Territorial Control and Cross Border Movement in Eastern Ethiopia: The case of Togochale Border

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Abstract

The movement of people across national boundaries on the African continent, for the purposes of earning a living through gainful employment, engaging in cross-border trade or visiting their kin, is commonplace. However, the extent to which political power and authority permits this mobility is dependent on specific historical and political factors of each country. This paper traces and examines Ethiopian state presence at the Togochale border in the east of the country by examining patterns of cross-border movement – namely migration, refugee movement and cross-border trade – since the 1960s. Using archival sources and secondary sources, the paper constructs a historical narrative of strong state presence in this border area. Furthermore, the paper argues that the notable presence of the Ethiopian state at this border is a consequence of how the Ethiopian state conceptualises the notion of territorial statehood, which is shaped by the country's history. Popular understandings suggest that local populations hold much sway in African border areas, rather than the central state, which is often confined to the capital – miles away from the border. Therefore, the presence of the Ethiopian state at the Togochale border appears to depart from the norm of limited state presence in African borderlands.

Keywords Territoriality, statehood, borderlands, eastern Ethiopia, Togochale border.

Introduction

This paper foregrounds the control of territory by the Ethiopian state in the eastern periphery by constructing a historical narrative of strong state presence in this border area. It traces and examines Ethiopian state presence at the Togochale border by examining patterns of cross-border movement – namely migration, refugee movement and cross-border trade – since the 1960s. The focus of the paper is the manifestation of statehood in eastern Ethiopia. As such, the paper takes the border as an ideal representation of

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territorial statehood. The interplay between territorial control and cross-border movement thus reveals the conceptualisation of territorial statehood by the Ethiopian state.

In the mid-1950s, following the withdrawal of the British Military Administration (BMA) from Ethiopia, there emerged competing ideas of what the border means and represents to the Ethiopian state. These notions related to the nature of the Ethiopian state at the time and the thinking that characterised the country's rulers. Borders, therefore, can be seen as directly linked to the determination of the limits of the state and as markers of the limits of the intended exercise of power by the state. Borderlands, on the other hand, raise a different set of dynamics vis-à-vis the state and the exercise of power. However, borderlands have similar characteristics, as spaces that owe much of their character to the nature of the border, regardless of whether they are in Ethiopia or elsewhere in Africa (Asiwaju 1985).

According to Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 389), "experienced territory or space is not abstract and homogenous, but located, relative, and varied." This suggests that the manner in which a state elects to establish territorial statehood varies and is dependent on a range of factors. Indeed, Sack (1986: 3), argues that "territoriality is a historically sensitive use of space." Most of the literature on the relationship between African states and their borders is informed by the colonial experience (Kapil 1966; Englebert & Hummel 2005; Englebert 2009). The majority of this literature does not take into account countries such as Ethiopia, which have different experiences with colonialism. Recent literature demonstrates that it has not been easy to assess Africa's recent past, which in many ways has departed from the colonial past. As Nugent (2004: 1-2) suggests, although there has been much written about contemporary Africa, "a lot of it is unreflective and does not seek to place the material in any kind of historical context." This paper rejects this approach by contextualising and historicising the relationship between the Ethiopian state and its borders in order to understand contemporary practices of territorial statehood.

The paper begins by conceptualising African notions of territorial statehood. It traces current understandings of territoriality in Africa and locates these in the post-independence consensus on African borders. The paper then moves on to a discussion of Ethiopian understandings of territoriality. This section highlights the constitutive role of peripheries in Ethiopian statehood. The paper then discusses a period of rigid state borders in the post-BMA period in

Ethiopia. The section examines how this period influenced the manner in which the state viewed the border. To provide context, this section explores internal political dynamics within the eastern periphery under imperial rule. Next, the paper surveys the increased militarisation and further rigidification during the period of the Dergue from 1974. Finally, the chapter examines the nature of this border since 1991, a period that has experienced unprecedented levels of cross-border movement, most of which is underlined by cross-border trade.

Understanding territorial statehood in the African context

There is a research gap in the literature on state formation in Africa, in particular the relationship between African states and their borders. Approaches to state formation in Africa have been dominated by analyses that are rooted in Weberian sociology of the state and its notions of statehood. This has led to the categorisation of all manifestations of statehood that do not conform to this model as instances of state failure, collapse or weakness (Rotberg 20021982). This literature has struggled to make sense of political development outside the confines of state capitals, and has equally been unsuccessful in explaining inter-state relations in Africa. Since the end of the Cold War, regionalism has emerged as a prime ordering principle on the continent, with many African countries organising and cooperating at the sub-regional level. This inevitably requires a rethinking of statehood. The inability of the literature to grasp rapid and often unconventional political development is problematic and requires further investigation.

The inability of the literature and analysts to imagine African statehood beyond the confining category of the nation-state has been the main challenge. The preoccupation with internal state 'disorder' has meant that the legitimacy of African cases of secession, for instance, is questioned and met with contempt, as demonstrated by Zartman's (1996) assessment of Somaliland. The fixation on internal 'collapse' or 'disorder' has led others to argue that there is, in fact, logic behind the seeming disorder that is found within African polities (Chabal & Daloz 1999). Indeed, while Chabal and Daloz's main claims are open to debate, their approach nevertheless demonstrates that, in Africa political dynamics and practices exist that do not conform to ideal-type forms of political organisation.

The contemporary African state system is based on the decisions reached by newly independent African countries in 1963 in Addis Ababa and in 1964 in Cairo – to retain the territorial boundaries inherited from colonial rule.

Consequently, there has been general agreement on the absence of inter-state conflict on the continent, regardless of the persistence of states that emerged from seemingly arbitrary boundaries – the paradox of African boundaries (Herbst 1989). There is consensus on some of the reasons why this paradox has persisted. A number of commentators such as Christopher Clapham (1996) and Jeffery Herbst (2000) have noted that the nature of the international state system supports this paradox, particularly the popular idea of the nation-state. Others, such as Pierre Englebert (2009), have gone a step further by attempting to demonstrate how the international system supports this paradox. The overall consensus is that African countries have largely remained viable and peaceful towards each other, regardless of internal turmoil, because the international system 'rewards' them for remaining intact. The conclusion, therefore, is that African norms of statehood find institutionalised legitimacy in the international system (Young, 1991).

However, the African territorial consensus and its popular understandings are challenged in the Horn of Africa. In most analyses, the Horn is acknowledged for its exceptional nature, but the discussion tends to focus on the remarkable feat of peacefully retaining 'artificial' boundaries elsewhere on the continent. Crawford Young (1991) acknowledges that "Ethiopia cries out for creative imagination and careful study" but does not offer ways to go about this. Similarly, Englebert (2009) and Englebert and Hummel (2005) do not adequately address why in the Horn the seemingly low odds of international recognition for breakaway states does not seem to deter secessionist states from emerging. Nor do they explain why, unlike elsewhere on the continent, as Englebert has demonstrated, actors in the Horn appear to be disinterested in the "domestic power of command" that is afforded by the legalities of the international system. Although some of this literature has attempted to challenge the state weakness/failure discourse, it has not been able to provide the necessary analytical tools to take the analyses to a level that historically and contextually investigates the variegated forms of empirical statehood that continue to emerge in the Horn of Africa.

To successfully challenge some of the assumptions that exist in the literature we must focus on history and context. This paper thus contributes to the current turn in the literature on African state formation, which rejects ahistorical analyses. This is highlighted by Spears (2003), when he notes that the Horn of Africa, Somaliland in particular, raises significant questions about Africa's territorial order. Others have suggested other explanations for the unusual expressions of statehood in the Horn. For instance, Kornprobst (2002)

argues that "there is no consensus on who constitutes a colonial power in the Horn," unlike in other African sub-regions. Kornprobst suggests that some states might perceive Ethiopia as a colonial power in the Horn. However, such an assertion needs to be interrogated. The formation of the contemporary Ethiopian state in the late nineteenth century and the complexities of the decolonisation process in the twentieth century would need to be considered.

This paper employs an interpretive approach and a qualitative methodology that combines historical and ethnographic research methods. As such, a constructivist inspired methodology should be inductive, interpretive and historical (Pouliot 2007). Indeed, a study of the state in Ethiopia, as this paper demonstrates, is a study of the motives and practices of how the state has fashioned itself toward its peripheries. Here, the task of the researcher is to contextualise and historicise this experience in order to arrive at a particular understanding of the relationship between the centre and the periphery. And most importantly for the purposes of this paper, the state's relationship with its borders needs to be historicised and contextualised.

Territorial conceptions of statehood and the constitutive role of peripheries in Ethiopia

The formation of the contemporary Ethiopian state in the late nineteenth century – the empire state – was shaped by the incorporation of territories located south, east and west of the political centre (Donham & James 2002). Subsequently, the peripheries shaped the evolution of state bureaucracy and the definition of the national territory. Central to these processes was the extension of state power over a particular territory, which instituted the use of territory as a means of asserting imperial state power and authority. However, the territorialisation of state power in Ethiopia was not an unambiguous process.

The political and economic transformation of Ethiopian society was delayed because of the organisation of state power under the imperial order. The traditional base of legitimate state power in Ethiopia, initially for the Christian groups and later for the Ethiopian nation, ensured that a large section of the population within the Ethiopian territory remained on the fringes (Markakis & Beyene 1967). The 'fringe' or lowland peripheries, where pastoralists were much harder to keep track of and to control, experienced the least amount of administration (Donham 2002). In the period following the Italian occupation, the state saw an increase in peripheral dissent. However, this change was less about a periphery that became more belligerent, and more about structural

changes that were taking place in the centre and in the wider region, specifically state centralisation and decolonization. The state became increasingly centralised, and for the first time, the territorial boundaries of the state became more defined than they were previously.

Territoriality became more salient in the post-1942 period in Ethiopia. The geographic and political organisation of space found an immediate and direct expression in an increasingly centralised state. Indeed, centralisation required an exact articulation of the territorial limits of the state. Elsewhere on the continent, the post-colonial relationship between central state power and the national territory has been conceptualised in slightly different ways. To a large extent, the centre-periphery relationship was shaped by the colonial experience, and thus it was this experience that influenced the nature of the post-colonial state (Herbst 2000). In most cases, the core-periphery relationship took the form of the urban-rural divide (Bratton 1994). The post-colonial state sustained this dialectic and adapted it to suit its peculiar mode of power and control. Callaghy (1987) describes the trend of increasing the power of central authority while simultaneously weakening local power structures in the periphery as the "coverover strategy." This experience was widespread in the colonies and saw the colonial state transferring its most undesirable features to its post-independence successor (Young 1994).

Although the practice of exercising control over the peripheries was similar to elsewhere on the continent, the motives and structures with which it was created and carried out was differed in Ethiopia. Unlike the post-colonial state in other places in Africa, the state in Ethiopia had been actively involved in the determination of its territorial boundaries. Ethiopia participated in the drawing of boundaries in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, the centre-periphery relationship in Ethiopia is different because the demarcation of boundaries and incorporation of conquered territories into the state was actively pursued by Ethiopian rulers even prior to the formal demarcation of boundaries.

The period following liberation from the Italian occupation was a key moment in Ethiopia's modern political history. This period was characterised by a determined effort by the state to: a) consolidate its territorial gains from before the occupation; and b) consolidate its political dominance, particularly in the peripheries. These two goals were essential for the survival of the imperial state following the five year Italian occupation. The pursuit of these aims was accompanied by strong rhetoric on modernisation. This rhetoric was rooted in a provincial administrative structure that sought to maintain the

status quo of centre-periphery relations. The main goal of the provincial administration was to maintain the traditional role of the centre in the administration of the conquered territories and to preserve the territorial integrity of the state. This became the dominant theme in the articulation of Ethiopian statehood, with subsequent state rulers adapting their ideologies in a way that they too could maintain the role of the state as an agent of control and authority.

The aforementioned objectives of the state were given impetus by the presence of the BMA in Ethiopia from 1941. The military arrangement that ultimately threatened Ethiopian territorial sovereignty began as an Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA), and later, in 1942, became a full British Military Administration (Rennell-Rodd 1948). Zewde (1991) notes that under the convenient cover of the continuation of the war, Britain came to assume extensive control over Ethiopia's finances, administration and territorial integrity. The changes that occurred during the period of the BMA are crucial as they brought to the fore the (in) ability of the Ethiopian state to control its territory and assert its authority in the peripheries. During this period, Ethiopian statehood shifted to an increasingly territorial conceptualisation, one that was not seen in the pre-Italian occupation period. Prior to the occupation, administration entailed the radiation of power from the centre to a vast and vaguely defined territory. However, the need for exact delimitation of the territory became increasingly urgent and significant after the occupation. During this period, the state sought to fashion itself as a modernising empire with a secure territory and a stable community. The preconditions for 'modern' statehood crystallised because the territorial foundations of the state came under threat during the period of the BMA. The effects of this threat were most evident in the peripheries, which had hitherto been vaguely defined and loosely administered.

Attempting territorial control by militarising the eastern periphery

The rationale for the uncompromising approach of the imperial state with regards to the border with the Republic of Somalia in the early 1960s can be found in the events of the preceding decade. The period of the BMA presented a significant threat to the territorial integrity of the imperial state; this was mainly because the state was yet to consolidate its territory and political authority in the eastern regions. However, the official end of the BMA in 1954 left residual territorial ambiguities, particularly in people's minds. Therefore,

the formation of the Somali Republic in 1960 added another dimension to the anxieties of the imperial state vis-à-vis its uncertain presence in the east.

The 1960s began with a series of rebellions in the southern and eastern regions of Ethiopia – in Hararge and Bale provinces. These revolts were staged by pastoralist sections of the population in response to increased state centralisation, particularly the introduction of livestock tax. The revised Ethiopian Constitution of 1955 was meant to signify a shift to a modern state and government. The supposed transformation entailed the introduction of new revenue collection measures, which implied a more centralised bureaucracy (Gilkes 1975). Many, particularly the pastoralists, found the increasingly centralised administration to be offensive as it curtailed some of their movements and freedoms. This led to a conflict that was ignited when a police force was deployed to collect taxes in Bale province. On arrival, the police were immediately surrounded and overpowered by the local tax rebels, who until then were no more than a loose formation (Gilkes 1975). The rebellion was exacerbated by the formation of a secessionist movement – the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) – in south-eastern Ethiopia.

According to Gilkes (1975), there were similar movements against taxation and tax collection among pastoralists in the Ogaden district of Hararge province. However, he also states that "these are impossible to verify since most of the area is closed to outsiders." This statement indicates the initial stages of the militarisation of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia. The state insisted on tax collection as part of a comprehensive effort to assert its authority in these remote areas. The militarisation of the region also coincided with the commencement of oil and gas exploration in the late 1960s. What then developed was the state's territorialisation of resource control (Vandergeest & Peluso 1995), where the state mobilised means of coercive enforcement in the Bale and Hararge provinces. Gilkes (1975) notes that, by the early 1970s the Ethiopian Army's third division was permanently based in the Ogaden district, where it "spen[t] a substantial amount of time collecting tax." The administrative ambiguities that were created by the BMA in the eastern periphery led to suspicions by imperial state authorities regarding the loyalties of some of the borderland populations.

Thus, the presence of the imperial state in this periphery was first and foremost about making claims to the territory, but also increasingly to claim the population. The territorialisation of central state power and authority thus increased exponentially in the 1960s up to the 1970s and suggests an

increasingly territorial approach that reflects a range of possible objectives by the imperial state:

Rulers territorialized state power to achieve a variety of goals. Foremost among these was the need to make claims on territory to protect access to people and income from taxes and natural resources, in a world in which only territorial claims were recognised as legitimate. Second, territorialization enabled increased efficiency in the collection of regular taxes. A regular money income was necessary to finance permanent militaries, assess the viability of young men for a conscript military, and finance a growing bureaucracy as well as government investments that sustained local production in a context of global competition (Vandergeest & Peluso 1995).

The foregoing was true in Ethiopia where the imperial state deployed severe strategies in the administration of its peripheries in order to comply with its ideas of territorial statehood. The 'modernisation' of the state, which included an increase in revenue collection and establishing an elaborate bureaucracy, provided both the context and pretext for the militarisation of the eastern periphery.

With modernisation as state rhetoric in the post-liberation period, there was much optimism about the transformation of Ethiopian society. However, this optimism was thwarted when the apparent transformation failed to live up to expectations. The imperial state adopted a version of modernisation that was implemented within already established political structures of traditional hierarchy (Clapham 1969). The focus on centralisation, often framed as modernisation, was underlined by a conceptualisation of territorial control as a key component of political power. There was, therefore, more continuity than transformation in the process of modernising the empire.

Huntington (1969) outlines what could have occurred in Ethiopia as part of political change in a traditional polity, stating:

To cope successfully with modernization, a political system must be able, first, to innovate policy, that is, to promote social and economic reform by state action. Reform in this context usually means the changing of traditional values and behaviour patterns, the expansion of communications and education, the broadening of loyalties from family, village, and tribe to nation, the secularization of public life, the rationalization of authority structures, the promotion of functionally specific organizations, the substitution of

achievement criteria for ascriptive ones, and the furthering of a more equitable distribution of material and symbolic resources.

This was not to be in Ethiopia since the overriding concern was to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. The making of territorial claims, protecting resources and collecting taxes, often through violent means, marked the beginning of the challenges that have affected the administration of this periphery since the BMA period.

The pastoralist populations who formed a majority and other 'cross-border populations' were the most affected, as the policies favoured a sedentary lifestyle. The imperial state favoured a sedentary existence particularly for the pastoralist communities whose loyalties the state could not guarantee. To a large extent, a sedentary way of life was achieved in the Jijiga area up to the border at Togochale where a number of pastoralists became 'agro-pastoralists.

Post-BMA patterns of cross-border migration

The unstable political climate in Hararge and Bale provinces and the nationalist fervour that accompanied the formation of the Somali Republic led to the strengthening of rules that governed cross-border migration in Ethiopia. Policies on the use of the borders of the empire were decisive in their intention to determine who belonged and who did not.

Some of the most important decrees that were passed on the use of the border appeared in the Negarit Gazeta – the Ethiopian government gazette. These included the Immigration Proclamation of 1943 (Negarit Gazeta Vol.1). This was followed by the Customs and Export duties Proclamation of 1943. The customs and duties proclamation also defined illegal activities, such as smuggling, and the penalties they carried. To confirm these proclamations, a former government employee who worked in Hararge province in the 1960s and 1970s noted that there were customs posts at the border at Togochale, as well as sixty five kilometres further inland at Jijiga. Elders interviewed by this author all confirmed that more rigid rules and regulations were introduced by the imperial state and, in particular, they noted the regulation of customs duties at the Togochale border in the 1960s. Customs duties were collected by state agents and went directly to the state and not to local leaders. In the Jijiga-Togochale region, the state rarely used local 'chiefs' or balabbats. This is because the central state authority had directly administered this section of Hararge province since its official incorporation into the state. Therefore, it

was the northern military-settlers – the neftegna – who oversaw administration, including revenue collection, in the Jijiga and Togochale areas.

Interviewees in Jijiga noted that imperial authorities were very strict about the use of passports at the border. The state became even firmer following Somali independence. This change coincided with the beginning of the territorial claims of the Republic on Ethiopian territory. Imperial rulers attempted to alter the movement of people on this border. However, those crossing the border often flouted these rules since they had always known and participated in unhindered cross-border movement.

The conflict between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia shaped the territorial (border) discourse for the next few decades. The Ethiopian state became increasingly strict at the border by monitoring the movement of people.

The start of a refugee problem

In the 1960s and 1970s, refugees in sub-Saharan Africa were mainly a consequence of "explosive internal social and political situations" (Milner 2009). In eastern Ethiopia, in addition to internal conditions, the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict of 1964 produced the first wave of refugees across the Togochale border. However, this movement was not massive and did not lead to the establishment of refugee camps. In the 1960s, the vast majority of refugees in Africa lived in rural settlements located in the host countries (Milner 2009). Unfortunately there is little documentation on this particular movement of refugees. Yet, we can assume that the refugees were, in one way or another, absorbed into the border villages of eastern Ethiopia. The movement of large numbers of refugees across state borders has since become a defining characteristic of human migration in the Horn of Africa and, in the process, shaped the various states from below in quite significant ways.

During the 1963-64 Ethiopia-Somalia conflict, one of the catalysts for the movement of people from eastern Ethiopia was the "Declaration of State of Emergency in the Region Bordering the Republic of Somalia" Order, (Negarit Gazeta Vol. 3). This Order brought the Ethiopian army to the region and severely restricted the movement of people, causing many to flee across the border to the Somali side. The entire region came under emergency laws as the imperial state struggled to distinguish between those who were fighting against taxation and those that were advocating for secession.

In 1964 the Somali Republic initiated a ceasefire that remained until the close of the decade before the civilian government in Mogadishu was overthrown by a military junta in 1969. The latter later re-visited the 1964 conflict and the unresolved issues thereof, and in the process plunged both Ethiopia and the Republic into a deadly war that generated the greatest number of refugees.

Limited cross-border trade

There is no indication that the Togochale border was involved in extensive cross-border trade during the imperial period. This is partly due to the limited available data on this area during this period. There is evidence, however, of trade in khat, to the British Protectorate and beyond. The export taxes of this popular drug are reported to have been high – at two Ethiopian dollars per kilo (Foreign Office 1954). It is likely that this was the only Ethiopian export that passed through this border. Following Somali independence, all forms of cross-border trade were official and heavily regulated. Khat remains one of the main Ethiopian exports to pass through at Togochale. As part of the process of modernisation and centralisation in the 1960s, cross-border trade was standardised and formalised according to strict customs rules and regulations.

Trade activities that take place outside official channels are perhaps the most common and rooted forms of cross-border trade at Togochale. In conversations with people in Jijiga, several people had personal stories of smuggling small quantities of goods and products across the border. Regardless of strict rules at the border, local populations often managed to utilise the border for their own needs, where they deployed what can be termed as "practical norms" (Blundo & De Sardan 2006), based on personalised understandings of the meaning of the border. The populations were, overall, aware of the rules and regulations on cross-border trade, however, because of their familiarity with the landscape, they still managed to smuggle a limited number of goods. They were engaged in these activities because the goods were useful for daily consumption and for other more immediate needs.

However, the changing official nature of the border had an impact on how the locals experienced it. The transformation of the border from a loosely defined concept during the BMA to a more clearly defined entity after the BMA, created a situation similar to what Nugent (2002) sees as a "dual aspect," where the border presents both constraint and opportunity. Yet, from the perspective of central authorities, the strict measures and practices were a way of constituting a state (Mitchell 1991).

Radical centralisation, war and a refugee crisis

In order to create and sustain the required levels of centralisation, the military regime that overthrew the ancien regime in 1974 needed to secure its territorial borders. Unstable borders not only threatened the revolution, but also the territorially defined state, which was an integral component in the on-going transformation of Ethiopian society. By 1977, the Ethiopian state was involved in a military confrontation with the Eritreans in the north and at the same time faced increasing threats from Somalia in the eastern front. These confrontations heightened the urgency to maintain the territorial integrity of the state. The resolve to maintain territorial control is evinced in a statement that was delivered by Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile-Mariam to the 14th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Libreville, Gabon, in July 1977:

[…] the frontiers between Ethiopia and Somalia are regulated by a series of international treaties. If Somalia refuses to recognise these treatises, then Somali itself which owes its very existence to a set of international agreements and decisions to which it was not a part must cease to exist. This fact may well be unpalatable to the Somali leaders, but is a reality nonetheless. Somalis are infiltrating with terrorists recruited, trained and financed by the government in Mogadisho for sabotage and subversion in Eastern Ethiopia […] (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1977).

The combination of internal upheaval in Ethiopia and the war with Somalia gave rise to the first major wave of refugees in the Togochale border area. The current reasons for refugee flows in this region are not always political, but tend to be a combination of social, political and environmental factors. The human tragedy is often compounded by drought and famine. A refugee camp coordinator in Jijiga aptly noted this, stating:

Environmental issues are additional, but it is political issues that are the major factors contributing to refugee inflows. If there was political stability, environmental issues like drought would not force people to flee and become refugees (Mugoro 2011a; 2011b).

The conciliatory spirit of the 1964 ceasefire between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia was short lived. Border skirmishes resumed when the Dergue came to power in 1974. This was followed by reinforced security at the Togochale border, as noted by an elder in Jijiga. The elder recalled that after the Dergue came to power she set out on a journey to Hargeisa in northern

Somalia but was detained at the Togochale border. By her own admission, she was crossing the border illegally without the correct documentation. She spent a night in jail and was released the following day after her brother in Hargeisa received news of her arrest and intervened. She noted that she was interrogated throughout the night, where she was shown photographs and asked to identify the people in the photos. It appears that the main objective of regulating cross-border movement was the apprehension of those that were deemed to be dissidents; under the new regime, the new role of the border was to contain and eliminate dissent. A recurring theme from the interviewees at Jijiga is that everyone needed a passport to cross the border, but not everyone had one or could have one.

From 1974 to 1978, immigration policies and practices were radicalised at the Togochale border. The period after the war with Somalia in 1978 saw the most significant changes in the usage of this border as internal political dynamics in the eastern periphery of Ethiopia became radicalised. The militarisation of the region and the increasing tensions between Ethiopia and the neighbouring Republic of Somalia led to stricter measures at the border. These measures were, indeed, a consequence of the radicalised conception of territorial statehood by the central state. This conceptualisation entailed the removal of perceived sources of discontent (Clapham 2002), the origins of which the state was only too aware. The state's security apparatus is reported to have routinely arrested people suspected of engaging in activities deemed hostile to the state, and generally terrorised anyone with contrary nationalist ambitions (Hassen 2002).

The economic revival of the Togochale border

The centuries-old objective of gaining access to the coast by successive Ethiopian rulers has once again taken centre stage since 1991. The coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ushered in an era of economic renewal in Ethiopia, one not seen since the post-war period in the 1950s. Changes in the domestic and regional political landscape called for a pragmatic approach on the part of the Ethiopian state vis-à-vis its new neighbour, Somaliland.

In 1993, Ethiopia became a landlocked country following Eritrean independence, making it the most populous landlocked country in Africa. Ethiopia needed additional coastal outlets that, according to Clapham (2006), can in principle be attained through any of its neighbours. However, political necessities are an ever-present reality in inter-state relations in this region.

Thus, in reality, Ethiopia did not have many coastal options. In addition to the Djibouti port (closest and overused) and Mombasa (much further away), Addis Ababa was compelled to consider the opportunities presented by its new neighbour. However, by the Somaliland authorities' own admission, the Berbera port lacks the adequate infrastructure to be a serious competitor to Djibouti and Mombasa.

With very little to lose, Somaliland has made several economic bilateral arrangements with Ethiopia. However, its lack of international recognition makes formal arrangements with neighbouring countries a challenge. Yet, Ethiopia and Somaliland have developed amicable relations, the political challenges notwithstanding. Ethiopia was the first country to have permanent diplomatic representation in Hargeisa, with Ethiopian Airlines one of the first to fly into the capital. Yet, to the frustration of officials in Hargeisa, Ethiopia has not issued formal recognition. Ethiopia's reluctance to recognise Somaliland is related to the unwillingness of authorities in Addis to be seen to encourage secessionist states but it also has to do with the fact that "Ethiopia rides several horses in the Somali regional calculus […]" (Jazhbay 2007).

The extent of the cordial relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland is reflected at their mutual border at Togochale and the surrounding Ethiopian borderlands. The regulation of cross-border trade flows appears to be one of the main reasons for the presence of the Ethiopian state at this border, to collect customs revenue. We can distinguish between unofficial and official trade. Within these two categories, we will further differentiate between large-scale and small-scale trade. In their 2002 cross-border trade study, Tekan and Azeze (2002) noted that, unofficial imports and exports abound in the border areas between eastern Ethiopia and the neighbouring Somali territories, and that the Ethiopian government calls this trade 'contraband.'

Small and large-scale official and unofficial cross-border trade is present at Togochale. This trade involves livestock, khat, some grains and cereals, coffee and second hand clothing. The unofficial trade of these goods is sometimes also referred to as informal cross-border trade, but is not always illegal. According to a United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report, informal cross-border trade occurs when business activities cross borders based on supply and demand imperatives (UNECA 2012). Informal or unofficial trade at Togochale is regulated by government import/export licenses, which are issued for fixed commodities to individual traders. Some of

these licences were, at the time of research, capped at two thousand dollars a month for people who live in Togochale and surrounding areas.

The stimulant khat dominates both official and unofficial cross-border trade at Togochale. The demand for khat is overwhelming on the Somali side of the border and the supply appears endless on the Ethiopian side. In January 2012, cross-border trade in khat was estimated at one million Ethiopian birr a day, an amount approximately the equivalent of fifty thousand US dollars at the time. This was an official estimate, based on the trade that was accounted for. The illegal trade is said to be equally profitable. The economy of the Harar-Jijiga-Togochale area is dominated by khat. Both large- and small-scale informal trade in khat is present in the border area, as well as in the nearby towns of Jijiga and Harar.

Next to khat, livestock trade features prominently in cross-border trade activities at Togochale. Sheep, cattle, goats and camels are the main types of livestock that are exported across the border. Central to this trade are the extensive Somali networks that control the trade. The trade is regulated by intricate systems that have been developed by various Somali clans. Indeed, large-scale livestock trade is dominant not only in the eastern Ethiopian borderlands, but in the entire Horn of Africa sub-region. For the best way to witness the intricate trans-border trade in eastern Ethiopia, one needs only to visit the Babile camel and cattle market. Babile market is the biggest in the eastern part of Ethiopia and is strategically located on a major trade route. Babile is located on what Majid (2010) calls the "Harar-Jijiga-Hargeisa-Berbera corridor." This village-town is located on the main road between Harar and Jijiga, where the Harar highlands give way to the Jijiga plains.

It is arguable that informal cross-border trade features high on the trade that takes place across the Togochale border. The numbers have increased exponentially since the early 1990s. As mentioned previously, this has much to do with the political changes that have taken place in the region. The current Ethiopian government has prioritised and accelerated economic development in the country, and this is reflected in the country's economic statistics. It is also observable at the Togochale border, which witnesses a high traffic volume. A number of borderland inhabitants are engaged in many sectors of informal cross-border trade on which they rely for their livelihood.

Conclusion

This paper explored patterns of cross-border movement – namely migration, refugee movement and cross-border trade – since the 1960s in eastern Ethiopia. The paper used archival material and secondary sources to construct a historical narrative of strong state presence at the Togochale border of Ethiopia. In doing this, the paper argued and demonstrated that the notable presence of the Ethiopian state at this border is a consequence of how the Ethiopian state conceptualises the notion of territorial statehood. The Ethiopian state has a long history of statehood, which is much longer than most African countries. This is a result of the unique processes of state formation that unfolded beginning in the nineteenth century. From this experience, the peripheries became central to the conceptualisation of territorial statehood in Ethiopia. Even in the face of many challenges to Ethiopian territory, successive rulers prioritised the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the state. This meant paying close attention to the country's borders. This explains why the Ethiopian states' relationship with its territory, and borders in particular, appears to go against the African norm of limited state presence at the border.

The paper problematised the lack of history and context in contemporary analyses of African statehood. In particular, the paper rejected the traditional approaches to statehood that are rooted in Weberian sociology of the state. These approaches frown upon forms of statehood that depart from the Weberian framework. To overcome this limitation, the paper employed an interpretive approach and a qualitative methodology that combines historical and ethnographic methods. And by using a constructivist inspired methodology that is inductive, interpretive and historical, the paper contributes to the body of knowledge that seeks to provide historical context for contemporary processes of state formation in Africa. A blanket approach to understanding African territorial statehood does not get us far since it is often embedded in a singular colonial narrative, which then impedes our ability to understand atypical cases such as Ethiopia. The paper has demonstrated that a country like Ethiopia developed its own specific conception of territorial statehood, which led to the establishment of a unique relationship between the state and its borders.

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