market in each *Woreda* and that cattle selling was to be conducted under state supervision. This meantthat any cattle trade outside the designated *Woreda* cattle market would not be allowed and, if it occurred, would have legal implications.

But, despite the different controlling mechanisms introduced by the regional government, there were always problems in carrying them out. Thus the shadow-markets continued to exist, as both sellers and buyers were willing to take the risk of defying the regulations. A further complicating factor is the fact that the area is on the border with South Sudan, and that the area across the border is also occupied by pastoralists. Thus, it is difficult to know which cattle is that belongs locally and therefore should be subject to local regulations, and which would belong to the South Sudanese side.

Different Actors in Cattle-Raiding

I have also claimed that there is an increasing use of modern weapons in the raiding and that this leads to more casualties. The civil wars in Ethiopia and in the Sudan in the 1980s contributed to the availability of weapons in the region which again added to the severity of cattle raiding. As a result of the availability of automatic weapons, cattle raiding are becoming more lethal and the scope is increasing, which makes it impossible for chiefs and elders to settle the disputes between the tribes involved. They have to compete with the weapons for respect and authority.

Similarly, I argued that the involvement of nation states, and also the nation state problems with armed opposition groups also played into the evolving processes of cattle raiding. Hence, there is also the issue of scale, in which what used to be traditional and local practices now get spread out and can affect stability of larger regions. To discuss such issues we have to return to the cattle raiding practices themselves. Which is to leave the local stealing of cattle and return to the large scale raids between larger groups.

Conflict in Gambella has always assumed to be inter-ethnic between the Anywaa and the Nuer, and the Murle and the Nuer. Yet, many of the violent conflicts in the region since 1993 have been among the different Nuer clans (Regassa, 2010; Dereje, 2011; Markakis, 2011). Here I discuss one of the inter-clan conflicts among the Nuer i.e. Jikany-Nuer and Lou-Nuer. Both clans are also in South Sudan, and have conflicts also there (see Manger, 2009). In both cases the conflicts escalate from local redistributive raiding to large-scale wars, partly as a consequence of the availability of weapons.

Discussing this issue with Jikany Nuer elders in Lari they told me that in the early days (going back to the 1950s) their territory extended up to Nasir and Akobo in what is currently South Sudan. Even though the Lou Nuer had occupied areas around Pibor River, cattle camp youth had to migrate further east to Akoboon their seasonal migration. This was because the water and pasture available in and around Pibor was not enough. For such movements to go on, the elders had to negotiate and agree on pasture and water sharing arrangements, and such agreements are still in practice in Akobo today. But they do not stop raiding. A policeman in Pagak explained that, despite the negotiated agreements, cattle-raiding wasstill going on by both Jikany and Lou, particularly at the end of the dry season, just before the Lou departed back to their place in Pibor.

But apart from ecological reasons linked to the natural environment the Nuer operated in there were also other extra-local or regional factors that contributed to the violent clashes between the two Nuer clans around Akobo. A split of SPLM/A in 1991 did not only split the Dinka and the Nuer parts of the SPLM Army, but the emergence of Rieck Machar and the SPLM/Nasir faction also produced increased tensions between the Jikany and the Lou, leading to serious clashes between them in 1993 that led to many deaths in Akobo. On the Ethiopian side the fall of the socialist Derg regime in Ethiopia, also in the 1990s, also affected the situation by removing state authorities involvement in these conflicts as the Ethiopia state in Addis was itself under attack by the TPLF.

The problems continued, and for instance, in May 2009, a violent incidence happened near Akoboin which Lou Nuer youth attacked Jikany villages in the middle of the night. The villages were surrounded on all sides and armed youth walked through the village, reportedly killing over a hundred civilians and injuring another fifty. Survivors of the attack told government officials that Lou Nuer went from house to house shooting people in their *tukuls* and burning the huts down. Most of the victims were women and children and some of them survived by pretending to be dead.In 2010, a peace agreement was made between the representatives of the two clans in Akobo, facilitated by Gambella Regional State and Jonglei State in South Sudan, which brought relative peace for the next year until another incidence happened in the beginning of 2011.

Another hostile relation is between the Nuer and the Murle. Ethiopian JikanyNuer and Murle are not close neighbors and they even do not share borders with each other. Nuer elders in Lari claimed that up until the 1950s, the territory of today's Nasir, where the Murle live today, was their former homeland. The expansion of the Lou Nuer for pasture and water towards the east has pushed the Murle further to the east i.e. towards Gambella. But the Murle do not migrate to the Ethiopian side of the border in search of water and pasture as their Lou Nuer neighbors do. They visit the Ethiopian Jikany Nuer mainly for cattle-raiding and child abduction. This makes the Murle one of the most feared groups among the Jikany

Nuer in Gambella. And the 2015 incident represents an example of the scale of violence.

There have been various incidences of cattle-raiding and child-abduction by the Murle along the border since the 1960s. Murle attacks intensified since the end of the Sudanese civil war in 2005. This could be due to the fact that during the civil war Murle had no access to the Ethiopian side of the border that was controlled by SPLM/A during the 1990s and early 2000. But the end of the civil war produces processes of demilitarization, which opened the way for Murle to reach the Ethiopian borderlands.

In May 2013 the Murle made a night attack at a place known as Bil-Rut in Wanthor district, Nuer Zone and killed seven people; abducted four boy children and wounded many people. The dead people included children, both old men and women and both young women and men. On 4th March 2014 the Murle cattle raiders also made another night attack at a place named Muon, near Jikaw, and abducted seven children and further killed six people of whom two were women. They also wounded seven people of whom three were men, two women, and two children Cattle-raiding by the Murle is considered to be more dangerous than raids carried out by Lou Nuer. This is partly because of the tactics used by the Murle in raiding and their unique action of child-abduction. Hoth Nyon, the Lari *Woreda* security head narrated:

> Murle, unlike the Lou, are very well armed and came in big numbers not only to villages but everywhere cattle and children could be found. Lou do not kill people and they do not take children. The Lou come in small numbers and in the dry season. The Murle are different.

One of the main issues that make Murle feared in Lari is their action of child-abduction. Murle do not abduct anyone they can find in a village but prefer children between the ages of 7-10. And girls are preferred over boys. The following is what the Lori *woreda* security head had to say:

> They abduct children and preferably girls mainly for cattle. Like the Nuer, the Murle also used cattle as bride wealth. So if they abduct a girl, she will be a source of cattle when she is to be married. The future husband brings cattle to her family when she is ready to marry. If they abduct a boy, he will be raised as Murle and he will be Murle. He will raid and abduct again when he becomes young.

> It is our sons who were abducted long time ago who are now looting our cattle and our girls. They do not know that we are relatives because they were converted to Murle. They became Murle and unlike us [Nuer] who have six gars [scar] on the forehead, their lower tooth is removed instead.

Some studies in South Sudan (Akuei, et.al, 2010: 53) indicate that the

kidnappings are motivated by Murle's low fertility rate which, in turn, is allegedly caused by widespread sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) within the Murle community. The studies indicate a relatively low population growth in Murle society, and a low population growth is likely to be attributed to livelihood related factors.

It was possible for me to interview three abducted children by Murle in 2011 and who were returned after three years in 2014 by the Ethiopian authorities. One was abducted while she was 11 and returned at 14. The other one was 9 when she was abducted. They told me that they were given to another Murle, who in turn demanded cattlefrom the right parents for the return of their child. Such a selling of abducted children is common in the area.

Proliferation of Arms and Uncoordinated Disarmament along the Border

What we see from the above descriptions is that raiding is taking new forms in which violence is increasing due to the use of modern weapons. But for a long time the governments involved saw the raids as being part of traditional culture and did very little about them. It was only since 2012 that the increasing nature of violent cattle-raiding along the border began to attract the attention of the two national governments, in South Sudan and Ethiopia. The first Joint Ministerial Commission meeting between Ethiopia and South Sudan was held in Juba, South Sudan, from February 27th to March 2nd 2012. The main objective was to establish a joint Border Administrators and Governors Commission to address matters concerning cattle theft and violence along the common border. Later in January 2013, senior army officers of Ethiopia and South Sudan have signed an agreement to work together on issues related to ensuring peace and security along their common border.

One strategy to make peace is to initiate processes of disarmament and people in Lari claimed that their weapons had indeed been taken by the government. For government officials, disarmament is indispensable in the region where the violent ethnic clash is a common phenomenon. In this section I offer some more comments on how the borderland communities were disarmed and how the violence in South Sudan since the CPA of 2005 has influenced the practice of disarmament in Gambella and in Jonglei state. Again, the situation is complicated by war and the proliferation of militarized groups within the different groups. Diana Felix da Costa (2012) shows how the disarming of local armed groups and militias is complicated by their links to larger fighting forces, like the SPLM/A and Sudan Armed forces (SAF), thus providing a link between local "tradition" and ongoing political developments on a national level. To illustrate the complexities de Costa continues:

> As in other areas of South Sudan, cattle-raiding has happened
> for generations. Cattle are a primary currency for transhumant

communities, representing wealth and social status. However, although competition for cattle and resources has historically been a major source of tension among communities in Jonglei, the past five years has seen a change in the way confrontations are experienced. Conflicts have become more violent, and no longer follow social rules the way they used to, with a rising number of deaths and displacement of fighters and civilians (Hutchinson & Jok, 2002).

Jonglei's inter-communal conflicts stem from competition over natural resources and political control, feelings of political and socio-economic marginalisation of certain groups over others, and a pervasive lack of accountability and reconciliation between communities. Yet, this competition for access to and control of water and grazing land is aggravated by a legacy of civil war, the widespread militarisation of society (Hutchinson & Jok, 2002) and broad availability of small arms, the weakening of traditional authority and dispute resolution mechanisms, the manipulation by local and national elites of local grievances and ethnic identities, and the absence of formal state-provided security. Poverty and a general perception that 'peace dividends' are not shared equally among groups also contributes to feelings of marginalisation and distrust in government (DDG et al, 2012:4). (da Costa, 2012:34)

As an example da Costa points towards the "The White Army"- militias which were made up of Lou Nuer armed civilians, mostly youth, and Popular Defence Force (PDF) of Murle led by David YauYau are notable and notorious armed groups during the civil war as well as active in Jonglei State. (ibid)

And we see similar developments across the border into Ethiopia. Historically, the Ethio-Sudanese border has been porous with cross-border movements of people and armies. Since the inception of the Sudanese civil war in the 1950s, the borderland people have been entangled in various levels of conflicts. Moreover, the presence and operation of armed movements in the area have also proliferated the availability of arms along the border. In the 1980s and 1990s, Gambella was a base for SPLM/A and the fall of the regime in Ethiopia in 1991 and the subsequent split of SPLM/A overflowed the region with armaments.

The recent disarmament in Gambella was conducted in 2005. Informants told me again and again that they had been disarmed in the midst of heavily armed group-attacks from the Murle and Lou Nuer, who in their turn had successfully resisted the multiple rounds of disarmament in South Sudan. A cattle keeper in Pagak, claimed:

Since the time they [Murle and Lou Nuer] heard our guns were taken, they attacked our village day and night. They had their

> guns. But we gave our guns to the government in return for government protection. We are now unable to protect ourselves.

The Regional Police Head explained on his part that there were two main necessities for disarming Ethiopian communities along the border with South Sudan in 2005 and 2006. One was an external factor relating to South Sudan. With the signing of the peace agreement in Sudan, the CPA of 2005, disarmament was the first priority and hence in the same year the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and SPLA conducted disarmament in Gambella. SPLA was allowed to disarm pastoral communities into Ethiopian territories because of the seasonal movements of some pastoralist groups avoiding disarmament in South Sudan.

The second reason disarmament was considered found essential in Gambella region was, still according to the regional police head, due to the supply of weapons in the area during the second Sudanese civil war and particularly in the aftermath of the 2003 incident in the region. Since the 1980s, Gambella region had been a battleground both for SPLM/A andalso discontented Ethiopian groups who were fighting regimes against the Derg. This left too many weapons in the region which made the region volatile.

But the disarmament of groups along the border, and to carry out such disarmament at the same time, proved difficult.Thus the Ethiopian side was being disarmed, while the South Sudanese side was not. Many informants claimed that they had been attacked by well-armed Murle and Lou Nuer while they were disarmed by Ethiopian authorities. A cattle-keeper stated that:

> …we have had much disarming by the government and all guns on our hands were collected and that is why we are vulnerable to armed raids.

The Southwest Ethiopian lowland periphery thus remains a site for armed struggle in the country. The current ruling regimes in Ethiopia and South Sudan had their bases along this porous border and the borderland continues to serve as a launching base for new discontented armed factions waging attacks against Addis Ababa and Juba. Today, there are plenty of armed resistance groups along this porous border. Some of them are bandits and criminal gangs without political agenda who used the war economy around South Sudan as a survival strategy; others might not have such political aims but arm themselves in self-defence.

For instance, since 2015, the SPLA-IO is claiming that SPLA-Juba is supporting an Ethiopian rebel movement, which has been involved in attacking their positions in Upper Nile. The leader of this movement is named as Thuwath Pal, a Jikany Nuer. Thuwath Pal was the governor of the Gambella region in the 1980s, before the fall of Derg regime in 1991. When the regime fell he fled along with the SPLA and South Sudanese refugees in Sudan. Pal later began a movement known as the Ethiopian Patriotic United Front (EPUF) in the late 1990s and allegedly went for

training in Eritrea, where he was also given weapons.

What has this to do with cattle raiding? The link is that such groups operate among local people and recruit members to their groups from local communities. In the process weapons get spread around, and in the process it becomes difficult to differentiate between the political resistance and the cattle raiding. Both are violent and both appear as organized armed groups. The consequences are serious and the April 15, 2016 incident with which I started the paper proves the point. It was indeed unique in its magnitude and level of damage. It receives lots of media coverage and attention from the Ethiopian Federal Government because of the magnitude and the damage it inflicted on the borderland communities.

But the problems did not end there. The following year, on 15th March 2017, another incidence happened in Jor and Gog *Woreda* of Anywaa Zone which led to the death of 28 people and the abduction of 43 children. Again the blame is was on the Murle. The Ethiopian authorities admit that more than 1000 armed Murle crossed the border into Ethiopia from Boma areas in South Sudan on the 15th and killed people and abducted children in Gambella region.

Conclusion

The understanding of cattle raids in the border regions between Ethiopia and South Sudan can no longer be explained by the old focus on ecological functionalism and the limited redistribution of cattle between tribes. It represents a complex process in which a series of factors play together in ways I have tried to outline in this paper. Because of such complexities the issue of cattle-raiding and child abduction is not a problem limited to Gambella alone. It is related to the political processes at the regional level and in particular political processes in Juba and Addis Ababa. There are many armed groups operating along the porous border between the two countries. Some of these armed groups have political agendas whereas others are just bandits utilizing the insecurity situation in the lowlands who depend on cattle raiding for their survival. And, the dynamics of cattle raiding along the Ethiopia and South Sudan borderlands are constantly developing. While the traditional forms of raiding practiced for centuries, i.e. to restock the herds, all within certain cultural rules and codes designed by elders and chiefs, havebeen replaced by new forms of raiding characterized by more deaths and more cattle taken. This does not only face the anthropologists with the challenge of understanding the empirical developments, but also with the challenge of developing conceptual frameworks that better can explain what is going on.

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Section IV

Health and Family Related Border Issues

Chapter 16

Balancing Actions on Many "Borders": Experiences of Midwives Delivering Infibulated Teenage Mothers at the Pokot Kenya-Uganda Border Corridor

Chris C. Opesen

Introduction

Female genital modification (FGM) is one of the many cultural and reproductive health (CRH) traditions crisscrossing global borders. Aware of the variations associated with it, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines FGM in collective terms as any human induced modification (alteration) to the female genitalia for reasons that are not medical (WHO 2008, UNICEF 2013).WHO also classifies Female genital modification into four typologies. Type one involves the partial or total removal of the prepuce (clitoridectomy). Type two, on the other hand, involves the partial or total removal of the prepuce and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (excision). Type three involves the narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and apositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the prepuce. The third type of FGM, which is also called infibulation, is the focus of this paper.

Type four is unclassified. It includes all other modifications to the genitalia for non-medical purposes: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping, stretching and cauterization. In all these four typologies, three million women undergo FGM annually and overall, over 200 million are excised worldover (UNICEF 2016). Africa alone,with over half of its constituent countries (28 countries) practicing FGM, accounts for over 102 million of these cases (UNICEF 2013). In eight of these countries, prevalence is almost universal (over 80%)[39]. In others, the prevalence ranges from high to very low: moderately high (51%-80%) in five countries;[40] medium/moderately low

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[39] Somalia (98 per cent), Guinea (96 per cent), Djibouti (93 per cent), Egypt (91 per cent), Eritrea (89 per cent), Mali (89 per cent), Sierra Leone (88 per cent) and Sudan (88 per cent) (UNICEF, 2013).
[40] Gambia (76 per cent), Burkina Faso (76 per cent), Ethiopia (74 per cent), Mauritania (69 per cent) and Liberia (66 per cent) (UNICEF, 2013).

(26- 50%) in six countries;[41] low prevalence (10%-25%) exists in fourcountries;[42] while low prevalence (≤10%) exists in six countries[43].

All these four typologies of FGM including infibulation (FGM type three) are practiced in both Uganda and Kenya (Grassivora & Busatta 2009, UBOS 2011, 28 FGM Too Many 2013). And like in the Tepeth and Kadam communities, the Pokot that are the focus of this paper practice infibulation as a rite of passage to womanhood in children aged 9-14 years (28 FGM Too Many 2013, Gieszl 2011). After ninty days of healing and socialisation to womanhood from the day of excision, the neophyte aged 9-14 years then graduates as a woman and is captured into her house of matrimony by the groom. Since menarche commences in puberty, it is scientifically possible for such teenagers to conceive and reach delivery time within a year in marriage (Kpedekpo 1982, Dawson *et al* 2015a). Unfortunately, very little has been done to study the experiences[44] of midwives delivering these teenage mothers especially, in poor countries (Dawson *et al* 2015a).

To make a substantive contribution to the contemporary corpus of knowledge in this area, this chapter explores how the experiences of midwives delivering infibulated teenage mothers at the Pokot Kenya-Uganda border corridor involve balancing many borders. Key among these borders are: the international border between Kenya and Uganda, the border between the legal and social (the normative, moral and spiritual) and the border between traditional practices and the modern bio-medical standards.

The balancing act of midwives the chapter presents is based on findings from a larger ethnographic study at the Pokot Amudat district (Kara-Pokot) Kenya-Uganda border. Accounts from participant observation are corroborated with evidence from two labor ward life stories by midwives in Karita HC III, hermeneutics and five other ethnographic interviews involving three midwives, one TBA and one doctor. All these participants were followed and/or observed for the entire participant observation period.

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[41] Guinea-Bissau (50 per cent), Chad (44 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire (38 per cent), Kenya (27 per cent), Nigeria (27 per cent) and Senegal (26 per cent) (UNICEF, 2013).
[42] Central African Republic (24 per cent), Yemen (23 per cent), United Republic of Tanzania (15 per cent) and Benin (13 per cent)(UNICEF, 2013).
[43] Iraq (8 per cent), Ghana (4 per cent), Togo (4 per cent), Niger (2 per cent), Cameroon (1 per cent) and Uganda (1 per cent) (UNICEF, 2013)
[44] Experiences in the context of this paper operationally refers to the practical realities-emotional, physiological, spiritual, mental, objective or subjective that interface with midwives in their day to day labor ward duty of delivering teenage mothers that underwent infibulation in puberty as a rite of passage in Pokot

Balancing Actions on Many "Borders"

First and foremost, among the borders midwives delivering infibulated teenage mothers in Pokot have to balance their actions on is the international border between Uganda and Kenya itself. With less developed pelvis and lessened elasticity of the birth canal, the labor experience of an infibulated teenage mother is very complicated. It is characterized by delayed labor, high risks of fistula, sepsis, extreme hemorrhage, maternal, and new born deaths among other complications. To manage these risks, midwives delivering these teenage mothers must rationally balance their acts. This is done to determine which ones to handle with low maternal health outcome risks within their poorly staffed and ill equipped facilities (BMAU 2015) and which cases to refer to a hospital on the Ugandan side or on the Kenyan side of the border. This balancing act takes into consideration many factors. One is the expertise to handle particular complications and the other is the case arrival time into the facility. Quite often, late arrivals with serious complications are referred as they present more maternal health risks. Sereen and Maine (1994) validate this observation in their argument that attendance of antenatal care (ANC) and timely reporting for labor in the health facility can reduce labor complications more so, where the necessary infrastructure is available.

When a referral decision has been made, the preference of the mother in question and her care takers also influences if a referral is made to a hospital on the Kenyan side or a hospital on the Ugandan side of the border. This is because when the border of preference is ignored, mothers usually reject referrals and instead return home or to a traditional birth attendant (TBA). Referring to one of the complications she has handled, Pauline, a midwife in Karita HC III, for example, highlighted:

> … Many of them (expectant mothers) come in stage two after smelling danger. At this point the TBA has surrendered. When they reach here and we see we can't handle their cases there is nothing else to do but refer her to Amudat or Kapenguria hospital in Kenya. **…**….. I referred another one to Amudat. Her condition was worse. She couldn't even urinate. I called a vehicle but when they reached the village to pick her, she hid. She didn't want go to Amudat hospital…………

These referrals also involve balancing decisions based on availability of means (an ambulance) and medical infrastructure. Amudat hospital, situated in the Ugandan side, has no surgeon or blood for a C-section delivery. In such situations, midwives refer the case to Kapenguria hospital in Kenya. As Pauline illustrates above, for most mothers, this is the preferred option. This is because of the long period of displacement they had into Kenya from the 1970s to 2005 (Mkutu 2007, Kim 2007). When this happens however, the midwife has to also sit in the ambulance many times and cross the international border to Kenya. They make themselves available to avert any emergencies that could occur on the way. The

preference of Kapenguria hospital in Kenya is also informed by the confidence Pokot mothers have on the quality of maternal services in Kenya as compared to the one found in Uganda. It is also influenced by the assurance of social support from the stock of social capital accumulated over the three decades of their asylum seeking in Kenya (Mkutu 2007, Kim 2007). Furthermore, since the Kenyan side is more developed, Kenyan referrals are more appealing. At least, they represent opportunities to see towns with street lights away from the rural, unlike Amudat or Napak. The fact that midwives consider all these intricacies when deciding whether to refer an expectant teenage mother to a Ugandan or Kenyan hospital is a testament that their experience involves balancing their referral actions at this international border every now and then. Not only is their decision important to save life but it is also necessary to satisfy the preferences of the teenage mothers they serve.

In addition, the lived experience of midwives delivering infibulated teenage mothers in Pokot is characterized by balancing of actions on the border between the legal and the social (normative, spiritual and moral laws). The balancing act on this border intensified from 2010 and 2011, when FGM was banned in Uganda and Kenya respectively (Shweder 2013, Salonen 2012). Like in the Kenya 2011 Act, the Uganda FGM 2010 Act has harsh penalties for participation in FGM. A person convicted of practicing FGM faces a sentence of up to ten years in prison. For aggravated FGM defined as a case where FGM results into death or disability or infecting the victim with HIV/AIDS, the punishment is life imprisonment. In the same way, for aiding or taking part in this practice, one is liable, on conviction, to a prison term of up to five years (Parliament of the Republic of Uganda 2010, Kenya National Council for Law Reporting 2011, Shell-Duncan et al. 2013). Partly, in resistance of these laws, FGM in Uganda increased between 2006 and 2011 from 0.6% to 1.4% at national level and from 1.8% to 4.6% in the Karamoja Kenya-Uganda border region, where Pokot falls (UBOS 2011). However, while this law requires everyone including health workers to report any cases that come to their attention, many midwives do not comply. This is because of intimidation by traditionalists who are also the custodians of both the normative, moral and spiritual laws. For acting in ways that threaten FGM, for example, they are investigated and cautioned by the Pokot elders. Attesting to this, Becky, the in-Charge Lokales HC II reflected from her experience as follows:

> Including LCs, some leaders don't support war against FGM. I sent one of our nurses here to write the names of girls under twelve years in the community. They came here to ask me what the reason is. I told them we just want to know [the number] for planning purposes. They said, "If you want to take our girls to the Police and they arrest us, it will not be good." They intimidated me because they thought it was about FGM.

Apart from intimidation, some Pokot midwives are also bribed not to report FGM cases they receive, noted Martin, one of the midwives in Karita HC III. Underlying this experience is a rational decision a midwife takes to balance the risk of following the legal versus the social, which is ruthlessly enforced in her/his everyday social life. Because the cost of deviating from the broader moral, normative and spiritual laws is higher, severe, prompt and more communal compared to that of the legal, many of these cases go unreported. This thus reinforces the argument that a decision by a midwife to report or not an FGM case involves balancing actions on the borders of the legal and the social. As argued by Shell-Duncan, Wander, Hernlund and Moreau's (2013) and Mackie's (2000), deviance is inevitable when the legal framework implemented by the state is the antithesis of the social. And not surprisingly, the social is sanctioned by the community to ensure continuity of social conventions like FGM that determine womanhood, leadership and marriage prospects. Many FGM initiates are increasingly thus, seeking anti-biotic treatment in health facilities without being reported to the legal institutions because the social is overwhelmingly more intimidating and consequential.

My experience at Amudat is also indicative of this trend. When I first went there in February 2015, I met Dorcas, a sixteen-year-old first-time expectant mother from across the border in Kenya. Dorcas did not undergo FGM before marriage. She had thus to be subjected to FGM during labor. This is because of the belief that a TBA who assists a woman that has not undergone FGM to deliver before excising her will be struck blind by the Pokot "god" for coming in contact with an impure woman. Sadly, Dorcas had severe hemorrhage during her obstetric FGM and was brought to Amudat hospital in Uganda for assisted labor. The delivery became complicated and both the baby and Dorcas died. Instead of reporting to police, the hospital staff, however, allowed Dorcas' caretakers to escape back to Kenya after paying the Kshs 500 dictated by the hospitals' standing order in the region (Ariong 2016) to facilitate the burial of the dead they were leaving behind.

In addition, it is a policy in both Uganda and Kenya that every expectant mother must attend ANC in each trimester. This is to enhance early detection and management of complications. Unfortunately, most infibulated teenage mothers never attend ANC and do not have personal screening files (BMAU 2015). Technically, such cases in lower level health centers are supposed to be referred to higher level facilities that have the capacity to handle emergencies. Furthermore, many expectant mothers check-in at the health facility too late and at the border of life and death. Without ambulances to facilitate movement, midwives are expected to balance their acts in the execution of this policy. This is because the moral law to save life that they swear allegiance to supersedes this policy. As a balancing act, midwives also make these delicate decisions because ethically, it is more important for them to save life than to be legally right. Martin (2015) agrees. He argues that of paramount importance for a

midwife is to maintain the best interests of the patient that he/she is caring for. This explains why many midwives continue to handle cases that have not even attended antenatal care (ANC) clinics or checking in at midnight instead of making referrals as stipulated by the policy. The challenge is that the balancing act midwifes engage in sometimes involves misjudgment which sometimes results in more severe complications. Reflecting on a related experience, Cathy, the lead midwife in Karita HC III, had this to say:

> I remember one very complicated case I handled in 2013. It was of a prime gravida. She was a teenage mother brought in at midnight already in the second stage of labor, with the baby's head seen out-implying that the mother was ready to push. When I did a vaginal examination. I found two things. One, the traditional birth attendant (TBA) had tried to help her deliver. However, like all TBAs here, she had used a septic arrow as a blade to administer episiotomy in the first stage of labor. [Because of that] she had cut her vaginal walls inside and so she was bleeding internally. Two, the baby had a facial presentation which is a complicated case because unlike the foetal skull, the facial bones do not mould. The worst thing is that this was an infibulated case. I sent the guard (Askari) to call Martin, the Nursing Assistant to come and give me help

Some complications, similar to that of Dorcas, brought to Amudat hospital in Uganda for assisted labor after FGM, even lead to maternal deaths. But the fact that midwives contravene policy provisions to help these mothers points to the reality that the balance of the moral and ethical law is often more compelling to them than that of the legal. It is also stronger than their frustrations, anger and the difficult conditions under which they work put together.

The experience of midwives delivering infibulated teenage mothers in Pokot is also characterized by the balancing of actions on the border between traditional practices and the modern bio-medical standards. As argued by Dawson et.al. (2015a) and Jacoby and Smith (2013), the balancing of acts on this border is important to demonstrate not only the cultural competence a midwife needs in order to adapt to the cultural environment of her practice but also the need to have the wisdom to avoid the risk of fights with mothers. The fights are multifaceted. Infibulated teenage mothers for example, have a higher risk of suffering from severe tears and extreme bleeding in the birth canal than their counterparts, more so, without modern hemostatic agents. Due to lack of capacity and to avoid repeat episiotomy in subsequent births, traditionally, TBAs do not stitch these tears. But because modern bio-medical practice requires these tears to be stitched, midwife labor ward "fights" with new-mothers and their caretakers are inevitable. With her caretakers, the mother resists being stitched. The midwife, on the other hand, keeps explaining why she needs

to be stitched. With a strong team of traditional midwives usually on the side of the new mother, the midwife has to eventually yield into her will or risk a violent humiliation by her caretakers. Decisions of this kind reflect the balancing of actions by a midwife on the border between traditional practice and the modern bio-medical standard. Illustrative of this is Cathy's experience:

> I remember one very complicated case I handled. It is of a prime gravida in 2013… the mother refused to be stitched. I tried to counsel her but all her caretakers shouted at me. I asked them why they did not want me to stitch her. 'Do you want her to go through this again in the next delivery? You will not do it, will you?" they questioned

Compromising decisions of this sort could, however, carry risks. As Cathy cited under the balancing act on the border between the legal and the social, a mother can, for example, have severe bleeding in the birth canal if not stitched. In addition, tears left open can become septic and develop serious infections. Martin, a male midwife in Karita HC III, recounts:

> When we do episiotomy, these wounds may take time to heal. They may even get infections if not managed well. What we normally do is to stitch them and then treat with antibiotics. Unfortunately, some mothers completely refuse to be stitched because they believe that if stitched, next time they are giving birth, you will cut the same place.

As way of self-defense in the event of accusations, midwives thus demand every mother that resists stitching after labor tears to sign in their records. That way, they defend the decision not to be stitched was done on the mother's will. *"For self-defence,"* Cathy narrates, *"*I insist that she signs that it was her own decision. If anything happens, I will not be held accountable." Martin also corroborated; "To manage mothers who refuse to be stitched after episiotomy, we make them sign some form for our own protection.*"*

The second facet of these fights usually occurs when caretakers attempt to flee from the facility, leaving the deceased behind. In Pokot, this is driven by a contagion worldview of death. According to this worldview, when a person dies, his spirit is believed to become restless, dangerous and will thus, hover around the corpse to look for another living host. It is also believed that if one comes closer to the corpse, this spirit will enter his/her body and s/he will also die. This explains why Pokot people flee and avoid possible contact with a corpse as soon as one dies. If the deceased dies at home, the home is abandoned or will have a death purification rite performed. This is to avert catastrophe from the profaned contact with the spirit of the dead that henceforth is in the margins and is thus dangerous. As a spiritual purification rite, a black he-goat is sacrificed. Excreta from its offal is sprinkled in all the houses, around the home and on all members.

The Pokot call this purification rite *Kitse.* It is performed to incorporate this spirit into a harmless and peaceful state from the border of danger, harm, restlessness and search for a new living host. This emic construction and practice of *Kitse* Gennep's (1908), Douglas (1966) and Turner's (1966) demonstration of perceptions of persons in the margins as hot, harmful and dangerous and thereby the   justification   for their isolation until incorporation in high belief societies. Validating the significance of *Kitse,* Douglas (1966) further argues that rituals of this kind are important because individuals in transition are helpless and need to be helped to become normal again through ritual performance. Without it, misfortune such as another death may be traced to them (Douglas 1966). Furthermore, Gennep (1908) coined and defined "rites of passage" as rituals performed in ceremonies accompanying individual life crises. Turner (1966) slightly modified this definition and constructed these rites as rituals performed to mark transition from one stage of development to another. Given the relevance of these classical constructions even in the context of Pokot, *Kitse* in Pokot is thus regarded as a rite of passage. This is because it marks one's transition from physical life into the border of death and an invisible spiritual being that needs to be helped to transition from a dangerous spirit of the dead in limen to an incorporated spiritual border that does not cause harm as a risk (death) aversion measure.

However, when kin dies in a health unit, caretakers are likely to leave his corpse in the sickbed, participant observation demonstrated. It is not thus uncommon for wards in the region to stink especially in situations where the refrigeration systems in the morgues are poor or where hospitals have no cemeteries. Moroto hospital, the regional referral hospital for Karamoja region has, for example, had many of these cases reported especially in 2015 and 2016 with many patients running away from wards because of the abandoned dead bodies (Ariong 2016). And the case of Dorcas that I observed is an empirical evidence of such a scene. When midwives including those of Pokot origin are left with the deceased, they also suffer from the fright of the spirits of the dead. Overwhelmed by these worldviews, abandoned rotting bodies and to avoid fights with the caretakers who leave the bodies of their kin therefore, health units have introduced a standing order to charge caretakers burial fees. Introduction of these fees, can therefore, be considered as a balancing act. Depending on whether the deceased is an adult or a child, the fees charged range from Kshs 300 (Ushs 10.000), Kshs 200 (Ushs 7.000).

Unfortunately, infibulation contributes to high newborn and maternal death risks (Dawson et al. 2015a). In addition, since infibulation in Pokot symbolizes the coming of age and marriage worthiness, infibulated girls as young as 9-14 years are married off in Pokot on the day of excision. With children also essentially, regarded as symbols of prestige, these "child" brides are expected to conceive as soon as they enter their houses of matrimony. Any delays may lead to divorce and refund of bride wealth. The tragedy however, is, without well-developed pelvis, these child brides

become a high risk group for newborn and maternal mortality (Kpedekpo 1982). As the case of Dorcas demonstrates, many, fail to deliver and die during labor, exposing midwives to the spirits of the dead and the fright that comes with it. This is what makes midwives ensure caretakers pay money to cover the burial expenses of their deceased ones as a balancing act to reduce the length of their exposure to the deceased and the fright of their spirits.

As observed under the balancing act on the borders of the legal and social, given the preference of TBAs in Pokot, many teenage mothers only come to the health facility when the TBA is defeated by a complication. This unfortunately also triggers midwife-care taker fights. This is because even if the national policy requires all mothers that do not attend ANC to be sent to referral hospitals that can handle complications (BMAU 2015), a midwife who follows this policy and refuses to deliver a late arrival in a lower level health center will socially be accused of neglecting her duty. To save life as a moral and ethical law or even a traditional expectation and avoid fights, midwives must balance on their acts. They do this by at least showing concern and attempting to help late arrivals regardless of their ANC seeking behavior. And this happens especially in a situation where there is no ambulance for referral. This implies that a midwife that gives tradition more importance than the standard bio-medical procedure wins more public respect and reverence than one who does not.

Similarly, infibulated teenage mothers that refuse to be stitched or suffer fistula oftentimes present with many complications. Corroborating Cathy's account, for example, Pauline, the third midwife in Karita HC III narrates:

> … … These women present here, they come with shocking complications including fistula, the holes that develop from the breakdown in the tissue between the vaginal wall and the rectum or the vaginal wall and the bladder or even both. My assessment reports show those with tears running from the vagina to the rectum/anus. This is what we call recto-virginal fistula (RVF). The worst cases, however, involve those with tears running from the vagina to the bladder. This is what we call vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF). For VVF cases, we refer them to Amudat hospital because it has a doctor who can handle them. FGM causes this problem because it makes the birth canal narrow. When this happens, a woman needs to push harder and longer. This is what causes these walls to rapture. Women with these walls raptured also suffer with urinary or fecal incontinence. They cannot control the urine. Feces flow involuntarily. If she urinates feces will also flow. And because of the constant flow of urine and feces, I have seen those with skin and other tissues damaged in the vulva and vagina.

Midwives therefore experience difficulty in breathing during examination of mothers with fistula, sepsis or both because of the foul smell, especially,

given that they suffer more from prolonged labor (dystocia). Furthermore, where a complication is overwhelming, modern biomedical practice requires one to seek the support of a colleague. Doing this with infibulated teenage mothers, however, makes them uncomfortable. Many may run away and never return to the facility. To manage such a risk, a midwife must thus be culturally competent to, with dramaturgy, professionally handle best the situation without obviously showing that she is affected by the extent of the tear, its foul smell and by not inviting another colleague. When they see midwives calling in a friend to come and see or help or ask questions perceived to be "stigmatizing" or "discriminatory", infibulated teenage mothers are repulsed to traditional birth attendants (TBAs) away from health facilities. Similar observations have been reported in other countries. In Canada, for example, Huston (2000) observed immigrant women that have undergone FGM being affected and not returning for their next visits when the health-worker they have gone to see appeared shocked or acted inappropriately by calling a colleague to view the woman's genitals. A suggestion for pelvic examination for routine papanicolaou (PAP) smear to screen for cervical cancer was also considered totally inappropriate. Equally repulsive was the procedure that required examining the genitalia (Huston 2000) .

To avert this risk, many midwives in Pokot engage in a balancing border act by allowing mothers to come with their TBAs or to go to their trusted TBAs even when alternative medicine is not allowed in health facilities(Sundal, 2012). Pauline's experience is more telling:

> … Some mothers also escape from the health center or demand to be allowed to go to a TBA, for a service they feel is better delivered by TBAs including making a stubborn placenta come out after birth. Even here in Karita there is one who is highly respected. Last week we had an interesting case. The placenta delayed to come out. I asked her to wait until we finish treating her first, but she insisted that she wanted to go to the TBA. The moment she massages me, she said, it would come out. I had nothing to do. She left and when she returned in the evening she remarked, 'didn't I tell you? I am now okay.'

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates the labor ward experiences of midwives at the Pokot Kenya-Uganda border corridor as a rational balancing act on many borders. The key borders include: the international border between Kenya and Uganda, the border between the legal and the social (normative, moral and spiritual laws) and the border between traditional practices and the modern bio-medical standards. The paper also reveals that poorly balanced acts on any of these borders comes with undesirable consequences including intimidation, fights for the midwife as well as more labor complications for the mother. As a long-term effect,

poor balancing of acts also strains not only midwives relations but also presents risks for them from the unbalanced border(s) in question. On the other hand, rationally balanced decisions on each of these borders can bring the midwife the experience of respect and freedom from risk, reprimand and other costs flowing from the borders. Improving the competences of midwives in recognizing, managing and balancing their acts on these borders including, the politics involved would, therefore, be a good step towards improving not only the experiences of midwives working in the contexts of infibulation, early age marriages, motherhood and multi-faceted borders like Pokot but also those of the infibulated teenage mothers that they handle. Part of this competence improvement process should involve promoting education in Pokot to raise local content in the midwifery practice. Currently, only six per cent and twelve per cent of Pokot females and males respectively are literate (UBOS & ICF, 2011). This implies that the majority of the midwives in this border corridor are non-native. In Karita HC III, for example, out of the four midwives working there, only one is Pokot. This brings in complexity in rapport building, communication. It may also create ground for stereotyping or poor balancing of acts especially on the traditional border as observed in the relationship between Somali mothers and medics in Canada (Huston, 2000). Given the status quo of low native content in midwifery in Pokot within many cases no Pokot midwife in the entire facility, the current preference of TBAs to professionals by mothers in Pokot can be interpreted as a partial indictment of "exotic" midwives working in Pokot for lacking the necessary cultural competence. This means that a great social distance between midwives and there would be clients exists. Obviously that creates a gap in midwife-mother mutual understanding, relations building and confidence levels (Howitz 1990). This social distance may also partly explain why Pokot mothers only come to midwives when the TBAs they trust have failed and in the company of a TBA whose work is to observe how the midwife handles the case. This observation is supported by Dawson et al (2015b) review of global midwifery experience. In their review, it was found that where midwives work ineffectively within the cultural context of the women and their families, their attractiveness to clients is likely to be low. This is because cultural competence affects rapport building. Similar findings have been reported by Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs (1989) and Phiri, Dietsch, & Bonner (2010). In their studies, Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs (1989) and Phiri, Dietsch, & Bonner (2010) indicated that working effectively in a cross-cultural context and provision of culturally appropriate care that centers on a woman's cultural requirements demands communication and positive attitudes. All this is supportive of the need to have a health system that values diversity and enables midwives to work in cross cultural situations. Regrettably, this does not seem to be the case in the marginalized context of Pokot at the Kenya-Uganda border where the level of cross-cultural competence is limited by low local content in midwifery.

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Chapter 17

Reality of Hepatitis B in Uganda: an Anthropological Investigation of Access Challenges to Services among Truckers and Commercial Sex-Workers at Malaba Border

Aguto Opoya Yolam, Bateganya Fred Henry and Mukama Raymond

Introduction

This study was conducted at Malaba, along the Kenya-Uganda border. Malaba is home and work station to myriads of people who are engaged in different forms of human adaptations. Key among these are long-distance truck drivers, sex workers, clearing agents, *boda-boda* riders and people engaged in different business activities.

As is the case with other "neglected" and hard to reach areas like landing sites, borders face challenges of access to health care and services. Like other borders in Uganda, Malaba border faces key health challenges. Some of these challenges include: unclean water, poor sanitation and the much-known HIV and AIDS disease and Hepatitis B Virus (Hep B), as shall be seen in this paper. While a lot has been studied and reported about HIV and AIDS (including at borders in Uganda) not much is known about Hep B in Uganda. Hep B is reported to be one of the main causes of mortality and morbidity (Hutin *et al* 2018). The infection prevalence in Africa is put at 6.1% (WHO 2017). The current Hep B infection diagnosis and treatment record in Uganda (and indeed other parts of Africa) offers little confidence to achieving the WHO set target elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030.

Using empirical data from focus group discussions, observations, formal and informal interactions with truckers and commercial sex workers (two groups among many other actors at the border),this paper seeks to show how the sexual transactions and nature of their main sources of livelihood presents major challenges to Hep B transmission and treatment not only at Malaba border and the neighbouring villages but also along the transport corridor where truckers routinely ply. It also highlights what is known about Hep B, existing access challenges to this treatment and vaccination and what should be done to improve access to vaccination and treatment.

The Border

Malaba, a border town along the Kenya -Uganda border, came to light and prominence during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway in the 1900s. Whereas Malaba- Uganda is found in Tororo district in the Eastern part of the country, Malaba-Kenya is located in Teso North Sub County, Busia County.

Malaba is among the busiest border crossing on the main Nairobi- Kampala highway. It is located about 14 kilometres east of Tororo, the nearest large town and the location of the district headquarters.

The population of Malaba was reported to be 18,224 (UBOS, 2014). It must be noted though that this population does not include the many people who either come from neighboring sub counties and towns to work or pass through here and sometimes spend a couple of nights in lodges and inns (without permanent homes in the town).

Being among the busiest borders in the country has led to an influx of people from different regions of Uganda and indeed elsewhere in the East African countries. Malaba is home to various ethnicities and nationalities. Historically, Malaba was home to the Iteso ethnic group, with families and clans living on both sides of the border. Due to various socio-economic changes, urbanization, migration, education and growth of trade and business the ethnic composition and nationalities at Malaba have changed.

Nationalities found at Malaba include: Burundians, Kenyans, Rwandese, Tanzanians and Ugandans. Ethnic groups living or working there are: Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kalenjin, Karimajong, Samia, Baganda, Basoga, Banyankore, Bagisu, Japadhola, Iteso, Chaga, Haya, Sukuma, Fipa, Hutu Tutsi and Burundians. Swahili is a widely spoken language in Malaba.

It can thus be said that Malaba is a multi-ethnic community with people moving in and out doing business. Anyone arriving at Malaba cannot fail to notice money-changing, *boda-boda* (bicycle and motorcycle) riders and clearing and forwarding agents, who are involved in brisk business among a bee hive of activities. Malaba town is inundated with many shops, trucks, *matatus* (commuter taxis), supermarkets and rental houses. Many small-scale traders are involved in *magendo* or illegal border trade because they cannot afford the huge tax levied by the Kenya and Uganda revenue agencies on goods and merchandise. Seeing that Malaba is a major border crossing point between Kenya and Uganda, one cannot fail to notice long distance truck drivers who ply the Mombasa- Kampala- Kigali and Kinshasa transport corridor. With all these categories of people involved in various forms of livelihoods, it is a little surprising that commercial sex workers have positioned themselves to "service" this seemingly huge *clientele*.

The fluid nature of human livelihoods and activities at Malaba could be said to be majorly transactional. And each actor in the transactional activity exchanges goods or services for a return, usually in monetary terms. From the Kenyan side of the border, most people cross to buy agricultural products such as bananas, mangoes, pineapples, cassava, groundnuts and maize. On their part, people crossing from the Ugandan side of the border go to Kenya to buy processed goods like cooking oil, baking flour, salt, soap and other detergents and hair and body beauty oils among others. Key

actors in the "service" sector at Malaba are commercial sex workers who usually provide services to the many truckers and other actors.

Since this paper focuses on long-distance truck drivers and commercial sex workers (CSWs), it is important to briefly unpack who they are. Long distance truck drivers (here after referred to as truckers) refer to"….truck drivers and their assistants, individuals who earn a living transporting goods along major transport corridors within the country and across national boundaries"(KMCC Uganda 2014:1).

Truckers are believed to operate a complex sexual network along transport corridors where they spend a whole lot of time, sometimes as long as three months, a behaviour that has made them be categorized as a high-risk group (Thakur *et al* 2015, Sawal *et al* 2016, KMCC Uganda 2014). It has been reported variously that truckers (including those in Uganda) engage in multiple sexual partnerships, fail to consistently use condoms; and often delay seeking treatment for some of the sexually transmitted infections they get (KMCC Uganda 2014).

Given the presence of truckers and the fluidity and constant flux of people crossing the border to either Kenya or Uganda, commercial sex workers (CSWs) are active and engage in transactional sex at an alarming scale (KMCC Uganda 2014).The fact that truckers' sexual practices are closely intertwined with CSWs (the key actors in the sexual network) presents major sexual and reproductive health concerns not only to actors in this network, but also the overall public health terrain at the border and the entire region. While HIV has variously been associated with truckers and CSWs at many borders, Hepatitis B (Hep B) is an equally devastating disease. Hep B is a disease that is increasingly becoming a public health challenge not only at Malaba border but in other regions of the country.

Hep B is a contagious liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) (CDC 2010). An infected person can either develop "acute" infection or chronic illness (CDC 2010). There are several tell-tale signs of Hep B. Some of these signs include: yellow jaundice, fever, chills, appetite loss and nausea (NAS 2000).Hep B is spread via a number of ways. But it is commonly spread in situations "when blood, semen, or other body fluids from a person infected with the HBV enter the body of someone who is not infected" (CDC 2010:1). This means that the main modes of transmission are: having sex with an infected partner; sharing of sharp objects including needles, injections and syringes; blood transfusion from an infected person; and passing of the virus from mother to child during birth (CDC 2010)

Viral hepatitis caused 1.34 million deaths in 2015. That figure is comparable to deaths caused by tuberculosis and it is higher than those caused by HIV. It is well established that the African region and the Western Pacific Region are the most affected by Hep B (WHO 2017). Given the attention accorded to tuberculosis and HIV (Global Fund TB, HIV and Malaria) especially in African countries, one wouldn`t be far off

the mark to suggest that it is likely that Hep B deaths may be increasing while HIV and TB deaths are decreasing. Global players such as World Health Organization, Vaccine Alliance (formerly GAVI) and others have set out to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030 (WHO 2017). This can only happen if all countries test and vaccinate their citizens.

Hepatitis B in Context

East African borders, including Malaba are characterized by limited or underserved health/social services, a high level of informality, ragged infrastructure, and a highly mobile and migratory nature of key actors. These characteristics not only affect social structures and economic livelihoods of communities and groups that live here, but also present major challenges to the spread and control of diseases and epidemics. While folks who live in fairly stable relationships and households both at the border and neighbouring villages are also susceptible to contracting Hep B, truckers, sex workers and other folks who engage in casual and transactional sexual activities at the border stand a high risk of contracting Hep B. Known modes of Hep B transmission, chief of which being a contact disease, seem to point to a major public health problem whose impact and effects can sometimes be felt beyond the border as truckers and sex workers can "transport" the disease along the transport corridor and the neighbouring villages. Hep B can be contracted by babies (whose mother has the Hep B virus) and anyone who comes into contact with body fluids (sweat, blood etc) from an Hep B infected person, which could be sexually or through other interactions.

The danger of Hep B is partly anchored in the fact that someone infected with it can carry it for a considerably long time. Such individuals, sometimes called carriers (NAS2000), can infect other people with whom they relate intimately or through exchange/injection of blood and other fluids. There is no doubt that unless government diagnoses and adequately handles those found to be positive or vaccinate those that are negative, the incidence of Hep B infections is likely to increase (WHO 2017). Albeit many challenges, recent events reported widely in the media point to concerted efforts by the government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Health (MoH) and health partners of scaling up access to Hep B vaccination and treatment services in the country. It is the need to understand Hep B dynamics and challenges at borders, specifically Malaba border where we have many truckers and commercial sex workers, highly sexually risk groups, that this study was conceived.

Research questions that guided this study were:

1) What do truckers and commercial sex workers know about Hep B?
2) How much is Hep B a social problem at the border?
3) Which challenges have affected Hep B vaccination and treatment at Malaba border?

4) What should be done to scale up access to Hep B vaccination and treatment for truckers and commercial sex workers?

Participants of the Study and Methods of Data Collection

Eight focus group discussions (FGDs) and seven informal interviews were conducted during this study. FGD participants and informal interview respondents were largely semi-literate with only five of them reporting to have gone beyond ordinary level secondary education. FGDs were conducted in: Swahili (with 3 participants); Luganda (with 2 participants); Lusoga (with 2 participants); and English (with 1 participant). FGDs were conducted with 4 truckers and 4 sex workers' groups. Altogether, sixty four male and female participated in the FGDs and informal interviews.

There were thirty male and thirty four female FGD participants and respondents respectively. Of the thirty male respondents who took part in the study, twenty three said they were married (or lived with someone as if married) and seven were single. All female were single, though thirteen reported being single mothers. All participants and respondents had either migrated to Malaba or simply passed through or came to work there. All female rented where they lived while truckers either stayed in guest houses or with the commercial sex workers from whom they sought services.

All interviews and discussions were audio recorded and later transcribed. We conducted both manual and computer aided analysis. Content analysis was used to identify occurrence of particular views and perceptions. Thematic analysis was used to identify both pre-determined and emerging themes. Allocated codes were then used and uploaded into Atlas (ti) for further analysis.

Disaster at the Border

Interactions with FGD participants and informal interview respondents identified two forms of awareness about Hep B. These were: ever hearing about HBV and knowing what Hep B was. While most FGD participants (47) had ever heard about HBV, only 17 knew what Hep B was. In terms of knowing what HBV was, 13 were female (sex workers) and 4 were male (truckers).

The following excerpts highlight what the "ever heard about Hep B" category said. We quote from truckers who participated in an FGD:

> I have only heard about this disease but that's all. First of all they haven't told us anything regarding this disease, for instance, whether to stop taking sodas or any other thing. I mean they used to tell us to prevent AIDS through use of condoms. So we want to know where it comes from whether we stop putting on black clothes, taking Panadol or alcohol because we have not got any sensitization.

Another participant in the same group added:

> I was in Iganga when I heard them mobilising and sensitizing that people should go and get vaccinated against Hep B but I don't know anything about it. I was going to go but before I could do that again I heard on TV that there are fake drugs. That scared me. I didn't go there because I don't know the right drugs.

A third trucker, participating in an FGD on Tororo road, has a similar notion:

> I have heard people talking about it but that's all, I don't know what it is. I did not go to the hospital because am a hustler. I will be losing time to finish up with my daily work. Time is money, will be losing money lining up there.

Of the seventeen who reported knowing what Hep B was, most said they had heard about it through different forms of media. They reported that they didn't know anything beyond what had been shared on the media or from the health facilities. Several channels were reported to have been sources of information about Hep B. Some of the channels reported were: FM radios, television, newspapers and village health team (VHT) member. Some excerpts highlighting each of these are presented below.

Most participants and respondents reported that they had heard information about Hep B on the radio. A trucker from the FGD on Parking Yard, for example, reported:

> I have been hearing from the radio but I used to take it lightly because it has never happened to me. But I usually hear musicians fundraising for Hep B. Apart from that, truly I don't know how it is spread or how it affects and how it's caused. Just as you tell people to buy mosquito nets to avoid malaria, and another example is AIDS which we know comes as a result of unfaithfulness. So, how does Hep B come about? We want to know how one gets infected so that we are able to prevent it. Because, you may find that while we are drinking water we may get infected.

Another source given was television and a participant in the same group said:

> Most times the adverts are one TV. These TV stations are based in Kampala. So most of the sensitization messages target areas around Kampala so even when they say go get tested we take it as a joke because the targeted areas are in Kampala. Even when I am interested, I feel it's expensive to travel to and from Kampala. Therefore, you lose interest since you feel fine and it's for Kampala people. So we are waiting for the disease to extend

closer to us this side and maybe then we will go for vaccination [he ended his remarks sarcastically].

Village health team members were reported to be some of the other agencies through which participants and respondents had heard from about Hep B from. Here is an excerpt highlighting thi, from a sex worker of the FGD on Kigali zone:

> You see this man who brought you to us. We take him as a Red Cross agent. Red cross is concerned with issues of life worldwide. So he goes around mobilizing people using his mega phone. Just like he called us for this gathering. We came because we are loyal to him for the good things we have seen him do. So such people can be very useful in both passing the information and gathering us if there is need.

Despite the report that there was growing public awareness of Hep B by 2010 (WHO2017), our findings and anecdotal evidence elsewhere in Uganda showed that there is limited awareness and a dearth of information about Hep B among people who live or pass through Malaba border. Our findings on awareness about Hep B brought out two main forms. From our interactions, it was clear that being aware about something didn't necessarily mean that the participant (s) knew accurately about something being asked about, in our case Hep B. Further interrogation of these (ever heard about Hep B) participants showed that most of them heard about Hep B on radio (FMs) and few from newspapers.

Our findings show that while the Ministry of Health and partners have been trying to create awareness about Hep B, there are some gaps in the messaging and audiences. For example, prevention efforts are either focussed on urbanites or are not in tandem with what is prevailing at the border. The results of our study clearly indicated that sex workers, truckers and other folks who work and transact business at the border are not catered for in the existing prevention and control programs.

Another question that this study sought to address was to establish which challenges truckers and commercial sex workers experienced in accessing Hep B vaccination and treatment services. Hep B testing, vaccination and treatment at the border seem to be littered with a number of challenges. Core livelihood activities and attendant work schedules of truckers and sex workers, key among "most at risk population" (MARPs), present serious challenges to efforts to vaccinate and treat Hep B.

Truckers reported that the changes in the clearing system where in-bound cargo are cleared at Mombasa meant that some of them spend less time at the border. A remark by a trucker from the FGD at Exit Gate is illustrative of this:

> You sometimes spend less than an hour and you continue to Kampala...in such circumstances, it is difficult to go for tests

and vaccines...You reach at the health centre and there is a long queue of mothers, children, and they ask for a book I hear to open you a file. This we don't carry. Most times you are in a rush; your phone is buzzing with calls from your boss. The truck is ready and you have to move it away because you are blocking others and causing traffic jam.

There were also work-related challenges which made it hard for commercial sex workers to access HBV vaccination and treatment. A Kigali zone based commercial sex worker reported that their "working schedule" made it hard for them to access services. She said:

In the hospitals, there are long lines. You find many people yet many of us stay out at night till late. So, during the day we need to rest. Yet at the hospital you will have to wait till 4pm. The doctors there are few and seem to be so busy so one is left with no option that to go to the streets to make money to go to the clinic to buy medicine.

The nature of their work where they entertain all kinds of clients, was another challenge. Brenda, a 35-year-old sex worker from Kigali zone said:

We have a lot of challenges. We have all sorts of clients, those that bathe, those that don't, wheelbarrow pushers, doctors, teachers, infected people, non-infected and many others. Therefore there are those that sweat, some forcefully kiss you; some have unprotected sex with you. So, if they are infected, you will definitely get infected

Congestion at health facilities, reported long lines at others all speak to the challenges that these two key populations and other folks who are either directly or indirectly linked to them, face in the existing healthcare delivery system. Hep B prevention and control services, in their current form are not alive to the fact that this population (s) can't exactly fit into this "one-size fits all" service provision framework.

While some challenges were specific to truckers and sex workers, other issues raised were cultural and structural in nature. For example, the form of greeting by shaking hands and hugging, common norms and practices in many African cultures, could easily lead to Hep B infections if sweat or other fluids are unconsciously shared between the parties involved. Some structural challenges were: reported drug stock outs and fake vaccines and drugs on the market.

Fake drugs including Hep B vaccines that were reported on the market came out as a major concern in all the interactions held. Some excerpts highlighting this were from truckers, Exit Gate:

If all drugs go through the National Drug Authority for verification, where does the right and fake drugs come from? This baffles us because we now fear to go for vaccination

> because we are not sure of drugs and vaccines. We are scared of being vaccinated with fake drugs. Bring the right drugs, come on TV and radio and explain just like you did when there were fake ones to clear the air.

Another participant, a sex worker and FGD participant at Tororo Rd. said:

> I heard of it [Hep B] and even went to the hospital for vaccination. I even got the two vaccines but when I was going for the third dose, then I heard on the radio that the drugs being used were fake, I withdrew. People who had taken full dose started complaining that the vaccine brings different diseases, this also added to my fear now I wonder me who had taken two doses, what type of diseases it will cause me.

WHO notes that incidence of Hep B varies between populations and countries. Most at risk populations (MARPS), especially truckers and sex workers, the main study population of this study, stand a higher chance of contracting Hep B given the risky sexual behaviors. Our study findings show that most truckers and sex workers have not tested, vaccinated or even received Hep B treatment. This finding speaks to the fact that there is limited access to testing, vaccination and treatment services (WHO 2017).

It must be added, however, that even if these services were to be availed or scaled up access for truckers, sex workers and other folks at the border requires adaptation and tailoring these services to the peculiar and distinct cultural practices, sexual lifestyles and daily livelihood challenges that these groups face. Study findings presented here speak of the unique working times of commercial sex workers and truckers which quite clearly don't easily rhyme with the schedules of most health facilities. For truckers, long queues found at health facilities at the border and neighbouring Tororo municipality, coupled with the three doses vaccine schedule (1+30+150 days) do not favour them given their migratory nature plying the transport corridor.

The African norm and traditions of greetings which require shaking hands and hugging (for some communities) was a challenge that different participants expressed. One female FGD participant highlighted this. She is a sex worker and a member of the FGD in Kigali zone:

> …the manner of greeting in most Ugandan ethnic groups where shaking hands is a sign of respect is a major challenge especially given the way HBV is contracted. Sweat and sweaty palms (fluids) are very dangerous especially when one of the individuals is infected.

Clearly, we see that our study participants and respondents have to navigate between cultural norms and expectations (where shaking hands and hugging is a sign of respect and acceptable upbringing). Our finding points to the need to avoid getting into contact with a person's fluids or sweat,

especially if that person has the Hep B virus. Hep B presents a major challenge to folks at the border since the levels of interactions and transactions taking place there cannot prevent any form of contact between and among different actors. The cultural practice of shaking hands and hugging manifest a deeper cultural and social problem and challenge that should inform any behavioural change communication strategy for highly mobile, fluid and interactive groups of people such as truckers, sex workers and other folks that live and work at the border.

Government interventions to treat other diseases under the primary health care approach where some medicines and drugs are distributed in the community were said to have impacted on the testing and treatment of Hep B in the community. In relation to that, here is a remark by a trucker, a member of the FGD Exit Gate:

> In every village, government is busy with some diseases that are treated every month, stocking medicines at sub county level. Every LC1 is also busy with sensitization, for example, of bilharzias, elephantiasis and others; yet they are ignoring a deadly killer like Hep B. The government surprises me for it takes serious and dangerous diseases for granted and jokingly.

Conclusions

It is evident from our findings that Uganda is still short of fully implementing the Global Health Sector Strategy (GHSS) on viral hepatitis that was adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2016. While the elimination of viral hepatitis, especially HBV calls for a comprehensive five synergistic prevention and treatment interventions (WHO 2017), empirical evidence drawn from truckers, sex workers and other folks living or working at the Malaba border shows that there are gaps that ought to be addressed in order to achieve the desired outcomes. It can also be concluded from this study that perceived knowledge, access and source of infection knowledge of Hep B is quite scanty among truckers and commercial sex workers and other folks at the border. The practice of designing "one-size-fits-all" interventions that focus on the prevention, control and treatment of diseases like Hep B doesn't adequately work at the border where you have truckers and commercial sex workers who have a distinct sexual and livelihood lifestyle from the rest of the community. While access to health care coverage in low to mid income countries has been reported to be quite complex given the different dimensions this access entails (Sharma *et al* 2015), our study findings speak to clear access challenges and barriers. These include: availability of services, quality of these services and to some extent costs involved. Though WHO acknowledges that access to HBV testing is limited (WHO 2017), at Malaba border and elsewhere in Uganda, there are other reasons that have contributed to the dismal numbers of testing. Fake drugs on the market, for example, have not only dampened the resolve of the general population to go for testing and subsequent vaccination but have also made those who

were yet to complete the 3 doses (vaccine) to abandon it midway. Hep B testing was dismally low among our participants. While this was a qualitative study, it can authoritatively be said that 5 of the 64 participants (7.8%) had tested for Hep B. This low uptake of Hep B testing fairs far dismally in comparison to global figures at 9% (WHO 2017). The prevailing figures could be attributed to other factors, but one would be right to attribute it to the fake vaccines and drugs that our participants reported about, and which is highly discussed in the mainstream media and FM stations across the country.

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Chapter 18

Families across Borders: Contextualizing Spousal Migration and Family Relations among the Bamasaba-Babukusu in Lwakhakha

Christine Tricia Kulabako and Peter Atekyereza

Introduction

Migration entails movement of individuals or groups across borders. Its direct impact on family is renegotiation of relationship. Apart from the description of a family as man, wife and children, the meaning varies (Harrell, 1997); from a social constructionist perspective, family is constructed by their social and domestic spheres. In Africa, the family is also not seen as the traditional nuclear family. It includes members who share a feeling of familial connectedness and belongingness. Relations of the family in Africa encompass numerous different associations between families and relatives who are connected by ties of kinship, marriage and social relations thus wider and longer-lasting relationships (Murray & Barnes 2010).

The purpose of this paper is to explain the effects of spousal migration on the family relationships among the Bamasaba-Babukusu family. Living along the border, the experience of spousal migration is different yet it is modestly documented, therefore to fill this empirical gap, we seek to explain the effect by focussing on the role of the family members in maintaining of relations through observing the family structure, social support systems, roles and cultural values and finally marital obligation. An ethnographic study was conducted in Lwakhakha Township along the Uganda-Kenya border to explain how family members redefine or change their relationships after spousal migration. The family systems theory, which emphasizes the systemic nature of the family, enabled the study to examine how the absence of a key member of the family affects the family relationships. The study is based on the assumption that every member of the family must play their role effectively in order for the family to remain cohesive. Hence, the absence of a key member of the family like husband or wife disrupts the functioning of the family and produces renegotiations of the existing relationships.

Relations between man and wife, parental distance with the children, and interaction between different members are all affected because migration disrupts the wholeness and cohesiveness of the family. Data was extracted from MA dissertation were it was collected using in-depth interviews, observations and focus group discussions from the purposively selected

men and women who had their spouses across the border. I selected the respondents with the help of the community development officer (CDO) and the Voluntary Health workers in the community. The qualitative sample included families who had a spouse that had migrated for more than a year. Ten (10) families where interviewed disregarding religious faith and education. Observations were done particularly on the family structure, the frequency of interaction, support and satisfaction with received support. Three Focus group discussions were held which comprised of 11 people. Effort was made to capture and unfold the untold stories as well as experiences of the family members remaining behind in order to get a deep insight on how migration has affected them. Consent was also sought from the participants before commencement of the data collection.

The Bamasaba-Babukusu of Eastern Uganda

Prior to the creation of the Uganda-Kenya border by the colonialists in 1902 (Pirouet, 1995), the Bamasaba and Babukusu lived as a single ethnic group occupying the now Eastern part of Uganda and Western Part of Kenya. They both belong to the Bantu ethnic group living on the slopes of Mt. Elgon. They are distinguished from the other ethnic groups found in the central, northern, southern, and western Uganda by their dialects. They practice a mixed economy of both agriculture and rearing animals. They also practice male circumcision as a norm and ritual of initiation from boyhood to manhood (Khamalwa 2004). This ritual, which is known as the "*Imbalu*", works as a cultural form and a symbol which controls the doorway into the community. The history of these two ethnic groups has been traced from the slopes of Mt. Elgon which is the major physical feature of their land and they are believed to have separated in the 19th century.

Family Structure

Spousal migration has reshaped the family structure of the Bamasaba-Babukusu. It is now defined by the different life cycles the migrants go through. The old Bamasaba-Babukusu family structure was constructed along the notions of clan, familial belonging to create a communal form of existence (La Fontain, 1959). Living at the border and influenced by border activity, the Bamasaba-Babukusu have, over the years, gone through changes that have transformed the traditional family structure. Families among the Bamasaba-Babukusu are extended families with the father, the mother, children and other relatives like grandparents, uncles. Explaining how the nature of family has dramatically changed in Uganda and neighbouring Kenya, a Mumasaba elder had this to say:

> Bulebe (kinship) relations foster support amongst the people and
> we continue living by clan relationships like the butemulani clan
> in Kenya and that in Uganda. But with this new trend of women
> running to work, family in Uganda has visibly disintegrated.
> You can see single men without wives; children living alone

> without parents; women living alone with children because of this migration. It is now sowing season but you see families using hired labour to dig and plough the land. They use oxen but in the past a particular homestead would do these things together because of the spirit of togetherness. Obligations and cultural rites have changed. We used to sit together with the family and eat food together. Now you see restaurants and food stalls at the border which usually feed the men because the women are not there to cook; they have gone away to work yet it was their job to maintain the home as men go to work.

In the past, homesteads acted as an avenue through which family members constructed and developed identity. Being attached to a particular homestead was seen as social capital. The children were groomed to appreciate their sense of belonging. There was a clan system which is the basis of solidarity. "Now the homestead and the extended family system is changing. Because of the economic hardships", says a participant, "We have resorted to selective extended family relations; the rich only recognize themselves and the poor are left to associate by themselves." The concept extended family is applied to a social kinship network that is created by nuclear families and immediate relatives (Wagner, 2003). Wagner argues that within the extended family, there is cooperation, support and proximity. Although some elders have lost credibility, maybe because of poverty and values of migration, the few that still hold the status are important in rebuilding family relations. Explaining this, a 29 year old lady narrates her relationship with the extended family in an interview:

> I do not have a phone of my own, and therefore I do not communicate with my husband directly but instead he calls my mother in-law or brother in law. It is a problem to me not to communicate to my husband directly but it gives a good chance to communicate with my in-laws because and it makes the bond between me, my husband and my in-laws stronger. I always rely on their support and advise which is good for me because my husband is not around.

Extended kin are responsible for holding the social fabric thus building around each other and sharing of household activities. This reciprocity is seen as a vehicle to reinforce a family relation which is of paramount importance to the Bamasaba-Babukusu. Communication enables families to obtain a series of benefits including moral support. I would argue that when one is immersed and constantly in contact with family, s/he does not loose identity. The relations are strengthened and renewed.

According to the study findings, members of a given family fiddle with the separation of a spouse. This adjustment involves taking on new roles. There are situations where even children assume adult responsibilities. Mukwasi, a 19 year old told us that:

> When baba told me that I am the one supposed to cook every
> day," "I realized that mai [the mother] had gone and she is not
> coming back.

However, it is important to understand the culture of the Bamasaba-Babukusu attitudes towards migration and how a parent willingly decides to separate from the family. They are a migratory group of people and have historically used migration as an economic tool in life (Makila, 1978; Simuyi, 1991). Supportive of that finding is a remark by a participant:

> I did it for the sake of my children, my husband had sold the
> house and we were renting at the time I went to Kenya.

In the past, men were the sole breadwinners in the family (Lopez, 2016).But that is changing now. Women are increasingly becoming breadwinners in the family. For this reason, they are beginning to cross borders for survival. As the roles change so does the relations. Migration has affected the family structure, and the changes in the family structure threaten the cohesiveness of the family resulting in the renegotiation of family relations.

The study also found out that due to spousal migration, social support has been cut low especially in the homes where it is the woman who left. Apart from the initial shock of separation, family members remaining behind experience other life stressors that in most cases increase the level of depression. In the words of an elderly participant, "Even if the parents may find support from other relatives and friends, the relationship is not sufficient in providing support like the intimate relationship of a spouse," (Elder, informal dialogue).Yet the effect is not only the spousal withdrawal but also the children miss parental advice and support. As evidenced in the study of adolescent's reactions to parental absence (Aguilera *et al*., 2004) children in Lwakhakha are also affected just like the adults because they depend on parents as their social capital. A 33 year old caretaker narrates the ordeal in an in-depth interview:

> All I want is her....the young child always laments! The mother
> of the children started work by working in Mbale. At that time,
> she used to come back home on Saturday but ever since she
> started working in Kenya, she does not come back home. When
> the eldest daughter turned 10 years, I asked the father to take
> her to school but   he said, 'I have fed you all these years and
> now you are talking of school fees, pay fees for him or tell the
> mother to pay for him.' She started crying because now her
> mother was not around. The young girl started working on
> peoples gardens and washing clothes to get money for school
> fees; yet her mother is alive but not around to help. When she
> became 15years, boys used to laugh at her because she was dirty
> and not like the girls in my village. She did not have clothes.
> Her mates used to go to the markets on Saturday but she could

> not go because she was like the mother of the home. One time she ran away to go to her grandmother's home but they later brought her back home. When you tell baba (father) anything, he just quarrels and says she can also go and leave the home just like her mother, it is frustrating.....

From the above excerpt, we realise how family togetherness is crucial to social relations and support systems. To further explain the social support system, I looked at association in terms of communication and activities shared within the family. Analysis shows that the longer the migrant stays away, the lesser the communication hence a further disruption in social support. Wafula narrates that among the Bamasaba there is a saying *"bulebe libaale, bukhwe livumbu"* meaning blood relationship is permanent or as hard as a stone while marriage relationship is as breakable as a lump of clay. Speaking of the loose communication between him and his wife after she migrated, a father of three children had this to say:

> In the first months of her departure from Uganda, she communicated a lot. Migrants like her visit their families often especially during ceremonies like burial or weddings but after staying away for so long, they cease to communicate. Sometimes the phone numbers they used to call are switched off. Hence, communication is cut off.

Wafula and Nassimolo have similar sentiments about association within families; relations constructed by blood are stronger while those constructed through marriage are easily affected during migration. In the view of the poor development of social security systems outside the family, hardly anyone would wish to escape the power of family relations as the case of Nassimolo.

The study also showed that migration renegotiated socialisation of children. During the interviews the respondents said there was poor upbringing of the children. This, they attributed to lack of parental guidance. The parents, some of whom travel across borders are not physically present to play their roles. As children grow up, they need the psycho-social support. It is evident in Lwakhakha that there are a number of children roaming around the town. This is visible even at the border. There is also a growing problem of drugs abuse by children. A school teacher also narrated this ordeal:

> Children used to spend time either at school or at home playing and dancing especially the traditional dance known as namussudukku which trained them about their culture. Today children spend their time at the border and trading centre doing petty trade, spend time in video halls, they dodge school and have learnt different ways of behaving and relating.

From the excerpt above I realized that it is important to be able to understand the value of a solid family even if we claim that certain actions

and the activities we do are because of the family. Family relationships should be looked at sometimes from the point of view of the children rather than concentrating on what parents are obliged to do. Likewise, whereas we observe families being disrupted by circumstances like death, some of the circumstantial disruptions are caused by our own individual choices. The voice above not only shows the pain experienced by elders but also shows the new realities that are portrayed by the changing behaviour, identities and lifestyles of the children.   The disruption in the parent-child relationship is caused by the painful or rather selfish decisions all in the name of for the sake of the family but at the expense of children. However, as Pottinger (2005) argued, separation of spouses causes psychological torture that is manifested in forms of deviant acts, poor self-esteem and depression among children.

Cultural Values

Imbalu is a cultural form that controls the doorway into the community where they circumcise young males. This signifies or symbolizes a deep psychological impact on the entire culture. It is impossible for one to be a full member of the society without participating in the ritual. Relations within the family are constructed within this ritual. *Imbalu* serves as a symbol of social organization. However, due to the increase in migration, Bamasaba people have joined religious faiths like Islam and the current sect of Christianity known as *born agains* which disrupts the cultural norm. As can be surmised from narration of Gladys a Mubukusu below, this defies the traditional religion:

> I am a Mubukusu by origin. My husband is Gishu. He came to Kenya to visit his relatives and that's how we met. We fell in love and he brought me to Lwakhakha and we got married. He is a very traditional man but I am born again. Therefore, during circumcision, I did not used to attend the ritual because of the songs that are vulgar and abusive. When my in-laws' learnt about my religious faith, they started harassing me and one day my husband abandoned me for another woman. Here also the Muslims usually do not attend the ritual and this has impacted on the family relations in the community.

Among the Bamasaba-Babukusu, *imbalu* is very important and it is a crucial way in which culture exercises control over relationships. It is such rituals that act as a fundamental channel in the understanding of relationships. However, change in family relations has occurred due to the traditional culture being in contact with European culture through migration. Social institutions like the family, which are the backbone of culture, have been forced to adapt to the urban and westernized value systems which have disintegrated traditional values and meaning of culture hence antagonizing family relations. It is therefore not easy to delineate the changes brought about by Christianity and modernity as the two come in the same play. Western culture has impinged upon traditional Masaba-

Bukusu lifestyle and this clash or interplay of the two cultures has produced new meanings (Malinowski, 1961). From the stories above, the people of Lwakhakha are now shaped and reshaped by the life trajectories of cross border migration, whether those living internally in Uganda (left behind) or those across the border of Uganda.

Another effect of spousal migration on culture and affiliation relations has been the removal of arenas where the age-sets members would meet. In the past as mentioned earlier, the novices used to meet and make acquaintances which would be nurtured into life-long friendship. Some of these arenas include *isonjo, ineeba* and beer drinking places as Wabongo an elder narrates;

> Because of migration, some people lose the value of imbalu which is our cultural form of identity, they take children to be circumcised in hospital and this makes the children to lack the inner identity, they miss out on the community's instructive power. Age set mates used to meet during their intermittent rounds which offer opportunities of knowing each other and developing comradeship but now people come with different values from wherever they had migrated to which is not good for our culture.

The above narrative does not only show the nostalgia of the elders in Masaba-Bukusu land but also shows the lack of this inner identity in shared beliefs, norms and values that give a particular community its distinctive identity. The idea of affiliation and community solidarity has been negatively affected because these children identify themselves with the community physically but not socially. Geertz (1973) points out that sacred rituals, myths and values are portrayed not as subjective human preferences but as the imposed condition for life hidden in a world with a particular structure. The culture of a homestead in the definition of the family has been shattered. Homesteads acted as an avenue through which family members constructed and developed identity. Being attached to a particular homestead was seen as social capital. The children were groomed to appreciate their culture and get sense of belongingness. The clan system was the basis of solidarity hence being cultured to the values within the society. Wafula, an elder says:

> Now the homestead and the extended family system is changing. Because of the economic hardships, we have resorted to 'selective extended family' the rich only recognize themselves and the poor are left to associate by themselves.

During my stay in the field, I attended a burial ceremony of one of my informants. Many people had gathered including politicians and religious leaders. Many speeches were given and as the masters of ceremony winded up the speeches, one elderly man stood up and shouted ….. "*wabelesina*!

(literally meaning, what's "wrong with you"). I was astonished! He continued:

> I am a mutebulani, I am the head of the clan, the man who has died is a butemulani, he is my friend, and a brother. How come I have not spoken?"

Burial ceremonies are one of the activities that are shared by the families. Yet the opportunity of speaking was mainly given to the politicians and the rich people in the community leaving out the influential clan leaders like the elder of the butemulani clan. I observed first-hand how cultural values are disintegrating among the Bamasaba-Babukusu community.

While many such circumstances are taken in apparently by some elders and some communities as a jocularity or a minor incident, such actions are a depiction of a dying culture. Relations especially kin relations are built on *lukoosi* (respect). The absence of it to me, the observer, depicts a different perspective: a relation that is shattering. So long as households of migrants are relatively isolated from kin, traditional patterns of relationship and cultural values cannot continue to operate in their entirety. The relationship between migrants, his/her household and other kin relatives is maintained by whom they choose to maintain effective contact with which I observed as forming an egocentric network rather than a corporate group thus affecting relations. Data further suggested that the family wellbeing was greatly affected by limited income within the households. This directly trickled down even to the children in terms of health and education. The women left behind do gain greater personal freedom during their husbands' prolonged absences, but this comes at the expense of greater domestic responsibilities and anxiety for their husbands' return. Though migration can contribute to household budget through finances or goods, it only relaxes the constraint but increases the children drop out from school and the health status of the children as Joyce, a 33 year caretaker and neighbor describes:

> If the mother sends money, it does not even last a week. One of them has dropped out of school, but the major problem is food, sometimes we do not have enough food to feed ourselves and even feed them. The youngest who is 4years sometimes goes silent and not playful, a sign that he is missing the mother.

Furthermore, analysis indicates that apart from dropping out of school, those that have managed to maintain school have a lag in education progress or systematic attendance of school. It varied with age and gender; older children tend to allocate time to the home chores in order to increase on the family production.They do not attend school regularly as expressed by the following participant: The eldest son who is 17 years works in the trading centre, fetching water for people to get some little money to take care of his brothers and sister. But he does this partly because he lives around the border which also offers opportunities. These boys go to the

border to do petty informal trade instead of going to school which would not have happened if the parents were around**.**

The above narrative also resonates with literature (Desforges and Aboucher, 2003; Tett, 2001), who argue that family involvement and support as a family process is an effective variable on education levels. Migration therefore, has defined the social distance in terms of provision between family members and the wider kin. There are changes in the degree of reciprocity in terms of who is doing what for whom, hence analysis of the process of mutual kinship or family relations both practically and theoretically. Whether the decision to migrate is done individually or as a family, the feeling of affection, intimacy and contentment in the relationship is disturbed during the process of migration and final separation. Intimate relations are shaped by social connectedness which can either be discontinued or maintained even after separation. The existence of intimacy or previous happiness in the relationship demonstrates an enduring continuity of family relations just like its absence presents a disruption in the way the family relates. Illustrating this, a mother named Jennipher narrates:

> When my husband and I first met, it was the most beautiful thing that ever happened to me. We agreed with each other to start up a family and that we would stick by each other at all times. After the birth of my second born who is 7 years now, things started changing. He started battering me and threatening to kill me. The love we had had long disappeared. We could not even talk about family matter. Then one morning he said he was going to work. Little did I know that he was going across (Kenya). He never returned home and I got worried. I tried looking for him but failed. He called on our neighbour's phone who told me that my husband was in Kenya and wouldn't be returning soon, I wailed!!! Even with the battering, at least I had him around. Now the love has totally gone ever since he travelled. It's like I have never gotten married….

In the incidence above, Jennipher, a mother, is a case of marital loneliness. The physical and emotional state that she is in warrants support. However, despite the fragility of her state, the husband's return is something out of context for Jennipher. Further still, with the low level support from the extended family, it shows that the relations have reduced. Love and affection imply a sense of belonging if it is found within a family. This is where one finds identity. However, a breakdown of affection shows a breakdown of morals as observed by a mother of two children:

> He left when I was six months pregnant for our second child who is now two years and I have never seen him since then. He does not even know how I gave birth. He has never seen his daughter or even sent anything to us, how do you think I survive?

When I asked her to tell me more, she laughed and said:

> Of course neyiya (I gamble). There are truck drivers in the area all the time. I mean I fend for myself and the family by having sex with the truck drivers at the border. Women here resort to digging for people but what can 2000shillings do for me and the children? If I find a man and says he wants some sex, I give him and get milk for my child.

But what happens to the children born out of such relations? Bamasaba-Babukusu community is a patriarchal society (La Fountain 1962). The children born with substitute spouses who are on the move especially the cross border truck drivers cannot define relationship and belonging along a patriarchal notion. They turn out to belong to the matrilineal side which redefines relations. Alber, Haberlin and Martin (2010) have also observed that increasing instability in both conjugal and affinal relations have been caused by labour migration of spouses.

Conclusions

Family relations among the Bamasaba-Babukusu people are based on kinship or the extended family but due to effects of migration and other developments, the extended family social ties are disintegrating. The previously important role of the family in securing livelihood of the family is dying off and this has created new forms of families with numerous challenges and experiences. Migration experiences vary between men, women and children. The movement across borders create fictive families but they can barely survive because of broken relationships. Separation of spouses due to migration disrupts the family units. Relations are broken, redefined and some change. Evidence of the disruptive effect of spousal migration on families shows how it is important to also analyze the non-economic, social impacts of migration.

Also from the humanitarian perspective, separation and subsequent loss of the family member tends to be the immediate risk for the people left behind therefore the significant psychological and emotional effects of separation of spouses should not be overlooked in migration research and better still the salient features within the family should be brought on board while trying to understand the family and migration. In migration research, the psychological and emotional effects of separation of spouses on family and marital dynamics are very critical and there is need to invest in psycho-social support for affected families.

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Section V

The Tension between National Borders and Social Boundaries

Chapter 19

Rituals of Homecoming: Polluted Bodies and Border Crossing Among the Acholi

Stevens Aguto Odongoh and Eria Olowo Onyango

Individual Agony

It was August 30th, the annual day of marking the forceful abduction of children during the LRA war. The annual event was being commemorated at Kitgum's Boma grounds where the bereaved parents and those whose children were still missing gather in remembrance of their lost or abducted children. As we prepare to join the gathering, Latonya's mother displays the belongings of her daughter who disappeared in 1992. It consists of a primary school report card, a school uniform and used exercise books. She cries: "Many children, men and women have returned from captivity but my daughter up to this day is still missing. It is better to get her dead than to live like this… See! See! All the other children are playing in the courtyard. Where is mine?" She sobs while wiping tears off her face. Latonya's mother is losing every glimpse of hope as to whether Latonya would one day return like some of her friends. At the Boma grounds where the commemoration is taking place, a banner is erected with a list of names of the still missing children. Some of them were abducted as early as 1990 and nobody knows their whereabouts up to today. The crowd is full of sad faces as loud-speakers are blaring names of the still missing; Okeeelloooo Richard, Aaaadong Sarah, Aawaaaach Bena…The seemingly helpless parents brave the scorching tropical sun as they listen attentively in the hope that some special announcement would be made regarding the fate of their child(ren).

The case of Latonya's mother is by no way exceptional. It is rather a depiction of what the wider community has experienced and continues to experience. This is so because almost the entire Acholi land was affected by the civil war in Uganda, between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army, the LRA (Finnstron 2008; Opiyo 2013). The war, which lasted from 1986 to 2008 led to mass displacement and abductions of mainly young Acholi children as child rebel soldier recruits. At the time of this fieldwork, Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA, was still at large, believed to be hiding in the jungles along the borders of Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and, first the former Sudan, then the new South Sudan. He is believed to move around in these areas with some fighters, including women and children, around him.

In the course of the war, many Acholi were affected, and the children and others who are referred to above were victims of that war, being abducted and forced into the LRA army. And it is this absence that produced the agony we see. After waiting for many years in uncertainty as to whether some of the still missing, formerly abducted Acholi children could be alive or dead in the wilderness, many families in Kitgum seem to be losing hope of ever finding their abducted children who are supposed to be men and women by now.

Collective Concerns

But this is also about larger issues than the individual agony of parents. It is a deep felt concern for the entire Acholi community and tribe. The collective concern was often expressed to us in group discussions with the elders. Their concern was certainly about the fate of individuals but also about what they called "the pollution of the land". The elders kept stressing that the land is polluted because it is stained by the blood of Acholi people, it is littered with skeletal remains, women and children were raped, and homesteads were abandoned and covered by bush. And worse still, when the Acholi returned to their former places of residence, their farms lands and grazing areas were littered with landmines. Relatives, friends and neighbors killed one another during war, many Acholi grew up outside the confines of familial or clan surroundings. This has made some returnees to engage in incest owing to lost relationships. It is difficult for returnees who left as children to understand how Acholi communal ownership of property works, especially land. Parents must look for their lost children; the community must make sure all members who died in the wilderness are brought back for decent reburials.

Sharing the concern about this complexity of issues, but focusing on the missing children in particular, one elder put it like this:

> Not knowing the whereabouts of the still missing Acholi is not good for us. Dying in the wilderness is not good for the family…The body dies but the ghost remains and the ghost hides somewhere in the forest or mountains. If the ghost is not brought home, it can get angry and turn into cen. Cen can become dangerous if rituals are not done. All those [Acholi] who committed atrocities have to come back and live in peace with those who are alive. In that we can plead with the ancestors to bring peace to the land, good life and health. We have to call all the spirits of those who died in the wilderness to come back home and stay with the family to give the children good health.

What we see here is, on one hand, a daily bitter experience of living with such a memory of missing children and fellow tribesmen, not knowing whether they are dead or alive. The other is the Acholi cultural requirements for dealing with members who participated in the violence, or those returning after violent expeditions. It is this collective concern that is

the focus of the paper, how do the Acholi deal with the two ways of homecoming; one the bringing home of the bones or if there are no bones, bringing home the spirit of the deceased. And second, how to bring back home those who actually return, as physical persons, to a society they have been away from for a long time, and in that period they have also been part of unspeakable acts in the war. The first is about how to deal with the dead, the second how to deal with the living. In both cases a series of different ritual activities are set in motion, rituals that are part of an Acholi cosmological world of purity and pollution, border crossing and spiritual cleansing.

The rituals thus create a space for reestablishing belonging and sociality. For the dead this consists in a ritual of reburial that the Acholi call *coko cogo*. In local language *coko* means "to collect", while *cogo* means "bones". In case a body cannot be returned, the family of the deceased must organize a special mourning in which the ghost, *jok* [s]/*joggi* [pl] of the deceased person is brought back. This is called *dwogo cen paco*. *Dwogo* in Acholi means "to return", *cen* is the label for a vengeful spirit which must be tamed, and *paco* means "home". *Dwogo cen paco* therefore implies calling or summoning the spirit back home. For such practices to be fulfilled, the Acholi start by getting expert advice from a local spiritualist known as *ajwaka* or *laao* with guidance from Acholi elders who together perform a ritual called *neno iyi dyel*.

For the living returnees, a particular problem is that they were abducted as children, and hence never went through the important Acholi transition periods of their individual lives. In addition they have to be reintegrated after all the atrocities they have been through in the battlefields of war. Thus, on their return the returnees have to cross many boundaries, whether linguistic, social or cultural boundaries, all of which are organized and performed in sacred Acholi terms. The returnees are allowed in gradually, not in one single ritual event but in a series of events that also are meant to make up for the missed transition rituals, and hence the lack of important socialization processes of the individual as members of the Acholi society. The returnee must learn who his or her relatives (*wat*) are, and you must be allowed into the compound to which they belong. Both signify socialization processes that help the lost individual to acquire a new belonging and a new identity.

This is what the chapter is about. Drawing from ethnographic experience in Acholi land the discussion explores how the Acholi employ notions of bodily contamination in the selection, admittance and (re)ordering of local traditional spaces for returnees formerly displaced by the LRA war. The basic argument is that rituals are the medium through which Acholi power is enacted and performed to enable a fluid continuity. This is also about cultural continuity.

Some Conceptual Leads

Our analysis is inspired by certain conceptual choices that should be pointed out before we enter the empirical discussion. The first point is that our case shows that we need a broader concept of "border" than what has become dominant in much of the literature. We agree with debates within contemporary border studies in which we see calls for a redefinition of borders beyond notions of fixity (Donnan and Wilson 1999; Paasi 2008; Prokkola 2011; Konrad 2015). Paasi, for instance, stresses that: "borders should not be seen solely as phenomena located at the 'edges' of territories but rather 'all over' territories, in innumerable societal practices and discourses" (2008: 215). We could look at borders as something that "links different aspects, meanings, influences and characteristics of various kinds of limits and their impact on social, economic and cultural life. [Thus] Churchyard walls, the border of the nation state, ethnic or religious boundaries – are all borders and order life" (Drost 2017). Both Paasi and Drost's conception of borders largely plays into Anzaldua 1987's "Borderlands La Frontera" where she succinctly stated that borders should be seen beyond physicality to include the emotional, mental, sacred or even the sexual aspects of borders and border crossings. This paper is an illustration of precisely such an extensive use of the border concept.

A second conceptual lead is taken from the field of symbolic anthropology, and relates to the conceptualizations of Victor Turner and Mary Douglas. We find Turner (1969) particularly interesting in his claim that in a society, a member moves from one social position to another through liminality which forms a ritual process. As we deal with the Acholi who return from war, we see the absence as a period of liminality that must be closed by a ritual process. After such rituals that mark the re-entering into society, the candidates can become members of the social structure and gain a new social position.

We find the work of Mary Douglas interesting also. Douglas pays attention also to symbolic borders and border crossings that are defined by cultural thinking (1966). Furthermore Douglas uses the terms "classification", "ordering", "ambiguity", and "anomaly", concepts that become particularly interesting from the point of view of border studies. Border crossing makes the border crosser appear as alien and even dangerous, dirty and polluting. Also, what is important in Douglas' definition of anomaly and ambiguity is that they exist only in relation to the dominating order and cultural thinking models. Again, the border crossing of the Acholi war victims and their re-integration into society should therefore also be linked to a wider cosmos of Acholi cultural models. Let us do precisely that, and then link it to border crossing.

Links to Acholi Traditions

Traditionally, the Acholi people were warriors who fought with the neighboring groups and when they returned after war, they were readmitted

into the society through ritual observances. Warriors were always presumed to have impurities owing to their involvement with war and severe killings. Those who died in the battle had a special funeral arranged for them in which their ghosts were brought back home to stop them from turning into *cen*. In the reading p'Bitek (1965), he argues that blessing the warriors for warfare and acknowledging them back through cleansing rituals was for long a highly cherished practice by the Acholi people. The cleansing process often involved Acholi elders with the help of an *ajwaka* (spirit medium) who is vital in acts of divination. The Acholi people believed only in *jok* prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries in the early eighteenth century (p'Bitek 1965; Girling 1960; Harlacher *etal* 2006). Every homestead had *abila* (shrine), which was used for divination purposes, i.e. consultation with the superior powers. In case there was calamity on the land – such as drought, poor harvest, floods or misfortune, including death, consultations were made through the elders and *ajwaka* in order to unearth the causes of the calamity or evil spirits. Two examples can provide empirical insights into this.

Neno iyi Dyel means literally 'looking into the intestines of a goat'. It is a form of Acholi cultural 'scan' into the cause of a misfortune, suffering, disease or death. Among the Acholi, whenever faced with a problem, a misfortune or disease, the *laao* can 'read the intestines' of a beast in order to diagnose the cause of the problem. Potential remedies, cures or means of healing can also be discovered by the *laao* after reading the intestines. The *laao* can also perform *neno iyi dyel* to foretell would-be dangers or threats that may harm the community, an individual or family. The *laao* has the power not only to read the intestines of an animal in order to uncover the cause of the problem, but also the capacity to divert any misfortune to another family, homestead or individual. After the source of evil is uncovered, another goat is needed to divert misfortune to somebody or somewhere else. If a homestead is discovered to have diverted their misfortune to another homestead, it could lead to accusations including a feud, especially if such misfortune is interpreted as the cause of death of a member of a homestead. According to Lenga, an elder in Namkora:

> The ancestors give the elders the power to 'read the intestines of a beast' in order to discover the source of evil or misfortune in the society. So in case there is a problem in the community, or any one is facing some challenges or suffering we take a goat to the elders in a homestead – such that it is slaughtered and the intestines are 'read' to uncover the source of the trouble.

Yubu lyel is performed between the months of December and March. In a general sense the ritual involves summoning the spirits of the ancestors wherever they may be to come and help members come out of a difficult dry season. But it is also used more specifically to call on the agency of the dead in order to achieve collective action and responsibility to the community. In the readings of p'Bitek, "members of a lineage erect a

shrine [*abila*] in honor of an ancestor, to arrest his anger, and to appeal to him to intervene and divert any dangers that threaten the lineage group. A diviner [*ajwaka-same as laao above*] exorcises a vengeance ghost, *cen*, or any other hostile ghost…" (1965:85). Normally among the Acholi, within every homestead or clan there is an *ajwaka* or *laao* who looks after a family shrine known as *Abila*. The *ajwaka*'s main role is to engage with the deities to uncover the unseen forces that affect the family, homestead or clan. *Abila* in this case provides not just answers to different supernatural occurrences but also offers culturally acceptable explanations. The spirits are summoned so that they should not remain in the wilderness, which may cause misfortune or bad omen including death in the homestead.

Continuities in Periods of War

In case of destruction of a community like it was with the LRA war, during the return, there are claims and counter claims as to who is the rightful Acholi, members always point to the graveyards of their ancestors. The graveyards (*lyel*) act as mark stones with which individual members, families and clans can claim belonging, ownership and true Acholiness. The metaphor of the body represents the continuity of Acholi family, homestead, clan or nation where members can point to their past in order to justify the present. While speaking with several clan heads (*ladit kaka*), they all claimed belonging to Acholiland through their ancestors.

In this way, the Acholi accord both the dead body and spirit 'absolute sovereignty' (Bodin as cited in Agamben 1995). Far from seeing the ritual just as mere superstitious or belief without basis, for the Acholi, *coko cogo* or *dwogo cen paco* signifies the continuity of a lineage, belonging and sociality in which there is an ongoing dialogue between the individual as subject and the collective Acholi. Many returnees thus felt connected to their homeland through the spirit of ancestors. Abandoning ancestral graveyards (*lyel*) is considered cultural immorality as *jok* ancestral spirits may take revenge. Even the displaced Acholi who decide to stay away, still feel obliged to maintain and clean up lyel through occasional visits as a way to appease and remain in a harmonious relationship with the ancestors and avoid vengeful spirits of the ancestors.

The desire to accord culturally acceptable funerals is significant for building common grounds for continuation. Making rituals a necessity can be seen in community's response and attitude towards not only returnees who have not yet performed the required rituals but also those believed to have been improperly buried (Harlacher *et al* 2006; Schomerus and Tim 2006). With claims of hidden mass graves especially in Kitgum, which was one of the LRA strong holds, and thus inaccessible, locals are in continuous pursuit to search for and in continuous processes of reconciliation and appeasing of their dead relatives. In a group discussion with elders, clan leaders and women groups, they all confirmed that while government yearly remembers victims buried in Namkora mass grave, there are many

Acholi with missing relatives who are believed to have died in the wilderness of the LRA operations.

The Acholi general experience with LRA war and particularly their understanding of those Acholi who were displaced, is thus framed within such a traditional framework. No matter the type of border, for the returnees to reach 'home', in the Acholi sense, it takes a series of ritualized processes because they are believed to have been either in contact with bad spirits during flight or to have directly killed in war. Those who move in the wilderness may encounter *gemo*, a dangerous spirit that is responsible for afflicting plagues like "…small pox, chicken pox (*odyer*), or dysentery (*anyo*), or various unexplainable illnesses and body disorders (p'Bitek 1965:87). While they return, they must undergo cultural purification that involves the performance of rituals which gives them a form of new identity and belonging.

What the above suggests is that the belief systems play a pivotal role in people's world view because it mirrors the way people relate with the surrounding. Acholi identity, behavior and life styles can better be conceptualized through their belief systems (p'Bitek 1971). In the midst of any culture is the superstructure where you find religious practices, rituals, and taboos (Harris 2001), Acholi religion is at the core where the socialization process takes place. "…in Africa culture and religion so overlap that there is no culture which is not religious and no religion which is not culture…religion is the meaning of culture in Africa" (Mbuy 2015:255). We may ask - what is it that makes religion an important aspect of culture? And one answer might be that religion forms the most important aspect of peoples' lived lives and it is the basis on which they construct their 'world view'. (p'Bitek 1971).

Consider Ceaser Achellam, one of the LRA top commanders who came out of the bush in 2012 taking advantage of the Amnesty that was provided to the LRA by the Uganda government. As a commander he was responsible for many atrocities in which his fellow Acholi were victims, and we might ask how it was possible for him to re-enter society? For re-entering Uganda's politically defined community Achellam was forgiven through the amnesty. To re-enter the Acholi socio-cultural world, the amnesty was not sufficient. The Acholi people had never allowed him back until he had to go through a ritual of *nyono tongweno* (stepping an egg as form of traditional Acholi reintegration process). Getting back to the community after amnesty or crossing the political border is one thing but re-joining a community as an actor who can mediate and perform their sovereignty is a process of a different nature.

A second example is the case of Bishop Ochola of Kitgum diocese. He has been prominent in the reintegration of Acholi returnees not just because he is a bishop but because he is an Acholi. He uses his position given to him by the church as a public figure, to appeal to a general "Acholiness". He does this because he realizes that the "traditional Acholiness" cuts across

the different religious faiths, be they Christian or Muslim. We argue that the answer lies in the significance of religious practices in Acholi culture.

Links to Traditional Forms of Border Crossing

Under conditions of violent social settings such as war and displacement, borders may get sacred and their crossing ritualized. Reading the works of Victor Turner (and van Gennep before him (1960)), we see that a ritual is like crossing a border, there is always a no-man's land preparing you to cross the border. Culturally and symbolically, Acholi returnees have to go through certain rituals to be able to belong again. Border crossing becomes a process not an event. When you live one border, you do not just go into another territory; there is a no man's land or what Turner (1975) refers to as 'elementary rites of passage'. Many Acholi LRA victims were born in Sudan but are associated with Uganda. They have lost their virginity, have been raped, defiled, encountered dead bodies or killed, returning with children whose fathers they do not know, have children whose fathers were murderers of their own community members. So when you were in the bush and get amnesty from government, you may have certain documents that allow you to come home, but you still lack certain cultural particulars to enable you to belong and this makes home no home for you. Turner (1964) refers to such a condition as "sacred poverty" (p.46).

While in the bush, camp or exile the Acholi did not have a normal family in the sense of the Acholi homestead - they were devoid of kin relationships, familial attachments, and clan belonging to enable them go through the various rites that produce a true Acholi. By acquainting themselves through performing the desired rituals, Acholi returnees begin the procedural act of acquiring their cultural power which is important for belonging and sociality. Donnan and Wilson (1999) refer to this approach of gaining territorial acceptance as 'body politics' where border crossers, displaced persons, are seen as disease carriers – such cultural ideology strips returning populations of their sovereignty and right to belong as they become the excluded. As Agier succinctly puts it: "Rituals enables the line of the border, still fragile, to be rehearsed in a sacred form" (Agier 2016:21-22).

Displaced persons many times cross borders back and forth because they feel connected to the homeland. Connecting with the ancestors, ancestral spirits, communal holy grounds and genealogical traces transcends nation state borders in what Namsaraeva refers to as "placenta homeland" (2013:142). Symbolically the placenta in human beings keeps a permanent attachment to place of birth (where the placenta was buried) which brings not only a feeling of nostalgia to the historic homeland but also divine obligation not to forget home and the ancestors. In this way, displaced persons develop a longing for a homeland in which border crossings are ritualized in a performance that "establishes an intimate and magical relation between the person and the birth place" (ibid; p.43).

Acholi individual returnees may physically cross borders coming "home," but actually they are coming to no home as yet, because home has to be reconstituted through ritual. Rituals produce elements of 'authenticity', making the homeland 'true' or 'real', and in the same process the returnees learn how to perform and act out how to be Acholi – including getting access to important resources such communal land. This being the case, we need to look closer at individuals who are in this process of border-crossing.

Individual Cases of Returnees' Experiences with Border Crossing and *Cen*

Aketa is an informant who lives in Orom Sub County in Okuti parish bordering South Sudan. He was abducted at the age of eight while on his way to the local Okuti primary school. His stories, like the stories of other abductees, are full of horrific experiences with war, including killing many people. Aketa's gruesome experience with the LRA war continues to torture his individual self through horrific memories of death and massacre. Since his return in 2011, Aketa has had several spirit-related attacks which, according to him, comes when memories of the battlefield is re-freshened in his mind.[45] We know by now that the Acholi people call this type of spirit *cen* and it comes if one kills another person or comes into contact with a corpse. Also that, the *cen* or the spirit of that dead person will "follow" you until you go through some cleansing rituals. Aketa and many returnees came across dead people during their period in the war, so they have spirits following them. They must be cleansed in order for them to gain acceptance and also ensure happiness of the clan.

Cen comes in the form of bad dreams, full of horror that returnees encountered; it can cause suffering and misfortune to the family, either to the returnee or any member of his/her family can get spirit attacks and, if delayed, the affected person can go mad or die. *Cen* can attack someone anytime, but most attacks have been witnessed at night. In many cases, ghosts of the ancestor choose one person in the family and 'speak' through

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[45] Even when I thought I (Stevens Aguto Odongoh) had become acquainted with Aketa, he was a little reluctant to open up, especially when we discussed topics related to his childhood memories while in captivity. He later told me that he sometimes gets nightmares after such talks. In order not to infringe on his rights any further, I for some time kept our conversations on mundane things. Meanwhile I resorted to talking to his friends and relatives who knew him well and were willing to discuss with me. This is part of the dilemma of carrying out ethnography among communities that are still emotionally tense. While sharing and participating in other activities especially playing football with other village boys, Aketa drew closer, more open and willing to share his experiences while in captivity. When the ethnographer continuously participates with informants who are emotionally challenged, with time the informant gains confidence, become freer to talk than when left in isolation.

them. The family or clan members get to know which ghost has issues with them by recognizing the voice in the possessed person.

Aketa and other ex-abductees, suffered from such spirit- related attacks or nightmares, and this makes the *ajwaka* very relevant in returnees' spiritual lives. The majority of the returnees I talked to had confided with an *ajwaka* at least more than twice. The *ajwaka* engages the possessed person to uncover what the *cen* wants. The *ajwaka* in this case acts as the mediator between the known and the unknown world as they have been chosen by the deities directly to link the community and the supernatural.[46] Thus we can say that the Acholi employ the agency of the spirit *cen* to reconstitute relationships. *Cen* is the spirit that 'speaks' and informs the living. For Aketa this means that, through dreams or spirit possession, Aketa's body becomes the medium through which the *cen* passes the message.

However, not all Acholi returnees have the community back-up to be able to reach an *ajwaka.* To interact with an *ajwaka* one needs to belong to and have the support of a "homestead". This is so as most homesteads have their own *ajwaka*. As returnees may have been away for many years, not all of them have re-established their belonging and links to a particular homestead. For returnees who have lost their links to specific homesteads, it is not only costly to get the services of an *ajwaka*, but even convincing the latter to accept to help is difficult. Normally the *ajwaka* has to conduct some rituals together with the family of the 'patient'. It is a collective process. So if one does not belong to any homestead, and thus also not to any known "family", the *ajwaka* may not do much. In such situations, in cases of such returnees who have lost contact with any known family or homestead, the Acholi paramount chief has, on some occasions, organized collective rituals to re-admit them.[47]

One informant, Patrick, narrated an ordeal that befell his sister when she got abducted in 1988 and later died in the bush under the LRA during the Operation Lightning Thunder.[48] Patrick's depiction of his sister's plight while in custody of the LRA, including how she died in captivity, juxtaposes the narrative of Aketa above. Patrick's family was able to learn that their sister died in the bush when two of the children of the deceased sister were rescued by the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) and later handed over to the ICRC for home tracing and resettlement.

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[46] Ethnographic group discussion with Acholi elders in Orom.

[47] Also see https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1021939/acholi-paramount-chief-welcomes-rebels. In which the paramount chief of Acholi Rwot Acana II has been reintegrating Acholis returning from the bush, especially from LRA bases in South Sudan.

[48] Joint military operations, especially between 2008 and 2009, mainly by armed forces of Uganda, DRC and South Sudan in the hunt for the LRA outside the Ugandan borders. Whereas some reports perceive the LRA rebellion to have ended within the Ugandan territory, many child captives, women and children are still under LRA custody, with several still escaping or rescued by the armed forces of either Uganda or a neighboring country.

According to the ICRC, the children had a photograph of their late mother and she had told them the name of her village in Kitgum and of her maternal grandparents.

Having learnt about their sister's predicament, Patrick's family sought advice from an *ajwaka* who led the family through a ritual called *ajaa*[49] to appease the bewildered spirit of their deceased sister. "The *ajwaka* 'spoke' to the spirit asking the spirit to come back home and not to harm anyone. According to Patrick, Ajwaka said:

> We do not know where you are right now, but we are bringing you back home. Today we gather here to bring you back home. We are together with you.50

> The spirit later asked for a sheep (romo) which we slaughtered and roasted for the people who attended the function.

In some cases individuals are presumed dead, and later are discovered to be alive. Such a case is represented by Laneno, who was abducted at about the age of eight years and spending many years with the LRA until her return in 2013. According to her, when she first arrived in Oriang village, she thought she was finally home. However, on her arrival from South Sudan, her family members on seeing her, refused to recognize her, leaving her in astonishment. Only later was she taken through a ritual known as *lwoko pig wang* ("washing away tears"). This ritual is performed to returnees who were assumed dead. Symbolically, by this ritual, a returnee crosses from the grave to attain 'new' life again.

During this ritual, a goat was slaughtered, roasted and eaten. Then the water that people used to wash their hands before and after eating the goat meat was sprinkled on Laneno's face. This is referred to as the act of *goyo pii* ("beating with water") which involves sprinkling this 'blessed water' on the returnee's face. This is followed by the act of *kiro pii* ("sprinkling water") which involves sprinkling water on top of a grass thatched hut as the returnee enters. The same process is repeated when the returnee comes out. Then all the members of the homestead, relatives and all those who mourned the death of Laneno, have to use the same water to wash their faces, thus washing away bad luck, bad omen and misfortune. By this ritual, the Acholi bring out the imagery of resurrection – a returnee who was presumed dead is living again. And also, by washing away bitterness and misfortunes that could afflict the homestead where returnees belong signify a continuity of Acholiness.

From the above we see that a returnee is not allowed to enter the homestead or mix with clans-people before certain rituals are performed. One ritual stands out. This is the ritual of *nyono tong- weno* (stepping the egg) which according to Chief Lugayi of Pajule, "… is a way of cleansing all the bad

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[49] Dried gourd used in Acholi shrines during exorcism and other ritual performances.
[50] Similar finding with group discussions, especially in Okuti parish.

omen that our brothers and sisters stepped on and evil activities they encountered while in captivity"[51].

Nyono tongweno is done at the entrance to a family compound or homestead[52] to welcome any member of the family/homestead who has been away for a long time. During *nyono tongweno*, a branch from a local tree known as *Opobo* is split and an egg is placed in between the split wood. This branch is then attached to a long stick used for opening the granary, locally known as *layibi*. In case *Opobo* cannot be easily found, a local grass known as *rao* is used. Returnees then step on this egg and jump over the *layibi* or the grass.

The long stick used to open the granary, as seen in the photo above, is locally known by the Acholi as *layibi*. The symbolism here is that the *layibi* is the one that opens the passage into the granary so that food can be accessed in order to sustain life. So, metaphorically, by jumping over the *layibi* at the entrance of the homestead during *nyono tongweno*, you can have access to life in the homestead - just as the *layibi* gives you access to food in a granary.

From left to right above: the ethnographer and one of the participants using *layibi* to open a granary. (Right): A mock demonstration of the ritual of nyono tongweno with some of my research participants at the entrance of my host's homestead.

Source: *Field photo by Opiro Jackson, one of the research participants*

The *layibi* signifies that the returnee will still be fed with food stored in the granary at home. The imagery of *layibi* as used here seems to resonate with an argument that Acholi idea of belonging and sociality is acted and

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[51] See the *Daily Monitor* (Wednesday, March 11, 2015, pp28) for more information on how people who return from LRA captivity are reintegrated through a cleansing ritual.
[52] Of late, mass rituals can be at the entrance of the Paramount chief's resident since some returnees come from captivity without knowing their relatives.

performed in rituals which nurture and consecrate upon members sacred responsibility to continue with Acholiness.

The newspaper photo below shows one of the top commanders of the LRA, himself an Acholi, carrying out the ritual of nyo*no tongweno* in order to be re-integrated into the society he once left to join the rebel LRA. Obviously this was a case of public interest which made newspapers cover it.

Having completed all the required welcome rituals, as prescribed by *ajwaka,* this also means that one is socially re-integrated into the Acholi society. Such a person can become a member of the Elders' Council of the Acholi. This is where the Acholi who will carry the mantle to the next generation belong.   Among the Acholi, the elders stand between the mundane and the sacred world. The elders represent the ancestors because the knowledge they possess was bequeathed to them by the ancestors and this makes them revered (Cf. p'Bitek 1965). Elders are also custodians of clan resources, especially land, and are generally mandated to head the clan until they bequeath it to the next generation. But again, such a person has to go through yet another set of rituals, in this case the ritual of *tap anak,* which literally means 'becoming an elder' *Ladit kaka* (clan heads) are chosen from among those who have performed this ritual. In this ritual, a potential candidate looks for a goat and brings it to the elders to seek permission to join the council.

Source: New Vision photo (March 10, 2015)

The elders after consultation may reject the candidature or accept it depending on the report from the *laao*. The *laao* performs the cultural screening to assess the suitability of the candidate to join the elders'

council. Returnees who have fulfilled all the required cleansing rituals can present their candidature through the *laao* by taking a goat to the elders in a homestead so that the beast will be slaughtered and the intestines 'read' for final proof of the candidate's suitability to become an elder.[53] In addition the elders check the social and cultural background of all applicants to verify their credibility.

Cobomoi, one of the elders in Okuti village, confirmed that while the candidate is visiting the *laao,* the elders carry out background checks of the applicant's credentials. In case of consent, the process of admittance into the elders' council starts. The candidate's goat will then be received by one of the elders who will bring out his spear to stab this goat. The goat is then slaughtered. Meanwhile branches from a local tree called *Opobo* is brought. Every elder takes a branch of *Opobo* that they use to beat the back of the candidate. Each elder present beats the candidate three times. The intestines of the goat is pulled out and one of the elders gets it and gently puts it on the candidate's forehead, then moves it to the chest, to the knee and to the toe, all in that order. He does this while uttering the phrase:

> You are now welcome among us the council of elders. If you had any spirits disturbing you, may it go away. You are now an elder.

 The goat is then roasted and when the meat is ready, the elders are served first as a sign of respect. For the young men who have not yet done *tap anak,* the meat is thrown at them. However old one might be, if they have not done this ritual, meat will be thrown at them because they are considered as children by the clan members. After sharing the meat, a local beer known as *kwete* is served. This beer is often prepared by the initiate's family for the elders to drink during the ritual.

Conclusion

When Acholi LRA returnees, whether dead or alive, are received back to Acholi land it means they have to cross different borders. For the dead, it means that the living have to carry our cleansing rituals so that the spirits of the dead will not pollute the homeland. For the living, the ritual performances are supposed to give returnees homeland consciousness and a sense of belonging.

For those who return alive, many returnees do not find clear familial or kin relations as the war destroyed Acholi structures of homestead that prepared the young Acholi as members of the lineage (Onyango and Odongoh 2018). Moreover, in the process of homecoming, "cultural purity is a point of pride for some returnees, while others fear their differences will prevent them from becoming full-fledged members…"(Diener 2011:384). The idea of pollution – the Acholi who were engaged in war, had seen corpses, killed or were living in exile - makes them 'impure', they continue to face

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[53] Ethnographic group discussion with elders in Orom and Namkora

isolation especially those who have not yet gone through the required rituals. Even being outside Acholiland for a long time or being born outside, makes you impure.

Prior to the LRA war, Acholi people had clans attached to geographical locations and now as they return after war, the badge of their clan system is missing for some, which makes tracing and identifying who belongs where difficult. The knowledge of the clan and the homestead – the core institutions that bring members of related kin together to enact belongingness as a group - has been destroyed. Such a situation has led to different competing claims around who is the right autochthon. This is crucial as it is only people with the right background who have the right to "belong" and thus to represent, recognize, acknowledge and participate in the desired cultural processes.

This also implies that the meaning of boundaries and boundary-making processes needs to be taken beyond statist notion of political lines that separate nation-states. Borders and boundaries may produce inclusion or exclusion depending on who is defining it (Barth 1969; Donnan and Wilson 1999) or the kind of transaction taking place. This calls for continuous study of how boundaries are shaped and reshaped. For instance, in spite of the fact that the Acholi share a similar ancestry, they continue to demarcate boundaries amongst themselves. The Acholi who move outside Acholi land have to regain their belonging and their participation in an "Acholi sovereignty" through rituals.

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Chapter 20

Social Distancing in Indigenous Health-Seeking Knowledge for Epidemic Control Used in Bundibugyo Ebola Outbreak

Jerome Ntege

Introduction

This chapter deals with the case of a recent outbreak of Ebola in Bundibugyo district of Uganda. I utilize two distinct but interrelated theoretical lenses Edward C. Green's (1999) indigenous theories of contagious disease. Green argues that most illnesses in Africa are treated naturalistically and much indigenous ethnomedical explanations of ill health are congruent with cosmopolitan biomedicines (Green 1999). According to Green *indigenous theories* express similar ideas to germ theory. It assumes that diseases result from exposer including a folk of the germ theory of naturalistic infections, pollutions, environmental exposures, and taboo violations. Green further argues that local people in Africa view epidemics because of exposures to naturalistic infections, polluting environment exposures and taboo violations. Pollution beliefs involve the avoidance of contact with polluting substances, clothes, personal items, food and other objects associated with the person with diseases as well as dirt, animals and body discharges (Green 1999). The second theory I used is Fredrik Barth's (1969) notions of boundaries, which see ethnic groups as socially constructed, natives strategically, manipulate their cultural identities by emphasizing or underplaying it according to context. According to this theory, people cross the boundaries between groups when they find it advantageous for them to benefit and they may sometimes maintain and regulate relations across them. Social boundaries and differences are only significant if they are socially useful to the people who affect them to solve problems (Barth 1969). When people got infected with an epidemic, ethnic tensions were raised between two ethnic groups blaming the disease on one ethnic group disease which enabled them to create boundaries between them and is enforced them through the traditional social distancing to prevent contaminations.

Traditional beliefs influence how local people think and behave towards epidemics. Several anthropological studies (Fairhead 2016; Green 1999; Hewlett and Hawlett, 2008; Hewlett 2016; Inhorn & Brown 1990; Nkosi 2012; Whyte1997) have indicated that local people have had knowledge about outbreaks. For example, many clearly understand a disease transmitted by contact can be controlled by avoiding contacts and movements (Hewlett 2016; & Amola, 2003). The above scholars have demonstrated the numerous evidence of indigenous concepts and cultural

models for epidemics in Africa. Some of these suggest that epidemics come like the wind which kills many people rapidly and can be transmitted by touch or proximity to infected people (Green1999; Hewlett & Amola, 2003; Richards 2016).

While a virus causes Ebola, it affects humans and animals. Its route of transmission has not been discovered. It is considered a disease in biomedicines with clinical entities and pathological underpinnings. At the same time, it is an illness linked to the patient's perceptions and behaviors. An Ebola outbreak is affected by many factors ranging from natural to social environment in with agents in animals and human network. Its transmission among human is greatly influenced by contacts and social relationships, which are largely influenced by the sociopolitical factors hence making it a social disease. According to Inhorn and Brown (1990), infectious diseases are both biological and cultural. They thus require a multidisciplinary approach which is both biological and cultural, historical and contemporary, theoretical and practical. Therefore, it is important to adopt a biocultural approach, which is holistic, hence well-grounded in anthropology, considering biomedicines as a culturally constructed medical or healing system. The *traditional social distancing* is rooted more the etiology and transmission influence by the human behavior and transmission of an infectious epidemic, emphasizing the importance of understanding culturally prescribed and proscribed behavior practices and their effects on transmission of infectious disease agents.

Bundibugyo District

Bundibugyo district, the research target of this study, is relatively isolated from the other districts of Uganda, it lies west of the Rwenzori Mountain which separates from the rest of Uganda, bordering with the Democratic Republic of Congo. Half of the available land is occupied by forest that forms part of the Semiliki and the Rwenzori national park. The soils and the climate are excellent enabling natives to produce enough agricultural produce for their continued survival. The people mostly live in villages found on the leveled land on top of the ridges. Villages are organized according to clans; each clan own a different location consisted of segments of one of the ridges with a stream on either side forming two of the boundaries. A traditional typical village except in town is made of people related to one another in a patrilineal line all claiming a common ancestry. The clans are responsible for the social well-being of the members including illness and death, for example, clan leaders must know the cause of any illness or death to a member.

There are diverse ethnic groups in Bundibugyo each with its own unique customs and norms. While the major ethnic groups are Babwisi and Bamba then Bakonzo, Bavenoma, Batuku, the smaller ethnic groups include Batwa/Basua and Babutuku/Bambuti. The colonial rule divided similar ethnic groups in the region into francophone and Anglophone leading to a confrontation. That is comparable to the case of the Bayira people who

were divided into the Banande in DR Congo and the Bakonzo in Uganda. Then there are Batalinga in DR Congo who are related to the Bamba in Uganda. Even though these groups were put in different national states, they have stayed together as though there was no national state border dividing them. The Bamba and the Bakonzo have, for instance, lived and worked together for centuries and inter-married each other. While they do have significant differences in language, they do share a lot of similarities such as dances, naming, marriage, food, art, and traditional practices like circumcision. For example, all ethnic groups in the region do practice circumcision but the cutting is only performed by the Bamba section called the Babulebule.

During the Ebola outbreak, their internal structure was still highly egalitarian with no hereditary or elected chief as such, who could command support for all clans in the district. There was not central cultural authority for all the clan heads, until the recent formation of Obudhingiya and Obusinga cultural institutions. All people lived entirely under the leadership of the clan leaders who were not hereditary but elected by the clan members. The social organization was oriented to a patrilineal descent with decentralized and exogamous social groups that make their clans. These clans each live in a particular location. Villages are organized according to clans and each clan has different villages. Clan leaders are informed about every critical illness and death. The clans are responsible for the social and cultural wellbeing of the community. All matters of well-being in that community are handled by the clan leaders. Every person has a clan and knows the clear structure which exists between the clan leader, sub-clan, the ridges, the village, and the village elders that everybody belongs to. What is important to note is that decisions are not done by coercion but by conscious. No clan leader is special or above another clan member. Be it a leader or a member, all are equal and their primary task is to protect the members of the clan. In case of a disease outbreak, clan leaders are at the forefront to spearhead any activity agreed upon by the members of the clan.

Much of the mountaintop is inhabited by the Bakonzo, while their counterparts (the Bamba, the Bavenoma, and the Babwisi) live in the lower lands of the mountain. The Bakonzo are the dominant group in the region stretching from Kasese to Bundibugyo and eastern DRC and (Mbalibulha 2008; Pennacini 2008). As a result, other major groups like the Bamba, the Babwisi, and the Bavanoma are united as one group called *Bamba*. Therefore, while the Bamba stands as an ethnic group, it also means coalition groups three major ethnic groups the Bamba, the Babwisi, and the Bavanoma. But on another level, it also means people from Bwamba land. Originally, before the formation of Bundibugyo district, it was part of the bigger county of the Toro Kingdom called Bwamba, and the people in the entire county were all grouped to gather as Bamba.

When I arrived in the district, I stayed at Bubandi, the last sub-county near the main cross-border point in Busunga. My interest was to see how being close to the border influenced the dynamics of Ebola constructions in the district. As I went around inquiring about the survivors and their families, I observed that the majority of the people in this area were Bamba and Babwisi with few scattered homes of Bakonzo. However, I realized all the homes of survivors I was visiting in the area and all the families they pointed out to have lost someone due to epidemic were of Bakonzo. I realized Ebola had attached homes not necessarily those which are close to each other, but selectively. It had affected particular homestead skipping others in the same sub-county. And I was curious to know what was special about the families that survived the epidemic as opposed to those who had experienced it. I started to wonder how a disease can be ethnic selective, killing only the Bakonzo and sparing the *Bamba* in the same village.

In addition, I arrived at a time when the district had just experienced major ethnic clashes ended in which many people died. From my early conversations with the people, I could sense ethnic tensions in their talk and divisions, which exist between the two major ethnic groups Bamba and Bakonzo. At first, I tried to avoid discussion on ethnic conflict and violence in the district, because at the time the tensions were so high. This comes after two major violent ethnic clashes that happened in 2014 and 2012 in which hundreds of people were killed. People were very cautious about any ethnic statement because it would worsen ethnic tensions in the area. Moreover, people thought I was investigating about these conflicts.

The Epidemic Outbreak

The epidemic was first reported in the early months of August 2007 by health workers of Kikyo health center III located in remote isolated villages, 25 km from the main town of Bundibugyo as the mysterious illness to the district authorities. The Bakonzo who dominate most of all the surrounding villages in this part of the mountain were the victims. As the epidemic intensified, people from other parts of the district with relatives in these areas of Kikyo started to contract the epidemic as they went to give care and attend burials of their relatives. When Bakonzo with relatives in Kikyo became ill, rumors went around saying they were having similar symptoms like the relatives who they had attended to in Kikyo. As a result, they began to label the illness as *Kikyoyosis*. They presumed that the illness affected people in Kikyo and their relatives elsewhere in the district. The name *Kikyoyosis* reflected the imagination of those who were not infected with the epidemic; it was a spiritual attachment. Thus, the illness was constructed as a curse toward particular families of Bakonzo and this curse stayed even when the individuals were declared healed by the biomedical doctors.

Initially, the Bakonzo associated the epidemic with poisoning; there was panic among the people, as everybody seemed not to know this kind of disease. The symptoms of the disease were very traumatizing. The

caregivers and the visitors to the patients became traumatized leading to fear. This boiled down to spiteful inter-ethnic exchanges between some Bamba families and the Bakonzo with the latter accusing the former of poisoning them. In retaliation the annoyed Bamba mobilized against the poison accusations of the Bakonzo, framing the illness as a curse by the gods towards the Bakonzo. They started to avoid infected people and their relatives.

When the epidemic crossed the borders of the villages and reached the town, the alert was raised among the relatives. Clan elders started to investigate the kind of illness killing the clan members. They presumed the illness is caused by witchcraft, performed by some evil Bamba people who hate particular families. The witchcraft accusations went from families to clan groups. Said differently, some of the Bakonzo clans looked at it in terms of witchcraft coming from some Bamba clans. They accused Bamba of being envious of the Bakonzo's successes in agriculture and business so the Bamba wants to kill the Bakonzo and take their possessions. The Bakonzo are always careful with the craftiness of the Bamba. The Bamba admit that their level of witchcraft outmatches that of Bakonzo and no mukonzo want to fight with a mwamba as far as witchcraft is concerned. Some of the Bamba clans are known to possess special spiritual powers beyond their reach. Thus, they alleged such clans were sending their spiritual powers to destroy particular families of the Bakonzo.

One of the leaders at the district said:

> As leaders, we were kept out of the things happening in the mountain about the epidemic. Even when it came to our notice and we tried to help the victims, their relatives kept the epidemic secret and frustrated our efforts."[54]

The Bakonzo never wanted district officials who are Bamba to know what was taking place. Illness and death issues are very sensitive matters in the district. They arouse a lot of suspicions amongst the community members. When someone does not want you to know about an illness, you avoid interfering. Otherwise, if you interfere, you can be labeled a witch responsible for the illness, which is very dangerous. The Bakonzo normally keep secrets about the illness. They only disclose them to their relatives and keeping others out of what was affecting them. Because of that, up until now, no one can tell exactly how many people died of the epidemic or where it had started. When the epidemic started no one among the district leaders at that time knew exactly what was happening except for the rumors of a mysterious illness until people started to die Kikyo, where some very ill people went for treatment Kikyo health center in Kasatu sub-county. There was a lot of secrecy and counter-accusations of witchcraft which district leaders failed to understand and on top of Bakonzo the 'culture of

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[54] A civil officer of Bundibugyo district interviewed by the author in October 2015 at town council headquarters

secrecy' (*Embita*)[55]. For example, efforts to trace the initial case of the outbreak of the true information of how the epidemic started failed. All the investigations were left questioning where it started; nor was the chain of how it was spreading in the mountain known—all because of the secrecy(*embita)* of the Bakonzo.

Bamwenda,[56] one of the cultural leaders of Bamba, explains why the epidemic killed only the Bakonzo and spared the Bamba. His explanation was based on the long-standing conflict between the Bamba and the Bakonzo and how this played out during the outbreak. According to him, the epidemic was a problem of the Bakonzo, but they tried to frame the Bamba as though they had poisoned the Bakonzo. However, when the Bakozo failed to substantiate with evidence of poisoning in the hospital, they accused the Bamba of bewitching them. The Bamba got annoyed by those accusations, so they did not want anything to do with the illness or death of the Bakonzo. For example, even if a neighbor got sick and died, they could not attend burial because they had accused them of being the cause of death; however, they also took other serious measures to avoid catching the illness. The story told by Bamwenda is more telling:

> The epidemic was just an indicator of what has been going on for a long time in terms of unfair treatment and unroyal behaviors of the Bakonzo towards us the Bamba. They have always looked down on the Bamba and other ethnic groups in the district and they only do care of themselves. On several accounts, they had betrayed us—right from the colonial times when we were fighting for independence and our self-determination from the Toro kingdom during the Rwenzururu rebellions. They have always kept secrets to themselves. Even the Bamba who have married wives from them do not trust them because they keep secrets with their ethnic group members. After the epidemic, it was clear that they separated from us and they formed their own kingdom. Consequently, we have also united to form our cultural institution. The epidemic was an eye-opener to what lied beneath and between us. And after the epidemic, it became clear that we are different. As Bamba, we organized ourselves to avoid the epidemic by addressing the

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[55]*Embita* means the widespread secrecy in the Konzo culture (Stacey 2003). It is the unspoken sense of unity and uniqueness of the Bakonzo people that influence their social and political life. Stacey goes on to observe how for centuries other people have failed to understand this quality of the Bakonzo culture.

[56]One of the cultural leaders of Obudhingiya Bwa Bwamba interviewed by the author in July 2015 at his home. (For confidentiality and anonymity, all informants in text are referred to using pseudonyms)

critical questions about it and invoked cultural knowledge to protect our people.[57]

Bakonzo gatherings in the mountain (the religious gatherings) are considered secret meetings by the Bamba. When the epidemic started, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) were gathering in the mountain. The SDA, consisting mainly of the Bakonzo, had an annual gathering in the mountain which lasted several days. It was during this gathering that rumors of poisoning started as one of the members died, and others became ill. Patients were taken to the health center in Kikyo; however, the situation became worse and those who went to bury were infected. In that community, usually, people want to show love and care. So, they touched the sick and they all got the sickness. The Bakonzo presumed it was poisoning coming from the Bamba. They consulted the medical superintendent of the hospital for help, who was also a mukonzo. Subsequently, a team was selected to investigate the presumed poisoning with the help of the biomedical support from the hospital. Unfortunately, the entire team, which was made of Bakonzo, became sick with similar illness including the health workers. Most of the medical workers got infected and some died including the district medical officer himself. When many people got ill and important people also died, ethnic sentiments went up, and they were wondering what exactly was killing the Bakonzo without killing the Bamba. They presumed the Bamba had a connection with the strange disease. They could not trust anyone except fellow Bakonzo. They were guided by a popular saying that goes, 'Bakonzo will accept a bad reason from fellow Bakonzo than good advice from non-Bakonzo'.

The Bakonzo got infected first and they dominated the medical space in the district. Most of all the medical workers in the district at that time were the Bakonzo who got infected trying to investigate the problem and giving care to the infected relatives. In addition, the epidemic started in a location dominated by the Bakonzo. And it was the family and clan members who went to perform the burial rituals of washing the dead bodies in the mountain who also got infected. Moreover, it was only family members and the clansmen who handled any emergencies of illness and death. On the other hand, as noted earlier, many of the Bamba presumed that the mysterious illness was a curse towards some the Bakonzo families—a curse inflicted either from the ancestors or gods to punish them. This was so because we noticed the first person to die in town was a mukonzo businessman, and after his death, many of his relatives got infected. People concluded the family and clan must be cursed or have a misfortune.

The Process of Distancing

When the epidemic reached the valleys of the mountain and began to spread in the town the Bamba was scared. They started to create a

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[57]One of the cultural leaders of Obudhingiya Bwa Bwamba interviewed by the author in July 2015 at his home in Bubandi

mechanism of ensuring that they do not get infected. A research participant recalls, "We had to take actions to aid members to avoid the infection"[58]. The first step they took was 'traditional immunizations'[59]as an immediate response to the epidemic. In the past, when people anticipated the danger that threatens their existence, the first step was conducting traditional immunization. This kind of immunization was also used long ago when people would go to war or see a threat to an outbreak of a disease. Depending on the magnitude of the suspected disease, different people conduct traditional immunization. And the people involved in this include elders (*abakulu*), healers (*abakumu)* and spiritual mediums*(abafumu)*. When conducting a traditional immunization, the ritual is accompanied by enchantments, curses, spitting and a sprinkling of water, smearing the whole body with mud, herbs, and dust, ritual washing in specific streams. Others cut their bodies and put the medicine to prevent any infections. As a consequence, in the process of doing the traditional immunization, other healing practices and rituals were also performed. Such rituals include invoking the ancestral spirits to come and protect people and precautions including a warning not to mix or meet with any other person who is sick.

Furthermore, the healers (*bakumu*) performed a ritual cutting in the body to put medicine in the skin for protection. The local people believed ritual cuttings ensured the epidemic does not attack the body. As the medicines were put in the body, the healer also ensured people are instructed on how to live and behave for the medicine to work and to be safe from the attacks of the epidemic. This was an effective way of passing on the message of prevention since many people trusted the healers, and they wanted them for help to ensure their safety. More importantly, while administering some medications, healers make sure people are well instructed on what to do and what to avoid during the period of the outbreak.

Some people performed ritual sacrifices of different types to avert the epidemic from various locations in the regions such as the mountaintop, in streams from the mountain, and deep in the forests. While some made a sacrifice to the gods, others made to persons, objects, ancestors, the land and other to the people in the community. For example, people sacrificed to gods by slaughtering a goat; others would deny themselves sex as a sacrifice. Some buried the game they had caught as a sacrifice while others

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[58] Group discussion at Bubandi sub/county with the elders and the parish chiefs

[59]*Traditional immunization* is an immediate ritual response to a strange illness in the community, performed by elders and local healers in Bundibugyo. Herbs are given to the victims which they drink to "clean" the inside of the body or to be smeared on the body to prevent the illness from entering into the body itself. This was revealed to the author at a group discussion of elders and the parish chiefs at Bubandi sub-county in October 2015.

refrained from eating meat or anything with blood as a sacrifice. Others would avoid visiting relatives and friends as a form of sacrifice even when their friend/relatives were sick. For similar reasons, some people crossed the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo for healing reasons. As explained by a Bamuloho, a local healer, first, they believe healers and mediums in Congo are strong than those in Bundibugyo. When someone gets a strange sickness, he or she goes to Congo for proper traditional treatment. Congo has a lot of forests with good herbs, and people have unlimited access unlike Uganda, where forests are national parks and access to the forest is limited. Two, Congo also has ancestral homes for some people, when people get sick, they try to go to our ancestral homes to find help. When you go to Congo, they believe, the witches in Bundibugyo cannot trace where you are and cannot use their powers to control you. So, when people become ill, they are taken to in DR Congo for proper spiritual treatments. Congo forests are likes 'a traditional referral hospital', with all herbal and traditional healing[60].

In cultural meetings held it was agreed to implement the traditional practice of 'social distancing'. All the clan leaders of Bamba, Babwisi, and Bavanuma participated in the meetings and warned people not to visit anyone sick or go to villages with sick people. They cautioned the folks to be vigilant and avoid taking part in any activity of the Bakonzo. They also warned people not to allow anyone from the infected homes and villages to talk to them. Warnings were sent to all members in the villages and all the clan members to avoid anybody who is infected and not to mix with relatives of any individuals with a sick relative. They added to that, clan leaders instructed to avoid crossing the borders and mixing with people from the mountain especially those who had lost relatives in the mountain. As a result, the Bamba people stopped participating in the burial exercises of those who had died or visiting families with sick individuals. They even went to the extent of avoiding hospitals or people who had gone there with the belief that they were contaminated.

Next, as another step of the cultural control of the spread of the epidemic, the clan leaders have created barriers in the form of 'traditional quarantine'.They would ensure that people do not mix with anything from the highlands. They avoided food, water, people, and any object from the mountain. Traditionally, when a member of a family has a disease which brings a skin rash and diarrhea, the entire family members of the affected individual are not allowed to mix with other families in the community. The sick individual and his entire family are kept in isolation. At a certain point, the entire family could be excluded from the community activities involving other people. The clan leaders never allowed members from affected families, say, to participate in community activities like attending a

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[60]Bamuloho is a local healer interviewed by the author in September 2015 at his home in Bubandi.

village meeting or going to the community market or going to the well, to swim ('*wash*') in the river where others do. The affected family used to seek support from the elders of the village until they are sure of what is affecting them.

For a long time, leaders have been using traditional quarantines when they suspect of an epidemic outbreak in the neighborhood. An abrupt illness in a home that kills several people in the family or kills very fast is considered a curse to that family. In order to avoid an omen of the epidemic from spreading from infected family to other families, participants say, we put barriers. Therefore, the clan leaders and the village elders would put a barrier on that particular homestead to avoid mixing with other people. However, when unexplained death occurs in more than one home in a village, they would quarantine homes where the unexplained death has occurred. An FGD participant explains the situation better:

> As Bamba, we fear to participate in any death that is not clear. If we do not know what has killed someone, we try to keep away. Village quarantine is enforced and we ensure quarantine visible to everybody in the community to prevent anyone in the village to come in contact with quarantined home or villages. For example, we use banana fibers or dry banana leaves or logs of trees. Now with clothes, we put a red ribbon on the village path. This time, in particular, we had to destroy the village's bridges, which connect the village over village streams. Once the bridges were destroyed it is a clear indicator that the relationship between the villages was temporally suspended until the bridges are reconstructed. When the bridges were removed, we rejected anything that comes from the mountain. For example, we refused to eat beans and cassava brought from the mountain to feed people in the valleys.[61]

For maintaining an effective avoidance strategy, the Bamba guaranteed reporting and information sharing. Through the Bamba reporting mechanism, they would hold a number of meetings at different levels of information sharing ranging from the family to clan level. In all the meetings, they created and enforced the message barring people to mix with infected families. Bamba would discuss the matters of the epidemic and ways of avoidance extensively from their homes to the marketplaces in the streets and the gardens where people meet. The Bamba would talk about the epidemic and shared information on the symptoms and signs of the unknown illness.

More to that, they kept an open information policy and they shared every information concerning the epidemic to avoided secrets among clan members. Their leadership system is based on information for all men who

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[61]Ethnographic group discussion at Bubandi sub-county of the elders and the parish chiefs.

attend the clan meetings. Everyone who attends clan meeting is entitled to know everything nothing is left out. Every man has a duty to explain to his family what is agreed in the meeting and is expected to implement them accordingly.

The effectiveness of the practice of distancing can be felt in the words of Muhindo, an Ebola survivor and widow living in the village not far from the town center. During the outbreak, she used to stay in the main town of Bundibugyo where she owned a small shop selling items like cold drinks, drinking water packed in homemade plastic bags, and second-hand clothes. Now she is relocated to a near village away from the main town. Recalling the calamities, she experienced as a result of Ebola, she says:

> My husband died. My daughter died. My brother-in-law died. And my brother also died. In the hospital we never received any visitor from the village, I was the caregiver for all my family members who were with me while we were very ill. At one point, I was so weak that I collapsed. I do not recall what happened afterward. When I woke up again, I realized my daughter had passed away and was already buried. I thought I was going to die, but I still wanted to live at least for my children. So, I did everything possible to live. When I was discharged, it was difficult for me because while in the hospital I was left to die alone. However, I survived. Now at home, I was left with no support. All the social relationships were far from us. Suffering from this epidemic is very difficult but living as a survivor is very painful as well because it has a lifetime effect and life has never been normal again.[62]

The epidemic spread differently in the two major ethnic groups. Almost all those who were recorded to die of Ebola were Bakonzo. Contrary to that, except a senior nurse of the Bundibugyo main hospital, nobody else died from Bundibugyo ethnic group. One of my informants who was a survivor of the epidemic informed me that people in the neighborhood looked at them as though they were the virus itself. She added, "People rejected me when was were hurting; I was left to die, even now people continue to call cursed as it was during the outbreak."

Fear drove responses among the masses, once people realized that the epidemic threatens to kill all of them they responded as a group. When the rumors of the epidemic increase, they also become innovative in coming up with ways to overcome it. As noted by Richards (2016), in such situations, the local folk can think like epidemiologists. Richards (2016) further acclaims the community's intervention on Ebola by calling it *people science,* --a form of local epidemiological response. Because of the fear in the community, Richards adds, everybody gets involved in the response for

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[62]Muhindo is a widow interviewed by the author at her home in October 2015.

Ebola. Whereas it took technological evidence through high-tech laboratories to establish the existence of an Ebola virus, local people who were facing the epidemic never waited for someone else to tell them that the disease was killing them. The external people observing from a distance have time to question the existence of the epidemic.

Local people, especially the Bamba, realized that distance determined exposure to the epidemic. Consequently, this changed all the measures; they stayed away from anyone suspected to have the epidemic to avoid looking into their eyes. In relation to that, Benton (2017) writes about the concept of the exposed and the relevance of relational phenomenon arguing that the extent and the quality of connection to a particular issue are significant. Therefore, the distance between the infected people and those who were not yet infected was relevant as noted by Brown and Kelly (2014). It measured the extent of contact, the distance between people who were presumed to have the epidemic and people who were not yet infected. Avoiding contact with the affected individuals was a driving factor in creating barriers in the community. Richards (2016)has also indicated quarantines were successful in Ebola setting because the ideas of social distancing were not new or alien to the community. On the contrary, people had used it to deal with issues of disease before.

Therefore, what was the key in this outbreak was the community's perceptions of the epidemic and its engagement using their traditional health-seeking knowledge. It is important to note that there was limited biomedical involvement in Bundibugyo. Many health workers in the health facilities were the first victims of the epidemic. Some got infected while others fled out of fear (Butagira *et al*. 2007a; Ssenkabirwa& Mugisha, 2007; Thwaite& Kisaky, 2007). There was no needed medical support from health workers. The government was quiet even though the epidemic is spreading. The people of Bundibugyo did not, however, just give up. Instead, they became innovative to mitigate the situation. They used the experience of outbreaks to diagnose the symptoms and implement appropriate measures for the epidemic at hand.

Social distancing was based on risk attitude of individuals towards the threat imposed by the epidemic outbreak. The community actions on social distancing were based on the community's awareness of neighborhood knowledge and perceptions of the epidemic. Distancing was not an individual private choice, but society health-seeking knowledge taken as an ethnic decision which every member of the groups had to comply with.

Conclusion

Through traditional social distancing, healthy and contaminated borders were culturally constructed using mental barriers based on ethnic relationships, kinships, and social networks. These were enforced through sociopolitical and geographical landscapes. Borders may evolve and shift depending on many factors, but the known blood ties remain across

borders. Borders did not limit the kinships relationships, but they transcended across physical and mental borders even in difficult situations of the disease outbreak.

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