“Rendilleland”– The Notion of Borders and State

Among the Rendille in North Kenya

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

HILAH SEGAL

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF DR. LYNN SCHLER

OCTOBER 2013
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Signature of student: Date: 17/10/2013
Signature of supervisors: Date: 17/10/2013

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The idea for my thesis dawned on me during my trip to Kenya, sitting in the open air after spending a week in a nomadic livestock camp, beside the town of Korr in Northern Kenya. I had come to Northern Kenya in search of adventure and had made several friends. During our conversations, I didn't think of the fact and I lost the notion of our coming from different places and just lived the present. Therefore, my thesis is about people’s perceptions. I wanted to investigate how people similar but yet different to me, grasp their environment and reality. None of this was possible without the great support of my supervisor Dr. Lynn Schler, who has been much more than a supervisor to me. Her dedication and support have been invaluable throughout this three-year project. I feel I owe the successes of my research to her, for being an excellent mentor and encouraging me to believe in my abilities as a researcher. I would like to thank the Department of Politics and Government Studies, where I have spent the past six years as well as the African Center for its financial support and for being a welcoming home at the Ben Gurion University. Lastly I want to thank my dear family and both my Rendille and Israeli friends.
Abstract:

The Rendille are a pastoralist community living in the savannah region of Northern Kenya. Under British colonial rule, from the start of the nineteenth century, the different groups living in the region experienced geo-political changes with far-reaching political and cultural repercussions on local articulations of space, community and autonomy. The nation-state of Kenya that was established with the end of colonialism, preserved colonial borders and in so doing, preserved the British notion of borders, land ownership, and sovereignty in the postcolonial nation-state of Kenya. This imposed notion of “borders” was loaded with a broad set of assumptions about political entities, communities and identities. My research aims to understand how the Rendille experienced these changes, and how local views of “borders” have either conflicted with or adapted to the notion of “borders” represented by the colonial and postcolonial state of Kenya.

My paper first aim is to examine local notions of “borders”, through the local distribution of “space”, and how these notions manifest in Rendille daily life. I do this by exploring locals division of space in both public and private spheres and by that to understand the Rendille definitions of the term ‘borders’. Secondly, I go on to investigate local conceptions of the state of Kenya’s political borders as well as how “Kenya” was formed and is reflected to these communities. Ultimately, my goal is to use the notion of borders among the Rendille in order to show how they affect the community identification with the nation-state of Kenya.
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Introduction:

Why do you kill me? What! Do you not live on the other side of the water? If you lived on this side, my friend, I would be an assassin, and it would be unjust to slay you in this manner. But since you live on the other side, I am a hero, and it is just … A strange justice that is bounded by a river! Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other (Blaise Pascal, Pensées, In: Agnew 2001: 7).

In June 2010 I visited friends from Rendille community in Northern Kenya. During the months I spent there, as well as in subsequent trips, I was struck by a feeling of being far removed from politics. Coming from a politically tense environment myself - where politics, by its Foucauldian definition, is ever-present in daily life - this impression surprised me and required further investigation. I became deeply interested in how local theoretical constructs engage with broader regional, national and transnational concepts and paradigms.

In what follows, I deal with the question of geographical borders. At the start of my research, I wanted to understand how these are conceptualized by a small community with whom I became acquainted and developed strong social ties. I hoped to see how these views can contribute to the growing academic discussion on the nature of borders and national identities. Here, I join what Stephen Jones has called “Geoanthropopolitics”, albeit from a standpoint of more recent critical development. On Geoanthropopolitics, Jones explains “it is an appeal to political geographers to do fieldwork among primitive peoples. The results may be highly significant, for the political geography of tribes may shed light on that of national states” (Jones 1959: 242-243).
The main aim of my thesis was to understand how the Rendille perceive Kenya as a political entity. I wanted to understand how this nomadic community perceived the nation-state and their place within it. What does the idea of Kenya conjure up for the Rendille as nomadic pastoralists situated at Kenya’s periphery? What is the significance of Kenya’s borders for their lifestyles and identities? Claiming that the Rendille indeed have a concept of spatial division, I wish to argue that this connects to the way they perceive Kenya as a state. As Jones continued—“Although nationality is basically a "we-feeling" in a group of people, it embodies a strong territorial bond” (Jones 1959: 249). More generally, I argue that we need to further understand the connection between local concepts of space and borders and the wider concept of political borders.

For centuries, borders were the way geography was understood. A person’s territory, the space in which they lived, was grasped in as far as its limitation, its demarcations. In Africa, the drawing of borders and its academic analysis play a major role in understanding regional politics; however, only recent work on communities in the former colonies attempts to understand local communities’ perception and conceptualization of their own reality. In the case of the Rendille, similar to other herding communities in Africa, it is often argued that these communities "take up a ‘special’ place in modernist imagery" (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004: 1). Here I will show how local social and cultural concepts shape the way in which the community engages with broader political entities.

David Newman (2003: 19-20), wrote that borders are "perceived as concrete and tangible phenomena in the landscape". However, they may also become apparent without existing physically. At the same time, borders can be ignored by one group of people if they do not impact their daily lives and yet have a major significance for
another group. Writing about borders from a small community's point of view enables the exploration of borders as a cultural notion. Nonetheless, here I seek to understand the Rendille conceptualization of borders, as geographical borders; though these borders may not necessarily be visibly demarcated.

Borders are lines. They are static structures with various forms. At times they must be respected and in other cases they can be crossed. Borders are a manmade entity; therefore, above and beyond the question of why and where they are made, we must know how they are made, under what conditions and from whose point of view. What reality do borders generate and do they have other manifestations aside from the visual and physical? Borders create new identities and maintain older ones, however, identity is neither stable and nor a one-off decision but rather a continuing process. John Wood write- “People ‘shift’ identities. They ‘locate’ themselves in one ethnicity or another. They ‘inhabit’ like tents or houses or countries. Their identities have hard or soft edges. They ‘move’, especially in these post-colonial times, from one ‘location’ to another, sometimes ‘through’ transitional ‘spaces’, often across ‘boundaries’. Indeed, boundary metaphors […] creating and maintaining boundaries are what ethnicity is all about” (Wood 2009: 228). In my thesis I want to show how the Rendille challenge the Eurocentric view of borders, by proposing something that is more flexible at times, and how this affects the Rendille’s sense of identification with the state of Kenya.

The principal argument of my thesis is that a deep connection exists between the Rendille concept of borders and their feeling of belonging and identification with the nation-state of Kenya. Borders are institutions that generate reality. Here I would like to show how the Rendille conceptualize borders according to their individual social status and the specific location they are in. The Rendille have an evident notion
of borders. Rendille borders are clear and regulated in some cases, other times they are more flexible to the point where they can be considered almost as non-existent.

In my first chapter I give a brief introduction to previous research on the theory of borders, both as a general term and in the African context. I will use this as a point of reference when analyzing the Rendille notion of borders. The chapter starts with a short, historical description of the development of this body of theoretical work. Then I will discuss recent development theories dealing with the question of borders on their broader sense, and finish with a short discussion on borders in the African context. Borders have always been central to political-geography studies: they defined territories as political spaces, thus they considered as an elementary human need. Since the 1990’s, scholars have emphasized the social, political and cultural role played by borders, beyond simply demarcating space. In current research, the link between borders and social and cultural life has been highlighted. Borders are currently envisioned “as the product of a set of cultural, economic, and political interactions and processes occurring in space” (Rumley and Minghi cited in Megoran 2011: 4). This conceptualization has evolved in order to account for a range of dynamics identified in the study of geographical space.

Currently, it is widely accepted that territories and borders were not only the products of political activity, but in turn played a significant role in shaping the political sphere. Where previously it was assumed that borders were imported to the people of Africa from Europe during the colonial occupation, it is now clear that any society has its notion of space division and that Africans had their own ways of distributing space, albeit different to the framework familiar to Europeans. Here, I will show how a group in North Kenya, the people of the Rendille community, conceptualizes borders in accordance with their unique social circumstances. I will
exemplify how their spatial relations depend on local and social structure and how this connects to their vision of the nation-state of Kenya.

Having laid down these foundations, I move to my second chapter where I show how borders were used in the socialization process in Northern Kenya. There, I argue that local populations took an active part in shaping their lives. The Rendille participated in the colonial struggle and actively resisting European forces. This way they challenged the geo-political order being forced upon them. Here I will discuss the academic approach to local communities in Africa as it transformed from the romantic view of “Primitive tribes” and an “uncivilized” people, “detached from human history”, into active subjects who experienced their own unique history.

In this chapter I give a brief description of the history of the area. Starting with a discussion on the importance of oral history in writing Africa’s history, I continue by showing the land struggle of communities in the Northern provinces against the British colonizers. I show how this was not only a struggle for land or an identity struggle, but also a clash between differing spatial notions and ways of conceptualizing and understanding space. Lastly, I give a brief outline of Rendille community structure that includes an introduction to their customs.

The third and the fourth chapters focus on the fieldwork I conducted in Northern Kenya, in August 2011. In the third chapter, I show how the Rendille divide space inside their min (houses), goup (family compound), the towns and the forr (satellite camps). By analyzing these spaces I propose that the Rendille, contrary to previous assumptions, have a clear notion of borders. Whilst in the min and the goup the Rendille notion of borders is clear and regulated, Rendille borders become more fluid in the forr. I also show how this notion changes due to local social
transformation, as in the case of sedenteralization. I claim that here, conceptualization of “borders” is linked to their day to day practices, social status and community hierarchy. Although for the Rendille, the existence of borders does not always have a physical manifestation, the community is very clearly aware of them. In this chapter, I will show that these borders are dependent on Rendille social structure and have far-reaching implications on the way they perceive the nation-state of Kenya.

Lastly, in the fourth chapter I argue for the influence the Rendille conceptualization of borders has on their understanding and identification with the nation-state of Kenya. I show how these borders play a major role in Rendille recognition of Kenyan authority and how they see the authority as a matter for negotiation. I examine the Rendille’s complex relationship with Kenya as a direct outcome of their unique notion of borders.
The Creation of Borders:

The aim of this chapter is to review previous research in theory of borders, in the general sense and with particular focus on borders in Africa. This review will serve as a basis of comparison for my research into the concepts of borders and divisions of space among the people of Rendille. I will begin with a general discussion of the development of Border Studies and Borders Theory in the intellectual sphere. The lack of theoretical frameworks for understanding local conceptualizations of borders and space will also be examined within the broader field. I will also examine the development of border studies in the African context.

The Renaissance of “Borders” Theory:¹

Concerns about social justice thereby intertwine with the question of how to understand foundational geographical concepts (Harvey 1996: 5).

What might be meant by "the production of space" in particular or, more generally, ‘the production of nature’? (Harvey 1996: 10).

Over the last three decades, academic perspectives on borders have changed from viewing borders as a “line on the map”, or the “edge” and the “limits of (nation-) state, to a conceptualization of borders as a set of social constructions (Newman 2003a: 13; Paasi 1996: 25). As pointed out by Chris Rumford: “theorizing borders also involves an attempt to understand the nature of the social” (2006a: 155).

¹ The study of borders is discussed in a variety of disciplines and with a diverse use of the term in psychology, sociology and literature. Furthermore, the concept of borders appears in different geographical spectrums- global borders versus local ones, urban centers versus the rural areas. This comes in terms of how borders are understood, grasped and imagined (Newman 2003a: 13). In this thesis, I will discuss the notion of geographical borders as an instrument for dividing space, as well as the way in which they appear in the Rendille’s conceptualization of their political space.
Recently, scholars have started to look further into the dynamics created by the establishment of borders.

The interest in “borders” as a political term was heightened during the “The Renaissance of Geopolitics”- after the Second World War- with the renewal of interest in the relationships between geography, politics and especially the division of “space”. As Alexander B. Murphy and others wrote:

The new or ‘critical’ geopolitics is devoted to the study of how geographical space is represented and signified by political agents as a part of a larger project of accruing, managing and aggrandizing power. Within the new perspective, geographical space has largely relinquished its states as an objective and real-existing entity, as is now understood in the very different sense as a ‘cultural complex of practices and representations’. Effectively, space become a discursive subject […] it may possess is not inherent or a priori, but rather is projected onto it […] by political or geopolitical discourses (Murphy et al. 2004: 620- 621).

The historical evolution of borders as modern tools of political power is deeply rooted in the rise of the nation state in Europe. The increased significance of marked territory in the creation of national independent states followed the Westphalian state system that began in 1648. This gave a primary position to the international law. The model of the European state was slowly transplanted throughout the world, bringing with it a legal organizational system where the “frontier” transformed to “border” (Murphy 1990: 534; Sahlins 1989).2 During and as a result of this process, borders took on heightened political significance and power, becoming instruments to define the boundaries of these new entities. Some scholars have argued that borders became the

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2 In his article, Peter Sahlins (1989: 240) describes the local dynamic between the imposed political borders of the national state and the local communities’ preservation of their particular identity and their “Inherited local boundaries”.
demarcation of all political, social, and economic acts taking place within and between them (Yeung 1998: 292; Newman 2006b; Agnew 2001).

The way in which we conceptualize borders has evolved from a strictly political demarcation to viewing borders as possessing constructive powers in political, cultural and economic spheres. The Oxford dictionary defines “borders” similarly to the Westphalia accord and follows the classical approach adopted by scholars. Borders are defined as: “a line separating two countries, administrative divisions, or other areas”. It has also been added that they are the area creating “adjoining districts”. The two other definitions refer to a certain frame, end or something that goes around along the edge.\(^3\) The vagueness surrounding the term “border” and the abstraction that both terms “boundaries” and “frontiers” hold, complicates its conceptualization of it. As early as 1959, Stephen Jones discussed the historical, political and cultural relation between boundaries, time and place. Borders and boundaries divide between the known and unknown, the ruled and un-rulled. The notion of the frontier plays a prominent role in these discussions. In the following, Jones distinguishes between them:

In the United States and other new lands, a framework of boundaries was laid down before the land was densely settled or even effectively controlled in many cases. "Frontier" came to mean the advancing fringe of settlement rather than of territorial acquisition. Indeed, "frontier" has come to mean the locus of a way of life rather than a specific geographical location. There was still a frontier long after the Pacific Ocean became the western boundary of the United States (Jones 1959: 251).

In contrast, John Agnew regards “boundaries” as being largely associated with the concept of frontiers, which, according to him, is a relatively recent term used to

\(^3\) Oxford Dictionaries online- http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/border?q=border. 11-4-2013, 15:00.
describe areas of borderland around the edge of a territorial zone, state or a settlement (usually of the European colonies). Thus, he argues, a border “conveys the sense of an edge or periphery rather than a precise line of demarcation” (Agnew 2001: 12).

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the state was the main category of analysis for politicians as well as academics in the geo-political field. Inspired by Friedrich Ratzel and others who saw the state as a “living, dynamic organism”, and not just defined territory, research focused on understanding the “regional and global balance of power between states and empires who, more often than not, produced scenarios designed to serve the long-term strategic interests of the state within which they resided” (Newman 2002: 4). ‘Boundaries’ and ‘frontiers’ were almost synonymous since both of them were connected with the manifestation of territorial contact: The former was the line that defined the separation and the latter was a zone between the states (Nugent and Paul 1996). Borders, it was argued, were established only with the foundation of the modern nation state and investigated in order to understand how they created, marked and influenced the surrounding environment (Paasi 1996: 25; Megoran 2011: 3; Agnew 2001: 8).

The study of International Relations (IR) has drawn a distinction between borders and boundaries: “International boundaries are thus invisible vertical planes delimiting the horizontal extent of states. As such, they are distinct from international borders.” (Megoran 2011: 2). Megoran continues to argue, based on Mark-Jean F. Blanchard, that

The latter [Borders] are the institutional paraphernalia and practices associated with managing and policing boundaries, such as customs checkpoints and passport controls, and markers like fences, stones, signposts, and barriers. Borders are thus the spaces of division and interchange created or influenced physically and socially by the presence of an
international boundary. They are social institutions that mediate exchanges between
states” (Megoran 2011: 2).

Alternatively, David Newman (2001: 151) has argued that the field of geography does
not distinguish between borders and boundaries but rather views them both as a line
of separation, as opposed to a frontier. The terms were interchangeable: borders and
boundaries were seen as lines that start as simple demarcations and end up profoundly
changing the area both socially and politically. Despite any difficulties regarding the
nuances of the terms, I will adopt the approach of geographers and use both terms-
“borders” and “boundaries” -alternately.

The evolving conceptualization of “borders”- first as a line of demarcation in a
conceptual sense and later as an institution- has evolved and been influenced by
several broader debates in the fields of political science, geography and history. For
example, the study of nationalism has clearly impacted on the ways in which borders
and boundaries are defined and discussed. The border-nationalism-society
relationship is complex and inseparable, and their interrelationship affects how one
understands each of them individually:

In the nineteenth century the convergence of analogies between nature and nationalism
provided a vision according to which society […] became conterminous with the boundaries
of the national state. […] This makes the role of boundaries particularly important in the
construction of the narrative account that constitutes the kernel of territorial identification
(Paasi 1996: 51).

Anssi Paasi (1996), with reference to Anthony Smith’s writing on nationalism in
1978, argues that over the centuries, boundaries were seen as a necessity in creating
national identity, since it was impossible to create national solidarity between people
without ascribing land possession and territorial definitions. The creation of kinship
relations had to be attached to a specific space, which introduced the feeling of belonging. The aim of nationalism, according to Paasi, is to create a national identity based on state boundaries.

However, Paasi notes that territories, and, therefore, boundaries, are not enough to create social identification but rather, additional factors are needed to connect people. A territory serves as a symbol and, therefore, is not interpreted by all groups in a similar way. What determines national identification is first and foremost “national socialization” — how people are instilled with the idea of citizenship in their everyday lives and in life-history (Paasi 1996: 53, emphasis added). Paasi (1996: 55) describes the process of national socialization where “nationalism may be defined as a social process through which certain historically contingent forms of territorial identities, symbols and ideologies are instilled into the social and individual consciousness”. In this thesis, I will touch briefly on the broad topic of nationalism and borders when discussing concepts of borders and their impact on the perception, conceptualization and imagination of the nation state by its people.

The study of European colonialism has also contributed to our understanding of borders as a tool of political power. In Europe, borders evolved as a symbol of European modernity and advancement, enabling Europeans to differentiate between themselves and the “uncivilized” world. European conceptualizations of borders became part of a broader worldview that differentiated the “West” from the non-western “Other”, whether African, Middle Eastern, Asian or Latin American peoples. As many scholars have argued, this European worldview was largely founded upon and policed by many imagined borders between the “East” and the “West” all designed to maintain social, racial and cultural hierarchical distinctions (Said 2000
[1978]; Agnew 2001: 18). In this worldview, European conceptualizations of political borders were seen as additional evidence of western superiority, while colonized and occupied people, it was claimed, lacked any notion of borders. As Stephen Jones wrote, quoting Ratzel, (Jones 1959: 242): “It is easy to assume that primitive men have primitive ideas about boundaries, and that these are more or less alike around the world. A common assumption has been that primitive men have no linear boundaries but only zones. As Ratzel neatly puts it, ‘Not lines but positions are the essentials for this concept’”.

Recent research has revealed that the use of borders to separate and differentiate between societies is not only a European strategy, and similar practices have been revealed in African contexts (See Schlee 1989). Identity politics is not only a “game” exclusive to Europe, but can be identified in all societies. Schlee wrote: “The substance of identity politics includes the possible ways in which people can claim to be the same as other people or to be different from them” (Schlee 2009: 1). Indeed, the concept of “otherness” can be seen as an alternative conceptualization of borders between people and space. In what follows, I will argue that the notion of “otherness” has indeed played the same social, cultural and political role of borders and therefore must be understood as a crucial part of borders regimes. Seen in this light, we can identify alternative social, cultural and political interventions as part of demarcating borders, a significant departure from any earlier academic conceptualization of borders.

Border scholars have also brought about new understandings of “maps” as tools for enforcing political power. The “map is about the world in a way that reveals, not the world- or not just the world- but also (and sometimes especially) the agency of
David Harvey emphasized the social and political role played by maps as an organized representational form of "space" where they serve "typically totalizing, usually two-dimensional, Cartesian, and very un-dialectical devices with which it is possible to propound any mixture of extraordinary insights and monstrous lies" (Harvey 1996: 4). Maps are an instrument that make borders visible and express the social constructions under which they have been written, as well as the conditions that exist in the specific context. Harvey continues to explain (1996: 5): “Mapping metaphor subsumes [...] the problematic of representation within an often unquestioned choice to employ one particular projection rather than some other”. Maps were created in order to “frame an image of the world we live in”, while creating a visible and valid reality (Wood 1992: 4-5). As Wood argues, map usage is a cultural production that developed in some societies for generations, while in others it did not evolve at all. Therefore, maps, like borders, are culturally dependent and imagined. Wood (1992: 19) reiterates this idea: “Once acknowledged that the map creates these boundaries, it can no longer be accepted as representing these 'realities', which alone the map is capable of embodying (profound conflict of interest)”. Borders, therefore, were created by people and helped them conceive a new reality.

With increasing trends of globalization, the study of the constitutive powers of border regimes has become more urgent. New schools for critical geopolitics have

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4 Wood discusses the concept of material maps as a guideline for the geographical world and mental maps as part of social behavior. An interesting insight in his book is the creation of an individual reality based on knowledge acquired from life experience- "What is achieved in this way? Precisely the pretense that what the maps show us is ... reality. Where it is not reality, why then it would just be ... opinion, Somebody's idea of where your property began and ended, a good guess at where the border was, a notion of the location of the hundred-year flood line [...] the social construction of borders" (Wood 1992: 15-16, emphasis added). In this way, similar to what borders do, maps do not reproduce the world but construct it- "to admit it that knowledge of the map is knowledge of the world from which it emerges [...] isomorphic counter-image to everything in society that conspires to produce it. [...] it would be to insist on a sociology of the map” (Wood 1992: 18, italics in original text).
focused on the impact of globalization, including its influence on the traditional understanding of territory and sovereignty. During this time, territory has become of “supreme importance to the state” (Newman 2002: 6). Globalization has led to new conceptualization of borders in a world that many claim is becoming ‘borderless’. With the increased movement of knowledge, capital and people around the globe, some have claimed that national borders are losing their significance and even becoming obsolete. This has led to a re-examination of what the nature of borders is and has been, and scholars have questioned previous conceptualizations of the essence of former territorial borders and national boundaries (Yeung 1998: 294; Debrix 1998: 827-830; Agnew 2001: 7; Newman 2001: 144). Some economists and politicians are convinced of globalization’s potential to eventually bring about a borderless world:

The fortunes of individuals, firms, industries and even nation states are so intertwined with ongoing events in the global economy that it become almost impossible to define the nation state without reference to the broader economy […] The end result is the demise of geography and national boundaries, which no longer make a difference in the ‘borderless’ world (Yeung 1998: 292).

But not all are convinced that we are indeed moving toward a world without borders. In fact, many scholars have argued that globalization has led to a hardening of boundaries and a reinforcing of borders regimes. Some have claimed that globalization has in fact led to more policed, more fortified borders. The growing policing of global migration and efforts to establish better control over borderlines by building higher fences and using harsher and broader ranges of actions against immigrants, indicate an increasing anxiety over security issues (Newman 2006a; 2002; 2001: 14; Rumford 2006). The vision of a world without borders ceased with the question of immigration, and the result is that “there is no government in this
world that brings the much celebrated rhetoric of a borderless world into actual
practice” (Van-Houtum and Van-Naerssen 2002: 127). Furthermore, resistance from
local populations brought about the “dialectical process of homogenization and
differentiation” of the concept of borders, through questioning it roles (Yeung 1998:
292). I will not touch upon the issue of globalization and its effect on the borders
question. However, I do think this work strengthens Newman’s argument regarding
the shifting of national borders from the boundary and the edge of the state towards
the inner space where social interaction takes place.

**Theorizing Borders:**

One of the key merits of the past few decades certainly have been the widening of the
ontology and epistemology of borders (Ven-Houtum 2005: 673).

In the last two decades, the study of borders transformed “from the study of the
evolution and changes of the territorial line” to the expression of the complexity of
human social life. Henk Van-Houtum argues “a site at which socio-spatial differences
are communicated […] the border is now understood as a verb in the sense of
bordering” (Van-Houtum 2005: 672). Borders are conceptualized “not so much as an

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5 Some theoreticians, such as David Harvey (1990) and Henry Yeung (1998), claim that globalization is
not necessarily a new process but an inherent part of capitalism and its expansion. In the last three
decades, globalization grew faster and larger than in any time in the history of economy. It is argued
that “the notion of ‘borderless world’ is […] representation of space […] world metaphor remains
representational rather than real (Yeung 1998: 295)”

6 Classical writing saw borders as an inherent part of territorial and space division. At the time,
thinkers investigated their empirical appearance rather than their functions. As early as 1936, Richard
Hartshorne created five categories of borders- pioneer, antecedent, subsequent, superimposed, and
relict (where borders reflect the historical social process of human settlement). When boundaries
were founded, they determined the community settlements’ shape, and, therefore, its inhabitants’
national identity. While in some places, the line of the border took into consideration the local social
factors and the cultural differences, in most cases, there was a gap between the two. The border was
imposed by the colonial powers who ignored ethnic identities and particular needs. S. B. Jones divided
object or phenomenon, something to erase or install, but rather an ongoing, repetitive process that we encounter and produce ourselves in our daily lives” (Berg and Van-Houtum 2003: 1-2, emphasis added). This thesis will show how social and cultural phenomenon not previously perceived as tools of the bordering process are in fact deeply engaged in the process of geopolitical and special demarcation. This new interpretation of borders changes the way spatial division is understood.

As part of this recent critical approach, David Newman in his article The Lines That Continue to Separate Us: Borders in Our ‘Borderless’ World (2006) views borders as institutions, a way to maintain social order and divide people into distinguishable categories. Borders and boundaries are a socio-economic-political phenomenon that creates partition by including some and excluding many others (Newman 2003b: 281-282). Borders are “spatial strategic representation of the making and claiming of difference in space” (Berg and Van-Houtum 2003: 2). Borders, as institutions, serve as a framework, in which practices of control can be implemented and political power can appear. They serve as a “control mechanism”, not by virtue of their physical location as a barrier but rather, its function as such (Newman 2006b).

Borders are constructed from people’s imagination of the environment in which they live. This causes borders to function as a “mental map,” and demonstrates that land is only accessible through social constructions (Newman 2006a). Although borders are understood, for the most part, as a separation line, they can also be a line for “contact and cooperation” between the two sides, and, therefore, are both inclusive
and exclusive. It is through this line that communities are enclosed in various ways (Newman 2003b: 281-282; Viktorova 2003: 149).

In previous writings, Newman elaborates by describing borders as having mutually constructive relationships with space inside the political arena:

Rather than a uni-directional relationship in which the political is always seen as influencing the evolution and formation of human landscapes, the relationship is now correctly perceived as bi-directional […]. Territory is as much symbolic and abstract as it is tangible and concrete […]. Space and place become imbued with individual and group meaning, sites become mythologized […] strengthened through the agencies of political and territorial socialization (Newman 2002: 13).

Borders are recognized as an instrument to regulate societies. They are used as a methodological mechanism to include some members and exclude others. They are not necessary stable; however, they always delineate how identities appear, are characterized, imagined and vary (Newman 2003a: 15). Borders are marked not only by their drawing but by combining their delineation with all kind of practices, “rules and regulations”, that create the notion of difference (Ibid: 16).

Henk Van-Houtum and Ton Van-Naerssen explain the process where these imaginary lines are “(b)ordering and othering” as they highlight issues of“(im)mobility” (Van-Houtum and Van-Naerssen 2002: 125). They agree with other academics in that borders represent the point of demarcation between populations and serve to create an imagined unity. They state: “The making of a place must hence be understood as an act of purification, as it is arbitrarily searching for justification,

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7 The creation of borders by people is a similar process to what Benedict Anderson has described in his book *Imagined Communities* (1991). The drawing of borders from people’s interpretation of their surrounding is equivalent to their ideas of identification with one another, leading to the emergence of a national state as a social and political entity.
bounded cohesion of people and their activities in space which can be compared and
contrasted to other spatial entities” (Ibid: 126). They show the inherent paradox that
the border creates:

[Borders are] erected to erase territorial ambiguity and ambivalent identities in order to shape
an unique and cohesive order, but thereby create new or reproduce latently existing
differences in space and identity- is of much importance in understanding our daily
contemporary practices (Ibid).

Henk Van-Houtum and David Newman emphasize the differentiation element
inherent to the process of “bordering”: “Borders do not represent a fixed point in
space or time […] rather they symbolize a social practice of spatial differentiation”
(Van Houtum and Naerssen cited in Megoran 2011: 3). Similarly, Newman adds that
a dynamic appears with the production of the line surrounding particular spaces and
populations, as he is quoted by Megoran: “International boundaries are ‘simply the
tangible and visible feature that represents the course and intensity of the bounding
process at any particular point in time and space’” (Ibid). However, while both Van-
Houtum and Newman consider borders and boundaries as instruments to create
difference, the former promoted a specific conceptualization, while the latter argued
for a general theoretical framework (Ibid: 4).

Anssi Paasi regards borders as an expression of practices by political
institutions. As he follows the “construction of ‘we’”, based on David Carr and others,
and its relation to the imagining of the “other”, the borders became instrumental in
creating the connection between social solidarity, territorial identities and otherness.
Paasi tries to understand concepts of “place” in various social units on various local,
regional, national and global levels (Paasi 1996: 8-10, 206). Geography is a tool for
drawing and visualizing boundaries of power that emerge from social practices, while
boundaries are part of the political practice of constructing individual subjects and reproducing society (Ibid: 20).

Nick Megoran (2011) develops these ideas when he suggests that the approach to borders as a social process is too narrow, too restrictive. He argues for the need to historicize borders and their political, social and cultural role over time. According to Megoran, the study of borders should include the historical transformation of borders, or “biographies”. For example, researchers need to ask how specific boundaries (and the borders that they produce) appear, reappear and change, and disappear or become less significant over time. These processes determine how borders “materialize, rematerialize, and dematerialize” (Megoran 2011: 4-5). Donna Flynn explained the need for this historical investigation of borders and the influence of time over the understanding of space. This is revealed only through a deep analysis of “how a group of people living in a literal international border zone renegotiate and manipulate that border, as well as cultural boundaries, in an ongoing processes of identity formation, thus forgoing a cohesive, transnational border identity” (Flynn 1997: 312). "Biographies" of borders, as I would like to show in this thesis, is not only valid in researching international borders but all types of borders in political, social and cultural space can be historicized.

It is now commonly accepted that we need to unpack the meaning and significance of borders in particular times and places. The research of borders can

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8 The discussion on social identity and the construction of the “Other” through separation between “we”, and “there” is broader than what can be expressed here. Paasi (1996: 13) summarizes: “[A] spatial dimension is usually inherent in the definitions of the Other, by virtue of the fact that the Other typically lives somewhere else, there. If the Other lives there, we-defined in specific narratives-are in any case different from it. In the case of nations, the discourse on culture, language etc. constitutes the ‘we’ and distinguishes it from the Other. The constitution of the we/they dichotomy usually exploits stereotypic[al] definitions of both us and them, and of them in particular. [...] Hence, both social, cultural and/or physical boundaries can be exploited in this categorization, whether we call it social specialization of spatial socialization”.
teach us much about political, cultural and social life. Thus, Jevgenia Viktorova (2003) looks at borders and boundaries as an ‘ontological condition’- where the demarcation of the self and the other, between the I versus the We, does not create opposing and distinct concepts but, rather, complementary ones where each one of them is created in comparison to the other and holds qualities that it lacks.\textsuperscript{9} Viktorova wrote:

Framing the notion of boundary […] includes the ‘generation’ of boundaries by the differences between the modalities of identity and alterity, the perception of boundaries in these modalities, as well as the related processes of boundary-drawing and crossing, the mechanisms of communication and meaning-generation (Viktorova 2003: 142- 143).

The reference to borders is often through the understanding of it as a geographical space. However, borders can be understood as a “spatial dimension of human consciousness” where they are largely “spatial to the operation of perception, cognition, meaning-generation, ethical and aesthetic orientation in culture can be envisioned in spatial terms” (Ibid: 141). Viktorova concludes by pointing again to the inherent character of borders as an instrument of demarcation of societies and communities.

In this thesis, I would like to borrow Berg and Van Houtum’s concepts of borders and prove how “borders are not a border” but, rather, a symbolic representation of social and political structure. I will use the various aspects of borders outlined in this chapter, including borders as a concept of “othering”, as a

\textsuperscript{9} In her article “Bringing Identity and Alterity: An Apologia for Boundaries” (2003), Jevgenia Viktorova discusses the works of Yuri Lotman Mikhali Bakhtin in order to understand borders and its mechanisms as sphere dividers through their broader description of the term and it various notions. She does this through an in-depth inspection of the way they handle concepts of identity and othering and “the conditions in which boundaries manifest their properties of asymmetry and ambivalence, the effects of delimitation etc.” (Viktorova 2003: 142).
control system, as a creation of social practices, and show how phenomenona were not previously grasped as border performances, though they acted as such. I will emphasize, as was suggested by Berg and Van Houtum, how cultural structures and daily practices make the term ‘border’ fluid and how these borders manifest through social interaction practices.

**Borders in Africa:**

Agnew writes about the traditional thought of social and political systems:

> [Social and political systems] *always* require geographical boundaries that precisely demarcate them one from another both to trap externalities and to provide a territorial membership criterion. This perspective ignores the fact that for much of human history and in most of the world politics took place without careful boundary delimitation and with little or no attention to precise spatial limits on members in the polity (Agnew 2001: 8).

Agnew argues in his lecture that borders and boundaries were imported by Europe to all parts of the world, and he questions why Europeans needed to create them in the first place (Agnew 2001: 9). In contrast to Agnew’s contention, I will argue that Europeans did not bring borders to Africa. In fact, nearly all societies have local notions of borders, although these are often conceptualized differently than in the European context. The historic geopolitical division of space in Africa, and the ‘bordering process’ reveals in different times and places diverse notions and practices with which Europe was not familiar. Thus, as Retaillé and Walther argued, African notions of borders and the demarcation of space accounted for more cultural and social hybridity than in European formulations (Retaillé and Walther 2011: 96-97). Scholars such as these have just scratched the surface of our knowledge, and much
work on African notions of borders still needs to be done. According to David Newman, even in recent research, we are still unfamiliar with other conceptualizations of borders other than the “traditional” European one (Newman 2006a: 629).

African Border Studies has emerged as an increasingly significant field of research from the 1990s onwards. The field gained more prominence following the African Borders Studies conference in Edinburgh in 1993 (Rodrigues 2012). Until then, scholars presumed that the idea of borders was imported to Africa from Europe during the imperial occupation when Africans were forced to accept the European political system.

It is well known that colonial state borders were created during and after the European “scramble” for Africa, reflecting European geopolitical interests and ignoring local approaches to land division. Territorial borders were determined without taking into consideration demography and ethnography (Wimmer 2008). The pre-colonial African landscape was perceived by the colonizers as primordial and boundless, while its inhabitants were seen as “naturalists” and “people with no land”. In reality, a large percentage of the population, including farmers, were spread out over wide areas. In addition to farmers, there were pastoralist groups who required constant movement. Therefore, political power was generally imposed upon populations and not over territories. Although it is argued that Africa was partitioned even before the colonial period, the plurality of approaches to people’s environment— their “endogenous conception of space”— included various approaches to how communities treated the land they inhabited. The most accepted approach, detailed mainly in Herbst’s book States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in
Authority and Control (2000), is that pre-colonial boundaries in Africa were relatively loose, the opposite of the later demarcated ones (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004; Wimmer 2008; Herbst 2000, 1989; Mbembé 2000; Retaille and Walther 2011).

However, recent historical work has contradicted this assumption by demonstrating that throughout the continent, we can find examples of the rigid concept of territorial boundaries that has played a significant role in establishing and reinforcing political power and authority. Thus, in a recent PhD, Vincent Hiribarren argued that “Borno was a bounded territory with a codified relationship with its vassal states” (Hiribarren 2012: 32). He argued that during the “Scramble for Africa”, the border was not destroyed, but that the colonizers “reused it” (Hiribarren 2012: 32). In what follows, I argue that we need not adopt an either/or approach to conceptualizing colonial and local borders. Instead, I show that there is alternative concept of borders, one that accounts for more fluidity and change in the ways in which borders are invoked and policed. Thus, borders can move and then return and borders can be established by society without having a physical presence.

African studies has made a significant contribution to our notion of borders as contingent, fluid and changing. It is been seen that historically, spatial relations in pre-colonial Africa were dependent on local social structure and, for the most part, were relative. In societies with boundaries demarcated by a physical line came the need for strong allegiances.\(^\text{10}\) In some cases, one community could have fallen under several sovereign powers and held a number of loyalties. In other instances, several authorities controlled the same territory at the same time. The boundaries created by the governing power gained significance only through social relationships and the local

\(^{10}\) For example see Wilks 1989 [1975] for her historical research on the Asante people in West Africa.
systems that created to separate populations (Mbembé 2000: 264). Denis Retaillé and Olivier Walther (2011: 89) present unique approaches to space through what they call a model of “mobile space”. They argue that across the Sahel, populations created places through cultures and networks, while becoming mobile: “Space model […] takes into consideration the mobility of the places themselves. This means that a place can move within a given spatial structure and yet keep its intrinsic properties”.

In the area that became the border between Kenya and Ethiopia, communities familiar to one another fell along the two sides of the border. The boundaries between the communities were maintained “by the armed force”, or what I will argue later, based on Günther Schlee (1990), was the “border of fear”. Steven Van Wolputte and Gustaaf Verswijver argue that a landscape is always seen from the viewpoint of the local inhabitants settled on it and their relationship to it. This is expressed in their daily practices but was not taken into consideration by the Europeans. As they write “Except in the European mindset, pristine or virgin (‘untouched’) landscapes do not exist […] what seemed to be an empty desert actually harbored many trade routes that ultimately connected the continent’s east and west coasts” (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004: 9-10).

In this context of fluidity and change, scholars have debated the impact of the imposition of European-style borders in African context. It is well known that African state borders were determined from the beginning of the colonial period. But European influence on the division of space could already be seen in the slave trade era and during the development of international trade. European economic interests along the African shores were a preliminary factor affecting the determination of the first borders of Africa. Trade between local populations and the sailors, the
establishment of traffic posts and the activities of merchants and missioners drew some physical lines of separation that remain to this day. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 resulted in the division of Africa into political entities defined by borders drawn on maps and controlled by European colonial powers. Some of the colonial empires took into consideration natural boundaries as well as pre-colonial political entities and kingdoms; otherwise a few of the boundaries were completely arbitrary or imagined.

If before the conquest these borders symbolized negotiation and new opportunities for the Europeans and Africans, at the time of the final occupation they gave shape to spatial limitation, and implemented imperial space divisions (Mbembé 2000: 264-265). Over time, the international colonial borders created fundamental changes to the local populations on either side of them. Borders created new boundaries but also opened up new opportunities. In North Kenya, for example, conflict and low-level raiding became more profitable where the border created a natural haven for illegal trade (Galaty 2005: 63). Stolen animals and goods became easier to be smuggled, hidden and then sold on the markets according to a changing net rate price on both sides of the border. In addition, different groups mainly from Ethiopia and Kenya, who lived nearby had little access to firearms in comparison with their other Kenyan neighbors (Ibid)

Most of the “bounded territories”, such as the colonies, were divided into political districts and these sub-divisions also engendered political, cultural and social change on a very local level. Thus, in some cases, Europeans needed to build systems of chiefhood in areas newly defined as districts. These were established in order to implement colonial rule, particularly taxes, monetary economy, education,
urbanization and bureaucratic and administrative arrangements. Each colony was designed under its own set of circumstances, although in most cases, the creation of provinces, municipalities and so forth were the outgrowth of European economic and political interests. This had a significant impact on the invention and consolidation of local ethnic identities (Mbembé 2000: 265-266).

Following independence, most of the marked geographical lines remained, despite the changes to some states’ names (Ibid: 264). Moreover, independent African states have maintained the European colonies’ national borders and “methods” of policing them. Anthony Asiwaju writes (2012: 68): “Not only were the legal instruments inherited [...] border relations in Africa have continued to feature the same kind of mutual jealousies, conflicts and tensions that characterized such relation in the Europe of the national state”. Questions regarding national borders in Africa were examined from various perspectives- such as the national identity of the Hausa along the Nigeria-Niger boundary (Asiwaju 2012: 70), the social dynamic between Somalis, Oromo and others at the borders of the Horn of Africa (Schlee 2003b), and the embodiment of the border by the Okpara over the Bénin- Nigeria borders (Flynn 1997). Nonetheless, there has been no comprehensive study regarding local African populations and the division of space, how locals understand and perceive borders (not only national ones), and the way in which they conceptualize this term. If during the colonial period, administrative institutions organized the political state through the enforcement of borders and its division of space, from the 1980s, this separation of communities based on imagined common cultures, family ties and language created growing conflicts (Mbembé 2000: 267).
The question that Harvey raises, which I have highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, relates to the production of ‘space’, pursued by the production of nature and emphasizes the link between “space” and “time”. Borders are formulated under the complex relationship between the two terms and their contact with the social structure. The significance of borders should not only be examined within a broader geo-political context, “top down approach”, but also as an institution that experiences transformation from the “bottom up” - for example, through people’s daily and regular practices (Newman 2006b: 102; 2003). Following David Newman’s approach, I argue that in order to understand how borders are developed, policed and violated in local settings, scholars should examine the ways in which daily practices and local ideologies divide space and construct boundaries. Rather than only viewing borders as a mandate from above and as a way to only separate national states, they should be seen also as having local significance.

In the following section, I will examine the Rendille perception of borders and how they came to light during my fieldwork in August 2011. I look at how the term “border” is understood by members of the group through their division of “space”. This is in order to acquire deeper knowledge of the group’s geopolitical comprehension. This analysis is based upon Newman’s understanding and conceptualization of both terms, as he writes: “Space and, by association, borders undergo constant reification” (Newman 2003: 16). Here, I wish to ask when and where do “borders” appear in pre-colonial and colonial times and from independence in 1963 up until 2011. This examination will be based on relevant literature and on my own experiences in the field. I will show how the Rendille “practice” borders and how these experiences impact their geopolitical perception of borders.
Historical background:

Throughout history, nomadic communities were seen from a ‘romantic’ point of view and as communities that did not develop or change over time. Indeed, nomadism characterized their ‘nature’: academics wrongly assumed that nomads chose to live solely according to natural changes in their environment and, therefore, did not have notions of borders. However, as it will be seen, my research into the Rendille community has proven quite the opposite: the Rendille have demonstrated a very clear division of space; social status is the determining factor in drawing their borders; and their borders are constantly changing. Nomadism was a solution for the Rendille who tried to predict and survive changes in their harsh environment. Exposed to constant environmental changes as they were, they adopted varied but defined ways of living (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004). In what follows, I argue that borders were used as an instrument to shape social customs and agreements; however, only with the use of “grassroots” research theory can the Rendille’s notions of borders be assessed.

In this chapter, I will review Rendille history and previous research conducted by anthropologists and historians on Rendille society. I will show how the academic standpoint changed from viewing this local population as living proof of human prehistoric times, to a position that attempted to understand the interior architecture of their society: from being ‘objects’ of study to ‘subjects’ with ‘independent thought’. I will try to understand the way in which the Rendille have experienced, confronted and challenged the geo-political order established by surrounding dominant powers. The Rendille not only witnessed but also participated in effecting recent changes to their environment, with far-reaching political and cultural implications on local articulations of space, community and autonomy.
The Evolution of Knowledge on Africa:

North Kenya was treated by both the British authority and the Kenyan independent government as ‘Another Country’, a distant wasteland inhabited by small and economically insignificant populations of nomadic pastoralists (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 29).

Until recently, the study of nomadic societies in Africa has been limited to and skewed by the biases of western knowledge. Up until the 20th century, western history studies were almost exclusively based on the examination of written documents and archeology, sources that are rare in Africa and even more so in the Sub-Sahara. Sub-Sahara Africa has been considered by some philosophers and social science researchers as a continent with ‘no history’ (Hugh Trevor-Roper cited by Macgaffe 2005: 190). Earlier generations of anthropologists saw the present as a representative of the past, as though it were evidence of the past itself, while historians were overly preoccupied with the transformations and changes that occurred and looked for ways to reconstruct it (Henige 2005: 169). Furthermore, during colonial times, the rewriting of Africa’s history was very much influenced by the colonizers desire to fit the history of African societies to the ‘tribal’ reality that they imagined (Keim 2009: 116-117).

Since the 1950s and 1960s, interest and research in Africa has widened and deepened. However, this process was complicated by an ongoing debate about the uniqueness of African history. Historians argued that while Africans have not preserved history in the same way as Europeans, local societies did have ways of

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11 The first historians and anthropologists who came to these areas during the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century based their knowledge on diaries written by early travelers. In the case of the Rendille, Paul Spencer claims (1973) that the writings of Von Höhnel from 1888, Chanler in 1893 and Arkell-Hardwich from 1903, are not reliable sources as they give misleading and contradicting information. However, he does use it as a starting point in learning about the general relationship between them and the Samburu people: “From reading these and other accounts one can quite justifiably begin to wonder just who might be protecting whom and whether this would induce the best of terms. Yet there remains one common theme: that these two tribes were closely related in some way” (Spencer 1973: 2).
preserving knowledge of the past. Historians needed to adopt their methodology to local societies. Thus, writing Africa's history was dependent on uncovering local methods of preservation of historical knowledge. These included the stories told and re-told by the griots, storytellers, Pims, musicians, as well as other local traditions and practices.

After the publication of Jan Vansina’s book *Oral Traditions. A study in Historical Methodology* (1965), the use of oral traditions and other local tools became crucial to academic writing on African communities’ history. Moreover, history has become regarded as something that is reconstructed and a question of perspective. As Mario I. Aguilar states: “While economic diversification and adaptation helps the actual persistence of a cultural system, symbolic systems of social reproduction are absolutely essential in order to create historical and timely persistence” (Aguilar 1999: 152). This new perspective regarding different methodologies has led historians to question whether or not to accept local stories and what to do with them. This debate has reached unprecedented intensity (Parker and Rathbone 2007; Henige 2005: 170-171; Waller 1995: 201: 347; Oliver 1966: 363).

The problem with researching African history, and specifically the Rendille community, is that research was based on European methodological understanding, which did not reflect the variety of African cultures. In contrast, culturally sensitive research can broaden previous assumptions and change academic conclusions. For example, historically, the Rendille community has always had its notions of borders; however, their ideas of borders were different to those of the British. The British ignored the Rendille’s borders when they drew their district boundaries, minimizing the Rendille grazing areas and, consequently, threatening their means of survival.
Therefore, in order to gain a true historical picture of the Rendille, history must be culturally aware.

Colonialism often contributes to the destruction of social and cultural institutions that preserve communal memories and identities. At the same time, colonial authority created new social and cultural systems that did not previously exist. Borders and the bordering process played a crucial part in enacting and reinforcing these changes. Thus, the British created notions of ‘tribes’ and ethnic categories which did not previously exist. They did so by using administrative practices- “as totemic concepts of yesterday” (Galaty 1982: 1). By assigning labels to communities and attributing them to groups, the colonial power could uphold ‘order’, ‘map’ and ‘organize the areas’ social structure by building ‘categories’. This process had far reaching implications for local communities who had no previous conceptions of rigid borders but maintained more fluid views of group identities. Van Wolputte and Verswiiver (2004) explain:

Pastoral nomads were the most beneficial to colonial rule as long as they remained ‘marginal’, ‘isolated’, ‘traditional’ and ‘uncivilized’ (or ‘unspoilt’). In this they served not only as the object of scientific interest but also as counter example, propaganda tool, geopolitical weapon and, since the nineteen-fifties, as leisure and entertainment. Of course, the fact that the way they were represented by colonial discourse was highly biased and politically motivated, and that they were objectified and ‘locked’ into racist and evolutionist stereotypes – with all the social, economic and political consequences this implied – hardly renders these herding communities unique in, say, Africa (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004: 6-7).

Colonial knowledge of Africa envisioned local communities as part of the natural landscape, and subsequently as objects that needed to be ‘cultivated’, tamed or conserved. Parts of Africa were seen as untouched vestiges of past civilizations not
yet destroyed, and, therefore demanding careful examination (Ibid). African societies were believed to be constituted of neatly divided tribes with deep roots in the distant past. The ‘tribes’ all had the same origin, were “one blood”, and had “common history” (Galaty 1982: 2). Nomadic pastoralist people were seen as “brave, independent, fierce men, freely moving with their herds, and not having to deal with the constraints and frustrations” of “civilized living” (Dyson- Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980: 15). In many contexts, both nomads and settled groups were regarded as an obstacle to development, either as a threat to progress or as a delicate phenomenon endangered by modernity (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004).  

A substantial body of literature emerging in the postcolonial era debunked these notions of pre-colonial African societies as a conglomeration of clearly demarcated and unchanging tribes. Postcolonial research has revealed a reality in stark contrast to colonial knowledge. Thus, with regard to North Eastern Africa, it is now commonly accepted that most communities were heterogeneous and made up of different clan groups. Group identification is seen as contingent and fluid, moving beyond the notion of the tribe. Recent research has examined the emergence of social alliances, focusing on the dynamics and relationships between the “sign” of the group, primarily its name, and the classification process (Galaty 1982: 3). Mario Aguilar adds that memory and imagination are essential elements in the “creation or recreation of a cultural diaeresis […] they constitute social memories to a certain point, whereby

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12 Galaty and Bonte (quoted in Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004: 6-7) summarize the perception towards pastoralist societies in five main points: “[I]n these ‘myths’, both ideological and scientific, pastoralism has been depicted: (a) as an irrational, if not lackadaisical, process of unbridled herd accumulation predicated on cultural rather than economic (read ‘rational’) value; (b) as a ‘natural’ adaptation to the arid lands, currently explicable as a set of micro-ecological subsistence strategies; (c) as an ethnically and economically closed system of autonomous subsistence production; (d) as entraining ‘predatory’ conflict and inevitable territorial expansion; and (e) as inevitably egalitarian in ethos, associated with nonstratified, acephalous systems of political organization (or disorganization)”.  

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people gather and share impressions of the past and expectations of the future” (Aguilar 1999: 155).

**Rendille land, historical background:**

During pre-colonial times, Northern Kenya was populated by competing nomadic pastoral groups who were frequently at war over water and grazing land. These wars increased during the harsh droughts, famine epidemics and rise of smallpox at the end of the 19th century. Nomadic pastoralists traveled for several reasons: in order to seek land for grazing and water; to avoid physical and social threats including insects and diseases; and to stay away from competition with other people. Indeed, the nomadic way of living and animal keeping was not “an isolated subsistence strategy: it has developed, historically that is, as a response […] to make the most efficient use of dryland resources” (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004: 20-21). Each herder and herding community moved following a different course. Therefore, it was argued, that “[the] attempts to classify these patterns of livestock movements into categories […] have proved this to be an intellectually sterile enterprise” (Dyson- Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980: 18).

In this study, I will treat the Rendille as a nomadic pastoralist community (using the various terms alternately), following Dyson- Hudson and Dyson- Hudson’s definition of nomads: “[People] who are primarily dependent on livestock, who live in environments with marked seasonality, and who choose as their basic strategy for providing year-round food for their herds the movement of livestock to pasturage the than bringing of fodder to herds” (Ibid).
According to Spencer (1973), Sobania (1979), Günther Schlee (2012 [1979, 1989]) and Anne Beaman (1981), the pastoral nomadic communities of Northern Kenya can be divided into two main categories: Cushitic (from the eastern part of The Horn of Africa, i.e. Ethiopia and Somalia), and Nilo-Hamitic, (from the Sudanese Nile). These people are presently recognized as a unified ethnic entity but, in fact, have never been hermetic groups but mixtures of communities. Indeed, these communities have had social and economic relationships with other societies from early times. As Sobania (1979: 52) argues: “The notion that such societies are of single origin ignores the dynamics of community.”

The Rendille stemmed from the Cushitic people. They evolved to become a camel-keeping population living in North Kenya and have migrated over time through the area that became the northern part of the Republic of Kenya. From the 19th century onwards, they have occupied the Chalbi and Kaisut Deserts, bordering on Lake Turkana and the Marsabit Mountain. Similar to most nomadic and pastoral societies, the Rendille strive to maintain their livestock productivity throughout the year, during both the rainy and dry seasons. The Rendille’s dependency on animals necessitates constant migration in order to look for water and pasture land. Like many aspects of pre-colonial African history, the distant Rendille past remains largely vague and unclear (Spencer 1973: 148).

The Rendille are a prime example of a mixed society: they are Cushitic in origin and their language is very similar to the Somali, Borana and Gabra communities further to the east. It was the British colonizers who created geopolitical borders, followed by social borders, between the communities. Even though these borders existed before the colonizers, they were never clear, nor defined, but rather
constantly changing (Spencer 1979: 149; Schlee 2010, 1990; Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 39; Fratkin 1997: 247). While most of the area was affected by ‘Boranisation’ and ‘Islamination’, the Rendille were culturally influenced by the Maa-speaking communities: they had similar circumcision ceremonies, earlobe piercing rituals, and even some shared vocabulary. This highlights the regions social mixture and complexity (Schlee 1989: 40).

Recalling the Rendille’s later history, it is assumed that they emigrated from the eastern shore of the Turkana Lake. The Rendille age-group *Irbandiff* were initiated into warriorhood in 1825 and were the last warriors traced grazing in the area of Kerio Vally, as well as the earliest ones to enter the region of Lake Turkana and make use of the area of Kokoi and Surge for grazing. The expansion of the Turkana in particular, but also of the Samburu, caused the rest of the communities in the lake area to wander from one area to the next out of fear from raids or lack of grazing land (Sobania 1979: 30-31; Waller 1995: 201).

Since it is known that the *Dibgudo* age-group are recorded as having a circumcision ceremony in 1867 and a marriage ceremony in 1878 it has been assumed that the exact day of arrival to the low land plains of Surge and Dharrar regions may have been earlier. These traditions, coupled with the existence of specific vegetation in the area, indicate that the main centers of Rendille settlements were in the Kokoi region alongside Turkana Lake and other inland grazing areas (Sobania 1979: 31-32).

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13 In his article on this issue of borders among the Rendille, Schlee states- “The Interviewer believes that a gate [in what he recognized as “Rendille Land”] must lead through something. The localities of the various gates and their spatial relationship to each other therefore seemed important to the interviewer, because he thought that by connecting these gates by a line, one might find the boundary in which the gates are the crossing points” (Schlee 1990: 8).
Other causes for movement and migration were the *Mutai* ['the disasters’]; raids, droughts and stock diseases recorded in the stories of different age-groups, like is recorded to the times of the age-groups that were initiation between the years of 1867 and 1895. These events reflected a time of mass movement, when Borana and Gabra were pushed to the west by the Somali-speaking communities and the Samburu and the Rendille were evicted from the Wato area by the Maasai. At the end of the 19th century, the Laikipiak were defeated, something that allowed the Turkana to take control of the eastern side of the lake and raid its population (Sobania 1979 33). There is evidence that the Rendille moved from Laisamis to the Horr Valley and Loyangalani, meeting other communities, such as the Gabra, and faced harsh raids by the Borana from Ethiopia and encountered droughts.

Throughout the British occupation of Kenya, that formally began in the 1880s, the north of the country was treated as a military buffer zone, or borderland, between the British Empire and hostile countries such as Ethiopia (occupied by Italy during the Second World War), and Somalia. After Ethiopia’s defeat of Italy in 1895, in what is known as the battle of Adwa, the British had cause to guard their railways from Mombasa to Uganda, as well as the central tea plains and cattle farms. Thus, between the years 1906 and 1914, a border was created in order to separate the British colonies and Ethiopian empire (Schlee 2010, 1989; Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 29; Simpson 1996: 282-283; Wood 2000: 68).

This new administrative division and establishment of borders divided various local populations by placing them on either side of the border. The British authorities enforced borders by separating “their tribes” from the ones on the “outer” territory.

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14 For a map of the area see Appendix, Figure 5.
such as Ethiopia (Sobania 1979: 25). Similar to other parts of Africa, in Kenya the British created and unified cultural entities. The purpose of this classification, which was later used to categorize the African people into defined ‘tribes’, was to divide up the population in the simplest possible way: a division in tune with the British political vision. By virtue of their dress, diet, manners, spatial praxis, and ways with animals, African herding communities were classified as 'traditional'. Mr. H. R. Tate, one of the first Europeans to make his way of the heart of the Northern provinces and the Rendille community writes:

In stature they are heavier made than the Masai, no doubt owing to the invariable strain of Rendile blood in their veins. The elmoru, or elders, wear the hair short, but the elmoran (warriors) have a fringe and allow the hair to grow long behind, but do not bind it in a queue. In face [t] they lack the aristocratic profile of the gaunt Masai, but their expression is pleasing and intelligent. The kopo (old women) and ndito (young girls) dress in the same style as among the Masai people. (Tate 1904, 226, emphasis added)

The European way to perceived the communities’ in remote and harsh environment, which they viewed as ‘tribes’, were rooted in racist ideologies. In fact, the ‘natural habitat’ these communities occupied was forced upon them, largely as a result of British imperial isolation and expulsion policy (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004). The British found that different societies had cultures, traditions and symbols in common and created in their mind what John Parker and Richard Rathbone called a “frozen identity” (Parker and Rathbone 2007: 47). For example, in North Kenya, the colonizers saw a clear division between Galla and Somali that did not exist on the ground (Schlee 1989: 46).

During the early 1900s, the British tried to establish a local administration system to control the Rendille, while at the same time creating inner borders between
the different nomadic groups in the area. The implementation of borders caused a reconfiguration of the northern territories of colonial Kenya. As the Borana and Gabra moved southward from the border, the Samburu, Rendille and Ariaal were also forced to migrate as part of a regional domino effect. At the beginning of the 20th century, political conditions in Ethiopia led to a great rush of Borana and Gabra into Kenya, which further complicated the dispersal and settlement of local groups in Northern Kenya (Schlee 2012, 1989; Sobania 1990: 10-11; Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 29; Galaty 2005: 57; Simpson 1996: 287-288).

Soon after their arrival at the end of the 19th century and the creation of additional police posts, the British began to limit the Rendille and the Samburu to their distinct zones. The Rendille were not allowed to move north of Horoder-Koronli-Kargi-Kurkum-Gus-Balessa Koronte and Moite, and the administrative policy repeatedly prevented the minimal movement necessary for their survival. Nonetheless, in special cases, permissions were granted in order for the Rendille to be able to travel long distances. The area of the Rendille was defined in early 1919 with some later changes, mainly due to a lack of water and grazing land (Sobania 1979: 48).

Since many of the local groups did not have a centralized authority but were guided by their elders, the British had to create them. They did not put much stock in the locals’ ability to create a viable political system. As one of the administrators states, and quoted by Spencer: “The Rendille chiefs and headmen ‘are consistently inferior … One does not expect much one gets less but they are wild people and they

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15 In 1929, for example, the Rendille moved all the way up to Turbi and Lake Buti on the way to Moyale in search for water and grazing. However, they were taken back by the administration “with little trouble” (Sobania 1979: 68).

16 For a summary of the documented Rendille movement since 1910 until 1960, see Sobania (1979: 63-76).
have been taught little of the world and its ways” (Spencer 1973: 171). Even though some of the headmen did succeed and rose to higher governmental positions, the majority of these local officials were not proactive. Most of the ‘so called’ chiefs preferred to not do very much in order to keep their position in the community, and at the same time safeguard their position with the administration (Ibid: 173).

Nomadic groups were placed at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy, as they were considered to be the most primitive communities. Land ownership, fixed homesteads and villages reflected the colonial vision of civilization for others to mimic. The people of Africa were seen as a ‘discovery’ in a ‘natural’ environment, an ‘authentic people’ who projected the imagined past of humanity, and survived as the primary state of civilization which progressed from a nomadic way of living to sedentary lifestyle (Van Wolputte and Verswijver 2004: 9)

For years, the British tried to implement grazing control in the Marsabit District. They limited what they saw as over-grazing by the local communities, in order to prevent what they saw as creating a lack of grazing land. Throughout the colonial period, the British adopted a policy of “indirect rule” through local

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17 In one interview I conducted with an elder Alaihe Thuleibor, from goup Gobbore next to Kargi, Thuleibor explained to me how the British worked in the area: They used the local population to publicize themselves and to implement colonial authority. He said: “When the British control, there is no one who’s fighting. If somebody steals the goat of somebody, they make sure they can get it back. He say that time nobody steal or nobody kill somebody. [...] There is no [nothing] in the Kargi, I don’t see any mzungu [white person] in here, but they follow the law of that British. There is only here in the Marsabit. There is no mzungu there, but somebody like District Commissioner [Police], officer. And they use camel like [...] They moved from place to place. Even this Kargi they can’t sit one place in the Kargi. They move from place to place. And the all police, the all police, they use camel [...] The mzungu is maybe one and he use this black people to be a police, army, but the boss is mzungu [...] The police is move and they follow every goup they are group of people here, and they have a camels they carry everything and the follow goups [...]. Even in the yib. They are in the yib. The other groups they divided. There are those groups look for the goups and there’s groups who look for the yib. They move from Kargi to Marsabit, from here to Loyangalani, everywhere. They move everywhere with animals, with goups. That wazungu, they walk like army but they write like this mzee [elder] is a police, his a police, Me like a police. But they have one boss he’s working with that people and while he is sitting in the Marsabit and they get reports from everywhere” (Alaihe Thuleibor, Elder, goup Gobbore, Kargi, Language- Rendille, 5-8-2011).
administrative units known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD), established in Moyale in 1910 and placed under military supervision until 1920.18 The British strove for minimal investment in the area and thus assigned only a few troops to guard the vast northern region. They tried to enforce internal borders by controlling the movement of pastoralists and keeping them inside their ‘ethnic areas’.19 However, the British never provided the resources to bring this plan to fruition and local populations, the Rendille included, continued to construct and enforce their own notions of political boundaries throughout the period of colonization (Simpson 1996: 286; Aguilar 1999: 152; Hogg: 1986: 319). The British policy was to control the population with minimal investment on their part, as summarized by Sir Geoffrey Arche:

There is only one way to treat the Northern Territories, the home of nomadic camel, cattle and sheep owning people, and that is to give them what protection one can under the British Flag and, otherwise, to leave them to their own customs, as far as possible, and under their own chiefs. Anything else is certainly uneconomic (Quoted by Hogg 1986: 319).

As early as 1918-1919, the annual report notes of the ‘native’ game reserves of the “Northern Reserve: “The Northern Reserve has been heavily poached by the Turkana and other hunters, and, at present, it is quite impossible to do anything to prevent it”

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18 For a short introduction of the district division see Sobania (1979: 11-12).
19 According to official reports published by current organizations criticizing the continued policy of the government of Kenya towards “minorities”, the NFD was defined from the beginning as a closed area where movement was restricted. The policy of neglecting these areas was maintained from the Europeans settlements, when movement was prohibited and missionaries could not come in and the area. There was a separation zone between the “fertile” white highland and the Horn of Africa. During that time, the area of the Rendille territory was reduced from 57,600 sq. km to 8,000 sq. km. - “Years of political isolation and economic deprivation have left the northern counties without proper infrastructure, with few towns of importance and few economic activities. Hence the proportion of non-pastoralist population has remained low, while pastoralists have faced constraints such as a lack of livestock market infrastructure, a lack of road infrastructure and poor access to market information, all of which is negatively affecting the returns they can get on their livestock production” (IWIGA and IFAD - Enabling Poor Rural People to Overcome Poverty, 2012. Country Technical Notes on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues, The Republic of Kenya, Pp. 9, 18).
Therefore, in order to stop raids from groups on the Ethiopian side of the border, the first government station in Northern Kenya- a police post- was established by the NFD in Loiyangalani, on the shore of Lake Turkana (Sobania 1979: 10).

The Northern provinces of Kenya were seen as the “Backward North” and its inhabitants were looked upon as “outdated”, “rough” and “inhospitable” in their behavior (Aguilar 1999: 152). As far as Britain is concerned, from the beginning of the 1920s, right until their withdrawal from the region, they see themselves as having participated in local power struggles by favoring the Borana. On the other hand, they also worked to reduce armed conflict with the introduction of new internal borders that divided groups of Borana, Gabra, Sakuye, and different Somali groups such as Adjuran, (Schlee 1989; Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 29; Simpson 1996: 286-287; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980: 49). For example, the Samburu people were forced into one district and were administrated from Maralal in the Rift Valley Province. This is despite their long history and close relations with the Rendille and Ariaal peoples who were officially under the administration of the Marsabit region. Despite British efforts to confine the Samburu, their goal was not effectively achieved because a portion of the Rendille and Ariaal populations spoke both Rendille and Samburu, making them indistinguishable from their Samburu counterparts. Due to the mutual assimilation of all the groups in the region, it was essentially impossible to

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20 For example of the actual population numbers inhabiting the Northern Frontier Province See Appendix Figure 6.

21 Up until then, the area was administrated from Naivasha as it was appended with headquarters at Meru (Sobania 1979: 10).

22 The British regarded the Somalis, from the beginning as “resisters par excellence”, a title that they had to carry from then onwards. Because the Somalis lived in the periphery of the colony, the British could ignore their problems and needs on the one hand, while being more strict and punitive on the other. The Somali resistance to the colonial government started from early period and included most Somalis clans (For a detailed description of the relation between the Somalis groups and the British see Tortun 1972)
distinguish and divide between them (Schlee 2003a, 2003b; Spencer 1973: 1; Galaty 2005: 60; Simpson 1996: 292).

From records of colonial officers also quoted by Sobania (1979), one can learn what the local officers thought of these dynamics with the local population:

1936  [...] The Rendille are indeed related to the Samburu – Samburu camels are at Marsabit and Rendille cattle with the Samburu. ‘they are always desiring to cross the boundary and intergraze but this is not encouraged.’

1937  The southern part of Marsabit District had insufficient rain and in October a number of Rendille had to be brought back from Samburu country south of the Merille where they had gone to find grazing. Toward the end of the year most Rendille have moved toward the country near Kulal on the Samburu border.

1938  The Rendille are not allowed north of the line drawn […]. The precaution is necessary because the Rendille ‘are extremely wealthy and would otherwise encroach into the grazing of the Gabra who are far worse off’ […]

1945  In the south the Rendille moved without government permission but with the goodwill of the Samburu into their country and were found as far south as the Lerroghi slopes […] (Sobania 1979: 69).

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23 The situation seemed increasingly complex in one of my interviews with Iltug'wa Ogom, Young Elder 30~, goup Ju, Logologo, Language- English, 2-8-2011- “You know, now Rendille when he kill Somali it is not good. When Somali it is kill Rendille, it is not good. Because, when the first Somali he get the Rendille [In the past], they don’t kill, they took it [with them]. That is why Rendille it came here [After traveling all the way from Ethiopia]. That is why it is very bad for Rendille who kill Somali. You know, Rendille they don’t go to kill Somali, they are Samburu. You know Samburu they come to cross the Rendille, and those who change from Rendille to speak Samburu [Ariaal], like you know from Logologo there are people those who speak Samburu, they came from Samburu, to the Rendille, that’s people they’re going to kill Somali. And the Somali, they don’t know different of that people, those, we are like Samburu, is it? When they come to kill, they say “Rendille kill us”, that’s why they come to kill Rendille. Because that Samburu is mix [with the Rendille]. The Somalis confuse. […] They don’t know different of Samburu and Rendille. That’s why fighting became between Rendille and Somali.”
Under the circumstances of the occupation and control of the local population, the colonial rulers had no other choice but to maintain the borders they had created in order to implement their authority in the area.

With the establishment of government posts in the area, small trade centers grew and were promoted. However, pastoralists could only be employed by the government as headmen or chiefs. When Indians, Arabs, Ethiopians and Swahilis began to open shops in 1918-1919, local trade was forcibly restricted to livestock trade and could not participate in the development of the colony. The colonial government made an effort to separate "white highland" stock from local pastoralists. In addition to limiting the import of animals from the north, it awarded the “white highland”, a higher "grade", forcing down the prices of locals animals. Major colonial markets were closed off to all pastoralists in order to maintain the high prices of European settler stock, using the frequency of infectious diseases as an excuse (Schlee 1990: 2).

During and after World War II, most of the economy opened up to locals and restrictions were lifted, barring the production of nomads’ livestock. Many wealthier pastoralists began to get involved in the colonial economy and diversified their own produce to include shirts, tea and sugar. The southern part of the NFD- near Isiolo- benefitted from this trade more than the north- Marsabit and Moyaly. The northern stock restrictions were maintained for centuries and the results are still reflected in present trade (Hogg 1986: 319-321).

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24 This had an effect on class division that continues to this day.

25 For the main trade town in the area during the colonial era see Appendix, Figure 2.
The link between the various groups in the area, which I have named A “Community Complex”, is a broad network of communication and multifaceted relationships that the British could not understand:

Both camel-herders, the Rendille and Gabra share similar patterns of land use, house-hold economy and social structure; this makes them ideal allies and almost inevitable enemies, and here is the paradox of their long relationship. Mirroring one another, the tension between them contrasts with the amiable complementarily each enjoy with a cattle-herding society, Rendille with the Samburu and Ariaal, Gabra with Borana. But have occupied the same arid, volcanic strewn desert region, the Gabra and Rendille have become, in schlee’s term, ‘interlocked’ (Galaty 2005: 63).

Initially, some nomadic pastoralists resisted colonial borders, since they prevented them from reaching grass and water during drought and limited their ability to associate with the wider social system (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 40). For example, in 1945, camels were found at Kikoi, Dololo Wachu as the Rendille “played hide and seek” against police patrols. Some of the Rendille were heavily punished for disregarding government orders but continued to ignore the border known as the “Rendille line” (Sobania 1979: 72). In spite of these restrictions, most of the population moved throughout the region relatively undisturbed so long as they paid taxes, stayed in their restricted zone, and their warriors did not raid other groups’ animals. In fact, the elderly Rendille population has acknowledged in interviews that colonial boundary controls reduced the periodic raiding and killings over water and

26 Raids were an ongoing struggle between the various communities even when the locals did not necessarily distinguish between defined “groups”. “The continuing attacks between different groups are drowning many times from misidentification of aggressor. The tension between the, colonial defined, Rendille and Gabra was growing larger after the Borana have raided the Rendille and they counter raided the unrecognized Gabra” (Galaty 2005: 62).
27 In another case, it was told that “The Hamar [Sitting around the Omo valley, southern Ethiopia] recall the Samburu as being so powerful that they merely ‘danced’ into Hamar settlements and threatened the Hamar into defeat. Dasenech tradition tells of the Dasenech entering the mountain grasslands near Lake Stefanie and finding a spear in the ground, clearly indicating the trepidation involved in violating a known grazing boundary” (Sobania 1979: 32, my italic).
pasture (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 40). Such disregard for colonial laws and borders, have contributed to western stereotypes of nomadic groups as people without borders, people who have no regard or understanding for borders.

In early 1945, meetings were held between Rendille representatives in order to discuss grazing control policy. According to the British, the results from these meetings were that the Rendille ignored, ‘trespassed’ and showed no respect for British imposed boundaries. As a result, the Rendille had to pay heavy fines. The nomination of locals to colonial-government positions, according to Sobania, was not effective even after almost 40 years (Sobania 1979: 54). However, Hogg adds that these nominations resulted in the creation of a wealthy pastoralist class. These locals were often the first to settle in towns, send their children to school and have access to resources and goods that other locals did not (Hogg 1986: 321).

In 1962, the British held a referendum on the NFD, which was already considered the “Eastern Somali Territories of Kenya”. In the meeting on the district’s future, in the context of imminent independence and the creation of the Republic of Kenya, the British made a decision that went against the local populations' will, in particular the Muslim group representatives in i.e. the Somali, Borana and Sakuye. The groups requested the right of self-determination and to be united with the Somali Republic, but the British announced the final annexation of NFD as the seventh district of the new Republic of Kenya – and hence the last component of the border. A civil war called the Shifta War (named after the word for ‘bandit’ from the Semitic languages of Ethiopia) broke out between Somali groups and the British were succeeded by the new independent government in December 1963 (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005; Whittaker 2008; Spencer 1973: 3).
As part of the regional struggle taking place, some of the Rendille people joined the Northern Province People’s Progressive Party (NPPPP). This, scholars explain this was as a resulted from of feelings of identification with the Somalis. However, the actions of the Rendille further challenged their relationship with their former allies, the Samburu (Turton 1975: 235). The level of insecurity in the region increased and continued in future generations: The war officially ended in 1967, but emergency regulations remained in place until the beginning of the 1990s. As Elliot Fratkin and Eric Abella-Roth describe, the Shifta war opened a period of insecurity. It became dangerous to travel due to road attacks. The Rendille and Gabra in particular made a radical change when many of them moved their groups close to police stations and small, existing towns (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 42).

At the time of independence in 1963, the Marsabit district, which most of the Rendille had been assigned to, was poorly developed: there were two large towns of more than 2000 residents (Marsabit and Moyale), a few trading posts (In the towns of Laisamis, Maikona, Loyangalani and North Horr), only three primary schools, no secondary school, one governmental hospital and only a few boreholes spread around. Despite the poor state of the Marsabit district, the new government under Jomo Kenyatta did not show a large interest in developing it. An imagined “border” was maintained between the northern part of the country (north of Isiolo) and the central highland, and the majority of government investment was allocated to Nairobi and the urban region. During the 1970s, President Kenyatta granted Christian

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28 The boreholes are water wells that were mainly drilled by the British for the local population and up until now have been used as part of their control policy of restricting the locals to specific sites. The possibility of having ground water throughout the year encouraged the locals to stop wandering in search of water.

29 Up until today, throughout my visit in Kenya, I heard from many people, not only the Rendille, about the division between the two parts of Kenya. They expressed it by saying that there is “Kenya one”, which is the center of the country where things “happen”. They live in “Kenya two”, a place
Missioners and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO’s) permission to work in the area for the first time. The establishment of schools, dispensaries and distribution of food in times of heavy drought caused many of the Rendille communities to settle round these points and stop migrating (Ibid: 30-31).

President Daniel Arap Moi, who replaced Kenyatta in 1978, had an interest in maintaining support from small agro-pastoral communities, among them the Samburu. Hence, he promoted development of the area resources. Although armed raiding continued to be part of daily life in the Northern provinces, as can be found in records from the years 1992 and 1994, some development did take place. By 1995, the number of district primary schools was up to fifty-four, there were seven secondary schools, four hospitals and fifteen medical dispensaries. The towns next to the major roads grew larger and some new towns were established, especially next to relief and aid distribution stations (Ibid). Despite the much-needed development of the area, violence continued and resulted in the restriction of local populations’ movement. For instance, Gabra’s collaboration with Rendille had heavy consequences for the group later on. Galaty writes- “For this reason it became that Borana cannot pass on Gabra land on their way to raid Rendille” (Galaty 2005: 63). There is no doubt that these changes, development on the one hand and a worsening of the violence on the other, influenced the local populations in terms of physical living space, as well as how they defined themselves and their local boundaries.

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30 17 families were hurt from the raids and an estimated 5000 camels were lost during the two incidents. Another Rendille camel owner estimated that about 24,000 camels were gone (20% of the Rendille’s total animals).
Some of these units were recognized corporate groups, others were no more than loosely linked groups of people who spoke the same language and moved in bands or shared the same residential location. From these clans, […] it is possible to reconstruct the various groups which formed the basic elements of the present communities which we differentiate with the name Turkana, Karamojong, Jie, etc. (Sobania 1979: 26)

When two societies, languages, or cultures meet, it is not always obvious who will assimilate whom, who will prove the assimilator, who the assimilee (Galaty 2005: 57).

Today, there are approximately 60,000 Rendille people, most of them still living in the harsh arid land of Northern Kenya. For reasons previously stated, there is not one, singular historical myth of the Rendille’s origin but rather several myths of a unified community. Spencer suggests that the imaginary unity of clans causes divisions in communities and ethnic differentiation, such as the Rendille versus the Samburu. However, Sobania (1979) and Schlee (1989, 1993) argue that the division in groups assumes some “relationship by origin”, the clanship, as Schlee explains (1993: 592):

The fissions of clans of the first type, who once were co-resident and now are divided among different ethnic groups, are ascribed to the time the ethnic groups split from each other. In other words ethnic groups split across the clan spectrum, and this gave rise to the same clans (still recognizable by sets of specific features, mostly including their names) being represented in different ethnic groups, clanship being the older, ethnicity the younger grid of classification in such cases.

31 For a map of the Area and the communities division see Appendix Figures 1-4.
Some of the clan units were more corporative with one another whilst others had relatively loose ties. However, most of the communities that did establish themselves shared similar historical stories focusing on intermigration, competition and warfare from the times when, as the tale goes, “Lake Turkana had not yet split mankind into different parts” (Schlee 1989: 41). The connection between past and the present is important when understanding the Rendille as a hybrid community and a non-unified social complex. The variability of Rendille communities and the creation of other social groups across the African continent took place throughout history and in particular, the colonial period. The Rendille ‘tribe’ was created from wide-ranging political, social and economic reasons: “They [African’s identities] are in other words, ‘constructed’ by human agency, whether deliberately or inadvertently” (Parker and Rathbone 2007: 40).

Richard Waller points out that it is not accurate to divide the general African population into specific communities, but that there are a variety of relationships acknowledged as having existed for a long time:

Whether or not the narratives discussed here refer to a "real past," they clearly indicate the continuing existence of social pathways between communities; and whether or not inter-ethnic clan relationships emerged genetically as Schlee suggests, the fact that people think and act as though they did points to long-standing interaction and interdependent relations throughout the region (Waller 1995: 200).

33 Parker and Rathbone added later that the what they call ‘ethnogenesis’ was a colonial project, with an emphasis on the fact that it was a deliberate process conducted by elite and religious missioners for political and militaristic reasons who aim to “revamp and to expand ideas of belonging” (Parker and Rathbone 2007: 42-43). In their book, Parker and Rathbone continue to exemplify the ethnic hybridity of societies in Africa using the Maasai community in Kenya, as they argue that “A group of people who now identify themselves as Maasai – and would be so identified by outsiders – are only two generations away from being people who identified themselves very differently” (Ibid: 46).
It is important to emphasize this issue since many of the Rendille, like other communities in Africa, have adopted the clear cut categorization of themselves as a ‘tribe’ (Sobania 1979: 49-50). Although the Rendille were considered as an impenetrable society, there were cases where people were accepted into the community (Schlee 1979). Therefore, based on Schlee (1989), when I refer in my fieldwork to the people of the Rendille, I am referring to people who identify themselves as Rendille and usually speak Rendille as their mother tongue.\footnote{As he writes- “The Rendille who live in the southern part of Marsabit District, between Lake Rudolf (Turkana) in the west and Marsabit in the east are mostly camel nomads. The 1979 census (Republic of Kenya 1981) gives their number as 21,794. This number, which is based on self-classification, also comprises the Ariaal and about 2000 migrant labourers who no longer participate in the pastoral economy but work as night “watchmen”, soldiers or policemen in towns and garrisons throughout Kenya” (Schlee 1989: 3). Therefore, while many Rendille speak Samburu, like the Ariaal, something that I will elaborate more on in the chapter dealing with fieldwork and methodology, I will use self-identification in my work.}

According to Schlee (1989: 32), the origin of the Rendille is bound to several communities belonging to the ‘Proto-Rendille Somali cluster’ (PRS) in Southern Ethiopia.\footnote{The PRS were cultures spoke Somaloid languages, but not all Somali were necessarily part of the PRS.} The PRS linguistic distinction was divided into three main categories: (1) Borana whose language is close to the Oromo in Southern Ethiopia, (2) a variety of Somali dialects and (3) Rendille who speaks Somaloid, an Eastern Cushitic language belonging to the family of Afro-Asiatic languages, described as “mutually, unintelligible languages/dialect clusters” (Schlee 1993: 591). Schlee explains:

They [Rendille] speak a Somaloid language which, if it were spoken in Somalia, could have been classified as a Somali dialect. Ethnically, quite clearly, they are not Somali because they do not perceive themselves as such, and because they are not Muslims […]. The belief system of the Rendille is a traditional monotheism not unlike that of the Gabra and the Boran (Schlee 1979: 3).
The PRS was divided before the end of the first millennium: The Somalis moved with their herds of camels further east to the Horn of Africa and converted to Islam, and the Rendille stayed behind in Northern Kenya around Lake Turkana, keeping their belief system (Schlee 1989; Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 39).

Rendille social structure, using ‘Rendille’ as a denoting all speakers of the Rendille language, is comprised of three groups: Two moieties where the people are divided to, Belel, i.e. Belesi Bahai, the ‘Western’, and Belesi Berri, the ‘Eastern’ and the tenth clan, the Odollah. The two moieties are built from nine clans where each individual belongs to one of them. The people in these moieties, and therefore clans, are referred to as ‘Rendille proper’, or ‘white’, a name that used by outsiders as well as the Rendille themselves.36

A third group is the tenth clan, the Odollah, with a different cultural and organizational structure to the other groups and, special social standing. It is a small clan that does not belong to any of the moieties. While the brotherhood of clans and the clans themselves determine the sexual rights that can be shared, the subclan is a place where these features and qualities are inherited. According to Schlee, it is not a clan in “its strict sense, [...] but, like its Gabra equivalent, a phratry or confederation of clans”. The Odolla is made of four exogamous units and is even smaller than the smallest subclan of most of the other clans (Schlee 1989: 9-10, 14).

The Rendille includes a large group of Ariaal- four clans holding Samburu names and corresponding to Samburu sections and a fifth clan called Illuria, which means ‘mixture’ in Samburu. The Ariaal have, to a certain extent, a “double

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36 The Rendille clans are:
Belesi Banal Moity- D’ubsahai, Rengumo, Matarbá, Nahagán, Uiyám, Uyám.
Bekesi Berri Moity- Saale, Urwén (Urawén), Gaaldeilan, Tubcha.
And the Odolah.
affiliation”: despite the fact that most Ariaal speak Samburu, even better than Rendille, and have strong ties to Samburu, most of them still follow their Rendille’s clan of origin exogamy rules. The Ariaal take part in the Rendille camel economy as well as keeping cattle, like the Samburu, and participating in the Almodo and Sorio customs and rituals. However, the initiation rituals of the Ariaal, especially circumcision ceremonies, are like the Samburu and include ilmugit sacrifices. In general, the Non-Ariaal Rendille hold the gaalgulamme ceremony the year after circumcision, which is a group celebration/festivity/event that takes place every fourteen years. These communities did not collectively convert to Islam or Christianity, though some individuals did (Spencer 1973: 63-65; Schlee 1989: 9; 1979: 224).³⁷

Rendille social structure is expressed through the community’s organization and reflects its complexity and inconsistency. For example, the Odollah clan can be found both among the Rendille and their Gabra neighbors. The fact that members of the same clan can belong to different communities reflects the population’s tolerance (Schlee 1989: 14).

In other cases, the Dasenech groups, which according to Sobania (1979), are people who left the Rendille for economic reasons during the droughts of the 19th century, are divided into two groups, the Randal and Duro. The name Randal indicates their Rendille roots. The Dasenech sit further to the northeast of Mt. Marsabit next to the Gabra and Borana groups (Sobania 1979: 36-38, 121-125).

³⁷ For a broad and detailed explanation and discussion on the Rendille’s social structure see Schlee’s works: The social and Belief Systems of the Rendille: Camel Nomads of northern Kenya (1979) and Identity on the move (1989).
Finally, the creation of the Ariaal serves as an example of community intermingling. The Ariaal, as previously stated, are Samburu-speaking Rendille who mainly occupy the border towns between the Rendille and the Samburu- Laisamis, Ngurnit and partially Logologo- and with time, adopted more of the Samburu customs (Spencer 1973: 130-131). The mixture that the Ariaal symbolize is the ethnic point of divergence of a group of people, while at the same time the adoption and assimilation of outer practices from different social environments into their daily beliefs. The Ariaal are Rendille who found themselves on the margins of society causing them to adopt the Samburu language and some of their customs. They consequently became a subgroup of the Rendille. With all that has been said on the frequency of migration from the Rendille to other groups such as the Ariaal and the Samburu, it is important to note that it was mainly a one-way movement. Although there was some migration to the Rendille, it was near impossible to join them completely and even hundreds of years later, migrants were still seen as “different”. The Rendille were known to “sort people out” and are far more segregated and distinguished from other communities in the area (Schlee 1989: 49).

I intend to demonstrate a link between Northern Kenyan social hybridity and what I will later present as the Rendille notion of “borders”. My thesis will show that local groups, such as the Rendille, had a very clear way of drawing boundaries to separate themselves from others; however, their boundaries were not based on visible, physical lines. The Rendille’s perception of conceptual “borders” will be described based on their unique circumstances. In what follows, I will demonstrate that there is

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38 Some of the elements that are linked to the exclusiveness of the Rendille and that they are easy to leave are violence between the two moieties and clans, poverty of junior sons in favor of the first born and the hard and long process to become Rendille- “[...] Certain clan groups which have been among the Rendille for many generations are still sometimes referred to as ‘Boranto’. Two hundred and eighty years, it seems, is not long enough to become fully accepted by the Rendille” (Schlee 1989: 50).
a correlation between Rendille social structure and their local definition, notion and understanding of borders.
“Rendilleland” - Rendille’s Perspective of Borders:

People inhabiting the same country have quite different views of the legitimacy and usefulness or even the existence of boundaries (Schlee 1990: 3).

Landscape are coded by society, and several co-existing codes are in a complex way linked to different spheres of life, e.g. social, political, cultural or economic. As a result, subjects and landscapes are constantly transforming each other (Passi 1996: 26).

In his article, *Policies and boundaries: perceptions of space and control of markets in a mobile livestock economy*, Günther Schlee (1990) seeks to outline the Rendille’s awareness of space and any corresponding western perceptions. Schlee defines “borders” as a bounded and distinct territory, derived from the Eurocentric view of them. As he points out, there is no equivalent word for “borders” in the Rendille language. Most people use the Bantu word *mpaka*, which has also infiltrated the Swahili language, or the Cushitic word *seer*, a word with several meanings (Schlee 1990: 6).

In this part of my thesis, I will argue that the Rendille do in fact have an “idea of borders”, as Schlee refers to this issue (1990: 7); however, they conceptualize the term differently. Based on recent, existing border theories I have outlined, I perceive borders as spatial divisions, a dynamic institution created by the local population through their daily routines. In what follows, I intend to look at “borders” from a different angle- not just as a political entity, but, rather, as local performances that divide space. In this way, “borders” are not necessarily connected to physical delineations. As Schlee suggests, on a larger scale, the Rendille notion of a border is at times almost nonexistent. Nonetheless, I claim that local Rendille notions of “borders” are inherently linked to the visibility of their social practices, their political
status, social ties and interaction - as demonstrated by the inner division of the Rendille *min* (house) and *goups* (the community compound). In these spaces, occupied and defined by local, cultural and social practices and political relations of power, there are clear and hardened borders that construct and police both space and social hierarchies.

I will later show that once the Rendille move outside areas where their social architecture prevails, the notion of “boundaries”, and therefore “borders”, becomes fluid, unstable and highly contested. Thus, in the towns and the *forrs* (the satellite camps of herders) borders are changeable and at times absent. For example, local “fenced” zones are areas that are variable, established through community interaction, movement, ritual and interpersonal relations. This distinction between perceptions of Rendille-bounded space where the Rendille implement their regulated notion of borders, versus areas outside it, has strong implications for the ways in which the Rendille perceive the nation-state of “Kenya”.

In the following pages, I examine the Rendille’s understanding of local borders delineating their lives. Beginning with the local layout of the household, villages and towns, and then moving to regional grazing areas, I attempt to understand the Rendille notion of “borders” as an expression of spatial “boundaries”. These notions influence local perceptions of broader political definitions of borders, including the Rendille’s perception of the nation-state of Kenya. The findings are based on a review of relevant literature and interviews with local residents conducted in fieldwork during the summer of 2011.
Conceptualizing Borders:

My “Min”:

The Rendille min is a house described by Günther Schlee (1979) and Anne W. Beaman (1981). The min is built along a clear set of communal principles, with the inner space being well organized. It is made of two parts: shorter poles that construct the rear section and longer ones in the front that are curved with mats and skin. They are described by Beaman as a “low, round, dark-brown dome” (1981: 161). Whilst in the past, when Beaman conducted her research, the min was made only from materials that can be found in the Rendille’s local environment, nowadays, it is combined with imported relief food bags and cans. Furthermore, whereas two cow skins used to be laid in the rear, or “eastern half”, to serve as a sitting and sleeping ground, today these are often replaced with layered goat skins (Schlee 1979).

Several min are called goup. They have one room, contain no windows, and the single door faces to the west, since the desert winds come from the east, a defining characteristic mentioned by Schlee (1979). The front part of the min is considered public and this is where visitors are generally seated, while the deep interior serves as the family’s private area (Beaman 1981). In this type of house, every item has its place, from the water bin to the cooking area. The people in the house sleep in one row, their feet pointing toward the door. The husband sleeps on the southern side (right), the wife on the northern side (left), and the children in between. When the husband is in the house, the older girls are not permitted to sleep there and the older sons rarely do either. However, when the father is away, the rules are much more flexible (Schlee 1979, Beaman 1981). In my interviews, I hear from Kisido Migeres,
an old woman in *goup* Gob bore, that when a *h’air*\(^{39}\) needs a place to stay for the night, he can come to sleep at her *min* even if he is not her son. She explained: “The *h’air’s* comes and divide [themselves between the *mins* in the *goup*] because you see this is not a big room […] they come to sleep”.\(^{40}\) Outside the *min* and inside the *goup*, everyone who wants to can sleep.

The *min* space is not only a “shelter” but also “[it] affirms the family and community that is [at] the core of their [the community’s] identity” (Sobania 2003: 108). After an *h’air* gets married, his *min* is built, most commonly in the wife’s *goup*, until the husband gets permission from her mother to take her to his family. The transfer of the woman can be between two neighboring *goups* in the same town, but in other cases she can be taken to a distant, unfamiliar place. Kroboso, the wife of Illtug’wa Ogom, describes how she moved to Logologo after her wedding and did not like it:

I don’t want to go Logologo because I don’t know if it is good or if it’s bad. [At first] it is very bad for me […] because I was not born here, in Logologo, I don’t know people from here. I’m born in Kargi where I know everybody. That’s why I like there and I don’t want to come here. I don’t know people and people don’t know me. I came [from Kargi] with a lot of things. […] All things of Rendille to make this *min* […] only the wood we got here. […] you must bring these things with you because your mother gives you. […] Because I got married, and my husband want to go somewhere, I must go where he want. When I came here I don’t know where I need to collect firewood […] I don’t know where is the borehole to go to fetch water, first when I came.\(^{41}\)

\(^{39}\) *H’air* is the age after boys are circumcised and before they get married. In many cases, they are referred to as warriors since most of the time they are sent to the field to look for the animals and protect them.

\(^{40}\) Kisido Migeres, 50~, Goup Goobore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.

\(^{41}\) Kroboso Ogom, Young woman 22~, Logologo (Originally from Kargi), Rendille Language, 28-8-2011.
Although the married woman is the owner of the min, the husband is allocated significant part of the inner division. Whilst the house contains one single room, this room is divided between the people living in it. This room “demonstrates the multiple connections between family members and generations” (Sobania 2003: 108). As explained by Somnicho Ourare, a young h’air who got married during Sorio days, a month before my arrival-

Inside of the min it is only for me [...] if maybe you can come into your min, to enter your min, maybe there are visitors already sitting in your min, they talk with your wife; they sit for a long time. When they see you are the husband who comes back, they all go that side (Left) in order to make it free for you. Then you can come to sit on your side of the min (Right).

The structure of the min that Somnicho Ourare describes reflects his personal status as a married h’air and a man: the min is for his wife, but he still has his allocated space. What Somnicho is expressing is a desire for his own space, a space that he owns. The space gains significance for the Rendille only when put into social context. Therefore, when Somnicho wants to have his own min, he wishes to have his own space. The structure of the min not only represents social belonging, clan and economic status of the husband, but also the social structure of the community (Beaman 1981).

If a father is a Rendille and the mother is from a different community like Samburu, the children are all Rendille. As one elder in the goup explained, ownership of a min only comes with a specific social status, and young h’air’s do not enjoy the same privileges elders have:

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42 Sorio is one of the major celebration days for the Rendille and takes place four times a year- (For further reading- Schlee 1979 ; Beaman 1981)
44 Paulina Ogom, 30°, Logologo (Originally Korr), Rendille Language, 26-8-2011.
You feel better when you have a home. The h’air, they don’t have a home. He is his own home. He have his mother home, family home, but he don’t have personal home. So when you get married, you have your own home. You have a min, children, wife and your animals. When you were a h’air you had only animals and the family of your father, brothers, […] You don’t have your children or your wife. That something make you different […] But it is better to be an elder than when you are a h’air.45

This elder is testifying to a deep connection between the ownership of space and social status. According to this informant, Rendille men aspire to have a space that belongs to them and the accompanying sense of belonging that ownership over space affords them. While in earlier eras, Rendille h’airs waited approximately 14 years between their circumcision ceremony and the time they got married, following recent social changes in the Rendille community, many marry, have families and start to build their own min at a younger age. Nevertheless, according to the elder’s explanation of the social order, it can be seen that the concept of the min “space” is largely dependent on the visibility of practices taking place within it and the social status of its inhabitants.

The division of space in the Rendille min between - elders, women, h’air, girls and boys – is not a border in the traditional political sense. But I would like to argue that an examination of the sharp demarcation of space within the min can provide us with important insights into broader Rendille concept of borders. Following current theorists who argue that borders are institutions that divide between social groups, I believe that it is possible to gain a better understanding of how the Rendille imagine borders by investigating the connection between everyday divisions of social and physical spaces. The differentiation of space is well and clearly defined for the

45 Abthup Choya, Elder, Goup Gobbo, Kargi, Rendille Language, 4-8-2011.
Rendille, though it may not necessarily have physical dimension such as a physical barrier. Like Jevgenia Viktorova writes: “the insuperable subjectivity embedded in the mechanism of perception turns the boundary into a marker of the asymmetry between the two possible modalities of perception, ‘regimes’ of sameness and difference, termed above the logics of identity and alterity” (Viktorova 2003 157, emphasis added). Social borders bring about physical divisions in the min, goup and, as I will later show, in the town, where these divisions are recognizable to the Rendille without being visible or physically delineated.

The daily practices of local communities are linked to the historical construction of their “socio-spatial identities” (Passi 1996: 212). Border theories have moved beyond investigating the role of borders as markers of state territories and nationalism, to using borders as a means of marking social practices and habitués (Van-Houtum 2005: 674). Following the redefinition of borders, David Newman (2003b: 283) writes that local boundaries are constantly being crossed, and can therefore be ignored and not perceived as borders. These imaginary lines determine people’s movement without being ever drawn. Rendille space, divided by “borders”, is understood by the ways in which it serves the population’s needs and fits inside the hierarchy and order of the people living together. Through this approach, various aspects of Rendille life reshape their perception of “space” and construct their perceptions of “borders”. The Rendille border is based on social boundaries; it has both spatial and geopolitical dimensions that the community clearly recognizes. All Rendille position objects inside the min in the same way, in an identical layout of objects and people. As mentioned, the Rendille social system is highly regulated and creates borders between people through distinct spatial divisions.
“They change to be something which they don’t know”:

A *goup* is the name given to a Rendille settlement containing 9-65 *mins*, which encircles an enclosure containing camels, sheep and goats (*sun*). This formation protects the animals, which are extremely valuable to the community, and guarded from any outside threats.\(^{46}\) In the middle of the settlement stands the *naabo*, a thorn-bush fenced zone, and the entirety of the *goup* is shaped in relation to its location (Schlee 1979; Beaman 1981; Schwartz 2005). In some cases, there is also a fence surrounding all the *min* in the *goup*, and other fences running between the *min*, as in Logologo, south of Marsabit town. In other instances, such as Kargi, in the Kaisut desert, west of Marsabit, only the animals are fenced in, because there are not enough trees close by.\(^{47}\)

The building of the *goup* is well organized, as described by the elders. As Atiya Ogom describes:

> When the *goup* is going to move, *wazee* [elders] come first to fence the *naabo* […] after they fence it they know from which house the order of the circle starts. The direction of *naabo* [The entrance from the west], they start to set the oldest son [wife] *min*. Then the other houses are follow… everybody […] knows who he follows […] and then they make circle like this […] The *wazee* is sitting in the *naabo* and telling everybody ‘It is not there… you must go this direction…’, or maybe he told ‘This house and this… they are near… make this far.’\(^{48}\)

From this quote, we learn that the organization of the *goup* space is determined by the community seniors: the eldest brother’s *min* is the first to be built, followed by the rest of the family. He is in charge of keeping the fire lit in the *naabo* all day, every day.

\(^{46}\) The animals only come to the *goup* on rare occasions. Most days they stay in the *farr* [bush camp], as will be described in the following pages. Only milked animals are constantly there, as milk is part of the Rendille’s basic diet.

\(^{47}\) Paulina Ogom, 30\(^{–}\), Logologo (Originally Korr), Rendille Language, 26-8-2011

\(^{48}\) Atiya Ogom, Elder (50\(^{–}\)), Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 4-8-2011.
Only the elders are allowed into the naabo and it serves as a meeting place for them to exchange travel information. It also serves as a space for religious and cultural practices. He continues- “All wazee come to pray … for everything… if the forr is very far, they pray for forr they pray and then after every mzee [elder] is… get up to go he’s house. Every mzee is going to sit in front of house to pray again”.49 The space of the goup is divided between the members, as I learned, following principals of settlement and occupation of land. Il tug’wa Ogom, a 30 year-old married man explains:

If you build your min, you are [sitting] there already there, is it? Your min is [settled] there, is it? If somebody comes he sees this is your min [e.g. your place]. You can tell, from here, to there it is mine. Because [in] this place is my min already […] because I’m there. Still my min, my house is there, is it? So that place it is mine [for] that time. And [if] maybe I can move again to [settle in] another place [I leave this place to others] […] Now, because of towns, here in Logologo […] we cannot move. It is not easy to move, you know? So this place now it is mine, because I can’t move.50

As the elder implies, Rendille “space” is divided among people through “action”, the act of settling, and according to the overall social order. Moreover, it is relatively changeable so that the boundaries of the land are temporary but still perceptible.51 Paulina Ogom, Il tug’wa Ogom sister-in-law adds: “Korr and Kargi they don’t have

49 Atiya Ogom, Elder (50~), Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 4-8-2011.
50 Illtug’wa Ogom, Young Elder 30~, Goup Ju, Logologo, English Language, 2-8-2011.
51 I was trying to understand from Illtug’wa Ogom what would happen if somebody wanted to build a permanent house, bearing in mind that their goup is more or less static now However, I could not get a clear answer: “You know a place like this one, in the goup, if somebody, if he wants to come to and built a permanent house. Because you see the goup it is not a permanent, something if you want to move he can move. Is it? … But, if you use cement and a Mabati [Metal pieces] you can built a permanent house, is it? So, you can tell it is near to me. You know. This place is mine now because that time I’m there.”
many trees to put everywhere, that’s why… but everybody he know his place, without fence.”

I was told that the houses are ordered from the elder brother down to the youngest, with the doors facing the same direction. The Atiya Ogom continues to explain: “When the Rendille start, they know [the order of the goup families]. They know who is big, who is second, who is third. And, it is like when you’re born first, second born, third born. The goup it is like that. So they take fire from the first born of this goup”.

The “power of word”, the verbal agreement on spatial division and border determination, often has more implications than first meets the eye. The spoken “word” is used to preserve customs and ideologies, whilst in order to “sustain credibility, these words must be accompanied by actions consistent [grammar in the original], and these actions can fundamentally shape the course of events” (Murphy 1990: 545). Local Rendille practices are re-established through performance, repetition and re-iteration of their practices and language. In addition, these practices shape the geographical arrangements inside the community. For the Rendille, borders are not understood by their physical appearance but, rather, in relation to a specific social context. The borders are determined by the social structure known to the community.

In contemporary Rendilleland, a few of the goups are still moving in semi-nomadic way - including those next to Korr, Kargi, and few next to Logologo. But these goups move only within a few kilometers' radius from the towns, in a circular motion. Every few months the Rendille will move the goup to a new location just next

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52 Paulina Ogom, 30\textdegree, Logologo (Originally Korr), Rendille Language, 26-8-2011.
53 Atiya Ogom, Elder (50\textdegree), Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 4-8-2011.
to the former one, but almost at the same distance from the town. There are almost no
goups that are travel long distances. For example, on each of my visits to Kargi, I had
to search for goup Gobbone. I was aware they are in vicinity of the town, but I needed
to check which side they were on. The same was true of the goup Marti and the goup
Odolla next to Logologo, each of which circumnavigate the town at a radial distance
of one kilometer from its centre. The movement takes place before the Sorio and
mostly for hygiene reasons, e.g. when the land gets too dirty. This move is carried out
by slowly moving all the equipment by hand or with donkeys, not with camels, as
they would have done in previous years.

I found an interesting case in the goup Ju and the Ogom family with whom I
spent most of my time on my visits in February, July and August 2010 and again
August 2011. The goup itself has not traveled for a few decades; however, the mother,
Dere Ogom, is still moving her min from one side of the goup to the other whenever
“it gets Chafu [dirty]”. I had previously witnessed Rendille “rules” and was familiar
with them from interviews; however, this goup’s rules were more flexible than the
norm. These differences are due to the outcome of the goup’s settling process and
transformations, be they political, economic or social. Regarding Dere Ogom’s habit
to move her own min, it is not only sanitation that motivates her; she also moves in
order to declare her status. As a woman in the goup whose sons are elders with social
power, she has very few rights. However, the min is entirely hers and through these
special practices she can state her wishes and claim her status. By crossing the goup
“borders”, she reestablishes herself as the oldest women and “mother” of the goup.
She declares herself independent and free from others’ authority.

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54 Dere Ogom, 65 ~, Goup Ju, Logologo, Samburu Language. 9-8-2011.
Schlee (1979), Sato (1980), Beaman (1981), and others, have already described the Rendille rituals—Sorio, Almodo, Circumcision etc.—and how they connect to spatial organization. During ceremonial times, each goup has its location and its animals that come from the forr. Some of the h’airs and the animals are instructed to come into the goup and others must settle nearby. In order for the rituals to conduct and the ceremony to be performed, space is divided in a clearly structured way (similar to what is later described with regard to the Ulukh55). The divided spaces are, on the one hand, shaped as some kind of a circle like the goup with each individual having his or her own physical area; on the other hand, the borders are only determined to suit a particular goal at a specific time; in other words they are temporary. During an interview, Iltu’wa Ogom told me that nowadays most of the clans divide themselves according to the towns they live in, since there are too many people to be organized at once in one area.56

Over the last thirty years, many local practices have changed as a result of a gradual sedentarization of groups beside and inside towns. As towns began to attract more and more of the local population, this led to a decrease in the importance of the goup, which previously served as a core space for the social functions, (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005). In settled communities, like the ones located on Mt. Marsabit, researchers have noticed “[...] changes in male authority and a particular decline in the collective authority of male elders, and greater female autonomy to grow and sell crops” (Ibid: 45).

55 The Ulukh are ritual gates, described by Schlee (1990 :7). They are “in the middle of everywhere”. I elaborate further on the Ulukh later on.
56 I did not have the chance to confirm whether it is true or not, however, what can be learned is that these temporary boundaries are made for the most important ceremonies for the Rendille fall also under the borders discussion Rendille people are going through in recent decades.
As I observed in my fieldwork, the Rendille men do not meet in the naabo to pray and discuss issues concerning their livelihood and animals but rather sit around the towns, idling. One of the elders explained to me that the h’airs do not have rights in the goup- “The law of the h’airs [says], when they [stay] outside [of the goup] in the forr, they have a different law. [But] when they are coming to the goup they don’t have any law. [This is] because they aren’t supposed to come goup”. 57

Yet nowadays this rule is more or less unenforced, as can easily be seen in local towns where h’airs frequently associate with all people- elders, women and children- something that could not have happened before. Somnicho Ourare explained during his interview: “We’re still h’air. Now the management of this min and our goup is it not us. It is old mama and wazee. We’re still h’air. Only we can come, you know, this is my hut and you can get your hut […] they cannot say anything, now you are h’air.” 58

The Rendille describe the goup as “safe”, and everyone can sleep outside in the open air if they so desire, unlike the local towns. 59 The system of the goup defined a set of rules which need to be followed by everybody and are enforced by the elders. But most importantly, these rules shape the meanings of “borders” in Rendille space.

The transition from a nomadic to settled lifestyle and the creation of local “Rendille towns” is a complex process that has been affected by and in turn affected the Rendille notion of “borders”. The increasing fluidity of both terms, in the context of the changing social environment and local relations between people in the community, has had a major impact on the conceptualization of “borders”. In this

59 Nasere Ogom (50+), Korr Town, Rendille language 16-8-2011.
way, it is shifting the social infrastructure of the Rendille and changing it into something that is unknown and unfamiliar, as described by Alaihe Thuleibor, an elder from goup Gobbore, next to Korr:

The wazee from the goup they come […] to sit [in town]. Under the shadow of these houses, [They come] to sit without paying anything. You see … there is change. The educated people they come to change people, but this all wazee they are not educated… They sit in town and not in the goup. They do not have one big tree, to sit together. Because now they cannot sit there, they come to sit in the towns… They all wazee they change to be something which they don’t know. They don’t know this life.60

The process of revising understandings of familiar spaces - the min and the goup - goes hand in hand with the transition to permanent settlements, which is described by Elliot Fratkin and Eric Abella-Roth in As Pastoralists Settle: Social, Health and Economic Consequences of Pastoral Sedentarization in Marsabit District, Kenya. Among other things, they detail the consequences that sedentarization has had on nomad communities in Northern Kenya in general and the Rendille in particular, in terms of economic welfare and health. It clearly shows how the noticeable restrictions that previously reinforced social structure are now slowly being perforated, a matter that will also be discussed below.

As described in the elders’ quote above and as reinforced by my fieldwork - as time elapsed, social and cultural rules came to be reconstructed around the town. Being nearer the town has generated new social codes and a “familiar space” has developed around it as well. For example, it is only considered appropriate for women to walk to the town during the daytime. In addition, whereas in the past this was not possible, nowadays h’aiirs and women interact in the Dukas [stores]. Furthermore,

now situated in the town, away from the *goup*, the elders’ interaction has changed in nature – change for felt by all the community. I asked one of the elders from Korr to explain his reasons for moving to the town and what he does when he enters the town.

He explained:

> Always if you have time you can come to town because you can get all reports if someone come from Logologo, somebody came from Kargi, and you know the animals, or your camels […] and he come to the center of town. […] Then all reports come to the town […] and sometimes I want to buy something. […] Also if there is any work in the town I can work. If somebody is built [as house] and he need somebody. […] There is one place that *wazee* come to sit there, waiting reports and giving others the reports. […] and then women they are different, they come only for work, they buy something […] or she come to look for a credit [loan] in the *duka*.⁶¹

The “reports” the elder is talking about is “news” that the *h’air* and elders [sometimes also women] give. The *h’air* do not come directly to the town and sit with the elders to talk: They first go to the *goup*, impart the information to the elders, and then they convey it to others in the town.⁶² However, unlike some men who also visit the town to idle, most of the women view the town as a place you go out of necessity.⁶³

Paulina Ogom stated: “If I go to town, it must be that I have something to do. […] If I don’t have anything to do there, I don’t like to go.”⁶⁴ Although the reasons for visiting the town varied between individuals, I nevertheless observed many more men who were unoccupied, “at rest”, and inactive in town than women. This teaches us that division of space and borders are drawn and determined by the division of society into social and hierarchical groups. This is important as it reveals and reflects

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⁶¹ Leungayon Ogom, young Elder, Korr, Samburu Language, 16-8-2011.
⁶² Leungayon Ogom, young Elder, Korr, Samburu Language, 16-8-2011.
⁶³ More about the reports and it spatial significant will be given in the next subsection on the *forr*.
⁶⁴ Paulina Ogom, 30⁺, Logologo (Originally Korr), Rendille Language, 26-8-2011
the whole process of border conceptualization by the Rendille; we can learn here again about the link between the social practices and the division of physical space.

Many of the town’s current standards and norms are new and not based on previous Rendille social separation between groups. This division between the town and the *goup* goes beyond geography and there is also a separation between “the people of the *goup*” and “the people of the town”, the people “who keep tradition” and the ones who perform the ceremonies and nothing else. Muhamed Galsaracho says: “the tradition is in the village […] and nothing is kept in town.” In town, the smallstock, goats and sheep, travel independently and are trained to come back every evening to be fed maize in the houses. Moreover, unlike what was described earlier regarding settling *goups* without any need for plot registration, in towns, most of the land is paid for to the chief who acts as a government representative (an official-political nomination). A Rendille’s decision on where to live, in town or in the *goup*, is a question of which authority to place himself under. In town, the presence of the state is more strongly felt and therefore many Rendille prefer to remain inside the older social organization.

Land registration is most commonly done when an individual wishes to build a permanent house and secure it as his property. Lands that are registered are marked by clear boundaries, a property mark. In town, the Rendille are forced to have more

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65 Muhamed Galsaracho, 28“, the town of Korr, English Language, 16-8-2013.
66 At first I thought that this division is clearly an economical one, however, later it appeared that this is not necessarily the case but only one aspect of it. During her interview, Leungayon Ogom, an elderly mother from Korr, focused on the medical treatment, food and money that she receives from some “white” man named Andi, people from church and other family members that can assist her. Nevertheless, she had no problem describing the plot and house that she owned in Marsabit town. The question of choosing where one wants to live is a matter of authority and the wish to be independent of state rule inside the town. As long as a Rendille lives outside the towns, he preserves the former Rendille authoritarian hierarchy.
67 Muhamed Galsaracho, 28“, the town of Korr, English Language, 16-8-2013.
interaction with the state. The registration process is not easy; it costs money and is not always free from political corruption. In the town, state control stands between the Rendille and the land. Out of town, in the goups and in the forr, the land is accessible. There, people try to avoid interaction with the state.

Contrary to what I expected, I found that not all “people of tradition” are against the process of settlement. Although most Rendille now complain about the costs of sedentarization- both in terms of health and economic conditions- I heard more than one Rendille express disagreement. For example, Kroboso Ogom says: “[settlements] is better because we have already a lot of work to do, and if we can move again to separate this all hut and to go to build in a new place, it’s a lot of work. This is why we don’t move”. 68 I believe that this response is a declaration of her status as a woman who undertakes a major portion of the housework and is asking not to be burdened with the additional task of travelling. In this transformation, the debate over the status of women is raised through various phenomena. Given the amount of work women already have, they do not need to declare ownership on their min by moving it.

Both of these cases show that transformation of the Rendille social structure goes hand in hand with their notion of spatial division. Recent reports submitted by the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWIGA) describe dramatic changes in community lifestyle in Northern Kenya. They write (IWIGA and IFAD 2012: 16- 17):

In the north, nomads would look for signs of coming drought or rain in the stars […] This allowed them to negotiate grazing rights in places not so severely hit, and send their cattle to

68 Kroboso Ogom, Young woman 22~, Logologo (Originally from Kargi), Rendille Language, 28-8-2011.
relatives in distant communities. **None of this is working any more** [emphasis added].

Climate change, together with land dispossession and mobility restrictions, also results in profound cultural changes. The communal social fabric, mostly based on livestock exchange, has largely become fragmented. […] A growing number of pastoralists who have lost their livestock are now moving into urban centers where food and other help is being handed out and where employment may be available. This is not an entirely new phenomenon but it is being exacerbated by the drought and the increased competition for pastures and water.

Here we see the geopolitical relations between political infrastructure, environment and the geographical arena. The political relations were established alongside administrative structures of governance, the marking of international frontiers, as well as the delineation of internal boundaries for grazing. I argue that such changes in the last few decades have affected the way the Rendille conceptualize their reality, and as a result, their notion of borders dividing space.

*Forr*[^69] - *Not like it “used to be”*:

Rendille people define themselves and are referred to by others as “the people of the camel”. In many ways, their commitment to their animals is stronger than any other aspect of their lives. When writing about the Rendille’s concept of “borders” in terms of the creation and reshaping of local space, one must factor in their relationship to the camel. The Rendille used to depend on camels as an essential part of their diet, consuming their milk and sometimes blood and meat. The camel was given as dowry payments, or used in the transport of houses, water and members of the community who could not walk (Schlee 1979; Beaman 1981). The Rendille differentiate between three kinds of *forrs* according to the type of animal that is herded—smallstock camp

[^69]: Satellite camps of herders and camels.
(Adi-forr), camels’ amp (Gaali-forr) and zebu⁷⁰ camp (Loio-forr). Previously, when the Rendille used to move with the goup, it was merged with the forr and the two traveled together (Sato 1980: 36, 45).

The Rendille are not long-distance herders any longer, such as the West African Fulani and Tuareg communities. Generally, the Rendille graze their cattle up to a few days walk away from their settlements, when living a semi-sedentary life next to permanent water sources. They would not live closer than ten kilometers to it, out of fear of over-grazing (Fratkin and Abella-Roth 2005: 35). To this day, males are responsible for caring for the camels, and, therefore, making up the forrs. The animals are taken by the circumcised, unmarried boys- “warriors” as they also have been referred to - to a distant herding camp. When there is enough grazing nearby, they will come closer to the settlement but live in separate camps. Camels require much attention and can easily get lost in the bush. For this reason, the boys are trained to navigate from a young age, survive their harsh environment and herd their camel. The young men are required to live in the forrs under harsh conditions for up to several months, sleeping on a skin on the ground, and often with little food or water (Schlee 1979; Beaman 1981).

During my fieldwork, I sought to understand how these h’airs and unmarried young men, who are frequently “on the move”, described the paths they took and how they navigate the area. An answer I received on a number of occasions reflected confidence on the subject. Derache Marasara told me:

⁷⁰ One of a domesticated form of cattle, Bos taurus indicus, of India, having a large hump over the shoulders and a large dewlap. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/zebu 29-7-2013, 12:15.
I can go, just leave next goup there and then from morning he start again to move. I’m going to sleep to the forr of camels far to start going in the Morning. To walk all day […] I’m going to follow the way which I know.  

The knowledge the Rendille refers to, and their inability to explain what “I know”, demonstrates that, to a certain extent, their movements are dictated by their familiarity with the area. My interviewees described familiar “space” through their social relationship to it, but descriptions were very different for physical spaces largely void of social relationships. Once outside of the socially constructed space of the forr, the h’airs conceptualize and navigate space based on their individual needs and perceptions. Here they have a sense that they can control their own destiny, define and navigate space. Derache Marasara continued his explanation:

I walk all day, if you start to go from here early in the morning you can walk all day and a half. And then you can be tired [...] then I stay. There are any forr there or goup, and you can sleep there. Rest again. And then you can start again tomorrow, early in the morning again. That how you can walk when you are a h’air. Even now.

The Rendille describe how far they are travel from their homes or towns in terms of the number of days they need to walk to get there. Walking everywhere means they do not depend on any transportation. A Rendille depends on no one when he wants to move. Therefore, his perception of boundaries is confined to areas he cannot go, be it because of his community of origin or his social status. There is a stark contrast between the communal spaces where borders are defined and the social structure is clear, and areas “beyond”, the forr, where control of social and political hierarchies are less applicable. The forr is a place with almost no sense of the Kenyan state as a

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71 Derache Marasara, H’air, Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Language Rendille, 5-8-2011.
72 Derache Marasara, H’air, Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Language Rendille, 5-8-2011.
73 Ladumen Kemire, H’air, Urugwain, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, Rendille Language, forr arriving from Korr, 20-8-2011.
governing body; the h’air are autonomous as individuals and as a group. Here, space is a no-man’s land, where the Rendille try to reconcile their desire for more state regulation with their wish to preserve the old way of living.

I learned that the limited area of the forr- an organization I observed in various locations- plays a significant role in the local understanding of “borders”. It seems to create a space with structure and specific rules that are bound to local social structure and intra-community relations. The structure of the forr was described to me in Kargi by Alaihe Thuleibor [Drawing a “map” in the sand]:

This is the map of the forr of camels, and this is the place [western side] they take all milk of those camels [and] they come here with milk [The communal area- Kulaf]. They come to divide milk here, everybody to give. They eat food here. And then when they sleep, last time when they want to go to sleep, they have one a small group, like two people or a three, which sleep here, here, here … [hojap] to divide it like that. And then they are others who sleep here.74, 75

Drawing a representation of the forr space has a similar function to any map. In other words, it is a “geographical text” expressing the borders implemented on the landscape. The movement of the forr makes its boundaries temporary and dependent on the social needs of its inhabitants at the time of its building. The structure serves as a direct continuation of the Rendille social construct through spatial form and design. Here, one can see that the conceptualization of “borders” is fluid. Their “borders” are drawn according to current, short-term and immediate necessity. Each goup divides

74 Alaihe Thuleibor, Elder, Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.
75 Same diagram, map, was drawn to me also in the interview with Ladumen Kemire, H’air, Urugwain, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, Rendille Language, forr arriving from Korr, 20-8-2011.
itself into several forrs of camels, zebu and small stock when in transit. Unless somebody is joins or leaves the party, the inner order is never changed.\textsuperscript{76}

In the past, a h’air wishing to return to the goup would express this through his interaction with space and through his role and status in the community. Alaihe Thuleibor illustrates this in his description of Rendille life:

\textit{H’air long time ago. Only they moving outside the goup for the animals, they don’t come to the goup. […] H’air, [if] he wants to come from forr […] he afraid to come goup. Maybe he comes [with] mbuzi [goat] or camel which have small baby to come with that animal to come goup. And then when the wazee they see h’air, they come, all wazee they wake up and they go there. To sit down, and then they ask reports. “everything is good in the forr?”, “even the children that you are having in the forr, they are good?”, he [The elders] ask if the all camels they get pregnant or they don’t have a pregnant, if the camels they have milk or they don’t have milk, They ask reports like that. So, long time ago, h’air they are like that and wazee is like that. And then the wazee he ask “when can you go back?.” H’air, because the they afraid, wazee because wazee maybe he told him “you can’t sleep goup you can go back”, so he say “Today I’m sleeping in goup, and then tomorrow I can go back!”\textsuperscript{77}

We can learn from this quotation that the event of the h’airs oral report to the elders used to take place in a divided space, and almost no longer does.\textsuperscript{78} I was told that the h’air was not allowed into the goup without the elders’ permission, which means he had boundaries he could not cross unless authorized from above. The embodiment of the borders happened through social practice and the changing of social positions. In the forr, the h’air becomes autonomous and can travel to anywhere he wishes. These borders are subject to each individual, i.e. vary from person to person and are

\textsuperscript{76} Illtimbian Ogom, Young Elder 32~, Goup Ju, Logologo- Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, forr arriving from Logologo, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{77} Alaihe Thuleibor, Elder, Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{78} I was given an example of a report by Illtimbian Ogom, that said: “Like now this h’air [who just passed us sitting under the tree] that came here, if he’s going to give a somebody report there, he say I met four people, they sitting there, but the forr is near there, they have a forr...”
reassigned to him as a result of changes to his social status. This makes borders a concept that is not the same in every space; it is not the same notion and it cannot be duplicated in different places.

What is important is the social, cultural and political authority prevailing over a specific space, determining what and where the border is. Elders have borders that they cannot and, for the most part, do not want to cross. The *h’airs’* report becomes the eyes of the elders in the familiar-unfamiliar space no longer visited, i.e. the *forr*. The *forr* is a space that the elders once knew well and where the *h’airs* have, to some extent, lead independent lives from them.

Not only do the *h’air* herd the animals, many times the elders share the burden of herding the animals such as when the kids go to school and the family cannot pay for somebody to look after them instead. One of these elders was Illtimbian Ogom, Illtug’wa Ogom’s older brother and husband of Paulina Ogom, with whom I had the privilege of spending time in the *forr*. This time, during my fieldwork, I met Ogom at his 30th relocation of the *forr*, i.e. I met them after they had already moved 30 times since his last visit to Logologo. He was therefore able to describe the task of herding from an elder’s perspective. On reading his account, as with the account of the *h’air*, one can learn something about Rendille spatial relations and its significance. He told me:

> It is like yesterday [when we all moved together with the *forr*], I move and then we make *forr* here. The next day we can’t come to relax here, like today. The children go to look for the animals and they walk, again, to look everywhere, to go around. If there is grass there, there is water, so they come back to the *forr*, and then I move again in the morning to go there. That’s why I choose to move. […] Because of [the] animals they have grass; you can move to go there, if the animals don’t have grass there, you can’t move that side. And you go to look
another one. You can’t walk to move, to go somewhere you don’t see [it] first. You can go to see where you want and then you come back.\textsuperscript{79}

Here we learn what determines the movement of the elder, and similar to the young men, it is tending the animals. When living in the \textit{forr}, movement through space and across borders is the same for both groups, regardless of their social status back in the \textit{goup}. The hierarchy of the \textit{min} and the \textit{goup}, and the space division implied by them is eliminated and in both cases, movement is determined by the need to feed the animals. In answer to my question on how he knows where his destination is, Illtimbian Ogom answered:

\begin{quote}
You can get reports maybe in the town, for the people. ‘cause you see, the cars pass everywhere, if somebody come with a car from here, to pass Logologo, and he tell the people I saw somewhere rain there and there. That’s why you start to move. […] That’s why I reach this place. I talk with a lot of people, it is not somebody one that say ‘I saw there is rain there…’, no, I ask somebody and again I look for somebody I know, who is talk the truth and who don’t say the truth.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

Previously in the \textit{min} and the \textit{town} we saw that space is divided according to an individual’s social status. This determines his movement across the Rendille’s socially-regulated borders. However, in the \textit{forr} the conceptualization of space is drawn from the need to take care of the animals, demanding a more flexible concept of borders. The enforced border of the state is only secondary to the one the Rendille adopt in accordance with their notion of borders. This obviously has an impact on their identification with the Kenyan state. Here we can see that for the Rendille it is something that is negotiable and dependent on their local culture.

\textsuperscript{79} Illtimbian Ogom, Young Elder 32\textdegree, Goup Ju, Logologo- Interviewed in the \textit{forr} between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, \textit{forr} arriving from Logologo, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{80} Illtimbian Ogom, Young Elder 32\textdegree, Goup Ju, Logologo- Interviewed in the \textit{forr} between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, \textit{forr} arriving from Logologo, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
Another way to receive reports and inform oneself on where to travel with the animals is what Ladumen Kemire, an h’air from the town of Korr described:

When the forr is in one place, two people go to see everywhere, and then they come back. They see if there is a good grass, water, […] Like here, if you come here you know that there is Latakwain… that you can fetch water there and that there is a good grass. And when they come in the evening they can say let us move and fence [the forr] there.81

Currently, many reports are transmitted between Rendille over the radio where callers on mobile phones inform listeners where rain fell, where the forr moved and if there is an event that requires special attention. Almost every day at 17:30, KBC radio station has a program dedicated to the Rendille. H’airs and elders82 from the forr would call the radio station at this time and broadcast these reports. This has an effect on the spatial division previously described in relation to the establishment of the town. Due to the clear link between Rendille spatial practices and their perception of borders, the change in spatial behavior can explain some changes in their social structure. The practice of the h’air coming and giving news of the forr to the elder, reestablishes their general control over the herd, following the blurring of forr borders. The hierarchy of the community, and in turn border determination is dependent on this reporting practice. Therefore, replacing this information transfer with a radio broadcast is causing a change in the social practice, eliminating the boundaries it previously created.

81 Ladumen Kemire, H’air, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, Rendille Language, forr arriving from Korr, 20-8-2011.
82 More and more frequently elders are required to go to the forr and herd the animals. This happens because there is no other person in the family to tend the animals and the family cannot hire anybody. Some elders, like Iltimbian Ogom, told me that they like to spend their time in the forr more than in the goup.
A second example of a fractured Rendille social structure relates to marital customs. One of the prominent rules was that h’airs could only marry after fulfilling eleven years’ social duty as h’ airs in the forr (Schlee 1989). Currently, they can marry as soon as two years after their circumcision and “warriorhood” ceremony. The h’ airs’ children are raised in the goup by their mothers while the h’ airs go to herd the animals. I have reached this conclusion from comparing what I have witnessed on the ground- h’ airs getting married and having children- with my reading of Schlee (1989). He outlines the importance of a Three-generation cycle with 14 years distinction between each lineage. In February 2011 I traveled to the Max Plank Institute in Halle, Germany, and confirmed this social change with Schlee himself.

This transformation of Rendille roles slackens the borders between the goup and the forr since the h’air now also play a paternal role and must come home more often than they did previously. The social definition of a h’air within a family is still unclear and this vagueness affects the division and demarcation of borders. Even in the goup borders become fluid as the h’air needs to cross them in order to fulfill paternal duties. Reports arrive much more frequently and therefore the custom of “reporting” between the h’air and the elders loses its significance and becomes less common.

In other words, as a result of this process, the external borders of the goup and the goup itself lose their spatial significance, though their boundaries are still intact. The elder describes: “Now, they [h’air] don’t have discipline like long time ago. Even h’ airs, they don’t have a discipline. Even the girls… everybody they don’t have a discipline like time. Like long time ago. Because now h’ airs and the women they
come into the all *duka* to buy something they want”

The *h’air* and the women cross their social boundaries. Interaction in such a form, he argues, is something that would not have happened before the community settled in towns. The notion of clearly demarcated social space is slowly collapsing and the Rendille are starting to formulate a new concept that fits the new reality they face.

As I have demonstrated, with the social changes taking place among the Rendille—elders herding animals, *h’air* becoming fathers, women interacting with both elders and *h’air* in towns, new concepts of borders are borne. On the one hand the flexibility of the *forr’s* borders is adopted in the *goup*, on the other, the regulated state borders are being imposed on the communities and they feel threatened by this. The concepts are in a process of flux. If once each space fell under a different authority— the *min* was organized by the women, the *goup* by the elder, the town by the state and the *forr* by each independent individual — now everything overlaps leading to a reconceptualization of spatial divides.

As previously mentioned, back in 1990, Schlee tried to understand the Rendille’s "idea of borders”. In his article *Policies and Boundaries: Perceptions of Space and Control of Markets in a Mobile Livestock Economy*, he described an interview with an elder on the purpose of the *Ulukh*, the ritual gates. The Rendille have two kinds of *Ulukh*: temporary and permanent. The first *Ulukh* was made for a specific purpose, such as festival, and is located just outside the settlement. Because the settlement used to move, these gates did not have a fixed geographical location. The second *Ulukh* is considered by the Rendille to be "God’s creation", and is marked by a group of trees, stones or other natural objects. In these *Ulukh*, a specific ritual is

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83 Alaihe Thuleibor, Elder, Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.
performed whenever a Rendille individual, herd or settlement passes by. During an in-depth interview with an elder from the town of Korr, Schlee asked his interviewee to find an imaginary line that connects the “everlasting” *Ulukh* to the other (Schlee 1990: 8). The elder surprised him by drawing lines that circumnavigate each gate separately rather than linking one gate to the other (See Appendix Figure 7).

Unlike Schlee, whose conclusion was that the elder failed to circumscribe an area and instead described the path of somebody walking from one *Ulukh* to the other (Schlee 1990: 19), I argue the contrary: The elder described the confined area in which social interactions and Rendille rituals take place. The gates do not demarcate movement into and out of an enclosure but, rather, symbolize a declaration of belonging and a person’s social status. Each space, like the gates, has its own and unique inner sense that is known only to the people of the community. For example, young men will pour milk before the camels pass through the *Ulukh* in contrast to individuals who travel alone and lay down grass or a stone (Schlee 1990: 18). The ceremonies in this confined area are linked to the participants’ social status, and this is how the Rendille recognize and treat the boundary. The borders of the gates serve to demarcate a site where people and animals declare their status - camels traveling away from a water source will not cross it nowadays, while camels traveling southbound will go east and then south after crossing. The question of whether the camels will cross the gate or not is dependent on whether they are returning from or

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84 Schlee writes (1990: 8): “The interviewer asks insisting questions about these gates because he thinks that even if there are no walls or fences there must at least be imaginary lines to be crossed when going through the gates. The interviewer believes that a gate must lead to something. The localities of the various gates and their spatial relationship to each other therefore seemed important to the interviewer, because he thought that by connecting these gates by a line, one might find the boundary of which the gates are the crossing points”. In his paper Schlee is looking to find the Eurocentric view of borders, as a territorial line that when it is crossed, one move from one zone to the other. In my paper I have shown that reading Schlee from the new conceptualization of borders, and through my analysis of the Rendille notion of borders, the Rendille view the gates as having its own specific notion of boundaries, a space with its own specific borders structure.
traveling towards the water source. In other words, it is related to their status at a specific moment (Schlee 1990: 20). The Rendille indeed hold a notion of borders but these have different meaning depending on their social, political and physical context.

The h’air I met in the goup explained to me that when they are in the forr, they are free to behave as they want, as long as they are not accompanied by an elder:

The wazee go [to the] forr only if there is a Shida [Problem] ... The h’airs, they take opportunity to have a different laws than the wazee in the goup [...] [The h’airs] discuss together and they say we can move from here to go there without wazee. They have somebody, must they have one h’air who is in control of others, who manages the others.85

Even when the elders come to visit the forr, they are not allowed to publicly criticize the way the h’air run it (Sato 1980: 53), as this is the space controlled by the h’air. In this case, we can see that there is a complex relationship between the elimination of borders and the creation of them, as the division of space corresponds to the present social order. When an elder arrives at the forr, the clear boundaries that had existed between him and the h’air are broken; they spend time together, sleep together, sometimes in a way that would have been considered radical back in the goup. For example, the ritual drinking of Chai [Tea] has changed significantly: Whereas in the goup a h’air would not drink chai in front of the elder, in the forr he would. It is clear that chai entered the Rendille custom relatively late; however, since h’airs generally travel in couples the rule is that they only drink with their partner. Once again we see that there are changes to the condition in the forr, where the social structure changes.

Ladumen Kemire explains: “If they don’t have chai they can drink and even eat with

85 Abthup Choya, Elder, Goup Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 4-8-2011.
a mzee. It is different. In all forr I can drink alone.\textsuperscript{86} While in the goup the h’air will never drink chai with an elder, in the forr, it is something that happens.

History tells us that the Rendille would continue walking until they encountered another “tribe\textsuperscript{87}. The Rendille’s travel with the forr is determined by their livestock’s need for grass and water. Nevertheless, its boundaries are determined by what Schlee called a “border of fear”. It is the line that separates them from other groups and communities (1990). Taramatua Lomuloie, another h’air says:

We know [where to go] because of the border\textsuperscript{88}. I know the border because maybe you can see it, even [others] can tell you… if you pass this mountain, that side, it is Turkana, because I ask people, I ask people on the way. I ask people where the place of Turkana is and they tell me if you pass that mountain, or behind this river it is. [Or whether] this side of the river there are Samburu.\textsuperscript{89}

Here, we can clearly see that the border is dependent on the “others” present. It is constantly modified when circumstances change. The boundaries of where the Rendille can travel change from person to person. The notion of “borders” develops from experience, and is temporary and dependent on social status. The state does not play a major factor in the Rendille description of space. Significantly, they define space in relation to the location of other groups and not how the state of Kenya has attempted to redefine it.

\textsuperscript{86} Ladumen Kemire, H’air, Urugwain, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakain, Rift Valley, forr arriving from Korr, Rendille Language, 20-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{87} The explanation of the problematic use of the word “tribe” is given above. I also explained that the local communities adopted the term. I see significance in using it in this specific context.
\textsuperscript{88} I think the use of the term “border” in this case is already borrowed from “outside”, i.e. the European concept.
\textsuperscript{89} Taramatua Lomuloie, H’air, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakain, Rift Valley, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
This, however, did not prevent some of the *h’air*, driven by curiosity, to confirm rumors they heard about the other side.\(^90\) Derache Marasara tells his story:

I saw Turkana from Loyangalani […] They say the Turkana can’t fence their animals. Even in the night. Even donkeys, camels and goats. They sleeps without fence. There is no *furr* to sit. […] There is nothing that will kill the animals, no hyena or leopard. […] They are funny, they sleep far from the animals in the night. And everybody sleep alone. And all of them they have guns, even small boys. […] If somebody coming during the night, they are running to make a lot of noise, all of them.\(^91\)

As we can see here, the Rendille do not ignore the separation between themselves and other communities. They are aware of the need to keep each side safe and prevent violence. I also heard from Alaihe Thuleibor who explained:

This is Borana. Turkana. This is Somali. [Drawing it in the sand] In your border, you are free, you don’t afraid anything in your border, is it? Borana they don’t afraid anything in their border. Here, there is drought here you see? In your border, you have permission to go this border.\(^92\)

It could have been argued that the Rendille had no land restrictions, similar to previous general assumptions on nomadic communities. However, on closer inspection, it can be understood that “Rendilleland” as referred to by Rendille themselves is “where Rendille people can be found now” (Schlee 1990: 23) or “wherever the Rendille were at a given time” (Schlee 1998: 234). Before the establishment of the new political district, the Rendille used to see “Rendilleland” as wherever the Rendille temporarily sat. Rendilleland had marked borders; however

\(^90\) Derache Marasara described in his interview some kind of interest in seeing the other side and to confirm some rumors he hears. However it is also possible that he was going to steal the Turkana stock and could not admit it.

\(^91\) Derache Marasara, H’air, Goup Gobboore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.

\(^92\) Alaihe Thuleibor, Elder, Goup Gobboore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.
they were not permanent and were socially determined. Once again, the state does not seem to play a role in drawing them.

Land becomes significant because of people’s access to it and “human action gives territory meaning” (David Knight cited by Murphy 1990: 532). Therefore, in recent times, with the demarcation of political districts and the Rendille’s movement beyond the area assigned to them by the state, the Rendille have begun to express feelings of alienation. In interviews I conducted in a smallstock forr, I continuously heard the sentiment that the Rendille are not in “their land,” and feel like travelers in a “foreign land”, a topic I will revisit in the discussion of the modern Kenyan borders.

The interesting point here refers to what David Newman wrote on inner and local boundaries. Newman argues that in most cases, borders and boundaries research has an international focus, leaving administrative and municipal boundaries aside as a “separate” and usually uninteresting issue. The connection between local society’s notion of borders and its connection to international borders is almost completely ignored. The study of local borders, the focus of this thesis, is essential for understanding how groups, communities and individuals relate to international borders. These borders affect citizens’ daily lives to a much larger extent than international borders, where they serve as preliminary constant of the population with the government. These inner-state borders are not similar to international institutional ones since they are established, not by agreement and statement of political entities, but whenever the individual is obliged to identify themselves before the state, e.g. present an ID card to a police officer (Newman 2003b: 282-283). In the case of the Rendille, it is clear that they are much more affected by historical division of land into political districts than the international borders of the State of Kenya. There is a
connection between local conceptions of space and boundaries on the one hand and political or international borders on the other. The Rendille have not and do not travel to these borders; however, they suffer from their side effects, such as the import of small-arms and worsening of the raids. However, dealing with the inner district boundaries was a comparatively larger struggle for them.

During my discussion with Illtimbian Ogom on the Rendille decision making process, the topic of losing animals when in transit arose. There was a case where an animal of Illtimbian’s herd left the forr, went astray and ended up in the forr of another community (not Rendille) Illtimbian Ogom expressed doubts that he will get to see the animal again. However, what did arise were his feelings that at night, the far borders - from Turkana or Samburu- become as near as the border of the forr. As he said:

There is a border between us, you can’t pass there, and we can’t pass there, and we know. Everybody know, we go from here and they tell you if you pass here you can meet Turkana in that side. And Turkana they know, if you pass here that river, somewhere that river, if you pass, it’s a Turkana. If they pass… for example, if you fence your forr, and your all animals is in the forr, and it’s in the night […] we sleep, if you hear something outside, because a forr it is like a border in the night, if the all animal it’s in […] if you hear something, open the door, in the night, must you know it is a something who want to steal your animal. Or come to kill this animal. You know. The border is something like that. You can’t come and open. When you come out you call ‘Illtimbian, how are you? It is me’ […] If you don’t talk and I have a gun, I can shot you. […] If there is peace there is no Border.  

Rendille herders can graze hundreds of kilometers away from their natural habitat, something that occurred during my fieldwork due to the drought. However, when it is

93 Illtimbian Ogom, Young Elder 32+, Goup Ju, Logologo- Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, forr arriving from Logologo, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
not necessary to travel, the Rendille prefer staying near their permanent settlement. Kenya, as a nation-state, is officially meant to provide free and safe movement to its citizens within its territory, who, theoretically, are considered equal in the eyes of the law. In reality, nomads are still repatriated to their “native land”, “district of origin”, behind Isiolo, symbolizing the “quarantine belt” (Schlee 1998: 228).

These days there are still violent incidents such as the one I witnessed during the 2011 drought, when the Borana fought the Rendille next to Serolipi and next to Logologo in July, or when the Gabra entered into conflict with the Rendille in Kurkum next to Kargi last August. The motive behind most raids is animal theft from the forr or looting lorries traveling on main roads. When people move animals or immigrate, they risk being attacked, especially when they travel close to other tribes. The notion of borders is still tied to Rendille social life. They do not look to the state to determine division of space. Therefore this also affects the way they perceive the state of Kenya and the spatial boundaries it tries to enforce upon them.

As a Kenyan, Rendille can travel across community borders, all the way to Nairobi or Moyale, but they risk being robbed just as any other traveler. In the interview with Iltimbian Ogom, he explains:

This all people you see from Laisamis, Logologo, Marsabit, Serolipi, that all area, [came from] long distance, [and] this [is their] first day to come here. [They come] because of this drought. Korr. That all area. Kargi. That all people. That first day [for them] to see here. That all people they move from that place, from here, they are Forr like this, Wamba, Maralal, near

94 Muhamed Galsaracho, 28++, the town of Korr, English Language, 16-8-2013.
Isiolo, Nanuki. It is like this. **They are foreigners. We are foreigners now. We are the same, you, us, we are the same in this place.**

In this quote, we see that the concept of citizenship, equality and freedom of movement across land are not applicable to all. A man, like Illtimbian Ogom, who depends on animals, cannot feel welcome in a place where animals are at risk. For him, Kenya is not a spatial entity.

Most of the Rendille are not conscious of their social role in the communal structure of the state because they do not enjoy freedom of movement with their livestock, e.g. they do not engage in the political game. In the next chapter, I will discuss the Rendille’s relationship with the state and the range of ideas they ascribe to the term ‘Kenya’. For some, the lack of visible and day-to-day interaction between them and the state makes it hard for them to grasp the official political borders that come with it. Others do feel that the Kenyan state has a spatial effect on them, that they do belong to the territory called Kenya. I will argue that the Rendille notion of borders- a notion moving away from a clear and structured line to a fluid meaning- has important implications on the ways in which they engage with and interpret the borders of “Kenya”.

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95 Illtimbian Ogom, Young Elder 32**, Goup Ju, Logologo- Interviewed in the **forr** between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, **forr** arriving from Logologo, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
Rendille notions of “Kenya”:

Nations are imagined as limited since even the largest of them has finite, elastic boundaries beyond which lie other nations (Paasi 1996: 56).

As we have seen, The Rendille notion of “borders” and their geo-political understanding of the environment are inherently tied to its social context. We have seen that the Rendille conceptualize “borders” in connection to social and cultural points of reference. In other words, their understanding of borders and their relationships to borders is deeply linked to questions of economic status, ownership of animals, political hierarchy, social hierarchy, or inner social division, clan, sub-clan and castes. This chapter will examine what implications this has for the Rendille conceptualization of Kenya as nation-state and how they view their place within it.

Throughout history, African nomadic societies were organized in a multiplicity of social structures, each linked to local history, cultural and geography. Some societies established a centralized authority, such as the kingdom of the Tutsi, in what is today Rwanda and Burundi. Others, like the Somalis, had no centralized power -Islam was the force that held them together. However, this did not prevent inner clan raids from occurring. In a different case, the Herero had a homestead as an exclusive independent unit and had barely acknowledged any authority beyond it. The Rendille of Northern Kenya did not have any political authority and were led by their community elders (Azarya 1996). It is possible that a lack of historical precedent for strong, centralized political authority has impacted how the Rendille have conceptualized the modern nation-state of Kenya.

But any examination of the relationship between the Rendille and “Kenya” must begin acknowledge the significant and ongoing impact of colonial history and
knowledge on this relationship. From the time of the British occupation, the relationship between the Rendille and the political entity of “Kenya” has been contested on an historical and cultural level; there are those who view Northern Kenya as inherently tied to Somalia rather than Kenya. Schlee and Shongolo, for example, have argued that the northern districts of Kenya should have been grouped with the Horn of Africa states and not East African States (Schlee and Shongolo 2012: 1-3). The Rendille also identified with Somalia, and during the 1962 referendum organized by the British, these populations voted to be annexed to the new state of Somalia. The British however, ignored these results and kept the northern regions as part of Kenya. From this time onwards these areas were annexed to Kenya. Since then, the Rendille have had an ambivalent relationship with the Kenyan state.

This ambiguity, rooted in the colonial era, persists until the present day, and can be felt in Rendille notions of Kenya and their place within it. As will be demonstrated, informants viewed Kenya as both an inescapable reality and as elusive and absent. The Rendille have both expectations and demands of Kenya, and they complain of marginalization and neglect: On the one hand they must adhere to Kenyan law, on the other, they feel overlooked by the law. Hasan Gaere, an elder from the Odollah clan who works at the dispensary as a nurse, argues:

What does police help? You know, police, where are they? And here you find out seven people are killed… there are police here? They have police in Laisamis, what have they done? Nothing! And there is a police in Gudas, and you know, where the fighting took place?… There were three bodies in the borehole. Me and Eva [the missionary] went and we confirmed the dead bodies. If we are two Kenyans, the Somalis Kenyan and the Rendille Kenya… But the problem is that although we know Somalis there, in between us again, nobody know who is who… If now, me I can go to Somalia, me… I can be in a Lorry here, go to Mandera, from Mandera I go do Mogadishu. From Mogadishu I can go anywhere in Somalia. Nobody will
ask me where are you, who are you… I’m like a Somali. It is now that there is a problem at the border…

Similarly to Hasan Gaere, several informants claimed that there are in fact two Kenyans. There is Nairobi and the southern part of the country that is in “Kenya One”, while in the Rendille area, the Northern Province, is described as “Kenya Two”. This imagined division between the north and the rest has its roots in the history of colonial rule. As Günther Schlee writes: “Nomadic livestock producers and private traders have always viewed the present practice [of livestock trade control] as a direct continuation of colonial policies that still work to the benefit of the remaining white ranchers and African elites who took over the deserted European ranches (Schlee 1998: 228). The northern districts are seen by politicians and as a result by the locals, as areas behind the “quarantine belt”.

Nomad populations, including the Rendille, are generally restricted to their plot of land due to the delineation of political regions. In Northern Kenya, cross-border movement of ethnic communities into the customary grazing land of another group is pre-agreed through discussion with local elders, public announcements to the government-appointed chief and admonition to the young herders to maintain peace.

Muhamed Arvele, Assistant Chief of Kargi describes:

The chief of this place [Kargi] will write a letter to Baragoi chief. ‘Listen to me, my animals are pushing towards your location, take care of them’. […] If there is relief distribution there, also give it to our animals. If his animals come here, I take care of his animals and his people. [The people of the area] They don’t know because they don’t know the fruits of the

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96 Hassan Gaere, 50~, Goup Odollah, Logologo, English Language. 11-8-2011.
97 Illtug’wa Ogom, Young Elder 30~, Goup Ju, Logologo, English Language, 2-8-2011.
government. They’ve been cut off, the road is cut off. […] After election? The chapter is closed.98

The Rendille attitude to the state is multifaceted: On the one hand, they are aware of the Kenyan state authority, on the other, they recognize they are treated as second class citizens. Günther Schlee describes the political tension:

In spite of the principle of freedom of movement and in spite of the fact that restrictions along ethnic lines smack of tribalism, it is understandable that the authorities should want to have a say in who is allowed to graze where; if they did not, it might be difficult to keep the peace and impossible to introduce ecologically acceptable forms of grazing management which, in the long-term are in the interest of all […] The systematic neglect and willful retardation of the development of Northern Kenya […] until today, the northern nomads are under-represented among Kenya’s elites […] The circumstances of colonization, decolonization and the final integration of the north into the Republic of Kenya have caused the relationships between the central powers and the northern nomads to be characterized by estrangement and aversion (Schlee 1979: 52-53, My Emphasize).

Schlee describes a central effect on the relations between the Rendille and the state; however, as I have shown in this thesis, this is not the complete story. The state is indeed recognized as a continuation of what the colonizers did in the northern region, with the elite exploiting the population. The Rendille do not take a role in the Kenyan politics; they do not fully recognize their social status as citizens, and therefore they do not imagine it as having any spatial affect upon them. Such mixed feelings influence their identification with the state.

The Rendille’s sense of marginalization and even absence from Kenyan political life emerged in an interview with Iltug’wa Ogom. While discussing the upcoming elections, Ogom claimed that it was common practice among politicians to

98 Muhamed Arvele- Assistant Chief, 32°, Kargi, Language English, 6-8-2011.
manipulate borders between communities and voting districts in order to give an
advantage over the Borana (at the expense of the Turkana and Rendille). As the entire
area, from Loyangalany to Logologo, votes for only one MP of the Marsabit district,
the empowerment of the Borana happens at the expense of the other two groups.\textsuperscript{99} For
Illtug’wa Ogam, the Marsabit district has an MP who is Borana and, therefore, does
not care for the Rendille. Illtug’wa Ogam explained:

\begin{quote}
If the Borana come to kill that people it is nothing. ‘cause he is a Borana. And the only MP
they have it is from that place. They can’t say only Rendille vote for one MP of Rendille and
Borana MP of Borana. They can’t do that. So that’s why I say government, they don’t look
about the people. They don’t care about the people.\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

Illtug’wa Ogom perceived voting to be important as they affect his life; but it was the
lack of Rendille involvement in politics that had the greatest impact upon them. For
him, this situation was partially mitigated by the fact that he was an elder, and he
therefore received authoritative position through the Rendille local-political-social
system.

Several scholars have said that ethnic identity has played a central role in the
construction of communal and individual relationships to the Kenyan State since
colonial times. Ethnicity has played a central role in shaping political history and
discourse in postcolonial Kenya. According to Günther Schlee (Schlee and Shongolo
2012: 107), people’s ethnic affiliation had a significant role in Kenyan politics
particularly during the 1980s. He writes- “‘Nation’ stood for the universal civic
identity as Kenyans […] In practice, even politicians had to care mainly for their own
constituencies if they wanted to stay in power”. This was regarded as a “hidden

\textsuperscript{99} This is previous to the new constitution.
\textsuperscript{100} Illtug’wa Ogom, Young Elder 30\textdegree, Manyatta Ju, Logologo, English Language, 2-8-2011.
“agenda” behind statements regarding the development of the new nation. Nowadays, this is already “explicit politics”. Thus, the conceptualization of political entities and authorities is tied to more local notions of belonging, privilege and authority.

The absence of the state was further brought to my attention in an interview with another h’air, Ladumen Kemire, who never went to school. This lies in contrast to the two other men I have quoted in this chapter who did receive elementary schooling. In response to my question about why he needed to hold a gun when traveling with the herd, he brought up the term “government”. I asked him what this word means for him and he responded:

The government is somebody and somebody, this is the government. [...] government you can go and to tell the police [if somebody steal your goats]. And the police is a Rendille, but maybe the boss is a Turkana, and you go to tell him the Turkana is steal my animals. How are they going to talk to Turkana? [...] I can’t believe out government 100% to say government is give [the animals] back. [...] So why I should tell the government and I’m the government myself. Because I have a gun and the government have a gun like that.101

The personification of the state as seen in this quote was expressed by others as well. I was told by other informants that the government is “like the Rais [President], and MPs and those who go outside to borrow the food relief for us”. Later he also described Kenya as “everything in the world [...] Kenya is everywhere with people. The people everywhere it is a Kenya”.102 This quote reveals the ties the Rendille maintain with their local identity when the state and the political authority lay far on the horizon. So where Kenya’s existence is felt by the Borana, or any other community, this is not the case for the Rendille.

102 Ladumen Kemire, H’air, Urugwain, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwan, Rift Valley, forr arriving from Korr, Rendille Language, 20-8-2011.
Beyond Borders:

The ways in which the Rendille describe space beyond the borders of Rendilleland reveal how they draw connections between physical space, political authority and social status. Although it is uncommon to travel beyond the “borders” to see another community, it is not as rare as one could imagine. For some, Kenya is the space beyond the forr. Taramatua Lomuloie explains what he thinks of other communities and both his and their relationships to Kenya: “I can walk without animals in all Kenya… I don’t see the Turkana [in the forr] but I know they come once in Kenya they see because in the big towns you see them every time. They are different. The Turkana are black people and they have muscles”.103

The h’air, Namrran Iprison, shared his experience working as a guard at the relatively new camp of “the Chinese”.104 It was his first time visiting the area as he was from another community. He said:105

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103 Taramatua Lomuloie, H’air, Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakain, Rift Valley, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
104 The exploration of the Chinese in the area is part of their general involvement in Africa. In relation to Northern Kenya, it started with the construction of the paved road from Nairobi to Moyale- http://archives.dawn.com/archives/10135 15-8-2013, 13:15. The article reinforces what I stated earlier concerning the feelings of Northern communities of being “second Kenya”- “Here one finds all the restless bustle of a quintessential border town because residents say it’s the frontier between the “Kenya Mbili” – Swahili for the two Kenyas.“People in the north feel they are not part of the country,” said Hussein Sasura, Assistant Minister for Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands. “When someone leaves for Nairobi, people say he has gone to Kenya.”
105 I found Namrran Iprison’s description of what he saw when traveling “behind the border” interesting as it reflects people’s belief that things are wonderful on the side of “the enemy”, especially for their animals. Furthermore, I think it interesting as it stands contrary to his feelings that his home town is his homeland- “I saw a place which is called Marti, it is a very good place for the animals area. If I have my animals there it is a very nice area. But I’m afraid of the tribe of that place because this is an area of Borana. [...] I saw a place called Abasville, it’s next to Wajia. Again, it is very nice for the animals. [...] The two places are towns. [...] In that area there are not reserve people. Nomad’s people that have beads like our people. They are nomads and they don’t have beads like our people. All of them have cloth. Everybody have business, somebody sell goats, somebody by shoes. [...] When I look at them I say everybody here they don’t have any shida [problem], ‘cause everybody have its own business. And this is something different for me. I like in an area of a lot of Shidas. Many Shidas. Everybody like that [...] Because I’m born here I can’t see if it is bad, and that there is somewhere good and beautiful than here. Because I was born here I think this is better than
I speak Kiswahili and I talk to many people. I ask a lot of things. I see in my eyes many things because I stay these five days or one week. I go there because I want to see, I want to ask. [...] In that work I can see some places I can’t if I don’t have this job. [...] I can’t go because of two reasons: One, if I walk from here to go Marti, Wajia, I’m afraid other tribes they kill me on the way. Because they say ‘why does he come to do here, maybe he come to steal or come to kill people and take that animals’. [...] It is not educated. It is not the way like Isiolo or to go ahead. It somewhere out of the main road. Must they ask me ‘what do you come to do here?’ [...] Because I have big holes in my ears. [...] If they see these holes in the ears, everybody know this is a Rendille. [When coming with the Chinese] they know I am in working with somebody. Nobody care about me. I am a Rendille, but I come here because of my work.¹⁰⁶

Namarran Iprison feels Kenya cannot guarantee his safety. This makes it difficult for the Rendille to identify the state as a social structure with physical boundaries limiting their movement. An authority that will be applicable to the Rendille is one that is committed to safe-guarding community. Namrran Iprison believed that “the whole world is Kenya”, and therefore the need to survive is similar in any place. No one can guarantee the Rendille’s safety but themselves. He continues: “You are in Kenya, but it is a different Kenya.”¹⁰⁷ “Kenya” is that space beyond Rendilleland and it symbolize where it is not safe for the Rendille.

In Rendilleland, the Rendille tend their animals, they are the legitimate and responsible authority, and they do not expect the government to contribute to their animals’ safety. This is similar to what John Wood wrote on the Gabra- “The Gabra distinction between inside and outside is at least partly moral. Thus, to speak of inside

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is to refer to the society, the community, and its core values, while to speak of outside is to think of activity beyond the reach of strong social order.[…] the herds of camels, goats and sheep, which are important not only economically but also morally” (Wood 2009: 234). For the Rendille, the role of authority figures includes responsibility for the people. Therefore, for the state to be viewed as an authority, it would need to provide security for its citizens.

The fact that the Rendille do not trust the state insofar as their animals are concerned means that they do not completely accept its control. In the min, goup and the forr, "inside" the borders of Rendille society, it is clear that the Rendille, not the State, are in charge. However, in the town and during interactions with the state, the Rendille are ambivalent toward Kenya. In Nairobi, as Iltug’wa Ogom explained to me, there are no problems with people from other communities such as the Borana, Turkana, Somalis or Gabra. He said:

[Since it is] outside. The place we have animals. We fight of grass and water. [In Nairobi] there is a police. He don’t have a chance to fight with you. The police [In Logologo] don’t know what’s going on in the goup […] they sit in the town. They don’t go in the forr. […] The police, they don’t want to go to the forr because it is a hard work, to walk. And you don’t have your animals there, is it? And the government they don’t pay police for going to look the people in the forr. No. Only in the town. […] If you go to the forr it is a different law. For the only people of animals. From forr they don’t know what’s the government. A government, they don’t go to the forr.108

The lack of state presence in Rendille daily life is one reason why many Rendille “know Kenya” but cannot see it as something that has power over them or limits their space. They do not relate to it as an entity with a spatial effect. “Kenya” does not

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108 Iltug’wa Ogom, Young Elder 30°, Manyatta Ju, Logologo, English Language, 2-8-2011.
influence their concept of “borders” because they do not internalize the social status it assigns them. The relationship between Rendille identity, their spatial understanding and state demands is similar to what Stephen Jones saw as kinship-territory tension. He argues: “The problem of racial segregation in the United States today is a form of kinship-territory conflict. The issue can be stated as shall there be two grades of citizenship based on so-called "blood" or only one based on territory? Residential segregation is a more or less conscious attempt to maintain the racial system by forcing it into the more viable territorial form” (Jones 1959: 242). Similar to this, there is a contradiction between the way the Rendille see themselves as “one blood” and the demand of the state to except it notion of territory, and therefore it legitimate authority.

When traveling to the forr on previous visits to the area, I noticed the presence of many guns. When we started walking back to the goup in Logologo the h’air walking with me no longer carried his guns. During my fieldwork, Iltug’wa Ogom recalled this visit saying: “Didn’t you notice you arrived to the goup without the guns?” He explained that “you can carry the gun in the bush, [but] you cannot go to the town with a gun”. Iltimbian Ogom added:

The law of government, they […] don’t want us to have the [our] borders [I think again that the use for the term “border” in this case borrowed already from “outside”, i.e. the European concept], they want us to be together. Borana, Turkana, everybody […] the government now want us to move everywhere we want in Kenya. But the community they cannot do that because of animals. Because of the animals, they eat grass of others. [It is a problem that] the

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109 Iltug’wa Ogom, Young Elder 30~, Manyatta Ju, Logologo, English Language, 2-8-2011.
animals not the same [in numbers for all the people and] maybe this area of Samburu the animals not too much [of the grass for the Samburu livestock].

It was impossible for Illtimbian Ogom to accept “Kenya” as an institution that will theoretically eliminate what already exists on the ground between the communities and create a higher source, a larger body of identification. The purpose of “Kenya” is to a form an entity that manages the population. For this elder “Kenya” is a matter of negotiation. “Kenya” is perceived as a limited area, relatively “far” and with no priority over the local borders of the Rendille.

The concept of the border as an institution that moves from being fixed and clear in the Rendille’s min or goup is parallel to what I have seen regarding the Rendilles’ approach to state laws. While the Rendille observe their own customs and rules in a consistent manner, the limitations that the state places upon them are accepted with hesitation and resistance. The h’air argues that they must do their work and become h’air even if they do not like it. In contrast, as mentioned earlier regarding the government’s ordeal in implementing livestock management, the Rendille see state law as something that can be disobeyed.

Nomads belonged to a larger romantic approach to Africa that persisted for centuries in all forms of research and popular publications. As previously stated, they were seen as “preservers of custom” and cultures that were untouched by modernization. However, recent approaches have clearly shown that many times nomadism originates from resistance to ones colonizers (Scott 1985) and to poverty (Gordon J. Robert and Stuart Sholto-Douglas 1992). Iltug’wa Ogom argued that

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110 Illtimbian Ogom, Young Elder, Manyatta Ju, Logologo- Interviewed in the forr between Masakita and Latakwain, Rift Valley, Samburu Language, 19-8-2011.
111 Somicho Ourare, H’air, Manyatta Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011.
poverty is the main reason for his inability to travel and move his min like the Rendille used to travel. He explained:

If I’m not poor, I can move. And if maybe drought now, this drought it is kill all my animals, I cannot sit here. Maybe I can go Nairobi to look for a job, like watchman, and maybe I can go with my children. And my wife […] The is no problem in Nairobi because it is a city. Kenya.112

Iltug’wa Ogom’s identification of Nairobi as a city and his notion of what "Kenya" and its significance, is not accidental: It voices what the majority of the Rendille feel having suffered neglect and mistreatment at the hand of the central authority (See here note no. 104 on the Chinese). Leungayon Ogom, an old woman who never married, exemplifies the relationship between people who “stay” to live “traditional life” and the lack of mobility between social-economic status and poverty:113

The plot [she have] in Marsabit there is one house with a four rooms, but I don’t want to live there because of Borana. Because they see I’m like this, I’m not educated. Count Counsel People want to sell, but they know this plot have a card already this is why they can’t sell. So she say nobody taking that plot, this is mine. I’m the owner. […] I’m Nairobi [When going for eye examination] it is not good because I sit there with a lot of people but I don’t see any Rendille. […] We live there like a refuge. […] I hear the name Kenya, Kenya, but I don’t know the different with other things. I don’t know.114

112 Illtug’wa Ogom, Young Elder 30~, Manyatta Ju, Logologo, English Language, 2-8-2011.
113 Günther Schlee writes (Schlee and Shongolo 2012: 91) - “This migration away from the nomadic pastoral sector should not lead us to assume that the population pursuing the traditional way of life of the Rendille is in any way numerically weakened or on the decline. On the contrary, today there are more Rendille engaged in nomadic Pastoralism and upholding traditional culture than in the entire period of time over which we have an historical overview. Those parts of the population who migrate to towns merely represent the numerical surplus of the pastoral sector, which, in the traditional system, would have fallen victim to famine or the”. This also applies, according to Schlee, to the number of Rendille speakers who have predicted decline that did not occur. A Rendille who relinquishes the habit of keeping animals cannot continue following the Rendille tradition as it is mostly dependent and linked to customs practiced on and with animals or takes place in relation to the herds: for example, blessing them.
114 Leungayon Ogom, Old Mama 60~, Korr, Rendille language, 16-8-2011.
In this statement, we see that even a property owner can feel that he belongs to the lower classes when asking for help. The woman has no affiliation to Nairobi; she has no status except being a “refugee” there. Hence, for Leungayon Ogom, Nairobi is the symbol of Kenya, and despite being part of the state she cannot view it as placing special limitations upon her, nor can she grasp Kenya as an institution imposing space limitation, borders, upon her. Muhamed Arvele, quoted earlier, added to these feelings of neglect. As a representative of the government he told me:

The government… Even the food we are distributing here is just from the WFP, not the government, World Food Program. It’s not from the government. The food we are getting from the government is very small. Very small. […] One lorry. The whole Kargi. One lorry. What can one lorry…?115

For Muhamed Arvele government authority over the Rendille is understood only as a matter of tradeoff. If in the min and the goup the elders earned respect by taking responsibility and by being committed to the community, then the Rendille assume that the state must do the same.

During my fieldwork I wanted to understand what the Rendille see on their horizon. I attempted to understand what they think and imagine when they look “beyond”, “over there”, where the sky and the earth "meet". I was hoping to discover concepts of spatial limitation. With most of my informants, this was a “hard question”. It seemed like the first time they faced this question or perhaps they simply did not want to share their thoughts. Derache Marasara said:

Me: “And what after the mountain?

115 Muhamed Arvele- Assistant Chief, 32~, Kargi, English Language, 6-8-2011.
H’air Marasara: You can see where your eyes can see. You can see the flat and then the end you can see, it’s like sky and the Ground… they come together.

Me: And what is there?

H’air Marasara: When we look from here I see the small hills I say that’s the Kurkum, after that I’m not seen anything. Nothing”.116

We may infer that the Rendille have no interest in knowing beyond what is needed in order to perform their customs. However, as mentioned earlier, most of the people had a lot of interest in knowing what lay “ahead of” and “outside” their familiar environment. Nonetheless, it sheds light on the fact that when a Rendille has no social affiliation, he will walk toward “this horizon” and does not draw any limitation over space “over there”.

This explains why a Rendille will give directions by first pointing at himself as if he is already at the destination and then explaining the way from the location itself. For example, if we are staying in Logologo and a Rendille wanted to give directions to the location of a store in Kargi, the Rendille would imagine himself in Kargi and then describe the new location with instructions how to walk around. This process is not done in order to describe places they have no social affiliation with but rather it shows that their ability to perceive space and to draw boundaries connected to their status.

Agnew argues that the term and concept “place” encompasses three major elements: ‘locale’, ‘location’ and ‘sense of place’. “Locale” refers to “the settings in which social relations are constituted.” In other words, it signifies the physical and the visual aspect of a place. “Location” points to the geographical zone, drawn by

116 Derache Marasara, H’air, Manyatta Gobbore, Kargi, Rendille Language, 5-8-2011. Marasera is the brother of Krobooso Ogom.
borders, and a defined area in which social interactions are defined and take place. “Sense of place” denotes “the local structure of feeling” and the integration of “the objective macro-order of location” with the “subjective territorial identity of sense of place” (Agnew quoted in Paasi 1996: 45). The question is how much of a role does Kenya play as a “Place” for the Rendille?

Kroboso Ogom, who I quoted earlier and who hosted me during all my visits in Logologo, asked me once to “send regards to my goup”. Kroboso Ogom imagined my life in Israel as similar to hers. At the beginning of her interview, she stated, “I don’t know anything, I know only Kargi”. However, when she continued it was important for Kroboso to tell me the changes in her attitude toward her hometown: During the visit to Marsabit, she already preferred to be in Logologo rather than Kargi, because Kargi became something “new for me when I go back. I know now Logologo, so Logologo it is good than Kargi. That time”. What was reiterated during her interview was her pleasure and interest in visiting new places, such as the market in Marsabit and Nairobi, which she described as “something I would like to see”. However, she felt most comfortable with the familiar. Kroboso Ogom could tell me that Kargi is closer than Nairobi and that Israel is even further away, but when I tried to understand what Kenya is for her, she said that she does not know and for me to tell her: “I hear every time Kenya, Kenya, but I don’t know”.117

Kroboso Ogom’s lack of a sense of “Kenya” in general and the concept of it as a bounded entity is also expressed by Kisido Migeres. The following offers a good summary of what I understood “Kenya” is for most of the Rendille:

117 Kroboso Ogom, Young woman 22~, Logologo (Originally from Kargi), Rendille Language. 28-8-2011.
We don’t know if Kenya is bad, or Kenya is something good. We don’t know because we don’t know outside. Where we don’t know if it is somewhere good than here. […] I know there is something called Kenya, but I don’t know [the] importance of Kenya. It is the name of this country, I know the Kenya it is the name of my country, but I don’t know if it is something important.¹¹⁸

Most of the Rendille who I have quoted do not perceive Kenya as a “Place”. Kenya does not constitute for them social relations, or the “Locale”, since Kenya does not address or ensure the Rendille’s relationship and dependence on animals. As a result, the state does not take part in shaping the Rendilles’ identity. The geopolitical environment is for the most part still rooted in their community. This is exemplified by the story of Lkirait Khoyan, an elder living in Logologo, on his trip to Nanuki:

One day I went to visit Nanuki. I went to meet a friend of mine. He’s working in the Kenya army and I went with some goats to sell. I stay there a week. Now, when moving to such a place, you know, I don’t have that freedom to walk around and do what I want. When I go for a walk, that friend or his brother walks with me because I can easily get lost in that big place. Even when we are in the house, during nighttime, even one hour… they don’t even leave the door open. They always close the house. So whenever somebody comes, and knock on the door, then they must know first who that person is. So first they must listen. […] For a week I am a prisoner inside this house. […] I’m not comfortable in this place. Let me go back to my place, because in our home, my home place, we have that freedom of walk. […] I ask this brother of mine, why you don’t give me freedom to go freely? […] He told me ‘no, this place is dangerous, that if somebody sees you with something he can get you or kill you because he thinks you are carrying something good. Then I say this place is terrible, I must go back.¹¹⁹

To the elder, like many Rendille, large towns seem unsafe for him to move around in. Therefore, many Rendilles who find themselves traveling to the center of the country

¹¹⁹ Lkirait Khoyan, 40*, Rungumu Clan, Logologo, Samburu Laguage, 8-8-2011.
wish to escape back to their small hometown as soon as possible. However, from a different perspective, the absence of police authority in the forr, the raids and inability to move freely because of one’s origin or community, heightens the risk of daily movement between the districts and towns. There is a constant negotiation of the areas the Rendille feel safe to travel to and the ones that they do not. Though they desire governmental authority, they also resist it at the same time.

The Rendilles’ notion of “borders” is tied up with their interpretation of “place” through the notion of “location”. However, it is the lack of “sense of a place” that problematizes their feelings toward “Kenya”. When the Rendille leave the areas that they have social references for, their “sense of a place” - in the strict definition of the term- becomes blurry. The Rendilles’ complex conceptualization of borders cannot easily be implemented when they travel to town, away from their daily interactions. The concept of “Kenya”, as far as borders are concerned, seems to be irrelevant for most of the local community, if it not accompanied by a related social structure and geo-political understanding.

Nevertheless, during my interviews, I did meet a few Rendille who describe Kenya as an entity that limits their movement. As mentioned above, I did not find a correlation between the level of education, social status and economic position of those Rendille who recognized Kenya as such and those Rendille who did not. Leungayon Ogom said:

I’m born here and I don’t know what “Kenya” is. I know it is my country because I don’t need a passport if I want to go Nairobi or Mombasa. But if I want to go out I need to look for a passport showing me that Kenya is my place and another [country] it is not mine. […] I know it because a lot of people, even from here, they go outside and then they come. They go
somewhere and somewhere and then they come again here. That’s why they tell the story about passport.\textsuperscript{120}

And Lkirait Khoyan adds:

I have learned a lot here in Kenya, because in Kenya here my kids got education. And also guides. Also here in Kenya my children been fed. Through our government always they there is food. Because before, when migrating from one place to another, I don’t have any idea about Kenya, then it was very easy for me to die. With Malaria. I have no idea of other things around. Only my animals are migrating. […] One thing I came to know about Kenya is my ID card. That is how I came to know Kenya, I must go to register myself in Kenya. Because I counted as one of the Kenyans, I’m a Kenyan. I’m proud to be one… Whenever I am having this one, I can walk wherever I want in Kenya, because I have my ID card. And then nobody interfere in what I’m doing. And that where my knowledge, […] through my ID card.\textsuperscript{121}

I then asked what happened if the elder needs to travel to an area where Borana live.

He said:

I can sometime go with this ID. I can walk with a Borana. […] That the only time I can. So I must always have somebody to guide me or to go with me, from Borana. […] This ID can help me because they know where this person comes from. Thorough this ID card.\textsuperscript{122}

In another case, Lokuti Kutukai, an elder who traveled as an \textit{h’air} many years ago to dance in front of Kenyatta in Embu, said:

Kenya is all our country. If I go this side and then I stop, I say this is Tanzania and this is Kenya. When I go from here, I go to Moyale and then I stop in Moyale, I say that is Kenya. I get to Ethiopia. Ethiopia is another government like Kenya.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} Leungayon Ogom, young Elder, Korr, Samburu Language, 16-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{121} Lkirait Khoyan, 40\textsuperscript{\textdegree}, Rungumu Clan, Logologo, Samburu Language, 8-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{122} Lkirait Khoyan, 40\textsuperscript{\textdegree}, Rungumu Clan, Logologo, Samburu Language, 8-8-2011.
\textsuperscript{123} Lokuti Kutukai, 60\textsuperscript{\textdegree}, Manyatta Ju, Logologo, Samburu and Rendille Language, 10-8-2011.
Lastly, Paulina Ogom, the wife of Illtimbian, situated the Rendille within Kenya’s boundaries: “We are between like somewhere in Kenya, but I don’t know the border in this side and the border of this side. But must he have Border in this side. But I don’t know the borders. […] I’m somewhere in Kenya. Kenya is from Mombasa to Moyale. And also here it is Kenya”. These last few accounts demonstrate that for some of the Rendille, Kenya indeed is an entity they recognize and even identify with. It does play a role in their spatial understanding of their environment and space.

However, still, for the majority of the Rendille, “Kenya” is removed from their identity and sense of boundaries. This is because the Kenyan government does not answer to Rendille local needs, their ideology and culture. In practice, what is happening on is a daily negotiation of what “Kenya” is and how it appears in the lives of the Rendille. This discussion is not restricted to the relationship between the local concepts of “border” and the division of space. Rather, it is also encompasses Rendille locality, culture and social structure.

\[124\] Paulina Ogom, 30^*, Logologo (Originally Korr), Rendille Language, 26-8-2011.
Conclusions:

In this thesis I have tried to present the Rendille’s conceptualization of borders and to demonstrate the link between this and the Rendille perception of the nation-state of Kenya. Through the interview analysis I conducted in Northern Kenya in August 2011, I have tried to understand the ways in which the notion of borders exists among Rendille communities.

I started this thesis by giving an overview of border theory in the general geopolitical sphere. I have shown how gradually our understanding of borders has expanded to encompass new phenomena: If previously, borders had been a line symbolizing territorial limitation, now they are perceived as an institution formed as a result of various practices of inclusion and exclusion, identity formation and creation of “otherness”. Borders as such, create unique dynamics in society, in a relationship that is reciprocal, since borders are in the first instance a human creation. They also have political power to generate realities.

In this chapter I have continued to show that the perception of borders as a European invention is in fact incorrect. Borders were used by Europeans in order to demarcate what they saw as uncivilized backward societies. In other words, during colonial times, borders enabled the Europeans to distinguish themselves from the peoples they were occupying, from the ‘natives’. Borders served to implement the European racial and cultural hierarchies of the time. Therefore, by the time of the confrontation between the African communities and their colonizers, borders already existed, and what ensued was a clash between two different notions of borders. Borders, for many societies in Africa, were not static entities as in Europe, but rather
fluid entities functioning under local social structure. In the example of the Rendille, borders depend on a specific social structure.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I gave a brief historical description of Rendilleland. I have shown that what shaped British policy throughout their occupation of Northern Kenya was a ‘romantic’ view of the nomadic local populations. Here I read the historical development in such a way that the British demarcation of grazing territories was not the first introduction and implementation of borders to the area, but rather an execution of a new conceptualization it. Nomadism was a way of life that helped communities survive in their environments; I have shown how borders were used by communities to differentiate between one another, though in an ambiguous, less clear-cut manner.

In my third chapter I have shown how borders manifest in the life of the Rendille. Starting from the min where borders are regulated and clear for all members of the community; in the goup and the town things become more fluid due to processes of sedentarization. The construction of borders for the Rendille is very much dependent on their individual or sub-group’s social, economic and cultural status. For the Rendille, borders are drawn by the daily practices and performance of political power. They do not always have a physical appearance, but they are well known to the Rendille community.

Within this system of space division and demarcation of borders, questions of authority are raised whenever the community chooses to migrate to a different place: Whom do they choose to follow? This has far-reaching implications on the ways they understand, accept, negotiate or ignore the state's laws. As for the forr, here the Rendille border is fluid. As I have argued throughout my thesis, the Rendille border
has a strong geographical dimension, though this is dependent on daily social practices based on their social structure. Each space carries its own concept of borders, as borders for the Rendille change from person to person, according to their individual circumstances.

In my final chapter I examined the link between the Rendille concept of borders and its connection to their perception of the nation-state of Kenya. Here I argued that since the Rendille did not have a central authority but were led by the elders of the community, identification with the central government of Kenya was incomprehensible to them. The Rendille’s first priority is taking care of their animals. Since they feel that the state cannot support and safeguard them against rival groups such as the Samburu, Borana or Turkana; their relation to the state is an ambivalent one. For the most, the Rendille feel neglected by the state and treated as second class citizens. On the other hand, the Rendille are indeed aware that they have some relation to Kenya and that it has some impact on their lives.

To conclude, as I have tried to show throughout this thesis, I think it is important to learn about local communities’ perceptions of borders in order to enrich and diversify our understanding of this term. This is due to the growing implication it has on the way people read and understand their realities. Borders shape people’s views of their surrounding communities and at the same time determine their identification with one another as individuals, between communities and with the nation-state. I believe that this understanding of the borders’ effect on the global picture can teach us something about communal and national identification worldwide.
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Appendix:

Figure 1:

Map prepared by Ingrid Rhinehart

Figure 3:

Map 1. Location of Rendille in North Central Kenya

Figure 4:

East African Pastoralism in Transition 5

Pastoralists of Africa

East-African Pastoralists

Figure 1: Pastoralists of Africa and East Africa

Fratkin, Elliot. 2001. *East Africa Pastoralism in Transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille Cases*
Figure 6:

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<th>Province</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>Goans</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
<th>Other races</th>
<th>Natives</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>89,442</td>
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<td><strong>7,468</strong></td>
<td><strong>236</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2,627,080</strong></td>
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Distribution of Population.

The geographical distribution of the population is as follows:—

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<th>Asiatic</th>
<th>Native</th>
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Figure 7:

a.

# תוכן עניניות:

1. הקדמה

7. היווצרותם של גבולות

7. הרצוגנשטט של המחשבה על "גבולות"

16. חשביניו "גבולות"

22. גבולות באפריקה

29. רקורט היסטורי

30. התחפושות של הרודיאן על אפריקה

34. ארץם של הרנידילה - רקורט היסטורי

49. הרנידילה - עבר ו clearfix

56. מחזה ה ive של הרנידילה על פושג ה "גבול" "Rendilleland"

58. המשנה בábadoל

58. "Min" he

63. "המשנה למשנה של האנאה של פור" - פור

73. "לא כוונ "שהייח" -  "נפוע הפרי של ברוק ה "גבולות"

91. השבה לubernול

97. מסקנות

110. ביבליוגרפיות

113. מסקנות

124. נספחים
The Rendille (Rendille) are a warrior nomadic community that has been living in northeastern Kenya for hundreds of years. They make their living through livestock herding, especially camels, goats, and cattle.

Under British colonial rule, starting in the 19th century, various communities in the region experienced geopolitical and political shifts, affecting their local customs and autonomy.

When Kenya became a nation after the end of colonialism, it took on the colonial borders, thus preserving the British idea of borders, land ownership, and sovereignty. The study of this border concept was a source of a wide range of basic political identities and communities.

The object of this research is to understand the Rendille experience of these changes and how local interpretations of the term "border" stood in opposition to or changed in the context of colonial and post-colonial Kenya. The purpose of my thesis is to examine the local concept of "border" in relation to the specific and public areas and in that way, understand the Rendille’s perception of the nation-state of Kenya and its borders.
“Rendilleland”

של הרנדילה (Rendille) בצפון קניה

(מ.A) (M.A)

עבודה זו מתוזגה חלק מהדריישה Lópezلو ל פוסטר "מותпле לمنذ החרז והחרז" (A) (A)

נואם: חיילה סגל

בנחלת: "ר" לין שלר

תאריך: 17.10.2013

חתימת הסטודנט: 

חתימה בת伤亡: הלן" מ. פ. L. L. F.

תאריך: 17.10.2013

אוקטובר 2013
“Rendilleland”

tפיסת הגבול והמדינה של הרנדילה

(Rendille) בצפון קניה

(ד"ר לין שלר)

מאת: הילה סגל

منظمة: ד"ר לין שלר

אוקטובר 2013