The *gaf Daba*: Time, Violence, and Development in Mid-Twentieth Century Northeastern Kenya

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(History)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2015

Date of final oral examination: 5/5/2015

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Acknowledgements

In 2011, an anonymous student noted on a teaching assistant evaluation for an Afro-Atlantic History course that I was "truly a slip through the cracks." This sentence fragment, while probably intended as a condemnation, has proven among the most accurate observations to leap out of a student evaluation and play upon my continuous self-assessment. Essentially, what it says is that it is apparent that I was not supposed to be in graduate school and thus I must have somehow managed to "slip through the cracks." Many people helped me do so. The State of New Mexico provided me with a 4 year college scholarship based on a high college entrance exam score and Mayfield High School covered the initial cost of that exam. Teachers at Mayfield helped prepare me, coaches pushed my self-discipline, and peers drove my competitive ambitions and impressive/pathetic alcohol consumption. I think my lower-middle class, white, male, background also helped me "slip through the cracks" in ways that were neither pre-determined nor fully negligible.

My uncle, Daniel Newcomer, certainly helped me prepare for graduate school and warned me to avoid fueling anyone's predisposition to categorize me as a "cow-fucking hick" based on my New Mexico State University pedigree. Ray Sadler helped me, a self-described "lost puppy," get into the graduate school at Florida International University with a thoughtful letter of recommendation on my behalf. Once there, Jim Sweet became my mentor and friend and has shaped my intellectual growth ever since. My friend at FIU, Jaime Price-Anderson, remains steadfast and taught me that if an acknowledgements section was bland and disingenuous then it negatively colored her entire perception of the work that followed. I hope this one doesn't let her down. My time in Miami was sometimes bumbling, usually exciting, and incredibly educational. Darden Pyron, Terry Rey, Jean-Robert Cadely, Daniel Cohen, Elena and

Hayat, the doorman at W6 who I simply knew as "lion," my student David Ebro, the ever-bizarre Phillip Cadden and John Bardunias, and somewhat begrudgingly, Howard Rock, were all important players in my time there.

After completing a Master's at FIU my application to the Peace Corps was "lost" for 6 months before "slipping through the cracks" and getting me a spot in Tanzania. In the tiny village of Lambo, I learned a lot from the books I finally had copious free time to read and long discussions with friends that I was similarly budgeted by the slower and more pleasant pace of each day. Sadiki and Mwacha Senkoro, Samwel Tarmo, John Saturnini, Fokus Mchimbi, Ryan Brady, Lewis and Channa Parish, Tina Silva, Erik Peterson, Kelly Cox, Amy Bruins, Chris Brown, Jillian Lawton, and a lot of people I was only on a first name basis with, all impacted my perception in important ways. Two of them, the elderly *mzee* Zebadayo and a developmentally disabled boy called Petro were my most frequent companions on the bench in front of my house. I don't know what that says about where I fit into the community, but I miss them and consider them integral to who I am.

The same goes for the relationships that I've had the fortune to forge at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in Nairobi. These are the people that immediately contributed to this dissertation and that a more concise person might limit themselves to thanking. Among the first people I met in Madison were a travelling carney from New Mexico with an abiding interest in tattooing, knives, and spare change, and Neil Kodesh. Both helped acclimate me to the shock of living in the Midwest. Once in Madison I was also reunited with Jim Sweet who deserves multiple mentions for his empathy, intellect, and ability to convey the previously unfathomable in simple terms. He is the model of what an adviser should strive to be. However, he sets the bar unrealistically high since he is also a freak of nature with an overactive heart and mind. Florence

Bernault has understood me where others could not and supported me in striving to communicate the sometimes esoteric to mine the valuable insights therein. Emily Callaci and Katrina Daly Thompson both graciously agreed to be a part of my dissertation committee. Emily, not unlike Neil, has been a model of modest brilliance and a great help in conceptualizing where my project connects to others. Katrina pushed me on questions of language and time that she was uniquely positioned to productively challenge.

In terms of challenging arguments, that often took the form of shouting and gesticulation, I am indebted to fellow students and local friends whose patience is laudable and insight invaluable. Probably the least patient dialogues were between me and the definitively irascible Ben Cross, a rock solid friend whose temper is as easily cooled as heated and bespeaks his passion for life. In contrast, Skye Doney is nearly impossible to goad into a fight, preferring actions to words and acting as a genuine friend since arriving in Madison in the same year I did. Athan Biss is cleverer and perhaps also more mischievous than myself and cannot fail to make people laugh as they reflect on his antics. In this he is matched by Patrick Otim who is undoubtably the trickiest of the bunch and the most judiciously self-assured. Phil Janzen has a remarkable ability to teach by listening carefully and an incomparable good nature. Johanna Lanner-Cusin has a palpably voracious mind and a magnetic appreciation for absurdity. Lindsay Ehrisman is a mother hen despite herself, a creative thinker and natural leader. Before I spend too much time highlighting the quiet, contemplative genius of Janey Myers, or the unassuming kindness, practicality, and perserverance of Matt Reiter, let me point to the intense, self-searching, wisdom of Kevin Walters and the genuine-tough-sweetness of Genevieve Dorais. I can only begin to list the wealth of friends I've been lucky enough to meet at UW-Madison. It is a remarkable place of learning.

I would like to say more nice things about so many of the people I've interacted with here. These are not platitutdes but well-earned accolades that speak to the important things in life and I regret that I can't be exhaustive. Preceding me on this path are Nikki Eggers, Sarah Hardin, Lacy Ferrell, Adam Malka, and Dan Magaziner. Caitlyn Tyler-Richards, Dave Bresnahan, Abby Lewis, Erik Hmiel, James Homsey, Dan Hummel, and the wonderful Steve Pierce have all influenced my intellectual world. In Nairobi, I met teachers of various sorts and made numerous true friends who I will do the favor of not naming here. I will only say that the staff of the Kenya National Archives was extremely professional and dedicated to their work. Some helped me "slip through the cracks" of the archival grain. Outside the archives, chewing *miraa* with "Mohammed" and his brothers in Ngara was an experience impossible to replicate elsewhere. "Nimo" made me what I hope is a better person and shared some of the key victories and disappointments of my life with me.

Back in snowy Wisconsin, I would not have been able to truly feel at home without Alberto Ortiz and Derek Taira. If I have "slipped through the cracks" they have done much more and bring with them a perspective that despite the attempts of charlatans to produce simulacra of, cannot be duplicated or faked. Alongside my Madison friends Jeannette Dainty, Greg Melitsoff, Phillip Murray, and Vic McDaniel they helped keep me grounded (and might therefore cringe at this bubbling litany). My family, of friends and blood, is truly large and within it my sister, mother, grandma, and father remain foremost, while my grandfather retains the greatest influence even so many years after his passing. I am deeply in a debt of gratitude and am thankful also for the financial support, via teaching assistantships, fellowships, and external funding, that has kept me alive throughout this academic hustle. *Asanteni sana*.

Introduction: Time and Memory

Remembering and forgetting are highly political acts, especially when played out in national consciousness. The language of memory is time. Dates and the events associated with them occupy a significant place in our catalogue of recollection. They are, more often than not, the thing to which historians pin our memories. For instance, on December 12, 1963, Kenya gained independence from Britain. Jomo Kenyatta became "the father of the nation" and gave charismatic speeches about *harambee* [collective effort] and *maendeleo* [progress/development], the pillars of Kenyan nationalism. In one of those speeches he proclaimed "I have no intention of retaliating or looking backwards. We are going to forget the past and look forward to the future."[1] He was speaking of the post-colonial transition and signaling a policy of reconciliation with Britain. Memories of the Mau Mau Revolt still throbbed in the heads of many Kenyans, particularly the Kikuyu and Luo who were the main political base of the nascent state. Mau Mau also festered in British minds, especially those aware of the excesses involved in its suppression. To the British, Kenyatta offered the possibility of forgetting. To Kenyans he presented the balm of a relatively alien temporal construction, the future. But Kenyatta's call to forget the past in favor of imagining the future was contrary to cyclical ways of measuring movement through life. If the prospect of a numb collective Kenyan amnesia was appealing to the British, the sting of memory, through which people knew themselves, remained preferable to most Kenyans. In truth, nobody could be forced to forget. But the questions that animate historians remain: What did they remember and how did they remember it? What kinds of moments were memories fastened to? What memories were passed on, and among whom were they carried?

[1]*East African Standard* [*EAS*] 13 August, 1963. See also Gordon Dyus, *Twilight of the Bwanas* (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2011), 129. Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism, 1964-1971* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 62.

Communities within Kenya have emphasized different memories of the mid-twentieth century. Historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists have in turn favored particular constellations of such memories. The scholarly narrative tends to begin with colonization, explore Mau Mau, move to independence, and then shift towards contemporary politics. The most notable and influential early work on Kenya is Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya*. Originally published in 1938, Kenyatta used anthropology to advance land ownership claims and call for independence.[2] In 1974, Mwangi Wa-Githumo elaborated on these themes with *Land and Nationalism in East Africa*.[3] There is also George Bennett's straightforward *Kenya: A Political History* which traced a growing political consciousness, of which Kenyatta was exemplary, leading to independence.[4] He in turn was followed, six years later in 1970, by Cherry Gertzel who also focused on the history of Kenya's political elite.[5] In the 1990s, Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale's two-volume collaboration *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* explored Kenyan politics more broadly and applied an unabashed, and sometimes poetic, Marxist lens to Kenya's history.[6] All of these histories can be somewhat paradoxically described as forward-looking histories, driven by questions of Kenya's future.

Mau Mau has dominated historical memory of colonial Kenya. In the words of E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, writing in 1991, "for four decades, Mau Mau has been the conjuncture around which Kenya's pasts and possible futures have been debated, contested and fought over."[7] Here

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[2]Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (New York: Vintage, 1965 [1938]). Kenyatta suggests that Kikuyu should be known as Gikuyu or Gikoyo. Xv n. 1.
[3]Mwangi Wa-Githumo, *Land and Nationalism in East Africa: The Impact of Land Expropriation and Land Grievances upon the Rise and Development of Nationalist Movements in Kenya, 1884-1939: a History* (New York: New York University, 1974).
[4]George Bennett, *Kenya: A Political History: The Colonial Period* (London: Oxford University, 1964).
[5]Cherry Gertzel, *The Politics of Independent Kenya* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1970).
[6]Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Athens: Ohio University, 1992).
[7]E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, "The Production of History in Kenya: The Mau Mau Debate," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 25 (1991): 300.

again, the future is inextricable from the past. Granville Robert's *The Mau Mau in Kenya* was published during the "emergency" and treats the revolt as a "terrorist campaign." Prefiguring language that would be adopted by the Kenyan government in reference to the so-called Shifta War the following decade, he notes "it is the intention of all right-thinking men in Kenya that this menace to the future of the country shall be overcome as quickly as possible."[8] Kenyatta also recognized the potential "menace to the future" represented in Mau Mau when he proposed forgetting the past. But he did so realizing that harnessing that memory in particular ways could help shape the memories upon which to build the future.

With independence the narrative surrounding Mau Mau was revised. It went from being recalled as a series of terrorist attacks to becoming the heroic national struggle for independence. Robert Edgerton's, *Mau Mau: An African Crucible*, as the title suggests, looked at the Mau Mau revolt as the key event in Kenya's colonial history imparting a singularity of purpose to anti-colonialism.[9] E.A. Miguda's *The Luo Experience of Mau Mau* argued for an important Luo presence within the revolt and thus a significant role in nation-building.[10] More recently Caroline Elkins reached a wide audience and catalyzed legal action on behalf of former detainees, with her aptly titled *Imperial Reckoning*.[11] Other notable historians, from Frederick Cooper to Ali Mazrui, have taken on Mau Mau as the ultimate ordeal leading towards Kenyan nationhood.[12]

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[8]Granville Roberts, *the Mau Mau in Kenya* (New York: Hutchinson, 1954). 8-9.
[9]Robert Edgerton, *Mau Mau: An African Crucible* (New York: Free Press, 1989).
[10]E.A. Miguda, *The Luo Experience of Mau Mau: With Specific Reference to the Luo People Living in Nairobi during the 1949-1958* [sic] (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1984).
[11]Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).
[12]Frederick Cooper, "Mau Mau and the Discourses of Decolonization," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988): 313-320. Ali Mazrui, "On Heroes and Uhuru Worship," *Transition* 11 (1963): 23-28. William Ochieng, *A Modern History of Kenya* (London: Evan's Brothers, 1989).

The other major trend in Kenyan historiography has been built around economic enquiries. These have largely sought to understand the failings of independence to deliver prosperity. Among the most interesting scholars on the subject was Okello Oculi, who published both poetry and economic research.[13] After working with Crawford Young at the University of Wisconsin, Oculi wrote a comparative study titled *Political Economy of Malnutrition* which looked at hunger and politics, through an assessment of labor and capital production, in post-colonial Nigeria, Kenya, and Jamaica.[14] He concluded that each of these places increasingly relied on food imports, sold for profit, at the same time that any profits from such capital accumulation tended to be invested externally, ultimately resulting in hunger. In 1974, Colin Leys treated the topic of economic history in *Underdevelopment in Kenya* explaining how the Kenyan economy favored settlers through biased land adjudication, continued loans, and favorability to foreign capital and monopolies.[15] In 1980, Nicola Swainson explored the post-colonial transition in a more positive light within her *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya*. She argued that between 1918 and 1977 a class of Kenyan capitalists had emerged and found success in marketing consumer goods.[16] Four years later, Christopher Leo took up a Marxist reading of the economic history of Kenya in his *Land and Class in Kenya*. He postulated that agricultural investment rather than industrial production would most benefit Kenya in the future.[17] Frederick Cooper has also written impressively on the topic, within a broad African

[13]Okello Oculi, *Orphan* (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing, 1968). Oculi, *Prostitute* (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing, 1968). Oculi, "Imperialism, Settlers and Capitalism in Kenya," *Mawazo* 4 (1975): 113-128.
[14]Okello Oculi, *Political Economy of Malnutrition: Colonial Capitalism and Malnutrition in Nigeria, Kenya, and Jamaica* (Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1987).
[15]Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*.
[16]Nicola Swainson, *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya, 1918-1977* (London: Heinemann, 1980).
[17]Christopher Leo, *Land and Class in Kenya* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984).

context, in his *Decolonization and African Society*.[18] All of these studies focused on land and labor as the keys to understanding Kenya's history.

Alongside the core of Kenya's historiography, focused on Mau Mau and economics, is a parallel cannon of books on the Maasai and the Swahili Coast. Tom Spear has been involved in the production of both. He explored land tenure and social organization on the Swahili Coast in *The Kaya Complex.*[19] He then took on the topic of the transmission and interpretation of Mijikenda oral traditions in *Traditions of Origin and Their Interpretation*.[20] In cooperation with Richard Waller, he edited *Being Maasai,* which explored ethnicity and identity through the example of the Maasai.[21] The Maasai have been especially favored in popular literature, often gleaned from weak anecdotal evidence collected or imagined in the present with little to no attention to historical chains of causation.[22] However, alongside Spear and Waller's academic engagement with the Maasai, are similarly rigorous works like Naomi Kipury's *Oral Literature of the Maasai* and Anthropologist Dorothy Hodgson's, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous*.[23] Much work on the Swahili Coast has focused on its "city states" and peoples before more recently turning to exciting and expanding scholarship on its place in the Indian Ocean World.[24]

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[18]Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society the Labor Question in French and British Africa* (New York: Cambridge University, 1996).
[19]Thomas Spear, *The Kaya Complex: A History of the Mijikenda peoples of the Kenya Coast to 1900* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978).
[20]Thomas Spear, *Traditions of Origin and Their Interpretation: The Mijikenda of Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University, 1981).
[21]Tomas Spear and Richard Waller eds., *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa.* (Athens: Ohio University, 1993). See also Thomas Spear and Derek Nurse, "Maasai Farmers: the Evolution of Arusha Agriculture" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25 (1992).
[22]Mindy Budgor, *Warrior Princess: My Quest to Become the First Female Maasai Warrior* (Guildford, CT: Globe Pequot, 2013) is a particularly egregious example of a fetishized and willfully blind treatment of Maasai culture.
[23]Naomi Kipury, *Oral Literature of the Maasai* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983). Dorothy Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2011).
[24]Some examples include A.H.J. Prins, *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast: Arabs, Shirazi and Swahili* (London: International African Institute, 1967). Christine Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast: Politics, Diplomacy and Trade on the East African Littoral, 1798-1856* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1971). Cynthia Brantley, *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920* (Berkeley: University of California, 1981). Chapurukha M. Kusimba, *The Rise and Fall of the Swahili States* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1999). Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-*

Many of these works share a captivation with the economic importance of the coast. Both the Swahili and Maasai historiography, while prolific, rarely overlap with the political and economic explorations typical of Kenyan national history. This dissertation, though it treats both pastoralism and Islam extensively, can do little to avoid following the trend of leaving these two fields of memory largely peripheral. The state however is very present in this analysis and some further discussion of how it was remembered is therefore in order.

Relatively recent national histories of Kenya have retained a fascination with the political. After the turn of the millennium, David William Cohen and Atieno Odhiambo jointly interrogated the stories around the unsolved murder of a prominent Luo Minister, John Robert Ouko.[25] They used their inquiry as an opportunity to query historical production and especially to point to government corruption, implicitly questioning Kikuyu power. In a tone of conciliatory longing, they note that "Ouko tried to maintain a safe distance from the hurly-burly of Kenya's political debates pitting the Luo against the Kikuyu as well as the intra-Luo debates between the pro-Mboya and the pro-Odinga factions."[26] Ultimately, they suggest that he failed and, like Tom Mboya, was assassinated under suspicious circumstances. Odhiambo's collaboration with Cohen followed on the heels of his work with Lonsdale, *Mau Mau and Nationhood,* which used Mau Mau as a politically charged ingress for exploring similar themes of ethnic politics and the production of history.[27] These key works illustrate how the mainstream of Kenyan

1888 (London: James Currey, 1995). Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse, eds., *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University, 2008). Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California, 2008).

[25]David William Cohen, E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, *The Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University, 2004).

[26]Cohen and Odhiambo, *The Risks of Knowledge,* 175.

[27]E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale, *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority, and Narration* (Athens: Ohio University, 2003).

historiography has largely revolved around Mau Mau and Luo-Kikuyu division, even as it typically concludes that such divisions must be overcome.

The emblems of Kenyan ethnic division and its complementary nationalism have remained Tom Mboya and Jomo Kenyatta respectively. Even so, both men have prominent statues in downtown Nairobi and are generally appropriated, at least within the historiography and at the state level, in the service of proclaiming a unified Kenyan nationalism. Prominent Mau Mau fighter, Dedan Kimathi is also memorialized in statue form within the city toward the same end. To better understand this appropriation some recourse to another prominent figure in the Kenyan political imaginary may be useful. United States President Barack Obama entered the historiography of Kenya with his *Dreams from my Father*, a memoir in which he criticizes both colonialism and the African family, all while advancing the rhetoric of post-racialism.[28] Because Barack Obama is in a position of great power and because his father was Luo, he has been claimed, like Tom Mboya, as a Luo patron and symbol. Jomo Kenyatta and his son Uhuru, the current president of Kenya, play a similar role among Kikuyu.[29] As noted, all such personalities were ultimately symbols in the service of Kenyan nationalism.

The peoples of Northeastern Kenya have no comparable prominent national figures. If Central and Western Kenya are dominated by Kikuyu and Luo (among other groups like Meru, Luhya, and Kamba), Northeastern Kenya is the range of Boran, Somali, Gabbra, Rendille, and Sakuye (and other smaller groups). "Boran-Gabbra" Daudi Dabasso Wabera, the first African District Commissioner to serve in the Northeast, is perhaps the closest thing to a Kenyan national symbol to emerge from the Northeast. But it was his assassins, the *shifta* [bandits], who have

[28]Barack Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (New York: Crown, 2004).
[29]Matthew Carotenuto and Katherine Luongo, "Dala or Diaspora? Obama and the Luo Community of Kenya," *African Affairs* 108 (2009):197-219. Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (New Haven: Yale, 2011).

come to stand for the place of Northeasterners within Kenya. The complexity of Wabera's assassination and of identity politics in Kenya will be explored in detail within the body of this dissertation. For the moment, it suffices to note that the divisions between "upcountry" (pastoral, "Cushitic") and "down country" (agricultural, "Bantu") run at least as deep as the Islamic slave trade and were exacerbated under colonialism. Like the Swahili of the coast and the "Nilotic" Maasai, the region and people of the Northeast stand apart in the historiography of Kenya.

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Scholarly engagement with the Northeast has focused mainly on religion, pastoralism, and politics. Numerous works have explored the adoption of Islam and Christianity within the region. Somalis have a long history as Muslims, going back to the seventh century, and I.M. Lewis has chronicled it extensively.[30] Christian churches emerged in the region in the early twentieth century and began to find some converts in the 1950s. Father Paolo Tablino has explored this history in his *Christianity among the Nomads*.[31] Anthropologist Mario Aguilar has written on Boran religious conversion, especially to Islam in Isiolo District.[32] Aguilar and Lewis have also focused their attention on pastoralism among Boran and Somali respectively.[33]

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[30]I.M. Lewis, *Saints and Somalis: Popular Islam in a Clan-Based Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea, 1998). Lewis, *Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma* (New York: Cambridge University, 1996). Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar, and Saho* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea, 1998), Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: Culture, History, Society* (New York: Columbia University, 2008).

[31]Paolo Tablino, *Christianity among the Nomads: The Catholic Church in Northern Kenya* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006).

[32]Mario Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger, Pilgrim and Voice: Divinatory Processes among the Waso Boorana of Kenya," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26 (1996): 56-72. Aguilar, "The Role of Sarki Dance in Waaso Boorana/ Somali Symbiosis and Conflict," *Anthropos* 88 (1993): 184-190. Aguilar, "African Conversion from a World Religion: Religious Diversification by the Waso Boorana in Kenya." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*. 65 (1995): 525-544. Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla, Kenya" (PhD Diss., London University, 1993).

[33]Mario Aguilar, "Pastoral Identities. Memories, Memorials, and Imaginations in the Postcoloniality of East Africa," *Anthropos* 94 (1999):149-161. Aguilar, "Writing Biographies of Boorana: Social Histories at the Time of Kenya's Independence," *History of Africa* 23 (1996): 351-367. I.M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: the Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1994). Lewis, *a Pastoral Democracy: a Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa* (London: Oxford, 1961).

Anthropologists Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo have written a number of studies on pastoralism and its intersection with religion and politics in Northeast Kenya.[34] They have devoted particular attention to the changing nature of ethnicity in the Horn of Africa, for example, the way some Boran have become Somali and vice versa over the course of the Twentieth Century. These topics have also been the lifeblood of numerous other historical and anthropological studies upon which this dissertation draws.[35]

Dissections of politics at the micro and macro level have also been carried out on the Northeast despite, or perhaps because of, its consistently low electoral participation. Those who have dealt explicitly with the so-called Shifta War have been concerned with placing it within the larger context of the Cold War.[36] The most important synthesis of the so-called Shifta War is that of Nene Mburu, a prisoner during Mau Mau and a Kenyan soldier during the Shifta conflict. His *Bandits on the Border* is essentially a military history and serves as an in depth delineation of the conflicts that comprised the War.[37] But, it is mainly concerned with questioning Somali irredentism and considering the influence of the Cold War, in terms of arms and economic aid, thereby replicating much of the work that preceded it. In his focus on the shifta who have

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[34]Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia* (Oxford: James Currey, 2012). Schlee and Shongolo, *Pastoralism and Politics in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia* (Oxford: James Currey, 2012). Schlee, *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenya* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1989). Schlee, "Brothers of the Boran Once Again: On the Fading Popularity of Certain Somali Identities in Northern Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies* 1 (2007): 417-435.

[35]Gudrun Dahl, *Suffering Grass: Subsistence and Society of Waso Borana* (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1979), Bernhard Helander, *The Slaughtered Camel: Coping with Fictitious Descent Among the Hubeer of Southern Somalia* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2003), Gideon Were and Chris Wanjala eds. *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile* (Nairobi: Government of Kenya, 1986) Richard Hogg ed., *Pastoralists, Ethnicity, and the State in Ethiopia* (London: HAAN, 1997).

[36]See A.A. Castagno "The Somali-Kenyan Controversy: Implications for the Future," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 2 (1964): 165-188. Jeffrey Lefebvre, "The United States, Ethiopia and the 1963 Somali-Soviet Arms Deal: Containment and the Balance of Power Dilemma in the Horn of Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36 (1998): 611-643. Saadia Touval. "Africa's Frontiers: Reactions to a Colonial Legacy," *International Affairs* 42 (1966): 641-654.

[37]Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: The Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea, 2005).

become Northeast Kenya's national figures, his work dialogues with that of political scientists and anthropologists who have offered theories of the contemporary African state more broadly as it intersects with criminality.

These works explore the politics, economics, and ethics of illicit activity. Janet Roitman describes the ambivalent symbiosis of bandits and the state. "Rather than constituting an 'anti-society' composed of a contained and oppositional moral universe— or what is more frequently referred to as a distinct moral economy— bandits, smugglers, and traffickers seek a certain mode of integration by partaking in recognized modes of governing the economy."[38] She proposes that an "ethic of illegality" pervades the Chad basin and has implications for African states in general. This "ethic of illegality" confines illicit activity into a normative framework from which it emerges as nominally licit. Hence, there is a certain etiquette among both police and smugglers which dictates "fair" bribe rates and the instances in which it is acceptable for police to arrest people. Roitman's formulation is similar to William Reno's concept of the "shadow state" in which criminal enterprise takes place behind a façade of legitimate government.[39] It also touches on Jacques Derrida's idea of the "phantom state" in which organized crime performs the functions of the state.[40]

All of these renderings exhibit numerous commonalities. They see the emergence of "phantom states," "shadow states," and "ethics of illegality" as catalyzed by Western domination. That is, banditry in these forms emerges in answer to the political and economic dilemmas created during colonialism (and often the slave trade before it) and confronted during

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[38]Janet Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience: An Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2005) 181. See also, Carolyn Nordstrom, *Global Outlaws: Crime, Money, and Power in the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California, 2007), James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham: Duke University, 2006).
[39]William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).
[40]Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2005).

"independence" resulting in the shadowy forms described by these various authors. In many of these instances the state is not necessarily in direct conflict with bandits and may in fact require them.

How these theories applied to Northeast Kenya in the 1960s is worthy of scrutiny. Historian Hannah Whittaker has rightly expressed the need to move "away from mono-causal, nationalistic interpretations of the event, to focus instead on the underlying socioeconomic dynamics and domestic implications of the conflict."[41] She reports that "the period 1960-63 is […] significant in the popular imagination for being the time 'remembered' as bringing 'politics'" and is "indicated at by the use of the phrase *gaf Chaama* by the Boran."[42] The *gaf Chaama* means "time of political parties" and is a Boranization of the Swahili word *chama* meaning political party. Like shifta, which is derived from the Amharic *sheftanet*, meaning banditry, *gaf Chaama* indicates the distance of mid-twentieth century banditry and politics from those forms resonant in previous memory. Obviously, banditry and politics were not unknown or uncommon in Northeast Kenya prior to the 1960s. But the forms that they took in that period were unique, tied as they were to the newly independent nations of Kenya and Somalia and their emerging political and temporal forms. Such terms arise to translate the alien into the familiar and provide a space for determining meaning out of the imprecise.

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In the process of shaping cultural understandings, and thereby religion and politics, oral traditions often played an important role. Poems and proverbs floated from person to person through the broad expanses of the Northeast where they landed and were at times transformed.

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[41]Hannah Whittaker, "The Socioeconomic Dynamics of the Shifta Conflict in Kenya, c. 1963-8" *Journal of African History*, 53, pp 391-408. Whittaker refers to the period as the Shifta Conflict rather than War.
[42]Hannah Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya: a Social History of the Shifta Conflict, c. 1963-1968* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2014) 122.

For instance, the Boran proverb *Aadan namii finna, namii chinna* [a custom that is good for somebody's well-being is somebody else's peril] offers an opportunity to consider, construct and contextualize an inexhaustible range of practices.[43] Outside of historical context such words can only flutter around without ever touching the ground and providing us with the meaning to make sense of actual events in a particular time and place. Yet these, the rhetorical playthings of elders and children, are laden with clues which burden them enough that they can be captured, offering the reader an opportunity to drive a sterile pin through them and affix a label beneath. This process of capture and translation is how we transform memories and make them our own.

The exchange returns us to the initial questions driving this inquiry. How do we attach memories to time? Why do oral traditions have a timeless quality? How does our sequencing of events differ from other temporal frameworks? What are the political, economic, and moral implications? These are questions that have occupied historians, anthropologists, and philosophers, in particular, since the early days of their professionalization. Scholars have deconstructed and reconstructed in a looping, and often willfully impenetrable, fashion Heidegger's concept of *dasein,* or "being," as relative to time and done the same with the debates of Hegel and Marx about time.[44] They have also focused their critical lenses on the arguments of Clifford Geertz and Maurice Bloch on the subject of cyclical versus linear time.[45] The core elements of contention arising from this body of scholarship are about how and where to distinguish between synchronic, or symbolic, versus diachronic, or historical, time and the relationship between these modes of temporality and othering.

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[43]Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Boran Proverbs in their Cultural Context* (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2007), 15.
[44]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* Joan Stambaugh trans. (Albany: State University of New York, 2010), Norman Levine, *Marx's Discourse with Hegel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[45]Diane Hughes and Thomas Trautmann eds., *Time: Histories and Ethnologies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995), Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), Maurice Bloch, "The Past and the Present in the Present," *Man* 12 (1977): 278-292.

This study draws upon John Mbiti's welcome simplification of these nebulous engagements with time. He claims that African conceptions of time tend to lack a distinct iteration of the future. He states "what has not taken place or what has no likelihood of an immediate occurrence falls in the category of 'No-time'."[46] Meanwhile "what is certain to occur, or what falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena, is in the category of inevitable or *potential time*."[47] Anthropologist Peter Rigby deems Mbiti's observations "inexcusable" but hedges that even though the Maasai, whom he studies, have a concept of the distant future it is one "commensurate with the nature of their social formation and […] not a mere replication of […] the future embodied in capitalist ideology."[48] Thus both he and Mbiti dissociate the future from linear time, through attention to cultural distinctions. However, Rigby describes the movement of time as "the relations of past and present in the creation of a future."[49] But he adds the caveat that this movement is an "adaptation to an always uncertain future" thereby finding himself back in the company of Mbiti's rendering of time.[50]

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[46] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 16. Time was thought of in different ways in mid-twentieth century Kenya. The embryonic Kenyan state espoused a Western derived twelve month calendar with days divided into twenty-four hours. However, Somali and Boran-Oromo peoples in the Northeast organized time in cycles of years, also constituted of days but devoid of hours. Time was further reckoned in terms of age-groups and age-sets who organized corresponding to a complicated calculus of natural cycles which will be discussed further. In short, the Kenyan state adopted a linear model of time while Northeastern peoples espoused a cyclical model. This retreads the debates of Geertz and Bloch but is not confined to the overdetermined suggestion that time in Kenya functioned exactly like time in, for instance, England. Even within linear time in Kenya, the days are divided in 12 hour sections (subdivided into 6 hour sections, *asabuhi, mchana, jioni,* and *usiku*) from 7am to 7 pm and 7pm to 7am. Within Islam time corresponds to prayer times such as sunrise, midday, and sunset (*alfajiri, alasiri, isha*). Thus the observation of natural cycles remains a part of linear time even as it flattens such cycles.
[47]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy.* Emphasis original.
[48]Peter Rigby, "Time and Historical Consciousness: The Case of Ilparakuyo Maasai," in *Time: Histories and Ethnologies*, ed. Hughes and Trautmann, 209-210. Rigby's reflexivity is likely based on a reading of Mbiti as confining African thought to a strictly defined and unchanging perception of time. I consider this a misreading of Mbiti.
[49]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy.* 225
[50]David Hume's view that there is no possible way of knowing the future, except in terms of probability, and Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of "eternal recurrence", which explicitly denies an end to time, are pertinent here. See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: A Critical Edition*, Tom Beauchamp ed. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Modern Library, 1960).

The temporal is politically charged. While Rigby, like Kenyatta, recognized the political utility of the future and its relationship to hope, Mbiti saw its potential for division and false promises. In synthesizing the observations of Mbiti and Rigby, both of whom worked in Kenya, it is perhaps best to broadly define time as moving in spirals, neither fully returning to or superseding the past. In this rendering both the future and the deep past are potentially in the realm of "No-time" and it is only through attention to memory that either can be cogently apprehended, at least in terms of probability. It is particularly interesting then that the Boran conceive of the 1960s, still in living memory, as something akin to "No-time."

The Boran describe the period of the so-called Shifta War, 1963-68, as the *gaf Daba* meaning "time stopping."[51] The term *daba*, meaning stop, refers to the internment camps that accompanied Kenyan military efforts in the Northeast.[52] Through this turn of phrase, the Boran associate a temporal watershed, like birth or death, with confinement and the memory of the war. But "time stopping" is dissonant in a way that birth and even death are not, such that the *gaf Daba* was truly a "new thing." Whether positive or negative, a temporal framework absent of a future is not one closed to innovation. This is inasmuch as memory is concerned because as a historical analysis this study does not make claims to surpass a diachronic understanding of time. It strives only to attentively represent how memories were narrated by Northeastern peoples in the 1960s, thereby placing a particular set of memories in dialogue with a history that has largely been blind and deaf to them.

[51]Hassan Wario Arero, "Coming to Kenya: Imagining and Perceiving a Nation among the Borana of Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies*. 1 (2007): 292-304.

[52] Mario Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla, Kenya" (PhD diss., London University, 1993), 23. Dahl, *Suffering Grass*, 145, 165, 271. Boran settlements are called *ola*. According to Dahl *daba* is derived from the term for enclosure but is specific to internment camps during the so-called Shifta War. The *gaf Daba* is literally translated as "the time of stop." My spelling of *gaf Daba* follows from Arero, "Coming to Kenya." Aguilar spells it *gaaf Daaba.*

Chapter 1. How Many Miles to the Sun: Imaginaries and Boundary Making and Breaking

Some years ago an Mzee aged 112 gave evidence in court. He had witnessed a bandit robbing a boy, although the crime took place 5 miles from him. Everybody in court was aware that the Mzee could not see 5 yards let alone 5 miles. The magistrate asked 'can you see 5 miles?' The Mzee replied, 'yes, even further than that.' The judge then asked how far he could see. The Mzee answered 'when I was at Wajir Secondary School I was told that the sun is millions of miles away. I can see the sun so why can't I see five miles away?' Everybody laughed, but the Mzee won the case.[1]

This story appeared in 1968 in the first edition of *Kor*, a newsletter produced by the students of Wajir Secondary School. The author, a student named Ali Sigara, toyed with ideas of what constituted legitimate knowledge throughout his version of the story which claimed the old *mzee* was an alumnus of his school. It would have been extraordinarily difficult for a 112 year old man to have attended Wajir Secondary School especially given that it did not exist until the 1960s. The claim that he "won" a court case in which he was an eyewitness, based on the power of his wit, is equally dubious, as is his exceptional age. Yet there are clear truths embedded in this tale.

Wajir Secondary School was one of the premier and precious few sites of colonial-style knowledge production in the North Eastern Province (NEP) of Kenya in 1968. In Wajir, at the time of Ali's writing, the student population of primary and secondary schools combined had risen to a total of 3,354 (4%) out of the 82,876 district residents. For the NEP as a whole the discrepancy was even starker with 7,017 (2.9%) students among the 238,740 residents.[2] These students, nearly half of whom were in Wajir, were generally instructed in incomplete buildings, at mosques, or under trees. This paucity of schools was a product of both colonial neglect of infrastructure and the transient nature of Northeastern settlement.

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[1]KNA: SA/8/3. A.K. Sigara, in *Kor*. Issue 1 (1968). *Mzee* is Swahili for elder. *Kor* is a Somali word meaning camel bell.

[2]Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Kenya Population Census, 1969* (Nairobi, 1970).

Ali's anecdote draws on two separate wellsprings of learning: formal schooling and elders. Wajir Secondary School was an educational institution in the colonial tradition, emphasizing discipline and rote learning. The old *mzee* was typical of African education in which elders employed questions, parables, and other rhetorical devices to impart lessons to youth.[3] Through the story of the old man, Ali explored the interaction between these educational forms and troubled the claims of the former to sole proprietorship of legitimate knowledge. If the old man could see the sun 93 million miles away and yet not see 5 yards in front of him, what use were miles to verifying sight? It was, after all, different ways of seeing that were at variance in the first place. Ali's liminal position between these competing epistemologies thus provides a window into the fragmentary vision, resulting from the multiple ways of seeing, that troubled lived reality in the wake of the so-called Shifta War.

Boundaries: Time, Space, and Identity

The story of the old man looking at the sun brings under scrutiny the making and breaking of boundaries, to reckon spaces between people and places that characterized 20th Century Northeast Kenya. In the early 1900s the British imagined and created, through map making, military might, and collaboration with locals, the Northern Frontier District (NFD) within East Africa. The NFD was made up of the Marsabit, Isiolo, Garissa (Telemuga), Wajir, Moyale, and Mandera (Gurreh) regions (figure 1). In 1909 they sliced the NFD roughly in half through the "'Galla' Line," which separated Somalis to the east from Boran-Oromo or "Galla" to the west. The lines shifted again at Kenyan Independence in 1963 when the fledgling Kenyan government re-imagined much of the area as the North Eastern Province (NEP). The NEP created a new border excluding Marsabit, Isiolo, and Moyale which were west of the "Galla

[3]For a documentary illustrating these different forms of education among the Boran see James Blue, *Kenya Boran* (Documentary Educational Resources, 1974)

Line." These 3 districts were in turn incorporated into Eastern Province (EP). By 1964, the "Galla Line" had become known as the "Somali Line" indicating a shift in gaze from west to east. That is, while the British considered the "Galla Line" a check on what they perceived as the inevitable Somali expansion into British East Africa, threatening the White Highlands, the Kenyan Government considered the "Somali Line" a boundary temporarily hindering what they perceived as the inevitable consolidation of the Kenyan state up to the border with Somalia. Entangled in these moving boundaries were the inhabitants of Northeastern Kenya, Southern Ethiopia, and Somalia who inevitably crossed them to obtain water, graze stock, and visit kin.

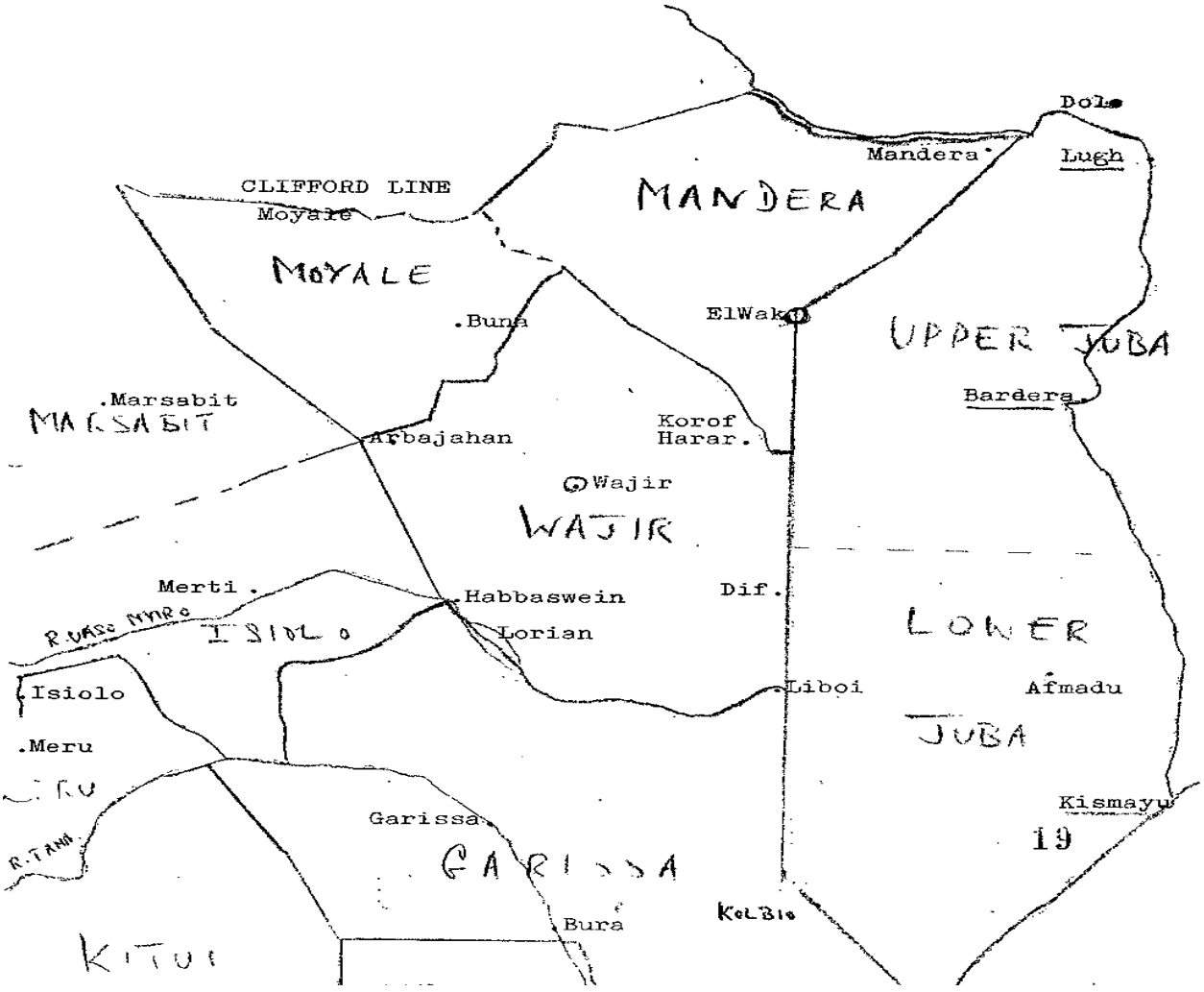

Figure 1. KNA: DC/MDA/7/3. Map of NFD including Upper and Lower Juba in Somalia. The Clifford line was the border between Kenya and Ethiopia.

This chapter pages back and forth through the historical record to provide a basis for understanding the myriad colonial and local re-imaginings of time, place, and identity in 20th Century Northeastern Kenya. In doing so it mimics an understanding of time that coheres with local ontology in the Northeast of the 1960s. As Kenyan scholar John Mbiti observed at the end of that decade "history moves 'backward' from the Sasa period to the Zamani, from the moment of intense experience to the period beyond which nothing can go."[4] *Sasa* is a Swahili term meaning the present while *zamani* means the past and Mbiti is careful to note, through linguistic evidence (the absence of a term for future), that there is no concept of the future beyond the immediate or likely recurrence of natural cycles. Observing a conceptual shift towards inclusion of a future, distinct from the past (zamani) and present (sasa), taking place in the late 1960s, he states "the change from the…traditional concept of time, to one which should accommodate this new discovery of the future dimension, is not a smooth one and may well be at the root of […] the political instability of our nations."[5] This observation coincides with the Boran convention that the watershed period of the so-called Shifta War of 1963-68 was actually the *gaf Daba* or moment when time stopped.

Exploring the meaning of "time stopping" is a key intervention into a historiography that has rarely analyzed local narratives on their own terms. Mbiti advises that "the traditional concept of time is intimately bound up with the entire life of the people, and our understanding of it may help to pave the way for understanding the thinking, attitude, and actions of the people."[6] Given that in Northeastern Kenya time was reckoned through migration following

[4]John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 23. For a personalized account that questions linear time in a West African context see Toyin Falola, *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt: An African Memoir* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004). For a look at the imposition of linear time in an urban African context see Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995).
[5]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 28. Swahili does have the term *wakati ujau* meaning a time to come and thus incorporating probability.
[6]*Ibid.*

natural cycles and proximity to ancestors, the way movement, both literal and figurative was bounded, had a significant impact on how time was experienced. Further, time was and is the idiom through which Boran-Oromo peoples tend to describe the so-called Shifta War.[7] As Mario Aguilar, an anthropologist of the Waso Borana (Ajuran), puts it "to be Boorana then is to respect and be aware of the past that influences the present."[8] Bearing in mind these insights from Mbiti and Aguilar, the goal of this chapter is to historicize the boundaries between now and then (time) by explicitly focusing on the distinctions, from the colonial to post-colonial era, imagined between here and there (place) and us and them (identity).

Boundaries have been explored in meaningful ways in other African contexts. Christopher Gray's work on cognitive maps in Southern Gabon describes a situation in which "colonial […] territoriality involved the imposition of categories and institutions foreign to the peoples to whom they were applied."[9] For instance the farm field or international border was an administrative and economically motivated bounding of space at odds with the proverbial conceit that "the clan has no boundary."[10] Of course clans did have boundaries, which is why there were different clans and prohibitions against particular forms of marriage and so on. However, these boundaries were more fluid, accommodating change, in a way that territorial boundaries rarely could. As Boran elder, Yea Aduba, put it in 1974, "a farm is just dirt, it can't move with a man. If it rains the farm will give food but if God withholds the rain there is no food."[11] Gray's focus

[7]Musa Galaal, *The Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore, Astronomy, and Astrology* (Mogadishu: Galaal, 1968), Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Hassan Wario Arero, "Coming to Kenya: Imagining and Perceiving a Nation among the Borana of Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies* 1 (2007): 292-304.
[8]Mario Aguilar, "Pastoral Identities. Memories, Memorials, and Imaginations in the Postcoloniality of East Africa," *Anthropos* 94 (1999): 158.
[9]Christopher Gray, *Colonial Rule and Crisis in Equatorial Africa: Southern Gabon, CA. 1850-1940* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2002), 2.
[10]Gray, *Colonial Rule and Crisis in Equatorial Africa*, 3.
[11]David MacDougall, *Kenya: Boran Herdsmen* (Documentary Educational Resources, 1974).

on cognitive mapping is useful because even though we recognize that boundaries are imagined, things like borders are often treated as physical realities rather than processes.[12] Like the nation states that they help define, borders cannot be taken as a given from which analysis must proceed but as objects of analysis themselves. During the transition between colonial and Kenyan rule, boundaries were refigured and tangled around the Northeastern peoples who crossed them, like so much barbed wire, leaving them scarred in ways distinct from pre-colonial practices that marked one's place and identity in time.

Background

In 1909, approximately ten thousand Somali pastoralists moved nearly fifty thousand herd animals into the desiccated Northern portion of British East Africa (the area extending from Lake Turkana to Somalia and bounded at the Southwest by Isiolo and the Meru highlands). It was not the first time that their migrations had brought them there. In 1885, a large influx of Somalis was able to break the power of the Orma, a Boran-Oromo group residing within the region that was influential in coastal trade and culture. Looking further into the past, this movement of various pastoralists, particularly Somali and Boran-Oromo clans, has a history traceable in written record to the 15th century and in all likelihood greatly precedes this period.[13]

[12]Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil-Hoehne, eds., *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2010). The editors recognize that "borders are the product of human imagination put into practice," 7. However, the essays and analysis in their work treat borders as a reality, imagined in the past, providing economic resources to groups able to creatively exploit them. This is done as a corrective to what they perceive as the academic tendency to treat borders solely as constraints. While providing good ethnographic evidence for the present and foregrounding a valid complaint, the book does little to historicize the ongoing imagining of borders. In other words they do not treat boundary making and breaking as a long-term historical process in which borders once existed as different imaginings altogether (for instance between different moieties) and therefore, in a cyclical understanding of time, could potentially do so again.

[13]Ethiopian and Portuguese records provide a written source base from the mid-sixteenth century on, while Arabic records provide some information stretching back to the thirteenth century. For an overview see Herbert Lewis "The Origins of the Galla and Somali," *Journal of African History* 2 (1966): 27-46, U Braukamper "Islamic Principalities in Southeast Ethiopia between the Thirteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," *Ethiopianist Notes* 1 (1977): 30-35, Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860* (Red Sea, 1994) and Tsega Etefa, *Integration and Peace in East Africa: A History of the Oromo Nation* (Palgrave, 2012). Information for the period before this, as well as parallel information, is gleaned primarily from historical linguistic methods and oral traditions and has yet to

As in the past, Somali entrance into the region was aimed at access to wells and grazing land. In 1909, as in 1885, this movement encroached upon the water sources and grazing lands of Boran-Oromo groups.

The Boran, or Southern Oromo, had moved into the area en masse in the 1890s in order to avoid military conscription and enslavement in Ethiopia as Emperor Menelik II consolidated control over frontier regions such as the Ogaden and Borana.[14] Upon entering British East Africa they came into competition with the Samburu who the Meru had successfully expelled from areas to the West in the 1870s. The Samburu exodus was simultaneous to Turkana migration into the region, bringing these two groups into conflict as well. Further exacerbating competition was the presence of Gabbra, Garre (Gurreh), Sakuye, and Rendille groups, also transhumant pastoralists.[15]

The so-called "tigre" followed on the heels of the Boran as they entered British East Africa. These "tigre" were reputed to kidnap Boran for enslavement and conscription and were heavily involved in the illicit arms and ivory trades.[16] They were called "tigre" as a derivation of the Tigray people of present-day Eritrea but were comprised of various ethnic groups, sometimes

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produce much scholarship. However, the work that has touched on the deep past suggests that many pastoral groups were initially agriculturalists who adopted herding as a more stable land use strategy. See for instance Gunther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Pastoralism and Politics in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia* (Oxford: James Currey, 2012).

[14]Jon R. Edwards, "Slavery, the Slave Trade, and the Economic Reorganization of Ethiopia 1916-1935," *African Economic History* 11 (1982): 3-14 and Leo Silberman, "Why the Haud was Ceded," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 2 (1961): 37-83.

[15]A.A. Castagano, "The Somali-Kenyan Controversy: Implications for the Future," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 2 (July, 1964): 165-188, Elliot Fratkin, "East African Pastoralism in Transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille Cases," *African Studies Review* 44 (December, 2001): 1-25 and Richard Hogg ,"The New Pastoralism: Poverty and Dependency in Northern Kenya," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 56 (1986): 319-333. Castagano's work is contemporary to the Shifta War and thus limited in that respect while Hogg's is handicapped by adherence to the now defunct dependency theory. But all the works are useful expositions on pastoral movement in Northern Kenya.

[16]For a discussion of British administration and "Tigre" see George Simpson, "Frontier Banditry and the Colonial Decision Making Process: The East Africa Protectorate's Northern Borderland prior to the First World War," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29 (1996): 279-308.

including Boran. In a manner prefiguring "shifta" banditry the "tigre" were autonomous communities who offered an alternative to the governmental forms that spawned them. The officer in charge of the NFD in 1919 illustrated this dynamic when he observed "so little is there to choose between the rule of official Abyssinia and the Tigre that the Boran refused to return whence they came and instead fled away east to Gaddaduma and threw themselves on the protection of the Tigre."[17] Though his objective was to highlight the tyranny of the Abyssinians and "tigre" in contradistinction to the benevolent rule of the British, he never explained why these particular Boran chose to flee to the "tigre," ostensible slave raiders, rather than the British. Instead, his observation highlighted the constraints of colonial systems and illustrated the criminalization of alternatives to them.

The British were concerned with checking Somali and "tigre" incursions into British East Africa. In response to the 1909 Somali influx the British Colonial Administration established the "'Galla' line."[18] "Galla" is a now pejorative term used to describe Boran-Oromo peoples. The "'Galla' line" was intended to separate Boran-Oromos and Somalis thereby providing a buffer to the White Highlands, where the majority of European settlers resided, as well as to impede "tigre" sorties. In 1964, the Civil Secretary writing to the Commissioner of Police summed this approach up stating, "during the last 60 years a main plank of policy has been to contain and hold the Somali penetration of the Northern regions of this country."[19] Boran-Oromo groups were restricted to the West side of the line while Somalis were expected to remain to the East

[17] KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/5. H.B. Kittermaster to Chief Secretary, 1919.
[18]The NFD was comprised of the Marsabit, Isiolo, Garissa, Wajir, Moyale, and Mandera districts. The North Eastern Province, established in 1963, excludes Marsabit, Isiolo, and Moyale districts. For expedience I use NFD and NEP interchangeably to refer to these 6 districts, signaling the colonial era with NFD and post-independence with the NEP. Thus I include the former NFD provinces within the NEP even though Marsabit, Isiolo, and Moyale actually fall within Eastern Province.
[19]KNA: BB/12/51. P.E. Walters, Civil Secretary, to Regional Commissioner of Police "Somali Infiltration into the Boran Areas of Isiolo District Eastern Region." 28 February, 1964.

(Eastern Region, comprised of Marsabit, Isiolo, and Moyale, is to the West of the NEP). The idea, however poorly conceived, was that without such restriction Somalis would continually move further and further into British East Africa initially befriending Boran and then destroying them. This convention held such that in 1964 the regional government agent reported that "seasonal trespass takes place along the whole length of the 'Somali Line' and unless dealt with ruthlessly every year, becomes permanent infiltration."[20] The trespass in this case included Waso Borana (Ajuran) who Somalis had, to the mind of colonials and their Kenyan scions, successfully "infiltrated" just prior to the inception of the "Galla Line" in 1909. Building on the reasoning behind the "'Galla' line," in 1926 the NFD was deemed a "closed district" (figure 2). This served to circumscribe the groups on either side of the line and eliminate legal movement to and from the district. In 1934 the NFD was amended to a "special district" and pass cards were issued in order to regulate movement between its constitutive districts.[21]

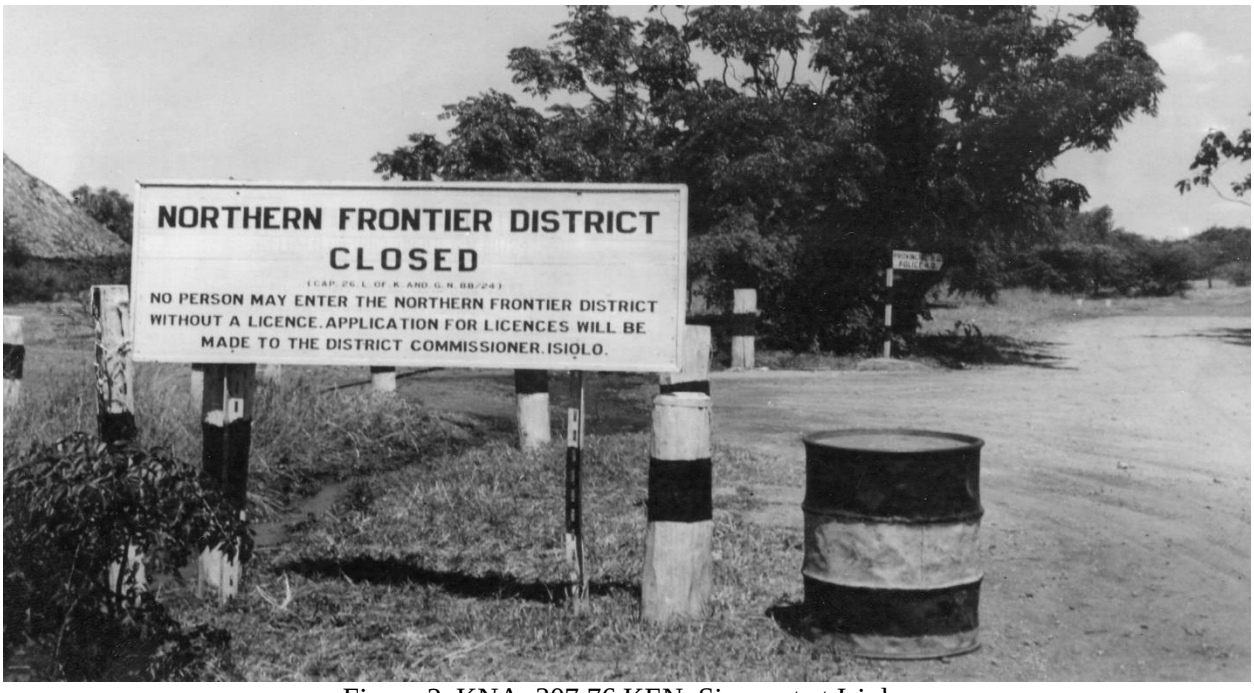

Figure 2. KNA: 307.76 KEN. Signpost at Isiolo.

[20]KNA: BB/12/51. Regional Government Agent to Civil Secretary "Somali Tresspass into Eastern Region" 1 September, 1964.
[21]Recall that the NFD though referred to as a "district" was actually comprised of 6 different districts.

Paralleling these restrictions on migration, the colonial administration attempted to reinterpret ancestral mythology to fit the rubric of territorially defined "tribes," thus hardening the meaning of kinship. Through a geographically bounded distinction between "Galla" and Somali the British extrapolated tribes from more fluid clan lineage structures. These colonially constructed tribes were derived from a British understanding of the intricacies of lineage alongside more fixed ideas of land tenure. For instance, the land linked affiliation that the "'Galla' line" required left Degodia Somalis included among the "Galla" while Ajuran Oromo (Waso Borana) were considered Somali because each group was respectively on the "wrong" side of the line. Based on their geographic and affined position at the moment of British consolidation of power in the region, various groups were classified in ways that were opposite to those which they occupied at other historical moments. These identities were then extrapolated back to the primordial often leaving the process of clan realignment, which continued despite British regulation, to appear chaotic or, more often, duplicitous to the British. In some instances British enforcement of ethnic and geographical divisions eliminated the opportunity for clan reconfiguration altogether.

Ethnic distinctions, however, were only one division that the colonial encounter exacerbated.[22] In the British racial schema both Somali and, later, Boran-Oromo groups were classified as "Asians" and provided with greater employment and business opportunities than those people designated "Africans."[23] The classification of Somali and Boran-Oromo peoples as

[22]Gunther Schlee, "Brothers of the Boran Once Again: On the Fading Popularity of Certain Somali Identities in Northern Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies* 1 (2007): 417-435.
[23]KNA: AG/1/6. Somali Exemption Ordinance, KNA: 967.62 MEM. *Memorandum of the Daru Somali Community of Kenya Colony to be Presented to the Hilton Young Commission*, KNA: DC/MLE/2/1/15 Circular Letter No. 2: Racial and Tribal Classifications. 25 April, 1961. During the 1950s NEP Somalis successfully petitioned to be counted as "Asian" rather than "Native" by formal complaint and insistence on paying the higher "Asian" head tax as opposed to the lower "Native" rate. The Boran and other NEP groups followed suit. This identity politics had a long history in which Somalis had previously been classified as "Asian" from 1919-1921.

"Asians" drew upon ideas of the inhabitants of Africa as "Hamitic," "Nilotic," and "Bantu" migrants. "Hamites" (also termed "Cushites") were erroneously believed to have entered the continent via the Middle East and, as such, were distinguished from their "Bantu" neighbors. This distinction was ostensibly linguistic but included other more essentialist traits. "Hamite" Somali and, to a lesser extent, Boran-Oromo groups were considered martially talented and thereby well suited to military and police employment within the NFD. In the 1950s, those willing to radically alter their lifestyle were allowed to settle in "Asian" areas of Nairobi, particularly Eastleigh, and enter wage labor (generally as police) or conduct business ventures denied to other groups. However, the unspoken phenotypic distinction between NFD groups and other "Asians," alongside linguistic and cultural barriers, served to keep them insular even when they did venture to Nairobi.[24]

Below the "Hamitic" and "Asian" NFD groups were the "Bantu" and, to a lesser extent "Nilotic," "African" majority constituting the greater portion of the rest of Kenya. In practice they tended to be groomed for either menial labor or the clerical positions that they were able to parlay into government administration at independence. There were of course many exceptions and the Kenyan Police drew from all populations, preferring Somalis in the NFD and "Bantu-Nilotes" elsewhere. In contrast to the "Hamites" who the British considered as something of noble savages, the "Bantu" were viewed as something akin to trained monkeys. A Scottish travel narrative offers an example of these views in describing a trek through the NFD: "The driver is a slim young Somali […] he comes of a race inured by centuries of the toughest living conditions in Africa […] he may be driving a truck, but he is a savage underneath and I envy him his desert

[24]Arero, "Coming to Kenya," 292-304 and W. Robert Foran, *The Kenya Police 1887-1960* (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1962).

stoicism."[25] The driver is contrasted with a Kikuyu porter named Mathai. "Mathai looks frightened and bewildered; all Kikuyus are scared bow-legged of Somalis, but he humps our baggage up just the same and tries to put on a sophisticated act at the savages. He has moral support for this from his pork-pie hat and spiv shoes."[26] These racist fantasies buttressed the colonial hierarchy and helped to dismiss resistance and self-determination, such as Mau Mau in Kenya and the Dervish movement in Somalia, as madness.[27]

The staying power of these ideas was in the fact that they overlaid local prejudices in which Northeastern peoples saw "Bantus" or "down-country tribes" as lesser based on their adoption of agriculture and their history of enslavement in the Islamic world. Colonial officials and later Kenyan bureaucrats tapped into local biases citing the well-established convention that Somalis refused to work with their hands. When officials claimed of Garissa residents that "they have not realized the value of manual labor which is considered an inferior job" they were actually referencing pastoral self-representation to which "Bantus" were a foil.[28] That is, "working with the hands" meant doing agricultural work and building permanent structures. Both of these practices were widely considered to be beneath pastoralists, though women were responsible for constructing temporary structures highlighting the gendered aspect of stereotypes predominating in Northeast Kenya. Such hard feelings also manifested in actions. In 1963, "a combined patrol of 3 Kenya Police (1 Kamba, 1 Turkana, and 1 Somali) […] were chased out at

[25]Alastair Gordon, *A Slight Touch of Safari* (London: Max Parish, 1952), 82.
[26]*Ibid*, 81. For further vignettes illustrative of racial imaginings see W. Robert Foran, *A Cuckoo in Kenya*, 32 and J.A. Hunter, *Hunter* (Harper and Brothers, 1952), 36. Foran describes Mozambican "Bantus" as "very angry and threatening, jabbering volubly like so many monkeys." Hunter claims "WaArusha" would work "themselves into a noisy gabble that sounded like the chatter of monkeys."
[27]Abdi Shiek-Abdi, *Divine Madness: Mohammed Abdulle Hassan, 1856-1920* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed, 1993), R. Mugo Gatheru, *Kenya: From Colonization to Independence, 1888-1970* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2005) and Sloan Mahone and Megan Vaughan eds. *Psychiatry and Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
[28]KNA: Garissa Annual Report, 1967. See also KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2, PC/EST/2/3/2, PC/GRSSA/3/3/3 and PW/3/1. For a discussion of racial thinking in East Africa see Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2011).

Benane because there was a down country Police tribesman amongst them."[29] During the conflicts of the 1960s Northeastern peoples were known to disparagingly refer to soldiers as *Mathmathow*, a Somali term meaning "kinky haired," thereby emphasizing a common somatic trait as a marker of difference.[30]

"Down-country" groups saw Northeastern peoples as "snakes" that lacked civility and were too violent to be trusted. "Down-country" groups could express such "common knowledge" by use of the Swahili proverb "*Mgala hapawi fumo. Nyumba haifugwi nyoka*" [the 'Galla' must not be given a spear; snakes must not be reared in the house]. Alongside "*Mgala muuweni na haki mupeni*" [kill the "Galla" and give them what they deserve] these conspicuously harsh adages serve as surprising expressions of vitriol within the generally more prosaic realm of proverbs.[31] Such sayings marked "Galla" or Boran-Oromo peoples as "snakes." This idiomatic convention drew on the Boran-Oromo practice of keeping puff adders for use in religious ceremonies. According to an early colonial official "when the first Kaalu (priest) was born, it was noted that a snake and a black bullock were present, hence the Boran worship of snakes."[32] Though the Boran did not "worship" snakes, as chapter 2 will make clear, their practice of snake keeping made a strong impression on outsiders. Through this association, "Galla" became a pejorative term, symbolized as a snake, and connoting a nefarious propensity for violence.

Boran-Oromo proverbs offer a range of observations on insider and outsider status as well. The complete reverse of its Swahili counterpart "*heri jirani mzuri kama ndugu mle kule*" [a good neighbor is better than a distant kinsman] is the Boran proverb "*dansa orma hama ufiit irra*

[29]KNA: BB/12/51.
[30]Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: The Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea, 2005).
[31]Jan Kanppert, *Swahili Proverbs* (Burlington: University of Vermont, 1997), 83.
[32]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. "Notes on Tribes Resident in the District." For ethnography detailing the continued practice of snake keeping see P.T.W. Baxter and Uri Almagor eds., *Age, Generation, and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organizations* (London: C. Hurst, 1978).

jira" [a bad kinsman is better than a good stranger].[33] Yet "*galat Waata, eegen halo*" [the gratitude of a Waat is vengeance] looks a lot like the Swahili proverb "*Mgala hapawi fumo. Nyumba haifugwi nyoka*" [the 'Galla' must not be given a spear; snakes must not be reared in the house]. The Waat (Waata) were comprised of hunter-gatherer peoples who claimed kinship with Boran. Waat and Boran traditions both claim that the Waat were Boran before becoming prideful and being punished by *Waaqa* (God). Waat remain important participants in Boran and Gabbra rituals. [34] Essentially the Waat were marginal peoples among the already marginalized Boran-Oromo.

Both the invocation of the "Galla snake" and "vengeful Waat" relied upon a certain backhanded respect. The "Galla" and Waat could both claim second class affined ties to other groups but remained distinct from them. This "Gallaness" or "Waatness" was ultimately considered immutable. The Waat were respected in terms of ritual and environmental knowledge but this same knowledge was construed as both backwards and dangerous. So-called "Galla" were seen as martially adept, in an unrefined sense, and therefore threatening and savage. Raising deadly snakes was both fascinating and frightening. Hunting with poison was innovative and suspicious. According to these folk assessments, a Waat could only repay kindness with vengeance and was therefore untrustworthy. Meanwhile a "Galla" knew only how to kill and was best killed first or left alone to the bush, just like a snake.

Such prejudices continue to manifest in discourse about the Northeast. The scholar who transcribed the Swahili proverbs above in 1997, accompanied them with the "explanatory" note

[33]Abdullahi Shongolo and Gunther Schlee, *Boran Proverbs*. 32.
[34] For a discussion of Waat mythology and marginalization see Aneesa Kassam and Ali Balla Bashuna, "Marginalization of the Waata Oromo Hunter-Gatherers of Kenya: Insider and Outsider Perspectives," *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 74 (2004): 194-216.

that "the Galla are aggressive people who cannot control their anger."[35] Hence he built on local knowledge to express a larger dialogue of savagery. If the "house" of the "Galla snake" proverb represented Kenya then the place of Boran-Oromo peoples in the modern nation-state was outside of it. In the 1960s "shifta," meaning bandit, came to surpass "Galla," thereby extending the negative connotation to other groups, most notably Somalis, and marking all Northern pastoralists as potential criminals. In the words of Garissa's Community Development Officer, John Nyaribo, pastoralists were "hot blooded and cruel."[36] The beauty of "shifta" was that, like the contemporary designation "terrorist," it avoided the complexities of relationships within the Northeast and lumped everyone together as for or against the Pan-African, progressive, Kenyan nation-state. Meanwhile it tacitly denied Northeastern peoples full citizenship were they to favor incorporation into the Kenyan "house." Obviously a "Galla snake" could never be truly Kenyan because it was foolishness to rear a snake in the house.

Like the "Galla snake" the characteristics of "shifta" were inclusive of backhanded respect. Kenyan Senator K. Kipury, a Maasai, gave an indication of this in claiming "the shifta were a slender people and fast and soldiers composed of fat men from the shores of Lake Victoria or from Nyeri or Kiambu could not succeed in fighting the shifta."[37] His solution was that "people who were slender like the shifta should be recruited to fight the latter."[38] This suggestion allowed Senator Kipury to pledge loyalty to the Kenyan state (he was careful to exclude Kikuyu from his caricature of overweight men), in a climate in which pastoralists were suspect in general, while maintaining the ostensibly positive martial and racial ascriptions

[35]Jan Kanppert, *Swahili Proverbs*.
[36]KNA: Garissa Annual Report, 1967.
[37]"Action of Shifta Helpers Urged" *East African Standard* [*EAS*], July 2, 1965.
[38]*Ibid*.

relative to pastoralists that the colonial period had helped to establish. His reasoning also relied on a rendering of "down-country" men that accorded with stereotypes of "Bantu."

Despite a general consensus that the "shifta" were slender and fast they remained largely incorporeal. The *East African Standard* reported of herding operations in the NFD that "Kenya Army, Kenya Police and tribal police […] guarded the cattle against surprise attack against the invariably unseen shifta."[39] In 1966, The Provincial Commissioner of North Eastern Province (NEP), Mr. J. Musembi described the shifta in the following terms, "the shifta don't wear labels and we cannot identify them when they move about the manyattas."[40] This was apparently quite vexing to the Minister for Co-operative and Social Services, Mr. Ngala, who complained that the "shifta" were "'mere hungry robbers' who had nothing to offer Kenya other than trouble." He challenged them to "come out openly and face total destruction from Kenya's security forces" indicating both his frustration and the place of the "shifta" in the Kenyan social body.[41]

In order to reconcile the fear of an unseen enemy with faith in Kenyan nationalism the attempt was made to label "shifta" through registration. The Kenyan government required that all males over the age of 16— from selected tribes— in the Northeast be specially registered with the government. A newspaper announcement provided a litany of the "tribes" (most of which were Somali clans) from which "shifta" could emerge. It decreed "the tribes are: Gurreh, Murule, Degodia, Leisan, Ashraf, Shebelleh, Sheikal, Shermoge, Warabeya, Garabeya, Gurreh-Murreh, Ajuran, Ogaden, Rendille, Gabra, Boran, Burji, Konso, Sakuye, Issaj, Herti, Aulihan, Addwak, and Abdullah."[42] Through the political ethnicity of "shifta" the "'Galla' snake" lurking in the Kenyan "house" became larger and more threatening. During the so-called Shifta War these

[39]"Security Forces Guard a Cattle Drive" EAS, June 10, 1965.
[40]"Support Pledged to Rid Country of Shifta Menace" EAS, February 1, 1966.
[41]"Minister Throws Down Challenge to Shifta" EAS, June 15, 1966.
[42]"24 Tribes Order to Register" EAS, July 2, 1966.

prejudices, which had hardened in the colonial era, were part of everyday harassment and violence.

Thus the colonial legacy in the NFD was to institutionally alienate and isolate the already distinctive groups that resided there from the larger Kenyan population. Through their enforcement of colonial laws and designation as "Asians" Northeastern peoples became perceived as favored tyrants, the antithesis of emergent Kenyan nationalism, which employed the democratic agrarian rhetoric of *harambee*.[43] Through regional segregation, coupled with neglect of even the most basic infrastructure, they were also physically and institutionally isolated from the rest of Kenya. These colonial impositions of borders and pseudo-scientific racial schemas were violently contested and reconfigured in the 1963-68 border disputes that came to be known as the Shifta War.

The So-Called Shifta War

The conventional narrative of the conflict referred to as the Shifta War is that it was driven on one side by the Somali concept of "greater Somalia" represented in the five point star of the national flag. These points correspond to Djibouti, The Ogaden (Haud), the NFD, and the former British and Italian Somalilands. In 1960 British and Italian Somaliland were granted independence from colonial rule and immediately re-united as the nation-state of Somalia. Djibouti remained French administered. The British ceded the Ogaden (Haud) to Ethiopia. The fate of the NFD was left an open question while preparations were made for Kenyan independence. The Somali government was emphatic that the NFD and the Ogaden should be incorporated into the Somali state.

[43]Jennifer Widner, *The Rise of a Party State in Kenya: From "Harambee" to "Nyayo!"* (Berkeley: University of California, 1992). *Harambee* roughly means "everyone pulling together" and is a political ideology that employs the rhetoric of grassroots communal action as central to nation building.

The emerging Kenyan government was equally resolved that the NFD should be Kenyan territory. Kenyan independence would mean defining a new nation. The Kenyan provisional government faced irredentist claims from neighboring states and feared ceding the NFD would open the door for Ugandan, Ethiopian, and Tanzanian incursion on their borders. Irredentism is a political ideology aimed at rectifying the placement of members of a given nation under the governance of separate states through the redrawing of borders to incorporate all members into a nation-state.[44] When applied to Africa, the British viewed Somali irredentism as legitimate because they were considered an anomaly among other post-colonial African nations.[45] That is, they were possessed of a high degree of cultural, linguistic, and religious homogeneity both within and across their borders.

It was the fact that Somalis described themselves as a single nation divided by colonial borders and yearning to unite as one that made the British initially sympathetic to their irredentist claims. The Somali government characterized itself as a genuine nation-state waiting to unify and forge ahead, thereby employing British independence rhetoric for its own purposes. In contrast, the emergent Kenyan government saw no legitimacy in Somali irredentism and considered the NFD a part of Kenya based on a shared colonial legacy of administration as a single entity. Thus they drew upon precedent under British rule to support their claims. They also saw the NFD as the foremost arena for silencing irredentism and illustrating the consolidation of state power. Both Kenyans and Somalis saw each other's claims to the NFD as impediments to self-determination.

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[44]*College Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (Funk & Wagnall's Company, 1945). Irredentism was initially defined as a political ideology "formed in Italy about 1878 to secure the incorporation with that country of regions Italian in speech and race but subject to other governments."

[45]I. M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho* (London: International African Institute, 1955) and Earl Noel Anthony Lytton, *The Stolen Desert a Study of Uhuru in North East Africa* (London: Macdonald and Co, 1966).

In response to Somali demands for the NFD, the British conducted a referendum in 1962. This consisted of meetings throughout the NFD and Nairobi, in which over 80 percent of the NFD population, as well as NFD migrants in Nairobi, voted for secession to Somalia.[46] Outside of the NFD public opinion was strongly anti-secessionist. In 1963, the British stepped aside leaving the NFD to serve as a Kenyan "buffer zone," against Ethiopia and Somalia, in the same way it had under British rule. This was not a new approach for the British as they had proved in numerous other arenas such as India-Pakistan, Egypt-Sudan, etc. The furious Somali government cut diplomatic ties with Britain and continued to press their claim to the NFD on the Kenyan government.

Within the NFD the majority secessionists organized protests and poll boycotts. The Northern Province Peoples' Progressive Party (NPPPP), officially formed in 1960, became the main political party agitating for incorporation with the Somali state. The Northern Province United Association (NPUA) represented the NFD minority who favored incorporation into Kenya, or at least did not wish to be governed by Somalia. In June of 1963, two Somali gunmen murdered the District Commissioner of Isiolo and a "Senior Chief" of the Waso Borana (Ajuran), both of whom were believed to be proponents of Kenyan sovereignty. The gunmen then fled to Somalia where they received unofficial asylum; the Somali government claiming no knowledge of them. The Kenyan demand for their return was ignored. With no diplomatic solution in sight, fighting broke out between armed NFD groups and Kenyan police and soldiers. The Kenyan government called these armed groups "shifta" and entered into a protracted struggle to suppress their activities.

[46]Castagano, "The Somali-Kenyan Controversy," 179.

At first glance, the so-called Shifta War may appear to be a simple border conflict but the making and breaking of boundaries it entailed ran deeper than any map or treaty could rectify. The failing of the Somalia vs. Kenya approach that characterizes most literature on the conflict is its inability to explain the involvement of a multiplicity of different groups (Boran, Gabbra, Rendille, etc.) in the war even though they had no stake in Somali irredentism. Moreover, it misses the apparent truth of an Isiolo official's complaint that international borders meant "nothing to the Shifta, but everything to the forces of law and order."[47] In other words, the idea of the nation-state cannot be taken as the uncontested starting point of the so-called Shifta War. Instead it was a particular imagining of people and resources which pitted different ways of life, which never coincided with international borders, against each other.

The burgeoning states of Kenya and Somalia were colonial imaginings. These were territorial boxes drawn around peoples whose dynamism had been rendered static through taxonomic classification. Cognitive maps and territorial concerns characterized colonial and, to some extent still characterize, western engagement with the region. Hence irredentism has typified analysis of the so-called Shifta War. However, these imaginings were also a colonial inheritance to particular "tribes" in Kenya and "clans" in Somalia. There was power in the ideas of presidency and parliament. This chapter is about exploring the ways colonial imaginings intertwined with local imaginings in complicated coils that wrapped around lived experience. It is to the process of a particular colonial imaginary that sought to create water out of dust that this analysis now turns.

[47]KNA: BB/12/51. Regional Government Agent Isiolo to Civil Secretary for Eastern Region "Security- Isiolo District" 17 February, 1964.

Sailing the Seas of Sand

Establishing the boundaries between perception and reality was the playground of imagination. The dissonance between colonial and local imaginings of these boundaries, though sometimes appearing innocuous, was ultimately at the root of the epistemic conflicts underlying mid-twentieth century violence in Northeast Kenya. A concrete expression of the colonial imaginary within Northeastern Kenya was the proliferation of officers' clubs. Each district had its own fanciful establishment. There was the Royal Wajir Yacht Club, the Isiolo Bath Club, The Garissa Curling Club, Moyale's Blue Turtle Club, and Mandera's Whaling Club.[48] Each club included a bar and a swimming pool. The Isiolo Bath Club boasted a pool 20 feet wide, 40 feet long, and between 5 feet 6 inches and 6 feet 6 inches deep from the shallow to the deep end.[49] The pool was built with prison labor at a cost of approximately 200 pounds and served as a template for Mandera's pool. These swimming pools were an odd transmogrification of space in drought-prone Northeastern Kenya, where water, even for valuable livestock, was scarce. Splashing around in puddles was a pastime of children. Adults married, had children, and generally adhered to behaviors considered appropriate to their age-grades.[50] Thus, swimming pools must have appeared rather bizarre indeed.

[48]KNA: PC/EST/2/13/8.
[49]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/12. District Commissioner Isiolo to District Commissioner Mandera "Swimming Bath" 3 September, 1957.
[50]Michael Schatzberg, "Two Faces Of Kenya: The Researcher and the State," *African Studies Review* 29 (1986): 7. Christine Nicholls, *Red Strangers: The White Tribe of Kenya* (London: Timewell Press, 2005). Kikuyu described whites as children based on their "red" skin which was like that of newborns. See also Hugh Matthews, "Culture, Environmental Experience and Environmental Awareness: Making Sense of Young Kenyan Children's Views of Place," *The Geographical Journal* 161 (November 1995): 285-295, Mario Aguilar, "Portraying Society through Children. Play Among the Waso Boorana of Kenya," *Anthropos* 89 (1994): 29-38 and Luise White, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939-1959," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23 (1990): 1-25. In terms of age-grades and roles see Baxter and Almagor eds., *Age, Generation, and Time* and Günther Schlee, *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenya* (Manchester University, 1989).

Strange as they were, what swimming pools did provide was entertainment and respite from the heat for colonial officials whose flights of fancy very often involved the imagery of water, so scarce in the Northeast. The District Commissioner of Mandera playfully claimed for instance that "Mandera Whaling Club is essentially a seafaring institution (indeed Mandera itself is noted for being at sea on most matters)" and that the "section in which the Whaling or Swimming Pool is situate, has been redesignated 'Harbour area.'"[51] Although nautical language and imagery enjoyed the most popularity among colonials in Northeastern Kenya, being "at sea" was simply a reimagining of the perceived isolation of "sweating out one's days in the middle of the dusty desert."[52] The Wajir Yacht club was even built in the shape of a boat.[53] In this sense swimming pools helped reify a nautical imaginary through the hoarding of a precious resource, water, and a reveling in that wealth.

The isolation of a posting to the North Eastern Region also made social drinking an important group ritual for commiserating colonials. The connection between drinking and the opposition between "us" and "them" was expressed in creative form by the secretary of the Mandera Whaling Club in a letter to an alcohol distributor. Complaining that a consignment of gin had partially evaporated due to shipment on a train he states in surrealist prose that

> Some indeed, have suffered injury while attempting to board phantom trains from ethereal platforms and one, poor man, died of thirst whilst waiting at a remote railway station for a train that, in the event, did not appear. Subsequently it was found to have been taken out of service as a result of some of the neighboring nomadic tribesmen having complained of the noise.[54]

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[51]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/12. District Commissioner Mandera to District Commissioner Isiolo "Club Licences" 20 October, 1961.
[52]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/12. F.A. Ellenberger, Mandera Whaling Club to Manager of East African Breweries ltd. 21 October, 1959.
[53]Derek Franklin, *A Pied Cloak: Memoirs of a Colonial Police (Special Branch) Officer* (London: Janus, 1996), 115. Franklin asserts that people avoided the swimming pool because it gave ear infections.
[54]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/12. Secretary of Mandera Whaling Club to Messrs. Jardin Ltd. 13 June, 1959.

The idea of the passage is to underscore the unreliability of trains, a symbol of progress, in the region. But the description also illuminates the distance between Mandera "whalers" and "neighboring nomadic tribesmen." The distinction is even more pronounced when considered in light of the official designation of these "tribesmen" as "Asian." That is to say if colonials were operating on the logic of their ledgers then by their own definitions the imagined complaining "tribesmen" would have to be dubbed "Asians." The fact that they were not demonstrates both the inconsistency of colonial reasoning and the gap they perceived between themselves and "tribesmen."

The manifestation of these imaginings of belonging and exclusion took the form not only of clubhouses and swimming pools but also of dress codes. Each club had a specific tie and by-laws, often referential to other clubs in the region. For instance, members of the Mandera Whaling Club sported "a silver whale spouting a palm tree" alternating with a camel facing "by reason of its blue blood" in the opposite direction to "its relative of the cadet line in Wajir."[55] The spectacle of colonial officials donning ties emblazoned with whales and camels and entering the clubhouse to get extremely drunk and go for a swim was not lost on locals who had their own ceremonies of camaraderie, from chewing *miraa* (catha edulis) or *buna* (coffee beans) to communal gatherings. The crux of the matter, in terms of the interaction between imaginaries and boundaries, was who could enter the clubhouse or the gathering.

If colonials and locals appeared as children to each other from the outside, when they crossed boundaries, metaphorically entering the clubhouse, this perception was inverted and they became infantilized. Often they bristled against this. For instance in a 1962 circular, Government staff in Isiolo were informed that "members of the subordinate staff, particularly the more elderly

[55]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/12. Mandera Whaling Club to Hawke Ltd., London. 1 June, 1961.

among them, dislike being addressed or referred to by their senior officers as 'boy'" because "the use of this form of address is felt to contain a slight to the dignity of the individual."[56] Here colonial "children" referring to local elders as "boy" ignored the proper roles of age sets within the hierarchy of age-grades. This disrespect warranted formal complaint from those who, like Ali Sigara within the school system, sought to assimilate divergent epistemologies. In other words, the clubhouse was a site for establishing manhood. This could be done within the bounds of the administration, as with the letter, or outside of them, in which case manhood was defined in opposition to childhood. Some young men chose the second option when "the [Wajir Yacht] club was attacked by Shifta on the eve of independence in 1963."[57] Whether symbolic or tactical, the move signaled the association of the club with the paternalism of colonialism.

Colonial officials and ethnographers, like P.T.W. Baxter who worked with Boran and I.M. Lewis who worked among Somalis, were treated more cordially and allowed to chew coffee beans and *miraa* while attending annual rituals. Their observations, like those of children, provide sharp insight into questions of social organization.[58] However, as illustrated in the only half-satirical desperation of colonial officials sending out frequent telegrams reading things like "please dispatch urgently 12 white horse label whisky" and drunkenly singing "For He's a Jolly Good Whaler" in the confines of nautically themed clubhouses, the infantilizing of "others" was not unidirectional.[59] If on the one hand locals were not allowed in the clubhouse and their livestock could not water at the pool, on the other hand the clubhouse stood as a monument of isolation and the swimming pool a testament to the perpetual and irrational childhood of the

[56]KNA: DC/ISO/2/23/6. Service Circular No. 7 "Staff Relations." 22 February, 1962.
[57]KNA: PC/GRSSA/ 3/3/4. Wajir District Annual report 1963.
[58]P.T.W. Baxter, *Age, Generation, and Time*. I.M. Lewis, *Saints and Somalis: Popular Islam in a Clan-B*ased *Society* (Red Sea, 1998). Mario Aguilar, "Portraying Society through Children."
[59]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/12.

colonial official. President Daniel Arap Moi illustrated the perpetuity of the idea in 1984 when he said "if a foreigner asks irrelevant questions about your country, you should ask him why he was interested in these things instead of going swimming."[60]

In spite of daily interactions that defied cold logic, colonials maintained great faith in the construct of rationality. The persistence of this uncritical belief in rationality was so strong that it is evident even in the writings of radical scholars of the time such as Frantz Fanon, whose faith in Marxism was straight out of the intellectual lineage of the colonial education system, which he strongly criticized.[61] As anthropologist Johannes Fabian puts it "a truly radical critique needs to address the very concept of rationality, especially the built-in tendency of that concept to present itself as outside and above historical contexts."[62] Thus, if the "boy" established himself as a man in the "clubhouse" like the student Ali Sigara or in opposition to it like the shifta who attacked it, then it is important to understand the boundaries on opportunity that led to his development. In an African understanding of time one cannot simply shake off the past (zamani) for the future, if it exists, because the substance of the future is the past. That past is not populated with rational actors any more than the present is.

"Everything is on the Files"

While clubhouses and their pools were a particular organization of space within the constituent districts of Northeastern Kenya, the districts themselves were also tied to colonial imagining and at odds with local visions of space. A central discrepancy was that colonial officials "knew" Northeastern Kenya largely through writing, in the form of maps and files. Yet

[60]Schatzberg, "Two Faces of Kenya: The Researcher and the State," 7.
[61]Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1963). See also Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism: A Poetics of Anticolonialism* (New York: Monthly Review, 1972). Though Fanon and Cesaire took aim at French colonialism in particular their work was intended to address the lives of colonial subjects worldwide.
[62]Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 4.

constraining their own imaginations to such sterile confines was both unappealing and ultimately impossible. The District Commissioner of Wajir, P.G.P.D. Fullerton illustrates this tension through his inclusion of an excerpt from the 1960 memoir *A Tear for Somalia* as the preface to his 1961 handing over report. A handing over report was a document detailing local personalities, "tribes", resources, etc. meant to provide advice and help a new District Commissioner get their bearings. In the excerpt prefacing the handing over report, a young official talked with his predecessor over gin as he prepared to take over administrative duties. Fullerton quoted the closing lines: "'what about the handing over notes. What about this? What about that? What should I do?'" To these quandaries the author, Major Collins, responded "'it is all on the files […] everything is on the files. The answer to this. The answer to that.'"[63] Fullerton chose an excerpt from a memoir about the very process of handing over administrative duties as a guide to his handing over of administration in Wajir. It was in that sense a picture of a picture. Fullerton's inclusion of this dialogue indicates that he considered it both apropos and edifying to the situation of colonial administration in the Horn of Africa. How these files, supposed to be rife with answers, were created speaks directly to colonial imaginings of the NFD, itself a colonial construct forged in conversation with local perspectives, often across purposes.[64] Place names like Marsabit and Wajir were local words that referenced cultural, geographical, or climatic features but they were adopted in the service of a colonial territoriality that bounded them in ways alien to their origin. Small scale epistemological rifts in the rendering

[63]KNA: SA/15/17. P.G.P.D. Fullerton, Handing Over Report. 1961.
[64]For a good overview of this dynamic see Wyatt MacGaffey "Dialogues of the Deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic Coast of Africa" in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*. Stuart Schwartz ed. (New York: Cambridge, 1994), Paul Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa 1400-1948* (New York: Cambridge, 2010), and Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*. For a discussion of this process relative to territoriality see Christopher Gray *Colonial Rule and Crisis in Equatorial Africa*. These works in their totality contribute to a more robust understanding of inter-cultural discourse and territoriality in Sub-Saharan Africa.

of things like place names were based on fundamentally different readings of space and multiplied exponentially within the files.

Colonial imaginings were put to paper with the intention of collapsing time and space and easing administration. Renderings of huge swaths of land were shrunk down to the size of a tabletop map and descriptions of massive clans across generations neatly filed away in an office. Later administrators could consult these files to "know" who was who and where was where. Keeping people in their place to ensure security was the primary concern of NFD officers. Therefore, they had to know who and what those places were and strove to do so through careful taxonomy and boundary making. A 1943 communication written by the District Commissioner of Marsabit, one of the 6 administrative areas that comprised the NFD, provided a good example of this colonial lens.

> I have marked my boundary in blue pencil dotted to distinguish it from the D.C. Wajir's line which is incorrect vide your LND. 16/1/2/375 of 12/5/43. I have divided the Leasehold Area and the Boran and Sakuye Area by a dotted line also. In the first area live Isaak and Herti Somalis, in the second Boran and Sakuye and sometimes Gabbra.[65]

Here the Commissioner, T.G. Askwith, provided his vision of Marsabit District and its blue-dotted boundaries, as well as the people within them, to be filed away and cross-referenced to another file. This contrasted with the District Commissioner of Wajir's representation of Marsabit, thus Askwith pitted his objectivity against that of his peer and in so doing illustrated the subjectivity of colonial rationality and boundary making.

For the boundaries imagined by colonials to have any everyday significance they had to be manifested in the real world beyond the files. The 1952 Director of the Survey of Kenya, J. Loxton, broke the process of boundary making into "three distinct stages: - reconnaissance, pillar

[65]KNA: DC/ISO/3/6/13. T.G. Askwith to Officer in Charge of NFD, "Boundaries Map" 21 September, 1943.

building, and observation."[66] He was talking in terms of triangulation which used heliographs and pillars "of concrete, four feet high and 16 inches diameter, painted black and white, and usually sited on hill-tops."[67] This triangulation was done in order to map large areas efficiently. The process was fairly precise and therefore meticulous and Loxton asked that his survey officers "be given any assistance they may require, particularly at the stage of pillar-building, the purpose of which is sometimes misunderstood by the local inhabitants."[68] This assistance tended to take the form of armed guards and conscripted laborers because the "misunderstandings" tended to involve vandalism and reticence to aid survey projects.

The idea of "pillar building" is a useful way to approach epistemology within Northeastern Kenya. While the British built pillars in order to "build pillars" such as maps and "tribes" with which to triangulate their position vis-à-vis locals, it was not unheard of for Northeastern peoples to build pillars of their own. For instance, the Rendille marked paths with *hubulluk* which were stone cairns on which people placed grass or small pebbles on one side when travelling away and the other when returning. In a 1943 ethnography of the Rendille "on the files" in the colonial office, J.K.R. Thorpe explained of *hubulluk* that "the origin of these is said to be that at sometime in the past when villages were moving one lot went one way and the others some other way, the former arriving in safety and the latter meeting with disaster."[69] He noted "as a result, villages now moving in that area must always go through the Hubulluk, on the road that formerly proved lucky."[70] The practical application of this tradition under British administration was that "free access to the Horr Valley will therefore always be a necessity for

[66]KNA: DC/ISO/3/6/13. Director of Surveys, J. Loxton to DC Isiolo, "Triangulation Program" 25 February, 1952.
[67]*Ibid.*
[68]*Ibid.*
[69]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/10. Marsabit Political Records, "Anthropological and Ethnological: The Rendille."
[70]*Ibid.*

the Rendille if they are to abide this ancient custom."[71] Whether or not *hubulluk* were an "ancient custom" they were already well established prior to colonial administration and challenged the black and white triangulation pillars of British surveyors. While the goal of triangulation was to bound and subsection East Africa into districts and "tribal areas", the impetus behind *hubulluk* was to act as a compass ensuring free movement and safe migration.

If *hubulluk* could be used to circumvent survey pillars and secure a measure of free movement via claims to an "ancient custom" mimetic enough to resonate with the colonial imaginary, another strategy was simply to remove pillars altogether. In 1960, "Somalis" destroyed a survey pillar near Isiolo. The previous year, Turkana prevented a survey team from working in Lomelo, near Isiolo, and were alleged to have destroyed a pillar in the same region, though it was later found to be intact.[72] Such acts were relatively frequent and the Provincial Commissioner of the NFD perceived the issue thus:

> This region of desolate bush, covers half the entire land area of the colony, it has four International Frontiers, which are plastered with survey beacons over a distance of hundreds of miles, the inhabitants of the Province, are primitive nomadic pastoralists, who hate and detest survey marks of any sort, they regard them as tangible issues, which the Government intends as a means of inhibiting their grazing and water movement pattern.[73]

Prejudiced as it may be, the observation sums up the core of opposition to colonial "pillar building" rather succinctly. Despite little access to or concern with "the files", pastoralists recognized that the boundaries of the colonial administration were at odds with their own and that this had important consequences for their access to grazing and water.

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[71]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/10.
[72]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/13/12.
[73]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/13/12. Provincial Commissioner P.E. Walters to Director of Survey of Kenya, "Destruction of Survey Stations" 19 October, 1960.

All of this information was indeed strung about throughout the files, but it seemed the "answer to this" and "the answer to that" was still quite elusive to colonial officials. Even if the Provincial Commissioner of the NFD in 1960 had a good sense of pastoral opposition to boundary and triangulation pillars, he could not abide such opposition. And even if administrators understood something of Northeastern peoples through the files, they were continually revising those very files, underlining the futility of their faith in the fixity of colonial taxonomy. Meanwhile, Northeastern peoples read colonials largely through their "pillar building" and carried out their own revisions, such as the destruction of triangulation beacons. This process of realizing and revising imaginaries was behind the competing worldviews that Ali Sigara channeled in the anecdote of the old man and the sun. Colonials were subject to a similar process of trying to reconcile divergent epistemologies.

Shegats and Somalis

In November of 1961, the District Commissioner of Mandera, Thomas Cashmore sought to impart some wisdom to his successor F.J. McCartney.

> One word of warning. Nothing is as clear cut as it seems on paper in Mandera District. (Grazing orders or established rules, each and every one has its contradiction. You will be told I or some officer promised all sorts of things – assume at the very most 1/10th are telling the truth.)[74]

Cashmore had introduced this caveat with some musings on Somali character traits as he imagined them. He bid McCartney "remember two sayings about the Somali – 'Every man his own sultan', and 'God first made the desert, and then the camel and then the Somali, and then He laughed.'"[75] He continued to sketch out a Somali caricature stating "they have many fine qualities, but vanity and avarice are their two great failings. 'Fetina' to them is a game;

[74]KNA: BV/104/115.
[75]KNA: DC/MDA/2/10. T.H.R. Cashmore to F.J. McCartney, November 1961, Handing Over Report.

conspiracy second nature."[76] There were related observations made of Boran and, by proxy, Gabbra. For instance, the District Commissioner in 1956 made the grand claim that

> The Isiolo Boran suffer from a tendency to over-generosity vis-à-vis Somali tribes. This is a most dangerous characteristic since the Somali is all too quick to take advantage of any tribe, particularly Galla peoples who show any disposition to show friendliness and grant concessions – in fact, this is the basis of the whole history of the Horn of Africa.[77]

Where Somalis were characterized as opportunistic and malicious, Boran and Gabbra were criticized as overly friendly due to stupidity.

Cashmore's perception of the untrustworthiness of Somalis borrowed directly from ideas in vogue, and on the files, two decades earlier. For example, the officer in charge of the NFD in 1942 stated of "the Somali" that "vanity and avarice are his two greatest faults, loyalty does not concern him…because by loyalty we usually mean consistent loyalty, which is a peculiar conception of the British race that is not understood in these parts."[78] The interaction between Cashmore and McCartney, drawing as it does on this imaginary, highlights the long-standing adversarial relationship between colonial administrators and their charges, which carried over to independence. Indeed most administrators, particularly in the Northeast, continued to be "outsiders" and focused on security concerns above all else, ensuring frequent tension.

There were also good practical reasons for the "conspiracies" that Cashmore discerned among Somalis. He spelled out a primary one with his contention that "each Tribal Group has a grazing area reserved to it under Section 19(i) of S.D.O.…To avoid Tribal friction we attempt to enforce the grazing boundaries and a 10% fine of stock trespassing is the normal court

[76]KNA: DC/MDA/2/10. "fetina" is an Anglicization of *fitina* which is best translated as backbiting or rumor mongering.
[77]KNA: DC/ISO/2/1/14. 1956 Annual Report, classified secret.
[78]KNA: DC/MBT/7/7/1. Gerald Reece, "Note on the Somali" June 16, 1942.

sentence."[79] The S.D.O. was the Special Districts Ordinance which was a set of rules regulating movement, grazing, and water use throughout the Northeast. Given that access to grazing and water was by "tribe," which there was no strong somatic marker of among most Northeastern peoples, claiming different tribal affiliations could be advantageous, though it was not done as frequently as might be expected under such circumstances.[80]

The chief complaint against Northeastern peoples generally, and the one most often marshaled as proof of their duplicity, was their engagement in "shegatry." The practice of "shegatry" was simply the "adoption" of people from one "tribe" into another. For instance, near the Uaso Nyiro River, Boran were increasingly becoming Somali while Sakuye around Marsabit, who traced their lineage through Rendille peoples, were increasingly claiming a Boran identity.[81] The process of "shegatry" was in part based on the fluidity of identity formation. It was also a reaction to restrictions imposed by the British on that fluidity and thus access to grazing and water and therefore survival. For instance, in the 1950s around the town of Garba Tulla in Isiolo District anthropologist P.T.W. Baxter noted the following.

> In addition most of the Boran of that area have, for ecological reasons, come to depend more upon camels and sheep than upon cows, which has, for reasons of grazing and herding, led to a new pattern of family distribution and established a mode of life nearer to that of the camel keeping Sakuye and Gabbra.[82]

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[79]KNA: DC/MDA/2/10. The S.D.O. is the Special Districts Ordinance became increasingly draconian during the so-called Shifta War 1963-68 such that trespass in certain areas was punishable by death and all stock was seized. For instance, KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/25/11.

[80]Schlee, *Identities on the Move.*

[81]*Ibid*. Adoption is a culturally specific term understood to be the legal incorporation of a person, usually a child, into a nuclear family not of their lineage. Within sub-Saharan Africa generally and the Horn specifically adoption did not, and does not, typically function this way. Thus, in equating "shegatry" to adoption it is important to recognize that it was not a uniform process even among Northeastern peoples given that they had different experiences with the Islamic Slave Trade and different rules for the incorporation of outsiders. For a sense of the issue as an emerging question in the humanities see Barbara Yngvesson, "Reconfiguring Kinship in the Space of Adoption," *Anthropological Quarterly* 80 (2007): 561-579, Marijke Breuning and John Ishiyama "The Politics of Intercountry Adoption: Explaining Variation in the Legal Requirements of Sub-Saharan African Countries," *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (March 2009): 89-101, and Neil Price "The Changing Value of Children among the Kikuyu of Central Province, Kenya," *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 66 (1996): 411-436.

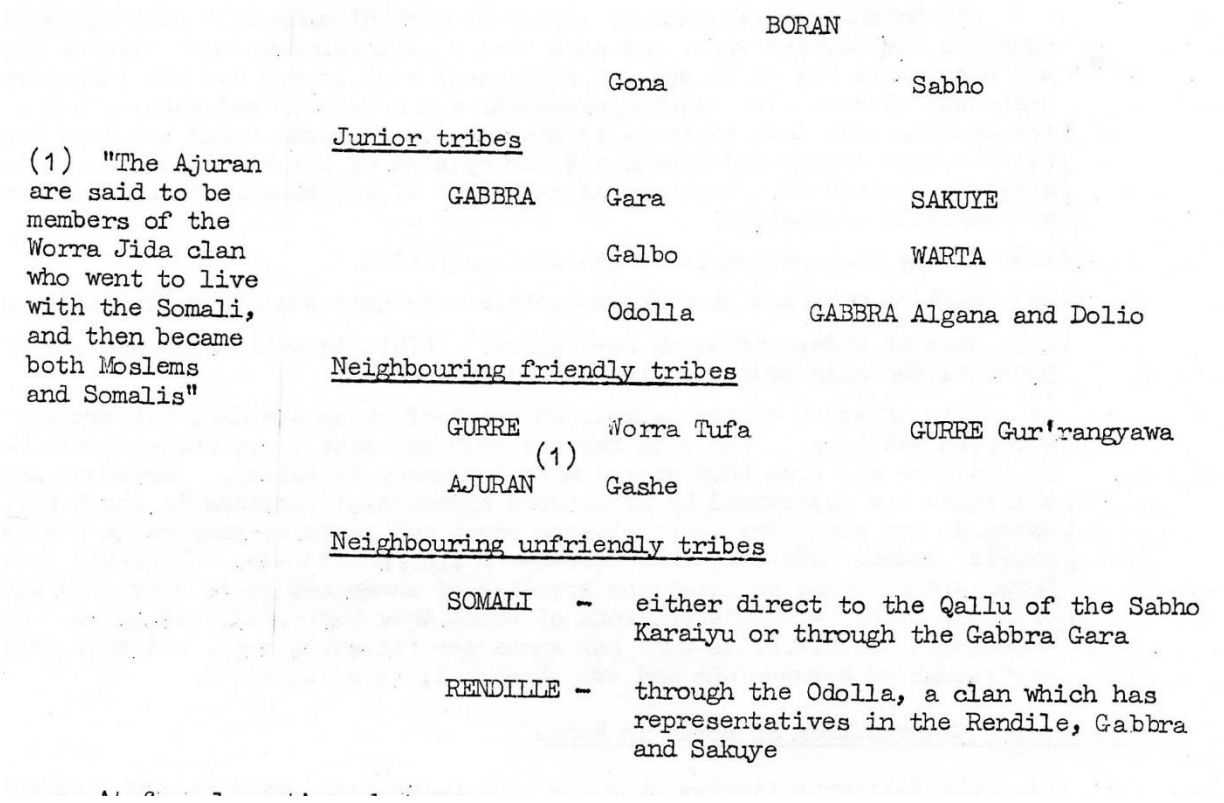
[82]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/30/26. P.T.W. Baxter to Chief Native Commissioner, "Extension of a Field Tour to Study the Galla Peoples of North Kenya," 1952.

This give and take necessarily had pre-colonial antecedents and was just as surely something shaped by the experience of colonialism. While Somali, Boran, Gabbra, and Sakuye clans had moved between these tribal monoliths at different times and places throughout their interaction, their experience with the British "tribe" added a new dynamic tied to state power. For instance, the Darood Somali had little reason to insist on "Asian" status prior to the turn of the Twentieth Century because there was no such governmental category.[83]

In ignorance of this dynamic, willful or otherwise, the colonial administration and the Kenyan state afterwards deemed "shegatry" to be an African practice aimed at deception and, paradoxically, linked to indelible tribal characteristics. A 1939 circular on *shegat* illustrates the intellectual lineage of this colonial imaginary. The officer in charge of the NFD, who issued it, claimed "it is generally agreed that from every point of view the 'Shegat' system is an evil; and it seems that in the Northern Frontier it is especially desirable to try to check it."[84] 17 years later, in 1956 the District Commissioner of Isiolo observed "shegatry in the Somali tribes continues to raise its ugly head – however often and hard it is hit."[85] The fact that "shegatry" continued to be a concern of the state is a testament to the conundrum of imposing boundaries on peoples who bounded themselves differently. Where the state placed limits to the rangelands of pastoralists based on "tribe," those subjected to the ascription were able to respond through "shegatry" or the changing of "tribal" identity. The give and take of this "shegatry" was a complex process that has generated countless colonial and contemporary genealogies and charts in which circles and

[83]KNA: AG/1/6. Somali Exemption Ordinance and KNA: 967.62 MEM. *Memorandum of the Daru Somali Community of Kenya Colony to be Presented to the Hilton Young Commission*. This is not to say that Somalis never made claims on what the British termed "Asian" status prior to the 20th century, but rather that "Asian" was not a category of identity with which to connect to patrons in the Indian Ocean world or raise ones status within East Africa before then.
[84]KNA: DC/MBT/7/2/1. Officer in Charge of N.F.D. to all District Commissioners, "Shegats" 23 May, 1939.
[85]KNA: DC/ISO/2/1/14. 1956 Annual Report, classified secret.

squares branch in and out of each other in dizzying fashion, or tribes are categorized in affective relation to each other (figure 4).[86] What is clear historically is that identities did change and that within the Northeast these identity politics were, when rains failed or "tribes" were barred from grazing, a matter of survival


BORAN

Gona Sabho

Junior tribes

(1) "The Ajuran are said to be members of the Worra Jida clan who went to live with the Somali, and then became both Moslems and Somalis"

GABBRA Gara SAKUYE

Galbo WARTA

Odolla GABBRA Algana and Dolio

Neighbouring friendly tribes

GURRE Worra Tufa GURRE Gur'rangyawa

AJURAN (1) Gashe

Neighbouring unfriendly tribes

SOMALI – either direct to the Qallu of the Sabho Karaiyu or through the Gabbra Gara

RENDILLE – through the Odolla, a clan which has representatives in the Rendile, Gabbra and Sakuye

Figure 4. KNA: AA/14/1/10/11/2. P.T.W. Baxter, "Social Organization of the Boran of Northern Kenya." 1954. This simplified chart created by P.T.W. Baxter lists the Boran moieties of Gona and Sabho and categorizes the Boran relationship to "neighbouring tribes." "WARTA" are Waata (Waat).

Restrictions on grazing help illustrate the way imaginings of space and identity impacted everyday life. On August 30th of 1963, regulations under the Special Districts Ordinance (SDO)

[86] See for instance KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. Gudrun Dahl, *Suffering Grass: Subsistence and Society of Waso Borana* (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1979), 96-97, 145, 158-161. [86]Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia* (Oxford: James Currey, 2012), 128-132. Schlee, *Identities on the Move*, 18-21, 24-25, 28, 197, 199, 214. Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 152, 169. Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea, 2000), 176.

were posted around Isiolo. Those who could read the notices were warned of a prohibition on "grazing or watering of stock in Isiolo Township except for milk stock owned by Herti or Isaak Somalis in respect of which grazing fees have been paid."[87] The notice warned that "all stock found in Isiolo Township in future that is not authorized milk stock in the above category will be seized and sold and the proceeds paid into the Special Districts (Administration) Ordinance Fund."[88] From a pastoral optic, townships such as Isiolo were sites of extraction where one had to pay grazing fees to the state and furthermore had to find links to various clans and tribes, depending on the town, in order to visit without livestock being seized. More vexing was the fact that towns throughout the Northeast tended to be established in permanent grazing areas where Northeastern peoples maintained their herds awaiting the rains to allow them to move away to perennial grass and water sources. Little wonder then that "shegatry," however temporary, was such a common scourge. However, it would be lazy to conclude that "shegatry" was simply a response to colonial categories. As illustrated, it was, but the implication of stopping there would be that identity was insignificant to Northeastern peoples and that they did not have their own categories for differentiating insiders from outsiders. Such a situation would have to ignore the cultural significance of names, genealogies, and marriage practices that preceded and followed interaction with colonials. The profound impact of the colonial experience was the way in which it exacerbated these divisions through the "pillars" of race and tribe.

The case of Boran advocacy for "Asian" status is demonstrative of this process. In 1955, J.R. Nimmo, District Commissioner of Isiolo, heard the grievances of "Chief" Galma Dida of the Boran regarding their current "African" status. Nimmo reported "the sum total of what he said

[87]KNA: DC/ISO/4/1/25. Regional Government Agent D.G. Worthy. "Special Districts (Administration) Ordinance Cap 105 Laws of Kenya." August 30, 1963. Order No. 12/61.
[88]*Ibid.*

was that the Boran considered themselves morally, culturally and socially equal to the Somali and were very hurt because they were classed with the down-country 'Agriculturalists.'"[89] He went on to relay that

> The Chief explained that the 'last straw' was the acceptance by Government of the Ajuran and Gurre as Somali, and the rejection of the Boran. Apparently recently the Somali people (particularly children) when they wish to insult a Boran call him 'an emptier of latrine buckets' (referring of course to the tasks allotted to 'Africans' or natives in Prison) and apparently it is this which hurts most, and which has goaded Galma into action.[90]

Though the Boran had generally been treated as de-facto "Asians" the need for legal reification of this status was made important as they began to be given "African" tasks considered degrading. The movement of Boran and Somali between the "pillars" of "African" and "Asian" status then was a sort of state "shegatry" rooted in the British "tribe's" racial schema and its ability to enforce it, for instance in prison. That this schema did not transfer wholesale was evident in the fact that among Northeastern groups "Asian" status was considered on par with "European." In this understanding they differed both from other "Asian" groups, such as Indians and Pakistanis, and Europeans who perceived a hierarchical division between each other. In other words, for Northeastern peoples "Asians" and "Europeans" were equivalent in status even if distinct in appearance and culture. There was a consensus among these groups however that "Africans" were somehow lower, leaving that "pillar" relatively untouched in the Northeast until recently. The retention of this "pillar" exacerbated tensions between Kenyan troops and Northeastern peoples during the so-called Shifta War.

[89]KNA: BB/1/2/4. J.R. Nimmo, DC Isiolo to R.G. Turnbull, PC NFD, "Status of Boran in Kenya."
[90]*Ibid.*

The Erasing Elephants

Other inhabitants of Northeastern Kenya also found colonial pillars objectionable and set about removing them. Over the course of 1962-63, Frank Woodhouse was engaged in boundary marker maintenance in the NFD and kept a journal of his travails. In January he had his first encounter with the elephants that would become the bane of his existence. He noticed "with heavy heart that at least 90% of our beacons along the boundary of this stretch…have been damaged by elephant." He opined "really most discouraging! Most destructive animals!"[91] Woodhouse was not alone and he recounts how the laborers in his employ "returned to camp after being charged by an elephant on boundary line […] apparently a bull elephant."[92] The almost daily battle with elephants ground the pitiable Woodhouse down. He scrawled "am now finding the demarcation very tedious, although it is very much on my conscience, it has taken so long and cost so much."[93] It seemed wherever he would pierce the earth with a black and white boundary marker, as soon as he moved down the line, in would lumber an elephant to knock it down.

Like pastoralists, elephants' perambulations were associated with the rain, moving to wherever it fell heaviest during the monsoons. They seemed particularly fond of the coast and in Lamu District, South of Garissa, they were proving rather contemptuous of agriculture, stealing crops and destroying fields. The frustrated residents of the villages around Kiunga, where an infamous raid and kidnapping at the start of the so-called Shifta War took place, complained through their Mudir that elephants were "repeatedly damaging our crops" and "one game scout is

[91]KNA: MSS/45/2. Frank Woodhouse diary.
[92]*Ibid.*
[93]*Ibid.*

not sufficient" to deal with them.[94] In response the government contracted hunters into the Game Department in order to kill elephants in droves. In 1956 a Mr. D.C. Bousefield dispatched of 101 elephants besting E. Rundgren who managed to kill 98.[95] The hope was that through these slaughters "the elephant will soon learn to keep away from those places where their presence cannot be tolerated, and they will be able to live in peace in the large areas where they can do no damage."[96] This approach was remarkably similar to the convention that rains brought peace as pastoral communities headed into the bush. Since Woodhouse was already in the bush, putting up boundary beacons, he could not call upon the Game Department to destroy the elephants that harried him in his work. In the Northeast of the 1960s, that sort of exterminatory approach was reserved for the General Service Units (GSU) and Police Patrols fighting engagements with "shifta." Perhaps it was just as well that Woodhouse could not call upon hunters, for like "shifta," elephants continued to fight back. They set about tearing up boundary beacons from district to district, attacking locals in Isiolo, and trashing farmlands on the coast despite, or perhaps due to, the mass killing of their clans.[97]

However, elephants did not reserve their aggression solely for agriculturalists and the administration. In 1959, elephants killed 2 Boran cows in Isiolo, rushing off only after the rather daring owner of the cattle wounded one of the pachyderms with his spear.[98] The following year around Sericho in Isiolo it was "reported that one male elephant was killed recently by Boran for its aggressive attitude and disturbance of their camels."[99] That Isiolo Boran were keeping camels

[94]KNA: DC/LAMU/2/17/7. Mudir of Kiunga to DC Lamu, "Damage by Elephants" 30 July, 1954. For an account of the raid see David Hurd *Kidnap at Kiunga* (London: R. Hale, 1965). A Mudir is a muslim governor, like chiefs, mudirs functioned as intermediaries between the State and locals during indirect rule under British colonialism.
[95]*Ibid.*
[96]*Ibid.*
[97]KNA: AG/52/84, KNA: DC/ISO/3/11/11, and KNA: DC/LAMU/2/17/7 Herds of elephants are said to organize into "clans", highlighting the impact of the colonial optic on the biological sciences.
[98]DC/ISO/3/11/11.
[99]*Ibid.*

is indicative of "shegatry" and it is likely that these were among D.D. Wabera's "Boran-Gabbra" kinsmen, securing access to grazing and water. The evidence suggests that their claim of defense of their herd was accepted after investigation under Section 5 of the Game Laws which held that game "shot in protection of…crops or stock" must be reported and "the trophies, including meat, of such animals are the property of the Government."[100] Recourse to defense within the Game Laws was not available to the three Boran convicted by the Game Warden of Isiolo "for killing some elephants near Benane."[101] This was because they had not obtained class A or B hunting licenses and had not formally settled on private property.[102] Though conflicts between elephants and their neighbors were not uncommon throughout Kenya, the scale of carnage and the punitive measures related to it were certainly uneven. Whereas the Game Department conscripted and remunerated hunters for killing hundreds of elephants around Lamu, they convicted any locals found in the bush for killing small numbers, labeling them "poachers."

Enforcing the imaginary lines between "soldiers" and "shifta," "hunters" and "poachers," or the colonial categories of "Europeans," "Africans," and "Asians" is of course what boundary making was all about. It was the contestation of the perception of the spaces between things and it is an ongoing process. If his journal is any indication, Woodhouse was just as concerned with racial space as he was with his boundary beacons. He complained "the surveyor, an Asian, Mr. Patel" was "having his meals with me, which I don't terribly like, but I feel that it is only civil to have him." Further to the point he stated Patel had "put his tent very close to mine."[103] Here the distinction between "European" and "Asian" was imperiled, Mr. Patel striving to destroy it like an elephant on a boundary beacon and Woodhouse endeavoring to repair it in his patient, if

[100]KNA: KW/17/12. "Wild Animal Protection Ordinance 18".
[101]*Ibid*.
[102]*Ibid*.
[103]*Ibid*.

afflicted, manner. Notably, the space between these two and the workers brought on for boundary maintenance, mostly Northeastern "tribesmen" of "Asian" status, remained a wide gulf devoid of meal sharing or close proximity tent-pitching.

According to Somali tradition, elephants were great levelers of such social strata. A colonial ethnography of the Gurreh provides an account of Sap, a "low class of Somali tribes."[104] It was said that the Sap were Somali by lineage but that "an elephant wiped out the adults of the family and so when the children were found no one knew whether they came from a high class family or not." Thus, "the pure Somali families could not marry [their] descendants."[105] The story is an example of how "shegatry" was employed to legitimate identity politics, re-imagining a Somali origin for Sap, thereby reifying them as Somali "shegats." It also illustrates the manner in which boundary making was not a simple top-down process. Despite the efforts of elephants to erase distinction the Sap were not allowed to marry into the Somali groups they were attached to because it was unclear if they were worthy, based on their lineage. This in turn made them "low class," a term itself created in the colonial rendering of the story.

Conclusion

Disaggregating the shifting boundaries of the former NFD is a disorienting process. The "pillars" of "tribe," "race," and "border" are so appealing because they allow a clear focus, albeit one of tunnel vision. But as soon as "Europeans" were born in Kenya, Boran and Gabbra became *shegat*, or elephants and locals destroyed a boundary beacon, that window onto the past is shattered. This is the fragmented vision that an honest account of colonial and post-colonial Kenyan history must contend with. Nancy Rose Hunt warns that History "should not run the risk

[104]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. J.W.K. Pease, "An Ethnological Treatise on the Gurreh Tribe." Sap, like Waata, are hunter gather groups typically responsible for blacksmithing and often carrying out important ritual functions. They are *shegat* to Somali and Boran groups.
[105]*Ibid*.

of 're-presenting' a singular *encounter* among colonizers and colonized, but should imagine and render multiple transactions, mediations, and misreadings."[106] The risk run in describing the disparate experiences of colonial and post-colonial interactions is the presentation of an episodic and schizophrenic narrative. Treating imaginaries and "pillars" as historical artifacts shared and misunderstood between groups in mid-twentieth century Northeastern Kenya is the metaphorical *hubulluk* that guides this study towards coherence.

If the 3 Boran convicted for poaching saw themselves as hunters, it can hardly be expected that they were unaware of the state's designation of them as "poachers" after they were imprisoned and fined. Reconciling this gaze especially in a context where Mr. D.C. Bousefield, for instance, was considered by that very same state to be a great "hunter" rather than a poacher illuminates the undercurrents of power and the miscommunication bound up in them. Moreover, colonial imaginaries and the files emanating from them continue to impact upon contemporary academic and journalistic engagement with the region. For instance, the seemingly harmless nautical imaginary of bored British officers remains within western discourse from the prosaic equation of the Sahara with the Indian Ocean, on which camels are "ships of the desert," to the problematic formulation of Somali "pirates." This heritage of colonial imaginings, produced in the drunken solitude of colonial service, through which we observe the past and present, is illustrative of the continuing power of imagined boundaries.

That such power, the power to confine, was established through "pillar building" helps explain why "pillars" both physical and fanciful were so hotly contested. It is equally apparent through the refraction of historical memories, so to speak, that these contests were not seen in the same way. To the colonial administration the vandalism of pillars, be it through "shegatry" or

[106]Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 160. Emphasis original.

physical damage, was evidence of the destructive impulses of the unrefined and justified their subjugation under colonial tutelage. To locals, things like boundary beacons and tribal grazing areas were the destructive means through which overgrown children sought to impose their will, thereby justifying local opposition. All sides, in any given interaction, despite an understanding that they did not see eye to eye, were quite adept at misinterpreting each other.

There were also moments of clarity, for instance when both locals and the colonial administration recognized that boundary markers were considered despicable because they restricted water and grazing rights, thereby imperiling self-determination and even survival. The boundaries of the colonial era were well established, particularly the imaginary ones which deemed certain "tribes" "shifta" rather than "citizens" and marked cattle for urban consumption rather than the maintenance of pastoral society. These "pillars" were inherited by the Kenyan state at independence and they had no intent of knocking them down; they were powerful and that power was to be harnessed rather than destroyed.

Chapter 2. Sacred Space and Time

In 1931 the Bible Church Missionary Society (BCMS) established a small mission in Marsabit.[1] At the onset of World War Two the mission was abandoned. After some time, in 1941, the church was occupied for one year by the First and Sixth King's African Rifles (KAR) who "created some consternation" when they turned the church into a Quartermaster's store. District Commissioner, J.K.R. Thorp explained that their "quite reasonable excuse" was "that they did not know it was a church and could hardly be expected to guess seeing there was a large pile of cow-dung in the middle of it when they moved in."[2] In 1943, the mission was reoccupied and the missionaries complained that they found "some dirty drawings on the walls of the buildings."[3] For missionaries returning to Marsabit the church was a sacred space that should not be profaned through conversion into a store or a stable. But how did Northeastern peoples understand the sacred?

The people inhabiting mid-twentieth century Northeastern Kenya viewed the sacred through many different lenses. Cattle dung was one of the ways that Boran temporarily marked

[1]Paolo Tablino, *Christianity among the Nomads: The Catholic Church in Northern Kenya.* (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa, 2006), 121.
[2]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/10. "Marsabit Political Records" 9 September, 1943.
[3]*Ibid*. The First KAR, comprised of troops from Nyasaland, now Malawi, was accustomed to Christianity and missionaries. The Sixth KAR, consisting of Somalis, was more familiar with Islam. Both the First and Sixth KAR also followed the cultural practices that comprised their ontological lexicon. That is, the way they practiced Christianity or Islam was bound up in the way they understood their own "local" religious traditions. The use of the term "local religion" is a bit of a misnomer for Northeastern Kenya because such religions are necessarily mobile. If they are pinned to a particular location, beyond sites like graves visited through pilgrimage, they become something different. In the case of the Sixth KAR, such "local" practices fell under the Proto-Rendille-Somali (PRS) complex which placed "emphasis on camel husbandry and the associated calendar of social organization." However, these African soldiers, with some exception among the Sixth KAR, were less familiar with Boran-Oromo traditions in which cattle played a prominent role. John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859-1966* (Suffolk, GB: James Currey, 2012), 38-41. Susan Beckerleg, *Ethnic Identity and Development: Khat and Social Change in Africa.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 15-17. Steve Chimombo, "Riddles and the Reconstruction of Reality," *Africa* 57 (1987): 297-320. For a discussion of Islam in Malawi see David Bone, "Islam in Malawi" *Journal of Religion in Africa* 13 (1982): 126-138. Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia.* (Suffolk, GB: James Currey, 2012), 4. For instance, *ayaana gaala* is the "day of the camel" and corresponds to Sunday. Camels are not to be bled, traded, or travelled on Sundays.

sacred space. During *gadaammojjii*, a ceremony for transition into the final age-grade of the same name, women built heaps of cow dung. The *gadaammojjii,* or retiree age-grade, initiates underwent a ritual head shaving during the ceremony and their hair was deposited in the dung heaps. Grasses were also placed in the dung piles which were then sealed with more cow dung.[4] The religious value of dung was in its regenerative properties, its ability to bring forth grass. Cattle fed on grasses which sprang up in their manure, which in turn fed these grasses. The metonymy at work in the equation of hair and grass placed people and cattle together within a cycle of decay and regeneration that marked time. The cyclical process at the center of Boran ontology is clear in this symbolic symbiosis.

Drawing and drama also played a role in Boran rituals. The *gadaammojjii* ceremony spanned three months and included dramatic performances such as the attempted theft of milk from the homes of the *gadaammojjii* initiates. Young men entered these homes and threatened to steal milk while the initiate and his family recited the heroic events of his life. The exploits of each initiate typically included martial and sexual conquests. The "milk theft" was not simply verbal but also visual. In anticipation of the mock home invasion, the initiate made drawings illustrating his life accomplishments to be expounded upon during the staged attack.[5] These recitations and illustrations indicated the initiate's fitness to enter the *gadaammojjii* age-grade and reaffirmed social ties among Boran families.

A *gadaammojjii* ceremony accounts for the centrally located pile of cow dung and the "dirty drawings" in the BCMS church. *Gadaammojjii* take place at eight-year intervals. One was

[4]Aneesa Kassam, "Ritual and Classification: A Study of the Booran Oromo Terminal Sacred Grade Rites of Passage," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 62 (1999): 484-503.
[5]*Ibid*.

performed in Marsabit District shortly after missionaries left the area.[6] For missionaries and British observers, dung epitomized the profane. Europeans had frequently, during the reformation and early modern period, used defecation as a way to deface places of worship.[7] In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the British carried the association between profanity and excrement, including animal waste, into their colonies.[8] But in Northeastern Kenya a heap of cow dung could mark sacred space. That such dung was temporary was part of its sacred value because, from a pastoral ontology, stasis was profane. While churches were intended to stand across time, dung represented cyclical change and movement. Such "movement" provides a basis for questioning cultural presuppositions about the sacred and profane.

This chapter traces the cosmological aspects of movement through time and space. It takes as a premise that God (*Waaqa*) is inextricable from time. *Waaqa* was the source of all things and his presence was understood through the passage of time.[9] For Boran-Oromo peoples, changes in the perception of time that unfolded in the 1960s necessarily impacted perceptions of God. As an anchor for exploring such change the chapter examines conflicts over graves, religious worship, cattle, and rain as they pertained to movement through sacred space and time.

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[6] Kassam, "Ritual and Classification," 491. The ceremony should have taken place in 1939 but must have occurred in 1940 after the church was vacant. This indicates adjustments within *gada* chronology. For a detailed chart of variations in *gada* see Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea, 2000) Appendix, Gada Chronology. 264-265. Given the available evidence, errant cattle and bored soldiers are an alternative if unlikely explanation for the condition of the abandoned church.

[7] Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 310.

[8] John Rothfork, "God with an Elephant Head: Pilgrimage to India" *Prarie Schooner* 62 (1988): 92-103. 97. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Of Garbage, Modernity and the Citizen's Gaze" *Economic and Political Weekly* 27 (1992): 541-547. 546-547. Northeastern peoples also associated human waste with the profane and understood the links between feces and disease. Manure was where perceptions diverged in that Boran attributed sacred value to it while Europeans considered it profane.

[9] Gideon S. Were and Chris Wanjala eds., *Mardsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile* (Nairobi: Government of Kenya, 1986), P.T.W. Baxter and Uri Almagar eds. *Age, Generation and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organizations*. (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1978) *Waaqa* was gendered male.

Calendars and Corpses

An important arena in which time and space were contested was the erection and exhumation of graves. In 1927, two colonial officials, headed two miles south of Mandera.[10] The pair was intrigued by a cairn there, known to be a grave, and they set about excavating it. Graves in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) ranged "in height from about six to 18 feet and in diameter from 12 to 60 feet."[11] Through exhuming these graves, colonial explorers were eager to find out if they could confirm the existence of an ancient tribe of giants. These giants were said to have dug wells and then mysteriously disappeared, leaving their footprints embedded in stone outcroppings. After numerous excavations the amateur archaeologists determined that there were "at least three distinct types of graves in this area, constructed by different peoples."[12] The third type of grave was "more advanced and suggest[ed] a higher stage of civilization and culture."[13] These "civilized" graves were attributed to "the 'ben Izraeli', the Semitic people which dug the wells and built the walled village at Binega."[14]

The two colonial adventurers credited what were actually Somali graves to the mythical "ben Izraeli" in order to supplement a narrative of relative civilization. In this postulation "Bantu" Africans were seen as the least advanced. "Hamitic" ("Cushitic") races were considered a step up in the racial hierarchy. These "Hamites" were viewed as having interacted with yet slightly more advanced "Semitic" races in the distant past. Colonials then claimed this intermingling explained civilization in Africa. Despite their preliminary excitement based on these racialized fantasies, the grave raiders could find no "ben Izraeli" remains. So, the colonial

[10]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. The DC was J.W.K. Pease and the Captain was A.T. Curle.
[11]I.M. Lewis, "The So-Called Galla Graves of Northern Somaliland" *Man* 61 (1961): 103-106. See also Tsega Etefa, *Integration and Peace in East Africa: A History of the Oromo Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[12]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. J.W.K. Pease, "A Further Note on Ancient Graves in Gurreh."
[13]*Ibid.*
[14]*Ibid.*

officials were ultimately compelled to give up their "ben Izraeli" hypothesis. What the duo unearthed, instead of giants, were average sized skeletal remains, vegetable matter, and grave goods including some rings and an earthenware pot. The results of destroying this particular gravesite were placed "on the files" and published in the journal *Man.*[15]

Exhumation of graves continued into the 1960s and ultimately forced scholars to contend with Boran time-reckoning. In 1961, *Man* featured an article by the prolific scholar of Somali anthropology, I.M. Lewis, on the comparative excavation of not less than seventeen graves in Northern Somalia. The article includes a photo of a grinning Lewis and two assistants, whose heads are cut out of the frame, squatting astride the bones of someone's unnamed ancestor, Lewis clutching the dome of their skull.[16] Similar excavations were carried on throughout Southern Ethiopia as well. In Kenya, the exploration of gravesites led colonials and their academic heirs to stumble upon Boran astronomy. In the 1980s the meaning of carefully arranged stone monoliths in the NEP was debated among archaeologists. Some maintained the stones were gravesites but the prevailing voices used them as evidence for a complex lunar-stellar calendrical system, which incorporated a solar year.[17] The solar year stood in contrast to the Muslim calendar, which had previously been considered a basis for the sophistication of Boran time reckoning.[18]

This scholarly engagement with the Boran calendar was intended to compare it to the Gregorian calendar. Therefore, it missed the deeper cosmological underpinning of the system.

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[15]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. J.W.K. Pease and A.T. Curle, "Prehistoric Graves in the Northern Frontier Province of Kenya Colony," *Man* 33 (1933): 99-101.
[16]I.M. Lewis, "The So-Called Galla Graves of Northern Somaliland," *Man* 61 (1961): 103-106.
[17]For an overview of gravesites in the Horn see Tsega Etefa *Integration and Peace in East Africa*. For the Boran Calendar see Dietrich Thomsen, "What Mean These African Stones?" *Science News* 126 (1984): 168-169, Laurance Doyle, "The Borana Calendar Reinterpreted," *Current Anthropology* 27 (1986): 286-287, Marco Bassi, "On the Borana Calendrical System: A Preliminary Field Report," *Current Anthropology* 29 (1988): 619-624.
[18]For an overview of debates about the origins of specific calendars among Northeastern peoples see Schlee and Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia*.

John Mbiti observes, "in terms of time, God 'stretches' over and beyond the whole period of *Zamani*, so that not even human imagination can get at him."[19] Whether or not God exists and can be truly conceived of, imaginings of God were present within twentieth-century Boran-Oromo culture. According to Boran tradition *Waaqa's* (God's) eye was the sun, allowing him to keep watch over the Boran.[20] Mbiti claims the sky "in its great immensity invites people to gaze in it, both with their eyes and imagination."[21] Gazing upward towards *Waaqa* was translated into an understanding of time and interpreted into the Boran calendar. It was therefore fitting that the Boran calendar, marked in stone on the landscape, should initially be confused with a burial ground.

Gravesites were linked to time because they were a reminder of ancestors and the genealogies of *gada*. Anthropologist Asmarom Legesse describes *gada* as "a system of *temporal differentiation* of society having little to do with age."[22] This definition may at first seem contradictory since *gada* is a governmental and social system in which age-mates, that is fellow members of a particular age-set/class, rule for eight years.[23] However, age-mates can vary widely in biological age. The eight year periods that comprise the *gada* system are also called *gada*, linking the part to the whole. For instance, the period 1960-68 was known as the *gada* of Jaldessa Liban.[24] This *gada* took its name from Jaldessa Liban who was elected the *Abba Gada* (father of *gada*). The practice of naming *gada* for the *Abba Gada* personified the Boran

[19]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 32
[20]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. Were and Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile*. 31.
[21]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 33.
[22]Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 50. Emphasis original.
[23]Kassam, "Ritual and Classification." Günther Schlee, *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenya* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1989). Age-sets move through age-grades from *dabballe* (childhood) to *gadaammojjii* (elderhood/retirement). *Gada* is a middling age-grade achieved after roughly forty years. *Gada* doubles as the name of the ruling age-grade.
[24]Ayana Angassa and Gufu Oba, "Herder Perceptions on Impacts of Range Enclosures, Crop Farming, Fire Ban and Bush Encroachment on the Rangelands of Borana, Southern Ethiopia," *Human Ecology* 36 (2008): 206. Notably the so-called Shifta War falls into the Jaldessa Liban *gada* but 1963-68 is better known as the *gaf Daba* in Kenya.

patrilineage in a single, and easily remembered, individual. This aided in the oral transmission of history within the cyclical generations of the *gada* system. According to the rules of *gada*, father and son must remain separate such that they do not compete for wives and children. This is an important factor in the divergent biological ages of age-mates. Following this rule, *gada* are spaced with a generation between them so that the "grandson" *gada* takes its name from the "grandfather" *gada*. Therefore, forty years (one generation) removed from the Jaldessa Liban *gada* (1960-68), the period from 2000-2008, was known as the Liban Jaldessa *gada*.[25] In these ways, the *gada* system is inextricable from Boran-Oromo ancestry and temporality.

Memories of ancestors connected gravesites to *gada.* John Mbiti explains that "birth is a slow process" meaning that one does not become fully "born" until they have proceeded through a number of milestones from actual birth to naming to initiation into age-grades.[26] This process is tied to family and ancestors who are in turn united in the governing temporal institution of *gada*. Death is also a slow process since "after the physical death, the individual continues to exist" because they are "*remembered* by relatives and friends" and can intervene in everyday life.[27] That ancestors were remembered is also clear from ritual. For instance, Boran slaughtered a cow after a burial. Then, roughly a year later, they would return to the gravesite and children would gather ground fruits, stones, and tree cuttings. In 1944, the District Officer for Isiolo observed that "these are brought to the grave on which they first put cowdung and then they plant these sticks in the cowdung."[28] They then threw milk, coffee, and soda on the dung "which are as food

[25]Angassa and Oba, "Herder Perceptions on Impacts of Range Enclosures," 206. Oromo and most Northeastern peoples typically take on the names of their grandparents or fathers.
[26]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*.
[27]*Ibid*. Emphasis original.
[28]KNA: DC/ISO/4/1. "Golbo Boran and Their Customs," 4 June, 1944.

for the deceased."[29] The real sustenance, however, was shared in the growth of trees that provided shade, future cuttings, and memories.

Such memories were a reminder of a person's place in the world and their connection to others. The *gadaammojjii* ceremony of the Boran provides an example. This marked passage into the terminal age-grade of the same name. The ceremony linked grandfathers and grandsons together through *gada*. The *gadaammojjii* ceremony signals the exit from *gada* of the eldest age-grade and the inclusion of children into the youngest age-grade. This constitutes "birth" and "death" so to speak. At sunset, family and friends of a child, having named them earlier in the day, return home and recite the blessing "may you live long, may you take care of your father and your mother forever."[30] Taking care of parents forever required remembering and honoring them after death. The way that eldest and youngest were initiated into their respective age-grades together via *gadaammojjii* reinforced the life cycle and the memory of ancestors. If these ancestors were somehow forgotten they became a threat. The ancestors of strangers or outsiders were also potentially menacing.

This logic undergirded the fact that the desecration of graves was not solely a colonial prerogative. While colonial officials were busy digging up cairns to satisfy their curiosity about an ancient tribe of giants, Somalis attacked a colonial grave. A British officer related how "a party of Gurreh, on mischief bent, set fire to the zariba and wooden cross on Lieut. Dawson Smith's grave."[31] Smith had disregarded warning of an impending Somali raid and then brazenly attempted to fight a large group with only a small police force. Even in death Smith could find

[29]KNA: DC/ISO/4/1.
[30]Aneesa Kasaam, "Ritual and Classification: A Study of the Booran Oromo Terminal Sacred Grade Rites of Passage," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 62 (1999): 484-503.
[31]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. A zariba is a tall fence of thorns. Fittingly, Lieutenant Smith's demise during a raid was detailed in *A Tear for Somalia*, the memoir which had so inspired P.G.P.D. Fullerton, in his handing over report described in chapter one.

little respite from the onslaught. The files describe how "in June 1927 an attempt was made to deface Lieut. Dawson Smith's grave at Ramu, the authors of which remained undetected." Shortly thereafter "a similar incident occurred in February 1928."[32] Ultimately "application was made by the Senior Commissioner for the removal of the grave to a Government Station where it could be adequately protected from wanton desecration."[33] Smith's grave, like that of a number of notable missionaries and explorers, was a threatening anomaly. Not only did it mark space but it did so with the body of an ancestor of the British "tribe," the same group who had been engaging in the destruction of Somali and Boran gravesites.

Within Islam the association between graves and sacred space was even more readily visible through the medium of shrines. The shrine of Sheikh Hussayn of Bale in Southern Ethiopia is of particular importance to this study.[34] I.M. Lewis explains that "the shrine of Sheikh Husseen of Bale is the most important Muslim centre of pilgrimage in Southern Ethiopia."[35] Moreover, the persona of Sheikh Hussayn was a conceptual field for the overlap of Boran-Oromo and Muslim beliefs. Lewis claims that "this powerful combination of Oromo, Somali, and Arab constituents gives Sheikh Husseen immense potency as a […] figure at once in the tradition of the Oromo divinely inspired *Qallus* and a Muslim saint."[36] Certainly pilgrimage through Southern Ethiopia is of sacred significance to both Somali and Boran-Oromo peoples of both "local" and Muslim faiths. It is also true that Sheikh Hussayn was symbolically linked to the *Qaalu* (*Kaalu*), the spiritual heads of the Boran-Oromo religion. However, it is to the

[32]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2.
[33]*Ibid.*
[34]Various authors spell the name Hussain, Hussein, and Husseen. I have settled on Hussayn pace Mario Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger," 57.
[35]I.M. Lewis, *Saints and Somalis: Popular Islam in a Clan-Based Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea, 1998), 102.
[36]Lewis, *Saints and Somalis*, 103.

emergence in Kenya of a female-dominated "cult" around Sheikh Hussayn called "Ayaana" that this chapter now turns.

"Ayaana"

At some point after the Waso (Uaso) Borana (a Boran group) moved into Isiolo District in the 1930s, a religious ritual called "Ayaana" came to prominence among them. Most scholars date the first cases of "Ayaana" in Isiolo District to 1952 when it came under administrative scrutiny and made it into the files. However, one of Anthropologist Gudrun Dahl's informants, an *ayaantu* (Boran time specialist/historian) says that "Ayaana" started during the *gada* of Bulle Dabassa (1928-36).[37] The history of Waso Boran migration substantiates the claims of the *ayaantu.* Beginning in the 1930s the Waso Boran were cut off from other Boran-Oromo peoples, especially those in Ethiopia.[38] They were separated from their kin via colonial restrictions on mobility that were becoming increasingly tangible through cattle branding, quarantine, and grazing schemes which regulated migration. Thus they were a ready example to other Northeastern peoples of colonial livestock law's impact on movement. With their pastures progressively more circumscribed, the Waso Boran were less and less able to make pilgrimage. Such restrictions cut them off from the *Qaalu,* the spiritual intermediaries to *Waaqa* (God). They met the existential crisis this entailed with religious innovation.

*"*Ayaana" took its name from the concept of *ayaana,* an idea central to Boran-Oromo perceptions of the divine. Religious notions like *ayaana* are necessarily elastic and adaptive.[39]

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[37]Gudrun Dahl, "Possession as Cure. The *Ayaana* Cult among the Waso Borana," Anita Jacobson-Widding and David Westerlund eds., *Culture, Experience and Pluralism: Essays on African Ideas of Illness and Healing*. (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis, 1989), 154.
[38]Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger."
[39]See for instance Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1999), Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), Paul Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2000).

Boran-Oromo describe *ayaana* as coming from *Waaqa*. Anthropologist Aneesa Kassam defines it as operating "on five temporal and numerological principles" within which *ayaana* itself stands for "space, time, motion" as aspects of the "principles of nature."[40] Anthropologist Joseph Van De Loo, personalizes the definition, stating that *ayaana* is "the kernel of someone's individual constitution and capacity to interrelate with others."[41] Illustrating its pervasiveness in everyday thought, *ayaana* is the word for a single day and thus a micro-cycle of time. *Ayaana* also refers to ancestry, as in the saying "*ayaana* is like an old respected person."[42] Some ethnographers have therefore described *ayaana* in terms of ancestor spirits.[43] According to Van De Loo, *ayaana* flows through and connects the "seasonal and lunar cycles of rainfall and the growth of plants and animals" to the "domain of home, household and family" as well as the "bodily domain…qua origin and innate makeup."[44] The core of *ayaana* then is that it connects individuals to *Waaqa* through the community and nature via the rituals and age-grades of the *gada* system.

Movement was integral to Boran-Oromo religious practices. The term *jila* was used interchangeably for pilgrims, pilgrimage, and ritual.[45] Boran moved to initiate or conclude rituals and pilgrimage itself constituted a ritual. Such rituals emphasized movement through life and the movement of *ayaana* through time via the life cycle. This took place one day (*ayaana*) at a time. Eight years-worth of *ayaana* made up one *gada* and five *gada* comprised a generation. The way

[40]Kassam, "Ritual and Classification," 489.
[41]Joseph Van De Loo, *Guji Oromo Culture in Southern Ethiopia: Religious Capabilities in Rituals and Songs* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1991), 146.
[42]Quoted in Van de Loo, *Guji Oromo Culture*, 148.
[43]Mario Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger, Pilgrim and Voice: Divinatory Processes among the Waso Boorana of Kenya," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26 (1996): 62. Schlee and Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity*, 58.
[44]Van De Loo, *Guji Oromo Culture*, 145. Dahl, "Possession as Cure," 154. *Ayaana* is also the term for the Boran month, a cycle of 27 days. See Schlee and Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity,* 46.
[45]Legesse, *Oromo Democracy*, 236. Günther Schlee, *Identities on the Move*, Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea, 1994).

that temporal descriptors such as *ayaana* and *gada* double as terms for key religious concepts and institutions illustrates how deeply ingrained time— the measure of motion— is within Boran ontology and cosmology. Such ideas also intrinsically link time to *Waaqa*. Therefore, the manner in which movement was restricted, first during the colonial era and then during the *gaf Daba* (time stopping), had a profound impact upon the sacred.

As their identity and mobility became increasingly constrained, Waso Boran, who were nominally Muslim by this time, began to practice "Ayaana." Colonial officials, and more orthodox Muslims, were unable to pin down exactly what "Ayaana" was. Like their giant-hunting predecessors in the 1920s, officials entertained creative and racially buttressed fantasies to provide an explanation. In 1956, the District Commissioner of Isiolo reported that Chief Galma Dida of the Waso Boran had informed him that "Ayaana" took the form of "casting spells on certain individuals and then charging large sums of money to remove them."[46] More titillating still, he claimed that "at night members are said to indulge in mass sexual orgies."[47] The District Commissioner concluded that "the Chief feels that if four or five elders could be convicted and put in prison it would make the others take more active steps to stop Ayana being practiced in their areas."[48] The Provincial Commissioner agreed stating "the resurgence of the Ayana Society should be checked in every possible way."[49] The poorly understood "Ayana Society" was considered dangerous to both morality and administration.

Prison was a unique option for addressing the threat of "Ayaana." In 1946, Waso Boran elders refused to pay livestock compensation to the Somali in the event that imprisonment was included as a condition of the *dia* bond agreement. *Dia* was a pre-colonial compensatory practice

[46]KNA: BB/1/2/4. JR Nimmo to Provincial Commissioner, Northern Prrovince, "Boran Affairs" 22 May, 1956.
[47]*Ibid.*
[48]*Ibid.*
[49]KNA: BB/1/2/4. Kennaway to District Commissioner, Isiolo, "Boran Affairs" 26 May, 1956.

which the colonial administration adopted, in modified form, for settling disputes. If, for instance, a Boran was known to have killed a Somali, a payment of livestock was expected in order to restore peace. The colonial innovation was to create written *dia* bonds which included monetary fines and prison sentences in place of, or addition to, livestock indemnities.[50] However, Boran, and Northeastern peoples more broadly, believed "a long term (above about 2 years) of imprisonment as being the equivalent of a death sentence."[51] The stasis inherent in imprisonment was directly at odds with the mobility central to the life cycle. Coupled with poor conditions, disease, and a lack of food and water, long-term incarceration removed people from the flow of *ayaana*. Following a circular logic, the harsh conditions of prison proved *ayaana's* absence. Further, imprisonment shifted criminal justice, for better or worse, to the individual rather than communal realm. As its defining principle, captivity eliminated free movement. But "Ayaana" in Isiolo was created out of constrained mobility as a means of regaining access to *ayaana*, so imprisonment was unlikely to destroy it.

"Ayaana" was first and foremost a way to cure unusual ailments within a constrained environment. If *ayaana* was readily available then there was little need for "Ayaana." But the absence of *ayaana* made "Ayaana" necessary. The practice of "Ayaana" provided a forum for assessing and discussing communal afflictions outside the realm of familiar illnesses. Mario Aguilar explains that "people treated at the *ayyaana* cult are people who have been suffering […] or who have been constantly sick over a period of time, without any apparent external sign of infection or body secretion."[52] "Ayaana" ceremonies were initiated with the arrival of an eagle. The eagle was considered a pilgrim and in this and its ability to fly was taken to manifest

[50]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/13/16, DC/ISO/4/7/5, BB/12/50, DC/ISO/4/7/7, BB/1/16.
[51]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/13/16. District Commissioner to Officer in Charge, Northern Frontier, "Blood Money" 15 October, 1946.
[52]Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger," 61-62.

ayaana. Upon spotting an eagle hanging around a settlement, a ritual specialist known as an *abayen,* gathered together people with the symptoms of exotic illnesses. Those assembled sang songs in veneration of Sheikh Hussayn, who took on the symbolic role of the *Qaalu,* as intermediary to *Waaqa*. An afflicted person then became possessed by the eagle and a dialogue between the eagle and *abayen* began. Aguilar explains "in that conversation, the *abayen* represents the community, while the sick person speaks for the eagle."[53] Through this ritual, *ayaana* conversed across its different levels, from the innate qualities of the individual to the larger community or "household."

The rites of "Ayaana" were female dominated and lively in a manner that troubled the administration. In 1962, The Mandera District Council noted that "these abhorrent dances were on the increase and should be controlled."[54] This despite the fact that "such dances were already illegal."[55] Even in 1969, the District Commissioner for Garissa complained that "there are people performing dances in Bula every day and from time to time unruliness and other nasty things take place."[56] He implored the district sub-chief, Mohamed Aden, to "explain to people that they cannot hold dances without a permit [and] if they continue to have unauthorized dances they can be arrested and taken to court."[57] Some people did in fact obtain dance permits. In 1960, Salat Nur was granted a permit to hold a public gathering/dance in Garissa.[58] Eight years later, he was among the 68 people, roughly half of whom were women, who applied for dance permits.[59]

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[53]Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger," 64.
[54]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/1/10. Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the African District Council of Mandera held at Mandera. 13 August, 1962.
[55]*Ibid.*
[56]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/8. District Commissioner, N.M. Kiara to Sub-Chief Mohamed Aden, "Ngoma za Sikusote." 1 February, 1969. My translation. The original Swahili reads "kuwa watu hucheza ngoma ndani ya Bula kila siku na mara kwa mara fujo na mambo mengine machafu hutokea."
[57]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/8. My translation. Original reads "uwaeleze watu hawawezi kucheza ngoma bila permit yangu. Wakiendelea na ngoma isiyo halali wanaweza kushikwa na kushitakiwa kortini."
[58]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/7/9. Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance No.53 of 1960. 9 March, 1960.
[59]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/8. 1968-70.

Because "Ayaana" was proscribed and thus not declared, it is difficult to tell how many such permits provided it with a legal façade as opposed to those acquired for celebrations or other occassions. Still, the high number of women seeking dance permits, in comparison to any other sort of licensing, speaks to the likelihood that many such permits amounted to an informal *ayaana* tax.

"Ayaana" in Northeast Kenya introduced Boran-Oromo religious elements into Islam as a familiar curative to unfamiliar maladies. "Ayaana" clearly takes its name from the principle of *ayaana*. The familiarity of this concept was intertwined with Islamic practices to address a new and constricted situation. Restrictions on mobility, from branding to imprisonment, struck at the Boran social body in new ways. Ethnographer Gudrun Dahl points out "for many Borana 'the new' involves not only Western influence but also the meeting with Muslim town culture."[60] The meeting of Islam and "local" religion was often construed as destructive. In 1965, an *abayen* named Kaliti Guyo was deported from Kenya back to Ethiopia because she was a "fortune teller and threat to security and good government."[61] Even at the close of the *gaf Daba* in 1968, the Kadhi, or Muslim legal authority, of the NEP complained about "Ayaana." He, Shiekh Ali Ibrahim, asked for the "dances to be forbidden completely within this District as far as our religion is concern[ed]."[62] He reasoned that "this dance is always practi[c]ed […] for curing purposes […] which of course have to create [a] negative attitude toward Moslem religion as [a] whole it is Magicians way of getting money without the government's knowledge in otherward being unli[c]ensed."[63] Here the Kadhi drove home his point through appeal to economic

[60]Dahl, "Possession as Cure," 164.
[61]DC/MLE/2/1/29. Kaliti also used the name Kaliti Galgalo Arero Kipito.
[62]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/8. Shiekh Ali Ibrahim to District Commissioner, Garissa, "Re: Ayana Dance" 28 July, 1968.
[63]*Ibid*.. I have edited the quote for clarity. The original quote reads "This dance is always practised within this District for curing purpose as believed, and of which of course have to create Negative attitude toward Moslem

reasoning, in that "Ayaana" was being practiced without a license and thereby avoiding taxes. This suggests that people organized "Ayaana" rituals clandestinely but it also indicates that other people did in fact get dance permits for the purpose of "Ayaana." In other words, people availed themselves of different strategies to access *ayaana*, whether in quiet collusion with, or direct opposition to, the government. The Kadhi could not countenance "Ayaana" in any guise and therefore it is worth interrogating why he believed that the healing practices of "Ayaana" created a negative view of Islam.

From a cyclical perspective, "Ayaana" can be taken to represent the resurgence of pre-Islamic cosmology. This even as "Ayaana" was in many ways molded by Islam, as practiced in towns such as Isiolo and Garissa. I.M. Lewis observes that "the pre-Islamic religion of the Somali was that of a Cushitic 'Sky God' (*Waaq*), and […] Somali society owes much to the interpretation of Islam in terms of Cushitic beliefs."[64] The link is such that "Ayaana" even found expression in Somalia, in the mid-twentieth century, where it was called "Boranaa."[65] One aspect of the appeal, and menace, of "Ayaana" ("Boranaa") was the fact that it was dominated by women. This was not the case in either Islam or Boran-Oromo religion, where positions of authority were reserved for men. Therefore, these faiths, while granting new forms of community as well as legal recourse to women, can also be recognized as constraining women. If a broad cyclical perspective on "Ayaana" is accurate it implicitly suggests that women held a preeminent place in pre-Islamic Boran-Oromo religion. Nigerian Scholars, O. W. Ogbomo and Q. O. Ogbomo argue that historians have believed that "since today women are oppressed, they must have been even more so in the past, especially if the writer is an optimist who sees the world

religion as whole it is Magicians way of getting money without the government's knowledge in otherward being unliecensed."

[64]Lewis, *Saints and Somalis*, 1.

[65]*Ibid*, 103.

stumbling forward in progress."[66] Even as they concede that precolonial African women also faced oppression, they rightly trouble the progressive narrative that often influences the reproduction of memory through history. The resurgence of the very old within the new carried the potential to upset the power dynamics of 1960s Northeast Kenya. This reconstitution, or even reemergence, of such a different order was a genuine threat to the status quo. Therefore it makes sense that Chief Galma Dida and Shiekh Ali Ibrahim, men in powerful positions, should place themselves in opposition to "Ayaana."

The Mark of the Beasts

Colonials worried themselves primarily with economic concerns. Thus, they found it difficult to see Boran agitation against branding and grazing control as anything beyond intransigence. This perception held despite frequent attempts by Boran intermediaries to explain themselves in religious terms which centered on migration and their herds. The importance of cattle to Boran-Oromo religion was not at all limited to their excrement. The stories Boran told in defense of their beliefs help to illustrate the point. In 1954, the significance of cattle to Boran religion found its way into colonial files in the form of a joke

> Three men, a Christian, a Mohammadan and a pagan Boran were talking together about religion. The Christian said 'we have the Bible'; the Mohammadan said 'we have the Koran'; together they asked the Boran 'but what have you, pray?' The Boran thereupon replied 'we had a book once but our cattle ate it![67]

The joke, though intended to lampoon Boran cosmology, highlights the centrality of cattle to the Boran. Furthermore, it presents a deep past (*zamani*) in which Boran had a book, which was subsequently replaced by cattle. Indeed, through divination the Boran "read" this "book." That

[66]O. W. Ogbomo and Q. O. Ogbomo, "Women and Society in Pre-Colonial Iyede," *Anthropos* 88 (1993): 431-441. For some further discussion of the role of women in precolonial African religions see Shane Doyle, "The Cwezi-Kubandwa Debate: Gender, Hegemony and Pre-Colonial Religion in Bunyoro, Western Uganda," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 77 (2007): 559-581. Rhiannon Stephens, "Lineage and Society in Precolonial Uganda," *Journal of African History* 50 (2009): 203-221.

[67]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. R.G. Brayne-Nicholls "Some Notes on the Golbo Boran of Isiolo," 1954.

is, they read by "inspecting the veins of the stomach of a slaughtered cow."[68] In both the stomach and the intestines they looked for blockages. Elders employed the idiom of the vein as path and debated where the veins of the stomach led and why. Such reading was an opportunity for social commentary. Like divination, the "joke" provided a way of translating the divine. In the case of the joke, the translation was for a colonial audience and was intended to convey the equivalence of cattle to books in understanding the machinations of God (*Waaqa*).

But not having a book was also significant since it was a marker of a unique system of belief. James Scott has proposed that "oral traditions […] have substantial advantages for peoples whose welfare and survival depend on a fleet-footed adjustment to a capricious and menacing political environment."[69] Scott's insight highlights the connection between mobility and orality within an often hostile environment. In the context of Northeastern Kenya such fluidity was conceptually underwritten in the movement of *ayaana* through time and space. *Ayaana* was "seen" and fixed in ritual, in cattle, and in migration, in ways that were readily discernable in the somatic world. Cattle, like all organisms, lived and died. This optic was distinct from the one that allowed the religious discourse and imaginings housed within texts to be understood in a holistic fashion. Abrahamic religion and identity were symbolically inseparable from text. From a broad East African perspective, pages of the Bible and Koran were literally imbued with power.[70] "Local" religion and Abrahamic religion intersected at the level of introspection. After all, *ayaana* was part of an individual's particular and unique make-up. But the outward expression of that intersection, when and where it took place, was important.

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[68]MacDougall, *Kenya: Boran Herdsmen*, 1974. The film opens with Boran elders reading a cow's stomach.
[69]James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2009), 237.
[70]Bilinda Straight, "Killing God: Exceptional Moments in the Colonial Missionary Encounter," *Current Anthropology* 49 (2008): 837-860. Jama Mohammed, "The 1944 Somaliland Camel Corps Mutiny and Popular Politics," *History Workshop Journal* 50 (2000): 93-113. Isabel Hofmeyr, "Dreams, Documents and 'Fetishes': African Christian Interpretations of 'The Pilgrim's Progress,'" *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32 (2002): 440-456.

Religion overlapped "tribe" and language as a changing marker of identity. In the early 1930s, J.W.K Pease observed that "Galla" was "applied by the people of Northern Somaliland […] to a large group of tribes […] which speak the Oromo language and possess no revealed religion."[71] Indicating the give and take of boundary making and breaking, he pointed out that "it has been adopted by Europeans, and is used by all writers […] for all Oromo speaking tribes."[72] Migration and settlement impacted such designations as did the passage of time. It is ironic that the appellation "Galla," with roots in Somali judgements of faith and British taxonomic imperatives, should be the bridge by which all Northeastern peoples came to be deemed "shifta," itself an identity rhetorically linked to Islam. In further illustration of the religious aspects of "shegatry," the Oromo speaking, Waso Borana (Ajuran), who lived around Isiolo in the 1930s adapted to colonial restrictions on their movement by adopting Islam and with it a Somali identity. Mario Aguilar observes that "by 1952, seventy five per cent of the Waso Boorana and Sakuye are reported as Muslims."[73] Yet, as explained in the above section, women within this affiliation practiced "Ayaana." Men continued to herd cattle and thereby also retained important links to Boran-Oromo cosmology and *ayaana*.

Cattle were sacred not in and of themselves but as creatures, central to the social system, whose existence (and offal) represented, participated in, and moved through the life cycle. Cattle were used to pay *dia* in the hopes of maintaining peace. They were sacrificed at important rituals marking movement through the stages of *gada,* including burial. They were eaten. This knowledge was passed on through practice. In 1954, the Provincial Commissioner of the NFD, R.G. Brayne-Nicholls, observed of children there that "another popular game is a Boran sort of

[71]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. J.W.K. Pease, "An Ethnological Treatise on the Gurreh Tribe."
[72]*Ibid.*
[73]Mario Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla, Kenya" (PhD diss., London University, 1993), 21.

'Dinky Toys'" in which "cattle and camels are modeled, and very well too, from damp soil."[74] He continued "with them they play games of make-believe" but "there is no idea of preserving good models for they are nearly as quickly made as destroyed."[75] The temporary nature of temporality— worldliness in this usage— found expression even at the level of play, in which mud-molded livestock were created and destroyed in repetition. What then was at stake in branding letters on cattle? Like *hubulluk,* Rendille cairns along migratory routes, cattle could be read to find a path around boundaries. Thus, a boundary beacon or brand could not simply replace the cultural lens through which *hubulluk* and cattle were understood. A bible could not become a substitute for cattle and vice versa. In fact, things like branding were hallmarks of colonial territoriality. They constituted a direct threat to local cognitive maps, the ways in which space was understood.

Through such threatening re-cognition, colonial officials imperiled the ability of mobile pastoralists to access *ayaana* through migration. In 1955, the Marsabit District Commissioner claimed "that steps must be taken to […] enac[t] the Marsabit Mountain (Grazing Control) Rules 1952 in so far as the issuing of Permits."[76] However, he complained

> The Elders […] stated that during these forthcoming rains they would not accept any restrictions. They could give no reasons for refusing to accept Permits, except it was a 'New Thing' and ever since they had been on Marsabit Mountain they had never been issued with permits![77]

Throughout the 1950s the colonial government endeavored to undertake a branding campaign to limit the amount of livestock grazing on Marsabit Mountain. The campaign included a census and residency permits, both of which the Boran found objectionable. Most of all, they were

[74]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. R.G. Brayne-Nicholls "Some Notes on the Golbo Boran of Isiolo," 1954
[75]*Ibid.*
[76]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. Marsabit District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 24 October, 1955.
[77]*Ibid.*

adamant in their refusal to have their stock branded. R.G. Turnbull, the Provincial Commissioner, initially responded by backing off of the branding scheme stating “"I do not wish to get involved in a show-down with these people until we have enough Police available in Marsabit to quell any disturbance they may make and enough Tribal Police to escort them to Ethiopia."[78] Turnbull had little choice but to exercise such patience since he, like the Boran, would have to await the rains for any large scale migration, forced or voluntary, to Ethiopia. He could only succeed in creating shifta by forcing the issue.

In their efforts to control migration, the colonial government interposed itself directly into Boran cosmology and criminality. According to Turnbull, writing in the 1950s, the Boran had “no traditional rights at Marsabit. They were brought there by us between 1917 and 1930 as refugees from Ethiopians."[79] He complained that "since they have been there they have been a continual nuisance” and elaborated that they were “destroying the forest, poaching game and giving sanctuary to raiding parties from the North."[80] It was certainly true that there was a large influx of Boran and Gabbra into Northern Kenya in the 1920s.[81] The movement between dry and rainy season grazing in order to preserve forage as well as movement to seasonal wells are defining features of transhumant pastoral systems. It was also true that one of the reasons for this migration, beyond the search for fodder, was to escape persecution. Moreover, one of the reasons the Boran wished to return to Ethiopia again was due to persecution under the British. The Ethiopian border with British East Africa vivisected the expansive Boran range. This border

[78]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. Provincial Commissioner Turnbull to the District Commissioner of Marsabit, 8 May, 1952.
[79]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. R.G. Turnbull to O’Hagan, 17 May, 1951.
[80]*Ibid.*
[81]K. Munyao and C.B. Barrett “Decentralization of Pastoral Resources Management and Its Effects on Environmental Degredation and Poverty: Experience from Northern Kenya.” C.B. Barrett, A.G. Mude, and J.M. Omiti eds. *Decentralization and the Social Economics of Development: Lessons from Kenya* (Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2007).

sometimes limited large scale migration but it also expedited evasion of taxes and legal sanctions for smaller groups such as bandits.

In attempting to turn pastoralists into ranchers, a more readily bounded form of pastoralism, the colonial government insinuated itself into conflicts. Intermittent and migratory settlement did not mesh with the way the British connected people to places. Turnbull stated "although, in theory, we should welcome a wholesale exodus from the mountain we should, in practice, be embarrassed by such a move."[82] Grazing schemes limited groups to ranges around settlements. However, pastoral seasonal grazing and wells were often very distant from each other and were frequently situated on different sides of international frontiers. Further, dry season grazing was necessarily distant from settlement. Turnbull noted that if the Boran were to move "we could not keep the area completely uninhabited and should be compelled to admit the Rendille."[83] Under Turnbull's plan, the Rendille and Gabbra gained permanent rights to the area of Marsabit Mountain, which they were in turn restricted to. After the Boran left Marsabit for Ethiopia they returned to find that the Rendille were occupying the wells. Conflicts followed and the colonial administration became involved, enforcing *dia*. To avoid such conflict, Boran, Gabbra, and Somali who settled in towns engaged in "shegatry," the changing of "tribal" affiliation, to retain mobility. Other of these Northeastern peoples chose to move away from, rather than through, the area. Still others of these groups became "shifta" during the 1960s, intermittently raiding settlements and then returning to the bush. Branding and bounding restricted the ability of Northeastern groups to become "shegat" or legally move in and out of the district. Banditry was one means of maintaining mobility and religious obligations, while exploiting "new things" like settlements and national borders.

[82]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18.
[83]*Ibid*.

The political expediency of avoiding persecution through migration dovetailed easily with transhumant pastoralism. Boran elders tried to convey this in the 1950s. In the preface of a letter forwarded from the "Chief and elders" of the "Marsabit Mountain Boran" the District Commissioner noted

> The Boran have done all possible to resist our intentions and indeed have announced their intention of moving back lock stock and barrel to Ethiopia if we persist in them. The reasons for their objection are frivolous in the extreme (e.g. that their cattle will die, that Government will seize all their cattle etc) and it is evident that they are resentful of any attempt by Government to effect a closer measure of control over them.[84]

In their "frivolous" objections these Boran elders showcased an awareness of colonial objectives at the time. For instance, the same District Commissioner observed, in a separate letter, the necessity of branding because "in no other way can we really control the flow of cattle to and from Abyssinia or ensure an adequate disposal of stock yearly to the Meat Marketing Board."[85] When placed in concert with the 1965 directive to cultivate a "greater appetite for consumer goods in the arid and semi arid areas,"[86] in order to ensure a market for livestock export, the expressed concerns of the Boran appear prophetic.

Another key factor in migration, given administrative harrying on both sides of the border, was religious obligation. Within the governing system of *gada* the preeminent spiritual leaders were known as the *Qaalu* (*Kaalu*). The two main *Qaalu* resided in Dirre and Liban respectively. Dirre rests near the Kenya-Ethiopia border while Liban lays further North. Both are within Southern Ethiopia and comprise the core of the Boran-Oromo homeland. The *Qaalu* cannot leave their area, be it Dirre or Liban, for the period of one *gada* (eight years). P.T.W. Baxter explains that "the relationship of the Boran nation through the *Kaalu* to God, the source

[84]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. D.C. to P.C. "Marsabit Mountain Boran," 11 December, 1950. The Boran had no "Chief" as this was a colonial imposition on *gada* in the interest of indirect rule.
[85]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. 8 September, 1949.
[86]KNA: BV/124/9. East African Livestock Development Survey.

of rain and fertility, was established in, and continues to be centered in, the two homelands."[87] To maintain that relationship Boran-Oromo peoples had to make a pilgrimage (*jila)* to Dirre and Liban at the transition between *gada*. During this time, the *gumi gayo* or popular assembly was held and the *Abba Gada* was elected. During the *jila* the Boran sing "*o fororе*" [may it rain]. Upon making their return from visiting the *Qaalu* they sing "*o roobaan sii galee*" [I have brought rain for you].[88] Through the maintenance of social obligations intrinsic to *gada* and pilgrimage, Boran-Oromo peoples ensured rain and fertility. In short, they kept *ayaana* flowing.

Colonial regulations struck at the connected movement, of people, herds, and *ayaana,* to the Boran worldview. The Marsabit Boran were absolutely opposed to the branding of their cattle recognizing it as a strategy for restricting their mobility. Branding fixed fluid identities, literally marking Northeastern peoples with the symbolic repertoire of the administration. In refusing to have their cattle branded the Boran cited religion. The District Commissioner reported that in a meeting about cattle branding the Boran objected "we believe it to be against our religion (obvious nonsense). We would rather risk the Shifta in Ethiopia than allow our cattle to be branded."[89] The Administration was dismissive of the Boran perspective, choosing instead to see it as a half-baked excuse aimed at misdirection and insubordination. But the importance of cattle to Boran religious observance belies such dismissal. According to myth the first *Qaalu* was accompanied by three black cows and brought rain wherever he travelled before one day disappearing into a miraculous fog. Anthropologist P.T.W. Baxter, observed in the 1950s that "the Qallu still maintain a herd of all-black cows, the posterity of those found with the first Qallu. They are herded separately, have an enclosure of their own, and must only be milked by

[87]Baxter, *Age, Generation, and Time*, 162.
[88]*Ibid*.
[89]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. D.C. to P.C. "Stock Branding on Marsabit Mountain" 13 June, 1950.

women of the sub-clan of the Qalliti."[90] While pilgrimage (*jila*) to Dirre and Liban, where the *Qaalu* resided, ensured the rains and healthy, fertile cattle, branding was understood, through precedent, as a direct impediment to this.

The Reverend Canon Webster of the Anglican African Church sought to clarify Boran resistance to branding. In a letter to the District Commissioner of Marsabit, Webster explained "the present decision to brand all stock on the Mountain suggests to them that the time may come when they may be separated through force of circumstances from both their remaining stock in Abyssinia and their kinsmen there and they are not prepared to face this possibility."[91] Webster went on to frame the discussion in Western idiom stating "they fear that the future increase of their stock will be limited, thus limiting the amount that they can 'Bank' since they anticipate difficulties in passing branded cattle to Abyssinia."[92] Given the Boran perspective that the religious obligations of pilgrimage would be curtailed through branding, resistance to the campaign on religious grounds was not "obvious nonsense." Pilgrimage to the *Qaalu* and the free movement it required was a central aspect of Boran religion, as were the herds threatened with branding. Worse still, the Boran herd, the quintessence being the *Qaalus*' all black cattle, was further threatened through scientific necromancy. This sought to take Boran cattle and breed them into European "exotics". Thus, the Marsabit Boran perceived the act of branding as an assault on their identity.

At the close of the 1950s the miscommunication continued and the issue of branding remained unresolved. Daudi Dabasso Wabera, a District Assistant at the time, made an attempt to offer his perspective on the matter.

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[90]KNA: A.A./14/1/10/11/2. P.T.W. Baxter "Social Organisation of the Boran of Northern Kenya," 1954.
[91]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. Rev. Canon Webster to D.C. 8 May, 1951.
[92]*Ibid.*

> As a cattle owner myself, coupled with the fact of being a member of the Boran tribe (Gabbra) - born and grown up at Marsabit Mountain. May I please enquire whether there is any objection to my submitting a memorandum (impartial without any fear of prejudice on my part) to you on the subject - pointing out (a) various discrepancies on either side, (b) the reasons and fear of Boran's, and (c) a solution which I think may solve the problem mutually. If you agree, may I please be advised whether I should submit a confidential or open memorandum. I would prefer the former.[93]

An interesting aspect of Wabera's letter is that he refers to himself as a "member of the Boran tribe (Gabbra)." Given that the Boran and Gabbra were considered distinct "tribes," Wabera was engaging in "shegatry" through claiming to be a "Gabbra-Boran" under the auspices of the administration. Wabera's state "shegatry" illustrates the continuing utility of "shegatry" as a strategy for Northeastern peoples to engage in identity politics in contrast to the fixity of colonial tribal-territorial designations. That is, "shegatry", even at the governmental level, was a means for peoples to remain mobile over the colonial landscape upon which people were tied to particular localities.

The Marsabit District Commissioner, H.H.C. Howard, provides a good example of the old guard. Howard had argued, nine years prior to Wabera's letter that

> The Sagunte Boran have renewed their application for more water which has been refused. I have no doubt that the stock is dying in small quantities from lack of water and this must be considered an excellent thing, because in no other way can the Boran be taught to limit the amount of stock on the Mountain to the carrying capacity of the wells.[94]

Howard had attempted to organize these cattle into different grazing areas and the Boran had, unsurprisingly, denied him. This was part of a plan to divide Marsabit Mountain into 6 grazing blocks, rotated by "tribe," and controlled by the colonial government. Perhaps smarting from his unsuccessful attempt to take on the role of the *Abba Gada*, Howard gloated, "now that the latter

[93]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. D.D. Wabera to Provincial Commissioner, 16 April, 1958. Emphasis original. Wabera later became the District Commissioner and the victim of Somali gunmen, kicking off the so-called Shifta War. See Mario Aguilar, "Writing Biographies of Boorana: Social Histories at the Time of Kenya's Independence," *History in Africa* 23 (1996): 351-367.
[94]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18. D.C. to P.C. "Marsabit Mountain Boran" 8 September, 1949.

policy has failed there is no one the Boran can turn to in their distress saving the Sky God or Canon Webster."[95]

Presumably, the Boran had turned to the "Sky God" (*Waaqa*), in their resistance to branding and tribal registration right from the start. Conflicts over religion, migration, and identity were all bundled together and this history was remembered through the concept of time and its equation with God. Boran had specialists in time reckoning and the history of *gada* called *ayaantu.* These *ayaantu* used their knowledge of logistics and the history of *gada* to determine the correct time for ceremonies, such as *gadaammojji.*[96] *Ayaantu* strove to avoid the repetition of previous misfortunes and keep movement in harmony with time and therefore *Waaqa*. The physical marker of branding curtailed the mobility ingrained in Boran cosmology and institutionalized in *gada*. As they looked back towards *Waaqa* the Boran were like the Somali *mzee* described in chapter one, using the sun to question the boundaries of the state. Such boundaries threatened the ability of the Boran to continue the flow of *ayaana* and rainfall through *gada*.

Rain

Rain influenced mobility. Pastoralists, like elephants, followed the rain. Settled peoples sought instead to bring rain to their fields. The logic of territorial fixity held that settlement offered the promise of social mobility to Northeastern peoples. But such mobility was very different from pastoral mobility and thus out of sync with the natural cycles that flowed from *Waaqa*. In the settlements rain confined people to their homes, destroyed roads, and constrained police and military patrols. But among pastoralists rain was a sign to move, in the knowledge that distant grazing would be replenished giving a chance for dry season grazing lands to

[95]KNA: PC/EST/2/11/18.
[96]Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 189.

regenerate. This complex entanglement of progress and stasis was at the heart of contestation between state and local understandings of even the most basic events, such as rainfall.

Within Boran cosmology the social obligations and temporal perception reified in *gada* were directly linked to rainfall. Were the Boran to neglect *gada* the rains would be withheld. Also if the Boran were to spill the blood of other Boran the rains would cease.[97] Thus the importance of freedom of movement is made apparent. The proverb "*Mudda rooba tchaamsaa, sagadi hindandau*" [the rain stops in May, after that prayers cannot bring it] is used to illustrate the way that things follow their seasons and natures.[98] But it is also interesting in that it implies that during the rainy season prayer can improve the possibility of rain. It both reminds listeners of ritual obligations and their inability to alter weather beyond certain bounds and thus can appear contradictory. Much like well-established theories of global climate change it places people at the mercy of nature while imparting their ability to modify the very nature they are subject to, especially in negative ways.

Like the Boran in their migrations, colonials were also intent on influencing weather patterns. Their efforts to control weather placed them in competition with *Qaalu*. According to the 1936 Political Records for Moyale District "good rains tended to keep the tribesmen quiet and content."[99] This convention remained intact from colonialism through independence such that in 1963 the *East African Standard* reported that "the long awaited rains appear to have broken in the Northern Frontier District and the administration is hoping this will help to ease tension."[100] During the rains, Northeastern peoples "scatter with their flocks […] away from

[97]Mario Aguilar, "Writing Biographies of Boorana."
[98]George Cotter, *Ethiopian Wisdom: Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People* (South Africa: Unisa, 1997), 166.
[99]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. Moyale Political Record, 1936.
[100]"Hopes of Less Tension," *East African Standard* April 3, 1963.

centers of population and into the bush."[101] Across the stretch of their interaction, pastoralists and administrators alike welcomed the opportunity that the rain afforded them to part ways.

Rains offered better grazing and, from the administrative perspective, the chance to introduce agriculture to semi-urban areas in the otherwise unaccommodating desert of the former NFD. Thus, there were "a substantial series of rain stimulation experiments during the ten-year period, 1950-60."[102] These were carried out by the East African Meteorological Department (EAMD) in conjunction with Atmospherics Incorporated of Fresno, California and the National Science Foundation.[103] Given the funding behind these investigations the conclusions were perhaps somewhat disappointing. In 1965, Thomas Henderson, President of Atmospherics Incorporated, synthesized the prior decade and a half of research with the observation that "there is a need to lengthen the rainfall at both the beginning and end of the precipitation seasons. Additional moisture in both directions would be beneficial."[104] In the margin of this report, the Minister of Agriculture, wrote the note "and during."[105] Fifteen years of research had determined that rain was good for Kenya and there should be more of it.

Measuring the impact of rainfall stimulation experiments required precipitation maps and daily meteorological observation data "on the files." It also required observation stations which, could be read from a pastoral perspective as constituting a competing sacred space, along the lines of a church. Weather stations were established early on and expanded with settlements. Wajir had a weather observation facility in 1917. Marsabit and Moyale acquired meteorological stations in 1920. Isiolo built a weather station in 1930, followed by Garissa in 1932 and Mandera

[101]"Hopes of Less Tension," *EAS*.
[102]KNA: BV/110/57. "East African Background to Rainfall Stimulation."
[103]*Ibid*.
[104]*Ibid*.
[105]*Ibid*.

in 1936.[106] The stations were variously housed on the grounds of police posts, trading centers, schools, and district offices. From a pastoral perspective, these were ritual sites from which weather balloons were launched, rain gauges were observed, and temperature and humidity were measured. When a thermometer at the Isiolo station was reading too low the Director of the EAMD suggested "holding the thermometer at arm's length outwards, and swinging repeatedly, taking care that the thermometer does not hit any obstruction. The thermometer should then be left standing vertically, bulb downwards, for at least an hour."[107] The sight of meteorological observer, Ali Galma, undertaking the prescribed rite must have appeared curious to onlookers. More peculiar still was that Mr. Galma was struck ill shortly thereafter and had to be replaced.[108] His successor, Rashid Guleid, also raised eyebrows when he absconded from government service at the beginning of the *gaf Daba,* taking the Isiolo weather files with him.[109] The theft indicates the value of weather lore to people, like Guleid, who attempted to negotiate a middle ground between settlement and pastoral life. Indeed weather lore was a way of assessing probability and thus time. Like reading the veins of cattle stomachs, weather lore, associated with settlements, could provide a unique means to comment on society via cosmology.

During the *gaf Daba,* Kenyan officials rhetorically linked "shifta" to the weather. The Veterinary Department noted "it is understood that these Shifta are here and no one ever can hope to drive them away, for the weather is now ideal for their existence here."[110] This connection seemed obvious to the Veterinary Department, tasked with overseeing livestock, in that transhumant pastoralism follows water and grazing and these are linked to rainfall. Further,

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[106]http://www.meteo.go.ke/obsv/. Rainfall Stations Catalogue. (accessed 4/12/14)
[107]KNA: RS/2/46. E.F. Lawes to Meteorological Observer Isiolo, "Faulty Minimum Thermometer," 5 March, 1962.
[108]*Ibid*.
[109]*Ibid*.
[110]KNA: RS/2/46. Permanent Secrretary, G.K. Karithi, to Provinical Commissioner for Eastern Province, "Security: Veterinary Camp, Isiolo," 9 December, 1965.

those who moved freely with their herds were now considered shifta. So it followed that given the right weather conditions the shifta must be around. The District Commissioner for Marsabit explained in a report about a gunfight between police and Boran that "the incident was a typical Boran Shifta raid made during the rains when there is plenty of water around and movement is not restricted by lack of water."[111] The Northeastern Regional Security Committee saw things the same way stating "any marked increase in shifta activity will depend upon the attitude of the Somalia government and an increase in rain."[112] Here an interesting paradox is introduced. Given the environment of Northeastern Kenya even the decisions of a nation-state required the cooperation of the elements. But if the nation-state was sedentary how could the population hope to receive sustenance from the mobile rains, which were now associated with shifta?

While shifta were associated with the rain, security forces were linked to drought. The North Eastern Security Committee illustrated the dichotomy observing that within the "present dry weather conditions security forces can move about freely until such times as the rains start again and security forces are more restricted in movement."[113] Much like the logic of incarceration, progress for the state meant stasis for the subject. Soldiers needed to move freely but locals needed to stay put because locals moving freely were considered shifta. But the association of shifta with the rain and the state with drought overlapped with local epistemology in a way contrary to the narrative of *maendeleo* [development]. At a religious level it also imparted that shifta were in sync with *Waaqa* while law abiding citizens were mired in the profanity of stasis.

[111]KNA: BB/12/50. District Commissioner Marsabit to Provincial Commissioner Eastern Province, "Marsabit Enquiry File No 4/63," 15 June, 1963.
[112]KNA: PR/1/5. Regional Security Committee, North Eastern Region meeting minutes, 28 November, 1964.
[113]KNA: PR/1/5. 2 March, 1964.

Even well after the so-called Shifta War ended, meteorological sites retained an important place in local perception. In 1973 in Wajir an EAMD report noted there had been cases "where by children come around and play about with the instruments." The report suggested this was "because there is no instrument enclosure protecting the equipments there."[114] Children may have been responsible for damaging meteorological equipment or "children" may have just been the post-colonial stand in for the grave-desecrating "vandals" of the colonial era. Either way, the state did not actually know who was responsible, as evidenced in its inability to mete out a punishment or even a reprimand. Instead the EAMD turned inward and sought funding to secure meteorological equipment at weather stations against further damage. Indeed this was the great failing of the state, it used its resources to restrict space rather than open it. The resulting lack of mobility was anathema to local ontology and was therefore highly contentious. Such conflicts were not solely spatial but also intersected with cosmological concerns. These included diametrically opposed readings of rain and drought as catalysts to mobility. Such contests over meaning placed the state at odds with its subjects and a great deal of suffering resulted.

Conclusion

In June of 1963, two Somali gunmen murdered Waso Boran Chief Galma Dida and Marsabit District Commissioner Daudi Dabasso Wabera. The gunmen were Somali nationalists suspected of colluding with white Kenyan police, former colonials, in planning the assassination.[115] Galma Dida and Dabasso Wabera had aligned themselves with the Kenyan state and with "new things," which seemed capable only of providing drought. They had not been

[114]KNA: RS/2/44. G.W.O. Akaki, "Instrument Safari to Garissa, Mandera, Moyale, and Nanyuki," 5 September, 1973.
[115]Mario Aguilar, "Writing Biographies of Boorana: Social Histories at the Time of Kenya's Independence," *History in Africa* 23 (1996): 351.

killed by the "Ayaana" practitioners or Boran herdsmen that they had actively sought to regulate. Instead they were the victims of politically motivated killing. Former police who had aligned themselves with the Somali state had taken the lives of the Kenyan officials. These gunmen claimed to be driven by the idea of "Greater Somalia" and they received unofficial asylum within that recently independent nation-state. In this sense their story fits the conventional narrative of the so-called Shifta War. However, even in reconstructing the history of the minority of subjects who made the transition from colonial intermediaries to post-colonial state officials and agents, a solely political focus is insufficient. Why had the very Somalis who, like their Kenyan counterparts, been willing to assimilate ideas of the state and linear time ended up killing their neighbors and potential allies?

Ideas about sacred space help articulate the perspective of Northeastern peoples as to the assassinations. The towns and settled life at the center of colonial and post-colonial states and their economies made stability sacred. Churches and mosques were monuments to linear time, and to theology oriented towards a heavenly future. They were resistant to synthesis with cyclical time and mobility. Heaps of cattle dung in churches made them profane. Movement towards a future was incongruous with movement through the cycles that dung symbolized. Movement towards an Abrahamic "God" required movement away from *Waaqa*. But movement away from *Waaqa* also meant movement away from rain, and thus towards drought. In the conditions of drought, death was inevitable. Therefore, according to Boran theology, it was only logical that Galma Dida and Dabasso Wabera had died. Drought, born of stasis, made people act like hyenas, dangerous scavengers. The scraps of the colonial inheritance in Northeastern Kenya were few and lacked *ayaana*.

Because the *gaf Daba* disconnected the Boran from *Waaqa*, they sought to regain their connection in multiple ways. They engaged in illegal migration across the borders and boundaries, physical and imagined, established in the colonial era. They created innovations such as "Ayaana," substituting Sheikh Hussayn for the *Qaalu*. They refused to have their cattle branded. They sought to evade the state. As the so-called Shifta War intensified those who could not avoid soldiers were killed or forced into towns. Within the towns, those that did not practice "Ayaana," attempted instead to bring rain and replace the *Qaalu* via the rituals of meteorology. Cattle and corpses, religion and rain, were all connected and contested in these machinations. Incorporating the idea of a future, paradoxically tied to stasis, was incongruous with *Waaqa* and thus constituted a crisis within Boran religion. Those who chose, or were forced into, sedentary life therefore tended to turn towards Islam or Christianity as a result. They met those religious traditions with their own cosmology resulting in a "new thing" both catalyzed by and constitutive of the *gaf Daba*.

Chapter 3. Semen, Scientific Necromancy, and the National Herd

Readers of the August 2, 1963 edition of the *East African Standard* were greeted with a full page article under the headline "Kenya A.I. Exports for Somalia." At the center of the page was a picture of a container of bull semen engulfed in a swirl of liquid nitrogen. The tankard of semen was marked with a large black arrow pointing upwards, and the entire image looks something like a futurist rendering of a cauldron. The article began with the line "semen from some of Kenya's best Sahiwal bulls has been exported to Somalia, where it will be used for crossing with indigenous cattle to improve milking quality."[1] The author then proclaimed

> One of the most exciting developments is the growing international trade in semen, making it possible for a Kenya farmer to enjoy the benefits and skill of years of work by perhaps a British livestock breeder in developing a high-yielding strain. All this genetic worth can be flown to him in a matter of hours contained in one single ampoule of semen.[2]

In its excitement over "genetic worth," the article brought forward the nationalist discourse undergirding livestock development in mid-twentieth century Kenya. This chapter teases out an epistemic dissonance, relative to science and culture, operating between the Kenyan state and its potential citizens in the former Northern Frontier District (NFD).

The "growing international trade in semen" in the 1960s provides a window into contested notions of market exchange in which the value of livestock, for meat, milk, and religious and cultural functions, were imagined. Because both the Kenyan State and Northeastern peoples employed livestock as national symbols, the international semen trade is a fruitful site in which to explore conflicting ideas about human ecology as they pertain to nationalism and perceptions of time. Claiming livestock as a national metonym is a means of saying entire groups, Boran and Somali, could be referenced through the symbolic deployment

[1]Colin Haynes, "Kenya A.I. Exports for Somalia," *East African Standard*, August 2, 1963.
[2] *Ibid*.

of a cow or camel. Meanwhile, untangling divergent visions of time offers a window into cosmology and the epistemic conflict wrapped up in it.

Taking account of the multiple visions of time and national development that operated in newly independent Kenya complicates the often mechanical arguments that relegate "unthinkable" iterations of community outside the constrictions of the nation-state into the marginal realm of "stateless society."[3] The "unthinkability" of Northeastern Kenyan life resides in its perceived incongruence with Western ideals of modernity, entailing the nation-state as well as advanced technology, and its revelation of the post-independence Kenyan state as a colonial inheritance; a ghost town in which pastoralists could find little sustenance.[4] Development in Northeastern Kenya was and is largely peripheral and when and where it has touched the ground it has primarily been in the form of land and livestock initiatives. While the rhetoric of *Maendeleo* [development] could be heard at every *baraza*, or public gathering, in the scattered population centers of the vast Northeastern Region, actual development projects were sparse and often unpopular. Though government land rovers often came and went with empty promises, development in the field of livestock production was in fact a major modernizing project of the

[3]Here I borrow from Michel-Rolph Trouillot's articulation of "historical silences" and "unthinkable histories." He argues that instances such as the Haitian Revolution diverged so much from predominating Western power structures and ontologies that they had to be willfully ignored to be reconciled. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995). Making the Haitian Revolution a "non-event," like making Greater Somalia (inclusive of the NEP and the Haud in Ethiopia) a vortex of anarchy expressed in the political science parlance of "stateless society," served the purpose of maintaining this ideological equilibrium. For a nuanced discussion of social organization within "stateless society" see Jean and John Comaroff eds. *Law and Disorder in the Post-colony* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006), Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2005), and William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

[4]For a detailed description of power as described here see the introductions to Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1990) and Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-188* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995). I employ Gramsci via Feierman and Glassman in the sense that hegemony is necessarily incomplete, resting on consensus and that that consensus is circular based on contradictory consciousness. For a discussion of modernity and the state see Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), Nicholas Dirks ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1992).

new Kenyan state. Its rhetoric, as well as some tangible initiatives, touched Northeastern pastoral communities in profound ways.

The National Dairy Herd

Kenya was home to a "National Dairy Herd" of several hundred thousand exotic and grade cattle. The herd "steadily increased from 1945 until in 1960 it totaled 441,000 animals of all ages. All but a few thousand of this number were in the hands of large-scale farmers, the great majority of whom were Europeans."[5] At the apex of the "exotics" were European Ayrshire, Fresian, Jersey, and Red Poll breeds notable for their milk production. Another characteristic of these breeds was their susceptibility to disease and tendency to need special food and accommodation. A cynical mind begins to see the subtext of national metonyms at work here. This herd had been coddled and expanded alongside the settler population until in 1960 Kenya stood as a key regional exporter to settlers and governments alike in neighboring countries. The exotics of the National Dairy Herd were held by government functionaries to be superior to "indigenous" livestock.

[5]KNA: BV/104/115. "The East African Dairy Herd." The authors note that "in this paper the herd is regarded as constituted of all female stock, stud bulls and bull calves kept for breeding, and does not include male stock retained for meat." The number works out to roughly 8 grade cattle per European inhabitant and this is a fair yardstick for following the ups and downs of the National Herd in relation to the settler population. However, Agriculture (inclusive of livestock) accounted for only 2,863 individuals (the third largest occupation behind military (5,054), and Government service (4,223) respectively) out of a total population of 55,759 Europeans in the 1962 census. Thus by the most liberal estimate of settler abilities, in which Europeans were solely responsible for the National Herd, only half of agriculturalists were involved in livestock production, and noone from other occupations dabbled, the number of grade cattle per breeder would still not exceed 310, a rather high and unlikely estimate. This is significant in light of claims that Europeans were responsible for upgrading the Boran bulls of the NEP since there were only 146 Europeans in the NEP as of the 1962 census. KNA: BV/124/10. For instance, "the major emphasis should be placed on testing and improvement of the indigenous Boran breed of cattle and the Sahiwal hybrids. For this purpose a limited number of additional Sahiwals will need to be acquired and consolidated with the existing herd. *The true Boran has been improved by European ranchers to the point at which its beef production performance is very high* under extensive pastoral conditions." emphasis mine. Even if every single European were involved in livestock breeding, which simply was not the case, and only one-tenth of the cattle in the NEP were grade Boran Zebu, an extremely conservative figure, each European would be responsible for more than 787 head of cattle, which is impossible without assistance.

As readers drank their morning tea and leafed through the pages of the August 2 edition of the *East African Standard* what did they make of the container of bull ejaculate touted there in all its glory? While they may have had any number of individual responses, the message they reacted to was much less subject to atomization. Frozen in time, the temporarily immotile sperm indicated the way upward to "modernity."[6] The article explained that "years after a top-quality bull is dead, its semen can be ‘mated' to selected cows and heifers and its genetic value used in up-grading cattle stocks."[7] This scientific necromancy, when applied to animal husbandry, could be employed to raise the standard of African livestock.

In order to improve cattle, the article contended, recourse to the West was necessary. The article describes how "Mr. B. M. Glover has bought 160 doses of semen from four proven Ayrshire bulls in England. He flew to England to complete the purchase and is paying the fare and expense of the breeding expert who will help him."[8] Though the white settler, Mr. Glover was not alone in engaging the international semen trade he was somewhat unique. The article notes "the Shorthorn Society has already bought 1,000 doses of semen, but Mr. Glover is thought to be the first farmer to do so privately."[9] The international travel and expense required to obtain the frozen seed were apparently fully worth it to Mr. Glover. He reasoned that his "Ayrshires are well known in the show and sales rings. I am doing this because I want to improve the quality of

[6]My invocation of modernity relies on a sense that modernity means the present of a historical moment, in this case the 1960s, and operates as a claims making device. The modern is often viewed as the height of opportunity generally manifested in material promise (i.e. access to and control of useful technologies, social institutions, and markets etc.). This diverges from the conception of modernity as a historical period born of capitalist production and enlightenment reasoning without ignoring the importance of these processes to conceptions of modernity. This stands in direct contrast to the progressive self-propulsion that modernity is imbued with in Western depictions of its meaning. See Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Duke University, 2007), Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, 1996).
[7]Haynes, "Kenya A.I. Exports for Somalia."
[8]*Ibid*.
[9]*Ibid*. The Shorthorn Society was and is an association of British cattle breeders throughout the commonwealth.

my herd and keep ahead."[10] Ultimately the message was that the future was bright and if Kenya was to succeed at pasture it would have to follow the lead of “modern” men such as Mr. Glover, though presumably not as far as semen gathering trips to England. So how was cattle superiority determined, what threatened the quality of Glover's herd, and who did he need to keep ahead of?

The general measure of superior livestock was and is increased meat and milk production. However, these are not especially simple matters. For instance, a desire for lean or fatty meat is a matter of consumer preference rooted in culture. Milk was a measure of prosperity among Northeastern peoples and thus coincides with the modernization of livestock at the juncture of the symbolic. In other words, everyone could agree on the axiom the more milk the better. Yet, cattle that can produce lots of milk but require special shelter and feed or that are not well suited to severe heat are not necessarily as desirable as those who produce less but are more mobile. For instance, even as late as 1965 "a herd of twenty-five high yielding young Fresian dairy cows was moved from Kenya to an enzootic East Coast Fever area in Tanzania, without any normal protective measures being taken and the whole lot were dead within six weeks."[11] Attempts to "upgrade" the East African herd were thwarted by the difficulty exotics encountered in much of the East African environmental matrix, peppered as it was with dispersed grazing, enzootic diseases, and in many areas a lack of water.

Thus there was notoriety in being a successful breeder of European stock in an unaccommodating environment. However, it seems this notoriety was driven more by nationalism than Mendelian expediency. Mr. Glover's prize Ayrshires were efficient foragers but were not well suited to heat and drought in comparison to the Boran breed of Zebu cattle. Meanwhile, Sahiwal cattle from Pakistan and India are good milk producers and do well in very

[10]*Ibid.*
[11]KNA: BV/104/115. "The East African Dairy Herd."

hot places. This helps explain why the Somali Government was willing to purchase their semen from Kenya, toward the goal of improving indigenous breed meat and milk production, despite the tensions and uncomfortable border between the two countries.[12] Ultimately, meat and milk production had to mesh with environmental conditions and cultural practices and preferences, leaving the matter of cattle superiority rather subjective (figure 3).

Figure 3. KNA: 920 KEN 972209. Lord Mountbatten, British Chief of the Defence Staff, inspects a Boran bull at the Royal Agriculture show during his 1961 visit to Kenya.

[12]For some discussion of the intricacies of relevant cattle breeds and cross-breeding in terms of milk and semen production see M.S. Khan, A.A.Bhatti, S.A. Bhatti, and M. Ashiq, "Semen Production and Productive Life of Sahiwal Bulls: Relationship with Genetic Worth," *Pakistan Veterinary Journal* 27 (2007): 20-24, H.W. Mwatawala and G.C. Kifaro, "Reproductive Performance of Artifically and Naturally Bred Boran Heifers and Cows under Ranch Conditions in Tanzania," *Journal of Animal and Plant Sciences* 4 (2009): 267-275, and J.C.M. Trail and K.E. Gregory, "Production characters of the Sahiwal and Ayrshire breeds and their crosses in Kenya," *Tropical Animal Health and Production* 14 (1981): 45-57. For a discussion of milk as a synonym of power and a synecdoche of semen see Paul Bjerk, "They Poured Themselves into the Milk: Zulu Political Philosophy under Shaka," *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 1-19 and Christopher Taylor, *Milk, Honey, and Money: Changing Concepts in Rwandan Healing* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992). Bjerk argues for a "milk complex" as a better way of conceptualizing the "cattle complex" and, borrowing from Taylor, as a "matrix of flow" in which the body, society, and the cosmos become entwined. As such he sees milk (when considered in analogy to semen) as the primary idiom of power among the Zulu and suggests this schema can be applied to East Africa.

The subjectivity of cattle superiority found expression in cattle breeding proclivities, in which livestock were representative of nation. Ayrshires were claimed as a Scottish breed, Jerseys were British, Sahiwal were variously Pakistani or Indian (indicating the contentious partition of India a decade and a half earlier), and Boran were Boran. Each of these breeds was "the best," depending on who was asked. However, for the Somali, cattle were secondary to camels.[13] Jomo Kenyatta used the connection explicitly, when he told the residents of the NEP who wished to be governed by Somalia to "pack up [their] camels and go to Somalia."[14] It is not much of a leap then to infer, based on the symbolism that people who regularly deal with livestock invest in those animals, that for Kenyan breeders to stay ahead and "modern" they had to embrace "exotic" (meaning European) breeds. If Mr. Glover and his prize Ayrshires represented an uncompromising western modernity for Kenya, and the breeders willing to mix their herds with Boran stock were the middle ground, it was certain that no breed of cattle could be mated with a camel.

Exotic livestock were highly valued and thus tended to be shipped via plane or boat rather than on the hoof. A Kenya Information Services Bulletin article makes things explicit in

[13]KNA: BV/22/4/107. Dr. Meyn, Adviser on Animal Breeding to French Breeder Claude Morand Fehr. Sahiwal were a liminal breed, not quite exotic and not quite indigenous, but distinctly "Asian" and therefore suitable for cross-breeding, particularly for beef, according to the colonial imagination. For instance "Mr. Dennis Wilson of Kilifi Plantations Limited, has started a large dairy farm right on the coast of the Indian Ocean in 1965. During the first years Mr. Wilson followed a criss-cross breeding policy between the Ayrshire and the Sahiwal (Pakistan Zebu). Due to changes in the milk price, Mr. Wilson now intends to lay more emphasis on beef production, and would like to test various exotic beef and dual purpose breeds for this." However, this cross-breeding was tempered by the perception that "the really good pedigree stock breeders are not getting rid of or tampering with the purity of their stock." Stock Policy Ref.9 KNA: BV/124/11. In further evidence of the logic that the colonial experience in South Asia applied to East Africa there were abortive plans bandied about for importing Water Buffalo from India to sustain local populations. See correspondence between Director of Veterinary Services and Kabete Provincial Secretary. KNA: BV/124/11. A final point of significance is that during the 1950s Kenyan Somalis successfully petitioned to be counted "Asian" rather than "Native" by formal complaint and insistence on paying the higher "Asian" head tax as opposed to the lower "Native" rate. The Boran and other Northeastern groups followed suit. This identity politics had a long history in which Somalis had previously been classified as "Asian" from 1919-1921. See Somali Exemption Ordinance KNA: AG/1/6 and *Memorandum of the Daru Somali Community of Kenya Colony to be Presented to the Hilton Young Commission* KNA: 967.62 MEM.

[14]"Mr. Odinga puts View on N.F.D." *EAS* May 23, 1963.

describing the process of international livestock trading at the governmental and high society level.

> A Kenya pedigree Jersey bull, 'Brackenridge Franchise', has been shipped on board a Royal Navy landing ship, H.M.S. *Meon* at Mombassa, to be taken 1,000 miles to the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean. The bull, which comes from a Limuru farm, near Nairobi, has been bought by the Agricultural Department of the Seychelles Government for breeding purposes […] In a special notice, the ship's captain said: 'As there is at present no satisfactory bull in the Seychelles and as there are 200 unmarried cows eagerly awaiting his arrival, I am sure this ship's company will appreciate this is one of the most important missions ever performed by H.M.S. *Meon.*[15]

The image of "Brackenridge Franchise" standing below the Union Jack of the H.M.S. *Meon* as it progressed slowly towards the 200 "unmarried" cows "eagerly awaiting" his arrival is somewhat comical but illuminates the national pride invested in livestock. This was all the more pronounced because within the realm of cattle breeding the eugenic narrative remained viable. Exotics were used to "improve" "indigenous" livestock and their population was maintained through inbreeding. International collaboration was often required in order to keep exotics "pure."

The mobility accorded to exotic breeds was in complete contrast to the regulations placed on "indigenous" stock. In 1961 a specially chartered aircraft at Embakasi Airport, Nairobi loaded on two Red Poll bull calves and twenty-two heifers then took to the skies before finally touching down in Addis Ababa. At the time, this was the largest consignment of livestock ever to be shipped from Kenya by air. An article in the Kenya Information Service Bulletin described the event and then got to the point, naming the man behind the purchase and the careful breeders who had raised the fine beasts. It noted that

> The cattle have been purchased by Mr. M.G. Langdon to improve the stock on his 1,000 acre farm near Addis Ababa. Mr. Langdon recently visited the Colony and contacted the Red Poll Society who introduced him to leading Red Poll breeders in the Colony. He

[15]KNA: DC/ISO/3/8/18. Kenya Information Services Bulletin, May 1961, "The Navy and the Bull."

> chose one bull and six heifer calves from Mr. Hugh Coltart, at Njoro. At Lumbwa he picked ten heifer calves from Hamilton Estates Limited, and six heifer calves from Heath Estates. The second bull calf came from Mr. Gerny Alexander, at Molo.[16]

The Red Poll Society, like the Mandera Whaling Club, the Wajir Yacht Club, or the Blue Turtle Club, was an exclusive society, although one that unlike the Somali Youth League, enjoyed freedom from government surveillance. Its utility was not simply the connections it forged among an international social caste but also something more tangible, high grade livestock thriving with special care in a presumably hazardous environment. These exotic cattle were a symbol of settler perseverance. But ever since Ghana gained independence in 1957 it had become clear that indirect rule in Africa was bound to become, at the very least, much more indirect. Where the settler population would fit into things was a matter of doubt and debate. By 1963, the National Dairy Herd alongside the settler population was declining.[17]

The uncertainty of the settler population's place in an independent Kenya manifested in changes in livestock practices. The National Dairy herd was steadily decreasing. Some of the herd had found new pastures in different countries. However, the primary factor in the herd's diminishing numbers was the slaughter of calves at a rate of about 3,000 per year.[18] J.F. Byng-Hall, the Managing Director of Kenya Co-Operative Creameries Limited, cited some of the perceived reasons for the decline.

> There seem to be two reasons for the slaughter of heifer calves by European farmers. First, […] there is no financial inducement to raise calves. It is expensive to sire calves by purebred bulls by natural service or by A.I. It is costly to rear them. There is no sure market for them when reared, and the farmer knows he is going to have to leave his farm within a year or two anyway. All he does, therefore, is to use the cheapest method of getting his cows in calf (by using Zebu bulls or grade bulls) and kills all or nearly all the calves at birth.[19]

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[16]KNA: DC/ISO/3/8/18. "Kenya Cattle Exported to Abyssinia."
[17]*Kenya Statistical Abstract, 1963*. *Kenya Statistical Abstract, 1968.* Between 1960 and 1963 the "European" population declined from approximately 61,000 to 53, 000 individuals. By 1968 the "European" population had leveled off around 42,000.
[18]KNA: BV/7/97. J.F. Byng-Hall, "National Dairy Herd," August 7, 1964.
[19]*Ibid*.

Settlers believed that independence would include a reckoning in which the land, among the most productive in East Africa, that they had appropriated would be reclaimed.[20] When their fears were not realized they continued to assume that they would eventually be removed "within a year or two." Interconnected in their fate, the decline in the number of settlers and exotic livestock made logical economic sense to Byng-Hall, though he hoped to alter the trend. However, the East African Dairy Herd had dropped to 397,000 by 1965.[21]

When it came to assessing African livestock practices government officials often relied on racism to explain away the ability of Northeasterners to succeed at livestock management within an incredibly inhospitable environment. Sir Donald MacGillivray described the situation as he saw it in a paper titled "The Principles of Livestock Development in East Africa."

> In the past the livestock industry of any locality has tended to emulate Topsy and 'just growed'[...] Frequently, however, the result has been a deformed weakling which after a chequered existence, during which life has only been sustained by frequent and expensive injections of capital, labour and legislation, has finally ceased to breathe altogether.[22]

Here racist imagery, Topsy (from Uncle Tom's Cabin), is marshaled to signal the ignorance of African breeders who act as a blank slate for outside impetus. While by no means sympathetic, Macgillivray's observation describes a cycle of life and death, a basic element of pastoral ontology, but he ultimately choses to couch it in terms of a racial hierarchy. Livestock development was a realm in which to carry on the narratives of race and gender imbedded in independence. Sir MacGillivray's rather biased perceptions are especially germane because he

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[20]Barbara Hertz, *Land Reform in Kenya*. (Washington DC: Agency for International Development, 1970). James M Rodewald, *Land Reform in Kenya.* Paper for Economics and Agricultural Economics 474, University of Wisconsin, summer session, 1965.
[21]KNA: BV/104/115. "Artificial Insemination."
[22]KNA: BV/104/115. Sir Donald MacGillivray, "The Principles of Livestock Development in East Africa," August 1965.

was head of the United Nations Special Fund which was in charge of formulating a livestock plan for Kenya.

The Milk Thieves

The plans to improve the national herd were particularly relevant to Northeastern Kenya as the potential main source of beef cattle for domestic and international consumption as well as heifers for the National Dairy Herd. The herd had already been built to a large extent upon local cattle. J.F. Byng-Hall described how "the existing National Herd was built up by using exotic bulls on indigenous humped cows, and continuing to use exotic sires on the succeeding generations."[23] The Northeast was home to the largest number of cattle and camels in Kenya. A development survey noted "the Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Marsabit, Isiolo, and Samburu districts in the Northern and North Eastern areas of Kenya, have a total area of approximately 80,000 sq. miles and contain some 1,150,000 cattle, 1,230,000 camels, 2,470,000 sheep and goats."[24] However, extremely underdeveloped infrastructure and separate administration had made these livestock resources hard to tap into. The UN development survey stated the problem, claiming "the need is for a readily accessible, internal, supply of good breeding stock. Although such animals are available in the country (mainly in the northern districts), they are at present only obtainable in small numbers, due to the lack of market and trade route facilities."[25] As the Director of Veterinary Services noted in 1962, sales depended “entirely upon development of permanent water supplies at our holding grounds” and “until these facilities have been provided the cattle can only be got out at the end of two rainy seasons.”[26] The goal then was to streamline

[23]KNA: BV/7/97. J.F. Byng-Hall to Bruce McKenzie, Minister of Agriculture, 12 June, 1965.
[24]KNA: BV/7/97. "Relevant Characteristics of the Beef Industry," The Samburu district of Northern was partially administered by the NFD prior to rezoning. All other districts mentioned were NFD administered.
[25]*Ibid.*
[26]KNA: BV/110/47. Director of Veterinary Services to Provinical Commissioner, Northern Province, “Marketing Policy: Northern Province.” 5 April, 1962.

the extraction of livestock from the Northeast through the development of bore-holes, holding grounds, and stock routes. Ideally, the livestock would already be improved within the region through the building of cattle crushes to help facilitate artificial insemination. Thus, plans for livestock development in the Northeast were fairly straight forward and revolved primarily around improved infrastructure. The cultural aspects of such development initiatives pitted scientific necromancy against pastoral ontology.

Scientific necromancy and pastoral ontology are theoretical constructs meant to indicate distinct, historically contingent, worldviews. Scientific necromancy is a phrase which serves to describe the efforts, for instance, to preserve a deceased bull through freezing and allow it to procreate via artificial insemination, thereby at least temporarily, defeating the passage of time relative to the cycle of life and death. It imparts the confluence of positivistic self-assurance with the creative and ritualistic flights of fancy that ultimately drive its cold logic. Scientific necromancy is meant to represent Western science as contingent and a product of historical processes rather than unassailably objective. In other words, scientific necromancy is employed to posit a generalized Northeastern Kenyan perspective in which principles congruent with the scientific method were attached to different forms and meanings, a different language of understanding. This "different language" rooted in "pastoral ontology" placed practices such as artificial insemination within a familiar worldview, in which social relations to nature could be considered in terms of natural cycles. Western scientific idiom could not simply replace this cultural logic mechanically.

The breeding of livestock without coitus was necessarily divorced from the cyclical notion of time, central to pastoral ontology. Artificial insemination stood outside the circle of life and death. It was especially aberrant in the instances where selective breeding stood only to

benefit the Kenyan state and foreign meat companies while at the same time threatening social cohesion and the authority of Northeastern elders. Even in those instances where divergent actors had similar goals, for instance the improvement of livestock, it is important to explore how achieving such goals was perceived and articulated in order to engage with the deeper history of the region. Thus, the term scientific necromancy is meant to highlight the cultural contingency of ontology.

Pastoral ontology is intended to signal a worldview tied to, for our purposes here, the notion of cyclical time as expressed in natural cycles. Such cycles were socially codified. The Boran were organized within a socio-political structure of age-groups and age-grades collectively known as *gada*. As discussed at length in chapter 2, every eight years members of the community moved into a new age-grade with different responsibilities and prohibitions. Somalis also calculated time in cycles. According to Muusa Galaal, a Somali scholar writing in 1968, Somalis maintained a belief that good years are followed by bad ones in a complex interlocked series of cycles. Time was reckoned by these cycles which cover three, eight, thirty, fifty, and eighty year periods.[27] In short, pastoral ontology was connected to cyclical time and scientific necromancy tried to move beyond the cycles extant in nature.

As noted, one aspect of the livestock plan for the Northeast was extraction and for this to be feasible on a large scale the Kenyan government, in collusion with their former colonial advisers, felt that "steps must be taken to cultivate greater appetite for consumer goods in the arid and semi arid areas."[28] An economic overview of the livestock industry in East Africa stated the problem thus.

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[27]Muusa Galaal, *The Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore, Astronomy, and Astrology* (Mogadishu: Galaal, 1968), 7-9.
[28]KNA: BV/124/9.

> Whilst it is true for the pastoral peoples […] that an improved economic status is obtainable by a switch from primitive dairying to the production of meat for the market, such a change is a formidable one. For farmers in settled agricultural areas increased crop production is largely a matter of ‘more and better' of the same thing, whilst for the pastoral peoples a change in the whole pattern of production, and in their way and philosophy of life is involved.[29]

This change in a pastoral "way and philosophy of life" was equated with progressive development and Sir MacGillivray, Head of the United Nations Livestock Development Survey, had much to say on the matter.

> The progression of the industry from, say, the nomadic herding of unimproved cattle on indigenous vegetation to the sophisticated techniques of ranching genetically superior stock on improved pastures can be regarded as a continuous evolution in which passage from one stage of development to the next is usually so gradual as to be imperceptible. In the ideal situation, as each improvement is introduced, the consolidation of past development occurs simultaneously with the preparation for introducing the next improvement. These improvements may be technical (e.g. disease control), social (e.g. new systems of land tenure), economic (e.g. credit facilities or improved marketing organization), but they must occur in an appropriate order in relation to one another if progress is to be continuous and as rapid as possible.[30]

Here he discerned an evolutionary progression from "unimproved cattle" to "genetically superior stock" which might be accomplished through implementation of development plans. The greatest obstacle to this perceived progression was cultural resistance and a lack of infrastructure.

The object of livestock development was to move from nomadic pastoralism to more settled agro-pastoral production, from Zebu to exotic breeds. Yet, superior stock was a subjective matter. High-yielding exotic milk cattle that die easily, such as the Tanzanian Fresians, were not really preferable to more hardy cows that produced less milk. This did not appear to concern MacGillivray who saw great potential for the development scheme in pastoral areas, particularly through duress.

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[29]KNA: BV/104/115. "The Livestock Industries in the Economy of East Africa."
[30]KNA: BV/104/115. Sir Donald MacGillivray, "The Principles of Livestock Development in East Africa," August 1965.

> The rate of development may be considerably accelerated in times of economic and nutritional stress, such as may be occasioned by a prolonged and serious drought. Given a leavening of people who have had some years of schooling, coupled with wise guidance from government, it is likely that a community which has experienced starvation and serious losses among its livestock will no longer be content to shrug off its hardships a 'shauri na mungu.'[31]

In the rugged pastoral Eden of the colonial imagination there was potential for livestock improvement given sufficient suffering and proper guidance. In MacGillivray's estimation this would require careful implementation of development initiatives in concert with a full scale cognitive restructuring. He claimed

> Efforts to raise the imaginative horizons of the pastoral tribes must concentrate upon loosening their traditional regard for livestock […]. Only when he has to pay cash for school fees, taxes or his limited range of consumer goods, e.g. beads, tea, sugar, beer and an occasional blanket, does the pastoralist need to sell an animal and so obtain a different currency. If his appetite for goods valued in money could be cultivated, his willingness to sell cattle would be correspondingly increased.[32]

MacGillivray also hoped these changes would be accompanied by changes in pastoral food ways. He propounded that

> A change in food habits is particularly desirable not only because it would establish the need to buy and sell with money. A change in food habits […] would have the advantages of (a) stimulating demand for the money with which to purchase the foods, (b) enabling a smaller proportion of breeding females to be carried in the herd and thus allow the increased production of steers and slaughter stock, and (c) reducing the domestic demand for milk, thereby leaving more available to the calves and increasing their survival and growth rates.[33]

Given that milk was the primary idiom of wealth within the Northeast replacing "(c)" with "(a)," and for that matter "(b)," was a formidable and unlikely task. Policy planners hoped to approach it from a couple directions. One approach was to enlist the service of anthropologists. A draft

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[31]KNA: BV/104/115. "*shauri na mungu*" translates to advice and God. Most likely the author is referencing the saying "*shauri la Mungu*" which literally means God's counsel or God's problem and is meant to invoke a fatalistic submission to trials and tribulations as beyond the scope of human ability to intercede in.
[32]*Ibid.*
[33]*Ibid.*

proposal noted "the anthropologist should work with the agricultural or veterinary staff in an area to find ways and means of breaking down customs that hold back development in the field of livestock improvement as in others."[34] Also, "it has […] been felt by some districts that Land Boards need to be composed of progressive people who understand the problem rather than elders who do not."[35] But Northeastern elders did understand the problems associated with livestock development. After all, the goal of livestock development in Northeastern Kenya was the extraction of milk (wealth) from the Northeast for consumption elsewhere.

The state's intervention into the livestock trade, while ostensibly connecting the Northeast to the rest of the country and providing a ready cash base, was broadly resented. Cattle auctions, like grazing, were restricted by "tribe." The justification for such restrictions was to stem the potential spread of disease. Government concerns about intermingling and disease were also the basis for quarantines which were applied to particular "tribal areas." Furthermore, stock sales themselves were subject to a litany of conditions. For instance, at Isiolo "all stock to be offered for sale must have been isolated […] for a minimum period of twenty one days prior to the sale" and "all cattle must show a clear 'N' brand."[36] Additionally "all traders must have valid no objection passes," which were obtained for a fee and allowed them to be in the area to trade livestock.[37] Buyers took offense to taxes imposed at auction and sellers felt prices were too low. At a 1962 auction in Garba Tulla, "buyers from Central Province […] abstained from buying cattle, on the grounds that they are being asked to pay shs. 10/=" while "Borans started grumbling after only about 24 cattle ha[d] been bought" saying "they would rather take their

[34]KNA: BV/104/115. "Land Tenure and Livestock Development."
[35]*Ibid.* Original quote reads "It has also been felt…."
[36]KNA: BV/110/47. Veterinary Officer in Charge, Northern Province, J. MacDonald toDistrict Commissioner, Isiolo, "Auction Sale – Isiolo Leasehold," 27 November, 1961.
[37]*Ibid.*

cattle home than sell cheaply."[38] Such uneasiness over price belied the depiction of pastoralists as ignorant of monetary economics. Even in 1941, The District Officer for Marsabit noted of Rendille there that "for unsophisticated sons of the desert they seem to have a very keen appreciation of money."[39] But appreciation of money did not equate to appreciation for money. That is, understanding how a cash economy worked was not necessarily an impetus to integrate into it, especially from a constrained position.

Where they could, Northeastern peoples sought to control their incorporation into the Kenyan economy. In 1962, the Mandera District Council complained that "the illegal practice of avoiding the recognized Auctions at Mandera, and of taking stock to the Somalia border for sale was still being practiced particularly on the 3 days of the week when Trans-frontier trade was not permitted."[40] The same year, the Mandera District Commissioner complained that "public meetings were held" in which "various 'hot gospellers' performed […] mainly concerned with encouraging people to ignore Pass and Grazing Control Legislation, and in vitriolic attacks against the Administration and Police."[41] Through disobedience and informal trade, pastoralists in Mandera maintained a degree of mobility and control over livestock trading decisions. Places like Garissa and Isiolo had less opportunities for such maneuvering given their distance from international borders. Nevertheless, throughout the former NFD locals sought to stay mobile and thereby protect their milk and livestock against the extractive appetite of the government.

[38]KNA: BV/110/47. Correspondence. 11 July 1962.
[39]KNA: DC/MBT/7/5/1. Osborne to District Commissioner Marsabit. 2 December, 1941.
[40]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/1/10. Minutes of the African District Council of Mandera Full Council Meeting held at Mandera. 8 May, 1962.
[41]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/7/5. Monthly Report – Mandera District. June, 1962.

The state's program of replacing domestic milk consumption with export meat production was inconsistent, under the rubric of nation-building, in that the opposite goal had been pursued in the rest of Kenya only a couple of years prior.

> A publicity campaign, aimed primarily at the African consumer, was initiated during the year, as it is considered that this will achieve important increases in local sales of dairy produce, as well as helping to combat malnutrition. Lectures and demonstrations, supported by pamphlets and by articles and advertisements in the vernacular press, form the main plank of the campaign. Also of interest to consumers was the establishment of a legal standard of purity for ghee in January, 1960.[42]

Thus, the goals of livestock development in Northeastern Kenya could be readily interpreted as the extraction of milk (wealth) from the Northeast for consumption elsewhere. These efforts to reduce demand for milk in the Northeast while pushing for increased dairy consumption in the rest of Kenya highlighted the "other" status of the Northeast in the Kenyan socio-political body. If the region was something like a cancer in the Kenyan social body, a snake in the Kenyan house, then opposition to it could be a rallying point for nationalism. However, such exclusive "down country" nationalism could not be expected to ring true in the Northeast no matter how often *harambee* [communal effort] and *maendeleo* [development] were repeated. Little wonder then that "such processes may be opposed by tribal elders."[43]

Science and Survival

While elders' opposition to livestock development plans made sense even from the standpoint of a Western teleology, there was also a deep-rooted cultural dissonance behind their reticence to embrace artificial insemination and decreased mobility (through an increase in wells and ranching schemes etc.). The Boran idiom of the *gaf Daba* was an apt way of describing the period from 1963-68. Stopping time to transcend death was one of the foremost ambitions of

[42]KNA: DC/ISO/3/8/18. Kenya Information Services Bulletin, May 1961. Ghee is clarified butter.
[43]KNA: BV/104/115. "Land Tenure and Livestock Development."

scientific necromancy. The West had been toying with the idea of suspended animation for quite some time. In the late nineteenth-century, *The British Medical Journal* questioned how to define death based on cases of newborns surviving their designation as dead.[44] These babies had been revived through artificial respiration, in one case over the course of four hours. The ethical dilemma was when to give up a person for dead, when to cease breathing into a still infant's mouth. Philosophically this was a long standing puzzle at the very core of religion and its refutation. Scientifically it was the impetus for bizarre rituals intended to open the possibility of defeating time.

The rituals and experiments associated with scientific necromancy were not confined to livestock breeding alone and touched the Kenyan ground in some peculiar ways. On November 13, 1964, J.R. Peberdy, Head of the Range Management Division, highlighted the direction technological innovation in game cropping was taking in Kenya to his counterpart Dr. P.E. Glover of the Serengeti Research Project in Tanganyika.

> I am investigating the possibility of incorporating game cropping in our range management scheme and have been collecting information from various sources. I have just received a letter from a firm in Spain giving details of a mobile units [*sic*] that could be used in a game cropping experiment. It consists of a tractor with a fifth wheel, with a semi-trailer and a freezer incorporated to refrigerate the animals during their transportation to the canning plant. I have written off to them for further details including specifications and prices but I thought that you might be interested in this information in the meantime.[45]

Peberdy envisioned "mobile killing teams" consisting of hunters and butchers traveling with the above tractor-pulled freezers and harvesting game meat. He spelled this out in a letter the following day to Ibertrade, the above-mentioned Spanish firm. Thus, game cropping initiatives in Kenya, as evidenced here, involved going into the bush, killing game and then freezing it for

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[44]W. Augustus Norry, "Suspended Animation" *The British Medical Journal,* 1 (1884): 162. John Marshall, "Suspended Animation" *The British Medical Journal,* 1 (1884): 312.
[45]KNA: BV/110/69. J.R. Peberdy to Dr. P.E. Glover, 13 November, 1964.

meat production. This was a somewhat bizarre ritual tied to capitalist imperatives that required long term storage. Yet such teams were already in operation in Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) and Peberdy was in correspondence with the Zoology Department of University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland on the matter.[46] The next step in the scheme was marketing.

During the first half of 1967, Mr. J. Wismer-Pedersen, a lecturer in Meat Technology at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural College of Copenhagen, Denmark, conducted testing on the quality of canned game meat. He toured the game reserves of Kenya and Tanzania killing and canning wild ungulates. He found that if the meat, particularly of Wildebeest, was refrigerated on the day of slaughter it was of a taste and quality comparable to two leading commercial brands of Danish "pork in own juice." This was apparently a positive conclusion.[47] In concert with information gleaned from game cropping and biltong manufacture in Rhodesia, Mr. Pedersen's research continued to inspire some interesting government exploratory projects at the end of the decade, including one involving a canning plant on a hover pad.[48]

The extractive and commoditization imperatives of the Kenyan government simply did not mesh with a Northeastern socio-cultural perspective. The names given to the 1968 breeding studs of the Artificial Insemination scheme help illustrate this point. Exotic cattle had names like “Settler,” “Virtue,” “Royalist,” and “Lindale Elite.”[49] Sahiwal were simply named a combination of letters and numbers such as “J.94” and “K.544,” while Boran were not included as studs at

[46] KNA: BV/110/69. A.S. Mossman to J.R. Peberdy, 10 November, 1964. "The refrigerated vans are run by private concerns. We chill carcasses at the field stations, and they are kept in cold storage when not being transported. Cold storage, in fact everything, is private except for the railway road transport used by some game ranchers. The butchers are licensed by the Game Department. One game ranching company, at least, arranges their licenses for them."
[47]KNA: BV/110/69. J. Wismer-Pedersen, Quality of Canned Meats of East African Wild Ungulates.
[48]KNA: BV/110/69. See John R. Peberdy, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Kenya to M.W. Symons of Laurentian Products LTD. S. Rhodesia. 8 January, 1965, 18 December, 1965 and response 28 January, 1965. For hover pad see KNA: BV/110/69. Richard Micklethwait 13 August, 1968.
[49]KNA: BC/24/1. “To All A.I. Staff.” 1968.

all.[50] In enlisting the aid of former colonial administrators to spearhead development efforts the Kenyan government was essentially trying to fight the colonial hangover by imbibing a steady stream of gin and tonics. That is, they were bridling against the inherited structures and strictures that were the very fabric of the post-colonial nation-state. Among these was a livestock hierarchy which revered exotic breeds based on a nationalist subtext and a proclivity towards production for the sole end of consumption.

For Northeastern peoples, livestock were not simply intended to produce meat and milk for conversion into capital. During the 1960s, the Veterinary Officer for Marsabit echoed his policy-writing peers when he observed "one of the main problems […] is that the inhabitants have no use for money and therefore have no incentive to sell their stock."[51] Though we have already seen that pastoralists were not ignorant of the workings of capital, sometimes choosing to trade livestock on their own terms, it is equally clear that there was a lot more than money at work in calculating the value of such stock. Even as recently as 2012 anthropologists Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo were able to contend

> Breeding for special performance features, whether on the basis of European breeds (called 'exotic' in Africa) or of local stock, however comes at a price. Fast growth comes with higher demands and lower resistance to deprivations. Nomads in arid environments (and even villagers who use unimproved pastures around villages) therefore often have preferred to keep their local unimproved breeds or have reverted to them after acquiring experience with 'improved' stock.[52]

A Kenyan government assessment of beef production in 1965 highlights the conundrum. It states "almost the entire production in Kenya is from the drier areas where indigenous Boran cattle are able to make very good use of comparatively poor pasture. Such animals, while they have been

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[50]*Ibid.*
[51]KNA: DC/ISO/4/16/13.
[52]Gunther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Pastoralism and Politics in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia*. (Suffolk: James Currey, 2012), 5-6.

of immense value to Kenya, nevertheless are comparatively slow maturing and therefore unsuited for intensive production."[53] Why were the animals of "immense value" if they were slow to mature? The nationalist discourse carried on the backs of livestock appears to be resonant once again, this time from a sympathetic observer. If the value of livestock was not reduced to their production capacity but also to their resilience, then the preceding quote makes sense and is illustrative of the competing pulls of different visions of productive society.

Frozen Rain

Within Somali tradition, good and evil were expressed in terms of rain and drought.[54] Scholar Musa Galaal, who wrote contemporary to the so-called Shifta War, explained "by 'evil' I mean drought, for drought is said to be the source of all evil. The source of all virtue, then, is rain."[55] The Somali saying *Col Iyo Abaar, Nabad Iyo Caano* [war and drought, peace and milk] linked rain with milk, a symbol of prosperity. Further, it indicated the spiral of pastoral life that the weather lore expert or "pastoral geographer" adhered to. That is, the belief that good years are followed by bad ones in a complex interlocked series of cycles. Time was reckoned by these cycles which covered approximately three, eight, thirty, fifty, and eighty year periods. The eight, fifty, and eighty year cycles were considered infallible, highlighting the cyclical core of this temporal framework.[56] Like the Boran specialists who could read cow stomachs for patterns, or the Rendille versed in *hubulluk*, Somali pastoral geographers charted cognitive maps built on in-depth local knowledge of environmental patterns that spoke to the probability of good water and

[53]KNA: BV/124/11. "Production of High Quality Beef in Kenya."
[54]This tradition obtained throughout the 20th century, is currently extant, and is traceable in poetry and proverb well before the colonial period. Tradition is employed in terms of thoughts and practices traceable over time based on a shared ontological core. Traditions are necessarily adaptive in order to remain viable. For discussion of tradition see Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1990).
[55]Galaal, *The Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore*, 14
[56]*Ibid*, 7-9. The eight year cycle also coincides with the Boran system of *gada*.

forage at particular times and places. Rain was an essential component in the calculation of these cycles within the Somali calendar.

In the Somali calendar the *Dab-Shid* or "night of fire" marks the New Year and falls within the first 4 days of August.[57] In the NEP the first forty days of the New Year are known as the *Dayr-Kala-Hahn*. This brings forth the rains that correspond to September, October, and November, or the *Dayr,* and is inconsistent such that the *Kala-Haan* (or first forty days of *Dayr*) is crucial. Pastoral geographers made much of how and when these rains took place as it had important implications for the shorter yearly cycles. This is summed up in the Somali proverb: *Kala-Haan Dayr ma sugo, kasna baaluq ma sugo* [the *Kala-Haan* rain does not wait for the main *Dayr* rains, neither does the youth who has learned about love making wait until he has come of age].[58] Rain, like semen, had important reproductive consequences, which though they should come at their proper time, may not. The *Dayr* rains moved from north to south and were said to belong to different clans at different times. The concept of *nuro*, or "grazing nourishment," connected Somalis directly to their herds. Galaal observed that "NURO is thought to be a life-giving, intangible substance which animals can sense, but which people can not. The weather lorist knows of its existence only through observation of his animals."[59] The places where *nuro* could always be found in certain years were generally named for livestock, further reinforcing the link. Take for instance, the place names *geel cayiliye* [the fatter camels] or *dabar-weyne* [the

[57]*Ibid*. The *Dab-Shid* is said to be reckoned from the Persian occupation of the city of Zeila in the ancient era. It is also notable that it corresponds to the Prophet Mohammed's birthday which may indicate the inscription of both the Indian Ocean trade and Islam onto this "traditional" cosmology. This in turn illustrates the dynamism of tradition and its utility in accessing distant histories. See for instance, Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1990). Work in this vein could be undertaken for the deep history of Somalia, which would offer important insight into Islamic history and the Indian Ocean diaspora in the Horn of Africa.
[58]*Ibid*, 49.
[59]*Ibid*, 10.

place of udders big with milk].[60] The latter example again presents milk as the metaphor for prosperity and is one of many, all of which are linked to camels, themselves a symbol of Somalis. Places without *nuro* follow the same symbolic formula. Consider for instance *geel war* [the starver of camels] and *qhandadhley* [the dryer].[61]

A final Somali concept of significance to this study is that of *barakiin* or "medicine." Galaal describes it as "a sort of medicine– a cure-all and a health preserver– that is said to exist in certain grazing plants abundant more in some areas than in others. The meat and milk of camels and goats act as the best transmitters of BARAKIIN to the people."[62] These plants are said to be particularly copious in the Haud. Galaal goes on to explain that "nomads living in towns, believing that the fresh meat and milk produced in the Bush contains BARAKIIN, go to the Bush to recuperate from illnesses."[63] The power of *barakiin* was explicit in this practice and expressed the inconsistency of modernizing projects with local wisdom. Going to the bush rather than the town to recover from illness was antithetical to development in the western mold.

The resonant question then is could the static semen housed just outside Nairobi at the Central Artificial Insemination Station (CAIS) be incorporated into the rain cycles of Somalia? Could artificial insemination produce *barakiin*? In terms of camels the issue was moot because Kenya in the 1960s had no use for camels and was willing to go to war to prove it. Even so, the Somali government was more optimistic than the Somali poets and pastoral geographers. In the preface to Galaal's study, the Somali Director General of the Ministry of Education, Mohamed Adan Sheff, provided his take on the matter. Sheff stated "I would very much like most of the contents to be written in a language suitable for instruction in our schools so that the young

[60]*Ibid.*
[61]*Ibid.*
[62]*Ibid*, 12.
[63]*Ibid.*

Somali children could have first hand information on the national way of life to which they could add the modern scientific knowledge which they may acquire later on."[64] He concluded by expressing his hope that "such a synthesis will lead to an enlightened society."[65] Mr. Sheff was confident that scientific necromancy could be incorporated into the national way of life in a manner inverse to, but not unlike, the Kenyan breeders who were willing to mix their stock with Boran cattle.

Different Brothers from the Same Mother

> *Children of Gabbra and Garre*
> *Sons of Guji and Boran,*
> *If you quarrel among yourselves,*
> *You are like the hyenas of one land*
> *Who, when they like, eat each other,*
> *Or, when they like, eat something*
> *Together. That is like the kicking of a*
> *Cow in mounting mood.* [66]
> -Jarso Waaqo Qooto

This poem employs metaphors of family and lineage familiar throughout the Northeast. The children of Gabbra and Garrre and sons of Guji and Boran were all Boran-Oromo groups rhetorically linked to their respective mythical Ur ancestor. Within oral tradition, all these "children" shared the same mother, Samaale, the ancestress of both Boran-Oromo and Somali peoples.[67] Samaale taught her children the same lessons about respect for the world around them and their place within it. She also raised them with the same sense of time. But living with different fathers had its impact too, and brought with it different languages for and ways of approaching Samaale's lessons.

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[64] *Ibid*, "preface" unnumbered.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] Gunther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, "Oromo Nationalist Poetry: Jarso Waaqo Qooto's Tape Recording about Political Events in Southern Oromia, 1991," *African Languages and Cultures* 3 (1993): 242.
[67] Gunther Schlee "Brothers of the Boran Once Again: On the Fading Popularity of Certain Somali Identities in Northern Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies* 1 (2007): 417-435.

Something all Boran knew from childhood was the importance of rain. As cattle grew restless and the musk of rain pervaded the air those Boran who could headed for Dirri or Liban within Ethiopia. Both places were considered the core of the Boran-Oromo homeland. They had a further importance in that the complementary *Qaallu* (*Kaalu*), who serve as the preeminent ritual leaders of the Boran and maintain the flow of *ayaana*, resided there. The *Qaallu* were restricted to Dirri and Liban respectively for a period of eight years. This corresponds to the spacing of age sets as well as the *gumi gayo*, or popular assembly, in which important decisions regarding the next eight year cycle are made.[68] The eight year spacing also coincides with the Somali reckoning of the eight year cycle, just as *ayaana* is similar to *barakiin,* and thus these may be old lessons from "mom" and *Waaqa* (God).

In adherence with temporal cycles, the Boran were organized into age and generation sets which P.T.W. Baxter described as a "time worm." Generations were kept roughly forty years apart while age sets were separated by eight years. If considered in relation to the passage of time, these age and generation sets, collectively known as *gada*, were connected to each other in a manner that could be represented in the single strand of a helix or Baxter's "time worm."[69] Age sets were central to the larger Boran-Oromo society and were tied to both obligations and cosmology. Each year, within eight year cycles, important rituals, from circumcision to the drafting of laws, were undertaken by particular age sets. For instance, the ritual of *gadaammojjii* took place on the second or third year of each cycle and marked the initiation of elders into the final age-grade (*gadaammojjii*) and of their sons into warrior status as *raaba* as well as their grandsons (*dabellee*) into the *gada* cycle.

[68]Gunther Schlee, "Brothers of the Boran Once Again," 421.
[69]Baxter and Almagar eds., *Age, Generation and Time.*

Pilgrimage to Dirri and Liban and the provision of myrrh to the *Qaalu* initiated the *gadaammojjii* rituals. As we have seen, the wives and sons of the *gadammojjii* then acted out the theft of milk from their elders who recited personal heroic poetry to defend against the staged robbery. This represented the passage of prosperity into the next age set, as indicated by the milk. Further, passage into new responsibilities had to be earned through respect of the elders who ensured their good name passed on. In a similar manner to other yearly rituals, as Boran made their way to visit the *Qaalu* they sang "*o fororе*" [may it rain]. Upon making their return from their spiritual heartland they sang "*o roobaan sii galee*" [I have brought rain for you].[70] Hence, for the Boran it was the maintenance of the social obligations intrinsic to age sets that ensured the rains would fall.

Somalis, for their part, did what they could to honor the rains as well. The pre-Islamic aspects of Somali cosmology were very similar to those of the Boran-Oromo in that lineage and the relationship of important personages to a greater power responsible for rain and fertility were the primary aspects. These beliefs, like clan, proved very resilient and found space within Islam to continue. Recall, Muusa Galaal's memories of the codependence of "high puritance" and "pseudo-religious practices." Instead of *Qaallu* as the symbolic embodiment of important ancestors, Islamic Saints represented in shrines played that role. These shrines were maintained in the ancestral homelands of the Somali, being Northwestern and Southern Somalia, as well as in Ethiopia and thereby provide another parallel to Boran-Oromo practices. I.M. Lewis explains that "*Lak* is the ceremony performed at the beginning of the main rains, and is a tribal rite including prayers for rain, Koranic recitations directed by holy men (*wadad*), and sacrifices to

[70]*Ibid.*

which each section contributes."[71] Rain, cyclical time, and "local" religion were all interwoven in the lessons of Saamale, or pastoral ontology.

As thanks was given for rain and its continuance ensured through the hum of prayers in southern Somalia similar events were taking place in Dirri and Liban. There were of course also important differences. Perhaps the most striking was that in the Boran "homelands" snakes that had been kept in bamboo cages were released into the surrounding newly greened grasses shedding their skins in an embodiment of rebirth. Among these snakes were docile but highly venomous puff adders.[72] These snakes were symbolic of the virile and regenerative effects of rain as well as the confluence of domesticity and wildness that the Boran kept in balance. The development initiatives of the Kenyan state in the 1960s were a major incongruence that forced its way into Boran and Somali cosmology, causing a rift in time. This coincided with the reflexive crisis in the settler community that independence initiated. One realm in which these very different reactions to a historical moment played out was in varied approaches to constituting the National Herd.

Conclusion

In the 1960s there was an irreconcilable disjuncture between the development projects of newly independent Kenya and the cosmology attached to natural cycles among Northeastern peoples. The former sought to stop time in pursuit of immortality while the latter relied on the passage of time, in the coming of rains and the movement of herds, to remain vital. Conceptually, "time stopping" was beneficial to the state, offering the potential of immortality through stasis, but cataclysmic to Northeastern peoples, offering only immobility. To be forever

[71]I.M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar, and Saho* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea, 1998), 103.
[72]Baxter and Almagar eds., *Age, Generation, and Time*. This practice is probably the source of the proverbial pejorative "Galla snake" discussed in chapter one.

young was to be out of sync with the dynamic spiral of time. These competitive visions of an ideal modernity were so incongruous that they resulted in a war in which the Kenyan and Somali state sought to bring Northeastern peoples into their cities and subject them to the benefits of development in the form of scientific necromancy. Northeastern peoples were familiar with similar projects in the distant past, when Islam was a "new thing" to adapt to, thus they tended to favor incorporation with Somalia or tried fruitlessly to retain their autonomy. The outcome of the conflict that became the *gaf Daba* was the enduring legacy of chaos touted as endemic to the Northeast.

Development through urbanization and the labor it entailed did not coincide well with pastoral life. There was no grazing and thus no *nuro* in Nairobi, marked with the graves of missionaries, settlers, and administrators. In the absence of both grazing and *nuro* one could be sure they would find no *barakiin*. Indeed it was to the bush that Somalis went to recover from ailments through eating meat and milk infused with the *barakiin* that scientific necromancy had not yet found a suitable replacement for. The Northeast remained a world away from Nairobi, where the Kenyan nation was imagined. One realm where the nation was defined was within the national metonym of livestock. Kenya preferred European breeds The Northeast preferred its small but hearty cattle and its bellowing camels to "improved" stock. This region apart was something different and its "other" status meant that opposition to Northeasterners could be, and remains, a rallying point for nationalism.

Temporality also impacted everyday life. The *gaf Daba* was unprecedented and stood in direct conflict with the generational system of *gada*. Perhaps one day bovine carcasses could be resurrected through scientific necromancy, but that would require submission to a Western cosmology and the regimes of time associated with it. Natural cycles were such that rich could

become poor and poor rich according both to chance and good works. Even in lean times one could reasonably hope for milk. The proverb "war and drought, peace and milk" imparted this hope based on the infallibility of natural cycles, which must eventually come full circle. Through "scientific necromancy" the Kenyan state sought, in the 1960s to remake the Northeast through the introduction of exotic stock and to fatten the "down country" highlands through the extraction of meat and milk.

The illusion that the frozen semen of the Sahiwal bull could bring about prosperity resided in the contradiction between the nation-state, in a western mold, and civil society in local form. If moving forward paradoxically involved creating stasis then it necessarily imperiled everyday life, which required time to move in spirals. Islam at least had not sought to radically alter this key aspect of Boran and Somali cosmology.[73] Though Mohamed Adan Sheff could see a middle ground where scientific necromancy could be employed to provide more milk, others had less opportunity to reconcile competing worldviews. The *barakiin* of a genetically altered heifer could only possibly be obtained by a hyena devouring its rotting body. A Kenyan government official writing to the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife put things in perspective when he wrote that "our objective therefore is to attempt to translate subsistence pastoralism into commercial livestock production; or, if you like, to convert the livestock from a frozen to a liquid asset."[74] Had the liquid he wrote of been blood rather than currency he would have done a fine job of engaging local perception. Instead these incongruent epistemologies, centered on livestock, came to a head and the results were often violent. Thus, conflicts

[73]For a discussion of time within Islamic cosmology see Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Franz Rosenthal, trans. (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958) and Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn 'Arabî - Time and Cosmology* (New York : Routledge, 2008). Khaldun, who was heavily influenced by Bedouin, describes the world as a garden in a constant cycle of civilizational growth and decay. Yousef describes Ibn Arabi's concept of *waqt* or the present moment.

[74] KNA: BV/110/69. D.C. Mlamba to A.P. Achieng, 11 May, 1968.

presumably based on "age old clan rivalries" turn out to be a product of the recent past in which sometimes hyenas eat each other, bones and all, and sometimes they eat something together.

Chapter 4. Stasis and Slums: The Legacy of Forced Settlement in Northeastern Kenya

Corrugated iron roof people do not go to the grassy leafy part of the city without a clear purpose. The police will get them. City council *askaris* will get them. The hotter it gets, the more it seems that some heat and light will burst out of this place.[1] –Binyavanga Wainaina

In May of 2010, the Ministry of State for Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands held a meeting with Northeastern Kenyan community representatives at the Sarova Shaba Game Lodge near Isiolo. The upscale lodge caters to international tourism and offers panoramic views of the surrounding savannah as well as a pristine turquoise pool. This oasis, situated in the Shaba Game Reserve, is fittingly illusory. It presents an aesthetic of an untouched and wild Africa to visitors on game safaris yet it did not come into being until the 1970s, after the Kenyan state had largely succeeded in asserting control over the former Northern Frontier District (now the Eastern Province and North Eastern Province). The Sarova Shaba's antecedents are not the deep past. Rather, they are the officers' clubs and lodges of the colonial era. The sweeping views and rustic decor may offer the appearance of an unbounded and timeless Africa to the outside observer but the lodge is emblematic of enclosure and a very different form of timelessness, from a local viewpoint.

During the meeting, elder Hussein Mursalle put a voice to the local perspective when he claimed "people are becoming more and more settled. This is because government services are only provided to settled people, people in towns. This is where food relief is delivered. People now sit in towns waiting for relief – those that are mobile don't get relief."[2] The observation is important because it highlights the way that citizenship in Northeastern Kenya remains linked to settlement. No doubt, settling in towns and integrating into the cash economy has become an

[1] Binyavanga Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write About This Place* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2011), 73. *Askari* is Swahili for soldier.
[2]Government Printing Office, *Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation* (Nairobi, 2010) May 17-18, 2010. ix.

option attractive to many people from pastoral communities throughout Kenya. Mursalle himself had told interviewers years earlier that "the life I want for my children is a settled life and not a nomadic one, a settled life where they can go to school and do some business."[3] In this sense the colonial project of establishing currency and semi-permanent labor initiated by the British had largely been realized under Kenyan stewardship. However, Mursalle's tone had changed by the time he addressed the Kenyan Government in 2010, with the plea that "we already have enough people living under iron sheets in the towns. Don't bring us as squatters to these towns."[4] Neighboring elder Diba Golicha spoke for those still operating in the mobile livestock economy when he stated "The key thing is livestock mobility. But when there is insecurity, we can't move and this makes us very vulnerable to drought."[5] Golicha's invocation of drought is notable here beyond its literal deployment because it is a common idiom of war and suffering among Northeastern pastoralists. Following from Golicha, elder Halkano Huqa connected the incongruence of mobility and stability directly to the venue of the meeting noting "we have three big game reserves in Isiolo – so we are squeezed."[6] What are we to make of all of this? Why should people be "squeezed" by the open spaces of game reserves? How does insecurity cause immobility and drought? What is lost by living "under iron sheets?"

To answer these questions and explore the paradox of citizenship as stasis we have to look back to the 1960s. As Halkano Huqa remembers it, the 1960s was the time when "independence came and the elders started to lose power."[7] Given these elders' cyclical approach to time the 1960s, the *gaf Daba* (time stopping) is the key moment for understanding stasis.

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[3]Olivia Bennett and Christopher McDowell, *Displaced: The Human Cost of Development and Resettlement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 89. The interviews for this book were conducted between 1997 and 2003.
[4]Government Printing Office, *Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation*, x.
[5]*Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation*, ix.
[6]*Ibid*, xi.
[7]*Ibid*, xi.

Without attention to how cyclical time clashed with linear time, the testimony of these elders can be easily misread as romantic and inconsistent. The result then is to miss the point and ignore the voices of potential citizens in the present as they describe themselves vis-à-vis the government by analogy to the past. In other words, when Mursalle says he wants his children to live in town he is indicating that time is moving again and advocating for a place in the Kenyan nation. But if his children are to be confined "as squatters" in those towns, within that nation, then the movement of time can be little more than a regression back towards the stagnation of the *gaf Daba*.

Spaces and Stasis

This chapter advances two related arguments tied to forced settlement under the rubric of *maendeleo* [development] in Northeastern Kenya. These are that changes in space were linked to changes in time perception and derived from suspicion of Northeastern populations alongside the Kenyan state's adoption of a sedentary vision of progress. The restrictions on mobility that came with "manyattazation" are best understood through the Boran idiom of the *gaf Daba*, time stopping. From 1963-68, the Kenyan government instituted a project of "manyattazation" or forced settlement as part of its effort to defeat "shifta" or bandits. Manyattazation is derived from the word *manyatta* denoting a homestead inclusive of livestock in the same way as *boma* or *kraal* in other African contexts. The term *manyatta* refers both to individual households and the aggregate of those households. A person inhabited a *manyatta* in a *manyatta* because the individual and the group were inextricable. State "manyattas" under "manyattazation" were distinguished from local *manyatta* that dotted Northeastern Kenya in that they were actually entire semi-urban settlements, generally district capitals.

"Manyattazation" was started in earnest in 1964 throughout the former Northern Frontier District (NFD) and became firmly established by 1966. In the North Eastern Province (NEP) there were initially thirteen government "manyattas" of which the largest were Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa.[8] In Eastern Province there were also thirteen mandatory settlements and Isiolo, Marsabit, and Moyale were the largest of these.[9] After 1967, the trading center of Takabba near Mandera became a government "manyatta" as well. Including Lamu and Tana River in Coast Province, the total number of mandatory settlements was twenty-nine. While clear numbers are hard to come by for the mobile populations of Northeast Kenya during the *gaf Daba*. Out of a population reckoned to be as high as 400,601, Historian Nene Mburu has reasonably, if conservatively, estimated that about 79,903 Northeastern pastoralists, or about 20 percent of the population, were confined to government manyattas during the period of the so-called Shifta War.[10] These government "manyattas" were typically "about 8 miles in circumference" and "fenced by use of barbed wire, reinforced by 'ziriba' thorn bushes."[11] The "manyattas" were lit with florescent lighting after dark thereby allocating resources primarily to security and disturbing the division between day and night. These enlarged "manyattas," tangled in barbed wire and flickering and buzzing with florescent light at night, distinctively marked the landscape. At these sites the state was both alien and highly visible. Such settlements were the main form of development in 1960s Northeastern Kenya.

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[8]DC/LAMU/2/7/15. "Preservation of Public Security Act Cap. 57 and Special Districts Administration Act Cap. 105." 13 June, 1967.

[9]Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: The Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea, 2005), 224. Lamu and Tana River in Coast Province were also "manyattaized."

[10]Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*, 224. This number is inclusive of Moyale, which Mburu leaves out of his assessment of the population at 397,091. See also *Kenya Population Census*, 1962 (Nairobi: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1964) and *Kenya Populations Census*, 1969 (Nairobi: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1970). Hannah Whittaker, "Forced Villagization during the Shifta Conflict in Kenya, ca. 1963–1968," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45 (2012): 352. Mburu, *Bandits on the Border.* 220-225.

[11]KNA: PR/1/5. M.M. Ole Ncharo, Chairman of the Isiolo District Security Committee to Chairman of the Eastern Province Security Committee "Villagisation of Tribes in Isiolo District" July 7, 1966. The Boran word for *manyatta* is *ola.*

The "manyattazation" initiative was aimed at providing security and was based on suspicion of local people and a desire to impose sedentary agro-pastoralism on the mobile populations of the Northeast. The ultimate goal of security was development. However, Somalis, and to a lesser extent "Europeans," many of whom had been born in Kenya, were suspected of plotting against Kenya in the interest of incorporating the NEP into Somalia. Kenyan government officials often complained that local populations were either "shifta" or "shifta sympathizers" bent on sabotaging development. Suspicion was a facet of manyattazation in that government manyattas were deemed to be "required to facilitate close watch over the activities of Somalis, as well as for their own protection."[12] Though Somalis were considered inherently nefarious, "shifta sympathizers" and even "shifta" could ultimately come from any Northeastern population. So, manyattazation was applied to all local groups, particularly Boran, Sakuye, Gabbra, and Rendille.

Ostensibly, shifta and their collaborators attacked the police and military in order to forestall Kenyan development efforts and thereby win over the population for secession to Somalia. The thinking of the government was that Kenya and Somalia were locked in a race to develop the former NFD. Such thinking has continued to find expression in much of the secondary literature on the subject which frames the conflict as a proxy war between Kenya and Somalia in the climate of the Cold War. This rendering falls short of accounting for participation among non-Somali populations in the violence. It also fails to explain the continuation of violence in the region even after the collapse of Somalia's formal government in the 1990s. Key among the changes on the ground during the period of the *gaf Daba* were the changes in time, expressed in that designation, as well as the restriction of free movement and alteration of space,

[12]KNA: BB/12/51. Regional Government Agent Isiolo to Civil Secretary for Eastern Region "Villagisation of Somalis in Isiolo District," 5 November, 1964.

expressed in manyattazation. Boran called government manyattas *daba*, stops, highlighting the association between stasis and these spaces.[13]

Manyattazation for the purpose of establishing a sedentary population integrated into the cash economy was a key component of the state's developmentalism. Mobile populations were harder to tax and maintained control over if, when, and how they chose to engage with currency. According to a 1963 Annual Report for Marsabit District, even though locals "welcomed Independence" they were "unused to change [and] found the frequent and often abrupt constitutional and governmental changes unsettling."[14] As such, "the irresponsible elements in the district were not slow to seize upon this unsettled state of affairs to further their own ends."[15] These "irresponsible elements" were "shifta" and the unsettling "constitutional and governmental changes" were those entailed in the Kenyan state's development plans. In this regard the situation in the 1960s was similar to that of contemporary Northeastern Kenya. The Marsabit Annual Report further claimed that "the nomadic people of this area will need separate treatment to the more educated parts of Kenya."[16] The immediate manifestation of that separate treatment was manyattazation. The violence that accompanied forced settlement rendered development primarily as immobility and thus for Northeastern peoples, Kenyan progress was stasis; the *gaf Daba*.

Understanding the *gaf Daba* requires disaggregating notions of time – time being simply the measure of motion – via historical contextualization. Kenyan scholar John Mbiti observed at the end of the 1960s that "the change from the […] traditional concept of time, to one which

[13]Mario Aguilar, "The Role of Sarki Dance in Waaso Boorana/ Somali Symbiosis and Conflict," *Anthropos* 88 (1993): 185.
[14]KNA: PC/EST/2/3/2.
[15]*Ibid*.
[16]*Ibid*.

should accommodate this new discovery of the future dimension, is not a smooth one and may well be at the root of […] the political instability of our nations."[17] This observation coincides with the Boran convention that the watershed period of the so-called Shifta War was actually the *gaf Daba* or moment when time stopped. Mbiti advised that "the traditional concept of time is intimately bound up with the entire life of the people, and our understanding of it may help to pave the way for understanding the thinking, attitude, and actions of the people."[18] Given that in Northeastern Kenya time was reckoned through migration following natural cycles, the way movement was bounded, had a significant impact on how time was experienced. As Mario Aguilar, an anthropologist of the Waso Borana (Ajuran), puts it "to be Boorana then is to respect and be aware of the past that influences the present."[19] In order to do justice to this approach the concept of time stopping needs to be taken seriously. This chapter explores how a local model of cyclical time competed with the Kenyan state's adoption of linear time through changes in settlement and economic patterns. Forced settlement imposed linear time, under the rhetoric of *maendeleo* [progress], upon cyclical time, expressed in free movement, in a manner that halted both. These changes in temporal frameworks and mobility were indeed at the root of political instability and bound time to suspicion and stasis in violent ways.

Trading Spaces

Life in Northeastern Kenya was necessarily mobile. To remain in one place too long was to be out of sync with the ecological phenomenon that determined survival, particularly perennial water and grazing sources. Sedentary living was contrary to religious rituals and temporal cycles that ensured rainfall and healthy communities. Boran and Somali alike believed that life moved

[17]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 28.
[18]*Ibid.*
[19]Mario Aguilar, "Pastoral Identities. Memories, Memorials, and Imaginations in the Postcoloniality of East Africa," *Anthropos* 94 (1999): 158.

through yearly cycles, key among these being the small cycle of eight years, by which age groups were spaced, and the large cycle of forty or fifty years, which demarcated a generation. Based on ethnographic research conducted in the 1950s, P.T.W. Baxter observed of the Boran that "the rule of generational succession within a set-line and the rule which insists on the eight and forty year time spans are absolutely inflexible."[20] Similarly, Somali scholar Muuse Galaal explained in the 1960s that Somalis "recognize at least five different kinds of cycles…the second is an eight-year cycle (SIDEED-GUURO), supposed never to fail" while "the fourth is one of fifty years [also] thought never to fail."[21] Rendille and Gabbra operated on a related seven year cycle with generations spaced at forty years. In 1943, J.K.R. Thorp noted that "Rendille years go in cycles of seven, like our week."[22] Drawing on late 1950s ethnography, Günther Schlee points out that "the age-set systems of the Gabra and Rendille… [are] modelled after the seven-day week, by the seven-year cycle linked to it and multiples thereof which form the different sectors of the generation-set cycle."[23] Experts invested with knowledge of these cycles and often an ability to read them against environmental clues, from constellations to changes in flora and fauna, informed Northeastern communal decisions of when to move and where to go. If, for instance, a drought occurred during the seven or eight year cycle it was expected to occur again in seven or eight years. Such drought years were likely to see increased conflict due to competition for resources, thus the common idiomatic association between drought and war. In short, pastoral ontology required mobility and adherence to cyclical time. The cyclical interplay

[20]P.T.W. Baxter "Boran Age-Sets and Generation-Sets: *Gada*, a Puzzle or a Maze?" in *Age, Generation, and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organisations* eds. P.T.W. Baxter and Uri Almagar (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1978), 158.
[21]Galaal, *The Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore*, 7-8.
[22]PC/NFD/4/1/10. Political Records Mandera, 19 September, 1943.
[23]Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2012): 46. See also Günther Schlee, *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenya* (Nairobi: Gideon Were, 1994) and Eike Haberland, *Galla Sud-Athiopiens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963).

between mobility and time permeated everyday life and the ways that life was described. Being in the world involved moving through the world and settlement patterns in Northeastern Kenya reflected this.

The homes of Northeastern peoples were temporary. Women were responsible for their construction and upkeep. As anthropologist Carol Eastman observed of Gabbra, Turkana, and Boran, "each nomadic woman builder begins by pacing out a circumference (or spiral) for the structure to be built; she literally knows the house as memory - the house she was born in is the very house she recreates again and again."[24] The Gabbra saying *"wara jecum nad'eni"* [home means woman] further emphasizes the point.[25] Since women were invested with the knowledge of home building and carried it in their memories, home truly did mean woman. But what memories of home did women have after the *gaf Daba*? Eastman, working in the 1980s, was able to document the building of pastoral homes in the old style. Therefore, memories must have persisted or at least been successfully reconstituted. However, she also documented important changes in settlement. For instance, the Boran residing in Marsabit town were not building temporary round homes with woven mats anymore, rather they built permanent rectangular homes with corrugated roofing. Furthermore, they were engaging contractors to construct such homes instead of relying upon women to do so.[26] The trend was the same across the former NFD. How did such changes in the use of space impact upon memory and vice versa? Where did time fit into the equation?

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[24]Carol Eastman "Aspects of an African Constructed Environment: Language Use and the Nomadic Process," *African Languages and Cultures*, 1 (1988): 108.
[25]John Wood, *When Men are Women: Manhood among Gabra Nomads of East Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999), 37.
[26]Eastman, "Aspects of an African Constructed Environment," 115.

The spirals carried in the memories of pastoral women were the blueprints of the individual homes that collectively made up *manyatta*. These homes were geodesic huts constructed from local materials. For instance, Boran houses were round and built from a frame of *tiba mina*, which are tree branches that were dyed red by pigments derived from boiling bark.[27] The *tiba mina* were then strengthened through a smoking process. The frames of homes were created by lashing together *tiba mina* (figure 5) which were then covered with sisal woven mats called *dase.* The interior of the hut was divided into three parts. The entryway was the *bada* and took up half the home. The remaining half-circle at the back was called the *haffo* and was split down the middle by a wall constructed of branches and mats and called the *dibu*. On one side of the *dibu* was the male space and on the other was the female space. In a typical household, husband and wife slept together in the male space, while children slept in the female space. However, in some cases husband and wife slept on separate sides of the *dibu*.[28] During the dry season women and children inhabited the home while men slept out in the open with the *fora*, or dry, herd which grazed a considerable distance from the milk stock that remained at the *manyatta*.

[27]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1 and PC/NFD/4/1/1. The branches came from *haroresa* (*Grewia bicolor*) or *madera* (*Buddleja polystachya*) while pigments were boiled out of the bark of *hargasu* or *dakara*. Among Gabbra *mad'era* refers to *Cordia sinensis*. Wood, *When Men are Women*, 151.
[28]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. R.G. Brayne-Nicholls "Some Notes on the Golbo Boran of Isiolo," 1954.

Figure 5. KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. 1954. Boran women tying together *tiba mina*.

A *manyatta* in Northeastern Kenya was a collection of such homes and herds. It bears repeating that these settlements were mobile. The *tiba mina* and *dase* of at least one home was packed up and carried with Boran when they moved their *manyatta*. The materials for other homes could then be prepared at the new site within the relocated hut, which was used as a smokehouse.[29] With a few particular differences the layout of homes was very similar among Somali, Rendille, Sakuye, Turkana and Gabbra and elements of each could find expression across the artificial boundary of "tribe." For example, Boran in Kenya covered their homes in *dase*, the weaving of which they borrowed from the Sakuye, while their kin in Ethiopia preferred to cover their homes in grasses and animal skins.[30] Another similarity among pastoral groups in Northeastern Kenya was their tendency to build their *manyatta* around a ritual space.

Beyond spaces for living, *manyatta* were physical embodiments of cyclical time. Communities sprang up in particular places for important events rather than important events

[29]*Ibid.*
[30]*Ibid.*

taking place in particular settlements. For instance, when a Boran boy was to be named, "a large party of women go to the chosen place and there build a large hut, about three times the size of the normal building."[31] These large huts were called *galma*. The *galma* was constructed of temporary materials, which were not cured for durability in the manner of living quarters. After rituals stressing communal codependence and the subsequent naming of the child, the *galma* was abandoned and left to fall apart. Anyone interfering in the *galma's* natural disintegration by taking materials from it was subject to punishment.

Other Northeastern groups favored fire for marking important moments in time. Rendille built *habo* in the center of their *manyatta*. The *habo* was a "small circular boma where a fire is continuously kept burning."[32] After being called to the *habo* by a man holding aloft a brand from the fire "each evening all the fully grown men assemble [there] for prayer."[33] Somali also used fires for ritual purposes. Pastoral Somali celebrated the *dab shid* or "night of fire" by building fires in front of their homes which the male head of household would either jump over or throw a spear through.[34] The *dab shid* marks a new year and "forms the base for astrological calculations for the whole year."[35] Gabbra and Sakuye gauged time with fires at their respective *manyatta* as well. For instance, each group lit special fires once a week for eight weeks leading up to the autumn rains.[36] After completing such rituals, which could take from days to months, *manyatta* would often be packed up and moved. The impermanence of fires, which burned out, and *galma*, which fell apart, reinforced the transience of pastoral life.

[31]*Ibid*.
[32]KNA: PC/NFD/4/110.
[33]*Ibid*.
[34]Schlee, *Identities on the Move*, 67-68.
[35]Galaal, *The Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore*, 17.
[36]Schlee, *Identities on the Move*, 70.

All groups moved their *manyatta* as dictated by yearly cycles and environmental factors. These cycles were known through the reoccurring rituals of the community. This building and rebuilding in coincidence with seasons and age-grades was a key facet of pastoral ontology, or knowing the world through mobility. Outside observers have in turn understood that world as chaotic and unpredictable based upon comparison with sedentary norms of settlement. In actuality both sedentary living and transhumant pastoralism are potentially stable or chaotic. Negotiating the interplay between settlement and migration became extremely difficult during the *gaf Daba* and continues to be an exercise in misunderstanding.

Symbolically, the camel caravan remains an iconic image of Northeastern Kenya, buttressing a romantic vision of rootless nomads. This vision renders pastoralism as a remnant of the deep past to be nostalgically admired but ultimately recognized as futile. The camelid "ships of the desert" that made up caravans derived from a nautical colonial imaginary that still informs western engagement with the region. A recent ethnographer of the Gabbra described the desert area around Marsabit as "undulant, like the open sea" with winds as "incessant as surf and sails."[37] He even framed his theoretical discussion of post-structuralism around Herman Melville's novel *Billy Budd*.[38] Clearly, the fantastic distance of nautical imagery remains a heuristic for translating the unfamiliar much as it did in the colonial era. The District Commissioner of Isiolo in 1954, R.G. Brayne-Nicholls, provided a ready example of the link in that he described one of his informants, elder Wario Guyo, as the "old man of the sea."[39] Brayne-Nicholls in turn dismissed Guyo, with a measure of admiration, as "full of tales of the great past."[40] Around this same time, camels also began to be viewed as relics. Though camels still

[37]Wood, *When Men are Women*, 34, 36.
[38]*Ibid*, 26.
[39]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1.
[40]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1.

play an important role in everyday life in Northeastern Kenya, they were largely replaced by automobiles in the 1940s and 50s within the realm of trade. During that time the British sought to transform trade in the interest of cementing a cash economy in place of the bartering that had preceded it and continued to compete with it.

Trade within the cash economy was centered in towns. From very early on and into the early colonial period, permanent settlement occurred primarily along the coast. Interior sites, when and where they existed along caravan routes, were often very small and situated near permanent water.[41] After the early twentieth century, as the British became a significant presence in what they labeled as the Northern Frontier District, they sought to encourage greater permanent settlement. In 1912, the British established an administrative station and a fort at Wajir.[42] In 1922, Mandera was founded as a trading center and in 1932 Garissa sprang up around an administrative station.[43] Such stations were referred to as "bomas", drawing on the term *boma* which like *manyattta* described a pastoral homestead.

A key component of British settlement in the NFD was the institution of the *duka* trade. *Duka* (pl. *maduka*) are small shops that provide goods for cash. *Duka* were intended to expand the cash economy and replace the barter system which predominated in the area in order to provide a ready tax base for the state and center economic activity in settlements. Starting with the British, towns rapidly became sites of the nascent cash economy. Initially Wajir only had one

[41]These semi-permanent settlements had a fraught and fascinating relationship with surrounding pastoralists which it is beyond the scope of this project to detail here. For some description of pre-colonial trading settlements see Peter Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism: Economic Factors in the History of the Somali of Northeastern Kenya, 1892-1948." (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1975), Aneesa Kassam and Ali Balla Bashuna "Marginalization of the Waata Oromo Hunter-Gatherers of Kenya: Inisder and Outsider Perspectives," *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 74 (2004): 194-216, and Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994). There is a wealth of scholarship on caravans in Tanganyika. For a representative example see Stephen Rockel, "'A Nation of Porters:' The Nyamwezi and the Labour Market in Nineteenth-Century Tanzania," *Journal of African History* 41 (2000): 173-195.
[42]Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism," 120.
[43]*Ibid*, 122.

small *duka* but by 1922, it had five stone shops and a mosque.[44] In 1948, Wajir gained a school.[45] Similar situations prevailed around other bomas throughout the NFD and attracted foreign and local populations in small numbers. At the end of 1941, Garissa had eight *duka*, while the tiny outposts of Balambala and Saka had four apiece, and Bura, Ijara, and Mudogashi each had three.[46] The major items of trade were livestock, hides and skins, and *miraa* (Catha edulis).[47]

These items were frequently bartered rather than bought and sold. In 1961, the District Commissioner of Isiolo gave the frustrated reply to a request, from Ismail Elmi Hersi, to trade camels for small stock, that "all camel barter in the Province has now stopped" and he could only grant "permits to sell camels."[48] Ismail Hersi was a self-styled "stock trade pioneer" and wanted to "buy 200 head of camels from Wajir and take to Turkana district to barter with [sic] sheep and goats."[49] In his desire to buy camels, Hersi was perhaps a "pioneer" but his plan to then barter them for small stock employed the cash economy in a way that ran contrary to British objectives. In attempting to divorce resources from their ecological bounds and render their relationship to people into the abstract form of currency, the cash economy was intended to marry the state to a linear model of time via the principle of progressive accumulation.

Within these towns the state was tangible in the form of administrators and civil servants such as police. Figure 6 shows "dubas" posing with their camels at Wajir. "Dubas" were "Tribal Police," drawn from local populations in the Colonial era. After independence "dubas" became

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[44]*Ibid*, 125.
[45]*Ibid*, 125.
[46]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/10. C.H. Williams "Trading Centres and Markets" 15 December, 1941.
[47]*Miraa* is Swahili for the plant and *Khat* is the Somali term. For a historical discussion of the plant in an Ethiopian context see Ezikiel Gebissa, *Leaf of Allah: Khat and Agricultural Transformation in Harerge, Ethiopia 1875-1991* (Athens: Ohio University, 2004).
[48]KNA: DC/ISO/3/28/14. A.J. Merifield, District Commissioner Isiolo to Ismail Elmi Hersi "Your Letter dated 14th November, 1960 to the District Commissioner, Lodwar." 5 January, 1961.
[49]KNA: DC/ISO/3/28/14. Ismail Elmi Hersi to the District Commissioner. Lodwar. "Camel Trade." 14 November, 1960.

"Administrative Police." They were responsible for tax collection, boundary enforcement, and other regular policing duties. As formal representatives of the state they stood at the interstices between linear and cyclical time. The liminality of "dubas" could cause misunderstanding not only with their pastoral kin but also with their administrative superiors. In 1959, the District Commissioner for Mandera accepted Adan Bashir's claim for travel expenses "less the nights the Dubas actually spent in […] Isiolo."[50] He admonished Bashir's commanding officer that he "should be careful in submitting this claim to use the year 1959 and to use dates and months other than dates and months the Dubas might have been on safari elsewhere!"[51] As the District Commissioner saw it "he cannot be paid safari allowances for being on safari in two different places on the same date!"[52] There is little reason to believe that Bashir would have argued that he was actually in two different places on the same date. If he was simply trying to dupe the administration out of extra funds, his manner of doing so was very poorly considered and easily discovered. If he was travelling in this period why not make claims for travel allowance? Chronology was the issue and Bashir's case illustrates that within Northeast Kenya linear time remained difficult to translate into everyday perception. Watches could be helpful in this regard and were an outward marker of assimilation to linear time.

[50]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/19/2. P.H. Walker, District Commissioner Mandera, "Dubas Adan Bashir- Travelling Claim." 17 April, 1959.
[51]*Ibid.*
[52]*Ibid.*

Figure 6. KNA: 363.2 KEN 962776. Tribal Police, or "Dubas," and camels at Wajir circa 1950s. Note the watch on the Officer in the foreground.

Clothing was also a factor in bounding identity. In 1960, the District Commissioner for Turkana advocated for special uniforms for travelling "Dubas." He noted that "from time to time I send Tribal Policemen to Kitale, escorting prisoners, guarding cash, rifles, ammunition" but "the regulation Kikoi looks out of place in a Settled Area and might render a Tribal Policeman liable to arrest for indecent exposure."[53] A *kikoi* is a wrapping worn around the lower body and typical of dress among Northeastern pastoralists. The *kikoi* was associated with pastoral identity and was a source of pride and a marker of difference. Notably the "Dubas" in Figure 6 wear shorts rather than *kikoi*. However, shorts enjoyed much less popularity than the *kikoi* made from Indian cloth which alongside *miraa* and animal products was a common trade item in towns.[54]

[53]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/19/2. G.G. Hill, District Commissioner Turkana to the Controller, Supplies and Transport Department, "T.P. Clothing and Equipment." 30 May, 1960.
[54]For a discussion of the cloth trade in East Africa see Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California, 2008).

Many Northeastern peoples moved through towns for trade but did not settle. In 1962, the population of Garissa was tallied at 875 people, while Mandera counted 523 residents and Moyale had 291 people.[55] Wajir and Marsabit had more notable populations at 1,055 and 2,470 respectively.[56] Isiolo was the largest town at 5,445 people but was made up primarily of Somali, Turkana, and "down country tribes," especially Meru. In 1962, there were only 227 Boran, 270 if counting Ajuran among them, and 1 Rendille recorded living within the township of Isiolo.[57] These spaces represented a small percentage of the overall population, even Isiolo accounted for less than 10% of the district population while the other spaces barely registered. The people who did settle tended to be *duka* owners and civil servants, typically police. The elderly, the sick, and people who had lost their herds constituted the remainder of local town settlers. Yet, even the elderly and impoverished, when they chose or were forced to settle in towns, generally set up their homes at the edge of town.[58]

The establishment of privately owned plots around the boma and its *maduka* distinguished towns from *manyatta*. Within towns ritual space was allocated to trade. The tendency of socially marginalized peoples to put up homes at a distance from town centers also created artificial "open spaces" in the geography of semi-urban settlements (figure 7). Further, the British convention of rectangular plots altered the personal space of individual houses. The spatial order of township plots was enforced through codes. Town dwellers were required to inhabit plots and "adhere to the area laid down and make no alteration to its boundaries."[59] Thus, local memories of home were replaced with British imaginings of space.

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[55]*Kenya Census, 1962.*
[56]*Ibid.*
[57]*Ibid.*
[58]Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism," 129.

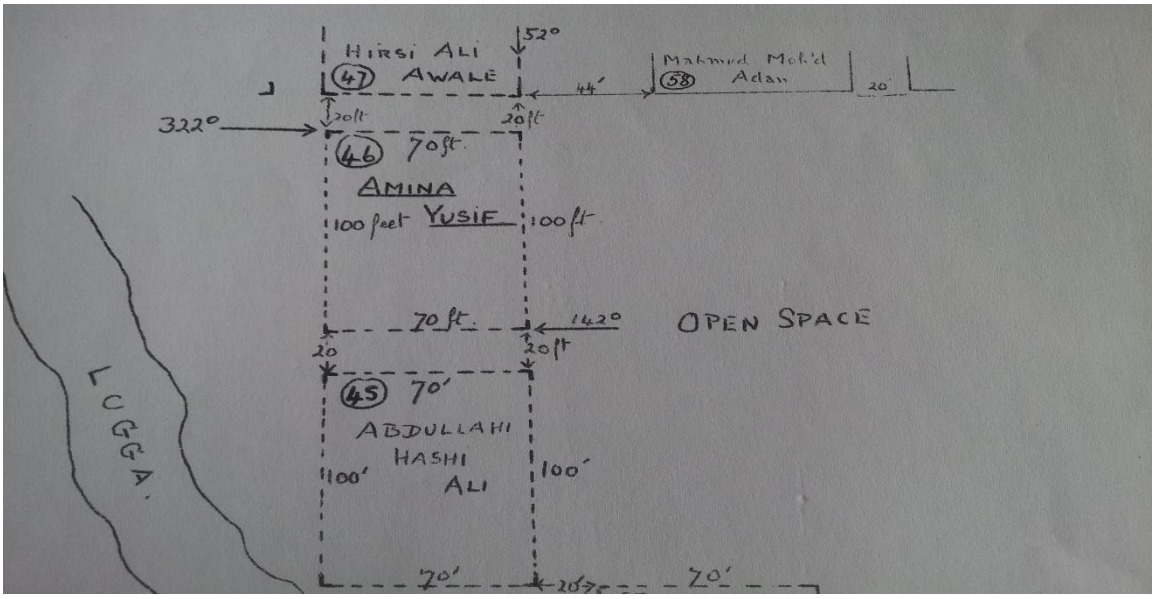

Figure 7. KNA: DC/ISO/3/28/26. January 26, 1962. Detail from official plan situating the 70x100ft plot of Amina Yusif in Bulla Pessa. A lugga is a stream.

However, within the rectangular boundaries of town plots and their concomitant rectangular homes, Northeastern peoples recreated familiar spaces. Boran women applied the interior divisions between male and female space from the round homes of their memory to the rectangular dwellings of town. But these memories became distant when not reinforced through the frequent destruction and rebuilding that migration required. Eastman writes that "nomadic women construct the present by reconstructing the past in woven shells or spirals."[60] This she contrasts to sedentary people who "have shelters constructed for them incorporating (and changing) forms from the past into present cultural memories."[61] In towns home no longer meant woman, except as a memory. On the move, home remained inseparable from woman.

The movement of memory from lived reality to a remembered imaginary, the memory of movement so to speak, was the basis of a new town-centered episteme connected to scientific necromancy. This in turn was tied to the idea of citizenship. Eastman observed in the 1980s that

[60]Eastman, "Aspects of an African Constructed Environment," 118.
[61]*Ibid.*

"sedentarisation, urbanization, and increasing cultural contact may, in effect, be seen as Kenyanising formerly nomadic people."[62] The key moment of this change was the *gaf Daba,* the 1960s, when time stopped, when the elders began to lose power. Attention to the ethnographic record illustrates that what preceded the *gaf Daba* was distinct from what followed it. By the 1980s, Boran and Sakuye living in Moyale and Dabel claimed that rectangular homes known as *arishi* "came from Ethiopia and [were] due to the influence of Islamic religion and customs."[63] Here analogy to a vague "Islamic" past was used in order to explain present living conditions. Such conditions then were implicitly recognized as something different from past conditions. That is, Boran were generally not Muslims prior to the *gaf Daba* and they inhabited round dwellings. Somali and Sakuye, who were Muslims, also inhabited round dwellings. Analogy to "Ethiopian Muslims" rather than other Muslims helps highlight the difference in dwellings, whether or not it is actually accurate to depict *arishi* as Ethiopian Muslim dwellings.[64] In any event, modified *arishi* came to typify township housing after the *gaf Daba* and the stories of their origin point to the distance that settlement imposed on memory.

With the cessation of forced settlement in April of 1968, government "manyattas" emptied as residents attempted to remake their memories through flight to Somalia, Ethiopia, and the bush. In 1968, there were 11,084 people confined to Mandera.[65] One year later just 946

[62]Eastman, "Aspects of an African Constructed Environment," 117.
[63]Gideon Were and Chris Wanjala eds. *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile* (Nairobi: Government of Kenya, 1986), 83.
[64]The larger history of Islam in Northeastern Kenya is a rich and complex one and stands outside the focus of this chapter. *Arishi* usually refers to Egyptian traders. See Joseph C. Berland and Apama Rao eds., *Customary Strangers: New Perspectives on Peripatetic Peoples in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 60-67.
[65]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/3/3. Mandera District Annual Report. 1968.

individuals remained.[66] Moyale was in a similar situation with only 353 residents in 1969.[67] Perhaps the starkest contrast was in Garissa which shrank to only 205 residents in 1969, representing a decline of 670 people from even its pre-war population.[68] Importantly, 1968 marked the beginning of the Gobba Bule *gada* and was therefore a fitting time for the resumption of migration. Most people availed themselves of the chance to move again and put distance between themselves and government "manyattas." However, the *gaf Daba* had impacted time in a "new" way and in its aftermath it presented the opportunity for creating new memories to a modest portion of the population.

The benefit inherent in these changes towards Kenyan nationhood was supposed to be citizenship and *maendeleo* [progress] for Northeastern peoples. Following the confiscation and slaughter of herds that took place in the *gaf Daba*, such promises took on a powerful significance, especially for the destitute and infirm who had always represented the core of settlement populations. Perhaps this is why some towns were able to retain pastoral settlers, with populations ranging from 1,003 in Mudogashe to 8,201 in Isiolo.[69] Wajir stood between the pulls of migration and adaptation to this new vision of time. Wajir saw an exodus of 3,947 people between 1968 and 1969, leaving it with 7,513 residents, or about 9% of the population at the time of the 1969 census.[70] Marsabit was somewhat more popular, given a history of long-term settlement on and around Marsabit Mountain, and housed about 12% of the district population,

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[66]*Kenya Population Census, 1969.* This census explicitly warns that "due to boundary changes since the 1962 census […] direct comparisons between the two censuses are difficult." However, carefully tracing the establishment of the Eastern Province (EP) and North Eastern Province (NEP) out of the former Northern Frontier District (NFD), as this study has done, makes comparison fairly straightforward and is a reminder of the importance of treating boundaries as processes.
[67]*Ibid.*
[68]*Ibid, Kenya Population Census, 1962.* If the area surrounding Garissa is included, as per the 1970 Garissa district report, then the population stood at a still small 883 residents.
[69]Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Kenya Population Census, 1969* (Nairobi, 1970).
[70]*Ibid.*

or 6,635 residents at the time of the 1969 census.[71] But the paradox of the equation between settlement and citizenship was that progress meant stasis. Even in the 1980s the District Development Officer for Marsabit noted "'it will take long for the Borana to adopt this type of building covered with iron sheets and walled by cement blocks."[72] He appears to have been correct since in 2010 Boran continued to question life "under iron sheets." Such evasion made the government suspicious of them. Their entwinement in cyclical time was hard to reconcile with the linear model that the Kenyan state adopted from the colonial era. During the *gaf Daba* this temporal restructuring became violent. The remainder of this chapter explores the suspicion and stasis that typified the forcible imposition of linear time and sedentary living that characterized the *gaf Daba*.

Suspicion

The Shaba Game Reserve is a good example of the spatial order prevailing after the *gaf Daba.* It was "open space" clearly delineated and bounded and therefore not really open space. There was no settlement allowed within the reserve and settlements around it determined the outer boundaries of the reserve. In this regard it was like towns where marginalized groups settled at the periphery creating "open spaces" around the center. Within the "open space" of reserves, game rangers and soldiers patrolled to enforce the restriction of space that kept the reserve "open." Little wonder then that nomadic pastoralists were "squeezed" by such spaces, which encroached on their free movement.

Although Shaba Game Reserve was not established until the 1970s, National Parks in Kenya were a colonial innovation. Marsabit already had a humble game lodge by the 1950s.[73]

[71]Were and Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile,* 123.
[72]*Ibid*, 85.
[73]KNA: DC/ISO/3/1/68.

Such game lodges would largely replace officers' clubs over the course of the 1960s. The transition was accompanied by suspicion. On June 5, 1965, a party was held at the Isiolo Bath Club, established by former British colonial officers, in memory and celebration of the old order. Members of the club from all over Kenya attended the party and "all wore Somali national dress."[74] The "Somali national dress" apparently consisted of "a kikoi, shirt and a tie."[75] The pageantry of "Europeans," many of whom were settlers of long standing, wearing club ties complemented by a wrapping about their waist in the fashion of a sarong did not sit well with some observers. The Agricultural Provincial Commissioner for Eastern Province complained that he "now [had] doubts about their loyalty to Kenya having demonstrated this by wearing the Somali National Dress in spite of knowing that the Somali nationals are hostile to the Kenya Government."[76] In independent Kenya, Somalis and "Europeans" could not be trusted. In the Northeast in particular there was an abiding sense among "down-country" administrators that these two groups were now in collusion.

However, the Isiolo Bath Club was not the only place where plots against the Kenyan government were suspected of taking place. Administrators also feared that anti-government schemes were being hatched on the ground, incubated in *manyatta* and places accessible to pastoral communities such as veterinary camps, where livestock were held. Vet camps were outposts from which livestock improvement and inoculation campaigns were mounted. They were also holding grounds for stock after confiscation or sale. Most, in fact, were full of confiscated stock during the 1960s. Mandera was illustrative. There "the Livestock Marketing

[74]KNA: BB/12/51. E.M. Mahihu, Ag. Provincial Commissioner to Permanent Secretary "Meeting in Isiolo Club," 17 June, 1965.
[75]KNA: BB/12/51. H.M. Ochieng, Provincial Police Officer to Provincial Commissioner "Meeting in Isiolo Bath Club," 23 June, 1965.
[76]KNA: BB/12/51. E.M. Mahihu, Ag. Provincial Commissioner to Permanent Secretary "Meeting in Isiolo Club" 17 June, 1965.

Division of the Veterinary Department ha[d] not bought cattle in the district since early 1963."[77] Because veterinary camps housed stolen livestock they were sites of frequent security force and shifta activity.

Predations on livestock impacted nearly all Northeastern peoples. After the war many locals came forward to make compensation claims for livestock that the Kenyan government had confiscated or killed. The government policy was to seize or slaughter livestock believed to belong to shifta. Section Thirteen of the Preservation of Public Security Act codified suspicion as a justification for confiscating stock. It found legal expression in the following meandering prose

> Section 13…gives police wide powers in seizing stock which belongs to shifta or anyone in the prescribed area who has consorted with or has been found in the company of another person whom he knows or has reasonable cause to believe to be a person who intends to act or is about to act or has recently acted in a manner prejudicial to the preservation of public security.[78]

Essentially livestock could be confiscated at will. These confiscated livestock were held at veterinary camps, such as the one outside Isiolo, before being shipped to urban markets such as Nairobi. Livestock seizure was the most frequent application of the Preservation of Public Security Act. In a single raid on March 21, 1965, the Kenya army seized 5,125 cattle from the area surrounding Isiolo.[79] In September of the same year, Bruce McKenzie, head of the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) observed

> What is unfortunately happening because of the *Shifta* trouble in the North-Eastern Region, we all of a sudden receive a call from the security forces […] asking us to take 10,000 cattle from the Moyale/Wajir area. Now if we did not take them the security people maintain that […] they would have had to eliminate them.[80]

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[77]KNA: DC/GRSSA/3/7/13. Civil Secretary North Eastern Region to Permanent Secretary, "Mandera County Council 1964 Supplementary Estimates," 31 August, 1964.
[78]KNA: BB/12/51. H.M. Ochieng to O.C.P.D. Isiolo "Stock: Isiolo District" 28 September, 1966.
[79]KNA: BB/12/51. "Shifta Activities – Isiolo District" 31 March, 1965.
[80]*Kenya Gazette*. Hansard Report. 21 September, 1965.

He went on to explain that the KMC was moving 1,000 head a week from Lamu down country, due to "shifta" livestock confiscation. Many residents in Eastern Region also complained that neighboring Samburu took advantage of the war to raid for cattle.[81] The fact that so many cattle were seized points to an economic impetus behind confiscation. Proceeds from the sale of confiscated cattle were officially placed in the Special Districts Administration Act Fund.[82]

However, it was not at all uncommon for livestock to be killed as part of a military strategy based on attrition. For instance, Ahmed Dahir, who resided in Eastern Province, complained that "during the recent shifta campaign I lost 85 heads of cattle being killed by our armed forces while in the course of their operations against insurgents."[83] Outright slaughter was even more common in the NEP. This was because it was harder to move confiscated livestock out of the region based on its distance from Nairobi and susceptibility to shifta counter-raids along the way. Some cases of such abuses were cruel but may appear relatively benign. In Habaswein, near Wajir, "five trespassing camels" were shot by security forces.[84] Other instances impacted entire communities. The most extreme case occurred in the NEP, there the majority of the Sakuye herd was rounded up and machine gunned. The remaining livestock were taken by soldiers and the Sakuye were forcibly moved into government manyattas, fully indigent.[85]

Suspicion and violence followed livestock. On the evening of June 29, 1965, eight Kenyan soldiers walked into the veterinary camp near Isiolo and began severely beating Bido

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[81]KNA: BB/12/51 and KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. For instance, on June 8, 1966 Samburu raided 150 cattle from Boran traders in Isiolo.
[82]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/7/9. KNA: DC/LAMU/2/7/15. Much money also found its way into individual hands via black market trading of seized stock, which could be accounted as killed.
[83]KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. Ahmed Dahir to District Commissioner Isiolo "Application for Compensation" 15 June, 1971. The number of cattle also includes a further legal claim for 131 cattle. KNA: BB/12/51 A.R. Kapila and Co. to Senior State Counsel "Roba Guyo, Tadicha Dida and Wako Geraba," 17 November, 1965. The total does not include the 5,125 cattle seized by the Kenyan Army on March 21, 1965. Most of the claims came from nearby Bula-Pesa which has since been incorporated into Isiolo town.
[84]KNA: PR/1/5. Minutes of North Eastern Regional Security Committee. August 29, 1963.
[85]For accounts of the slaughter of the Sakuye herd and their forced internment see Schlee, *Identities on the Move*, 19 and Schlee, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya*, 9-10.

Ado, the hides and skins instructor. They then proceeded towards the milking *boma* where one of them kicked over a fresh bucket of milk and the group proceeded to brutalize a milkman, Gorba Dullo, and two herders, Bulle Somo and Osman Mohammed. In the barrage of fists, clubs, and rifle butts that left all of these Veterinary Department workers bleeding and injured, Bido's watch was broken. The fact that Bido was wearing a watch is of some consequence in that it indicates he was invested in colonial time regimes for his livelihood. Perhaps in appeal to that relationship, he was concerned enough about it to mention it in his deposition despite the violent beating and humiliation that might be expected to have trivialized it in comparison. For the soldiers, Bido's identity was of far greater significance than the outward trappings of "modernization;" the kikoi trumped the watch. This is by no means surprising but it does speak to the boundaries to assimilation and citizenship operative in the former NFD of the 1960s.

The threat of violence constantly loomed over interactions between security forces and locals, reinforcing the division between "upcountry" and "down country." As Bido, Gorba, Bulle, and Osman were thrashed, other police and soldiers went down the housing lines extracting women from their quarters and looting their homes. One of the women, Elima Dobasso, was struck in the head with a rifle butt, leaving a substantial laceration on her forehead. She and the other women were then moved behind the houses and told to stay there. The women later claimed that in total 1,088 Kenyan Shillings, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, a pocket watch, and "some papers" were stolen.[86] A few miles away another contingent of police and soldiers rounded up a group of Turkana cattle guards and similarly abused them. The soldiers reportedly told the Turkana guards "tutapiga nyinyi na kutomba mukundu yenu" [we will beat

[86]KNA: BB/12/51. "Report on the Incident between the Security Forces and Veterinary Department Staff at the Veterinary Department, Isiolo on 29.6.65" 1 July, 1965.

you and fuck your assholes].[87] The threat was a real one. Back at the veterinary camp, Livestock Officer Daniel Orchet had heard a commotion and stepped outside his quarters to witness the milkman and two herders laying on the ground, bleeding. He observed that hides and skins instructor Bido Ado was "walking with some difficulty and there was blood on his kikoi at the back."[88] He also watched as the remaining veterinary employees were picked up off the ground and further beaten before being thrown into the back of a military vehicle. The vehicle then drove away headed towards the Turkana herders. At that point Orchet got in his own truck and went to alert the other two "European" livestock officers, Peter Ferns and Campbell Glover. The Livestock Officers and a Police inspector rushed to the Turkana camp where they "found a group of about 20 Turkana squatting on the ground surrounded by the security forces."[89] Glover questioned the soldiers who in turn threatened to shoot him. Then one of them hit him in the back with a rifle butt at which point the Livestock Officers fled.

The *gaf Daba* provided an instance to subvert the old colonial order, even as it was also an outgrowth of that colonial legacy. When Orchet returned to the veterinary camp his vehicle was surrounded by soldiers who "accused him of being a shifta sympathizer and of feeding the shifta."[90] They also informed him that even though he "had been to fetch a European policeman it would still do him no good."[91] After this exchange and the subsequent departure of the soldiers, Orchet found that his home had been looted. Over time he would also find that the soldiers were correct about the futility of initiating a police investigation. The District

[87] KNA: BB/12/51.
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] *Ibid.*
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.*

Commissioner of Isiolo, Reuben Musyoki, called for the dismissal of the Livestock Officers as well as local staff. Ignoring the raid, he assessed the veterinary employees in the following terms.

> I recommend that these Vet. Employees from N.E.P. be removed from Isiolo at once. They are shifta sympathizers and hide shifta in their houses. It is also doubtful whether the continued attitude of the European officers in the Vet. will ever change. It is time the govt. replaced them with African officers who will have the love of their country at heart.[92]

The Provincial Police Officer, H.M. Ochieng, expressed a similar sentiment. Reporting on a meeting with the Senior Livestock Officer for Isiolo, a Mr. Bond, Ochieng stated "the entire labour force in the veterinary camp under Mr. Bond is Somali and most of them are shifta sympathizers."[93] This was a misrepresentation as the veterinary department was not comprised solely, or even mostly, of Somalis. But the idea was to impart collusion between "Europeans" and Somalis in aiding shifta. To heighten suspicion Ochieng also reported that Mr. Bond "comes to Isiolo Bath Club often, sometimes returning home very late at night."[94] "Europeans" such as Mr. Bond were in part the focus of official suspicion in order to cement the transition from colonial to Kenyan rule. It was "African officers who [would] have the love of their country at heart." However, Somalis, like "Europeans," were excluded from the category of "African" illustrating both the resilience of colonial categories and their utility, when repurposed, to post-colonial state consolidation.

Stasis

The number of locals who fell afoul of security forces, appearing fleetingly, as a name here, or a number there, in an arrest or casualty column within the available records is staggering. Over the course of 1965, there were a total of 786 men and 128 women locked in

[92]KNA: BB/12/51. District Commissioner Isiolo, R. Musyoki to Provincial Commissioner Eastern Region "The Veterinary Camp Incident," 1 July, 1965.
[93]KNA: BB/12/51 Provincial Police Officer, H.M. Ochieng to Provincial Commissioner Eastern Province "Security: Veterinary Department, Isiolo," 24 June, 1965.
[94]KNA: BB/12/51 "Security: Veterinary Department, Isiolo."

Mandera prison.[95] That same year the average daily lock up at Wajir was 86.17 while in 1966 Isiolo had an average lock up of 90.93.[96] Most prisoners were incarcerated for pass violations. As the government manyattas around prisons began to serve the purpose of confinement, incarceration rates dropped. For instance Mandera Prison decreased its inmate population to 536 men and 98 women in 1966 and 123 men and 21 women in 1967.[97] The data around everyday experience indicates the conflict inherent to forced settlement in a society based around free movement. For instance, Bidu Arero was imprisoned for one month after being caught in Isiolo without a permit in 1963 and so was Hasan Abdi. Meanwhile Omar Ali Mohamed was sentenced to three months imprisonment for the same offense while Yusuf Haji Mohamed served two weeks.[98] Hundreds of others served sentences ranging from two weeks to one year for pass violations. Providing examples of death and confinement during the *gaf Daba* is like plucking names from a blood soaked hat. Bidu, Hasan, Omar, and Yusuf had moved too freely and encountered the power that the state had invested in colonial spaces and boundaries. Free movement threatened the state, so its agents stepped in where they could to halt it.

Mobility could make someone subject to the state but it was also a means of avoiding and/or combating the state. "Shifta" proved to be particularly agile, travelling throughout the former NFD to attack security forces and resupply. On August 8, 1964, "shifta" attacked a convoy of merchants near Laisamis in Marsabit District. In the ambush they killed "an Arab" and a "Somali driver" and looted the vehicles.[99] On November 23, 1964, "shifta" at Mudogashe, between Isiolo and Wajir, "broke into the shop of an ex-police inspector" and looted the

[95]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/3/3. Mandera District Annual Reports.
[96]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/12/8. Wajir District Annual Reports. KNA: DC/ISO/4/1/13 Isiolo Monthly Reports. The average lock up is the typical amount of prisoners on any given day as distinguished from total prisoners over the course of a year.
[97]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/3/3. Mandera District Annual Reports.
[98]KNA: DC/ISO/3/15/1. Kenya Prisons Service, "Certificates of Imprisonment/Detention" 1963.
[99]KNA: BB/12/51. "Isiolo and Marsabit/Moyale Districts Shifta Incidents from 1st August, 1964 to 20th May, 1965."

impressive sum of 7,940 shillings worth of goods.[100] In 1965, four "gangs" of "shifta" went to "Loiyangalani Safari Lodge and killed two Europeans."[101] They then hijacked a Land Rover and "after a considerable distance abandoned the vehicle and killed the [Italian] driver."[102] In 1964 alone Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale reported fifty-six separate violent incidents involving "shifta" and resulting in at least 113 deaths amongst shifta, security forces, and civilians combined.[103]

The targets of shifta attacks are significant given that they complicate official suspicions about shifta and their supposed sympathizers. Shifta proved ready to kill their presumed co-conspirators within the Somali and "European" population. However, they were also involved in violent incidents in which security forces and members of other local communities were killed. For instance, on November 23, 1964, a group under Abdi Mohamed Yusuf raided a Meru *manyatta* killing 5 people and taking "a large number" of cattle.[104] Thirteen days later, the same group attacked a *manyatta* where Samburu and Turkana were living together and killed eight people.[105] Thus, most communities in the former NFD had reason to fear both shifta and security forces. These Northeastern peoples fell in between the categories of shifta or soldier and were more interested in the livestock that provided their livelihood. They also recognized that the two categories were not necessarily exclusive to begin with.

Under state scrutiny, police were among the only "local" people with ready access to weapons and the mobility necessary to maintain herds. Thus police and shifta were sometimes the same person, both between settlement and bush and across national boundaries. Indeed, the

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[100]KNA: BB/12/51.
[101]KNA: PC/EST/2/3/2.
[102]*Ibid*.
[103]KNA: BB/12/51. Shifta deaths were estimated at 55 (probably an exaggeration), security forces at 6, and civilians at 52.
[104]KNA: BB/12/51. "Isiolo and Marsabit/Moyale Districts Shifta Incidents from 1st August, 1964 to 20th May, 1965."
[105]*Ibid*.

crossing of such boundaries could determine whether or not someone was shifta or police, underscoring the importance of mobility to identity. David Hurd, a settler kidnapped by shifta during a raid on the coastal town of Kiunga, claimed he was taken to Somalia where he was surprised to find that many of his captors were serving as police.[106] Within Kenya, the North Eastern Regional Security Committee noted with some embarrassment that in Wajir "the local population had expressed annoyance at seeing known shifta being trained as Home Guards."[107] However, the state married as it was to suspicion of all Northeastern groups made it difficult for these groups to negotiate their embattled position. In fact, the state solution was to confine local populations in order to eliminate the threats inherent to mobility. This effectively separated compliant residents from their livestock, which were then taken either by shifta or government forces.

As manyattazation became firmly established, the number of "shifta" casualties increased dramatically. From November of 1965 to August of 1966 there were 665 "shifta" killed in the former NFD.[108] Meanwhile security forces saw a dramatic decrease in casualties that same year. They suffered only fourteen deaths, while civilian losses climbed to 230.[109] Given the inexactitude of the category "shifta" these statistics are better parsed out as 665 able-bodied males and 230 women, children, and infirm. Manyattazation was effective in limiting security force casualties because it offered soldiers free range within the restricted area. As police and soldiers moved more freely the migrations of Northeastern peoples became increasingly constricted. Boran elders had communicated their concerns about this to the government right

[106]David Hurd, *Kidnap at Kiunga* (London: R. Hale, 1965).
[107]KNA: PR/1/5. North Eastern Regional Security Committee "Minute 92/64 – Home Guards," 21 August, 1964
[108]C.R. Mitchell, "The Dispute over the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, 1963-1967" (PhD diss., University of London, 1971). Appendix E.
[109]Mitchell "The Dispute over the Northern Frontier District." Appendix E.

from the start of the conflict. In 1964, the elders of Sericho, Mudogashe, Merti, and Garba Tulla complained that "innocent citizens are being killed by the security forces during operations" and that "everybody in the countryside was considered to be Shifta, indiscriminately."[110] They went unheeded. Even in late 1967 after an amnesty was reached, 120 "shifta" were killed and one Kenyan soldier lost his life.[111] Being a potential "shifta" was an extremely dangerous identity and one that belied the promise of progressive citizenship in Kenya.

Northeastern peoples did not have support within the government. After people like Bidu Arero, Hassan Abdi, Omar Ali Mohamed, and their numerous cell-mates served prison sentences, those who survived went to the hinterlands where they were considered "shifta." Outside the bounds of government manyattas they were subject to Emergency Legislation, which included the clause "security forces have the right to shoot without challenge in the prohibited area."[112] Ultimately, every local was a potential "shifta" or at least a probable collaborator and the logic of imprisonment was extended to settlement in general. This "manyattazation" process of confining locals to secured settlements was both a punitive and a security measure. As the Eastern Region Commissioner of Police put it "we shall never control these gangs of dacoits (Shifta is the wrong word) unless we thump the ordinary people for shielding, helping, and feeding them."[113] Through special operations and "manyattazation" the state and its agents were fairly successful at beating, imprisoning, and killing (thump is the wrong word) ordinary people.

The state's treatment of the people who resided in forced settlements underscores both its paranoia and its failure to deliver on the promises of independent Kenya. Of the people confined

[110]KNA: BB/12/51. Regional Government Agent to Civil secretary Eastern Region, "Security Situation- Isiolo" 28 October, 1964.
[111]Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*, 189.
[112]KNA: PR/1/5. Minutes of a Meeting of the North Eastern Regional Security Committee. 1 June, 1964.
[113]KNA: BB/12/51. P.E. Walters for Eastern Region Commissioner of Police "The Security Situation in the North" 7 May, 1964.

in government "manyattas," the sick, elderly, and destitute were overrepresented. The remaining "manyatta" dwellers were mainly individuals open to the possibilities foreseen in Kenyan citizenship. When such promises rang hollow, the state blamed shifta. At the funeral of a former shifta, the District Commissioner of Garissa gave a speech in which he claimed "if all the inhabitants of this land co-operate with the Government […] and fight against our enemies, the children of this land would be educated, medical facilities would be made available and business projects would be established. There would be peace and everybody would be happy."[114] The message here was clear. The inhabitants of government manyattas were suspected of helping shifta and being generally uncooperative. The District Commissioner's promises of peace and happiness in the "future" underscored the instability, lack of schooling, rampant disease, and general economic malaise that characterized life in forced settlement during the 1960s.

Soldiers and Slums

The direct violence of "manyattazation" took a number of forms. Frequently a combination of stock seizure, slaughter, demolition, and theft transpired. In Isiolo alone there were claims for 18,782 cattle, 2,645 sheep and goats (shoats), 241 donkeys, forty-six camels, sixty homes, and 12,500 Kenyan Shillings.[115] Khatima Abdi Noor and many others lost livestock to both culling and confiscation. In a letter seeking recompense, Noor stated that she "had 35 cows and among this [sic] cows some were shot and the remaining taken by the Government."[116] She also pointed out that her sixty-year-old husband was "shot dead in cold blood in the

[114]KNA: AHC/9/38. "Attendance of the Funeral of Nur Dass at Balambala. Date of Death 2-8-65," 7 August, 1965. Nur Dass was a former shifta who managed to surrender in December of 1964 and take up residence in Balambala near Garissa where he died about 8 months later.
[115]KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. "Application for Compensation."
[116]KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. Khatima Abdi Noor to District Commissioner Isiolo. Undated. Noor was, of course, not completely unique as a town dweller of long standing. For other cases similar to hers see, for instance, KNA: DC/ISO/4/1/15.

mosque."[117] Clearly she and her husband had been residing in the government manyatta, where they were ostensibly being protected. Khatima, now eighty years old, claimed to have lived in Isiolo since she was born and that all her relatives were buried there. In this sense she was an exceptional case. She also stood out in that she asked for compensation because in her old age she had "no strength to cultivate land."[118] Farming was an atypical occupation in the region. Those that did apply for *mashamba* or farms were overwhelmingly "down country" Meru.[119] In her sedentary existence and embrace of agriculture, Khatima should have been an ideal candidate for incorporation into the Kenyan state. Instead, her husband was killed and she lost all her cattle. In this regard, however, she was not exceptional.

Many of those who were forced to live in, or sought refuge within, government manyattas, ended up destitute. Buildings believed to be temporarily inhabited by shifta were demolished during the war. Under amendment to Emergency Legislation, security forces could destroy "buildings and manyattas where persons are found to be actively assisting Shifta."[120] Isiolo residents had attempted to claim compensation for sixty homes that had been destroyed because they were deemed to be housing "shifta" or "shifta sympathizers." In Garissa, residents were warned to "dismantle their houses" because they had been "built without proper authority."[121] Ultimately, "the houses were destroyed after a shifta attack."[122] Outside government manyattas the threat of shifta was also grounds for demolition. For instance, the small trading enclave of Kom, which straddled the border of Isiolo and Maralal districts, was demolished because the *maduka*, and few homes there, were believed to occasionally harbor

[117]KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. Noor to District Commissioner.
[118]KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. Noor to District Commissioner.
[119]KNA: DC/ISO/4/5/7. "Land Allocation." 1964-71.
[120]KNA: PR/1/5. Minutes of North Eastern Regional Security Committee. 1 June, 1964.
[121]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/7/9. Regional Government Agent to Civil Secretary North Eastern Region "Mr. Mohamed Ali Haji," 11 June, 1964.
[122]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/7/9. "Mr. Mohamed Ali Haji."

shifta.[123] Although "shifta" provided a ready excuse for the destruction of property, a great irony of settlement in the former NFD was that "progress" was even more frequently cited as a reason for demolition.

Throughout the 1960s people living in "manyattaized" townships were subjected to slum clearing. In 1964, at Dadaab, near Garissa, soldiers ransacked and destroyed homes and *maduka* during a government survey.[124] In 1965, the residents of the western portion of Garissa were ordered to demolish their "huts" and rebuild them according to code.[125] The pell-mell of shacks that came to constitute entire sections of towns resulted from the filling in of "open space" between plots. The residents of government manyattas required shelter and generally had no means of providing it to themselves in accordance with building codes. What exactly those codes were in 1965 was unclear for nearly two years. However, it was eventually determined in 1967 that they entailed building with cement blocks and corrugated roofing "in accordance with Township Building Rules."[126] While still vague, these rules required contiguous rectangular plots that could be readily taxed and regulated, as they had been during colonial rule.

Slums, which nobody particularly wanted to live in in the first place, were periodically cleared and sprung up in previously unoccupied "open spaces" out of necessity. These in turn were sometimes demolished in the name of progress, continuing the process. As Isiolo engulfed Bulla Pesa in the 1970s there was happy news that the township would finally acquire running

[123]KNA: BB/12/51 Provincial Police Officer to O.C.P.D. "Destruction of Kom Trading Centre," 6 October, 1966
[124]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/7/9. Regional Government Agent to Commanding Officer Royal Engineers "Dadab" 12 May, 1964.
[125]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/14/7.
[126]KNA: BY/21/139. Provincial Health Inspector to District Health Inspector "Re: Dilapidated Buildings- Isiolo Township." August 18, 1967. The District Health Inspector for Mandera helped alleviate confusion in 1969 explaining "the plots should be adjacent to each other i.e. wall to wall whereas the existing premises have gaps of about 15 to 20ft from one to the other. This has caused great hinderance as far as the pegging of new plots is concerned." KNA: BY/21/183. District Health Inspector to Town Planning Advisor "Mandera Township" 31 January, 1969.

water. But the Senior Water Officer complained that he was "unable to lay the pipes in Bulla Pesa because of obstruction from housing."[127] County Councilman, Abdulkadir Mohamed noted "the problem of poor people who if asked by the survey to remove the building and construct elsewhere would be left without home[s] since they cannot afford [sic]."[128] Such was their crucible as running water eventually made its way into Isiolo. The price of progress was destruction. It bears noting here that Dadaab, where soldiers had demolished homes after a survey, is now infamous as the largest refugee camp in the world. This new clambering migration of the poor from slum to slum was oppressively static, lacking the familiarity of pastoralism, but equally based on survival.

Conclusion

Violence was the tangible core of the *gaf Daba*, the stoppage of movement and therefore time. The violence of the *gaf Daba* was expressed in the halting of beating hearts and beating hooves. Progress for the state was stasis for Northeastern peoples. During the 1960s the state forced a model of linear time and its spatial foundation upon Northeastern Kenyans. This inextricably bound them to the state, while emphasizing their distance from it. Because people were indiscriminately considered shifta, the prospect of actually becoming shifta was made more attractive. To be shifta came with the possibility of obtaining cattle and maintaining mobility. The potential of the state to provide the same had proven limited at best. Manyattas were a glaring representation of the confinement that Kenyan suzerainty brought with it. This was augmented by the tendency of the state to ignore and rationalize the violence of police and soldiers against Northeastern peoples.

[127]KNA: DC/ISO/4/53. Director of Surveys to Office of the County Council. November 8, 1974.
[128]*Ibid*.

Confinement was a part of the violence and the logic of imprisonment overlaid that of settlement. This was not just an epistemically violent process, though it was that, but also a physically violent one. Livestock were slaughtered and families were murdered. Men and women were raped. Such things were not without precedent but they were unique nonetheless. Nobody could recall anything like the total decimation of the Sakuye herd prior to the *gaf Daba*. Northeastern Kenyans had never been forced to live en masse in government manyattas before, surrounded by barbed wire and security lighting. These were the sites where people were "confined as squatters" to live "under iron roofs" and the legacy of that history continues to trouble the region.

In this period the desire to establish a settled and productive tax base, integrated into the national economy clashed with deep-rooted suspicion of mobile Northeastern peoples, united under the political ethnicity of "shifta." Animosity went both ways. Suspicion went both ways. The state sought to impose linear time and locals sought to retain cyclical time. The state strove to create a sedentary population and locals strove to remain mobile. The Kenyan nation was comprised of citizens who would ideally live in rectangular permanent homes. Northeastern peoples carried home in the memories of women. Their homes were round, indicating a separate ontological repertoire. The differences between circles and lines are thus more profound than they appear at first. Neither are they insurmountable. But the way that reconciling these differences was approached was a violent struggle. In that struggle, time stopped.

Chapter 5. Poets and Orphans: Family, Gender, and Affect in the *gaf Daba*

> You were left behind,
> Unwanted deposit from quenched urges,
> To take the beatings of the sun's rays alone in the midheat
> And wait for the coming of torrential floods
> To scatter you to far aways.[1]
> -Okello Oculi

In March 1963, during a protest in Isiolo against incorporation with Kenya, a Somali woman climbed the flagpole at the district office and removed the Union Jack in defiance of police and soldiers who had threatened to shoot into the crowd. She then set the flag ablaze. As it burned, a British officer caught hold of her, knocked her down, and stomped on her head until she died. In this extremely tense moment, District Commissioner Daudi Dabasso Wabera managed to intervene and stop any more casualties. Though he succeeded in stemming further violence on that day, many among both the police and protesters were angry with his intercession. Debasso Wabera "instituted an official murder inquiry into the death of the Somali woman who had led the demonstration and had personally burned down the British flag."[2] However, the inquiry was dropped and three months later two former police, Mohammed Farah and Mohamed Nur Issa, assassinated Wabera near Mudogashe. The gunmen escaped to Somalia and residents of Isiolo speculated that the provincial police officer, L.T. Pridgeon, played a leading role in orchestrating Wabera's murder, which initiated the so-called Shifta War.[3]

But who was the unnamed Somali woman who had led protesters three months prior? She only emerged from the memories of historian Nene Mburu's interlocutors. She did not appear in the *East African Standard* which reported instead that about three hundred people removed and

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[1] Okello Oculi, *Prostitute* (Nairobi: East African Publishing, 1968), 130-132.
[2] Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*, 116.
[3] *Ibid*, 117. Hannah Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya: A Social History of the Shifta Conflict, c.1963-68.* (Leiden, NL: Koninkliijke Brill, 2014), 40.

burned the Union Jack during a protest at the District office in Isiolo.[4] She did not even appear in the abortive police inquiry that Wabera initiated. She does not manifest in any of the other extant syntheses of the so-called Shifta War. Yet people remember her as leading a secessionist protest and "personally burn[ing] down the British flag." Was she a historical figure, a way of retroactively talking about nationalism, or both? What family did the nameless woman belong to? Mburu's rendering of her as a historical figure is doubtless accurate. It is also fair to say that she can be used to talk about nationalism. But her name and thus her family remain hidden. The only information to go on is that she was Somali and that she was killed at the edge of the *gaf Daba*. Speculation on the identity of the defiant and nameless Somali flag burner and of her relationship to nationalism leads to inquiry about visibility, family, and gender. These are key subjects that, like the unnamed woman, have largely been overlooked in the history of 1960s Northeastern Kenya.

Livestock, Love, and Lineage

This chapter operates on the premise that family is the basis of "tribe" and nation. In Northeastern Kenya the household revolved around pastoralism. The chapter asks how such households were impacted during the *gaf Daba*. In particular, it places emphasis on the concepts of orphanhood and adoption, both literal and figurative, to explore how violence altered lineages. It also dissects the idea of manhood, and emasculation, in concert with femininity. Orphanhood itself was tied to gender in numerous ways, not least of which was that orphans were typically defined as "motherless." Furthermore, gender was closely linked with livestock both before and after the *gaf Daba*. According to Kenyan social scientists in the 1980s, under the direction of Dr. Chris Wanjala, the Boran "sense of manhood revolves around cattle ownership and their show of

[4]"Somali Crowd Pulls Down British Flag" 13 March, 1963. *Kenya Gazette* "Kenya National Assembly Official Record [Hansard Report]" 7 June, 1963.

strength when they are in conflict with a stranger."[5] In praise poetry men frequently referred to themselves as bulls. This convention presents itself in proverbs like *"loon korm hin qábne qublat iti moa"* [if there is no bull, an ox will moo for the cattle].[6] The proverb imparts that Boran men should be like a mounting bull or the presumed natural order of sexual relations would be disrupted. Generally speaking, women were connected with the home, children, and small stock. Among Somali, Rendille, and Gabbra, camels were associated with women. This amalgamation was reinforced at the level of practice. Camels were used to fetch water and carry household goods, tasks allotted to women.[7] Furthermore, camels were traced through a matrilineage despite ownership within patriarchies. Affect undergirded all of these connections.

The idea of love, or the lack thereof, was at the core of relationships within Northeastern Kenya. This chapter follows from historians Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas in defining affect as "the physical manifestation of an emotion" whether in speech, writing, or action.[8] This they distinguish from emotion which they define as "an internal state specific to an individual."[9] The relationship is circular such that emotion drives affect and affect in turn can appeal to emotion. In their estimation, a focus on affect "reminds us how social change, especially as regards intimate affairs, is far from linear but rather defined by uneven, circuitous, and submerged routes as well as generational forgetting and the continual reformulation of cultural boundaries."[10] As such, their description of affect nests surprisingly well into the larger focus of this project. That is, love, livestock, and lineage played an important role in the conflict between linear and

[5]Gideon Were and Chris Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile*. (Nairobi: Government of Kenya, 1986), 36.
[6]Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Boran Proverbs in their Cultural Context* (Cologne, Germany: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2007), 77. Here Boran women are equated with cattle.
[7]Were and Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile*. 63. Camels and women often shared the same names as well.
[8]Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas eds., *Love in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2009). 30 n.1.
[9]*Ibid*.
[10]*Ibid*, 29.

cyclical time inherent to the *gaf Daba*. Contending with love and its intersection with livestock and lineage, manifests boundary making and breaking, including its temporal aspects, at an affective/emotional level that highlights how deeply the changes of the 1960s cut into Northeastern Kenyan life.

The cutting changes of the 1960s scarred nations embodied as women. The camel, alongside the 5-point star, was the primary national symbol of Somalia. The West also employed female imagery, actual female bodies, as national symbols. The vexilllaries Britannia, Europa, and Columbia are ready examples of this tradition. Such women were land and nation personified. Meanwhile Somali women were linked with camels. Camels are mobile and retain their animal form, making the connection between camels and women necessarily imprecise. In contrast, Europa, for instance, is rendered clearly female and one must take cultural hints coded in artistic conventions to recognize her greater significance as a symbol of continent. A camel is typically depicted in poetry as linked to women through a social calculus familiar to any pastoralist, women are like camels. However, women are not camels. This differs from Europa who, though a symbol, needs to mirror actual women to be understood as feminine. If Europa is not a woman then women are not like Europa. These imaginings of femininity shared the method of placing women on a pedestal in order to define them, but they did so based on differing worldviews of what woman and nation should be. The different ways that women were appropriated as symbols helps further elucidate the relative fluidity or rigidity of Western and pastoral epistemic conventions.

Poetry provides a window into the affective/emotional relationships forged among Northeastern peoples. Somalis have often been described as a "nation of poets" and Northeastern peoples generally, are known for their verbal artistry. Recordings of Boran and Somali poetry

and song circulated widely throughout Northeastern Kenya, Southern Ethiopia, and Somalia.[11] Camel poetry was a popular genre. Somali scholar Axmed Cali Abokor explains that "the huge majestic animal has become the very symbol of society, social relations, and man's emotions."[12] Somali manhood was proven through siring children and the mastery of oratory and martial skills, in the defense of camels and women. Historian Said Samatar notes that "a man who cannot defend his camel with words— as with arms – has, in pastoral eyes, lost his right to live in the desert."[13] As noted, Boran subscribed to similar aphorisms centered on the protection of cattle. These also found expression in oral traditions. For instance, at the naming of a male child, elders would gather and "sing of the health of their cattle […] the young stock, and finally of their women."[14] Love and protection of livestock and family were bound up in each other, definitive of manhood, and expressed in poetry and song.

A Battle of Words

The oral traditions of Northeastern peoples were widely distributed via radio during the 1960s. The Kenyan government recognized this well and busily monitored Somali radio. In North Eastern Province, two individuals called "Olouch" and "Sagar" were ordered to listen to Radio Mogadishu and "produce such counter propaganda and refutation […] as may be necessary."[15] Concerns over Radio Mogadishu's programming dominated Kenya's broadcasting plans in the Northeast. A meeting with the Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs in September of

[11]B.W. Andrzejewski and Sheila Andrzejewski trans., *An Anthology of Somali Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1993), 1. Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, "Oromo Nationalist Poetry: Jaarso Waaqo Qooto's Tape Recording About Political Events in Southern Oromia, 1991," *African Languages and Cultures* 3 (1996): 230.
[12]Axmed Cali Abokor, *The Camel in Somali Oral Traditions*, Axmed Arten Xange trans., (Sweden: Motala Grafiska, 1987), iv.
[13]Said Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayyid Mahammad Abdille Hasan* (New York: University of Cambridge, 1982), 32. Notably, such "boys" would be expected to reside in urban spaces.
[14]KNA: DC/ISO/4/1. District Officer Isiolo, "Golbo Boran and Their Customs," 4 June, 1944.
[15]KNA: PC/GRSSA/321/1. Civil Secretary, R.S. Winser to P.S.G.O., 9 November, 1963.

1966 focused on "discussion of the Sychological [sic] Warfare with the Mogadishu Radio."[16] A broadcast detailing the Provincial Commissioner's visit to Wajir in 1965 "on the question of propaganda from Radio Mogadishu" encouraged listeners not to "listen to a lot of rubbish which they themselves know is not true."[17] Even so, broadcasting from Somalia continued to outstrip the Voice of Kenya in popularity.

Poetry and love songs were the most popular Somali broadcasts. Radio Mogadishu ran Somali, Arabic, Italian, and Swahili programs on three meter-bands at 7160 kilocycles per second.[18] Like their Kenyan rivals, Somali Information Services stressed patriotism. Somali broadcasting favored songs and poems about separation because they invoked irredentism and provided an opening to pine for the unification of Somalis everywhere. Such programming kept "Olouch" and "Sagar" busy dissecting, refuting, and then reiterating nationalist messages from the Kenyan side. From their vantage point "the only thing was to forget all the propaganda from Somalia and join in building our nation."[19] But the songs played on Radio Mogadishu found mass appeal mainly because they also spoke to everyday concerns. British journalist, Colin Legum transcribed numerous Radio Mogadishu broadcasts in 1963. On October of that year, he recorded a song by Arrey Issa Karshe from the program "Needs of the Somali People" that included the following excerpt

> But the Somalis,
> They just sleep and they wear watches,
> And if they have money in their pockets
> They buy cigarettes and walk in groups in the streets.
> [chorus] Too true
> This is not freedom[20]

[16]KNA: RQ/16/27. "Director's Monthly Report." September 1966.
[17]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. "Handout to the Provincial Information Officer."
[18]*The National Review* Issue no. 1. (Mogadishu: Ministry of Information, December, 1963), 45.
[19]KNA: AHC/9/38. Minutes of the N.E. Regional Assembly. Minute 116/64. 28 December, 1965.
[20]Colin Legum "Somali Liberation Songs" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1 (1963), 515.

The song critically appeals to a rugged pastoral ideal of freedom devoid of watches, money, cigarettes and other such colonial trappings. Oratory of this nature was considered inflammatory and, according to Legum, by December of 1963 these types of "warlike songs were forthwith replaced by Somali love poems."[21]

But "love poems" carried similar messages to "warlike songs." Love songs tended to follow the formula of separation through the motif of a man leaving a woman to seek good fortune far away. For instance, the 1960s love song *Waan Duulayaa* [I am leaving], contained the verse

> If death does not interfere,
> Travel is good for men
> One does not just stay idle in a place
> Where one cannot have a good life
> Since I have now lost
> My livestock and wealth,
> It would be foolishness
> To stay here together[22]

This song warns against idleness and suggests that life in settlements is not good but travel is. Even so, it indicates that travel is dangerous but tempers the dangers of travel with the suggestion of its necessity. The song continues with the lines

> Even camels don't just stay put
> In their enclosure
> Nothing is static in this world,
> And one's luck will change
> Abundance and drought
> Succeed each other[23]

[21]Legum "Somali Liberation Songs," 519.
[22]Lidwein Kapteijns and Maryan Omar Ali "'Come Back Safely': Laments about Labor Migration in Somali Love Songs," *Northeast African Studies* 8 (2001): 36. The authors interpret these songs as stories of labor migration. I suggest they are about mobility more broadly.
[23]Kapteijns and Ali, "'Come Back Safely'."

Here the camel and natural cycles are marshalled along with a paraphrasing of the proverb "war and drought, peace and milk." In both the "warlike songs" and "love songs," freedom was about the dynamic movement of nature and people.

To counter Radio Mogadishu, the Voice of Kenya broadcast in Somali, Boran, and Swahili. In addition, the Kenyan Information Service installed public address systems in all government "manyattas" and distributed transistor radios in order to compete with Somali programs.[24] These transmissions ran at 4915 kilocycles for an average of about 235 hours per month.[25] Kenyan broadcasters also scrambled to include Boran and Somali music instead of English records due to their comparative popularity in the region.[26] However, Radio Mogadishu had greater range and played more music than the Voice of Kenya. So, despite some success with Boran and Somali music programming, "the most popular programme continue[d] to be 'the teenager time' presented by Ahamed Mohamed."[27] Fittingly, Kenyan broadcasting was looked to most of all for understanding adolescent angst in the nascent nation-state of Kenya. What exactly were teenagers, named for a concept of age in which people counted in one year increments from birth? Were they comparable to the *raaba* age-grade of the Boran, who were uncircumcised warriors? Listeners had to tune in to "the teenager time" to learn about such urban youth and why they loved Kenya.

Often the exercise was didactic, as semi-urban youth listened. Letters rolled into the Voice of Kenya offices asking difficult questions about the "future." Students, especially those in their early teens, indicated they were "most curious and unsatisfied in the fields of religion,

[24]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/5/3.
[25]KNA: RQ/16/27. "Re: Monthly Report: Eastern Service-Voice of Kenya," 31 April, 1967.
[26]KNA: AHC/9/38. Minutes of the Northeastern Regional Assembly. Minute 114/64, 28 January, 1965.
[27]KNA: RQ/16/27. "Re: Monthly Report (May)- Eastern Service V.O.K.," 31 May, 1967.

politics, space exploration and astronomy."[28] Their questions included "which religious group can I join to gain eternal life," "why don't we have women in the Parliament," and "why should 1 x 0 equal 0?"[29] Understandably, the Voice of Kenya avoided such questions owing to "the difficult nature of the answer, or to the controversy inherent in the answer."[30] Ontology and epistemology were at the root of the difficulty and controversy of such disembodied conversations. But the alien quality of programs like "the teenager time" was part of their appeal, much like the watches that settlement residents increasingly sported.

The Kenya Information Service also deployed visual materials. At the end of 1962 mobile information units were slated for introduction into all provinces. By August 1964 a mobile unit was in operation between Garissa, Mandera, and Wajir.[31] The unit, a van, was used "in distributing publications published by the Ministry [of Information] and surrender terms published for shifta."[32] In Swahili, an announcement of surrender terms read "an amnesty is offered to all shifta who have recently surrendered or wish to surrender to the Government of Kenya from 6 November, 1964, until 12 January, 1965."[33] The mobile information unit distributed thousands of such English and Swahili leaflets to a largely illiterate population, concentrating its efforts in semi-urban centers.[34] There, at least, literate residents like clerks, teachers, and students could translate and orally transmit written materials to a larger audience. Still, passing out English and Swahili leaflets was not the most efficient way of disseminating the

[28]KNA: RQ/16/27. "Schools Broadcasting," 1968.
[29]*Ibid.*
[30]*Ibid.*
[31]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. "Annual Report North Eastern Province."
[32]*Ibid.*
[33]KNA: DC/LAMU/2/20/5. The original reads ""Kuna msamaha unaotolewa kwa washiriki wote wa shifta ambao wamejitolea au watakaojitolea kwa Serikali ya Kenya tangu tarehe 6 Novemba, 1964, had tarehe 12 Januari, 1965."
[34] KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information to Civil Secretary, Garissa, 11 October 1963. For an alternate translation and copy of original announcement see also Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*, 166, 258.

message contained within those leaflets. Shifta, by and large, could not read pamphlets about amnesty, whether or not they favored surrender as a possible option. Instead they relied on word of mouth, which though it could be influenced by written documents, shaped the meaning of those documents in different ways. Thus, there was an abiding concern among Northeasterners about whether or not people taking amnesty would be executed or not. This fear was not derived directly from the message of pamphlets, rather it was gleaned from suspicion of that message.

Radio programs, mobile slide shows, and leaflet distribution were part of the "cognitive restructuring" envisioned by Kenyan officials like Sir Donald MacGillivray, who formulated the national livestock plan. The mobile units displayed slides, especially on the topics of improved livestock raising and the treatment of tuberculosis. One of these slide shows included the caption:

> Cattle form the symbol of wealth in the pastoral (and the settled) areas of Kenya where most tribes still own large numbers of cattle out of which they not only derive monetary wealth for their day to day activities but also for paying taxes, school fees etc., in addition to adding prestige.[35]

The slideshow stressed improved stock raising techniques towards the goal of selling at auction. A slide of a cattle auction, was accompanied with the message that "the more money a farmer can get the better not only for himself but for the whole country."[36] Slide shows dominated by pictures of cattle ensured an easily accessible point of translation, even if the message and subsequent dialogue were much harder to control. For instance, in 1964, "for the first time, pictures were displayed in the townships of Garissa, Mandera, and Wajir" sparking "heated arguments" during the slideshow. [37] Through such propaganda the state sought to affect Northeastern populations who in turn debated state intentions.

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[35]KNA: AHC/6/22. "Kenya Information Services. Colour Slides – Mobile Unit Programme."
[36]*Ibid.*
[37]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. Annual Report North Eastern Province.

In these ways, The Kenyan Information Service, entered into the long standing and highly regimented Northeastern practice of competitive oratory. Said Samatar explains that "in respect to their mastery of speech and oratorical skill, Somalis differentiate [between] four ranks."[38] These ranged from *afmaal*, he whose mouth is wealth, to *afgaroo*, he whose mouth is deformed. Notably, the *afgaroo* was despised for his lack of sophistication and because he "cannot defend his camel."[39] The *gaf Daba* impacted this patriarchal meritocracy by elevating the status of the third rank *afmiishaar*, he whose mouth is a saw, to a place of prominence. The *afmiishaar* were cautiously respected for their cutting verses while *afmaal*, the great poets, were revered for their abilities as peace makers. In Samatar's estimation "the weakening of ethnic and family ties attendant upon wholesale urbanization seem to have given *afmiishaars* great opportunities to create mayhem."[40] Thus, changes in settlement and family structure impacted upon affect and social prestige. Oral traditions like poetry and song offer a glimpse into this dimension of Northeastern Kenyan history. Consideration of family dynamics offers another vantage point. The weaving together of poetry and family, with attention to gender, provides a sense of the affective elements of the *gaf Daba*. This chapter now turns to the construction of family and gender in order to examine how their meanings were altered and reimagined before and after the *gaf Daba*.

"Shall We Let the Camels Go?"[41]

Kenyans shared very different conceptions of family, and thus nation. Even the most colonially assimilated Northeasterners tended to interpret home and family as synonymous. For

[38]Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism*, 30.
[39]*Ibid*.
[40]*Ibid*, 31.
[41]This title is drawn from Faarax Afcad's poem "Camel-Rustling" recorded in B.W. and Shiela Andrzejewski trans. *An Anthology of Somali Poetry,* 19-20.

instance, reviewers of the 1962 clerical exam noted that in answer to an essay question about the home, "'an ideal home' was frequently interpreted as an ideal family, an interpretation that was accepted although not expected."[42] Northeastern peoples, from Boran to Somali and everyone in between, made up an extended family that traced its roots back to the mythical ancestress "Samaale." Within this family, the Boran-Oromo has three branches: Boran or "cattle-people," Gabbra or "camel-people," and Waata or "people of the bow."[43] Each branch overlapped in complicated ways which were deemed "shegatry" by the state and have dominated the attention of numerous anthropologists. In each group women were the embodiment of the home. Family was further complicated during the *gaf Daba* as competing concepts of what it meant were introduced. In 1964, the *East African Standard* reported that "the average British family man earns £16 a week, has two or three children and drinks 155 pints of beer a year."[44] In 1963, the "average Kenyan family man" had five or six children and earned the equivalent of £29 per year, or far below £1 a week.[45] Though this comparison indicates economic disparity and the unevenness of incorporation into the cash economy, it is largely artificial in that the nuclear family was a Western norm associated with urban space and still being adapted to an East African context.

The adaptation of home and family to Northeastern settlements touched the ground and intersected with visibility in unusual ways. In 1964, the *East African Standard* ran a story about Northeastern Kenya in its "Friday Page for Women." The article reported that "Somali shifta

[42]DC/ISO/29/48. Clerical Examinations, 1962.
[43]Aneesa Kassam, "Ritual and Classification: A Study of the Booran Oromo Terminal Sacred Grade Rites of Passage," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 62 (1999): 486.
[44]"Handbook on the Average 'Mr. Britain'" *East African Standard* January 8, 1964.
[45]*Report to the Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Republic of Kenya*. (Nairobi: Government Printing Office, 1967), 82. Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard Report). 7 June, 1963. There was no available information on average alcohol consumption.

have turned Garissa into what, for the women folk at least, is virtually a state of siege."[46] The situation was such that 27-year-old Maureen Wright spent "nervous nights in a cage with guns beside the bed and armed guards patrolling the garden […] encircled by barbed wire."[47] The cage was literally a cage, bolted onto the roof of her home, where she and her husband slept in order to stay cool. Maureen was a former air hostess, one of two "European" women living in Garissa, and was married to an administrative officer named Henry. The article reported that Maureen had "only one other European woman to talk to" and was not free to go shopping in nearby Coast Province.[48] For her own part, she told the reporter that she thought it was "'probably worse for the women than for the men here, because we have less knowledge but more imagination than them.'"[49] She also explained, "'we keep a gun by us…although I am sure I would never be able to use [it]. I would be so terrified.'"[50] Confined as she was, Maureen reportedly spent most of her time gardening and bathing. She claimed that on most afternoons she sat "'in the bath trying to keep cool'" while in the bush outside town "Somali shifta" hid just out of view "wondering whether to test Garissa's defences."[51]

The newspaper article, oriented towards a small female readership, affirmed concerns about the transgression of racial and gender boundaries. These were boundaries that Maureen operated well within. From the settler perspective, the destruction of the lines between Africans and "Europeans" was the primary threat inherent in Kenya's recent independence. "Shifta" were avatars for this existential threat and a means of transferring anxiety towards a new division between Kenyans and "shifta." Maureen's story, accompanied by a recipe for hot cobblers with

[46]"Life can be Tense for a Garissa Wife," *EAS*, March 20, 1964.
[47]*Ibid.*
[48]*Ibid.*
[49]*Ibid.*
[50]*Ibid.*
[51]*Ibid.* Reportedly Maureen was only successful at growing pumpkins in her garden, given the inhospitable soils.

pineapple and advertisements for Metamorphosa skin cream, Trimetts diet, Kayser lingerie, and Elizabeth Arden cosmetics, reminded readers of the stakes involved in the so-called Shifta War. Safely locked away in her cage, she was shielded from African guards, who in turn protected against the greatest threat, "shifta." Yet, the cage itself could offer little protection from firearms; in fact it was a tactical disadvantage to shelter in a cage, but it did enforce a distance that protected from touch.

While women like Maureen Wright were confined to homes within settlements, among pastoralists women were homes. The difference is significant even as it overlapped with the stereotype of the housewife, an obedient mother and homemaker. We have already seen that among Gabbra "*wara jecum nd'eni"* [home means woman].[52] Women built and rebuilt homes from spiral patterns carried in their memories. Without women, there were no homes, physically or conceptually. Furthermore, women housed children and milk within themselves. The Boran proverb *"gundoon waan hodd'an ilmeen waan d'alan"* [milk containers need to be woven and children need to be given birth to] makes the association between women and "home" imperative.[53] Boran and Gabbra women wove *chicho,* milk containers following the spiraling conventions of home building. Gabbra and Boran women kept a special *chicho*, the *chicho miju*, in the back of their home. They carried this container on their wedding day and it was a symbol of fertility.[54] In the back of the home next to the milk containers, in the female space, was the "proper" place for sexual activity. The home, milk containers, and fertility were mutually dependent symbols that defined femininity among Northeastern peoples.

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[52]John Wood, *When Men are Women: Manhood among Gabra Nomads of East Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999), 37.
[53]Schlee and Shongolo, *Boran Proverbs*, 49.
[54]Carol Eastman, "Aspects of an African Constructed Environment: Language Use and the Nomadic Process," *African Languages and Cultures* 1 (1988): 109.

A man's role was to nurture and protect women and livestock. An incident in 1951 in which two Degodia (Somali) were killed by Ajuran (Boran-Somali) at Butteh, between Moyale and Wajir, helps illuminate this point. On December 5th, Degodia took Ajuran camels and, according to testimony, the two groups traded insults. A Degodia witness stated that an Ajuran shouted at them saying "we were women and that our masters, the Ajuran, had now come."[55] An Ajuran witness claimed that Degodia said that if the owner of the stock "wanted to get the camels back he would have to fight for them."[56] Another Ajuran witness claimed that they tried to negotiate by saying, "if you are men of peace, release the camels," to which they were met with the reply, "if you are men, come get the camels yourselves."[57] In this verbal contest the *afmishaar*, with their sharp words, prevailed over the aspiring *afmaal* and the two groups fought, leaving two Degodia dead. The Ajuran retrieved their camels and in so doing left the manhood of the Degodia in question. As such, tensions remained high between the two groups until elders from both sides came together to adjudicate. In their conversations the *afmaal*, were able to use their words to redirect shame towards peaceful ends. Ultimately, the Ajuran agreed to pay *dia*, livestock compensation, to set things right.[58] What stands out in this incident, as in countless others, is the way manhood, femininity, and livestock were rhetorically bound together. These were the basis of family and therefore nation.

Lack of affection for family and livestock was the defining feature of insanity. In 1944, Aden Mohammed murdered his brother at a *manyatta* near Wajir. He was deemed insane and confined near Nairobi at Mathare Mental Hospital for two years. In 1946, he was declared sane

[55]KNA: PC/GRSSA/12/10. District Commissioner Wajir to Provincial Commissioner Northern Province "Ajuran/Degodiah Border Incident" 15 January, 1952.
[56]*Ibid.*
[57]*Ibid.*
[58]*Ibid.*

and stood trial. A witness claimed at trial that Aden "became abnormal and morose and we thought him mad" because "he did not take any interest in his family or stock." Another witness echoed this sentiment stating Aden "wandered about in the bush and took no notice of his family or his stock."[59] All witnesses in the case cited Aden's disaffection for livestock and family as clear evidence of his insanity. Aden himself was unable to explain himself. In his official statement he claimed "I do not remember anything that took place on that day […] how could a man in full possession of his faculties kill his brother, for no reason?"[60] This question presupposed the madness of the *gaf Daba*. During that time, actual and potential brothers killed each other in huge numbers based on the language of nationalism hitched to *maendeleo* [development] and concerns over "terrorism." For many, these were indeed "no reason" at all. People had killed for livestock and loved ones before, and no doubt, during the *gaf Daba* many fought for these same reasons. Someone who could not protect his "camels" or "cattle" was not a man. Someone who could kill livestock and "brothers" for no reason, was even more abstract, so perplexing in fact that they could only be deemed insane, or perhaps hyena-like. These were the real consequences of battles over meaning. The interspersion of a state molded in the West, into livestock, gender, and family yielded misunderstandings.

Such misunderstandings also had the potential to open new opportunities. Just before the violence of the *gaf Daba*, women and traders in particular tried to find advantage through embracing new possibilities. Alongside money, the prospect of Kenyan citizenship, which was largely theoretical within the Northeast, attracted some to settlements. In 1964, Wajir had a total of 1,574 voters. However, only 327 actually voted that year due to a region-wide poll boycott.

[59]KNA: PC/GRSSA/12/10. First Class Magistrate's Court "Criminal Case No. 5/46," 14 January, 1946.
[60]KNA: PC/GRSSA/12/10. "Statement of the Accused," 15 January, 1946.

By 1967 the numbers jumped to 8,280 registered voters, largely as a result of manyattazation.[61] Even so, voters in Wajir accounted for only about 10 percent of the total population (figure 8). Mandera followed a similar trend increasing from 2,312 voters in 1962 to 6,648 (or about 7 percent of the population) in 1967.[62] Notably, the majority of these voters were women. In Garissa, over 60% of the electorate was female in 1962. Women, who in the Northeast accounted for about 50% of the population, continued to be overrepresented at the polls.[63] Thus, the Kenyan government focused many of its development efforts on women.

Figure 8. KNA: 324 KEN 964280. Gabbra Voters at North Horr Polling Station. The individuals pictured appear to be *dabella*, the "retirement" age-grade of the Gabbra.

[61]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/9. Wajir District Monthly Reports. May 1963-September 1969.
[62]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/23. Mandera District Annual Report. 1967.
[63]*Kenya Census*, 1969 (Nairobi: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1970). Women made up 49% of the Northeastern Kenyan population. In Wajir, for instance, women accounted for 51% percent of the population. See KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/9. Wajir District Monthly Report, April 1967.

In 1966, the District Commissioner of Garissa held a *baraza* about the local *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* [women's improvement/development] club. He initiated the meeting with the statement that "it has been known the world over that communities which suppress women's participation in progress have taken unnecessarily long to develop."[64] He concluded with the claim that "women do most of the hard work […] whilst the men sit idle" thus "the men would be deceiving themselves to think that they can develop this area fully on their own."[65] Even as it assumed a stark division between men and women and their labor, this affirmative message was appealing to some. Settlement life attracted others. In 1968, the District Commissioner of Garissa reported that "at least one woman is known to have divorced her husband" because "in the words of the angry divorced man 'she would not leave the town to live at an unknown manyatta in badhia' [the bush]."[66] The place of women within these settlements was the subject of a great deal of speculation.

The Garissa *baraza* was organized to address the equation of women's education with the sex trade. The District Commissioner, B.T. Orangi, responded to "the rumor that women who came to these classes would be taught prostitution," by announcing that "bad women are found in both the educated and the uneducated societies and that it is not education that brings prostitution."[67] He blamed "bad women" for sexual entrepreneurship. Men, such as officials and traders with liquid capital, were removed from the equation. But what made women "bad"? According to local perspective, settlement life and formal education were key factors. Indeed, the association between formal education and transactional sex continues to be an overarching East

[64]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. "Garissa Handout No. 384," 24 August, 1966.
[65]*Ibid.*
[66]KNA: PW/3/4. Annual Report for Garissa District, 1968.
[67]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. Garissa Handout No. 384.

African social issue.[68] The operative framework being one in which young women exchange sexual favors for better grades in turn exposing themselves to higher risk for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV. This accords well with the perception, whether true or false, that social ills emanate from the cities, or in this case settlements. But concerns about women's education were not simply about economics and sexual exchanges, they were also concerns about the meaning of home.

Education had the potential to transform women and thus homes. But women's education within Northeastern Kenya was also quite limited. According to the 1969 census there were only 732 female students in the entire North Eastern Province.[69] The Kenyan government tried to improve these numbers through *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* classes aimed at empowering women and, it was hoped, their children. These classes focused on "literacy, hygiene, sewing, cooking and child care among other things."[70] Such skills, outside of literacy, were things that women already understood quite well. But their particular iteration within the context of settlement life was geared towards a homemaking in which woman and home were separable, or at least not conceived of as a singular entity. This could provide a modicum of freedom, as in the divorce case above. Even so, women's empowerment, as envisioned by the state, operated squarely within the confines of domesticity.

The domestic sphere was also central to prostitution. Analyzing the colonial period, historian Luise White explains that "women's concerns about how to reproduce a household, in

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[68]Sanyu Mojola, "Multiple Transitions and HIV Risk among Orphaned Kenyan Schoolgirls," *Studies in Family Planning* 42 (2011): 29-40. Barbara S. Mensch, Wesley H. Clark, Cynthia B. Lloyd and Annabel S. Erulka "Premarital Sex, Schoolgirl Pregnancy, and School Quality in Rural Kenya," *Studies in Family Planning* 4 (2001): 285-301. See also Euphrase Kezilahabi, *Rosa Mistika* (Dar Es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University, 1988) for a creative fictional account addressing the issue in Tanzania.
[69]*Kenya Cenus*, 1969.
[70]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1.

the long run or for a few minutes, determined how prostitution was conducted in Nairobi."[71] It was also the case in Garissa, at least as early as the 1940s, when officials complained of "down country" prostitutes accompanying and cooking for soldiers.[72] The recreation of home within towns and cities required cash, which was procured either through wage labor or illicit trading. In 1945, the District Commissioner of Marsabit, Gerald Reece grumbled "it is common knowledge that most of the hawking of Nubian gin and a good deal of prostitution in Nairobi is now being done by people from the N.F.D. – principally Boran and Gurreh."[73] In Mandera in 1952, Provincial Commissioner R.G. Turnbull complained that "the only imports into the Colony […] are Marehan prostitutes and Lugh salt; both commodities are of indifferent quality."[74] Integration into the cash economy and settled life were possibilities that some had chosen to embrace over the course of the early to mid-twentieth century. When and where they chose such options, Northeastern peoples generally attempted to recreate home while at the same time gaining some autonomy from their association with it.

The prospect of separating women and home was potentially liberating. However, it could also cage them, like Maureen Wright, within permanent homes while eliminating mobility. Further, "prostitute" like "shifta" had the potential to dehumanize, as in Turnbull's equation of Somali sex workers with salt. Of course, the "humor" in his observation relied upon the fact that prostitutes were not actually commodities but his joke toyed with the uncertainty of their humanity regardless. The larger Northeastern community also questioned the meaning of a woman who was not a home. For some women, defiant in the face of such judgments, this was a

[71]Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 226. White also describes a Boran-Oromo prostitute who brought beer to rebels during Mau Mau, 206.
[72]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/24/3.
[73]KNA: DC/MBT/7/2/1.
[74]KNA: PC/GRSSA/2/24/3. Provincial Commissioner NFD to Member for Commerce and Industry "Import Restrictions," 25 October, 1952. Marehan is a Somali clan.

fair trade. Many men appeared to be content with the situation as well, seeking out such women. But, taking account of voter registration, contemporary ethnography, and rumor, the general opinion in the Northeast was against settlement life and its concomitant prostitution. In the 1950s, Anthropologist P.T.W. Baxter observed that "most Boran dislike wage labor as workmen and the opinion of the older generation is strongly against it."[75] Baxter's focus here was economic and does not reveal much about the households those workmen sought to recreate with the aid of unattached women. But it does give a sense of the tensions underlying the transition to settlement life and its attendant cultural change.

One of Baxter's informants made the prevailing attitude before the *gaf Daba* clear. Boran elder Wario Guyo, the so-called "old man of the sea" from chapter 4, was "asked to provide one of his sons to be a 'dubas'" and "refused saying he would rather be deprived of all the wealth he had than subscribe to throwing his son away thus."[76] Towns were considered "dumping grounds," regardless of whatever opportunities they might present to the people abandoned to them. Through forced settlement the *gaf Daba* accelerated this slow process of change, while eliminating competing social frameworks, with calamitous results. It was this elimination of other possibilities, drawn from the past and likely to manifest again in the future, that "time stopping" so fittingly described.

Adopting an Identity

While life within settlements increasingly bounded possibilities in particular ways, life outside settlements was necessarily mobile and this was reflected in identity. In 1918, Agricultural Officer Clifford Plowman noted of the Boran that the *raaba* (Raba), an age-set of

[75]KNA: AA/14/1/10/11/2. "Social Organization of the Boran of Northern Kenya," 1954.
[76]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. "Dubas" were "Tribal Police" during the Colonial era and "Administration Police" afterwards.

uncircumcised warriors, were prohibited from having children though they were not discouraged from having sex. He observed that "any children these RABA may have must be cast out the moment they are born and given to the hyenas."[77] However, the first-born among "such sons may be reared, and he is brought up as a girl, and is made to wear female clothes and do his hair like a woman."[78] This hairstyle did not mark the child as especially unique since "all RABA wear their hair rough, and keep a round patch shaved on the crown" in the manner of "an unmarried girl."[79] After roughly 16 years "when this boy's father becomes Gedamoch, he is circumcised and restored to his sex."[80] All the other children of *raaba*, rather than actually being abandoned to hyenas, were typically adopted by neighboring groups, especially Waata. The orphans would sometimes return to the Boran if and when their fathers reached the "retirement" age-grade of *gadaammojjii*.[81] This practice of abandonment and adoption continued, in modified form, such that anthropologist Johan Helland observed it in Southern Ethiopia in the 1980s. He noted that "such 'illegitimate' children are given up for adoption outside Borana society, to missionaries, traders, townspeople or the despised Wata hunters."[82] The practice obtained in Northern Kenya as well where it included recurrent accusations of infanticide, especially during drought.[83]

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[77]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2. C.H. Plowman "Notes on the Gedamoch Ceremonies Among the Boran," June 1918. See also C.H. Plowman, "Notes on the Gedamoch Ceremonies among the Boran," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 18 (1919): 114-121.
[78]*Ibid.*
[79]*Ibid.*
[80]*Ibid.*
[81]Aneesa Kassam and Ali Balla Bashuna, "Marginalisation of the Waata Oromo Hunter-Gatherers of Kenya: Insider and Outsider Perspectives," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 74 (2004): 200.
[82]Johan Helland, *Social Organization and Water Control among the Borana of Southern Ethiopia* (Nairobi: International Livestock Centre for Africa, 1980), 7. Were and Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile*, 31-32.
[83]Were and Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile*, 31-32. The charge of infanticide was not limited to Northeastern peoples. For instance, Kikuyu were reputed to destroy twins and children of adultery unless a foster-parent was willing to intervene. See A. J. F. Simmance, "The Adoption of Children among the Kikuyu of Kiambu District" *Journal of African Law* 3 (1959): 33.

Some very brief discussion of the various groups introduced in these observations is necessary here. Waata are hunter-gatherer ritual specialists attached to the Boran, as well as other groups, in the manner of blacksmiths in other African contexts.[84] *Raaba* (Raba) refers to a senior warrior age-set of the Boran who "undertake ritual warfare […] to secure loot in the form of livestock and the cut-off genitals of slain male enemies."[85] These uncircumcised *raaba* were not yet considered men. Over time, these *raaba* reached *gadaammojjii* (Gedamoch), or the retiree age-grade. If the children of the *raaba* returned from abandonment, after their fathers had become *gadaammojjii*, they were reintegrated into the age-cycle and could one day become *gadaammojjii* themselves. This leaving and returning to different identities was circular and codified within *gada*, the age-grade and governing system of the Boran. It was also extant in the practice of *shegat* ("shegatry"), or the adoption of different ethnic identities, across all Northeastern peoples.

The relatively fluid adoption and abandonment of ethnic and, in some cases, gender identities among Northeastern peoples troubled the more rigid sensibilities of the British. It also challenged the Kenyan state's implementation of linear time and immobile boundaries during the *gaf Daba*. As H.M. Clifford of the Kenya-Ethiopia Boundary Commission explained it, "we do not like their guessing or inventing – that spoils the whole exercise."[86] But, from an African perspective, British invention was equally perplexing. In 1966, T Maingi, a Kamba man from Kitui, wrote a letter to the District Commissioner of Garissa asking him to "help me to know of

[84]Scopas Poggo, "The Origins and Culture of Blacksmiths in Kuku Society of the Sudan, 1797-1955," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 18 (2006): 169-186, Susan Rasmussen, "Art as Process and Product: Patronage and the Problem of Change in Tuareg Blacksmith/Artisan Roles," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 65 (1995): 592-610, Patrick McNaughton, "The Semantics of Jugu: Blacksmiths, Lore and Who's 'Bad' in Mande," *Anthropological Linguistics* 30 (1988): 150-165, Wyatt MacGaffey, "The Blacksmiths of Tamale: The Dynamics of Space and Time in a Ghanaian Industry," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 79 (2009): 169-185.
[85] Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2012), 5.
[86]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/1/44. H.M. Clifford to District Commissioner, Mandera, J.K. Mitchell. 3 February, 1955.

the tribes of N.E.P."[87] Apparently Maingi wished to settle a dispute with a friend who claimed there were two tribes in the NEP, the "Wagalla and Borana" while Maingi maintained there were three, the "Somali, Borana and Galla."[88] The correspondence prompted the District Commissioner to scrawl "what a letter!!" on the margin before passing it off to the District Officer. The letter, random as it was, helps to illustrate both the distance between "down country" and "upcountry" Kenyans and the way that the taxonomy of tribes was a colonial calculus imposed over lineage. Of course, lineage could be just as fictive as the tribes derived from it. But the "tribes of N.E.P." were as unfamiliar to most Kenyans as the people and place names that the Kenya-Ethiopia Boundary Commission sought to codify years earlier. This guessing game was circular.

The fluidity with which Northeastern peoples conceived of themselves applied to gender. The first born son of a *raaba* could be raised as a "girl" in order to remain within a Boran family. If the child's father reached *gadaammojjii* then the "girl" returned to a male identity. However, the choppiness of tacking between these gendered classifications is a function of the fact that such rigidity was not applied to all levels of *gada*, the age-grade/governmental system of the Boran. The child was not definitively a "boy" or "girl" in the temporal space of liminality between their father's status as *raaba* and *gadaammojji*. But to become a "girl" and remain within the family, the first-born child had to be definitely male at birth. This was determined with reference to genitalia.[89] The rules of *gada*, if they were adhered to, dictated that a female

[87]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/6/5. T. Maingi to District Commissioner, Garissa. "Application of tribes and square miles at your province," 16 May, 1966.
[88]*Ibid*.
[89]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/10. "Common Boran Nicknames Used by the Gurreh" and "Common Nicknames Used by Somalis in Mandera." These "nicknames" were often proper Boran names. Boran and Somali naming further establishes the connections between biological observation and identity. The Boran name Bido means "birth marked," Somo means "toothless," Huko and Hapi both mean "thin," while Gaba means "fat." Within Somali nicknames Bos means "crippled," Gabo means "short," Hansh means "very white," and Jilau means "very black." Proper Somali names reference parents, especially patriarchs. Other common names refer to teeth, hair, lips, noses,

child of *raaba*, first-born or otherwise, must be abandoned. Such female-bodied children could not be temporarily raised as a "boy" or "girl" within the family in order to circumvent abandonment.

The links between biology and gender, while porous, were reified through practices like the castration of defeated enemies. During the so-called Shifta War, Nene Mburu claims "Kenyan soldiers were terrified [that] their male genitalia would be chopped off and taken by the guerrillas as a souvenir."[90] But he also notes "the guerrillas regarded an uncircumcised male as a child and believed it would be cowardly to kill one."[91] He proposes, with attention to affect, that "although a soldier might cope with the loss of his life, he was not mentally prepared to lose his manhood, which was the fear of every circumcised soldier."[92] There is a lot at work here. Soldiers were all male. Circumcised soldiers were men. The uncircumcised were boys.[93] This worldview was generally shared across the "upcountry" and "down country" even if the taking of genital "souvenirs" was not. Everyone viewed a penis as indicative of, if not definitive of, manhood. But an uncircumcised penis was not manly because it was not marked with evidence of passage into manhood. This was a factor in the abomination of uncircumcised *raaba* bearing children. Such births were out of sync with cyclical time.

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etc. Still other names references the time (day or night), season, or other conditions of birth. Someone named "Hapi" could certainly grow fat. But if they did there would be a joke contained in their naming that relied on the movement from one observed state to another. In short, these names are drawn from observations of the natural world, which are deemed significant to a child's character and identity.

[90]Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*, 147. Anthropologists Günther Schlee and Abdullahi Shongolo term the practice of taking genital "trophies" the "killer complex" and discern it widely among Northeastern peoples. See Schlee and Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity*, 39-44.

[91]Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*.

[92]*Ibid*.

[93]This was not a universal perception. For instance, Luo traditionally do not practice male circumcision even as they recognize an association between masculinity and the penis. See for instance Paul Wenzler Geissler and Ruth Jane Prince, *The Land is Dying: Contingency, Creativity and Conflict in Western Kenya* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 185. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Marriage Customs of the Luo of Kenya," *Africa* 20 (1950): 132-142.

The temporal aspects of gender were also manifest in the gendering of Gabbra elders. The ritual elders of the Gabbra are known by their age-grade, *dabella*, which is the penultimate age-grade of the Gabbra.[94] The *dabella* are referred to as "women."[95] *Dabella* are also known as *korma*, bull camels, which embody both feminine and masculine traits.[96] All livestock, had something of this power. They were submissive providers that could be violent and virile. They were the quotidian repertoire from which imaginings of the world were drawn and debated in poetry and proverb. When talking about masculinity and femininity livestock were very often the example. So, *dabella* were *korma* but they were also "women" and they acted accordingly, as did the community. They were shown favor reserved for elder men, such as being fed first and addressed with deference. But like women, *dabella* did not carry arms and, according to anthropologist John Wood, even squatted to urinate.[97] They also performed ritual functions alongside women during weddings.

Weddings are a good place to explore the idealization of gender roles within a given society. The Rendille word for marriage, *mindischo*, means "house building."[98] This makes analogy to pregnancy, given that Northeastern women broadly were "houses." It also coincides with Boran marriage in which a marriageable man leaves the home of his parents and makes partnership with a woman whose home now shelters him.[99] This household should produce and nurture children and livestock. A Somali song equates courtship to the motif of women as homes. In the song a suitor "circles around her hut for days countless/ who scorned men with

[94]William Torry, "Gabra Age Organisation and Ecology," in P.T.W. Baxter and Uri Almagar eds., *Age, Generation and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organisations*. (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1978), 190. The final, or retirement, post-grade is called *jarsa.*
[95]Wood, *When Men are Women*, 5.
[96]*Ibid*, 174.
[97]*Ibid*, 175. Boran *gadaammojjii* are also forbidden to carry weapons. Dahl, *Suffering Grass*, 112 n.17.
[98]Schlee and Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity*, 99.
[99]Dahl, *Suffering Grass*, 99.

money bags full." [100] There is no need to distinguish between the woman and her hut as they are understood in this verse as one and the same. The man eventually wins her hand in marriage by giving up his best camel, a black-humped beauty.[101] Marriage was intended to house the man within her and produce children and livestock for the community.

But wedding ceremonies extend social reproduction beyond the individual household. Gabbra celebrated weddings in conjunction with *sorio*, during which a female camel was slaughtered and deceased fathers and grandfathers were remembered.[102] *Sorio* always took place during the three "camel months" of the twelve-month Gabbra lunar calendar. It was also the time when boys and girls were circumcised. During the actual wedding women with young children and *dabella* gathered together carrying *madera* (Buddleja polystachya) branches and escorted the father of the groom through a camel corral.[103] These branches were normally used to construct homes. At the exit to the corral, the *dabella* recited blessings, which were partially in the Boran language. The blessing asked for the favor of the *Qaaliti*, or wife of the *Kaalu*, the spiritual leaders of the Boran-Oromo religion.[104] Through linking weddings to memorials for the dead and circumcision of the young, a cyclical rendering of time is emphasized. Further, social ties, including those connecting the Boran and Gabbra, are remembered and thereby reinvigorated. These ties bound and twisted different Northeastern groups together in ways that defied colonial stasis.

The changing connections between Northeastern groups remained housed within cyclical time. Like *sorio* (Gabbra) and *sooriyo* (Garre and Rendille), the Boran *gadaammojjii* ritual

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[100]Samatar, *The Camel in Somali Oral Traditions*, 41.
[101]*Ibid*.
[102]Wood, *When Men are Women*, 129. Schlee and Shongolo, *Islam and Ethnicity*, 41-43. Schlee and Shongolo examine the parallel Garre and Rendille ritual *Sooriyo.*
[103]Wood, *When Men are Women*, 134-135.
[104]*Ibid,* 136. The pertinent lines are "Qaliti. Guide us, be in front of us."

marked important collective movement within the life cycle. Recall that *gadaammojjii* celebrated the entrance of elders into the retirement age-grade of the same name. It also welcomed *dabballe*, the first Boran age-grade, into the *gada* cycle. According to anthropologist Aneesa Kassam, the rituals of *gadaammojjii* linked "the alternate generations of grandfathers and grandsons and dramatically express the social distance […] which separates the proximate generations of fathers and sons."[105] It is more than coincidental that *dabballe* was the first Boran age-grade and *daballe* was essentially the last Gabbra age-grade.[106] Boran *gadaammojjii* and Gabbra *daballe* were understood to be "retiring." Both Boran and Gabbra followed *gada* and their respective *Daballe* age-grades, children and elders, connected the Gabbra to their Boran cousins.

This connection between Gabbra elders and Boran children manifested the mobility of ancestors. It also added a religious understanding to adoption in which Boran and Gabbra could be mutual caretakers at different stages of the *gada* cycle. However, the role of caretaker to people out of sync with *gada* was generally undertaken by the ritual experts of the family, the Waata. Prior to the *gaf Daba*, Waata typically raised the children of *raaba* that the Boran abandoned. Though of "low" status, spiritually powerful Waata were considered to have found the first *Qaalu* and the story of this discovery was continually recreated through their ritual association with him. Waata also tended the *Qaalu's* herd of black cattle strengthening their association with the Boran. According to Aneesa Kassam "the presence of Waata in rituals is highly valued" and "they play an indispensable role in all life cycle and transition ceremonies, and are rewarded with specific parts of the animals sacrificed."[107] However, Waata were also

[105]Kassam, "Ritual and Classification," 488.
[106]Torry, "Gabra Age Organisation and Ecology." *Jarsa* were technically the final Gabbra age-grade (a post-grade) but they were considered to stand beyond the age-grade cycle.
[107]Kassam and Bashuna, "Marginalization of the Waata," 200.

considered unclean due to a diet inclusive of a wide variety of game meat, such as birds and porcupines. In 1954, Isiolo District Commissioner R.G. Brayne-Nicholls noted the prejudice, explaining that "wild birds and game are eaten only by those who have no stock and their consumption is considered 'infra dig' [from Latin *infra dignitatum* meaning below one's dignity]."[108] Boran-Oromo oral traditions portrayed this exaggerated reliance on wild game as both God-given and resulting from Waata arrogance. Waata oral accounts coincide with this representation. According to a popular origin story, Wayyuu Banoo, ancestor to the Waata, unwittingly challenged *Waaqa* (God) to a contest of wealth and was punished for his pride through the destruction of his herd. He begged forgiveness and *Waaqa* relented, providing him knowledge of how to hunt.[109]

Boran and Somali associated attached hunter-gatherer groups, such as Waata and Sap, with hyenas. Sap were *shegat* to Somalis in a manner similar to the relationship between Waata and Boran. In 1929, British official J.W.K Pease described Sap with the following:

> The smiths […] of this district belong to a clan known as the 'Wara-beyu': the name means the hyenas and possibly was originally given them simply as a term of abuse on account of their low occupation, but the tradition now generally accepted is that the whole class descends from one Warabetu Abdi a Somali child who was lost and brought up by a hyena until one day a Dolbahante, Herti, Somali saw him down the hyena's hole, pulled him out, and took him home.[110]

The parity with the supposed Boran practice of abandoning children to hyenas stands out here. Abdi was separated from his parents and left to hyenas, who raised him before he eventually returned to his original family.

Within Northeastern idioms, hyenas have an important symbolic role. Anthropologist John Wood notes that Gabbra consider hyenas "an embodiment of wild and dangerous disorder,

[108]KNA: PC/NFD/4/5/1. "Some Notes on the Golbo Boran of Isiolo."
[109]Kassam and Bashuna, "Marginilization of the Waata," 200.
[110]KNA: PC/NFD/4/1/2.

not just because hyenas move about at night and kill livestock, but also because female hyenas have what looks like a penis and testicles."[111] Even though hyenas troubled the association between genitals and gender, female hyenas did still carry and birth children. The real symbolic potency of hyenas was in their disruption of social order. For instance, the *kussa* age-grade of the Guji, an Ethiopian Boran-Oromo group, are associated with hyenas. According to anthropologist John Hinnant, who conducted fieldwork in the late 1960s, "during *kussa*, men may become like wild animals, strip naked and go into the forests (where they can be heard calling like hyenas) and if they find a woman there, may have group sexual intercourse with her without fear of punishment."[112] Evidence is lacking for such forest attacks in Northeastern Kenya, even around Marsabit Mountain, one of the few areas in the region where there is actually a forest. Any actual instances are also omitted from Hinnant's account. Thus the salient point in discussing *kussa* appears to be that young men are wild, disorderly, and unaffectionate like hyenas, which kill livestock and children.

The epithet hyena is indicative of greed and avarice. In Boran-Oromo proverbial parlance "*dhambobi, hambaa waraabessaa*" [laughter is the only thing left over from the hyena].[113] The meaning being that the hyena eats everything else and laughs about it. Perhaps more directly to the point is the proverb "*ilke waraabessaa lafe irratti sodaatan*" [they fear the hyena because it eats bones and all].[114] The idea behind this proverb is that a hyena stops at nothing in attempting to satisfy its insatiable hunger and should therefore be avoided. Thus, it is incredible for a child to survive among hyenas. The so-called Shifta War gave "hyenas" opportunities to vie for the positions of authority that the *gaf Daba* had removed from the cycles of *gada*. These hyenas, like

[111]Wood, *When Men are Women*, 14-15.
[112]Baxter and Almagor eds., *Age, Generation and Time*, 217.
[113]George Cotter, *Ethiopian Wisdom*, 50.
[114]*Ibid*, 128. See also Were and Wanjala eds., *Marsabit District Socio-Cultural Profile*, 179-182.

their forebears, survived on the margins of Boran and Somali society, either in the bush or within settlements.

Near the close of the *gaf Daba*, Northeastern peoples, especially those in settlements, sought to reconcile their proximity to "hyenas" through appeal to citizenship. The *East African Standard* reported that in August 1967, "at Isiolo hundreds of Boran, Somali, and Rendille tribesmen carried placards reading 'Shifta are Hyenas! We are part and parcel of Kenya!'"[115] The placards made the association between shifta and hyena explicit. They also imparted that the Kenya Information Service was able to make some headway in their propaganda campaign. For instance, the flyer "The Future of the Somalis in Kenya" announced under the heading "live together as brothers" that "the people have a variety of customs, traditions, and ways of life. These the Kenya government accepts: they are part and parcel of Kenya."[116] Politicians frequently spiced their rhetoric with the phrase at *barazas* throughout the Northeast and speeches on the floor of Parliament.[117] Still, the inclusive language of the slogan was undermined by the fact that it was applied almost exclusively to the Northeast, highlighting the general perception that it was a region apart from Kenya. Within this "frontier," settlements constituted "Kenya."

In the years leading towards the *gaf Daba*, outcasts such as orphans from warfare or *raaba* unions, were increasingly abandoned to settlements rather than Waata. Many other children were born into settlement life. In the NEP children under 9 were the largest single demographic by far. According to the 1969 census they represented 76,033 of the total NEP population of 245,757. The next largest group, children aged 10-14, accounted for 37,214

[115]"Take N.E. Frontier Issue to U.N. say Tribesmen," *EAS* 23 August, 1967.
[116]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. "The Future of Somalis in Kenya," 1963.
[117]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/3/4. Wajir County Council Annual Report, 1967. See also Hansard Report: 26 March, 1965, 4 November, 1966, and 26 November, 1971. Korwa Gombe Adar, *Kenyan Foreign Policy Behavior towards Somalia, 1963-1983* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), 78-79.

people.[118] However, during the 1960s (and beyond) the entire country of Kenya was characterized by a young population, defined as persons under the age of 16. Out of a total population of 10,942,705 in 1969, there were 5,526,509 (or just over 50 percent) children.[119] Would this young population represent the future in terms of linear time, or their parents through the cycles of non-linear time? Would they don watches and walk in groups or would they wander to increase their herd? Could they do both? In the Northeast, the rigidity of colonial time and boundaries, inherited by the Kenyan state, made such adaptation extremely difficult.

In the period following the so-called Shifta War, famed Boran musician Abdullahi Jirma recorded the song *Finna Akana Kan* [This Way of Life] which included the following lines:

> I would have looked after cattle, but I do not have any
> I could have borrowed from someone, but we are all the same
> In the first place I came here after losing my wealth
> I now guard someone else's door [120]

The song describes moving to Nairobi to find work as a security guard. Having lost stock, some men sought to provide for themselves and their families through urban employment. Northeastern men found work in security, due in large part to the continued relevance of colonial stereotypes that remained salient in the post-colonial nation-state and linked pastoralists to martial prowess. At a more practical level, from an employer's perspective, the very otherness of Northeastern peoples helped insure that they were less likely to collaborate with urban thieves, drawn from the majority populations. Men travelled to provide for themselves and, to greater and lesser degrees, their families. But in so doing they risked an inability to fulfill the role of protecting women and livestock, engaged as they were "guarding someone elses door."

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[118] *Kenya Census,* 1969.
[119] *Ibid*.
[120] Hassan Wario Arero, "Coming to Kenya: Imagining and Perceiving a Nation among the Borana of Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies*. 1 (2007): 300.

Conclusion

In 1959, in the wake of Mau Mau, Kenyan government official Alan Simmance claimed "the whole traditional fabric of family law is threatened by the transition to modern life and this uncertainty will persist until the society commits itself to far-reaching decisions on the status of parents, the rights of women, and the up-bringing of children which it is not at present willing to concede."[121] In parity with John Mbiti's later concerns about the political volatility of differing perceptions of time, Simmance saw that the meeting of East African and colonial epistemology would translate into drastic change and uncertainty within families. However, his concern was focused on the burden this would place upon the government because he recognized that they had "no effective substitute to offer for the sense of collective guardianship and duty which still persist and should be encouraged to persist- at least until the advent of the Welfare State."[122] A "welfare state" that never materialized.

Furthermore, government officials hoped this "welfare state" would arise organically, out of the very structures which the colonial state had undermined. One of the thousands of flyers distributed throughout Northeast Kenya in the 1960s described the regions incorporation into the state well. Under the heading "Make the Most of Staying in Kenya" it presented the rather hopeless view that "the North Eastern Region obviously cannot survive on its own as an independent unit. With a weak economy, poor communications, no major outlets for stock and the difficulties of administration, the North Eastern Region would be in a helpless position."[123] The Secretary of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), described what that situation looked like. At a *baraza* in Wajir he noted "with regret the increasing numbers of poor people

[121]A. J. F. Simmance, "The Adoption of Children among the Kikuyu," 36.
[122]*Ibid*, 38.
[123]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. "The Future of the Somalis in Kenya," 1963.

wondering [sic] about for help."[124] He also suggested the paradoxical solution that "chiefs and tribal elders […] car[e] for their poor people in the old customary way."[125] Leaving aside that "chiefs" were a colonial imposition onto "the old customary way," the *gaf Daba* had served to break much of the continuity of such social reciprocity through forced settlement and military engagement with nomads that decimated herds.

Exemplary of the tattered relationship between the state and its subjects was the case of Mutaka Ali. A former police officer, Mr. Ali sought compensation for the livestock which the Kenyan military had confiscated and killed during the *gaf Daba*. He claimed "I was always against Shifta, when my cattle was confiscated I became a Shifta."[126] Ali's position as a police officer loyal to the state did nothing to protect his primary source of livelihood. Thus, he became a shifta. In other words, the community of shifta replaced the community of the post-colonial state. But the benefits of shiftahood were meager, therefore he returned to the Kenyan fold at the end of the war hoping to salvage his herd. Instead he was denied compensation with which to rebuild his name and was left to ponder his alienation in newly consolidated Kenya. He had tried "the old customary way" of defending his stock, and he had failed to protect it. This left his manhood in doubt, placing him alongside the *afgaroo*, who lacked the wisdom to maintain his camels. The state could do little to redress this virtual castration.

The slaughter of Ali's herd was all the more perplexing in that killing livestock defined insanity from a Northeastern perspective. To do so was to strike out at family. This masculine aggression, wherein livestock were killed and genitals cut, was accompanied by a different sort of violence towards memory. As women moved into settlements they lost recollections of how to

[124]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/21/1. Garissa Handout No. 411. 17 September, 1966.
[125]*Ibid*.
[126]KNA: DC/ISO/4/7/4. Mutaka Ali to District Commissioner Isiolo, Personal Letter. 11 August, 1971.

build the homes that were themselves. For some this was a revolutionary violence that separated them from their association with livestock and home in potentially liberating ways. However, those traditional attachments to home and livestock were not static. Neither was gender necessarily fixed; even as it was tied to biological observation it was not bound by it. Northeastern gender categories did not match Western ones, manifested in settlement, and were changeable even within an individual lifetime. There was spiritual potency, mirrored in the stages of *gada*, in moving between and straddling both age and "male" and "female" oppositions. Beyond the epistemic/cosmological loss entailed in confinement within settlements, was the confinement of otherness. The Somali flag-burner could not be fully Kenyan. The hyena could not be fully Kenyan. This was a legacy that the children of *raaba*, who moved from stewardship under Waata to being raised by "hyenas" in settlements, would have to face. Within their adoptive "family," joined to the Kenyan state and linear time, they remained neglected and thus dangerous and creative.

Conclusion: The Bone Collectors

In December of 1959, Haji Ismail, a hides and skins trader from Wajir, applied to be granted a "contract for all bones from Wajir, Moyale, Mandera, parts of Ethiopia and Mudogashi."[1] Ismail tried, but failed, to secure a monopoly on trading bones, for two shillings a bag, to the Archer's Post Abattoir in the Northern Frontier District (NFD). He and two other bone traders, Shire Elmi and Mohamed Ahmed, had been flooding the abattoir with bags of bones, ten thousand in the span of a few months alone, to be used for a variety of products, primary among them being "bonemeal," or animal feed.[2] These traders were bringing in so many bones in fact that by July of 1960 the abattoir had to temporarily stop accepting any more shipments. The enterprise of bone collection and grinding was met with general disapproval. The Wajir District Commissioner, P.G.P.D. Fullerton, observed that "there is at present in Wajir a great deal of criticism of the bone trade as being 'haramu.'"[3] He noted that "the Holy Men have all condemned it (since a good half of the exports are collected from animals which died without proper slaughtering), and people connect the recent disastrous cattle losses with the 'unclean' bones traffic."[4] Fullerton concluded that the colonial government should "leave the trade alone on this end, and let those who dare make their fortunes on the old principle that 'business haina haramu' [nothing is forbidden in business]."[5]

The bone trade was strange business, along the lines of scientific necromancy. If nothing was forbidden in business, and settlements were centered on trade in place of ritual space, then

[1]KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/29/1. Veterinary Officer-in-Charge, Northern Province to District Commissioners Wajir, Moyale, Mandera, "Collection of Bones for Archers Post Abattoir" 16 December, 1959.
[2] KNA: PC/GRSSA/3/29/1. P.G.P.D. Fullerton, District Commissioner Wajir to Veterinary Officer in Charge, Northern Frontier Province, "Collection of Bones for Archers Post Abattoir." 23 December 1959. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Pastoralism in the New Millenium* (Rome: FAO, 2001).
[3]*Ibid*. *Haramu* is Swahili for forbidden.
[4]*Ibid*.
[5]*Ibid*.

the sanctity of Western practices could only appear profane. In the Northeast such profanity was paradoxically ritualized. For instance, in 1962 and 1963, Catholic Father Paolo Tablino gave several masses to small groups of Turkana at the Archer's Post Abattoir.[6] Such worship services were an interesting juxtaposition of Christianity and scientific necromancy, both of which were initially associated with Europeans. The bone trade to the abattoir thrived on death and was therefore linked with disease, given that death is a disease vector. But the bone trade made the connection between living and dead cattle even more direct. As cattle and other ungulates died their bones were collected and sold to the abattoir, which ground them into "bonemeal" to feed to livestock. Northeasterners linked this cycle with the death of cattle, blaming the bone trade for endemic illness, which in turn provided the bone collectors with more dead livestock as grist for the mill. Like hyenas, the collectors and abattoir staff scavenged and consumed the dead "bones and all." Like artificial insemination, this introduced an inversion of the regenerative life cycle into the very symbol of that life cycle, the livestock who were repositories of *ayaana* and *barakiin*.

The bone trade also overlaid the association between hunting and ritual specialists, like Waata and Sap, with hyena. Further, it stood at the interstices of township opportunities and the "lowest" sort of bush scavenging. However, Ismail, Elmi, and Ahmed were all prominent traders, operating within the cash economy. Thus, settlements and their rituals of scientific necromancy could elevate "lowly" occupations, even if that trade came at the expense of livestock and family. These were spaces that made hyenas and *afmiishaar*, the coarse poets, prominent and separated women and homes. They were places where orphans were raised by a new type of hyena and women, who were no longer homes, were confined to new types of homes

[6] Paolo Tablino, *Christianity among the Nomads: The Catholic Church in Northern Kenya* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006), 96.

nonetheless. They were places where police moonlighted as bandits. Until the *gaf Daba*, such changes were largely matters of choice or expediency, even as these were impacted by colonial boundary making.

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The *gaf Daba* was a break in the spiral of time.

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Northeastern peoples struggled to locate it in relation to its antecedents and likely outcomes. It was a "new thing" within the realm of "No-time." If the bone collectors were like hyenas then they were like the Waata and Sap before them, who engaged in forbidden practices, making them despised and dangerous but also powerful. Though they fed on death, death remained a part of the life cycle and could be reconciled as such. Even as it overlapped with the scientific necromancy of artificial insemination, it differed in that artificial insemination strove to escape the life cycle altogether. Meanwhile, the consolidation of the Kenyan state at independence created a rift in time. With the manyattazation that accompanied the *gaf Daba* people were forced into stasis, at least temporarily, either within settlements connected with linear time but lacking opportunity, or through death outside settlements, of herds and individuals deemed "shifta." In essence the *gaf Daba* is a temporal metaphor for remembering the violence accompanying independence from the optic of pastoral ontology, and its insistence upon mobility.

This study has sought to tap into that optic, borrowing from it, and thereby troubling a linear narrative. Daudi Dabasso Wabera, for instance, appears at different points throughout this history, sometimes alive, sometimes dead. Like a memory he is newly recreated each time he is recollected. But given the movement of time and the life cycle, he remains confined by death to

memory alone, even as various cosmologies may grant him continued presence in the present. If he is not remembered he may disappear or become dangerous, either through spiritual malice or omission via silence, and thus misunderstanding. This study also draws heavily on "down country" perspectives and is part of a Western tradition tied to linear time and narrative. To pretend these epistemic lenses are irreconcilable would be to adopt the hard lines of colonial cognitive mapping and carefully elide the history of cultural translation, misunderstanding, and borrowing central to human interaction. This does not make time solely synchronic, instead it takes stock of the diversity of diachronic memory, in which events can expand or contract at altered speeds and time can stop.

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Such radical departures in perspective are largely absent from the existing historiography of East Africa. The Kenyan historiography in particular tends to be forward looking. In some instances, this may be built into the archive, both written and oral, especially where it intersects with the desire of informants and authors to negotiate their stories toward some sort of advantage. Historian Derek Peterson has argued of Kikuyu that "texts helped political innovators commit people to a singular vision of the future."[7] John Mbiti argued that as the nation-state emerged out of the colonial period, political instability was rooted in divergent concepts of time. If Kikuyu elites, like Kenyatta, elaborated a singular vision of the future, for most Northeasterners such a future existed within the category of "No-time." The extent to which that has changed since the 1960s is an interesting question for another project.

But given Northeastern ideas about time, which have persisted stubbornly enough to manifest in the present, it is perplexing that the existing histories of Northeastern Kenya have

[7]Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004), 18.

been so concerned with the future. Nene Mburu dedicates the last chapter of his study of the so-called Shifta war to exploring contemporary banditry and its possible outcomes. He claims that "should the former Somalia reunite […] there is every possibility militant greater Somalia nationalism would be rekindled and attract instant sympathy from disaffected ethnic Somalis of the NFD, hence sparking another secessionist war."[8] But he considers that "such a possibility would be obfuscated if ethnic Somalis and other pastoral communities inhabiting the periphery are indiscriminately embraced in the social, economic, and political fold of the mainstream society."[9] Mburu's use of "obfuscated" is interesting since it indicates that assimilation would only hide Northeastern ambitions towards "greater Somalia." Such lingering suspicion, justified or otherwise, obviates the inability of the Kenyan state, thus far, to incorporate Northeastern peoples. It also conjures a countervailing suspicion of what the state's indiscriminate embrace might entail.

In the most recent book on the period, Hannah Whittaker also offers predictions of the future. In her conclusion, she claims of a currently proposed road building scheme, part of the Kenyan state's forward-focused "Vision 2030" initiative, that "the project will bring jobs and greater communications capacity to former NFD areas."[10] But she hedges that "the project also has the potential to deepen political discontent, if local communities are forced to relocate or do not profit from the new jobs and services as much as they thought that they would."[11] From this discussion of potential development and its possible outcomes, she goes on to relate that "state collapse and the rise of militant Islam in Somalia has destabilized the border regions of each of

[8]Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*. 246-247.
[9]*Ibid*, 247.
[10]Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya*. 153.
[11]*Ibid*.

its three neighbors."[12] From this she concludes "this borderland is of central importance for understanding not only the past but also the future of North East Africa."[13] Such musing on the future may be fruitful. Do stability and stasis intersect? Is there appeal in destabilizing colonial-derived boundaries? Are politics and/or religion the catalysts of disobedience and violence? How the past is remembered has a unique bearing on how such questions are answered, though whether or not it impacts the future in predictable ways is another story altogether. What is clear is that Boran remember the period of the so-called shifta war in terms of "time stopping," and that this claim and its implications have not previously been explored within the existing historiography.

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In the idiom of the *gaf Daba*, what followed the rift of the 1960s was a very different world. Kenyatta is remembered. Mboya is remembered. Obama is being remembered. In his embrace of the state, Wabera is memorable. The memory of Kimathi humanizes Mau Mau. But who remembers the nameless Somali woman beyond the circumstances of her death? Who was Mutaka Ali: policeman or bandit, herder or settlement dweller? In not seeking to understand, or in actively forgetting, "shifta" become the memory and icon of 1960s Northeastern Kenya. Remembering, and thus imagining, the multiple mediations of history troubles the accounts from which "shifta" emerge out of Somali nationalism and become "pirates" and "terrorists" in the present. This politically motivated and xenophobic bounding of the imaginary into the "ethnicity" of "shifta," despite its contradictions, justified the violence of the *gaf Daba*. In the parlance of propaganda it was shifta who stood in the way of *maendeleo* [development] and they must therefore be eliminated along with their sympathizers. The slaughters carried out during the

[12]*Ibid*.
[13]*Ibid*, 154.

so-called Shifta War littered Northeast Kenya with too many bones to be collected into a single story. What could the Sakuye create from the bones of their herd? Were shifta like hyenas scavenging on death or Northeastern peoples struggling to maintain the life cycle, even if only their own? Surely, like Mutaka Ali, they were both.

Appendix 1: A Chronology of "Time Stopping"

March 1963	Operation Sharp Panga in which 4,200 British and African troops, including the Royal Air Force (RAF), conducted military exercises in the North Eastern Province.
March 1963	Somalia breaks off diplomatic relations with the British.
March 1963	Unnamed Somali woman burns a British flag during a protest and is murdered.
May 1963	Organization of African Unity (OAU) formed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
June 1963	District Commissioner Daudi Dabasso Wabera and Chief Haji Galma Dida murdered.
December 1963	Kenyan Independence.
December 1963	Kenya declares state of emergency in North Eastern Region.
February 1964	Fighting in Ogaden Region between Ethiopia and Somalia begins.
February 1964	Kenya increases armed forces and extends state of emergency.
June 1964	British provide 3.5 million shillings in military aid to Kenya.
June 1964	"Home Guards" formed to supplement Kenyan military efforts.
September 1964	Manyattazation formally begins and Special Districts Ordinance (SDO) goes into effect.
September 1964	Officially 198 shifta, 41 security forces and 103 civilians dead as a direct result of combat. Enquiry confirms 7 unarmed civilians summarily executed by security forces in Wajir.
December 1964	First shifta amnesty.
January 1965	Officially 100 shifta surrender.
April 1965	Somali government formally protests Kenyan and British military actions in Northeastern Kenya.
July 1965	Joint Kenyan and British military operations in the North Eastern Region made official.

September 1965	Officially 335 (533 total) shifta, 147 (188 total) security forces, and 173 (276 total) civilians dead as a direct result of combat.
December 1965	Diplomatic talks opened between Somalia and Kenya at Arusha, Tanzania. Mine warfare changes military engagements and military vehicles are outfitted with sandbags to decrease Kenyan casualties.
April 1966	Agreement between Voice of Kenya and Radio Mogadishu to suspend propaganda broadcasts.
June 1966	Kenya ends trade with Somalia.
July 1966	Northeasterners required to register with government.
July 1966	Government manyattas fully operational. Anyone caught outside of them is subject to SDO, which includes a clause to shoot without challenge.
September 1966	Officially 665 (1,198 total) shifta, 14 (202 total) security forces and 230 (506) civilians dead as a direct result of combat.
November 1966	Kenyan government revises casualties to 1,651 shifta and 69 security forces killed in action. No civilian deaths are accounted for.
February 1967	All Northeastern residents issued identity cards.
February 1967	Kenya formally complains that Somali army is shelling Mandera.
June 1967	Second shifta amnesty.
June 1967	Elders sent as amnesty emissaries to the shifta are murdered.
July 1967	Officially 340 shifta surrender.
October 1967	Arusha agreement signed by Kenya and Somalia. Both governments agree to a cessation of conflict, though Somalia denies any military involvement.
October 1967	Officially 120 (1,318 or 1,771 total) shifta and 1 Kenyan soldier (203 or 70 total) killed in action. The numbers clearly reflect the obfuscation of casualties during the period.
February 1968	Trade between Kenya and Somalia resumes.
April 1968	Manyattazation ends and people are allowed to legally resume pastoral migration.

Appendix 2: Selected *Gada* Chronology

Years:	*Gada*:
2008-16	Guyyu Gobba
2000-08	Liban Jaldessa (Sons of Jaldessa)
1992-2000	Boru Madha
1984-92	Boru Guyyo
1976-84	Jilo Aga
1968-76	Gobba Bule
1960-68	Jaldessa Liban (*gaf Daba*)
1952-60	Madha Galma
1944-52	Guyyo Boru
1936-44	Aga Adi
1929-36	Bule Dabbasa
1921-29	Arero Gedo
1913-21	Liban Kuse
1906-13 (7 years)	Boru Galma
1899-1906 (7 years)	Adi Doyyo
1891-99	Liban Jaldessa

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