African borderlands are among the continent’s most creative and most rapidly changing social spaces, acting as theaters of identity formation and cultural exchange, of violent conflict and regional integration, of economic growth and sudden stagnation, of state building and state failure. Because their unique position at the margins of social and legal spaces offers more flexibility to social actors, borderlands reflect changes on the national level more quickly and more radically than most inland regions. They thus become hot spots of social activity and, on an academic level, ideal places to study social, political and economic change. The Palgrave Series in African Borderlands Studies is the first series dedicated to the exploration and theoretical interpretation of African borderlands. It contributes to core debates in a number of disciplines—namely political science, geography, economics, anthropology, history, sociology and law—and provides vital insights for practical politics in border-related issues, ranging from migration and regional integration to conflict resolution and peace-building.
The African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE) is an interdisciplinary network of researchers interested in all aspects of international borders and trans-boundary phenomena in Africa. The network held its inaugural meeting in Edinburgh in 2007 and has since grown to over 250 members worldwide. ABORNE's core funding is provided by membership fees and the Research Networking Programme of the European Science Foundation.

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PART 1

Introducing a Borderland Perspective


**CHAPTER 1**

**Introduction: Border, Frontier and the Geography of Rule at the Margins of the State**

*Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers*

Imagine standing somewhere on the Khyber Pass: a rough mountain route harboring the bustling borderline between Afghanistan and Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). In Karkhana bazaar, which straddles the borderline between Afghanistan and Pakistan’s Khyber Agency, tourists and UN agents haggle for cheap alcohol and cannabis resin in the market stalls. Bicycle transporters are carrying boxes of smuggled car parts and electric appliances into Peshawar, meeting their counterparts who are carrying drugs and weapons into the Pakistani FATA. Once in a while a U.S. helicopter hovers overhead, determined to seek and destroy fighting Taliban units, which are constantly crossing the border. Imagine now standing on the border in Goma, the Congolese twin town of Rwandan Gisenyi. On the Petite Barriere ("small checkpoint"), a long line of pedestrians crosses this merged city center like ants on a sugar hill. Women carrying bags of foodstuffs are joined by smugglers transporting minerals from the Congolese mines of North and South Kivu. Their Rwandan counterparts bring petroleum and cement into Congo, along with construction materials and consumer goods from Mombasa and the Far East. Differences in the taxation laws of the two countries lead to widespread smuggling. Some goods are even unofficially reexported into Rwanda to avoid consumer taxes. The military on both sides watches these operations with a lazy eye, taking bribes and occasionally stopping traffic.

Two borders, two similar dynamics. What unites daily border practices in both places are a number of formal and informal checkpoints, which
tentatively divide these expanding borderlands and the actions that define them. For many people in Goma and Peshawar, the border has become a resource rather than an obstacle, providing livelihoods and political status and serving as a sanctuary against mutual incursions. These positive experiences have been reciprocally influenced by decades of outright and proxy warfare, allegations of support for militias and rebel groups and hesitant efforts to reach a political rapprochement. The different meanings these borders historically acquired thus appear related to their different configurations across space, which—as Paolo Novak writes—are determined to a large extent by institutional contingencies, social connectivity and the qualities of territory attached to the borders. This volume makes a first attempt to compare a number of Asian and African conflict formations on the basis of people’s own experiences on territorial borders and the way these experiences affect the making and unmaking of political configurations. By focusing on such routines and daily performances, the contributors to this volume depict borderland dynamics not just as outcomes of diffusing statehood or globalization, but also as actual political units that generate their own actions and outcomes. Particular attention is paid to the explicit trans-boundary character of conflict and peace, which is presented from political, geographical, historical and ethnographic perspectives. An alternative is sought to the still dominant idea of contemporary state formation as a centrally guided, top-down process, which has led to a deep misunderstanding of borderlands as marginal spaces that are either fraught with avoidance, savagery and rebellion—or lingering in dark oblivion.

**Where Does the State End?**

This question, asked by the anthropologist and philosopher Talal Asad, is meant to remind us that the state is never a fixed object. Its boundaries change, as does its internal morphology: the different ways of determining exclusion and inclusion, inside and outside, law and exception. In their volume on the margins of the state, Veena Das and Deborah Poole go a long way in deconstructing the fetishism of this fixed unity of the modern nation-state by identifying the different peripheries in which the state has yet to penetrate. They describe margins as sites where law-making and other state performances are not just evaded, but actively transformed and “colonized” by other more or less organized practices, thus generating important political and economic outcomes that may have a decisive impact on state formation in a broader sense (see also Chapter 8). Rather than focusing on the geography of this encounter, they prefer to metaphorically deconstruct the ways in which this myth of the state as the invisible ghostwriter of our lives is
reproduced through a continuous *unsettling* of rights, which makes political life both unintelligible and unpredictable. Through embedding itself in such unsettling movements, for example, in the domain of citizenship rights or policing, crisis becomes a powerful technology of state government, which means that margins often become central to the daily reality of state rule.⁵

In this volume, we concentrate directly on the *site* of state marginality: on the particular spaces in which state practices and images are copresent with other systems of rule, and the dynamics this produces between the people, objects and ideas circulating in such spaces. These are questions of geography: of borders, borderlands and boundaries, but also of periphery, center and frontier. Indeed, the unsettling and often violent renegotiation of rights and social conditions that characterizes the margins of state rule has to be imagined in specific sites: be they the human body, a dirty police barrack, or a town on the border. Asking exactly where the state ends *geographically* makes it possible to ask, for example, what happens in the places, sites and locations where state forms of organization are slowly penetrating other systems of socio-spatial regulation, are competing with other sovereignties, or are even withdrawing from their sovereign right to rule. It also permits us to visualize the often fragmented geographies of sovereignty that characterize state–society encounters at the physical margins of the state, and which often involve important processes of bordering and boundary-drawing between what is categorically termed as distinctions between state and society, formal and informal or public and private systems of rule.⁶

**The Border(land) Perspective**

The more intriguing question to ask is probably: what happens where the state ends. This brings us to the borderland perspective, which is central to this book. Since the mid-1990s, the borderland perspective has challenged the received wisdom about contemporary state formation as a centrally guided, top-down process.⁷ Far from being residual spaces, borders are key sites of contestation and negotiation, which, in many ways, are central to state-making processes. Border zones are not just reflective of power relations at the “center”, but they are also *constitutive* of them.⁸ Because of their frequent tendency toward transgression—either by ignoring, contesting, or subverting state power—border regions also implicitly and explicitly call into question the legitimacy of states and their pretences to control an illusionary cartography of territory and population, and the legitimate use of violence therein. Border practices and interactions tell us that state territoriality can never be a linear process, but people living in border zones—subaltern subjects like cross-border migrants and petty traders but also state officials and members
of security agencies—engender their own conventions and regulations that exist parallel, conjointly and in opposition to sovereign state claims on space.

Fundamental to our understanding of state–society relations in border zones in the global South is the acknowledgment that claims to sovereignty are always tentative in the face of fragmented and unpredictable configurations of power. Given their tendency for transgression, borderland practices have a strong potential to recalibrate such state–society boundaries and the often violent relations underpinning them. Despite the default setting of the international system, which in many ways is to respect and preserve interstate borders, many of today’s conflicts emanate from borderland regions and call into question the legitimacy of these borders. Whether on the northeast Indian or Afghan–Pakistani border, or in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa, or the Ferghana Valley in Central Asia, protracted conflicts have fundamentally challenged political forms associated with the (post)modern nation-state and its project of imposing order and authority on dispersed populations. This book, which emerges from a systematic exchange between several research networks on borders and armed conflict, is a first attempt to bring together evidence from diverse conflict sites in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where state performance has been generally characterized as “weak”, “failed” or “collapsed”.

The originality of this volume lies in the depiction of contemporary violent conflict and state formation on the basis of people’s own experiences at the border, and the way they affect the making and unmaking of political configurations. This includes both descriptions of routinely lived experiences of people inhabiting borderlands and their multiple identifications, spatial logics and relations developed in interaction with diverse political constellations. Contributors to this volume depict such borderland dynamics not just as outcomes of diffusing statehood or globalization, but also as actual political units that generate their own actions and outcomes. Particular attention is paid to the explicit trans-boundary character of conflict and peace presented from a political, geographical, historical, or ethnographic perspective.

The empirical sites of the various borderlands discussed in this volume have in common that they disprove the idea of the unambiguous, unitary sovereignty that a state exclusively holds over a territory: the “modern assumption of ‘hard’ boundaries within which 100 percent sovereignty prevails and beyond which it [disappears] altogether”. Instead of radiating outward from some putative political center, the sovereign power of the state seems to represent not much more than “a diffuse glow”, a distant presence that altogether needs to be asserted and legitimated through everyday performance and interaction with the border inhabitants in place. “If the principal fiction of the nation-state is ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural homogeneity”,
Mathew Horsman and Andrew Marshall write, “then borders always give the lie to this construct”. And, yet, James Scott reminds us that borderlands are often spaces of multiple sovereignties—spaces where different power holders struggle over control and allegiance of scattered populations. Hegemony has to be worked out, writes Tania Li, and, indeed, the struggle over political power and allegiance has often allowed (forced) people inhabiting these sites to negotiate different loyalties, allegiances and identities between competing norms and regulations (Chapters 5 and 7). Borderlands can become “spaces of refusal”, whereby borderlanders do not necessarily exhibit overt political resistance, but refuse to abide by the geographical framings of the nation-state.

The fact that most sites from sub-Saharan Africa and South and Central Asia that are taken as case studies in the various chapters of this book are all somehow situated in borderlands, sitting on the geographical margins of states, does not mean that we fetishize borders. That would also be a wrong starting point, given that the aim is to deconstruct the institutionalization of political power in places where the boundary between state and society has been contested and is taking an indefinite form. Yet a focus on border zones permits us to simultaneously distinguish them from the metaphorical frontiers of identity, nationalism and state power. Following Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, we regard border zones as sites where the state’s presence has somehow been limited and its monopoly of violence and political authority is finite, unraveling, or subjected to severe contestation. In the vast, loosely populated lowland planes of the Horn of Africa, for example, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, state borders may be marked on the map, but they do not necessarily materialize as either the “beginning” or “end” of one state vis-à-vis its national neighbor. Rather, this “end” comes in stages, is a fuzzy zone—a reputed “disorderly” or “unruly” frontier. As a result of this undecided frontier zone between one political reality and the other (the definition of which we will return to later), the category “unruly” is often a categorical consequence of the type of state penetration one witnesses in such border zones, rather than an objective empirical truth.

**Border Polities**

Importantly, therefore, the often violent (re)negotiations of political authority in border spaces often involve struggles over geography. As Wilson and Donnan write in their volume on border identities, the realities of everyday life at the border show scant evidence of the fact that borders principally exist to demarcate political space. This complex geography of border areas, which essentially contributes to their political ambiguity as contested but connected
places, stands at the center of this present volume. While border encounters are somehow suffused with power and violent contestation in their immediate heartlands, they also constitute political systems in a way: first of all, in the wider border areas or intermediate borderlands, as Wolfgang Zeller writes in Chapter 8 on the Uganda–Congo–Sudan triangle—which he renames “Sugango”. Second, border polities may also “radiate” outward toward the state territories that surround them and that make their presence feel through various signs and physical performances. Through a discussion of a range of sites across South and Central Asia as well as Africa, the chapters in this volume indicate the varieties of border encounters, which can range from violent contestation to a complete absorption of state regulations by border polities themselves. This resonates with Oscar Martínez’s typology of the differing intensities of cross-border interchange (ranging from nonexistent in what he calls “alienated” borderlands to being in full flow in so-called “integrated” borderlands). Our sites represent only a subsection of this typology, mainly those where a significant cross-border flow exists, while the border retains some (at least rudimentary) functions in regulating and controlling flows of goods and people.

As Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel already observed, one should be extremely aware of the social and political dimensions, not only of such differentiated border interaction, but also of the contested hegemony implied in these interactions and the institutionalization of power in such border places, which involves an implicit or explicit employment of violent means. A peculiarity of the approach pursued in this volume is therefore its strong focus on violence as a means of regulation. This has several reasons, the most important of which involves the intricate and often innovative connections between development and security in such cross-border regions. The recent conflict literature, for example, has noted a growing complexity of political constellations in borderlands touched by protracted warfare, which are shaped among others by new, and often violent, modes of transnational economic accumulation, displacement and identity construction in these cross-border places.

Analytically, borderland practices can generate differing effects on the part of central state administrations. Frequently, they provoke authoritarian reactions, whereby the visibly contested nature of borderland societies becomes conducive for violent and often “exceptional” forms of government. Such has happened for example in the northeast Indian borderlands, where exceptional measures have given sweeping powers to security forces engaged in counterinsurgency operations against the region’s “rebellious” populations (Chapter 7). Borderlands can also become cockpits of political creativity, which somehow force state regimes into important concessions. In Africa’s Great Lakes
Introducing a Borderland Perspective

region, for example, where the constant movement of people, goods and practices across borders has involved a gradual reinterpretation of institutions of legality, state and territory, practices at the margins have to some extent transformed the state’s “center”. This volume gathers in-depth knowledge of the technologies of rule in such border areas and the way they are legitimized by conglomerations of social forces, rather than contests between “states” and “societies”: all authors of this volume prefer a microanalysis of such border arrangements as they evolve through time and space, particularly zooming in on the ways these border arrangements have become productive of exceptional measures and political outcomes.

Borders and Frontiers

Another peculiarity of this volume is that it finally tries to reconcile two vocabularies on the margins of the state that have often been used in opposition to each other: those of borderlands and frontiers. The vocabulary of the borderland is often characterized by an analytical focus on subversion and transgression: on daily practices of cross-border smuggling, corruption, bootleg and contraband operations and the “business” of the border way of life. Borders are there “where the action is”, it is said, because of the pivotal position they fulfill in connecting local and global scales of economic exchange and political interaction. As many of the contributions to this volume suggest, borderlands are by no means the anachronistic backwaters that the state-fed elites in faraway capital cities see in them. Borders are often the “real” centers (see Chapter 3). Daily life at the border makes it clear that “states” and “citizens” somehow continue to depend on and reproduce each other, as the regulations emerging in border spaces often mirror or at least pay allegiance to state frameworks at both sides of the territorial boundary. Even in sites where the state’s presence at the border is unraveling, regulative frameworks provide a particular space for border dwellers to make use of opportunities that customs regulations (and their “illegal” bypassing), price differentials and supply and demand patterns across the border offer.

Borderlands generate important resources that have a decisive impact on state- and peace-building outside their immediate surroundings. Even as they are situated far away from capital cities, border areas play an essential role in calibrating power relations between the state and its citizens. That is exactly why border territories continue to remain inherently “central” to the dominance of state administrations over their mythical domains of economic redistribution—the flows of peoples, goods and capital—as well as the legitimate means of force over distinct geographic terrains: because they continue to function to a large extent as frontiers of the state’s spatial and
civilizational project and, consequently, of its “rightful” and sovereign rule over a territorially fixed population.

Notwithstanding these metaphorical proximities, the *frontier* is something different than a border.\(^{30}\) Frontiers are not necessarily boundaries, but rather political spaces with distinct spatialities of rule and sovereign power. For Africanists, the term “frontier” for a long time has been linked to the seminal work of Igor Kopytoff. His *The African Frontier* (1987) represents a historical account of the processes of pacification and inculturation of precolonial African peripheries. For Kopytoff, the frontier is “above all a political fact, a matter of political definition of geographical space”.\(^{31}\) But the term “frontier” has been used more widely to describe “... [a zone] of cultural overlap, characterized by a mixing of cultural styles. They are liminal spaces, simultaneously dangerous and sites of creative cultural production open to cultural play and experimentation as well as domination and control”.\(^{32}\) Often, the frontier becomes “a fault line and [...] a contested zone [... ] a zone of conflict and competition”.\(^{33}\) Frontier dynamics have occurred along state borders, but also along larger civilizational divides, delineating different geographies of settlement patterns, political organization and economic surplus generation—from spatially denser to looser and less intensive modes of production and settlement, for example, along highland–lowland, or sedentary–mobile (pastoralist) divides. From the point of view of political centers, the frontier usually signals the civilizational *carte blanche*, the empty space, the “*herrenloses Land*” (land without a master, literally),\(^{34}\) which awaits civilization and intrusion from the political center. The frontier is usually the space where territorial and institutional penetration of the modern state has (not yet) been completed. The teleological rationale of modernity, of globalization, sees these spaces as leftovers from a premodern past, destined to become modernized.

The work of territorialization and the frontier dynamics it produces are mostly state supported or state facilitated, although the state often is not directly involved in it as a key actor, but works through proxy (non-state) agents.\(^{35}\) These can be settlers who claim and appropriate land in a seemingly empty space or traders who control commerce and businesses in the local trade hubs. More outspokenly than borderlands, therefore, frontier zones also represent an openly visible *ideological* project of civilized the not-yet-civilized or reputedly “barbarian” populations inhabiting such contested regions. Furthermore, frontiers are also distinct geographical spaces where state power is actively territorialized through material and symbolic means. James Scott, for example, describes frontiers as “shatter zones”, or “zones of refuge” inhabited by “peoples [...] who have [...] been fleeing the oppressions of state-making projects”.\(^{36}\) These sites do generate a number of challenging effects of polytaxis and institutional mixture.
In the literature so far, “borderland” and “frontier” have rather been used as two separate vocabularies. We suggest that these two vocabularies describe different spatialities and temporalities of struggles over geography that have to be situated in specific empirical sites (table 1.1). Because of their joint attention to the “friction of terrain” between the state’s civilizing and territorializing projects and people that somehow continue to dwell in the interstices of such state control, both vocabularies have been analytically useful, because they both direct us to specific social, economic and spatial dynamics of rule, authority, appropriation and dispossession. In this volume, we are interested in theorizing the institutionalization of political power in these border areas by describing the intricate dynamics of territorializing and legitimizing rule—"the (re)writing of space and civilization"—in zones situated on the geographical edges of several political systems (see Chapter 2). In such overlapping or interstitial zones, elements of “borderland” and elements of “frontier” dynamics might and will in fact be present in different and sometimes contrasting configurations. The question then is what are the specific configurations and the wider geographies of rule in a specific site.

Although Benedikt Korf, Tobias Hagmann and Martin Doevenspeck (Chapter 2) suggest that frontier dynamics develop diverse spatialities, these different frontiers nevertheless have in common that they are spatially dynamic: frontiers do not denote static zones or spaces, but they move spatially in a certain direction in a teleological sense of territorializing space—what Schmitt calls *Landnahme*. This distinguishes the frontier dynamic from the borderland dynamic: in the latter, the borderline acquires a defining

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Table 1.1 The “borderland” and “frontier” perspectives
feature of the spatialities of flows and circulation across borders. These flows are bound to the specific spatialities of the borderland vis-à-vis the political center. The civilizational encounter that drives a frontier dynamic is spatially more diffuse than simply a line on the map. The frontier dynamic also emerges from the difference between center and periphery (of metropoles and marginal spaces), while the borderland is characterized by two types of hinterland “behind” the borders that often share similar characteristics in terms of livelihoods and mutually depend on each other. Analytically, the difference between “border” and “frontier” seems to be that (state) borders are clear lines on the map, but separate things that are often not too dissimilar, while a frontier characterizes a diffuse zone of transition from one set of social, political and economic geography to a different set of geography (figure 1.1).

Frontiers are not borders, but frontier logics often appear in borderlands. State borders are often the vanishing points of frontier spaces. In those political spaces where nation-state borders are porous rather than impermeable, where the state sovereignty is experienced as a “distant glow” rather than a permanent presence, borderlands as sites of flows and transgression often assume powers as central margins. Those border spaces only assume these powers to the extent that they are also frontiers of the state government and its

![Figure 1.1 Spatialities of frontier and borderland.](image-url)
sovereign pretences to territory as well as the flows of people, goods and ideas that traverse the borderlines cutting through these spaces: political power in the borderland is constituted to an important extent through its relationship, both practically and ideologically, with the state. In that sense, borders should be analyzed in terms of relational spaces: borders are as per definition part of the global regulative frame of nation-state sovereignty—the vocabulary of state and global actors in their relation to the flow of goods, people and ideas these regimes pretend to capture and control in borderlands. This distinctive character of borders give borderlanders the possibility to appropriate or “bend” these regimes for their specific political or economic projects. In this perspective, borderland dynamics in many of the empirical sites that the chapters in this book compile are sub-geographies in the frontier, with the frontier encompassing a larger spatial extent, within which borders emerge and borderland dynamics play out.

All borderland sites discussed in this book implicitly or explicitly contain elements of frontier. For example, Aboubakr Tandia describes the Senegalese government’s talk of “retarded” mentality of the forest people in the Casamance (Chapter 9); Zeller writes about the forced corporal discipline and confinement found in the borderlands in northern Uganda (Chapter 8); Korf et al. write about highland versus lowland ‘clash of civilizations’ in Ethiopia’spastoralist frontiers (Chapter 2); Christine Bichsel describes the politics of land occupation as a strategy to claim territory along a disputed state border (Chapter 6)—and we could enumerate many more examples from the case studies in this book. What is it, then, that makes borderlands “frontiers of state, nation and identity”?38 From the perspective of the state, both frontiers and borderlands are unruly spaces, and, yet, both enact the state from its peripheral spaces and thereby produce a certain kind of state effect, albeit through non-state and often “illegal” actions. The specific configurations of power in such spaces produce a very specific geography of rule and social order, which are both part of the process of state-making and its continuous transgression.

**Chapter Outline: Multiple Sites of Rule and Contestation**

The various chapters in this book study geographies of rule, power and authority in different borderland configurations that manifest different frontier dynamics (table 1.1). Similarly to the more generic discussion on sovereignty in the post-colony by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat,39 the discussion between these chapters should be interpreted as a “fruitful tension” between more Gramscian approaches to the social construction of borderlands and their immediate governmental effects, and
more Foucauldian/Agambenesque expressions of sovereignty in the territorial margins of state law (although only few authors in our compilation engage explicitly with these theoretical implications). The book is divided into four sections. In the first section, we put forward a theoretical comparison, which tries to capture the particular spatial logics that turn borderlands in Africa and Asia often into violent frontiers of state and other foundations of rule. These comparisons are given more substance in the following two sections of the book, which concentrate subsequently on the multiple sovereignties that characterize these borderlands and make them become contentious spaces of social and political change. Finally, the last section more explicitly connects these dimensions of multiple sovereignty and spatial friction to armed conflict in borderlands, which is a present theme in the entire book but only there is brought to its theoretical apex. In a final conclusion, Jonathan Goodhand links these different issues again to the ongoing theoretical and policy debates and tries to set out some lines for future research.

What makes a border a “frontier” of political and economic development? In their joint chapter, Korf, Hagmann and Doevenspeck try to formulate an answer to this question by elaborating a proper typology of contemporary frontier zones in Africa. They do so by clarifying, first, that frontier zones are not the empty spaces characterized by violent social disorder as many protagonists of (state) government and territorial expansion tend to depict them. Rather, they are examples of what Carl Schmitt calls *Landnahme*: the “civilizing” mission of expanding sovereign power, which accompanies processes of land appropriation in what by the expanding power is considered as “unowned” territory (*herrenloses Land*), or empty space. This process of *Landnahme* is illustrated in the contemporary land frontiers of north Benin and eastern Ethiopia, which are discussed in the second part of Chapter 2. Both frontiers in fact signal spaces of encounter, of mutual penetration and interference between different settlement patterns, modes of political organization and economic surplus generation—for example, between pastoralist and farmland institutions. Not surprisingly, they are both situated on important social boundaries (respectively of the Yorubaphone/migrant populations of central Benin and of the Oromo/Somali populations of highland/lowland Ethiopia). In different ways, such encounters also accompany the meeting point of clashing ideological projects, through which metropolises and indigenous populations legitimize their claims to political space. These often contrasting territorialities, which also frequently change over time, lead to challenging political dynamics in these frontier zones (Chapter 2).

In the third chapter, Markus Virgil Hoehne and Dereje Feyissa take up the question of political scales and recall that borders have largely been conceptualized as constraints, as spatial barriers. Similarly to Korf et al., their
intention is to look into the productive aspect of borders and borderland dynamics. They directly connect to the, now returning, viewpoint that borders indeed have retained their importance as imagined “lines in the sand” as well as concrete barriers that separate lands and peoples. Borders, they suggest, offer multiple resources, economic and political ones, which often reconstitute the state at its margins. In this process, borderlands are securitized and developed. Their double case study from the Ethio-Sudanese and the Somaliland–Puntland borders, which are both situated in the Horn of Africa, give more flesh to this argument and simultaneously offer potential routes toward regional integration in this part of sub-Saharan Africa through either “soft” or “hard” border practices and developments.

In the second section of the book, authors Sylvia Brown as well as Karen Büscher and Gillian Mathys provide further details about the ways borders simultaneously function as resources and problematic sites of mutual penetration. For example, the Karen people, who inhabit the border region between Burma and Thailand, have strategically used the in-betweeness of their contested territory as a critical resource, foremost to exploit the “rough terrain” of the border and recalibrate an unfavorable balance of power. The area occupied by the Karen National Union (KNU), a rebel movement that has been fighting the Burmese government from its stronghold in Thailand for six decades, thus constitutes an important “laboratory of social change” (Chapter 4), locked in a dialectical relationship between the Thai and Burmese governments and the “liberated” Karen people that belong to neither. But whereas their intermediary position on the neuralgia points of the international black market (in rice, gems, textile, teak, cattle and manufactured goods) has generated legitimacy for the KNU in these “liberated zones”, its wealth and legitimacy declined drastically from the 1990s onward as a result of changing geopolitical relations in the region. Particularly the development of regional infrastructure—itself a result of improving Thai–Burmese relations—has diminished what Scott calls the friction of terrain, making it easier for expanding (developmental) states to “pacify” border populations. Somewhat ironically, it also radically inverted the border advantage of the KNU’s leadership as a “quasi-state” in favor of a more ethno-nationalist agenda under the name of ethnic kin groups. In that sense, the Karen appear to provide an important counterargument for the perceived “statelessness” of South Asian borderland populations as they combine such immediate ethnic claims with a more long-term agenda of federal democracy.

In a contrasting case study, Büscher and Mathys’ chapter zooms in on the seemingly permanent regional standoff in the border region of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Avoiding a macro-level analysis, they particularly look into the flows of people and goods in a historical
“no-man’s-land” on the border between these two countries, a territory that is disputed until this day. Similarly to Brown as well as Hoehne and Feyissa, they emphasize the “in-betweenness” of the border, which produces ambivalent opportunities—or resources—for people who are able to somehow employ the border to generate or sustain livelihoods. However, Hoehne and Feyissa mainly emphasize the border as a political resource—thus how it can be mobilized to induce the political center to engage in the periphery, in terms of both security and economic development—whereas Büscher and Mathys mainly emphasize the economic livelihood resources that the border(land) offers. They provide multiple examples of local arbitrage economies, a concept reiterated by Hoehne and Feyissa, which defines economic activities for which the border has become the exact raisin d’être. The coexistence of different regulatory regimes on either side of the border reportedly generates an opportunity structure, which invites smuggling, unofficial exchange rates and illegal crossings of goods and people. Büscher and Mathys concentrate their attention on what they call the “navigation” of these borderlands by subaltern subjects—national minorities excluded from full citizenship in either state outside the immediate borderland, and petty traders and hustlers who somehow come to the borderland to gain a living. The informal settlement, or “no-man's-land”, located in the border space between these two separate countries thus generates a kind of exceptional situation in which people constantly have to shift and renegotiate their identities in “ever-increasing maneuvers of power and submission” (Chapter 5), while at the same time remaining central to the urban economy as well as national claims to territorial sovereignty.

The third section of the book specifically discusses the struggle for space in the borderland with regard to the political frontier—the way in which the human territoriality of the border is integrated into legitimized claims on geographical space. In her ethnographic study of development aid in the Central Asian Ferghana Valley (which simultaneously bridges and divides the countries Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), Bichsel illustrates very succinctly that territorial development is in essence always an ideological project by describing how strategies of peace-building (in this case by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation) indirectly reconfigure human territoriality in this disputed border region. By reducing, first, social conflicts in the area to a competition over economic resources, and, second, locating these conflicts primarily at international borders, development agencies interested in peace unwillingly underwrite competing state assertions to such contested territories, which transforms border communities into “frontier” populations. In the absence of other means, Bichsel writes, Kyrgyzstani and Tajikistani state authorities increasingly instrumentalize citizens to “defend” the border...
on their behalf and make claims to the disputed land. Very similarly to Ethiopia’s Somali region (Chapter 2), therefore, the inflicted violence and tensions over this land produce property relations that consolidate state territory as “national” territory. As such, the politics of “actual land use”, it is suggested, serves to produce a specific attachment to land by claiming and capturing plots in previously unclaimed spaces.

In his chapter on India’s northeastern borderland, Bert Suykens provides more analytical complexity to this exceptional situation of disputed border areas with reference to the Disputed Area Belt (DAB) between Assam and Nagaland. Although this region has a much more different history than the previously discussed Central African case study, the situation in northeast India is actually characterized by a very similar fragile peace, an interim situation that has resulted in the permanent suspension of “normal” law and that produces a very similar political ambivalence. On the one hand, Suykens writes, every border region somehow represents the heart of political allegiance to the nation-state, because it is here where one can effectively claim the “meaning of the nation” (Chapter 7). This centrality of the border enables border dwellers to successfully claim certain “public” goods (like land property) and compel competing authorities into important concessions. On the other hand, though, borderlands are also zones of massive encroachment by these competing regimes, which symbolically transforms inhabitants to instruments for claiming territory.

Suykens suggests that the imagination of a historical antagonism between the plains people of Assam and the hill tribes of Nagaland is indeed central to understand the difficulties in negotiating a political solution for the border dispute that characterizes this permanent state of exception in the DAB. In fact, he makes clear how the conscious un-regulation of rights to property and wealth in this “unowned” territory has become part and parcel of an active policy of legalized encroachment, whereby settler communities continuously have to buy protection from competing public authorities. This situation is illustrated quite visibly by the statement of an Assam police officer, who calls the practice of legalizing forest encroachment “an official system of bribes” (Chapter 7). This example, which somehow recalls the patronage relations on the central Benin and Ivorian land frontiers discussed in Chapter 2 and by Paul Richards and Jean-Pierre Chauveau, reminds us of the fact that the endorsement of indeed any right in such disputed territories remains inherent to a fundamental social relationship: a social construct that is not carried forward by the law as such but by the successful location of this right in a structure of codes and normative registers that make such rights appear legitimate and sovereign. In the empirical sites discussed in this volume, such rights frequently remain open to permanent negotiation, which is part of the
reason why the active denial of populations of their citizenship rights and livelihoods remains central to the contest over sovereign rule.

While armed violence is mostly implicitly present in the first three sections of this book (luring in the background in Sudan, Ethiopia and Somaliland, and more closely present in DRC and northeast India), the fourth section of this book offers the reader a more explicit focus on the relationship between sovereignty and violent conflict across borders. With case studies from Eastern and Western Africa (north Uganda and Casamance), Chapters 8 and 9 provide a detailed political economy of these regional conflicts but add an important geographical dimension. Using an explicitly topographical approach, Zeller connects various nodes in the northern Ugandan border economy by traveling with the reader from the seaport of Mombasa (Kenya), where many of the goods to north Uganda and South Sudan are imported, to the “boombo town” of Bibia, near the Sudanese border. Along the journey, he notices a particular kind of “borderland governance”, which has established itself as a result of “being on the edge of state territory and the verge of warfare”. The “get it while you can” mentality that characterizes this border town “reeking of dust, diesel and beer” appears to be maintained by a rather exceptional situation that connects the border to Uganda’s war economy, and substantially informs the political implication of state representatives in this contested border space.

Zeller adds another important aspect to his analysis when he writes that the expectation of border dwellers to operate under exceptional conditions has produced several levels of “borderland governance”: in unstable border areas like northern Uganda, the direct outsourcing of political authority to non-state actors (like vigilante groups or private businesses) might in fact provide a “local” solution to a “global” problem, as these forces become essential to the functioning of contested states. While such political reconfigurations are by no means only peaceful, the ambivalence of (returning) state presence through top-down reconstruction and technological development can become quite harmful because it might choke off conditions that provide an impetus to such informal equilibria.

Writing from Senegal, Tandia takes a similar starting point as Zeller by questioning the extent to which the Casamance borderland has become the backyard of a particular kind of “wariness”: a complex intermingling of armed actors with local borderland politics through the margins of the cross-border economy in cash crops, cattle and drugs (marijuana and cocaine), which in many ways sustains the “civil” war—in the sense that actors not living in this border area continue to instrumentalize and exploit its political, social and territorial marginalization for geopolitical and economic purposes. In this context of conscious un-regulation, the continued marginality and uprooting
of local borderland people has become at once an instrument of extraver-
sion, as Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis and Béatrice Hibou put it,⁴⁵ but
even more so a structural condition, which continues to reproduce local “sur-
plus populations”⁴⁶ that keep this economy going. Tandia’s case also exhibits
borderlands as “trans-local scales of multilevel and multi-actor spaces”, where
a kind of “transnationalism from below” has emerged in the domain of bor-
der vigilante movements: conflict management is a pattern of transnational
politics involving balances as well as asymmetries in relationships, which can
be collaborative as well as confrontational.

Coda

In this volume, we have looked into borderland sites in Africa as well as
South and Central Asia, albeit not in a strictly comparative way. Already
Baud and van Schendel⁴⁷ have expressed doubts about the possibility of com-
paring borderlands along their temporal (and thus teleological) evolution or
their spatial distinctiveness according to world regions, normally labeled as
“Africa”, “Asia” or “Europe”. In this volume, we therefore refrain from a
strictly comparative analytical frame, but rather look at the various forms
of spatial b/ordering that takes place in different sites. Our cases indicate
that similar, but also diverse and shifting geographies of rule involving bor-
der(ing) and frontier dynamics can be found in these various sites and that
it is not possible to detect specific dynamics in African versus Asian types of
borderlands. A key factor in defining the complex geographies of rule that
we find at different borderlands seems to be the extent to which the state has
accomplished the task of territorializing the margins, namely that it is about
the spatial outreach of the state and the resultant geographies of sovereignty.
These relational geographies between metropolises and margins define space
for transgression or subversion, but also dynamics of territorialization or
spaces of flows.

Grosso modo, the analyses in this book support the following three propo-
sitions: first, the cultural study of borderland communities teaches us that
political borders and social boundaries often do not correspond.⁴⁸ In order to
claim sovereignty, an important challenge for political actors in border areas
is not only to make these two matching, but also to make this overlap appear
legitimate—acceptable to its inhabitants and the broader societies of which
they allegedly form part. Following Robert Latham, we might distinguish
here between borderland authority and what he calls “social sovereignty” over
border subjects: whereas authority can be defined as the ability to place action
and practices into a meaningful social frame or context, sovereignty is rather
a feature of structures—it involves the broader body of codes and rules that
are the locus of preeminent power in this social field.\(^\text{49}\) An important feature of borderland polities and their multiple coexisting sovereignties in fact is that they do not necessarily entail the formation of an integrated social order or hegemony—to use Gramsci’s terms—over a configuration of people and places. On the contrary, the domain of social sovereignty can actually be quite narrow, as the case of Sugango demonstrates (Chapter 8). In line with Hansen and Stepputat, however, we contend that it is important to understand how such \textit{de facto} configurations of sovereignty develop also through a formal language of law, which since the mid-twentieth century has become the dominant horizon for political authority and imagination across the developing world.\(^\text{50}\) In fact, many authors actively refer to this language to indicate how claims to sovereign power in the world’s borderlands are always intimately connected to the declaration of an unruly outside or downside of society: of “bandits”, “criminals”, “smugglers”, “youth gangs”, “drug lords”, “warlords”, “mafiosi”, “traitors” and “terrorists”—\textit{en fin} of outlaws and liminal figures\(^\text{51}\) that cannot be understood without reference to their specific relations to states and hegemonic discourses of social order.

Our second proposition is that this permanent copresence of multiple bodies of regulations in the borderlands epistemologically gives the border a central place in the configuration of political order: in fact they have to be seen as shadows of the dominant sovereign power. In part to deconstruct this hegemonic image of the indivisible sovereign state, and in part also to give flesh to the everyday realities of rule in postcolonial societies, it has become more and more useful to describe what Smart calls the “continuum of persistence” between legality and illegality, which can range from ignored coexistence to open challenges of state sovereignty.\(^\text{52}\) While effectively challenging the state’s monopoly of violence, the multiple organizations, constellations and political networks that convey power in the borderlands are engaging in sovereign practices themselves. Therefore, to understand this association between the multiple sovereignties and the consolidation of political order in the borderlands, one needs to look at the ways this association is constituted in everyday practice—at the “methods of organization, spatial arrangement and formal representation”\(^\text{53}\) of actions attempting to organize life in such contested and instable areas—which make these places into state frontiers.

\textit{Finally}, it is important to remember that this method of writing space in the borderland is never complete, but continues to involve important struggles over geography, authority and political legitimacy. Rather than a physical given, it is our contention that the diverging levels of penetrability of the border spaces discussed in this volume (which range from impenetrable fortresses to porous web-like spaces) should be interpreted as the temporary \textit{effects}, the historical outcome of patterns of circulation, diffusion and interdependence
that connect border areas not only to state governments, but also to other nodes of political power from the local to the global level. Lying at the edges of various forms of public authority, borders potentially form gates or bridges, rupture or connection points that make them either “divisive” or “permeable” (Chapter 3), depending on the particular constellations of identity, power and economic accumulation that characterize their wider political geographies. To this end, it becomes necessary to merge analytically two kinds of vocabularies, which place these border constellations in a wider geographic context of contentions over sovereign rule: border and frontier.

Notes

4. T. Asad, “Where are the margins of the state?” in Anthropology in the margins of the state, ed. V. Das and D. Poole (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2004), 279–288.
9. The initiative for this volume emerged from a joint workshop of the ESF-funded African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE), the Asia Border Research
Network (ABRN), the Conflict Research Group at the University of Ghent and the political geography unit based at the University of Zurich. The aim of this workshop was to take stock of existing knowledge of regional conflict analysis from a border perspective based on critical and longitudinal fieldwork in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. We thank both universities as well as ESF-ABORNE for kindly supporting this initiative.


Introducing a Borderland Perspective


29. M. Pugh and N. Cooper, Whose peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); see also Chapter 3.


References


Introducing a Borderland Perspective


CHAPTER 2

Geographies of Violence and Sovereignty: The African Frontier Revisited

Benedikt Korf, Tobias Hagmann and Martin Doevenspeck

Kopytoff Revisited

In his classic *The African Frontier* (1987a), Igor Kopytoff provided a powerful explanation of the processes of pacification and inculturation of precolonial African peripheries. For Kopytoff, the frontier was “an area over which political control by the regional metropoles is absent or uncertain”.¹ Kopytoff’s understanding of frontier is essentially one of a politically constructed space: “The frontier is above all a political fact, a matter of political definition of geographical space”.² His work is primarily motivated by this distinctive understanding of peripheral African spaces and places. In this chapter, we draw attention to the analytics that can be garnered from Kopytoff’s work on the frontier, which allows understanding contemporary political dynamics in some parts of the African continent. We are primarily interested in a discussion of the logic or rationale of governing that shapes present-day African frontiers. In other words, we propose using Kopytoff’s heuristics of the African frontier, but apply them in empirical contexts different to those where Kopytoff did in his original work: postcolonial, not precolonial, Africa is our empirical site. In order to achieve this, we first develop a typology of the political frontier and illustrate it with two case studies from eastern Ethiopia and northern Benin.

In *The Frontier in Comparative View*, Dietrich Gerhard articulates the point that the frontier “is something entirely different from a border between
states, or even from a border region between organized civilizations”.

Frontiers are not boundaries or borderlands per se, but the frontier logic often appears in borderlands. Surprisingly, Kopytoff’s frontier concept has not drawn much attention in the study of contemporary African peripheries and borderlands. In their review of the literature, Wendl and Rösler (1999) come to the conclusion that debates on peripheries have shifted from the study of frontiers to the study of borders and borderlands. Border studies have mostly been concerned with the flow of goods and people, cross-border transactions and cooperation as well as more ethnographic, people-centered approaches that emphasize the social construction and reproduction of borders through daily practices and imaginations. Often considered an obstacle to Africa’s economic, political and social ambitions, a recent collection of articles has underlined how borders serve divided ethnic communities as economic, political, identity, status and rights resources, thereby emphasizing the productive aspect of borders, borderlands and border peoples. Hence, a border is thus not so much a line that divides, but a dynamic relation and social practice.

The erection of territorial borders has often been a measure by the metropolitan core to map out sovereign power at the frontier. But what kind of order emerges at the border? Is the border the end of one and the beginning of another political order? Joel Migdal, for example, writes that boundaries “signify the point at which something becomes something else, at which the way things are done changes”. Or does the border as a space develop its own order? At the same time, “border” can have several meanings, referring to not only the territorial state border, but also a social boundary, for example, between different “civilizations” or ethnic groups. Boundaries entail a spatial and a relational component; they include symbolic and social dimensions that are marked in maps, but may also signify other dividing lines, which cannot be found on maps. Border, then, is not so much a line, but signifies a relation—a relation between core and periphery, which is marked by a distinct logic of rule.

Frontiers also signify a geographical imagination of a boundary dividing civilization from the “not yet” civilized (unoccupied, “empty”) territory. This geographical imagination has material effects: Frontiers are mostly located at the peripheries of modern states and they are characterized by violent patterns of social and political (dis)order, or a fractured geography of violence and multiple sovereignties. Although imagined as an empty space, the frontier is not an “ungoverned” space; it is not a space of disorderly violence and social anomy. Rather, the frontier is a project of what Carl Schmitt refers to as land appropriation or Landnahme. The geographical imagination of empty space is crucial for this state project: “Der landnehmende Staat kann das genommene koloniale Land hinsichtlich des Privateigentums... als
herrenlos behandeln”, writes Schmitt in *Nomos* (“The land-appropriating state can treat the acquired colonial land with regard to private property rights as unowned,” our translation from German original). Similar to the frontier logic, Schmitt’s argument is based on a theory of civilizations: More civilized groups gain the right to appropriate land in territories occupied by less civilized societies, which are made objects of becoming more organized by more civilized peoples. In other words, *Landnahme* is part and parcel of a civilizing mission, and the frontier is the space where it is accomplished through land appropriation. This civilizing mission is accompanied by struggle, resistance, subordination and oppression. At the same time, the frontier molds a zone of encounter, of mutual penetration and interference: a territorial space with specific characteristics of order, and a specific geography of sovereign power and rule.

Pierre-Yves Le Meur (2006) coined the term “political frontier”, which we use in this chapter to understand different *longue durée* processes of land appropriation in contemporary African peripheries and the encounters these produce. Our conceptualization of the political frontier goes beyond Kopytoff’s original model, which emphasizes processes of ethnogenesis, by revisiting his reading and remolding of Frederick Jackson Turner’s (1893) original frontier thesis. Two types of political frontiers and associated spatial dynamics and social, economic and political rationales can thus be distinguished: Kopytoff’s interstitial frontier and Turner’s tidal frontier. Here, our use of the frontier concept differs from Benda Chalfin’s remarkable work on neoliberal frontiers in West Africa. Chalfin takes the state border as a place where global neoliberalism flourishes, where the frontier of global neoliberalism sets in. Her concept of border and borderland is different from the frontier concept, which we discuss, following Turner and Kopytoff, in this chapter. In the following sections, we elaborate our concept of “political frontier” by distinguishing two ideal types with specific geographies of violence and sovereignty and apply them as a heuristic framework in an empirical analysis of two contemporary frontiers in Ethiopia and Benin.

**The Frontier as Rationale of Rule**

Historically, frontiers have emerged in different settings, times and places. The historian Alfred J. Rieber distinguishes three basic types of frontiers: consolidated state frontiers as observed in Western Europe’s transition from feudalism to centralized monarchies; dynamic frontiers of advancing settlements such as the American, British, Imperial Russian and Chinese frontiers; and symbolic frontiers corresponding to popular imaginings of the geographic confines of different civilizations, cultures and religions.
Hastings Donnan defines “frontier” as a “. . . [zone] of cultural overlap, characterized by a mixing of cultural styles. They [frontiers] are luminal spaces, simultaneously dangerous and sites of creative cultural production open to cultural play and experimentation as well as domination and control”. But most often, the frontier is “a fault line and . . . a contested zone . . . a zone of conflict and competition”. Often, but not always, frontiers emerge along state borders or larger civilizational divides, for example, between sedentary farmlands and pastoralist rangeland livelihoods or between lowland wetland civilizations and upcountry people. The frontier signals the space of encounter and transition between different geographies of settlement, political organization and economic surplus generation—from more spatially dense to looser and less intensive modes of livelihoods. From the viewpoint of the metropolitan core, the former tend to be labeled as “civilization” while the latter are considered a civilizational carte blanche—an empty space or unruly hinterland, where a state of nature prevails that pits barbarians against each other. The teleological rationale of modern statehood and sovereign power has it, of course, that the latter spaces are remnants from a premodern past, destined to become extinct as modern statehood expands to the margins.

The Political Frontier

What is then the frontier, or, in other words, what makes the frontier an interesting concept for the analysis of current African peripheries? We suggest that there are three, partly complementary, partly distinctive, dimensions that distinguish the frontier from the viewpoint of political geography. By identifying these three dimensions of the frontier we seek to contribute to a theory of the frontier, which builds upon the existing, disparate body of works on the frontier, but is not limited to the latter/or goes beyond individual contributions.

First, the frontier can be apprehended as an ideological project or as the imagination of those who claim political space at the margins of the metropolis. The idea that frontiers are an institutional vacuum or no-man’s-land that needs to be claimed and occupied by outsiders is essential. Kopytoff talks about the frontier as “an institutional vacuum” because “the metropole defined an area in its periphery as open to legitimate intrusion”. This leads us to an examination of the discursive and symbolic strategies with which metropolises and political centers, both national and international, legitimate their claims on a particular frontier zone. While frontiers are often claimed by outsiders for economic interests, political motifs are equally important. This is demonstrated by the current discourse on state-building and reconstruction, which portrays African peripheries as essentially “blank slates” in need of international intervention and order.
Second, the frontier is a geographical space where state power is territorialized by both material and symbolic means. This occurs in a process in which the state divides peripheral territories into “complex and overlapping political and economic zones and rearranges people and resources within these units, and create[s] regulations delineating how and by whom these areas can be used”.\textsuperscript{17} The metropolis, or, in this particular context, the political center of the nation state, does not live up to the proclaimed image of the state as the guarantor of welfare and political stability in the frontier. Yet, interpretations that stress the absence or weakness of the state in the frontier are often misleading.\textsuperscript{18} Through population displacement, public policies, property rights and variegated center–periphery relations—often of a patrimonial character—political centers govern the frontier from afar. It is by this process of territorialization, both through population movements (both voluntary and forced ones)\textsuperscript{19} and policies, that the metropolis is both absent and forcefully present in its frontier.

Third, the frontier is a space with specific characteristics of disorder and violence. Particular configurations of order and disorder, often of a violent nature, manifest themselves in the frontier. The encounter between settler and indigenous populations, the overlap of different cultural styles, the transition between different production systems, the meeting of nationally defined territories, the territorial strategies by which metropolises regulate their hinterlands and the resistance of local populations to these and other trends reproduce violence and “political disorder”\textsuperscript{20} as ways of doing politics that are recurrently practiced in the frontier. What is often perceived as an unruly behavior by frontier inhabitants is often tolerated, if not initiated, by metropolises, who tolerate different political norms and levels of violence in their frontier areas as compared to the political center.

A Typology of Frontiers as Geographies of Rule

Kopytoff developed his work on the African frontier by engaging with Turner’s seminal contribution \textit{The Significance of the Frontier in American History} (1893). Turner defined the frontier as the line of most rapid and most effective Americanization. In his interpretation, the frontier moved westward, and the successive battles between colonists and Native American meant a gradual move away from civilized Europe. According to Turner, frontier colonization took place in several settlement waves, which gradually occupied the “empty” space of the Wild West and “civilized” it. Turner’s model is teleological as he describes a linear, singular frontier that emerges out of a historical necessity of civilization. He described the expansion of the settlement frontier in the American West as a teleological advancement of European settlers into an area of “free land”. The settler transforms spaces of wilderness
into spaces of civilization through successive forms of frontiers: traders and trappers are followed by ranchers and miners. The latter are followed by farmers, and finally townsmen. Turner's settlement frontier advances on a linear, teleological path toward enculturation, pacification and civilization. The frontier, therefore, is a short-lived form of territorial expansion from the metropolises into the peripheries of empires or states. The metropolis gradually consumes the untamed periphery and transforms it into a part of the metropolis, thereby pacifying the periphery. Turner's argument emphasized that the frontier experience of encountering wilderness and civilizing it had significant impacts on the institutional values of what became American society more broadly (or what he termed the national character). In other words, the frontier experience was formative for metropolitan society.

Turner's frontier is one of a teleological territorial penetration, which civilizes previously untamed spaces. Danilo Geiger (2002, 2007) summarizes the operating logic of this Turner frontier with four recurrent processes. First, the state shows only sporadic (i.e., unsubstantial) territorial presence. Second, the state purports the idea of "freely available" land and natural resources (waiting to be brought into proper use). Third, indigenous people are considered as standing outside of the moral universe; they represent a kind of untamed nature, a savage people. Fourth, the frontier is characterized by a system of predatory economic relations, based on unequal exchange. This economy is dominated by "intruders" (e.g., settlers) and not by indigenous inhabitants. Geiger summarizes this frontier as a space where "the state does not fully assert its claim to the monopoly of violence, in the sense that it considers violence by settlers and other private actors to some degree necessary and justified". Geiger (2008) also determined three frequently overlapping types of frontiers, namely frontiers of settlement, frontiers of extraction and frontiers of control.

Kopytoff referred to Turner's frontier as the "tidal" frontier and distinguished it from the "internal" frontier that he observed in precolonial Africa. Kopytoff's internal frontier emerged at the interstitial spaces of different kingdoms and princely polities. Settlers, herdsmen, farmers and runaway slaves split off from existing metropolises (dominant societies, political orders, petty kingdoms) and started occupying "open spaces" at the spaces in between at the territorial margins of other dominant societies, political orders and kingdoms. Both types of frontier, Turner's settlement or tidal frontier and Kopytoff's interstitial or internal frontier, therefore share the founding myth of frontiersmen who conquer a no-man's-land, free land or open space. But the frontier dynamics differ. Turner's frontier described the expansion of metropolises into the periphery, whereas Kopytoff's interstitial frontier suggested the emergence of new social and political formations, the ethnogenesis of peripheral groups, which, if successful, would themselves
become dominant and lose a part of their population as it ventures to establish new frontiers. At the periphery, the nucleus of new metropolises and kingdoms emerged. Whereas Turner described the frontier in teleological, linear and irreversible fashion, Kopytoff’s interstitial frontier is cyclical, dynamic and reversible.

We want to suggest that the Turner and Kopytoff frontiers represent two distinct and ideal-typical logics of territorialization, which continue to be relevant today and help us understand and describe contemporary political dynamics of African statehood and political (dis)order both at the center and in the margins (figure 2.1 and table 2.1). In the following two sections,

![Figure 2.1](Draft: B.Korf,T. Hagmann; graphic: M. Wegener (2012))

**Figure 2.1** Different interactions between metropolis and periphery in the Turner and Kopytoff frontiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Turner</th>
<th>Kopytoff</th>
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<td>Frontier logic</td>
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<td>Interstitial or internal frontier: emergence of new social formations (ethnogenesis)</td>
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<td>Original empirical context within which the concept was developed</td>
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<td>Frontier spaces</td>
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<td>Spatial dynamics</td>
<td>Metropolis (center) consumes the periphery</td>
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we will illustrate these types of frontier with two summary case studies: the Ethiopian–Somali frontier, which serves as an example of Turner’s settlement or tidal frontier, and the northern Benin frontier, which is a reminder of Kopytoff’s interstitial or internal frontier. Of course, hybrids of the two types may also exist.

The “Turner” Frontier in Ethiopia’s Somali Lowlands

The subtle, but crucial difference between borderland and frontier as geographical versus relational spaces becomes apparent when considering the political geography of Ethiopia’s eastern lowlands. Several dynamics of the political frontier can be observed in Ethiopia’s Somali region, which is also called the Ogaden. This region is inhabited by ethnic Somalis, whose livelihood depends on agropastoralism and transhumant livestock herding. In this section, we will outline that its geographies of rule follow the Turner frontier logic. These dynamics date back to the forced incorporation of the Somali lowlands into the Ethiopian (formerly Abyssinian) imperial state, which began in the mid-nineteenth century. Before 1977, the region’s political geography was marked by center–periphery relations evolving from a “fiscal-military mode” characterized by predatory taxation and military expeditions (1850–1920) to a period of “imperial tutelage”, which combined increased bureaucratic control, patronial relations and continued violence (1920–1977). After the Ethiopian–Somali or Ogaden War of 1977/1978, during which the Somali Democratic Republic unsuccessfully attempted to annex Ethiopia’s Somali region, approximately 800,000 Somalis fled Ethiopia to escape repression by its security forces. Both the imperial government and the socialist regime of the Derg sought to “civilize” and “pacify” the Somali periphery into the Ethiopian nation-state. Small groups of highland settlers and soldiers based in the region’s various military camps constituted the Ethiopian state’s expanding frontier. The key elements of this frontier strategy were an Amharization policy, the settlement of pastoral groups and coercive measures against Somalis opposing the expansion of Ethiopian state sovereignty.

Ethiopian and European colonization of the Ogaden sparked repeated bouts of armed resistance by Somalis in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although Ethiopian armies were able to subdue the local insurgents, the Ethiopian state failed to integrate Somalis into the national body politic, making the Ogaden a site of protracted militarized encounters between Christian Ethiopian highlanders and Muslim Somali lowlanders. Center–periphery relations changed when the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary
Democratic Front (EPRDF) toppled the Derg in 1991. Ethiopia was decentralized on the basis of ethnolinguistic groups, granting the country’s ethnic groups or “nations, nationalities and peoples” the right to self-determination. As a result, Somalis in eastern Ethiopia for the first time obtained the right to self-administration, and the Somali language, rather than Amharic, became the language of instruction. EPRDF’s “ethnic federalism” aimed to correct the historic marginalization of those groups subjugated by imperial and socialist Ethiopia such as the Somalis. By recognizing Somalis as a constituency within a multiethnic democratic state, the tidal wave of conquest and forced—but rarely successful—assimilation came to a temporary halt in 1991. In spite of promises of democratization and decentralized decision-making, the federal government partly revived some of the historic tactics of governing the Somali periphery, which are a reminder of, but not identical to, the Turner frontier. The autonomy of the regional administration was strongly eroded by its continued reliance on instructions by federal bureaucrats and politicians. Commanders of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) troops stationed in the region became influential local decision-makers as the government’s counterinsurgency agenda against the rebel Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) rose to prominence after 2007 (figure 2.2).

The frontier experience of Ethiopia’s Somali region is compounded by multiple and overlapping boundaries. The region is a border zone between Ethiopia and Somalia; more specifically, to the northeast is the de facto state of Somaliland, to the east are the autonomous republic of Puntland as well as south-central Somalia and to the southeast are the remains of the Somali Democratic Republic. While an internationally recognized border between Ethiopia and Somalia exists, it does not take into account the existence of these nonrecognized state entities. Similarly, the local production system, livelihoods and pastoral trading routes transcend state borders, both officially and unofficially. If we look at the flows of goods and services that transit the region, we find vibrant trade corridors, with livestock and charcoal going from the Ogaden through Somaliland up to the Middle East and, further south, to central Somalia up to Mogadishu. A reverse flow of “contraband” goods, mostly consumer goods originating in Asia, is imported through Djibouti, Berbera, Boosaaso and the southern ports. Ethiopia’s Somali frontier is also a constantly shifting dividing line between Ethiopian highlands and Somali lowlands, separating what is perceived as two different “civilizations”: the Christian-dominated, sedentary highlands, and the Muslim pastoralist lowlands. From the perspective of the “highlanders”, who have historically controlled state power in Ethiopia, Ethiopian Somalis are “citizens of doubt”,

who might side with neighboring Somalia. Conversely, Ethiopian Somalis’ experience of oppression and displacement at the hands of the Ethiopian state reproduces negative stereotypes about Ethiopian highlanders or \textit{habesha}.

Despite differences among successive regimes in Ethiopia, the Somali lowlands continue to be perceived in the imagination of the Ethiopian elite as a frontier space in need of state intervention. First, pastoralist rangelands, in particular common-pool grazing reserves at the periphery of the Ethiopian state, are seen as a “no-man’s-land”, as freely available land resources that need to be put to use by adopting agriculture.\footnote{Second, although pastoralism gained some recognition after 1991, previous governments have considered it}
as an archaic, outdated, premodern lifestyle, which needs to be overcome by settling herders. Third, this imagination reflects a teleological model of progress, modernity and civilization, which progresses from pastoralism through agropastoralism to sedentary cultures—with an urban lifestyle at its peak. Fourth, the Ethiopian state responds to its inherent geographical imagination with a project of taming the frontier: penetrating empty spaces through settlements along the Shabelle, Genale (Juba) and other river basins. This policy was initially pursued by the Derg, for example, in the large-scale Gode irrigation scheme, attempting to sedentarize pastoralists and encouraging highland settlers to out-migrate to the Somali lowlands. While the EPRDF government abandoned its predecessor’s forced settlement policy, it continues to advocate for the “voluntary settlement” of pastoralists. Fifth, the Somali region and war-torn Somalia are perceived as unruly territory, which threatens Ethiopia and thus requires a sustained Ethiopian military presence in order to secure the metropolis.

Historically and today, the expansion of the metropolitan core in the name of, successively, imperialism, socialism and, most recently, democracy has marked the Ethiopian–Somali frontier. Over time, the Ethiopian state’s agenda in the Ogaden has shifted between conquering the Somali frontier, capturing its natural resources, controlling population movement and defending the home country. Hence, the expansion of the Ethiopian–Somali frontier was not tidal, but is rather ongoing. One observes a historic continuity in the way in which the Ethiopian state furthers the administrative control of people and territory in its Somali hinterland, a process that Christopher Clapham, referring to the Derg, described as “encadrement”. Donor countries have often supported government intervention in the Ogaden, in the name of enabling both development and security. For instance, the European Union has recently underlined the allegedly aggressive character of Somalis in Ethiopia, who “tend to solve their differences through confrontation”, thereby reproducing a violent imaginary of the Somali region as uncivilized space that needs to be tamed by planned, bureaucratic measures. Finally, Ethiopia’s military intervention in Somalia (2006–2008), which led to the downfall of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), was a reminder of the fluidity of the Ethiopian–Somali frontier, whose contours may reach up to Mogadishu in times of heightened political conflict. Less known is the military intervention and state of exception that the Ethiopian rulers have brought to Somalis inside Ethiopia, in particular to the Ogaadeen clan and its home territories.

What role does the Somali frontier play at the margins of the Ethiopian state? For the Ethiopian highland elite, the Somali borderland is a largely empty space, devoid of civilization, waiting to become pacified. It is the
periphery to the core of the Ethiopian state. But we want to argue here that although the Somali region appears to be at the periphery, it is nevertheless central to the constitution of the Ethiopian nation-state. While ENDF troops and local militia composed of ethnic Somalis have attempted to instill tight military control in the Ogaadeen heartland following the escalation of the ONLF insurgency in 2007, both in the Ogaden and during its intervention in Somalia, the Ethiopia has been challenged to bring those zones of wilderness under control. This signals again a crucial difference in the ever-evolving highland–lowland interactions: the increasingly authoritarian government by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has detained, silenced and intimidated opposition parties and critics in the metropolis following the 2005 elections, which were heavily contested, yet the Somali lowlands have remained a much less controlled frontier space.

Frontier, then, becomes part of the logic of governing, the zone of indistinction between those who are included as excluded (namely the Somali inside Ethiopia, but not really Ethiopians) and those who are excluded as included. In this sense, the frontier is not an institutional vacuum as Kopytoff’s model suggested, but it is included as exception to the sovereign body of the Ethiopian space—and the Somalis become a kind of *homine sacri*: they are included as excluded, as pure bodies without citizenship rights. The Somali frontier, seen as a zone of indistinction where the state of nature—the violent, untamed pastoralist societies still in existence—comes into contact with the state of law of the Ethiopian sovereign, is therefore a central tenet for the constitution of the Ethiopian state; it is more that that—it is a frontier in the global war against terror. In this frontier, exception and rule, Hobbes’ state of nature—the lawless rule of violence—and the state of law, civilization and modernity are becoming indistinguishable.

To some extent, the irritation that pastoralist mobility—a society in motion—poses to highlanders is the paradigmatic idea that, to paraphrase James Scott (2009), sedentary agriculture seems to be seen as a necessary condition for state-making and state control. Non-sedentary livelihoods then appear as incompatible with and an irritant to state-making ambitions. This peculiar situation begs a question once asked by Talal Asad (2004): where does the (Ethiopian) state “end”? This “end” does not refer to only the territorial confinement of the state’s territorial boundaries (the state borders), but rather the state’s presence, control and rule of law. In those vast, loosely populated lowland plains, a state border may be marked on maps, but does not necessarily materialize as the “end” of one state vis-à-vis its neighbor. Rather, this “end” comes in stages; it is a fuzzy zone of a disorderly frontier space.
Benin: A “Kopytoff Frontier” in the Making

The political geography of agricultural colonization in north-central Benin is characterized by the simultaneous perpetuation and retranslation of models of social and political organization in settlement processes driven by dynamics of social fission. This dynamic was also described as the central characteristic of the model of the internal African frontier by Kopytoff (1987a).

While historical patterns of social and political or military organization have been studied in detail for southern Benin and northern Benin, there is comparatively little information available for the region between Parakou and Bassila (figure 2.3). According to Y. Person (1956), this area was settled as long ago as the fifteenth century by Yorubophone groups from the Yoruba core areas around Oyo and the sacred city of Ile-Ife in present-day Nigeria. According to John Igué, during one of the migration phases, they founded the settlement axis of Manigri, Igbere, Dogue, Igjomakro and Wari Maro, which today marks the northern linguistic frontier of the Yoruba in Benin. Remnants of abandoned villages are found everywhere, which are explained in oral traditions as the result of fission of the aforementioned villages (figure 2.3). This can be seen as evidence of historical frontier processes, and, at the same

Figure 2.3 Map of north-central Benin.
time, in view of the great number of these old places of settlement, as an indicator that the region was once much more densely settled than at the beginning of agricultural colonization in the late 1990s.

Historically, there are three different bordering processes that contributed to the peripheral position of the region before the formation of the current frontier: precolonial instability due to slave raids and wars, selective economic development and forest protection measures during the colonial period and forced resettlement following independence. For a long time, the area was part of a buffer zone between the Baatombu aristocracies of precolonial Borgou in the north, the Dahomey systems of rule in the south and Oyo in the east, and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the target of all kinds of slave raids. While slave hunts by the kings of Dahomey were carried out within the framework of the transatlantic slave trade and the expansion of royal palm oil plantations, raids by the Baatombu were also aimed at seizing foodstuffs and cattle. In the colonial period, economic exploitation was at first limited to the export of palm oil from the plantations in the south, which led to a general separation of the south from the remaining parts of the country. A reorganization of the colonial transport infrastructure became necessary when agricultural export strategies were diversified, with the forced expansion of cotton and groundnut cultivation in the north. In addition, three big forest reserves were created after the Second World War. As a result, the region became cut off from all important transport routes. As part of the government’s modernization policy following independence, the people disadvantaged by their peripheral situation were forcibly resettled along the main transport route, where agricultural advisory services, clinics and schools were located. Villages that resisted were penalized in a military manner, lost all administrative functions and found themselves trapped in one of the politically and economically most isolated rural areas of Benin.

A more recent frontier process started with the construction of a new east–west rural road. Since 1997, an increasing number of migrants have been attracted by the availability of land with a high agricultural potential and founded a large number of new settlements with a fast-growing multi-ethnic population. As a result of immigration, the established local political power structures within the host societies have become more dynamic. Much as in central Benin, the formation of new patron–client relationships has reinforced the existing multiplicity of political authorities, the negotiability of their spheres of responsibility and the rivalry between traditional, neotraditional and new political institutions, which compete in shaping political and economic relations with the immigrants.42 At the same time, there is a conflicting constitution of new political entities in the immigrant societies, where local power is legitimized by a person’s status as a firstcomer.
In other words, the chief of a new settlement is its founder. However, this principle of anteriority is very flexible, and chiefs claiming firstcomer status do not lack rivals who challenge their position. In a situation of institutional instability, the immigrants reinterpret the established rules of political interaction, and decision-making structures are continuously renegotiated. In these negotiations, models and ideas about political order established in different home areas interfere with those of previous places of residence of the immigrants, who additionally take over and translate elements from the host society, and thus produce locally modified models of political organization. The emergence of these models therefore takes place in a semiautonomous arena that is continuously influenced by factions of the host society. The latter is influenced in its turn by a multiplex-institutional structure, in which many contrasting historical and social elements are embedded. In this respect, political systems in the settlers’ milieu are partly a result of different local conflicts and negotiations between competing immigrant fractions, and partly an effect of the polycephalism, the multiplicity of sources of social order and political authority, of the host societies.

These dynamics are characterized by three central features of the internal African frontier (Kopytoff frontier): (1) the institutional vacuum, (2) the structural drift of society and (3) the firstcomer principle.

In contrast to Turner, who largely ignores the population encountered by the frontier migrants, or anonymizes it as wilderness, Kopytoff takes into account the presence of a host society, because the margins of the metropolis to which groups migrate due to fission dynamics are not necessarily uninhabited. “These are the easiest frontiers but they are not the only ones”. Like the institutional vacuum highlighted by Kopytoff, which arises due to the encounter of groups at the margins, the idea of the frontier as an uninhabited space is a subjective and politically motivated interpretation by the new settlers: “The definition of the frontier as ‘empty’ is political and made from the intruders’ perspective. . . . In this sense, they saw it as an institutional vacuum in which they could consider themselves not to be morally bound by institutional constraints”.

The Benin frontier described here is not characterized by a void, but by a maneuvering room that is exploited flexibly by both migrants and parts of the host society. This flexibility arises from the fact that the range or effectiveness of the established political authorities in the host society is decreasing due to internal conflicts and the multiplicity of competing claims in respect to decision-making competences. The frontier is not an “institutional no-man’s-land” and is not constructed as such by the settlers. Rather, there is an institutional opulence, which leads to regulatory pluralism as a result of the negotiability of competences. Actors in both the immigrant and host societies
strive for the (re)institutionalization of their own political and social models under conditions of all-round competition and mutual influence.

Kopytoff recognizes the transformation potential of frontier processes. Social models can develop local and regional variants, and the regulatory models of new political entities do not have to be exact replicates of existing ones. "This kind of structural drift might indeed have been one of the mechanisms by which such segmentary systems produced variations within the overall pattern." In this case study, structural drift can be regarded as a product of strategies of reinstitutionalization of political and social models implemented by different groups at the same time and in competition with each other. Here we see a conservative effect of the African frontier, to the extent that some principles of political culture that bind the groups together are reproduced: regulatory pluralism, despotic power structures, clientelism, venality and the links between politics and kin, ethnicity and region. The new settlements thus remain liable to fission, which means that the frontier process is perpetuated culturally, socially and politically.

Kopytoff emphasizes the advantages of being first in a new settlement area. He argues that, even more than the position of first son, first wife or first one in the age hierarchy, the position of being the first settler and founder of a community enables one to gain and to keep various privileges. This firstcomer principle, which Kopytoff finds so important, is also significant for political and social conditions at the northern frontier in Benin. Being recognized as the firstcomer means that one's authority is accepted, and to this day oral traditions of the founding of settlements are a reflection of interests of the different parties concerned. But even when there is no doubt about who is the founder of a new settlement, rivals seeking power in the village will still challenge him. The principle of anteriority can relate to different contexts and spatial scales: first immigrant in the region, first ethnic group, first of an ethnolinguistic group, first in the hamlet, et cetera. Taking into account the relationship between firstcomer and latecomer can help us to understand the new settlement structure of the study area, for in this case the motive of chercher la chefferie has led to the founding of smaller and smaller settlements as offshoots of new immigrant villages, and thus to the establishment of new local frontiers within the frontier.

Kopytoff described the model of the internal African frontier as a primarily local phenomenon, as a process characterized by multiple factors, within which elements of political culture in Africa are perpetuated and existing models of order are retranslated. The agricultural colonization process in northern Benin has followed most of these patterns. If we assume a flexible concept of the metropolis, which includes the regions of origin of the migrants, the places they have stopped at during their travels and the host
society and its social and political models, the constitution of settler societies and new political entities in the transitional space between central and northern Benin can be understood as a current frontier process. If, as Kopytoff assumes, social processes in Africa should be understood in the frontier context, this agricultural colonization offers one of the rare opportunities to study a frontier process from the beginning: “The early stages of small incipient polities, however, have been seldom available to direct observation”.49 In contrast to the Turner frontier, which is characterized by a succession of connected unidirectional waves of settlement, the frontier in this case study is primarily a local phenomenon. Multiple and multidirectional processes create local structures, within which elements of political culture are perpetuated and existing models of governance are retranslated.

The Political Frontier: Violence, Sovereignty and the Geography of Rule

Kopytoff wrote *The African Frontier* as a historical analysis of precolonial African political geography. In this chapter, we have tested the usefulness of the frontier terminology for the analysis of those postcolonial African political spaces where the ambivalent relations between metropoles and peripheries are currently renegotiated. Our analytical interest was to understand the frontier as a rationale of rule with specific inherent spatialities of political (re)order(ing). We have distinguished two different ideal types of political frontier: the Turner frontier and the Kopytoff frontier. While the Turner frontier, originally developed in the study of the American “Wild West”, is driven by a teleological drive to integrate wild zones into the metropolises, Kopytoff’s frontier model applied to a context of institutional vacuum at interstitial spaces in between different kingdoms. Both models of frontier describe different and distinct logics of territorialization, which we have applied to an analysis of the postcolonial political spaces of the Ethiopian–Somali frontier (Turner) and the northern Benin frontier (Kopytoff).

The Turner frontier subsumes the inherent rationale of unoccupied, empty spaces waiting to become civilized. The frontier is the territorial container within which a Hobbesian state of nature is still in place. It complies with Schmitt’s notion of “herrenloses Land”. Both, the image of state of nature and that of “herrenloses Land” imply the geographical imagination of savage or empty territories, of disorderly places devoid of rule. At the Ethiopian–Somali frontier, this state of nature (as untamed society) merges with the everyday image of the conflict-prone pastoralist areas, which is contrasted to the ideal of a highland “culture”—a sedentary culture, which is a requirement
for proper state-making. While we tend to define the frontier territorially—and Schmitt’s dictum of *Landnahme* would suggest just that—the frontier is then a spatially and temporally discrete entity where a state of exception is in place; Agamben would probably suggest that, while we can locate the frontier as a territorial space (the Somali region, for example), the crux of the matter is that the governing logic of the state of exception pervades, and goes beyond the territorial confines of the Somali container space.50

The Kopytoff frontier is characterized by more subtle spatializations of metropolises and peripheries and “no-man’s-land”. The institutional vacuum that characterizes those territories makes them appear to the metropolises as “open to legitimate intrusion”.51 However, Kopytoff also suggests that the incomers and the host societies both are entangled in the emergence of a bricolage of different social orders, resulting in polycephalic local authority structures with constant (re)negotiations of political authority and its sources of legitimacy. The northern frontier in Benin illustrates this process well, where claims to rights and authority, in particular those relating to land property rights, are in flux, and even the “firstcomer principle” is subject to interpretation and negotiation. In Benin, such negotiations and political conflicts have been confined largely to the local political arena.

There is, clearly, a politics of scale to the geographies of rule inherent in different frontier spaces. At the northern frontier of Benin, we analyzed the micro-politics of localized processes of inculturation between the incomers and host societies, while for the Ethiopian–Somali frontier, we described the macro-geographies of a kind of civilizational clash between highland and lowland, sedentary and pastoralist societies and the quest of the political center to colonize and transform the pastoral frontier into “fully governed, fiscally fertile zones”.52 The state’s ambition to tame the pastoral frontier turned out more violent than the polycephalism of the Kopytoff frontier in Benin. But, as the case of the Ivory Coast illustrates, this does not need to be so.53 At the northern frontier of the Ivory Coast, political struggle over who has legitimate claims to territories has turned into an important driver for the violent struggle over political control at the center of the nation-state. The politics of scale at the political frontier also suggests that we find overlapping and multiple dynamics in a particular political space with macro-geographies of the Turner frontier meeting a more polycephalic or hybrid negotiation of political orders in specific localities.

Scott (2009) has reminded us that peripheries are often spaces of multiple sovereignty where different—mostly distant—power holders struggle over control and allegiance of its often scattered populations. This situation has frequently allowed those who inhabit peripheries to juggle between different loyalties, allegiances and alliances. Our suggestion is that the terminology of (political) “frontier” provides a useful framing to grasp these fluid and
fragile geographies of violence and sovereignty, although those struggles take different spatial forms and dynamics.

Notes

14. Reid (2011: 22) describes the frontier as “highly militarized societies—especially when we recognize the frontier... as a fault line and... a contested zone... a zone of conflict and competition”.
22. Eastern Ethiopia is also known as Ogaden, which refers to the region's predominant clan family, the Ogaadeen. Known as Ogaden province during the imperial period and the reign of the socialist-military Derg dictatorship, with the federalization of the country, the region was renamed as the Somali regional state of Ethiopia.
29. See, for example, the 2005 Federal Land Use Proclamation, which states that “Government, being the owner of rural land, communal rural land holdings can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary” (Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation (No. 456/2005, para 5,3)).


46. Despite certain tendencies toward homogenization reflected in the “pan-African models” postulated by him.


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