

AEGIS-AFRICAN STUDIES IN EUROPE
CORTONA SUMMER SCHOOL 2008
BORDERS AND BORDER-CROSSINGS IN AFRICA,
Cortona, Tuscany, 16-22 June 2008

Applicants List and Abstracts

1. Maxim Bolt (London School of Economics), [*Networks and Rhythms of Movements and Settlement on the Zimbabwe-South African Border.*](#)
2. Anne-Kristin Borszik (University of Bayreuth), [*Chieftancy in Gabù: The meaning of Borders in "traditional" rule*](#)
3. Ana Elisa Cascão (King's College of London – CEAUP, Portugal), [*Sharing land and water resources across borders – the case-study of Gambella region, Western Ethiopia.*](#)
4. Giulia Casentini (University of Siena), [*Changing identities and conflicts for citizenship rights in a trans-border community. The case of Konkombas \(Ghana/Togo\).*](#)
5. Riccardo Ciavolella, (University of Milan, Bicocca – EHESS, Paris), [*Borders and Margins. Fulani Refugees/Returnees and Governance discourses on the Mauritania/Mali border \(Karakoro region\)*](#)
6. Setri Dzivenu (University of Edinburgh), [*The Impact and Implication of Cross-border Migrations: The Case of the Fulbe Pastoralist in West Africa.*](#)
7. Giulia Ferrato, (University of Naples, L'Orientale), [*Border to Border. The shifting identities of Somali migrants in transit to South Africa.*](#)
8. Joel Glasman (University of Leipzig), [*The Impossible Police: Colonial Space, Repression and Bureaucratization of the State in French Togo \(1930s-1950s\).*](#)
9. Oumarou Hamani (EHESS – Marseille), [*"L'informel" comme mode de régulation de la justice au Niger*](#)
10. Rosemary Jaji (University of Bayreuth, Germany), [*Encounter on the Border: Somali Asylum Seekers and Refoulement at the Somalia-Kenya Border*](#)
11. Gillian Mathys (University of Gent, Belgium), [*The colonial state, élite and migrants: Triangular relations in a borderlands region \(Rwanda/Congo\) 1920- 1960.*](#)
12. Jenny Mbaye (London School of Economics), [*West African Hip Hop: A Transnational Social Movement*](#)
13. Robert Mc Kenzie (School of Oriental and African Studies, London), [*The Disease of Traveling: African Migration to Cairo and Beyond*](#)

14. Yasin Mohammed Ruffo (University of Addis Ababa), [*Border, Border-Crossing: the Case of Internal and External Migrants to and out of Illubabor, 1904-1936*](#)
15. Samuel Negash Yemane (University of Addis Ababa), [*Trans-boundary Movements and Conflicts along the Ethio-Somalia Border*](#)
16. Lotte Pelckmans (African Studies Centre Leiden), [*Expectations of Borders and Border crossings.*](#)
17. Kristok Titeca (University of Antwerp), [*Cross-border Contraband Trade between North-Western Uganda, Southern Sudan and Eastern Congo.*](#)
18. Emilie Venables (University of Edinburgh), [*"Dreams of Escape": Senegalese Narratives of Migration.*](#)

Abstract. *Networks and Rhythms of Movements and Settlement on the Zimbabwe-South African Border.*

The Zimbabwe-South African border draws widespread attention from international media. Reports focus on desperate Zimbabweans' hopes for economic opportunities in South Africa. The southward "flood" of Zimbabweans causes South African alarm. The state is unable to check migration.

Such attention sees the border area one-dimensionally: a remote area where "border jumpers" cut the fence and run through game-farm bush. I propose to add depth to this picture, using data from fieldwork (November 2006–April 2008) on a South African citrus farm next to the border fence on the Limpopo River.

Englund (2002)¹ reminds us of the 'highly variable experiences of displacement under seemingly homogenous conditions', highlighting the contingency of border dynamics. I investigate this in two ways: how networks around the border shape it by linking it spatially to other places; and how coexisting rhythms of movement and settlement along the border shape it temporally.

The farm and surrounding area illustrate especially well these contrasting networks and rhythms of border movement and settlement. Almost all farm inhabitants hail from elsewhere and are embedded in networks into South Africa and Zimbabwe, yet there is a stable population built around work. The farm population is an intersection of networks, journeys and hopes for futures elsewhere. The permanence of farm residents varies widely, raising questions about the kind of community this is. Methodological questions follow. How can we analyse cross-border networks where there is little opportunity to follow the networks ourselves? Limited state attention to the border area is revealing, but there is consequently a dearth of statistical or census data. Throughout the paper, I engage with and suggest strategies for these challenges, characteristic of border research.

The farm owners have farmed in several countries; they are now developing land elsewhere in South Africa and Mozambique, mitigating risks of farming during land reform. Like many Limpopo River intensive crop farmers, they came from Zimbabwe in the 1980s to an otherwise South African cattle/game area. For them, the border represents sources of labour and intense police and army attention.

These border farms have created permanent-worker populations, generally Zimbabwean. Many live nearby, negotiating with border garrisons to cross regularly. Others hail from further afield and visit home rarely. Many have relatives in South Africa on nearby farms or in cities. During harvesting, Zimbabweans flock to the farm for work. Some are from border areas. Others head south and hear of possible work or stumble across the farm and try their luck. Many intend to use the money to pay for transport to big cities, where some have relatives. This variation poses particular methodological challenges. Surveys are essential for understanding characteristics of transitory populations. I set this data against longer-term participant observation, interviews and textual research.

For people in whose everyday lives the border is a central consideration, what other places are significantly connected to this region, and how? There is enormous variation in how permanently Zimbabwean migrants settle: one night stopovers; short seasonal work-stints to pay transport to Johannesburg; yearly seasonal work rhythms; permanent work and settlement. These scales and

¹ Englund, H. 2002. *From War To Peace On The Mozambique Malawi Borderland*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

rhythms offer theoretical and methodological lenses through which to understand the border region itself.

[top of document](#)

Anne-Kristin Borszik, University of Bayreuth. anne-kristin.borszik@gmx.net

Abstract. *Chieftancy in Gabú: The meaning of Borders in “traditional” rule.*

There is ‘tradition’ in Gabú². Political and economic conflicts stemming from a bygone past and believed to be overcome by rather optimistic politicians and development experts, continue to be handed down from one generation to the next, thus shaping present political and social life. Nevertheless, and thus bringing in a contrasting concept of ‘tradition’, I suggest that the chiefs mainly draw on ‘tradition’ as a means to an end: ‘tradition’ as (1) equivalent to the supernatural and as (2) historicity is instrumentally employed for consolidating political positions. In this paper I will explore the role borders play in the negotiation of ‘tradition’.

Residents and foreigners

As the most Eastern region of the country, Gabú borders on Guinea-Bissau’s neighbours Senegal and Guinea-Conakry. The political unit of parts of these countries dates from the Mandingo kingdom of Kaabu, existent from the 13th century until the battle of Kansalá on May 13th 1867. The part of the former Kaabu territory corresponding to today’s Gabú region was then governed by local chiefs of the Embaló family – but as client rulers of Futa Djalón who had conquered Kansalá. From 1885 on, the Embaló chiefs became contracted, and thus once again kept from being kings themselves, by Portuguese colonial rule.

The borders of the historical kingdom still interfere with the borders of contemporary nation states (Lopes 1999), as regional trade or the use of trans-national languages illustrate. Regional events like SAFRA (*week of fraternity*) aiming at regional integration and cohesion are organized regularly. Revealingly, the symposium held during the last SAFRA in January 2008 was entitled ‘Illegal Migration’. Problems with illegality, possibly originating in harsh emigration politics, differing economic conditions in the neighbouring countries etc., seem to perpetuate ancient power conflicts: in the Gabú region, most noticeable social tensions are those between the *Fulas di Gabú*, self-proclaimed ancestral – even though not the first – inhabitants of Gabú’s centre, and unwelcome migrants from Guinea-Conakry (*Futa-Fulas di La Guinée*). *Futa-Fulas*, descendants of the conquerors of Kansalá in 1867, still remind the *Fulas di Gabú* that it was not them, the local population, who had put an end to Mandingo rule in Kaabu, and that they never had experienced political independence (Hawkins 1980). In the local perception, the *Futa-Fulas* still represent a danger to Gabú’s social, political and economic sovereignty that needs to be averted – if necessary by recourse on ‘tradition’ (1).

² Gabú, one of Guinea-Bissau’s seven regions, comprises 185.000 inhabitants and 13 *regulados* (chieftaincies). Saico Embaló, descendant of the first *régulos* in the region at the end of the 19th century, is *régulo central* (head chief) of the Gabú region. His *regulado* Tumana a Cima also covers the town of Gabú with its 30.000 inhabitants.

City dwellers and villagers

Another, now 'invisible' border is likewise historically founded. The Gabú region, in pre-colonial times as part of Kaabu in all respects separated from the politically rather fragmented coastal region of contemporary Guinea-Bissau was subdued by the Portuguese, who had discovered the coast of 'Guinea' in 1446, only at the end of the 19th century. This border between the coastal and the interior recurred after independence with the 'trench' between Bissau's Central Society and the Agrarian Society (Schiefer 2002). In present Gabú, this 'trench' has many faces: a general ambiguous attitude towards politics in Bissau, imitation of state political strategies by non-state political actors, village chiefs' and chiefs' complaints about poor-quality state politics compared to colonial rule, chiefs' criticism at politicians' lacking consciousness of 'tradition' and their cliquishness with exactly those state politicians while eyeing potential resources.

Régulos in a tight spot

Saico Embaló, the *régulo central*, transgresses both historically originated barriers for reasons that seem to be symptomatic for precarious contemporary chieftaincy in Gabú.

The 'invisible' border between the Central and Agrarian Society vanishes as the *régulo* pursues the urban habit acquired during decades of public service in the capital and else-where. With his biographical background – though untypical and hardly desirable for a *régulo* – and occasional recourse to 'tradition' (his supernatural power and long lasting family history), he grows into a rather respected and feared ruler. Even though he agrees with the local population in allocating *Futa-Fulas* at a marginal position in Gabú, his institutional vulnerability resulting in a precarious economical situation forces him to transgress an ethical barrier: to receive *Futa-Fulas* – mainly illegal migrants without valid documents in conflict or seeking advice – and, as 'tradition' as historicity dictates that the chief as dispute settler is rewarded, to illicitly accept their bribes.

Thus, the chief manipulates 'tradition' for pursuing (personal) political and economic aspirations and becomes a hybrid figure in-between state and non-state political rule.

Bibliography

Hawkins, Joye Bowman (1980): Conflict, Interaction, and Change in Guinea-Bissau. Fulbe expansion and its impact, 1850-1900. Los Angeles: University of California (PhD).

Lopes, Carlos (1999): Kaabunké: espaço, território e poder na Guiné-Bissau, Gâmbia e Casamance pré-colonial. Lisboa: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses.

Schiefer, Ulrich (2002): Von allen guten Geistern verlassen? Guinea-Bissau: Entwicklungspolitik und der Zusammenbruch afrikanischer Gesellschaften. Hamburger Beiträge zur Afrika-Kunde, Bd. 70. Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *Sharing land and water resources across borders – the case-study of Gambella region, Western Ethiopia.*

The aim of this proposal is to analyse contemporary crisscrossing borderland issues in Gambella, a region located in the Western boundary of Ethiopia with Sudan. The focus will be mainly in transboundary land and water issues. Gambella is a water-abundant region, home of farmers and pastoralist communities that have been moving throughout history between Ethiopian and Sudanese territories. The rivers Baro and Akobo have origins in Ethiopia, cross the administrative political borders and join in the southern Sudanese territory becoming the Sobat River, which will later join the Nile River. The land of the region is extremely fertile and it is in continuum with the swamps of the *Sudd* region of Sudan. Water and land resources have a strong transboundary character in this region.

Gambella is an example of a complex environmental ecosystem that has been shared historically by the indigenous populations, such as the Anuak (sedentary communities) and the Nuer (nomadic communities), among others. Patterns of cooperation, but also of conflict, have marked the relations between the diverse groups. The race for resources (e.g. gold, ivory, slaves) in the region has roots in the colonial era, when the English administration and the Ethiopian Empire competed for the political control of the region. However, the competition for land and water resources became acute during the 1980s when a large number of outsider populations arrived to the region. Newcomers came from the two sides of the administrative borders. On one hand, populations arrived from the Ethiopian highlands in result of the resettlement policies pursued by the central government of Addis Ababa. On the other hand, civil populations, refugees and military contingents arrived from Southern Sudan in result of the resume of the civil war in Sudan, resulting on spill over effects in the Ethiopian side. These environmental, social, economic and political pressures have transformed the Gambella region in a prone-conflict area. The internal and regional dynamics have concomitantly affected the political relations between the diverse groups. Currently, the relationship between the Gambella region and the federal government of Ethiopia put in evidence an uneasy complex political puzzle. Furthermore, the unfinished peace process in Southern Sudan represents additional political stress for the region.

This research is the result of the literature review available about the region and a fieldwork visit to Gambella region in January 2008. The preliminary conclusion is that the lines of conflict(s) are blurred and difficult to grasp, and research may eventually be a useful tool to prevent further conflicts. The political manipulation of identities, already pointed out by several observers, can turn the problem more sensitive in the near future. The parallelism between Gambella (Ethiopia) and Darfur (Western Sudan) situations might be an overstatement, but brings to mind that environmental-based conflicts can easily turn into major political and armed conflicts.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *Changing Identities and conflicts for citizenship rights in a trans-border community. The case of Konkombas (Ghana/Togo)*

I would like to analyse the socio-political transition of a trans-border group, the Konkomba people, focusing on the relationship between the nation states and the local systems of power. The Konkombas are settled along the northern part of the Ghana/Togo border and they are an example of what social anthropology have called “acephalous groups”, but they also represent a good example of what a minority group in transition could be, owing to their struggle to emancipate themselves by changing their socio-political status.

In the Northern Region of Ghana their fight has become evident to the public opinion after the explosion of the 1994 civil war, the last and bloodiest episode in a long and never resolved dispute of land ownership. From the 1980s, in fact, numerous conflicts have taken place between the “acephalous” groups, in particular the Konkomba people, and the other politically organised population based on chieftaincy institution, Nanumba and Dagomba.

My analysis highlights the problem of a postcolonial state where, despite current upholding of participative democracy, access to resources and political representation is still deeply tied to the *chiefly/non-chiefly* opposition as it was during the colonial era. In this landscape the construction of identities becomes a political tool in order to establish who should be included or excluded from citizenship rights, demonstrating that the concept of ethnicity isn't fixed nor rooted in a timeless past. The various ethnic groups, in fact, build their own specifications in relations to “others”, in a continuous dialectic with their neighbours and the various political interlocutors.

It is interesting to note that the issues around ethnicity, belonging and autochthony assume a particular character in this border zone: in Ghana the Konkombas are said to be “non-indigenous” coming from Togo, and in Togo several authors affirm that they are believed to come “originally” from Ghana.

African frontiers are far from being geographically fixed or socially and politically stable. This is true especially in regards to the Ghana/Togo border, that is itself mobile. Before the World War I, in fact, the eastern part of the modern Ghana and the western part of Togo were a single political unit called German Togoland. At the end of the war this German protectorate was divided in two separate areas: a British mandate and a French one.

So, what is the current perception of this shifting border? What is the role of the border in building ethnic identities and in defining and re-defining the access to citizenship rights? Which are the answers to the needs of a minority group in transition held by Ghana and Togo since their different colonial heritage (British in Ghana, French in Togo) and their current political systems?

I propose to analyse these questions through a fieldwork research (April – May 2008; September – December 2008; April – July 2009) focusing on the district of Yendi, Saboba (Ghana) and Guerin Kouka (Togo) along the Ghana/Togo border, in the Oti river region where Konkombas are allocated.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *Borders and Margins. Fulani Refugees/Returnees and Governance discourses on the Mauritania/Mali border (Karakoro region)*

This paper analyses the political and social dynamics relating to the Mauritania/Mali border of the Karakoro region from two different points of view. First of all, it describes the border from the perspective of pastoral Mauritanian Fulani, who escaped “ethnic” persecutions in 1989 and became “refugees” in Mali. Eventually, some of these Fulani were repatriated to Mauritania. Some others are waiting to come back. In the eyes of returnees and refugees, the border represents a serious obstacle both to the integration of the Fulani to the Mauritanian state and to the repatriation of those who are stuck in Mali. Secondly, the paper analyses the actions and the discourses of “governance” promoted by a number of institutions that are currently in the Karakoro region, namely the HCR (that sustains the refugees’ camps and/or the process of repatriation), the NGOs’ (that support decentralisation and local development and in particular, the GRDR for which I worked as an associate researcher) and the international organisations engaged in the establishment of a “transboundary region” (the Karakoro basin project being part of the *West African Borders Integration Initiative* funded by the ECOWAS and the EU). The efforts at integrating a border region “from below” are at variance with the concrete needs of some “frontier groups” such as refugees and pastoral Fulani in general. Methodologically, this paper questions the difficulties and limits of carrying out a research about people, as the Fulani, who are beyond the scope of action of governance institutions in their projects of border region integration.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *The Impact and Implication of Cross-border Migrations: The Case of the Fulbe Pastoralist in West Africa.*

The Fulbe, one of West Africa’s major ethnic groups, live in areas corresponding mainly to the Sahel. The Sahel region, from where the majority of the Fulbe people hail, has been described by scholars as one of the most unstable and harsh environments in the world. And as a result of the uncertain climatic conditions coupled with their age-old vocation as cattle herders, the Fulbe have earned for themselves a transhumant lifestyle. Since the twentieth century, the Fulbe pastoralists have used migration into other parts of the West African sub-region as a main strategy for securing their traditional vocation and livelihood. The Fulbe usually settle among populations where rainfall patterns are favourable for herding as well as for other economic activities. Fulbe pastoralists movements, often transcending international borders in West Africa, have not only contributed immensely to the economies of their hosts but have also resulted in scores of conflicts with their host communities. Host communities have benefited tremendously from the Fulbe presence and yet have accused the Fulbe for creating a situation leading to increased competition over scarce natural resources thereby triggering conflicts and violence.

To appreciate this complexity in Fulbe-host relations, this paper would examine the Fulbe and host logics. It conducts this exercise by looking at the extent to which Fulbe pastoral logic squares up to that of the host and the ways in which this relationship become conflictual and violent. More

importantly, the paper analyses the relevance of Fulbe presence in these predominately farming communities and their impact on development. Here, the paper will argue that, the major interaction between both groups has been on the economic front with greater benefits for the host communities in particular and receiving States in general.

[top of document](#)

Giulia Ferrato, University of Naples "L'Orientale" . giulia.ferrato@gmail.com

Abstract. *Border to Border. The shifting identities of Somali migrants in transit to South Africa.*

The political and economic liberalization - occurred after the advent of democratic rule in 1994 - has deeply changed the South African social and demographic landscape, reconfiguring historical patterns of migration and immigration and reshaping spaces (e.g. borders, the inner-city, townships, informal settlements). Although South Africa has become a new destination for undocumented migrants and refugees from the rest of Africa (Somalia, DRC, Nigeria, Angola) since 1990, it was only since 1996 that the first xenophobic attack in Port Elizabeth made Somali migrants visible as *makwerekwere* (foreigners) and traders to South African society and posed the unresolved problem of refugees to South African government. As Crush and McDonald and more recently Landau suggested, on one hand the complicate interactions between citizens and non citizens and, on the other, the Somali orientation "to sites beyond South African's borders" have contributed to shape those "extraterritorial spaces that are in but not of South Africa", where Somali and other migrants live (Crush and McDonald, 2000; Landau, 2006).

The paper wishes to explore Somali migrancy towards South Africa during the Nineties. What are the reasons that may explain such a direction? Are these south to south migrations part of the same complex and integrated system of exchange which regulates and consolidates Somali migratory networks to the West?

Who are these migrants? What is their economic potential? Which is their social status?

By piecing together the overlapping patterns of Somali migrations to the South and by comparing the latter with traditional patterns of trans-regional migrations (almost all from Zimbabwe and Mozambique), the paper will attempt to investigate the dynamics of Somali migratory routes, focusing on the transit areas (borders, border towns, refugee camps) and on some of the most relevant passages through which Somali migrants have found their gateway to South Africa. Do Somali migrants aspire to permanent settlement or South Africa remains for them a site of temporary residence, "a site of trade and transit, a border of not belonging" between home and a place of an undefined future?

The paper questions the relationship between migrancy, borders and identities. African border regions seem increasingly to turn into crucial sites of political enforcement, wealth accumulation and identity formation. Somali have cross-bordered, migrated and dispersed for centuries. Nevertheless, as many authors have argued, it was especially after the outbreak of civil war in 1988 and later after the state collapse in 1991 that displacement, migration, refugeesm and diaspora have globally come to signify the "connectedness" of many Somali across the world. Although, as Landau has argued, "permanent dislocation generates its own deficit of belonging", the socioeconomic networks which follow the routes of Somali migrants, seem to reconstitute a distinct collective identity to counterbalance the dispersal of a fragmented national identity and perhaps the loss of a homeland to which it seems at present impossible to return.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *The Impossible Police: Colonial Space, Repression and Bureaucratization of the State in French Togo (1930s-1950s).*

This paper aims to explore the means of maintenance of law and order in Colonial Togo. It focuses especially on the way in which spatial and social transformations led to an adaptation of the politics and practices of colonial repression and to a bureaucratization of the colonial state. Until the early 1930s, the maintenance of law and order relied mainly on small troops of African soldiers who were recruited in peasant communities of the northern and rural parts of the country. These men were briefly trained, given a weapon and placed under the command of European officers. In January 1933, following the impact of the world economic crisis, a social uprising in Lomé challenged the colonial order in the capital. The French administrators, who had been surprised by the revolt, finally understood that the continuing demographic growth, migrations and urbanization had invalidated their traditional way of maintaining order. As a result, they reorganized the colonial police by creating an intelligence service of counterinsurgency relying on a new generation of African policemen.

These men were recruited in the southern bourgeoisie; all of them were well educated and trained in governmental schools in Lomé, Dakar and sometimes even in France. They constituted the first generation of African inspectors and commissars of French West Africa and would run the colonial police under French control until the independence in 1960. Drawing on the weberian thesis of bureaucratization, this paper will argue that this “modernization” of the colonial repressive institutions finally failed, because a real modernization would have required a prior “depoliticization” of the police. In fact, the colonial situation made this evolution impractical. As Max Weber showed, modern concepts of policing and social control in European countries relied more on information and identification than on armed violence and terror. In order to be efficient, the police of a bureaucratic state must obtain a certain autonomy vis-à-vis the political decision makers. Yet, as the 1933 crisis showed, the French administrators were not able to build such a modern police without a massive Africanization of the structures of command. But at the same time, the French administration was not ready to give their African servants the autonomy they needed to run the repressive institution effectively. Focussing on the example of this new generation of African policemen and the way they were able to use the colonial instruments to serve their own purposes, I will argue that the “modernization” of the police led the French colonials into a dilemma that they were unable to solve. This dilemma finally contributed to the process of decolonization.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *“L’informel” comme mode de régulation de la justice au Niger*

L’apparition de règles informelles dans le fonctionnement des services publics est interprétée en termes de « dysfonctionnement ». Pourtant, la réalité empirique de la délivrance de biens et services publics révèle qu’une part importante de ces services assurent leurs mission grâce à une combinaison du formel et de l’informel.

Dans la justice, cette combinaison est rendue visible à travers les relations de service entre les magistrats et les autres corps intervenant dans le cours des procédures judiciaires. A partir de résultats tirés d'une enquête dans un tribunal de grande instance du Niger, cet article expose les processus par lesquels ces acteurs mobilisent des règles non officielles pour maintenir le service de la justice en état de fonctionnement.

[top of document](#)

Rosemary Jaji, University of Bayreuth. fmary11@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract. *Encounter on the Border: Somali Asylum Seekers and Refoulement at the Somalia-Kenya Border*

Studies on stringent border policing as a response to influxes of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers have largely focused on Europe and western countries in general. Yet, movements of people particularly as asylum seekers are not only from the South to the North but also between countries of the South. Little attention has been paid to how developing countries in refugee producing regions react to refugee influxes at their borders thus giving the impression that movement of people in the South is only problematic when it is Northern-bound. This paper presents empirical data on South-South border crossing by focusing on Kenya's reaction to a Somali refugee influx at the Kenya-Somalia border. The paper situates the encounter in the contemporary processes of globalisation and argues that these processes have discernible implications for refugees not only at the global level but also at regional level in Africa. The politics of border crossing in Africa can be said to be a micro reflection of the dynamics at the macro/global level. Regional politics on border crossing in Africa challenges the perception and treatment of Africa outside the continent as an undifferentiated place presumed to be as monolithic in socio-economic and political terms as it is in physical/geographical terms. Movement across the border in contemporary Africa is a far cry from the notions of hospitality and African "brotherhood" that have for long been associated with the continent's peoples. In particular, people who move as forced migrants or refugees find themselves entangled in political process of globalisation upon which they hardly have influence. Refugee movement across borders in Africa provides an arena in which African states interpret and relate with forced migration. The encounter between the Kenyan government and Somali asylum seekers in January 2007 provided an arena in which the globalisation of local conflicts and the localisation of global conflicts can be observed. In this regard, refugee hosting in Kenya goes beyond humanitarianism and providing sanctuary to populations displaced out of their countries. It is also political in that it is not the needs of asylum seekers *per se* that determine who is allowed entry into Kenya but the regional political configuration whose function can best be understood when located in the global political order and its accompanying discourse of transnationalisation of terror and insecurity as revealed by the declaration of a "global war on terror". In this context, it is not the reasons for flight across the border that determine reception at the border post but perception of the fleeing population on the other side of the border. The flight of Somalis from their country in January 2007 was not viewed as a case of people fleeing violence as it was as a case of "terrorists" bringing insecurity to Kenya or transnationalising their home country conflict.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *The colonial state, élite and migrants: triangular relations in a borderlands region (Rwanda/Congo) 1920- 1960.*

Recent events at the Rwandese border with eastern Congo have illustrated that borders are not merely lines on a map, but that they are regularly contested. Refugee camps for Rwandans have been set up in Kivu and members of the Rwandese army (and troops of other nationalities) stroll around in eastern Congo. Rebel leaders such as Laurent Nkunda are allegedly supported by the Rwandese governments. Many other examples illustrate the same point.

For some scholars this perceived absence of borders is a side effect of 'weak' African states: African governments are not able to exert complete control over their periphery and are loosing control over their territory delineated by colonial and artificial boundaries. I believe that such conceptions of boundaries –at least in the case of the border discussed here- only partially explain these events. Historical examples of the Rwandan/Congolese frontier show 1) that border-attitudes of different groups are grounded on an older stratum of mobility patterns and that people took advantage of the existence of different spheres before 'actual' borders sprung to life (cf. concept of Kopytoff's 'frontier'), 2) borders have been contested and maintained simultaneously by different groups, or even within groups throughout the *longue durée*, this is by no means a new phenomenon. As such, borders are not merely geographical entities, but political, social, economic and cultural constructs, as even the contemporary events show.

The case of my PhD-research focuses on the colonial period. The migration of 'Banyarwanda' towards the Kivu was facilitated through the 'Banyarwandan' transplantation and settlement scheme, designed by the Belgian colonial government in the 1930s, inspired by large movements of African labour in the region towards e.g. Uganda, and aimed at solving the labour shortage which hindered the development of European plantation economy in Kivu.

In the scope of this migration, Africans were incorporated and subordinated in the colonial/settler political economy by planned, or *forced* migration through this scheme.

However, African peasants also had their stakes in migration, often, but not always, conflicting with those of the colonial state and elites. Therefore the colonial state was neither able to claim complete control over migratory flows in the region nor could it force every migrant into this form of waged labour. The thesis is advanced that the colonial state was unable to restructure migratory flows completely simply because they were part of multi-layered triangular power-relationships³ between the colonial state, African elites and African peasants. Each of the protagonists in this triangular relationship had their own stakes in migration and in creating, safeguarding or challenging borders.

Research results indicate that colonial migration flows were grafted upon a stratum of pre-colonial migratory patterns. Some actors dealt with borders as if they were inexistent and continued precolonial patterns of mobility, others straddled different territories created by this partition and

³ The term 'triangular relations' is derived from Michiel Baud and William Van Schendel, "Towards a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (1997). Baud en Van Schendel do not link this term to colonial states or Africa specifically, but I do think this concept can be very useful and elucidating because it integrates ideas about African peasants' agency in an interconnected and sometimes contradictory relationship to that of elites and the colonial state –without neglecting the differences within these groups. Similar ideas can also be found in, amongst others, Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994.), Catharine Newbury and David Newbury, "Bringing the Peasant Back: Agrarian Themes in the Construction and Corrosion of Statist Historiography in Rwanda," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000).

benefited from social, economic and political opportunities this partition brought about. The colonial state and African elites had their prerogatives depending on the context for stressing either the permeability or rigid nature of boundaries.

Those research results, integrated and completed with new results from archival research in the coming months, will be presented at the Aegis-summer school. Having developed this concept of 'triangular power relations', I would like to test its feasibility for a wider audience of peer researchers and learn from their comments and insights.

References

Baud, Michiel, and William Van Schendel. "Towards a Comparative History of Borderlands." *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (1997): 211-42.

Cooper, Frederick. "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History." *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1516-45.

Newbury, Catharine, and David Newbury. "Bringing the Peasant Back: Agrarian Themes in the Construction and Corrosion of Statist Historiography in Rwanda." *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000): pp. 832-77.

[top of document](#)

Jenny Mbaye, London School of Economics. j.f.mbaye@lse.ac.uk

Abstract. *West African Hip Hop: A Transnational Social Movement*

In West Africa, hip hop music has become a borderlands, a space where translocal, transcultural and panafricanist aspirations can be nurtured and articulated. Indeed, in the last 20 years, this regionally spread musical genre has become for young generations a way of asserting the rights for alternative identities to play a role in the social city life. Rebelling against logics of exclusion based on tradition which marginalised them both from the public and the private sphere, West African youth inscribe their individual and collective positionalities through hip hop aesthetic expression. Pointing to the need to address local aspirations of urban citizens – sometimes articulated through their vocal music – as well as local mobilisation through participation in social and economic activities such as music, West African hip hop actors do so from a translocal, transcultural and panafricanist perspective.

AURA (Artistes Unis pour le Rap Africain) or United Artists for African Rap, a network of young West African rap artists who have united together in order to promote children's rights in Africa, recalls how hip hop music can become this form through which awareness is raised. AURA has a clear agenda: a United Africa which would require citizens to become actively involved in initiating changes and in holding governments accountable for their actions. As such, the 17 members of AURA, originating from 10 different West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo) believe that, only in engaging Africa's currently largely marginalised youth population, it is possible to foster the continent's integrated development. Among them, Awadi (Senegal) and Smokey (Burkina Faso), two major figures of West African Francophone Hip Hop, are active and interactive artists as well as entrepreneurs in the music industry. The two artists who both are pioneer cultural entrepreneurs in creating their own label and recording studio dedicated to the hip hop generation – studio Sankara for Awadi and studio Abazon for Smokey – use this musical genre to voice out their realities but also to ground their macro-political aspirations.

AURA recalls, through the musical form advocated by its members, how multiple spatialities of citizenship interact inside the urban democracy: they are 'insurgent', 'disruptive' and cross cultural, political as well as ideological borders. The hip hop aesthetics is indeed transcultural as each musical emergence of Hip Hop is articulated and translated within its own circumstantial context. It is also translocal as an urban phenomenon linking, throughout the world, subjectivities which are marginalised inside their respective 'urban fabric'. Through their translocal discursive practices, those alternative urbanites re-inscribe a differential 'potentiality' inside the urban sphere of politics: their urban politics are, in other words, part of larger urban politics. This aesthetical expression of citizenship is finally panafricanist as it deploys an ideological project based on a continental vision of the youngest generations and their future. Beyond the ideal of negritude or the nationalistic concept, hip hop actors think and act across borders in order to bring about positive and sustainable changes.

[top of document](#)

Robert McKenzie, School of Oriental and African Studies (London). bmck15@gmail.com

Abstract. *The Disease of Traveling: African Migration to Cairo and Beyond*

Based on eighteen months of ethnographic research, my dissertation explores the lives of sub-Saharan refugees in Cairo, Egypt—one of the world's largest urban centers for refugees. Through the narratives of refugees, my work outlines and critically examines the inter-connectedness of migration due to war and extreme poverty, the refugee business of resettlement and local integration, and it sheds light on the social world of urban refugees.

At the AEGIS Cortona Summer School, I would like to present the core chapter of my PhD dissertation—titled *The Disease of Traveling: African Migration to Cairo and Beyond*—which challenges preconceived assumptions about refugees, and raises important questions about the distinction between the categories of refugee and migrant. Through an ethnographic lens that examines refugeeness in an urban context, this chapter explores the interconnectedness of war, poverty, and migration, while highlighting the critical role of globalization in the movements of peoples (whether they be refugees or migrants).

The title for this paper comes from a discussion with a Dinka man in Cairo, Egypt. "We have a disease, it's a serious disease, it's a disease of traveling" a Dinka community leader told me. "I think you mean desire, that is 'you have a desire to travel'," I replied. "No. I mean we have a disease of traveling, it's a disease like AIDS [sic], it spreads among us back home, makes us want to travel, and it's killing us slowly because once we get here [Cairo] no one wants to return home. We just stay here until we can travel to America but not everyone will get that chance," he corrected me.

There is little doubt that this 'disease of traveling' is a direct result of suffering from war in one's country of origin and the extreme poverty that follows as a result. The ideas that people construct about what awaits them in Cairo and beyond are quite curious, however, especially since so much of the information that they receive from family and friends, who have made it to Cairo and eventually to the West, directly contradicts these very ideas and dreams. My paper will explore and analyze these complexities.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *Border, Border-Crossing: the Case of Internal and External Migrants to and out of Illubabor, 1904-1936*

The State of Illubabor was one of the independent western Oromo states until the conquest, subjugation and annexation of Emperor Menilek II (1889-1930), the builder of modern Ethiopian Empire. The state of Illubabor was conquered and occupied by *Ras Tassama* in 1889. The conquering force after destroying Illubabor's frontier state introduced a new political, economic and social system to the area. An elaborate military and political structure was superimposed which was maintained by settler soldiers (*Naftxaanyaa*). The conquest by breaking the traditional border of Illubabor created an open space for internal migrants to move from the northern Ethiopia and settle in the newly conquered Illubabor. Internal migrants were the Shewan Amharas.

The first boundary agreement between British-Sudan and Ethiopia was reached in 1902. The opening of Gambella inland port in 1904 gave an impetus to the emergence of small interior markets of Bure, Gore, Mattu, Noppa and others in Illubabor. It was from the year 1904 that a number of external migrants moved into Illubabor crossing the boundary between Ethiopia and British-Sudan border. These external migrants were Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and others. They were notable skilled labourers and entrepreneurs as well as merchants who eventually built their own shops, houses and raised other properties. They also engaged in import and export trade, opening trade firms in Gore and other places. Thus these external migrants actively involved in the cross border trade between Ethiopia and British-Sudan.

External migrants allied with the internal migrants and opened new power space with them. With the Italian occupation of Illubabor in 1936 the internal as well as external migrants were forced to move out of Illubabor. The paper attempts to investigate the role played by Amhara migrants in the conquest and consolidation of the frontier state of Illubabor. It analyses the political, economic and social impact of the conquest on the indigenous Oromo society of Illubabor.

It also examines how external migrants came to Illubabor, allied with internal migrants and opened new trading power space for them. The paper discusses external migrants relationship with local needs the smuggling of goods and impositions of the central government in terms of taxation and tribute. It analyses the role of internal and external migration in the making of the new state borders.

[top of document](#)

Abstract. *Trans-boundary Movements and Conflicts along the Ethio-Somalia Border*

The Ethio-Somalia boundary was arbitrarily delimited during the colonial era when Britain in 1898 and Italy in 1908 signed agreements with Ethiopia. Demarcation of the border with the British Protectorate of Somaliland was completed in 1934, while that of the Italian-Somaliland was abandoned due to differences over the exact line. The ambiguity of this undemarcated border precipitated the Wel Wel Incident of 1934 and served as a pretext for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936. These about 1500 km borderlines cut across some Somali clans and have far-reaching social, political and economic impacts on the Ethio-Somalia relations.

Almost half the population of the Protectorate (Ishaq clans) and some from Italian Somaliland depended for centuries on the Haud pasture in the Ogaden region and used to migrate seasonally to Ethiopia and stay from four to six months. The 1898 agreement provided these clans unrestricted access to Ethiopia. From the 1950's, however, members of the Ishaq clans began to stay in the Ogaden throughout the year and some even adopted cultivation. The subsequent growth of settlement and enclosure affected the clan composition as well as the ecological balance and intensified the traditional Ishaq-Ogaden resource conflict.

After independence in 1960 the Republic of Somalia rejected the colonial border, and with claim of 'Greater Somalia' organized and armed the Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF). Crossing the border the Front initiated a guerrilla warfare that led to the 1964 and the 1977-78 Ethio-Somali Wars. These wars forced nearly a million Ogadenis to cross the border and seek refuge in Somalia. Conversely, Ethiopia exploited the animosity between northern and southern Somalia and provided military bases along the border for armed political groups fighting to topple the regime of Siad Barre. The trans-border incursion of particularly the Somali National Movement became effective and forced Barre to flee Somalia in 1991. This conflict and the subsequent factional wars compelled about 600,000 Somalis to cross the border to Ethiopia as refugees.

Apart from the search for pasture and water the Somalis also cross the border for contraband trade. The illicit trade took mainly livestock from the Ogaden and smuggled in turn manufactured goods and electronic devices into Ethiopia. Following the 1991 state collapse, Somalia became in effect a 'duty-free' port for this illegal trade. Economic orientation of the Ogaden to Somalia across the border in a way hampered integration of the region into Ethiopia's fold. To curb the situation the Ethiopian Government has in recent years opened a large-scale operation against the cross-border trade. Furthermore, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in alliance with al-Ittihad al-Islamiyya and from bases in Somalia has intensified from 1995 attacks on the Ogaden region. It is partly to neutralize the ONLF that Ethiopia has deployed its troops across the border to oust the Union of Islamic Courts and install the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu. This paper will analyze the lengthy Ethio-Somalia borderline from historical perspective and clarify the status of the only undemarcated border of Ethiopia. The complications created by legal trans-boundary movements and the impact of illegal cross-border trade will also be exhaustively outlined. Furthermore, the issue and repercussion of cross-border military conflicts involving armed political groups and state-sponsored incursions will be discussed in some detail.

[top of document](#)

Lotte Pelckmans, African Studies Centre Leiden. lpelckmans@ascliden.nl

Abstract. *Expectations of borders and border crossings.*

Geographical borders are today hotly debated in relation to migration and policy. There is an apparent contradiction between the pervasive "practice" of crossing borders and the "norm" of borders as protecting national boundaries. While borders seem to be permeable by definition, this is exactly their quality that is most problematized. This tension seems to be inherent to all borders; their crossing makes them visible and in the end reinforces or even defines them.

This paper, based on a chapter of my PhD thesis (work in progress), describes how Malian Fulbe migrants' choice of destination (usually Bamako, the West African countries of Ivory Coast and Equatorial Guinea, or Paris) is more influenced by the presence of roads, channels of communication and prior social contacts at the chosen destination than by the quality of border

control and the policies applied in the place of destination. Borders, as such, although definitely restraining, do not seem to be an obstacle in the choice of destination.

The physical crossing of borders frequently appears to result in ensuring a distance from social relations and obligations. The urge to migrate can be motivated by an expectation of emancipation and/or of being able to acquire individual autonomy and property. Migrant expectations of border crossings are about escaping claims by kin on their time, activities and property (money). Thus, crossing a border physically creates an additional option for crossing social boundaries. Most migrants are youngsters aiming to escape the authority of the elders and are going in search of money. However, there is yet another social group in Fulbe hierarchy that potentially benefits from migration, namely the Riimaybe or the former Fulbe slaves. Migration for them potentially results in being free of their former masters. The chapter demonstrates how certain people at the lower end of the Fulbe social hierarchy eventually profit from the anonymity that border crossing might assure. Some developed creative strategies to access nobility in other ethnic groups, doing so by literally distancing themselves from the social hierarchies of their ethnic group of origin.

Towards the end of the 19th century, sedentarization and conversion to Islam by Fulbe warlords and the religious elite resulted in new hierarchies and the colonizers reinforced a tripartite structure (i.e. the division between free men, slaves and caste groups) in colonial times. However, economic resources in contemporary Fulbe society are not the sole resource needed for upward social mobility. Social status, descent and social stratification have all remained important in maintaining hierarchy in Fulbe society. This illustrates that, however dynamic identity may be, it is neither infinitely mouldable nor individual. Identity is also ascribed through social power relations. The central question in the thesis is whether and how social hierarchies are maintained and transformed in Fulbe society. I argue that in order to understand current transformations (i.e. the partial emancipation of former slaves) in Fulbe hierarchies, a link should be made with the diverse and dynamic expectations of border crossings for different social status groups.

[top of document](#)

Kristof Titeca, University of Antwerp. kristof.Titeca@ua.ac.be

Abstract. *Cross-border contraband trade between North-Western Uganda, Southern Sudan and Eastern Congo.*

This paper discusses the organisation of the cross-border trade in the West Nile region in North Western Uganda, from which the neighbouring DRC and Sudan are supplied. This cross-border trade is mainly concerned with contraband goods such as fuel and cigarettes (and could be called 'smuggling') and is dominated by three Ugandan businessmen. Based on extensive fieldwork, this paper present unique ethnographic data on the organisation of this contraband trade.

A first key-issue which will be discussed is the 'embeddedness' of these contraband trade networks in state and society. On the one hand, there is a strong complicity of the wider community. Knowledge is a key-issue here: the community are very much aware of different organisational aspects of the cross-border trade (hidden warehouses, smuggling routes, supply times) but do not reveal this knowledge to the responsible agencies: similar to the mafia, the responsible businessmen are seen as 'godfathers' who provide a variety of services to the wider community. On the other hand; different state agencies are actively participating and protecting these contraband trade networks. The paper will describe in detail how this 'cartel' between state officials and the different agents of the contraband traders (at the different sides of the border) functions. This cartel for example prevents new players to enter the cross-border trade: if a new

player brings in contraband goods in the West Nile region, the major traders immediately inform the local state security agencies (revenue authorities, army, police), who confiscate the goods of the new player.

A second key-issue which will be discussed is the hierarchical organisation of the trade. In a simplified manner, the contraband trade networks can be compared with pyramids in which the businessman are at the top; retailers at the bottom and different categories of middlemen in between. Access to information is again a key-issue in this hierarchy: the higher in the trade network, the more information is provided on how to protect the trade activities; for example by being introduced to actors within the state security apparatus. The paper will describe in detail how this hierarchical organisation ('pyramids') functions.

[top of document](#)

Emilie Venables, University of Edinburgh. e.c.venables@sms.ed.ac.uk

Abstract. *"Dreams of Escape": Senegalese Narratives of Migration.*

In discussing the new and creative ways in which young people in the Casamance region of Senegal think and talk about migrating to Europe, I intend to show how important the power of the imaginary has become to narratives of migration. Building upon extended ethnographic research in the town of Ziguinchor and neighbouring Cap Skirring, I analyse the factors drawing people to the urban locus, as well as the ones that propel them to leave.

Ziguinchor is symbolic as a crossroads town attracting migrants from throughout Senegal and from neighbouring West African countries. It is also significant for its proximity to the beach resort of Cap Skirring, which welcomes a large number of European tourists. Many people move to Ziguinchor in search of the prosperous urban dream, and when they do not find it, they turn their sights to Europe. I argue that the harsh realities of the Senegalese capital have already been experienced by many hopeful migrants, thus Europe, not Dakar, becomes a highly coveted *eldorado*.

Daily life is punctuated with discussions about '*la-bas*'; the vagueness of people's ideas of the West, as well as their confidence that they will 'make it', is striking. There is no distinction made between Europe as a continent, France, Italy and Spain as countries or Paris and Madrid as cities. *La-bas* has become a general term for a modern, urban place in which life is believed to be prosperous. Clandestine immigration appears almost jokingly in everyday parlance, and repatriates tell their stories with pride, talking of their readiness to try again, despite knowing the risks involved.

Migration, according to my informants, can be achieved through strengthening existing social networks, as well as building new ones. Befriending and forming relationships with European residents and tourists in Senegal is thus believed to be an essential part of the migration process. Whereas men seek to extend their social networks through making professional contacts with European men and women alike, Senegalese women rely on romantic and sexual relationships with European men. The sense of desperation and desire to migrate is similar amongst men and women, yet there are definite gendered patterns apparent in the way in which it is realised.

This proposal has drawn on some of the main themes surrounding my research: I intend to stress the importance of social networks and 'making contacts' as ways of escaping, as well as the power of the imaginary in narratives of movement. In piecing together the fragmented and disjointed life-stories of my informants, I address the initial attractions of semi-urban Ziguinchor, as well as how it is eventually rejected for dreams of a non-specific *la-bas*.

[top of document](#)