



Università degli Studi di Cagliari

PHD DEGREE

Storia, Beni Culturali e Studi Internazionali

Cycle XXXII

TITLE OF THE PHD THESIS

*The Impact of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border on the Borderland Communities
(2000-2018):
A case Study of Senafe and Tserona*

Scientific Disciplinary Sector(s)

**STORIA E ISTITUZIONI DELL'AFRICA
SPS/13**

PhD Student **Biyan Ghebreyesus Okubaghergis**

Coordinator of the PhD Programme **Prof. Cecilia Tasca**

Supervisor **Prof.ssa Isabella Soi**

Final exam. Academic Year 2018 – 2019
Thesis defence: January-February 2020 Session

Acknowledgments

Over the course of this intellectual journey, many people aided and supported me in producing this thesis. While space does not allow me to recognize everyone individually, I am truly indebted to them.

I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Isabella Soi, for her critical supervision, constant inspiration and enduring patience throughout this long process of supervision, and also for providing me with many opportunities to develop my knowledge and involve myself in many international and national conferences. A word of gratitude is equally due to Prof. Bianca Maria Carcangiu, my co-supervisor, for her vital advice, guidance and support. I also wish to thank Prof. Paul Nugent at the University of Edinburgh and Prof. Massimo Zaccaria at the University of Pavia for their invaluable feedback and comments.

I would like to thank Prof. Cecilia Tasca, Coordinator of the *Department of Storia, Beni Culturali e Studi Internazionali*, and her administrative team for their constant follow-up and precious advice on academic and administrative matters.

Special thanks are also due to all staff members of the Department of Social Sciences the and University of Cagliari for the scholarship that they generously provided me to pursue my three years of study and for their boundless and kind support since my arrival in Cagliari in November 2017.

I am eternally indebted to Prof. Luca Puddu, at the University of Sapienza, the Editor-in-Chief of *Governing the borders in the Horn of African*, for giving me the opportunity to both develop myself as a writer and a scholar on the Horn of Africa.

Finally, I am very grateful for the steady support of my family and friends who kept me going during hard times.

Abstract

From 1991 to 1998, Eritrea and Ethiopia had an open border policy allowing the free movement of people, goods and services. Both states relied on this propinquity to construct opportunities that benefited them in economic, social and political realms. But pondering on cross-border disputes, these benefits have not been resourced for the last 18 years, first because of the border war (1998-2000) and then the ‘no war, no peace’ situation (2000-2018). By building up heavily-equipped armies, landmines, checkpoints and security agents, the two states have constructed a hard border between them. This has changed not only the form and function of the border but also the border regime, as border crossing became a critical national issue.

This thesis therefore, is centered on the question: How does the change of border from once entirely open to a hard/closed border impact the border communities? The aim is to understand how the borderland communities, who have a long track of cross-border livelihood strategies, are impacted by the hard border and what strategies they adopted in order to make a living. The focus is the livelihoods of the borderland communities from the end of the border war on June 18, 2000, up to July 9, 2018. An ethnographic approach was used to allow for an in-depth study. The study sites were Tserona and Senafe, two Eritrean-Ethiopian border towns. I conducted three-rounds of fieldwork during the summer season of 2017 and the winter and autumn of 2018.

This dissertation argues that the border closure had a crucial negative impact on the livelihoods of the borderland communities, because of the particular milieu generated by the ‘no war, no peace’ situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia over the last 18 years. Multiple layers of border controls and policing at the border by the two states, particularly by Eritrea, posed critical challenges to the livelihoods of people living on the Eritrean side of the border. The hardship was expressed in all aspects of their livelihood bases, including their financial, physical, social and human capital.

Relying on these localized findings, this dissertation lays the groundwork for continued research into how borders function as barriers and constraints, and the dynamics of the inter-state relations that drive them.

Table of Contents		
Title		Page No.
<i>Glossary</i>		V
<i>Acronyms</i>		VI
<i>List of Tables, Maps and figures</i>		VII
Introduction		1
I General Background		1
I.I. Rationale and Significance of the study		3
I.II. Central Research question		6
I.III. Methods		7
I.IV. Limitations and Constraints		10
I.V. Defining the key terms and Concepts		11
I.VI. Ethical Considerations		18
I.VII. Organization of Chapters		20
Chapter One: Literature Review, Conceptual framework and Methodological context		23
1.1. Literature review		23
1.1.1. Perspectives on Borders		23
1.1.2. Understanding African Borders		27
1.1.3. Understanding of the Horn of African Borders and Borderlands		31
1.1.4. Understanding Eritrea-Ethiopia border and borderland realities		34
1.2. Conceptual framework		37
1.3. Methodological Approach		40
Chapter Two: Background of the area: The Land, the People and its Border		45
2.1. Introduction		45
2.2. The Setting		45
2.2.1. Senafe Sub-administration/Nus-Zoba Senafe		61
2.2.2. Tserona Sub-region/ Nus Zoba Tserona		65
2.3. Pre-War realities of the two towns		69
2.3.1. Localized cross-border encounter and interactions		69
2.3.2. Commercial traffic and movement of people		76
2.3.3. Conclusion		80
Chapter Three: The Border War		83
3.1. Pre-dispute atmosphere: 1991-1998		84
3.2. Border War		87
3.2.1. Remote Causes		87
3.2.2. Immediate causes of the War		102
3.2.3. The course of the War		103
3.3. Algiers Peace deal –June 18, 2000, and the immediate developments		107
Chapter Four: ‘No war, No Peace’ Policy: Border closure		
4.1. Introduction		110
4.2. Border Militarization		110
4.3. Positioning of other agents		117
4.4. Politicizing the border crossing		119

4.5.	Checkpoints and Permit Papers (<i>Menkesakasi</i>)	122
4.6.	Landmines	126
4.7.	Conclusion	129
Chapter Five: The border's impact on the borderland communities		132
5.1.	Loss of main livelihood assets	133
	5.1.1. Loss of Financial assets	133
	5.1.2. Physical Assets	139
	5.1.3. Loss of Social capital	141
	5.1.4. Decline of other livelihood elements	146
5.2.	Adaptation strategies	151
5.3.	Conclusion	160
Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion		162
6.1.	Introduction	162
6.2.	Summary of Findings	162
	6.2.1. The change in the form and function of the common border	163
	6.2.2. Impact of the border on borderland communities' livelihoods	165
	6.2.3. Adaptation strategies	166
6.3.	Implication for future research	168
6.4.	Conclusion	170
Post –script development		172
	Border: The nexus of Peace	176
	Cross-border family visits	178
	Cross- border trade	181
	Border pulls infrastructural developments	185
	Appendices	188
	List of Key Informants	199
	Informal Conversation	199
	Bibliography	200
	Colonial Boundary Map	219

Glossary

<i>Deghiat</i>	<i>Commander</i>
<i>Dergue</i>	Committee
<i>Birr</i>	The basic Monetary Unit of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia
<i>Dejazmach</i>	<i>Commander or General</i>
<i>Derqi</i>	Drought
<i>Gulti</i>	Land tenure system
<i>Hagay</i>	dry season
<i>Kebabi</i>	Administrative Unit
<i>Magendo</i>	Informal trade/economy
<i>Mahber Shum Aditat</i>	Village elders' Council
<i>Mera</i>	Marriage
<i>Meslenies</i>	Woreda chief administrator
<i>Nigidet</i>	Pilgrimage
<i>Nus- Zoba</i>	Administrative Division
<i>Shum –Gulti</i>	Gulti landlord
<i>Shehena</i>	Village ownership of land
<i>Teskar</i>	Commemoration
<i>Timqet</i>	Baptism
<i>Wedebat</i>	Original inhabitant

Acronyms

AU	The African Union
EDF	Eritrean Defense Force
EEBC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission
EECC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Claim Commission
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean Popular Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian Popular Revolutionary Democratic Front
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MTD	Maria Teresa Dollar
PFDJ	People's Front for Democracy and Justice
RDC	Research and Documentation Center
TPLF	Tigray Popular Liberation Front
TSZ	Temporary Security Zone
UNMEE	United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea

List of Maps

	Title	Page No.
Map 1	Study site	49
Map 2	Political Map of Ethiopia, 1946-1980	57
Map 3	Political Map of Eritrea (The boundaries and names displayed on this map do not imply official recognition by the UN)	61
Map 4	Geography of Badme	89
Map 5	Colonial boundary map of 1900,1902 and 1908	219

List of tables

<i>Table 1</i>	The extent of expropriated land from Akkele Guzai, 1899-1902.	53
Table 2	The extent of expropriated land from Akkele Guzai, 1902- 1907.	53
Table 3	Retail price index of consumer goods in Eritrea in 2000 and in the border areas in 2018.	157
Table 4	Showing the price differences in consumer and construction materials in Eritrea before and after the re-opening of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia.	183

List of figures

Figure 1	Examination of the independent and dependent variables.	38
Figure 2	Senafe border town	63
Figure 3	Tserona	65
Figure 4	The Serha-Zelanbesa frontline	111
Figure 5	Tserona border landmine area	128
Figure 6	The end of the state of war between Eritrea and Ethiopia on July 9, 2018.	175

INTRODUCTION

I. General Background

Since Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1991, Eritrea and Ethiopia's common border has seen drastic changes, and remains a matter of great interest to border and international relations scholars. Following 30 years of armed struggle for independence (1961-1991), the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (ERDF) abolished Col. Mènghistu Hailè Mariàm's regime in 1991.¹ On May 24, 1993, Eritrea, led by EPLF, formally seceded from Ethiopia; whereas a TPLF-dominated coalition of the ethnicity-based EPRD party took control of the capital Addis Ababa.² The secession of Eritrea and the whole transition period in Ethiopia ran smoothly and were advantageous to the ruling parties.

This development altered the geopolitical situation at the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. The Eritrean border has transformed from an internal administrative border between two Ethiopian provinces, to an international border between the sovereign states of Eritrea and Ethiopia. This means that Eritrea has reestablished its colonial border with Ethiopia. In addition, the transformation has changed the border function. It brought an enormous positive economic impact on the two countries and on the surrounding border areas in particular. As the post-independence political economy of the case study shows, many borderland inhabitants seized the opportunity offered by geopolitical reconfiguration and capitalized on all sorts of differences at the border, including variations in price levels and specialized products, to earn a livelihood and accumulate wealth.³ Rapidly exploiting differences in price on the two sides of the political border was often considered a good tactic for making a fortune from formal and informal trading.

The political reconfiguration, however, did not entail any change in the pre-existing intra-ethnic socio-cultural relations and contacts across the border. For purposes of marriage,

¹ Terrence Lyons, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict and the Search for Peace in the Horn of Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (2009): 167–8, accessed January 23, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240903068053>.

² Clifford Krauss, "Ethiopian Rebels Storm the Capital and Seize Control," *The New York Times*, May 28, 1991.

³ Biyan Ghebreyesus, "The Border Regions of Senafe and Tserona: The People without Border," in Paper Presented at 20th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICE20), but not published (Ethiopia: Mekelle University, 2018), 8.

visiting relatives and friends, attending ceremonial activities, or for local distribution and consumption of trade goods, borderland people had free access to cross the border with no restriction.⁴ The symbolic and political significances of the border were overshadowed mainly by the borderland communities' cross-border socio-cultural homogeneity and the treaty of friendship and cooperation signed between the two countries on July 30, 1993.⁵

In 1998, the relations between the two countries took the reverse. A border war broke out, and was fought from May 6, 1998 to June 12, 2000. It changed the whole pattern of the relations, as the border became a graveyard for hundreds of thousands of Eritreans and Ethiopians.⁶ The border, once a symbol of connections, abruptly changed to become a distinct zone and a barrier to the free movement of people, goods and services. Communication and transport facilities from one side of the border to the other were cut off, and the border turned into a violent place of exclusion and inclusion. Both countries built up a hard border with heavily armed soldiers and landmines along its length.

Worse still was the 'no war, no peace' situation (2000-2018). Although the Algiers Accord of 2000 was meant to end the border conflict, it did not meet the two states' expectations, mainly due to lack of will to compromise.⁷ For almost 18 years, the two countries' bilateral relations were marred by the 'no war no peace' situation. Recurring cross-border skirmishes, sustained media campaigns and unlimited meddling in each other's affairs were some major defining features of their bilateral relations.⁸ The border remained closed for almost 18 years and people, particularly the border inhabitants, struggled to cope with the resulting situation.

⁴ Ibid.7-10.

⁵ Behailu Abebe, "War Stories, Displacement and Coping Experiences of the Displaced from the Ethio- Eritrean War," in *People, Space and the State: Migration, Resettlement and Displacement in Ethiopia*, ed. by A. Pankhurst and Francois Piguat (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2004), 231; The treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (FCA) between the transitional Government of Eritrea and Federal Republic of Ethiopia was signed immediately after the Eritrean Referendum on July 30, 1994. The terms under the agreements were: 1) preservation of the free flow goods and services, Capital and people 2). Ethiopia's continued free access to Eritrea's sea ports paying for the port services in its own currency, in Birr. 3) Cooperation in monetary policy and continued use of the birr by both countries until Eritrea issued its own currency; 4) harmonization of customs policies and 5) cooperation and consultation in foreign policy.

⁶ Kjetil Tronvoll, *War and the Politics of Identity in Ethiopia: The Making of Enemies and Allies in the Horn of Africa* (New York: James Currey, 2009), 5.

⁷ Redie Bereketeab, "The Complex Roots of the Second Eritrea- Ethiopia War: Re-examining the Causes," *African Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 1(2013): 18, accessed July 7, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajia.v13i1-3>.

⁸ ICG, "Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?," *ICG African Affairs No 68*, September (2003):1.

This thesis, therefore, departs from the question: How does the change of border from once entirely open to a hard/closed border impact the border communities? The aim is to understand how the borderland communities, who have a long track record of cross-border livelihood strategies, are impacted upon by the hard border and what strategies they adopted in order to make a living. The focus is on the livelihoods of the borderland communities from the end of the border war on June 18, 2000, up to July 9, 2018. To make an in-depth study possible, this thesis employs an ethnographic approach. The study sites are the two Eritrean-Ethiopian border towns of Tserona and Senafe, wherein I conducted three-rounds of fieldwork during the summer of 2017 and winter and autumn of 2018.

This dissertation argues that the border closure had a crucial negative impact on the livelihoods of the borderland communities, because of the particular situation generated by the ‘no war, no peace’ situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia for over 18 years. Multi-layers of the border controls and policing at the border by the two states, particularly by Eritrea, posed critical challenges to the livelihoods of the people living on the Eritrean side of the border. The hardship was evidenced in every aspects of their livelihoods, including financial, physical, social and human capital. It shattered lives, wrecked livelihood bases, created a state of uncertainty and fear. Thus, I endeavor to make a strong point, that a careful analysis of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border’s function over the last 18 years, proved that the Eritrean-Ethiopian border was a barrier and constraint.

I.I. Rationale and Significance of the study

As the Eritrean-Ethiopian international border covers around 1,000 Kilometers, I studied only the central section with my case studies of Senafe and Tserona. These sites were selected in an attempt to provide an in-depth insight into the multi-layered effects of the border on borderland communities, with specific reference to everyday life practices, relations, and their adaptive strategies. I chose Senafe and Tserona for two reasons; firstly because the towns were at the center of the whole border conflict and the subsequent ‘no war, no peace’ situation (which caused severe strains on the whole borderland communities), and secondly, because before the outbreak of the border war, these towns had been key transit points for the cross-border flow of goods, people and services between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Besides the existing gap in the literature, my motivation to study the topic under investigation has stemmed from three other reasons: the first is my long-time personal involvement in the region. My experience dates back to 1998 when I took part in a summer student service⁹ for borderland communities for two consecutive summers and as a soldier during the third round of the Eritrea-Ethiopia war. Over the course of these two experiences, I was lucky enough to witness the process of border change and the magnitude of the border war, such as the devastation to the borderland communities; the separation of families, displacement, loss of human life and livestock and strategies of survival at large.

Secondly, this study site had a unique cross-border feature, which differs from the western and eastern sectors of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border. The border communities were carrying out their everyday business across the border without due attention to the boundary markers. They were intermingling, trading, and visiting family and friends with no impediments.¹⁰ Their identity and social border markers were fluid and invisible.¹¹

Thirdly, I was touched by the harrowing stories of suffering told by students from the localities. Their suffering was attributed to the existing military and political situations at the border. On December 12, 2000, when the Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki and the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi came together to sign the Algiers Accord, hope replaced despair, tears and blood in the region.¹² Many borderlanders thought the signing would end their suffering. The occasion was the first formal face-to-face meeting between the two incumbent leaders since the outbreak of the full-scale war on May 12, 1998. Under the framework of this agreement, the two warring parties agreed to cease hostilities and abide by the Algiers peace plan and its modalities of implementation.¹³

⁹ Summer services is a part of a nationwide post-conflict rehabilitation programs which is for high school students intended to reorient them to ethnically and religiously diverse Eritrean society.

¹⁰ Jan Abbink, "Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio-Eritrean War," *Africa*: 56, no. 4 (2001): 447–58.

¹¹ Abebe, "War Stories," 222.

¹² The Algiers Peace Agreement was a peace package between the Government of Eritrea and Ethiopia which was ratified on December 12, 2000 to formally end the three rounds of the border war fought between the two states from May 1998 to June 2000.; "The Algiers Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (S/2000/118)," 2000.

¹³ *Ibid.*

However, the implementation process was against the expectation of the people, intercepted as both countries seated on two extreme ends on matters related to the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission ruling (EEBC).¹⁴ Eritrea urged Ethiopia to accept the EEBC deliberation unconditionally. Ethiopia, on the other hand, attempted to use its diplomatic and military leverage to thwart the status of the verdict. The international community on its part did not uphold its responsibility to enforce the EEBC decision on the ground. The UN, the African Union (AU), and the USA, although they were part of the Algiers Agreement, paid almost negligible attention to the stalled peace process.¹⁵ As a result, the ‘no war, no peace’ situation, a fragile peace, condemned the border people to socio-economic limbo for 18 years. Mutual recrimination and cross-border skirmishes were the main features of the two countries’ cross-border relations.¹⁶ The border became the theater for this bleak situation, and it remained closed. Under this transformation period, therefore, I saw the border as a constraint to the borderland communities’ livelihoods and as an essential subject of inquiry that should be studied, understood, and avoided.

This thesis makes the following contributions to the existing literature:

1. It provides the first comprehensive overview of the border impact on the borderland communities. It looks at the effect brought by the changes in the roles and functions of the border on the borderland communities’ from the viewpoint of those who have been suffering for almost 18 years: the residents of the Tserona and Senafe sub-regions. These are the people that had been impacted the most by the magnitude of the changes at the border. Hence, the investigation provides insights into the problems of everyday life practices, relations, and their strategies of adaptation in relation to a hard border.

¹⁴ Dan Connell, “Eritrea/Ethiopia War Looms as Washington Watches & Waits,” *Groosroots International*, 2004.

¹⁵ Terrence Lyons, “The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict and the Search for Peace in the Horn of Africa,” *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (2009):175, accessed June 13, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240903068053>.

¹⁶ Jonathan Ewing, “Ethiopia and Eritrea in Turmoil:Implications for Peace and Security in a Troubled Region,” *Institute for Security Studies*, (2008): 1–8.

2. It conducts the first in-depth assessment of how the multiple layers of border enforcement by the two states, and by Eritrea in particular, function at the border. It mainly examines how the border closure shaped the local patterns of life and livelihood along the border, focusing specifically on the local people's everyday life experiences.
3. Moreover, this research will be a data source for similar work in the future, especially for those who try to understand the impact of war and post-war realities within a holistic framework.
4. More generally, it represents a contribution to the rather limited range of academic studies on the contemporary Eritrean-Ethiopian border.
5. It is also expected to have implications for all stakeholders in the region, in the effort for normalization, as the issue under investigation is timely and needs urgent resolution.

I.II. Central Research question

As stated above, this thesis is shaped according to a central question: How does the change of border from once entirely open to a hard/closed border impact the border communities?

The dissertation has also designed the following less central questions, but relevant to understanding of the impacts of border on the borderland communities:

- A. What were the changes brought forth at the border by Eritrea and Ethiopia after the end of the border war in 2000? What are the causes behind the change?
- B. How have the changes at the border affected the function and dynamism of the border?
- C. How have people living along the border been affected in their everyday lives and livelihoods?
- D. How have borderland communities adapted to the change in relations between the two countries at the border?

I.III. Methods

Primary Sources

To explore the impacts of the border on borderland communities' livelihoods, an ethnographic approach was used: including in-depth interviews, informal communications, personal observation, and fieldwork notes.

Semi-structured interview

By conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher collected a massive amount of data about the border profile and its impact on the livelihoods of the borderland communities. The same method was used to examine what activities the border dwellers were doing to make a living at the border despite many challenges. The interviewer settled the questions as and when required. As Ram Ahuja suggests, there were no specifications in the wording of the questions or the order of the questions.¹⁷ The structure of the interview was flexible, presented in the form of guide.¹⁸ In simple words, the interview questions were asked extemporaneously, usually as part of a natural conversation.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted during the fieldwork periods, the summer of 2017 and winter and autumn of 2018. Altogether, 39 people participated (7 women and 32 men). The majority of them were from the towns of Senafe and Tserona. The interviewees were of different backgrounds, including ordinary citizens, priests, businessmen, local education authorities and local government administrators. The researcher also spoke to soldiers both on and off duty. All of the interviewees were selected based on their grasp of past and current patterns of cross-border life among borderland communities. The interviews usually took between 35 and 60 minutes. (See Appendix VI for detailed information on the key informants' details, including their personal particularities, interview dates and interview locations).

¹⁷ Ram Ahuja, *Research Methods* (India:Jaipur:New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2001), 223.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

With the exception of a few interviews conducted in Tigre, most interviews were conducted in Tigrinya, which is widely spoken in the area. Tigrinya is the native language of the majority of Eritreans and people living in the Tigrai regional administration. I chose this language because of my familiarity with the Tigriyna culture and people who inhabit in the region. Furthermore, I speak, understand and read the language because I have lived and studied with Tigriynia speakers for nearly 20 years. It is an obvious drawback that not a single interview was conducted in Saho. The researcher is a Bilin speaker from the middle of the Anseba river, and an interviewee might respond to a Saho speaking-researcher slightly differently, or may present their answer in a somewhat different way. However, this does not necessarily mean that I have gathered and received my data without any critical scrutiny. Instead, I mediated the data with alternative data and ethnographic observations.

I applied a snowball sampling method to reach as many people as possible. I utilized this sampling method for two important reasons. Firstly, it is the only technique that suits the complex security situation and the lack of regular transport services in the region. Second, the uneasiness of the local people toward a new face made the application of any other form of sampling techniques much more difficult. Indeed, this sampling technique was revelatory about the dynamics at the border in relation to border obstructions and it provides rich and grounded insights into people's everyday life practices and strategies of survival.

In the interviews' processes, I had support from the local administrators, members of different organizations, and my former students from the region. These people helped me designate the people best suited to the themes under investigation. Eritrean security agencies and members of the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF) also helped me not only to get a green light to stay in the field area and collect invaluable information, but were also very friendly and supportive during my visit to the most insecure places. Sometimes, they also allowed me to use their vehicles to reach dangerous areas.

Participant Observations

Besides the interviews, the fieldwork included participant observations at different levels including local, national and religious festivals, schools, meetings, seminars, and markets.

These were the sites of local occasions where local circumstances, encounters, and challenges were intensively discussed. I carried out participant observation for two reasons; first, to obtain more insight and understanding into lived realities, and second, to unveil when there are hidden realities beyond the local experience narratives. I observed all target groups in their normal work or natural settings.

Ethnographic Conversations

Ethnographic conversations were another indispensable part of the fieldwork, held in settings natural to the individuals. This method was used to follow up some interesting themes that I had noticed through participant observation or for triangulating data. Conversations were mostly recorded and sometimes noted after the conversation sessions. The good thing with this method is that it allowed and encouraged the participants to have open mind and take part in frank conversations.

Fieldwork notes and records

Field notes, fieldwork photos, videos and audio recordings of different socio-cultural and national events also constitute the primary sources. Except in sensitive areas, each event across each sub-region left me with a wealth of information to compare and contrast. All materials were transcribed into two big notebooks and are cited throughout the thesis.

Archival materials

Some archival materials substantiated the fieldwork sources. These sources came from the Zoba Debubi local administration and the PFDJ Research and Documentation Center (RDC), the only existing semi-national archive in Eritrea. The archival resources located in the RDC branch, situated in Tra-Vollo, were exceedingly important for framing the semi-structured interviews and the overall thesis. In this center, I found some important research survey materials collected by the PFDJ cultural affairs office between June 19, 1997 and July 12, 1997. The sources enclose details about the whole study region, including its geographic, demographic, social and economic foundations.

In addition to these materials, I found some information at the Adi Girat Catholic Church center, specifically on issues related to the demographic portfolio of the study area. Most of the materials were collected by church congregation members since the 1940s.

Media and internet sources

As the area under investigation is in the news, I also conducted intensive research on mainstream media and Internet sources. The aim is to support the primary data collected in interviews, personal observation, and field experiences. The most important sources came from sources affiliated to Eritrean and Ethiopian governments and some civil society organizations. These materials are related to issues on the border and the border region since the end of the border war between the two countries on June 18, 2000. I have also researched materials including minutes, press releases, letters and correspondence made at United Nations' General Assembly and Security Council sessions focusing on the two states.

All these data sets were obtained by means of data collection techniques and were finally structured and triangulated during the analytical stage in order to provide reasonable explanations to the main research questions posed in this study. At the same time, I utilized all the sources to compare the degree of insecurity and its implication on the life and livelihoods of the borderland communities.

I. IV. Limitations and Constraints

This research work is not without limitations. Four noteworthy fieldwork-related limitations are described as follows:

1. As per the original draft form of this thesis, I had a plan to take into consideration the Ethiopian point of view. However, the reality on the ground did not allow this, mainly because of the regular skirmishes between Eritrean and Ethiopian border forces. Therefore, the paper is limited to only the Eritrean side of the border although the inclusion of stories from the other side of the border would have made the analysis more complete. I took this decision after the first fieldwork in Eritrea when I received constructive advice from the Eritrean border guards regarding my personal safety in Ethiopia.
2. Another obstacle was the inaccessibility of primary and secondary sources due to developments surrounding the two states' political and military landscapes. Both

sources are almost like rare earth elements, difficult to uncover and difficult to access. Particularly, sources on illicit cross-border activities are, by their very nature, subject to secrecy. Subsequently, this led to a dependence on information gathered from formal and informal communication, which proved to be time-consuming.

3. Many of my interviewees were brutally honest only in questions that did not involve politics. For more political and border security-related issues, they were willing to share only official government statements that are widely circulated by official mass media or different government organizations. They tended to be somewhat more reserved when discussing their individual views and opinions about the border and its destructive effects on their everyday lives over 18 years.

In a similar vein, the interviewees behaved differently in situations when a formal interview was taking place than they would if the interview was not recorded. This could be either because of their position in the government or because of uneasiness about the topic which hindered them from offering their honest and frank opinion, owing to obvious security reasons.

4. Some local government officials in Tserona did not provide me even basic information such as the size of the population, and elements of the constituents' livelihoods. I only received very limited information during my second round of fieldwork due to some changes in the leadership. I felt at the time that, the sensitive nature of the topic under discussion and the existing sabotage may have limited my ability to get more detailed information.

I.V. Defining Key Terms and Concepts

To avoid potential biases and confusion, it is necessary to be explicit about the meaning and definitions of the key terms and concepts used throughout this dissertation. The meaning and the concept of the term 'border' is highly contested. The meanings vary from one context to another or from one theoretical angle to another and can be nonchalantly employed with multiple derivations. But, what does the term 'border' mean? How is it defined across different contexts or lenses? And what are the differences between border, boundary and borderlands? What are the definitions of the term livelihood? At the same time, what does the term 'no war, no peace' mean? What are the links between the border and the 'no war no

peace' situation in this piece of work? These are the fundamental questions that need to be addressed in advance, in order to make plain and lucid the arguments of this paper. However, the purpose here is not to engage in a critical analysis or a comprehensive literature review.

Border

Border and boundary are two inter-related concepts but they are not the same. A border refers to the outer edges of states, including their political and territorial jurisdiction. It also represents the geographic demarcations between nation-states.¹⁹ Governments can exercise their political jurisdiction only within their territorial limits, or borders. But, when borders are created as zones, they are often referred to as 'borderlands'.

A more implicit definition of borders in general, has been provided by David Newman:

Borders are lines. They constitute the sharp point at which categories, spaces and territories interface. One category ends, the adjoining category begins. Historically, this has been of greatest importance in terms of the territorial boundaries separating states, determining the territorial extent of sovereignty and exclusive state control. This is true of any type of border where the demarcation process is rigidly defined in absolute locational terms. It is less the case where borders are defined in general terms, allowing for a degree of movement within the border zone, within which the absolute notions of inclusion or exclusion are fuzzy and undefined.²⁰

Going beyond definitions, borders have both material and symbolic appearances and meanings.²¹ As Haselsberger argues, "they can have a very obvious physical presence (e.g.

¹⁹ Sandro Mezzandro and Brett Neilson, *Border As Method, Or, The Multiplication of Labor* (Durham and London: Duke University, 2013), 3.

²⁰David Newman, "Contemporary Research Agendas in Border Studies: An Overview," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, ed. by Dzoriss Wastl-Walter, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 37.

²¹ James Anderson and Liam O' Dowd, "Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meaning, Changing Significance," *Regional Studies*, 33:7, (1999): 595.

Iron Curtain) and/or a visually indistinct one, which becomes reality through, for instance, stereotyping of the “others” behind the border”.²²

However, as Wilson and Donnan argue, international borders have three elements in common.²³ These are ‘the jurisdictional borderline which simultaneously separates and joins states’; state institutions and agents who demarcate and sustain the border; and frontiers, an area of socio-economic and political dynamics or a territorial zone of a wide-ranging set of interactions, within which borderlands ‘negotiate a variety of behaviors and meanings associated with membership in their nations and states’.²⁴

Boundary

A boundary, on the other hand, is ‘a strip, surface, or line that separates, defines some otherwise homogeneous areas’.²⁵ It is sign or mark on particular facet. Compared to a border, a boundary is a narrow phenomenon. As Anderson puts it, a boundary is “the line of delimitation or demarcation” but equally denotes a frontier of the political and administrative jurisdiction of a given political entity.²⁶

A boundary is also understood as a legal limit. As Ladis K.D. Kristof assert, in the modern state system, states are bound within the frameworks of boundaries and their resulting legal entitlements.²⁷ However, a state boundary brings together not only an area but also people who live under its sovereign jurisdiction. In other words, a boundary is a means of marking off a certain state from its immediate neighboring political entities.

²² Beatrix Haselsberger, “Decoding Borders. Appreciating Border Impacts on Space and People,” *Planning Theory and Practice* (Taylor & Francis, 2014): 511, accessed May 20, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2014.963652>.

²³ Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, “Nation, State and Identity at International Borders,” in *Border Identities Nation and State at International Frontiers* ed. by Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Sergei V. Sevastianov, Jussi P. Laine and Anton A. Kireev, *Introduction to Border Studies* (Dalnauka: Vladivostok, 2015), 119.

²⁶ Malcolm Anderson, *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Oxford: Polity, 1996), 9.

²⁷ Ladis D. Kristof, “The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 49, no. 3 (2018): 271.

Borderland

The third concept is the borderland, representing the outlying regions of two countries. It specifically refers to a transition area between two distinctive areas, instead of clear cut-off mark or line.²⁸ It exists on each side of a border. In a microcosm, borderlands showcase the fuzzy social, cultural, religious and ethnic compositions, relations or affinities. People living in borderlands often continue to maintain their natural affinities regardless of obstructions imposed by arbitrarily-imposed borders.

A borderland is also understood as a zone within which the residents may feel a sense of attachment either to one side or another, but also with a wider possibility to emerge as a hybrid zone in which products, people and processes get mixed and amalgamated to produce new outputs.

In contrary, Martinez recognizes the borderland as a place of ethnic or international conflict accommodation.²⁹ According to Newman and Passi, a borderland can also be conceived as a distinctive site, where wide-ranging economic activities take place.³⁰ In short, this concept is increasingly used not only in relation to state boundaries, but also more generally in social, cultural and economic realms.

For this paper, therefore, the usage of these three terms and concepts will be narrowed to the following definitions. The concept of border will be limited to the institutions that govern the inter-state division as per the norms of international law. By hard border, I refer to clear and policed separating border, but not only against military danger, less permeable. Boundary is

²⁸Daris Wastl-Water, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, (Burlington:Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 39, accessed April 12, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.5194/gh-68-79-2013>.

²⁹ Oscar J. Martinez, *Border People: Life and Society in the US-Mexico Borderlands* (University of Arizona Press, 1994), 8-14.

³⁰ Anssi Paasi and D. Newman, "Fences and Neighbours in the Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography," *Progress in Human Geography* 22, no. 2 (1998): 186--207.

defined as the line of delimitation or demarcation. The borderland, on the other hand, will refer to a zone of multi-level interaction between two similar border communities. This paper also recognizes the concept of the borderland as a ‘hybrid zone’ in line with Newman’s position, which will be discussed in detail in the upcoming chapter.³¹

Livelihood

The next essential concept to be considered is livelihood, which means ‘making a living’, ‘supporting a family’, or ‘my job’.³² In its simplest sense, a livelihood is a means of gaining a living or the means for making a living, based on the assets available. According to Titi and Singh, ‘livelihood’ refers to:

People’s capacity to generate and maintain their means of living, enhance their well-being and that of future generations. These capacities are contingent upon the availability and accessibility of options which are ecological, economic and political and which are predicated on equity, ownership of resources and participatory decision making.³³

As Chambers and Conway put:

A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress (natural disaster, economic and social upheavals) and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.³⁴

A livelihood is comprised of three main elements: capabilities, assets, and activities. ‘Capabilities’ ‘refer to being able to perform certain functioning, to what a person is capable

³¹David Newman, “Contemporary Research Agendas in Border Studies: An Overview,” in *The Ashgate Research Companions to Border Studies*, ed. by Doris Wastl-Water (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 39.

³² “Guidance Note on Recovery Livelihood,” 2005, 1.

³³ V. Titi V and N.Singh, “Participatory Research for Sustainable Livelihoods : A Guidebook for Field Project S” (Winnipeg:Manitoba, 1996).

³⁴ Robert Chambers and Gordon R.Conway, “Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century” (IDS discussion Paper 296, 1992).

of doing and being'.³⁵ This includes the abilities to be sufficiently nourished, to be comfortably clothed and to live a normal life without duress. 'Assets' denote material and non-material resources or natural (biological), social, human, physical and financial assets. These include common-property resources, the family and communities, the political opportunities as well as existing job opportunities. 'Activities' and 'livelihood strategies' imply undertakings that people must conduct in order to meet their immediate everyday needs.³⁶

'No war, no peace' situation and border

The 'No war, no peace' situation is usually associated with brittle, fragile, turbulent and widespread insecurity situations.³⁷ It is characterized by a minimal scale of military offensives and counter-offensives, hostile political and military propaganda and persistent cross-border destabilizing activities. Usually, all of these situations happened after a peace accord had been reached in a remarkably divided society or in the context of a long-standing peace process with established ceasefires. India and Pakistan³⁸ (since the Simla agreement of July 2, 1972) are the main victims of such states of affairs, among many others.

More specifically, the term 'no war, no peace' signifies the process of transformation from a full-fledged war to a negative peace (the absence of direct forms of violence).³⁹ Under such gambits, states usually tend to occasionally use gunfire and shelling for purposes of public relations. Moreover, in this kind of situation, the belligerent countries use the context for their respective political advantages to overcome their internal pressures. They deliberately increase the risk of returning to war regardless of its disastrous outcome. However, the 'no war, no peace' features vary from one context to another in terms of extent and substance.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Handbook of Livelihood: How to Rapidly Assess the Effects of the Application of cites Decisions on Livelihoods in Poor Rural Communities" (Washington D.C, 2015), 11.

³⁷ Sujan Dutta, "State of No War, No Peace," *The Telegraphy*: October 30, 2016, accessed October 23, 2017, <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/state-of-no-war-no-peace/cid/1484331>

³⁹ Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War, 10th Year Anniversary Edition, Revised and Updated* (New York: London: NYU press, 2013), 251- 268.

According to Mac Ginty, ‘no war, no peace’ refers to the post-conflict socio-economic and political realms.⁴⁰ It is mostly characterized by militarism, economic decline, the breakdown of government services, and the absolute monopoly of physical coercion by a ruling elite or political parties or individuals. The cases of the two Koreas since the end of WWII, Lebanon (1982) and Sierra Leone (1991-2002) are some major illustrative cases that clearly demonstrate ‘no war, no peace’ outcomes. A similar situation also dominated the political landscape in Columbia for over five decades, mainly due to failed peace processes between the central government and Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (known in Spanish as the FARC), until a recent groundbreaking decision by the current government.⁴¹ On June 23, 2016, the central government and the FARC agreed to a definite ceasefire without pre-condition of any kind.

The ‘No war, no peace’ situation is indeed intimately related to the general lack of enthusiasm for a true and transformative peace not only from the disputing parties, but also from regional and international actors.⁴² It represents the absence of a broad range of policies for socio-economic and political advancement by the ruling agencies and their shareholders, no matter who gains what from the game. The political and military predicament between the Tamil Tigers and the government of Sri Lanka, especially in the first half of 2005⁴³, is one of the most seminal case studies of such a situation.

Despite these different features and forms, “No war, no Peace” situations have three elements in common. First, ‘no war, no peace’ occurs after a peace accord has been reached in a deeply divided society following failed peace treaties. It means that it is a result of broken accords. Second, it happens over the course of the peace process. Third, it occurs in some isolated geographic area, and the socio-economic and political limbo leaves people’s lives in tatters.

⁴⁰ Roger Mac Ginty, *No War, No Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006),3, accessed May 23, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230625686>.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid.16.

⁴³ Shlomi Yass, “Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers : Confllict and Legitimacy,” *Military and Strategic Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2014): 65–82.

The ‘no war, no peace’ situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia was not different. Since the two countries signed the Algiers Peace treaty of 2000, which was expected to end the border war (1998-2000), the tension between the two countries has not subsided. The terms of the Algiers Peace treaty remained flattered without making significant advances on the ground. Until July 9, 2018, neither Eritrea nor Ethiopia had shown the political will to resolve or negotiate on the pending border issue, except some lip service. Instead, various cross-border disputes and localized armed skirmishes were common. As a result, the Eritrean-Ethiopian border, once viewed by the people of both countries as a gateway to many opportunities, became a barrier not only because of its closure, but also due to the state of uncertainty along the whole of its length. The borderland, particularly the arable land and grazing land, went from farmland to minefields, prohibiting farmers and herders from a leading normal life.

In addition to these, the border once marked as an interesting example of trans-border economic and social cooperation, has faced formal restrictions because of the two states’ vying border regimes, particularly that of Eritrea. Both states have imposed inflexible border regimes, and these changes mainly affect the social, economic and cultural lives of the borderland communities. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the ‘no war, no peace’ situation at the border will be employed as one of the main dependent variables, to explore its barrier effects on the borderland communities.

I.VI. Ethical considerations

A good interview in social science research, particularly in qualitative methods, invokes thoughts, feelings, experiences, opinions and knowledge not only in the interviewer but also in the interviewee. The aim is to collect a good deal of primary data, but interviewing processes and the type of interview can put both the interviewer and interviewee at risk. For this reason, the interviewer needs to consider the ethical magnitudes of the research, and this can be possible only when the researcher has a clear ethical framework for dealing with different ethical issues, especially with regards to safety. The end result of the research must

not cause any form of harm to those being studied. The interviewee and interviewer must comply with informed consent protocols.⁴⁴

In the interview consent form, the interviewer needs to inform the interviewee about the sense of participation, the purpose of the research and its values in the society and research processes.⁴⁵ At the same time, the interviewer or researcher should have a signed or recorded consent form of their interviewees. Indeed, the researcher's reasonable promises of confidentiality should be honored to avoid minimize the risk of nay possible harm. This means that the participants must be fully aware of all steps designed for the end result of the research.⁴⁶

The researcher, on his part, should know what is to be told rather than what he/she knows in order to avoid the risk of running afoul. But this is not always the case. There are extremely difficult circumstances that make informed consent impractical. This issue is especially important in studies marred by spiral level conflicts like the current case studies of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border.

For this research, the main ethical issues have mainly arisen from the sensitive and emotive nature of the topic under investigation. Over the course of the research, I came into contact with people of different backgrounds and ensuring that everybody had the right to informed consent proved to be a difficult argument, because it became extremely disruptive and time-consuming, especially during certain parts of the interviews. Some participants showed a high degree of relaxation only when I switched off my voice recorders. When I sought consent for my research work and steps ahead, they became more reserved and changed their tunes. They repeat what the mainstream media in the country says, contrary to the realities on

⁴⁴ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford University press, 2016), 131.

⁴⁵ Hamza Alshenqeeti, "Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review," *English Linguistics Research* 3, no. 1 (2014): 39–45, accessed January 24, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.5430/elr.v3n1p39>.

⁴⁶ Joseph C. Hermanowicz, "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed," *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 4 (2002): 495, accessed January 29, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A>.

the ground. For this reason, in some instances, it took me much more time than I expected to establish participants' confidence in me.

Another important element is the question of confidentiality on matters related to my participants' safety. During formal interviews, they expressed their long-time anger and grief regarding the situation surrounding their lives over 18 years with no precaution for their safety. Thus, the researcher's role in such a context was to screen what could be unveiled and what could not. To avoid any potential harm, informants' personal information were also deliberately coded or omitted in most cases.

I.VII. Organization of chapters

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, wherein I maintain the coherence of the thesis in a micro and macro approach.

Chapter 1: Literature Review, Conceptual framework and Methodological context

Chapter one reviews the existing literature on borders and borders effects in general, with a particular focus on African international borders, especially the Horn of Africa borders. The section begins with a general note on the meaning, nature and perspectives of borders, and moves into micro-segments of borders in the international milieu using a deductive approach. It also discusses the conceptual and methodological track of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Background of the area: The Land, the People and its Border

This chapter examines the background of the study area and the pre-war realities (1991-1998). Section one provides an introduction of the study while the second section addresses the study areas and is followed by a brief historical overview. The next section deals with pre-war realities. This section explores the Eritrean-Ethiopian borderland communities' localized everyday cross-border socio-economic activities and relations from the independence of Eritrea in 1991 to the outbreak of the border war in May 1998 through the cases of Tserona and Senafe regions. The aim is to understand how the border was experienced, defined, and understood by the inhabitants of the borderland in their daily lives.

Chapter 3: The border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1998-2000)

Chapter 3 examines the main factors that led to the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict of 1998-2000. It mainly focuses on how the territorial disputes, strained party-to-party relations, the economic imbalance between the two states together with the strained relationship between Eritrean and Ethiopian leaderships contributed to the outbreak of the border war that killed around 100,000 soldiers from Eritrea and Ethiopia. Analyses of the immediate causes of the outbreak of the war are also part of the large prism. This is besides some highlights on the courses of the three rounds of the border wars between the two countries and some notes on the Algiers Peace deal of June 18, 2000, which resulted in monumental consequences.

Chapter 4: ‘No war, No Peace’ Policy: Border Closure

Chapter 4 examines the wide-ranging Eritrean border enforcement practices at the border, a counter-strategy against Ethiopia’s post-war policy of ‘no war, no peace’. This is part and parcel of the ethnographic focus and analysis of my research. The aim is to understand how the different bordering practices by the two states, particularly by Eritrea, turned the formerly open border into a hard border. Both states constructed a hard border by building up heavily-equipped armies, laying landmines, posting many security agents and setting up checkpoints at the edge of the border.

Chapter 5: The border impact on the borderland communities

This section, chapter five, presents the core research question, i.e., the impact of the border on the livelihoods of the borderland communities of the Tserona and Senafe sub-regions. Importantly, this segment illustrates the impacts of these changes on the livelihood resources, livelihood strategies and borderland security in relation to mobility and access to livelihood bases by comparing the impacts on the two case study sites. For comparative description purposes, the paper takes the discussion further by comparing the extent of impacts on three socio-economic groups: farmers, agro-pastoralists, and traders.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

After offering a short overview of the border transformation processes, this section provides the summary of the findings of each chapter and shows how they are inter-related to one another. It then takes care to show where the research has contributed first-hand additions to

a small but valuable existing body of literature on borders and borderlands in the Horn of Africa. In addition, it highlights opportunities and avenues to which future research could be usefully directed. The final section is the conclusion and discusses some implications of the thesis's arguments on the literature about borders.

Chapter 7: Postscript

In this part, I briefly examined the Eritrea-Ethiopia new rapprochement and its spillover effect. It presents some major changes that have taken place at the border after the re-opening of the border on September 11, 2018. The aim is to understand how desecuritization and the reopening of the political border for the free flow of people, goods, and services, as well as the restoration of Ethiopia's access to Eritrea's airspace, has changed the political and military landscape between the two countries and localized people-to-people relationships.

Chapter One

I. Literature Review, Conceptual framework and Methodological context

Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to review the existing literature on the main theme of this paper: the border, with a particular focus on African international borders, especially in the Horn of Africa. It also frames the problem within the wider concept of borders. To acquire a broader understanding of the research question, it is vital to have a general overview of the border concept before I proceed to the case study. I will therefore, give an overview some of the main and shared views, features and nature of borders.

This section begins by providing a broader background about borders. Second, it reviews the arguments supporting the alleged artificiality of African borders and its impacts. Third, it focuses on the borders and borderlands in the Horn of Africa, emphasizing their function from two conflicting perspectives. Fourth, it revolves around the macro-level scale, the Eritrea and Ethiopia shared border, mainly focusing on the effects of its transformation. Fifth, it draws attention to methodological approach based upon the conceptual framework.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Perspectives on Borders

Politically, borders or boundaries refer to imaginary or real lines that bisect two political entities or landmasses from one another.¹ They represent the sovereignty of a state or power differences between or among states. As a coercive and administrative institution, state exercises its political jurisdiction only within its geographical limits, or borders. A

¹ Francis Nguendi Ikome, "Africa's International Borders as Potential Sources of Conflict and Future Threats to Peace and Security," *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, no. 233 (2012):2.

government can apply rules and regulations, provide social services, collect taxes and apply force only within its own defined territorial boundaries.²

In their simplest form, borders have traditionally been defined as “lines on maps or barriers on the ground, whose existences are confirmed on many grounds: political, economic and social”.³ Recent analyses of borders, however, attempt to offer more inclusive definitions. Scott, for example, provides a brief but a broader definition:

They are symbols, discourses and institutions that interpenetrate all realms of society and that exist everywhere in society, not only at the formal boundary of national sovereignty.⁴

This definition adds a new dimension to explaining what a border is: it is not limited to the mere function of state borders, but also their meanings, which are very relevant to the borderland communities.

State borders can be unfolded into two kinds: natural or unnatural. Natural state borders are often based on natural topographic features, such as rivers, mountains or other natural fault-lines. According to Newman, natural state borders are more suitable for border management as they are more convenient for border control.⁵ Arbitrary or unnatural borders, in contrast, are borders which are drawn based on the lines of latitude and longitude with little or no regard of the wishes and stands of the local communities or sometimes with disregard for geographic features.

² John Kaspar Bluntschli, *The Theory of the State* (Kitchener: Batoches Book, 2000), 57–66.

³ Iwona Markuszewska, Minna Tanskanen and Josep Vila Subiros, “Boundaries From Borders : Cross-Border Relationships in the Context of the Mental Perception of a Borderline – Experiences From Spanish-French and Polish-German Border Twin Towns,” *Quasesiones Geographicae*. 35, no. 1 (2016), 106.

⁴ James W. Scott, “Borders , Border Studies and EU Enlargement,” *Leibniz-Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning* (2002): 12.

⁵ David Newman, “On Borders and Power: A Theoretical Framework,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 18, no. 1 (2003): 17, accessed April 11, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2003.9695598>.

Rethinking beyond definitions and the nature of the borders, borders often assumed different meanings and functions. Sometimes they appear to be gateways of opportunities, sites of wide-ranging opportunities. Other times they are barriers, limiting and imprisoning, and/or zones of persistent conflict and insecurity.⁷ These eventualities often alternate depending on time and space, or even co-exist as in the case of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Owing to this, borderland communities therefore shape and re-shape their perception of their borders.

However borders can also be perceived as a mental barrier, existing exclusively in minds, and can be as powerful as the physical border. Indeed, according to Newman even in the absence of a physical border, people can feel and perceive a mental barrier.⁸ In contrast, physical boundaries may be overlooked in sites where the local people perceive them as being irrelevant, as in the context of Eritrea before the outbreak of the 1998 border war. Usually, this state of perception is visible if the physical borders are simple enough to be crossed by the borderlanders for their everyday activities, such as marriage, visiting kin and close friends, attending different ceremonies, or local distribution and consumption of merchandized goods.

From a socio-cultural standpoint, on the other hand, borders are increasingly being defined by social and cultural elements.⁹ This means that borders are made real by inter-alia elements, such as national identity, religion, language, tradition, and myths or otherwise. Subsequently, state borders produce differences between borderland people, leading to senses of inclusion and exclusion.¹⁰ Thus, these conditions contribute to views that borders are mental, social and cultural barriers.

Referring to this debate, the U.S-Mexico border has been the most studied anthropological and sociological site. There has been a fast growing scholarship on border and borderland

⁷ James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, "Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance," *Regional Studies* 33, no. 7 (1999): 595–6, accessed 15, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343409950078648>.

⁸ Newman, "On Borders and Power," 19-20.

⁹ Anssi Paasi, "Inclusion, Exclusion and Territorial Identities: The Meanings of Boundaries in the Globalizing Geopolitical Landscape," *Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift* Nr. 23, no. 23 (1996): 6–23.

¹⁰ Newman, "On Borders and Power," 16.

communities, and their everyday life experiences, relations and circumstances.¹² *The Three US-Mexico Border Wars: Drugs, Immigration, and Homeland Security* by Tony Payan, for instance, captures the drama of life and death across the US-Mexico Border area.¹³ It offers self-revealing analysis and sound policy recommendations.

There has also been similar set of work on Europe, Asia and Africa. In an effort to understand how ethnicity, nationalism, and cultural identity are marked in everyday life at international borders, Donnan and Wilson, brought a wide range of anthropological views on the this subject.¹⁴ Turkish-Syrian border, the German-French border, India and the proposed Khalistan, the Portuguese-Spanish border, West Africa and Ireland are the cases in point.

The last two decades have also seen an increasing number of academic researches on border enforcement, border politics, and actors involved in the daily upkeep of border priorities. This was coincided with securitization efforts after 9/11. In his attempt to understand border enforcement in daily life, Bustamante observed how changing procedures at the border between California- Baja California region impacted the local border residents.¹⁵ Militarization and bureaucratization of the border have pushed local border communities into more marginal and vulnerable situation.

Similarly, Choi explored the impacts of everyday practices of bordering between Republic of North Korea and China and the implications of these practices on the lives of the North

¹² Oscar J. Martinez, *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press., 1994); Gordon H. Hanson and Antonio Spilimbergo, "Illegal Immigration, Border Enforcement, and Relative Wages: Evidence from Apprehensions at the US-Mexico Border," *American Economic Review* 89, no. 5 (1999): 1337–57.

¹³ Tony Payan, *The Three US-Mexico Border Wars: Drugs, Immigration, and Homeland Security: Drugs, Immigration, and Homeland Security* (ABC-CLIO, 2016).

¹⁴ Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Border Approaches: Anthropological Perspectives on Frontiers* (University Press of America, 1994).

¹⁵ Ana Marleny Bustamante, "The Impact of Post-9 / 11 US Policy on the California –Baja California Border Region," *Borderlands Studies* 28.3, January (2016): 307–19, accessed June 13, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2012.751729>.

Koreans who informally cross them.¹⁷ He argued that territorial bordering practices, such as increasing military power on border and building walls and social bordering processes separate the same ethnic groups living into sides of border, and even posed threat the North Koreans who illegally cross the militarized border.¹⁸

In a nutshell, the border is a unique unit of geographic analysis because the surrounding areas provide settings for socio-economic, political and cultural encounters and interactions. As described above, U.S-Mexico border regions are seminal examples of cross-border encounters and interactions. Whereas most African borders (especially the Horn of African borders as we will see in the upcoming sections) are a great incubating ground for ethno-communal, inter-state or intra-state conflicts. In this regard, the Eritrea-Ethiopia borderland can be an interesting case study to explore how the border closure caused life and livelihood hardships.

1.1.2. Understanding African Borders and borderlands

Like many other borders and borderlands, African borders and borderlands have no short historiography, but the nature of the borders and layers of conflicts associated with them received more noticeable attention than others. Academic discourses were frequently revolve mainly around the constraint sides of African borders. Thus, African borders have almost conventionally been portrayed as sources of raging conflict and instability.

As Francis N. Ikome, S. Touval, and A.I. Asiwaju asserted, in many cases there are some unnatural issues that contribute to this conventional view, basically emanating from the arbitrary and artificiality of borders.¹⁹ Africa's 54 countries are haphazardly divided into 165 international boundaries, cut through over 177 ethnic, cultural and social spaces, disrupting

¹⁷ Eunyong Christina Choi, "Everyday Practices of Bordering and the Threatened Bodies of Undocumented North Korean Border-Crossers," In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* ed. by Doris Wastl-Walter (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 529-550.

¹⁸ Ibid., 524.

¹⁹ Ikome, "Africa's," 1–16.; Saadia Touval, *The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).; A.I. Asiwaju, (ed.), *Partitioned Africans: ethnic relations across Africa's international boundaries*. (London: C. Hurst, 1985).

pre-existing socio-economic attachments and causing agony.²⁰ The African colonial borders are simply sanctioned without consent of the local people.²¹ In describing this partitioning process, Lord Salisbury stated;

We [the British and the French] have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's foot ever trod: we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediments that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were.²²

African borders overlooked the ethno-cultural, topographic and ecological realities. A. Adu Boahen expressed:

Because of the artificiality of the boundaries, each independent African state is made up of a whole host of different ethno cultural groups and nations having different historical traditions and cultural speaking different languages. One can imagine, then, how stupendous the problem of developing the independent states of Africa into true governments.²³

In the same vein, Asiwaju argued with regard to the traumatic experience of the borderland communities separated from their kin by arbitrary borders. He puts it:

The boundaries have been drawn across well-established lines of communities including a document or active sense of community, based on tradition concerning common ancestry, usually very strong kinship ties shared socio-economic resources, common customs and practice, and sometimes acceptance of common political control".²⁴

²⁰ Ieuan Griffiths, "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries," *The Royal Geographical Society* 152, no. 2 (1986): 207, accessed June 15, 2017, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/634762>.

²¹ Maano Ramutsindela, "African Boundaries and Their Interpreters," *Geopolitics* 4, no. 2 (1999):183, accessed November 14, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650049908407646>; Jeffrey Herbst, "Challenges to Africa's Boundaries in the New World Order," *Journal of International Affairs* 46, no. 1 (2018): 17–30.

²² Lord Salisbury quoted in J.C. Anene, *The International Boundaries of Nigeria, 1885-1960: The framework of an emergent African nation* (London, Longman Press, 1970), 3.

²³ A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 96.

²⁴ A. I. Asiwaju, *Partitioned Africa: Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1984* (London: C. Hurst, 1985), 25.

In addition to the differing effect, the arbitrariness of the African borders also negatively impacts borderland development. As Ieuan Griffiths and Emmanuel Gbenenye note, their ambiguity and inconsistency make states' jurisdictional extensions and economic developments across border areas difficult, resulting in the undeserved marginalization of most ethnic groups living at the periphery.²⁵ Consequently, with a few exceptions, borders and border regions remained porous, unstable and inconvenient places.

Conflicts, mainly those stemming from the arbitrariness and artificiality of African borders, continued to plague relations between many neighboring countries along the borders. The border conflicts between Sudan and South-Sudan, Nigeria and Cameroon, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and Egypt and Sudan are few among many others. These have caused widespread social disruptions and displacement at the peripheries of these respective countries.

For these and others reasons, therefore, the focal variable of attraction for various scholars in the traditional approach became the protective function of the border only, associated with the artificiality of the border. Conflict, marginalization, perennial wars and political instability are the key points of discourse. Thus, borders were perceived as barriers to cross-border socio-economic, political and cultural engagement as mentioned above.

In the edited book *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflict and Borderlands* Korf and Raeymaekers, for instance, make attempt to understand the African conflict formations on the bases of people's own lived experiences in relation to the territorial border. They also try to make sense of how these formations "affect the making and unmaking of political configuration at margins" and the borderland dynamics.²⁶ The Zeller and Tandia chapters in particular, zoom into a protracted state of uncertainty along Uganda–Congo–Sudan and Senegal border areas respectively.²⁷

²⁵ Griffiths, "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries," 213; Emmanuel M Gbenenye, "African Colonial Boundaries and Nation-Building," *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 8, no. 2 (2016): 117-124.

²⁶ Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, eds. *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflict and Borderlands* (Springer, 2013).

²⁷ Ibid.

Related to the above-mentioned experiences is the impact of a state of wariness in Kivu provinces in Democratic Republic of Congo (1997-2002), bordering Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. As Jackson observed, this border area is “prone to edge effects-discontinuities between contrasting controls regimes implemented at national level in neighboring states”.²⁹ A state of war and uncertainty exposed people along the border to ambiguity and uncertainties of life.³⁰

However, the conventional narratives of African borders have received some criticism from some scholars. Herbst, for instance, rejects the over-emphasis on the artificial nature of African international borders. But he is not denying the assertion about the disadvantageous consequences of African’s colonial borders. In his view, all political borders are not natural in the sense that they are the products of the gradual process of human action enrooted in claims and counter-claims matrix or wars and conflicts.³¹ This view is built on some solid foundation, and it has some logical sense as many other cases demonstrate.

In his book ‘*Narratives of the European Border: A History of Nowhere*’, Robinson, for instance, proves, that there are similarities in the boundary formation mechanism and impact on the same socio-linguistic and cultural groups of people living across border areas in Europe as in the case of Africa and Middle East. For him, the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) marked not only the modern political order of Europe but also the artificiality of the boundaries of sovereign European countries as elsewhere.³³ Many international boundaries in Europe arbitrarily divide the same ethnic groups.

The anti-conventional views of the African borders debate, nevertheless, would have not been complete without reference to recent works accepting borders as resources. The first innovative book is the one edited by Paul Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju, *African Boundaries:*

²⁹ Stephen Jackson, “Borderlands and the Transformation of War Economies: Lessons from the DR Congo,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 6, no. 3 (2006): 425–47, accessed November 12, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800600933621>.

³⁰ Stephen Jackson, “Making a Killing: Criminality and Coping in the Kivu War Economy,” *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 93–94 (2002):517–36, accessed November 12, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240208704636>.

³¹ Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

³³ R. Robinson, *Narratives of the European Border: A History of Nowhere* (Springer, 2007).

Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities. This collection accepts borders as “opportunities and conduits”.³⁵ It is a kind of prototype contribution that inspired many scholars in the continent to see beyond the conventional wisdom on borders and border areas in the continent. The book reveals different opportunities or resources that international African borders offer for local border communities.

In another similar work, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier*, Paul Nugent further consolidated the perspective that accepts borders as opportunities to local communities rather than barriers.³⁶ This new perspective, however, does not reject the arbitrary nature of the colonial border. Instead, it recognizes the presence of opportunities within multitudes of problems. This is particularly true regarding the formation of formal and informal economies.³⁷

Hence, understanding African borders requires a holistic approach. The perception of African borders as the only complicit sources of the web of violence and insecurity in the continent and much more focus on their arbitrary nature, can be misleading. It is imperative to dig- deeper to find out various other causes of the malign conflict on the continent. It is also important to look beyond conventional wisdom. As described above, there are many cases that demonstrate how African borders function as resources, interfaces and corridors for different opportunities for local communities.³⁹

1.1.3. Understanding of the Horn of African Borders and Borderlands

As in other parts of Africa, the understanding of the borders and borderlands in the Horn of Africa, wherein this research partially falls, has also been greatly influenced by political and economic downturns in the region. The borders imposed by colonial powers have

³⁵ Paul Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju, *African Boundaries: Barrier, Conduits and Opportunities* (London: Pinter, 1996).

³⁶ Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Lie of the borderlands since 1914*. (Oxford: James Currey Publishers; Legon: Sub-Saharan Books; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

³⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁹ Michel Foucher, “African Borders: Putting Paid to a Myth,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2019, 1–20., accessed November 18, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2019.1671213>.

widely been understood as barriers, as well as conflict breeding grounds and have gained broad consideration in academic and public policy circles.

As an integral part of this perception war, states of insecurity, political violence, deprivation, depopulation, and general humanitarian plight were always in pole position of the border studies of this region, which seem to have much commonality with the current Eritrea-Ethiopia cross-border reality.⁴⁰ The border war of 1998-2000 between Eritrea and Ethiopia over Badme, the maritime border dispute between Eritrea and Yemen in 1995, South and North Sudan over Abyie and the more recent skirmish between Djibouti and Eritrean, among others, are only a few examples of the inter-state and intra-state border conflicts in the region. These conflicts not only had incalculable consequences on the states in question, but also on the lives and livelihoods of the borderland communities.

However, the barrier-only orientation toward Horn of Africa borders was overshadowed recently with a groundbreaking study by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, in their book *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*.⁴¹ This book's findings brought about a new set of narratives against the conventional image of Horn of Africa borders. The old narrative of borders as barriers –only was challenged as Paul Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju's asserted from different cases and experiences across the African continent. The authors argue that the Horn's borders, known for many years to be the sources of conflict and plight, can also be resources in different forms. This is particularly true for extracting resources, including economic, political, social and status.⁴³ As a result, rethinking the notion of Horn of Africa borders became vital.

⁴⁰ Richard Reid, *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2011).; John Galaty, "Boundary-Making and Pastoral Conflict along the Kenyan-Ethiopian Borderlands," *African Studies Review* 59, no. 1 (2016): 97–122, accessed May 14, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2016.1>; Christopher Clapham, "Boundary and Territory in the Horn of Africa," in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. by P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 237–50; Wondwosen Teshome, "Colonial Boundaries of Africa: The case of Ethiopia's Boundary with Sudan," *Ege Academic Review* 9, no. 1 (2009): 337–67; John Markakis, "Pastoralism on the Margin" (London: Minority Rights Group International, 2004).

⁴¹ Dereje Feyissa and Virgil Hoehne Markus, eds. *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, (Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2010).

⁴³ *Ibid.* 12-21.

In this context, the dynamism of local people at the border remains a focal element. As Yasin Mohammed clarifies, the Issa-Somali, for instance, have emerged to be a dominating group over their immediate Afar neighbors just because of their skillful cross-border kin mobilization strategies.⁴⁴ They used their cross-border kin affiliations to forge a political alliance against their immediate adversaries, the Afar. In terms of geographic coverage, the Afar are the most dominant, whereas in the political landscape, they live on the peripheries of all the Horn of Africa countries, including Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea. This is because of their failure to instrumentalize their respective state borders in favour of their political interests, unlike their traditional enemies, the Issa.

The Nuer-Anywaa inhabitant of the Gambella region in western Ethiopia - contrasting mapping of state border for their respective ethnic interest - is also another example. As Dereje Feyissa puts it:

The Anywaa subscribe to a compartmentalized view of political boundaries both at the inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic level and thus they project the same imagery. The Nuer, on the other hand, subscribe to a more flexible view of a political community.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the two communities' states of mind are mainly conditioned by their interests, and dictated by their demands for greener pastures.

Furthermore, John Galaty considered the Ethiopia-Kenya border as an opportunity.⁴⁶ This reflection was developed from a similar work collected from Turkana, Samburu, Barana, Gabra and Dassanetch residents, the Ethiopia-Kenya borderland communities. Those local people adopted different survival strategies to cope with or benefit from the changing nature

⁴⁴ Yasin Mohammed Yasin, "Trans-Border Political Alliance in the Horn of Africa The Case of the Afar-Issa Conflict," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* ed. by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Viral Hoehne (Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 85–96.

⁴⁵ Dereje Feyissa, "The Cultural Construction of State Borders: The View from Gambella," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 4, no. 2 (2010): 314–30, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2010.487341>.

⁴⁶ John Galaty, "Boundary-Making and Pastoral Conflict along the Kenyan-Ethiopian Borderlands," *African Studies Review* 59, no. 1 (2016): 97–122, accessed May 14, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2016.1>.

of the state border regimes throughout different historical timelines. However, this kind of state of perception is not a unique phenomenon in the Horn of Africa. There is other hard evidence from the rest of the continent that further substantiates this.

Border and borderland scholars in the area under consideration, therefore, have asserted three things in common i.e. the arbitrariness of border, the changing nature of the border, and function and human dynamism, which have much to do with the border and borderland experiences of the current research. In particular, the literature unveils different strategies adopted by different actors in the border in relation to the states' border situations, which can be the right bridle to grasp the different survival strategies adopted by the Eritrean borderland communities against the hard border, imposed by the 'no war, no peace' situation.

1.1.4. Understanding Eritrea-Ethiopia border and borderland realities

As the topic under investigation is new, there are not many scientific works. This is the reason why I have decided to use some issues related to the topic as previous literature. The Eritrea-Ethiopian border became a popular subject of inquiry only after the outbreak of the border war in 1998. This moment grabbed the attention of many scholars, who started to write on the whole historical timeline between the two states: the origins of the border war, the course of the war and its consequences. However, there is no significant literature available on the situation at that border from the end of the war in December 12, 2000, to July 9, 2018. The same story is also true for its impact on borderland communities. The few existing academic or non-academic works are also not detailed studies.

As regards the pre-border war realities, the academic research revolved around the Eritrean-Ethiopian cross-border relationships and the consequent spillover effects. Most of the studies adopted a top-down approach, focusing mainly on state-to-state narratives, with the exception of a book written by Alemseged Abbay and an article by Stefano Bellucci and Massimo Zaccaria.⁴⁷ The focal areas of attention included economic and political

⁴⁷ Alemseged Abay, *Identity Jilted or Re-Imagining Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrinya Nationalist Struggles* (Eritrea: The Red sea Press, 1998); Stefano Bellucci and Massimo Zaccaria, "Wage Labor and Mobility in Colonial Eritrea, 1880s to 1920s," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 86 (2014): 89–106.

engagements, trade, policies and human resource development. The localized people-to-people relations along the borderland almost remain under-represented.

Counter-narratives of the pre-war realities focus mainly on the long and short-term causes of the border war, its courses, and consequences. The aim is to understand the root causes of the border conflict. As we will see in the following sections, the studies are approached from different angles: historical, social, political, economic or eclectic. The most focal area of attraction is the barrier function of the state border, particularly centered on some erratic issues related to border and cross-border activities. It includes an analysis on the overarching contestations over cross-border interests and policies.

The most detailed contribution is the non-normative book by Tekeste Negash and Kjetil Tronvoll, *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War*.⁴⁸ In their effort to understand the complex factors of the outbreak of the renewed border war (1998-2000), they juxtaposed the two sides of the two states' relations. In the first part, they extensively examined the friendship and cooperative cross-border relations that had resumed since the demise of the *Derge* regime on May 24, 1991. The starting point of their argument is the authoritative decision taken by the two states' leaderships since the inception of the new course after the collapse of the old regime in 1991.⁴⁹ However, they did not ignore territorial, trade and policy disputes. In the second part, they skillfully revealed the whole historical trajectories of these outstanding issues as they unfolded.

Other works of many different authors have been published over the years, even if they are less significant to the current research. The most recent major contributions are the articles written by Bereketeab, Trivelli, Tronvoll, Dirar, Lata and Young that focused on the origins of the border war and its broader consequences.⁵⁰ In a similar vein, Dias and Abbink

⁴⁸ Tekeste Negash and Kjetil Tronvoll, *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean Ethiopian War* (Oxford, James Curry, 2000), 30-45.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23-29.

⁵⁰ Redie Bereketeab, "The Complex Roots of the Second Eritrea- Ethiopia War: Re-examining the Causes," *African Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 1 and 2 (2013): 15-59, accessed November 23, 2017,

highlighted the conduct of the inter-state war and multiple dimensions of the conflict.⁵¹ In these attempts, the centrality of territory in its multiple dimensions for the understanding of the war is examined.

In his work, *War and the politics of identity in Ethiopia: the making of enemies and allies in the Horn of Africa*, Tronvoll, likewise, engages the academic discourse that accepts the disadvantageous consequences of the arbitrary border. Tronvoll tried to understand how the war and the impact of warfare impacted the formation and conceptualization of identities in the border areas.⁵² His focus was on the rough political project - mass violence, war and war propaganda - around the cross-border ethnic border areas, and its malign effects on the local people. However its findings are limited only to the Ethiopian perspective although the incorporation of Eritrean narratives would have enriched it further.

Yet there is no standard micro-level analysis of the context, except a small study conducted by Bahailu Abebe. In his article *War Stories, Displacement and Coping Experiences of the Displaced from the Ethio- Eritrean War*, he explored the broad processes of the Eritrea-Ethiopian border transformation through stories collected from the borderland communities, Zalanbsa and its surroundings. He found that the border has never been a barrier. Even after the separation of Eritrea, the international border remained meaningless: people continued to live together side by side without any serious difficulties.⁵³ The situation changed after the outbreak of the border war in 1998. The war has destroyed the socio-economic and cultural

<https://doi.org/10.4314/ajia.v13i1-3>; Richard M. Trivelli, "Divided Histories, Opportunistic Alliances: Background Notes on the Ethiopian-Eritrean War," *African Spectrum* 33, no. 3 (1998): 257–89; Kjetil Tronvoll, "Borders of Violence - Boundaries of Identity: Demarcating the Eritrean Nation-State," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6 (1999): 1037–60, accessed March 20, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329233>; Uoldelul Chelati Dirar, "Rivalry, Antagonism and War in the Nation & State-Building Process: The H Factor in the Relations Between Eritrea and Ethiopia," in *The 1998-2000 War between Eritrea and Ethiopia*, ed. by A. de Guttery, H.H.G. Post and G. Venturini (The Hague: T.M.C.ASSER Press, 2009), 25–51; Leenco Lata, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea War The Ethiopia-Eritrea War," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2003): 369–88; John Young, "The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (1996): 105–20.

⁵¹ Alexandra Magnólia Dias, "The Conduct of an Inter-State War and Multiple Dimensions of Territory: 1998-2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia War," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, no. 22 (2011): 21–41, <https://doi.org/10.4000/cea.384>; Jan Abbink, "The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Dispute," *African Affairs* 97, no. 389 (1998): 551–65.

⁵² Kjetil Tronvoll, *War and the Politics of Identity in Ethiopia: The Making of Enemies and Allies in the Horn of Africa* (New York: James Currey, 2009).

⁵³ Bahailu Abebe, "War Stories," 210–35.

ties between the local people living at the border and caused displacement and deprivation.⁵⁴

Apart from those, there are also two detailed contribution by Federica Guazzini about the evolution of the boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and its implications on the outbreak of the second war between them.⁵⁵ She argued that the root cause of the border war between the two neighboring countries lies mainly not on the colonial border agreements of 1900, 1902 and 1908, but a lack of a demarcation of the agreements on the ground.

This dissertation, therefore, seeks to address the knowledge gap on the Eritrean side. It provides the first comprehensive study on the impact of border on border communities, with a specific emphasis on the Eritrean side. It conducts an in-depth objective assessment of border enforcement and its impact on the borderland communities' livelihoods from the viewpoint of those who have been suffering for almost 18 years. In order to explore the question empirically, I adopted an ethnographic approach through the case study of the Tserona and the Senafe borderlands along the Eritrea-Ethiopian border. However, this work is just a single area. There is a call for further investigation and responsibility to examine the whole range of patterns along the entire borderland region.

1.2. Conceptual framework

The research questions, the themes of inquiry and the conversation questions are based on the sustainable rural livelihood framework developed by the Department for International Development of the Government of UK (DFID), the British Government department responsible for promoting development and reducing poverty. This analytical framework was selected because it focuses on the local people's potential in an all-rounded way rather than only stressing their problems, constraints, and needs. The focus, as described above, is empirical and is located largely at the micro-level. The study is mainly interested in local borderland communities' lived experiences. Borderland communities are recognized as the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 230.

⁵⁵ Federica Guazzini, "La Geografia Variable Del Confine Eritreo-Etiopico Tra Passato e Presente," *Africa: LIV* no. 3 (1999): 309–48.; Federica Guazzini, *La Ragioni Di Un Confini Coloniale Eritrea 1898-1908* (Torino: Editrice L' Harmattan Italia, 1999).

main actors by their own right, and victims, when considering the border as a ‘barrier’ due to border enforcement measures. However, this paper doesn’t address the effects of the barrier function of the hard border from the Ethiopian side.

While DFID employs the framework to discern sustainable means of fighting rural poverty in an environmentally sustainable way, the present research uses it as an analytical tool to observe, analyze, and better understand the borderland communities’ hardships under extreme military and political conditions at the border. A complete description of the livelihood framework with its major constituents including the vulnerability context is shown below in Figure 1:

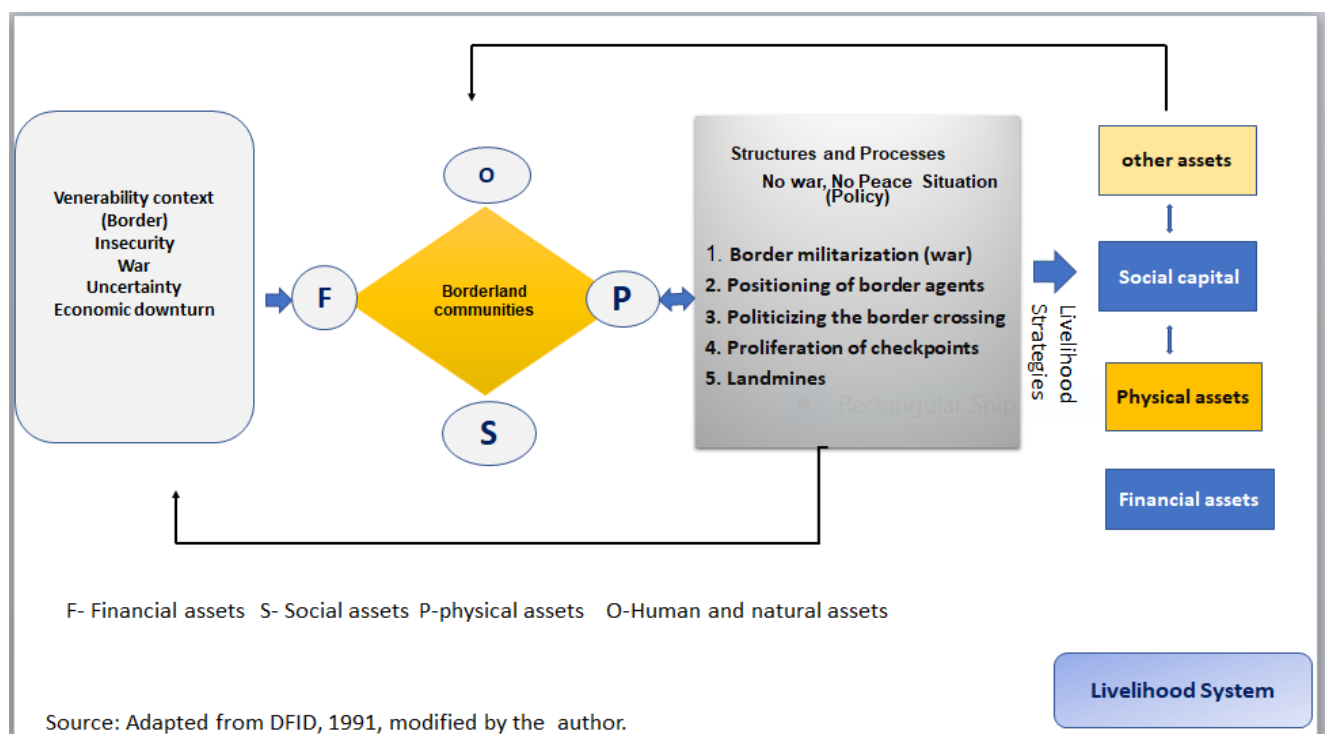


Figure 1. Examination of the independent and dependent variables

1. **Vulnerability context:** lies first in the left-hand-side of the diagram, is used to describe the livelihoods risks and shocks beyond people’s control. This represents not only the internal dimensions of household vulnerability in complex political emergencies (CPE), but the external dimensions as well.⁵⁶ As per the DFID description, most

⁵⁶DFID, *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets*, (London, 1999).

externally imposed changes in the vulnerability context are the outcome of wide-ranging activities at the level of transforming structures and processes.⁵⁷

2. Capital asset

From the livelihood framework (Figure 1), assets come in the second tier. It looks at the resources that individuals have or are likely to obtain in order to make their livelihoods. According to Krantz, individuals or households used these resources to sustain their everyday lives.⁵⁸ Assets include both material and non-material resources. In the original sustainable livelihood framework, there are five capital assets: financial, physical, natural, social and human. However, in this dissertation, these elements of capital assets are reduced to four: financial, physical, social and other livelihood, due to data access problems.

3. **Structures and Processes** (or Institutions) - are also part of the framework because they constantly change the vulnerability context. These can be formal (constitution, laws, and status) and informal (values, norms and customary or religious laws). In complex political circumstances, as in the context of Eritrea-Ethiopia, these elements have profound influences on individuals rights to access assets and services, such as farming, herding, trading, and grazing. They offer a favourable ground for military actors by distorting or weakening civilians' traditional institutions. However, this is not a mere one-way relationship. According to Scoones, individual and groups themselves can also play a significant role in transforming structures and processes.⁵⁹ In many cases, they are part and parcel of a social and political negotiation process.
4. **Livelihood strategies** - represent the wide range and mix of activities or choices that individuals or households make or undertake to achieve their livelihood goals under stressful conditions. Livelihoods strategies include productive activities, reproduction choices and investment strategies. As Scoones puts it, different livelihood strategies

⁵⁷ DFID. 2.2

⁵⁸ Lasse Krantz, "The Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Poverty Reduction," *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*, February (2001): 1.

⁵⁹ I. Scoones, "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis." (Brighton, UK., 1998).

by different households are due to differences in resources possessed.⁶⁰ However, livelihoods strategies depend not only on assets but also on vulnerability contexts and extents.

5. **Livelihood Outcomes** - is another important component of the framework. It refers to achievements or outcomes of different livelihoods strategies. These can be tangible (more income, improved food security) or intangible outcomes (self-esteem, inclusion, access to services, sense of control and political inclusion). Livelihood outcomes again depend on vulnerability contexts, livelihood assets, and livelihood strategies.⁶¹ When we think about livelihood outcomes, therefore, it is imperative to look at all factors that directly or indirectly impact them.

This framework is a way of understanding and analyzing the system of the borderland communities' livelihoods, including the internal and external factors that affect their socio-economic survival. It looks into the livelihood strategies of the local people in a given vulnerable context. As per the framework, people have access to five forms of capital assets. These are natural, social, human, physical and financial. Livelihood sustainability can be observed as a function of how people use those assets against shocks and stress at the border in both the short term or the long term. The different livelihood strategies usually pursued by individuals are due to differences in assets possessed or vulnerability contexts, which consequently bring about different outcomes.⁶² Accordingly, these outcomes have both positive and negative impacts on livelihoods.

1.3. Methodological Approach

This dissertation used an ethnographic approach during fieldwork in that it was conducted over a medium term period (two years). It aimed to understand the lived experiences of the borderland communities from the 'inside' as much as possible in a cross-cultural situation. As Jones and Smith explains, "ethnography is one of the early qualitative approaches and is

⁶⁰ DFID, "*Sustainable*," 2.2.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Scoones, "*Sustainable*," 2.5.

concerned with learning about people, in contrast to studying people, through immersion in native population”.⁶³

Initially, ethnography was developed in the field of anthropology in Europe. It then spread to the United States in the early 20th Century. It was mainly used to focus on non-western cultures.⁶⁴ Ethnography started to be used as a more elaborate scientific investigation approach only in the late 20th century. E.B. Tylor (1832- 1917) and L.H. Morgan (1818-1881), among others, were the founding figures.⁶⁵

Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison explain that ethnography ‘is a descriptive, analytical and explanatory study of the culture, values, beliefs, and practices of one group’.⁷⁰ They add:

An ethnography moves beyond description of data analysis, to theory generation and, if appropriate, to hypothesis generation, to explain, what is happening and observed in a situation, group, culture or society and why, what are its key dynamics, in short to understand why the group, culture or society is acting as it does and what can be learned from this.⁷¹

In an essay titled *People and things in the ethnography of borders: materializing the division of Sarajevo*, S. Jansen further explains:

⁶³ Janice Jones and Joanna Smith, “Ethnography: Challenges and Opportunities,” *BMJ* 20, no. 4 (2017): 98–100.

⁶⁴ David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography Step by Step*, 2nd ed. (London: Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1998).

⁶⁵ Vijay S. Upadhyay and Gaya Pandey, *History of Anthropological Thought* (New Delhi: Ashok Kumar Mittal, 1993).

⁷⁰ Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, *Taylor and Francis Group*, 8th.ed. (London, 2013), 15.3, accessed May 13, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2007.00388_4.x.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Ethnography offers much more, both descriptively and critically, when investigating human practice beyond signification, and things beyond their meaning in a symbolic order.⁷²

However, there is one inherent problem with the issue of a professional ethnographer. Usually, his/her academic background cannot provide him/her with the suitable adequate instruments and procedures for the specific social settings or situations in those particular research circumstances. This stems from the complex nature of social phenomena. Social phenomena are often far more complex and highly intertwined than theories, assumptions, hypotheses and perceptions suggest. For this reason, an ethnographer must be a proactive learner of the different social context of the field of inquiry.

In border and borderland studies, Anssi Paasi, notes that ethnography is a useful research approach for someone interested in understanding local people's narratives related to borders and border crossing.⁷³ According to him, this may be attained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews or narrative story analysis.⁷⁴ The basic intention is to understand 'how people realize, explain and express the complexity of stimuli and experiences emerging from the social and physical environment, in which they are living'.⁷⁵

Vila, on the other hand, recommends that ethnography can be helpful in mapping out the complexity of the border experiences through the voice of the borderland communities by focusing on a particular area.⁷⁶ In this context, he accepts ethnography as a method as well as a theory, as I do in this piece of work.⁷⁷ This assertion is developed from his own

⁷² Jamie Winders, "Ethnography at the Border (Review)," *Journal of Latin American Geography* 4, no. 1 (2005): 144–46, accessed July 20, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2005.0031>.

⁷³ Anssi Paasi, "A Border Theory: An Unattainable Dream or a Realistic Aim for Border Scholars?," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* eds. by Doris Wastl-Walter (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 16.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Anssi Paasi, *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness* (Chichester: John Wiley 1996), 65.

⁷⁶ Pablo Vila, *Ethnography at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), IX-XXXV.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

assessment of wide-ranging ethnographic research collected from the U.S.-Mexico border area in 1990s. In his view, ethnography helps researchers describe and analyze the border, ‘in all its manifestations, matters for people living along, within, and against it’.⁷⁸

The issue of ethnography as a best-fitting methodology is also central when someone considers understanding the nexus between security and borderlanders or state institutions and its effects. Donnan and M. Wilson wrote that:

Borderlands are territorial and cultural zones of varying meanings and practices, and their roles in national and state histories and contemporary actions must be a matter for empirical research. The roles of borderlands and borderlanders cannot be inferred from the major narratives of nation of the nation, or from the grand constructions of the state...This empirical research most often entails ethnographic research and this ethnographic work must intersect with concerns of stresses and security.⁷⁹

However, as Lichtman underscored, ethnography requires a continuous immersion into the natural setting.⁸⁰ Ethnographic researchers ‘become, as far as possible, a part of the world they are trying to study’.⁸¹ From the practical stand point of view, however,

total empathy is professionally and practically impossible. It is precisely the constant reflecting, taking notes, asking questions, completing questionnaires, taking photos, asking questions, completing questionnaires, taking photographs, recording and then transcribing, translating and interpreting imposed upon us by our profession that prevent us from getting completely ‘inside’ the culture which we want to study.⁸²

As a researcher, as described in the introduction section, I carried out research in Senafe and Tserona in 2017 and 2018, during the summer season of 2017 and winter and autumn

⁷⁸ Winders, "Ethnography," 144–46."

⁷⁹ Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, ed. *Borderlands Ethnographic Approaches to Security, Power, and Identity*, (New York, Toronto, Plymouth: University Press of America, INC, 2010), 14.

⁸⁰ Lichtman, *Qualitative Research for the Social Sciences*, 72.

⁸¹ G. Bhatti, "Ethnographic and Representational Style," in *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*, ed. by L Arthur, J., Waring, M., Coe, R. & Hedges (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 80.

⁸² A. Duranti, *Etnografia Del Parlare Quotidiano* (Rome: NIS, 1992), 20.

seasons of 2018. It includes continues fieldwork as well as biographical interviews, while simultaneously, collecting archival materials mainly from the local administrations and RDC on people, land and border. However, I had a long track of attachment with the people, their culture, their language and their way of life. From 1996 to 2000, I attended junior and high school in the same city, Medefera, the regional capital. When I was a student, I helped war-displaced civilians as part of my national summer service duty in the Tserona sub-region during the summer seasons of 1998 and 1999. I was involved in harvesting activities with local communities of different backgrounds. On June 18, 2000, I joined the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF) in response to a national call for defense against a third Ethiopian offensive. During this time, I spent almost 4 whole months on military duty on the frontline in territories between the Tserona and the Senafe sub-regions.

As Dwyer et al. explored, insider and outsider perspectives are also consequential for ethnographic research ‘because they impact the research process, the research findings, the arguments made by the researcher and implications of these findings’.⁸³ An ethnographer can be ‘an insider sharing the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants, or an outsider to the commonality shared by the participants’.⁸⁴ I shared the experience for almost 25 years, but I am of a different ethnic background and therefore outside their community, although I speak their language as my mother tongue. Hence, I feel more comfortable with the claim that I am not a complete outsider. Ethical issues related to culture have not impacted the course of my research, except in a few instances explained in the introduction section (pp.21-22).

⁸³ Anthony Naaeke, Anastacia Kurylo, Michael Grabowski, David Linton, and Marie L. Radford. "Insider and outsider perspective in Ethnographic research," *Proceedings of the New York State Communication Association* no. 1 (2011): 9.

⁸⁴ Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, “The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009): 55, accessed July 14, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>.

Chapter 2

Background of the area: The Land, the border and the People

2.1. Introduction

This third part of the work establishes the context for the empirical research. By providing an overview of the historical background of the wider sub-region and local communities, it will allow for a better understanding of the empirical data, to be presented in chapters four and five. The first section includes outlines of the surrounding region's geographic, demographic, social and economic foundations. The second section then examines the Senafe and Tserona residents' localized everyday cross-border socio-economic activities and relations from the independence of Eritrea in 1991 up to the outbreak of the border war in May 1998. This part mainly uses individual stories and in-depth interviews as sources. The aim is to provide some highlights on how the border is experienced by the inhabitants before the outbreak of the border war and its relevance to their livelihood strategy.

2.2. The Setting

The border sub-regions of Senafe and Tserona are at the southern edge of Eritrea, on the southern plateau of the present Zoba Debub or former territories of Akele Guzai¹, which lie along central segment of the colonial Eritrean-Ethiopian border. According to F. Anfray, a renowned French archeologist, the territories were part of the great Axumite civilization.² The ancient historical sites in the region now, such as Metera, Keskesse, Ham, and Kohaito are the most identifiable remnants of this civilizational legacy.³

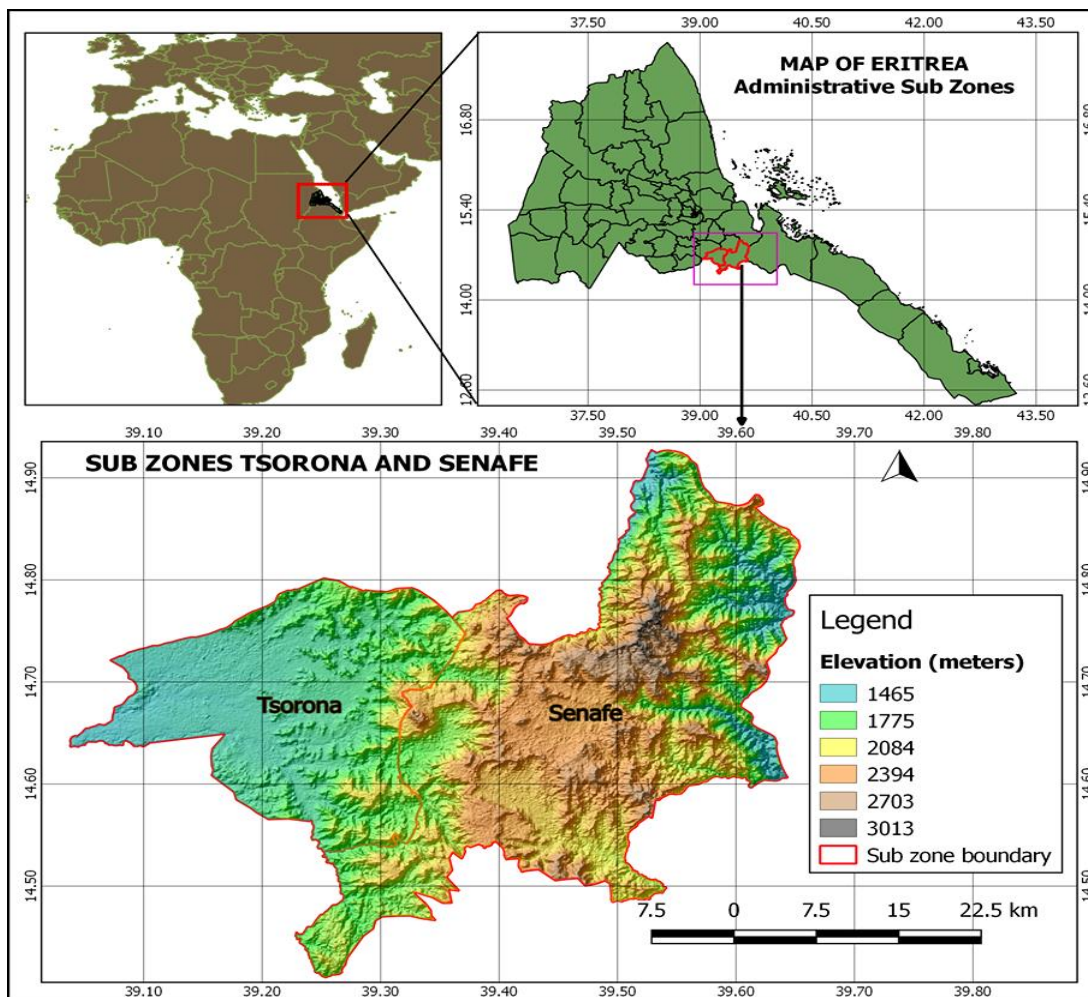
Before Italian colonial rule in Eritrea, these two border areas, together with Wereda Adi – Keih and Dechemahire, were under one administrative unit and had their own semi-

¹ Before the merger of Akele Guzai and Seraye to be *Zoba Debub* under the Eritrean government proclamation No.36/1996, Akele Guzai was one of the 10 provinces with Adi Keyih as its capital that constituted Eritrea.

² Francis Anfray, *Les anciens Ethiopiens: siècles d'histoire*. Fenixx, (Paris, 1990), 114.

³ Stephen H. Longrigg, *A Short History of Eritrea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945),12-13.

autonomous administrative system.⁴ The region had a kind of loose confederation system. The local administration had its own autonomous native administrative system, administrative councils and native court. The highest post in the confederation was not monopolized by one man.⁵ Instead, it was under the council of village elders, commonly known as *Mahber Shum Aditat* (ማኅበር ሹም ዓዲታት) or *Biato system*.⁶ The members were elected representatives of the people. They were intended to serve as vital deliberative organs and repositories of real power within entire administrative unities.



Map 1. Study site

Source: Eritrean mapping & information centre (EMIC), president office.

⁴ Irma Taddia, "Land Politics in the Ethiopian-Eritrean Border Area between Emperor Yohann's IV and Menilik II," *Aethiopica* 12 (2009): 62.

⁵ Ruffillo Perini, *Mereb Melash Translated by Vittorio Roncalli* (Italy: Roberto Chiaramonte Editore, 1905), 197-198.

⁶ A letter written from B. Silva to Ruffillo Perini in 1892 quoted in Ruffillo Perini, *Mereb Melash Translated by Vittorio Roncalli* (Italy: Roberto Chiaramonte Editore, 1905), 197-198.

Elections were the source of power. *Shum Addi and Shum –Gulti* were elected based on participation from the whole set of communities, but only *wede bat*, original inhabitants in the village or town or descendants of the original settlers. *Shum Addi /Chikka Addie* entrusted only for village affairs, whereas *Shum–Gulti* for *Mahber Shum Aditat*.⁷ With the passage of time, however, especially during Thewdros and Yohannes IV, the *Shum–Gulti* system became a hereditary system. All *Shum–Gultis or meslenies* came from the same family, and power was passed down from one family member to another in order of birth, through male descendants.⁸ The first-born son was the legitimate heir to his father’s power.

The administration operated under indigenous customary law, Ser’at *Adgna Tegeleba* applied to almost all sections of both Christians and Muslims societies.⁹ According to Lyda Favali and Ray Pateman, the set of rules or laws under this customary law was enacted in 1931 and first put into written form in 1945.¹⁰ This law had a wide range of governing codes on matters related to land, inheritance, marriage, punishment against crimes and resolving disputes. It had been an essential tool in resolving disputes, preserving unity and ensuring peace and order among the inhabitants.

With the advent of Christianity to Eritrea, they also started to be governed by *Fetha Neggesta* a combination of spiritual and secular laws. The first 22 chapters of the book deal exclusively with ecclesiastic law, whereas the remaining 29 chapters deal with secular issues.¹¹ According to Lyda Favali and Ray Pateman, ‘it is the translation from Arabic to Ge’ez of an Egyptian canon compiled by Ibn al-Assal, from 1240 to 1250, on the basis of a more ancient text of Syrian/Roman origin’.¹² Unlike in traditional law, the deliberation under this new

⁷ DO. Akele Guzai, Access No.1-10: *Administrative Studies*: [Unpublished Ethnographic survey conducted from June 19, 1997 to July 12, 1997]. Asmara: RDC, 1997, 899.

⁸ Perini, *Mereb Melash Translated by Vittorio Roncalli*, 197.; S.F.Nadel, “Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 16, no. 1946 (2019): 1–22.

⁹ Zera Yacob Estifanos, Wolde Mariam Abraham, and Gherima Gbere Meskel, *ሕግን ስርዓትን ናይ መሬት ኅደቦ: Collection of Codes and Bylaws of Eritrean Regions and Counties in Tigrinya and Tigre* (Asmara: Petros Printing Press, 1990).

¹⁰ Lyda Favali and Ray Pateman, *Blood, Land and Sex*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 33.

¹¹ Abba Paulos Tzadua, *The Fetha Nagast: Law of Kings*, ed. by Peter L. Struss, *Carolina Academic Press* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2009).

¹² Lyda Favali and Ray Pateman, *Blood, Land and Sex*, 33.

code of laws was unique. It was carried out under the auspices of religious leaders.¹³ It was most often referred for complicated or dubious matters.

However, the territories were not completely free from the influences of Ethiopian rulers. At various times, in the pre-colonial era, tribute was paid by Akkele Guzai's local leaders to Ethiopian kings and emperors or to the warlords of Tigray or to other contemporary rulers.¹⁴ Tributes showed how traditional communities reacted to attempts to superimpose a central structure or state. A refusal to pay tributes is a typical expression of defiance to authority and depends on the ability of a people to resist more powerful foreign invaders.

From 1825 to 1850, when the territory was under the influence of *Deghiat* Wiebe, they paid a tribute of 5,000 Maria Teresa Dollars (MTD).¹⁵ Ras Alula, one of the military leaders of Emperor Yohannes IV, increased this to 7,900 MTD. During the reigns of Thewodros (1818-1868) and Yohannes IV (1868-1872), however, tribute payment was made in various other forms.¹⁶ In addition to MTD, they were free to pay in the form of cattle, goats, and sheep or otherwise. Moreover, payment was made according to their wealth.¹⁷ There was no fixed tribute payment regulation.

The advent of Italian Colonial Rule and the region

The Italians established an outpost at Asseb in 1882, which they used as a base to move northward toward Massawa as Egyptian power declined. Seven years later, they annexed many parts of the Eritrean plateau and Eastern lowlands. In 1889 Italy, through the treaty of Ucciali of 2nd May 1889, formally took control of the Eritrean territories, including Arafali, Halai, Segheneit, Asmara, Adi Nifas, Adi Yohannes and Bogos areas. According to Article III and Sub-articles a, b, and c of this treaty, the boundary between Italy and Ethiopia was to

¹³ DO. Akele Guzai, Access No.2, *Administrative studies*: [Unpublished Ethnographic survey conducted from June 19, 1997 to July 12, 1997]. Asmara: RDC, 1997, 885.

¹⁴ DO. Economic Studies, Access NO. 3: [Unpublished Ethnographic survey conducted from June 19, 1997 to July 12, 1997]. Asmara: RDC, 1997, 521-544.

¹⁵ Lyda Favali and Ray Pateman, *Blood, Land and Sex*, 248.

¹⁶ "Bullettino Ufficiale Della Colonia Eritrea," 1903. 3.

¹⁷ DO. Economic Studies, 1997, 523.

be plateau.¹⁸ From Adi Yohannes, the dividing line between two countries was marked by a straight line running from east to west.¹⁹ In return, Italy promised financial assistance and military supplies to King Menelik's leadership. This agreement means that large territories from Akkele Guzai constituents, including Tserona and Senafe, were left out of Ethiopia.

A dispute later arose over Article XVII (17) of the Ucciali treaty to change this boundary. The dispute was based on the interpretation of the article. As per the Italian language version of the disputed article, Ethiopia was obliged to carry out all foreign affairs through his Majesty the King of Italy.²⁰ This would make Ethiopia a protectorate of Italy. On the other hand, the Amharic version stated that the Majesty, King of Kings, could use the offices of the Italian government for any negotiations which he may enter into with other powers or governments.²¹ Italy argued that the original Amharic text included the clauses that King Menelik deliberately signed a modified version of the treaty, but Ethiopia refuted that claim. The result was war. The Italians advanced into Ethiopia but were badly defeated at the battle of Adowa in 1896.²² They then withdrew to the Mereb river to recover and consolidate.

Italian Colonial rule and Border treaties of 1900, 1902 and 1908

I. Colonial border of 10th July, 1900

On July 10, 1900, Italy and Ethiopia reached an agreement for the delimitation of the frontier between the two countries, which formally reunited the two separated territories of Akkele Guzai to become the southern border area of Eritrea. The agreement was signed by His Majesty Humbert I, King of Italy and his Majesty Menelik II, King of Kings of Ethiopia.²³

¹⁸ "Treaty between the Italy government and his Majesty Menelk, King of king of Ethiopia Ethiopia(Treaty of Ucciali 2nd May), 1889" (1889), Art. III (see appendix.II).

¹⁹ Ibid; George Fitz-Hardinge Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik* (Great Britain: The Naval and Military Press, 1969).

²⁰ Sven Rubenson, "The Protectorate Paragraph of the Wichalē Treaty," *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 2 (1964): 243–83.

²¹ Archivio Storico del Ministero dell' Africa Italiana (A.S.M.A.I.) 36/4-40, the Amharic original of treaty concluded between Menelik and Antonelli, 10 Tiqimt 1880; Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia, eds. *The Battle of Adwa Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory Against European Colonialism*, (New York: Algora, 2005), 303-308.

²² Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, 271-345.

²³ E. Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty* (London: Frank CASS and Company, 1967), 458-59.

This framework of agreement recognized the Eritrean-Ethiopian border in this section to be the line ‘Tomat-Todlu-Mareb-Belesa-Muna’(see appendix III).²⁴ The latter three are all rivers. The Addis Ababa Peace treaty of October 26th, 1896 had already recognized these three rivers as boundary lines.²⁵ It begins at the junctions of the confluence of the Mereb with Mai Ambesa and continues all the way to the point near the old Italian fort at Radacoma.²⁶ This boundary treaty covers almost one-third of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border, and delimits the ethnic divisions of Tigrinya.

However, the regional state of Tigray, in clear violation of the terms of this agreement, published a new map incorporating undisputed sovereign Eritrean territories in 1997. According to the new regional state map, the international state border between the two countries went deep into Eritrea beyond the Belesa river. Many indisputably Eritrean villages, including Qolo Burdo, Qnin, Qinto, Una Shehaq, Adi Kutu, were left out of Eritrea.²⁷

The Convention of July 10, 1900, was violated not only by the Belesa delimitation, but also along the Endeli projection, north of Muna river. This is inhabited by Irob, Saho speaking people. According to Jean-Louis Péninou, “their grazing lands, which had long been raided and disputed between the traditional lords of Akele Guzai (a district in Eritrea) and Agame (a district in Ethiopia), were divided by the establishment of colonial Eritrea”.²⁸ As the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission found out, in 2002, the controversy surrounding these disputed territories emerged from a variety of different local names given to different tributaries in the past.²⁹

²⁴ Ibid. 460.

²⁵ Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, 271-345.

²⁶ Bertarelli in *Possedimenti e colonie*, 1929.

²⁷ Ghidewon Abay and Ogbazgy Abay, “A Study of the Evolution of the Eritrean Ethiopian Border Through Treaties and Official Maps,” in *Eritrean Studies Review*, ed. by Tekie Fessahatzion (Red Sea Press, 1999), 57–58.

²⁸ Jean-louis Péninou, “The Ethiopian – Eritrean Border Conflict,” *Boundary and Security Bulletin Summer*, 1998, 48.

²⁹ Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), “Decision Regarding Delimitation of the Border between the State of Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,” April 13, 2002, 35.

II. Colonial border of 15th May 1902

The border convention, however, did not end with the previous agreement. Two years later on May 15, 1902, an extension treaty was made in the western sector. This was a tri-partite treaty, signed between Italy, Great Britain and Ethiopia.³⁰ The aim was to modify the treaty of 10 July 1900 in the western section of the border, especially the Cunama territories.³¹ The terms of the agreements were written in three languages, Italian, English and Amharic. All of the versions mention that:

Commencing from the junction of the Khor Um Hager with the Setti, the new frontier follows this river to its junction with the Maieteb, following the latter's course so as to leave Mount Ala Tacura to Eritrea, and joins the Mereb at its junction with Mai Ambessa.

The line from the junction of the Setit and Maieteb to the junction of the Mareb and Mai Ambessa shall be admitted by Italian and Ethiopian delegates, so that the Cunama tribes belong to Eritrea.³²

This means that the Tomat-Mai Ambessa border of 1900 was amended (see appendix IV for more details).

As Gabriele Ciampi maintains, this border has less ambiguity. Neither the Italian colonial maps nor the Ethiopian post-World War II maps exhibit ambiguity about the course of the border (Map 5 (p. 222)).³³ Unfortunately however, this is the section of the border where border clashes between the two countries were triggered in May 1998. The incident occurred when the regional Tigray state pushed the international border markers forward against the basis of the provisions of the colonial border, and I return to the details in the section on territorial dispute in chapter 3(p. 87-91).

III. Colonial border of 16th May, 1908

Moreover, Italy and Ethiopia signed the treaty of May 16, 1908. The terms of this treaty deal with the third section of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border, the Eastern sector, running from the

³⁰ Gabriele Ciampi, "Cartographic Problems of Eritrean-Ethiopian Border," *Africa* 3, no. 3 (2016), 155.

³¹ Federica Guazzini, "La Geografia Variabile Del Confine Eritrean-Etiopico Tra Passato e Presente," *Africa* 3, no. 3 (1999): 309–48.

³² Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 1234 (see appendix III and Map 5).

³³ Ciampi, "Cartographic Problems of Eritrean-Ethiopian Border," 156.

terminus of the central segment established by the 1900 treaty, to the border with Djibouti.

Article I of the Convention prescribes:

From the most easterly point of the frontier established between the Colony of the Eritrea and the Tigray by the convention of 10th July, 1900, the boundary proceeds to south-easterly direction, parallel to and at a distance of 60 kilometers from the coast, until it joins the frontier of the French possessions of Somalia (see appendix V and map 5 (p. 222)).³⁴

In this context, there is more room for controversial interpretation than 1900 and 1902 treaties. In the first place, Eritrea and Ethiopia have no common understanding over the question of the exact location of the last terminus of the central segment of the border.³⁵ This stemmed from a lack of clear maps in the 1900 treaty and some inconsistencies in the framework of the agreement. The latter is the question of specification of the term “distance of 60 kilometers from the coast”. Mathematically speaking this seems easy, but drawing this on the ground proved difficult. The two sides have divergent interpretations on the geometric method of delimitation; they were not able to resolve this with a common accord.

Other developments

Apart from arbitrary border imposition, Italian colonial rule was also involved in large-scale land expropriation. This policy was intended to accommodate Italian immigrants from the south of Italy; the ultimate objective was to develop a settler colony.³⁶ The first decree in this matter was enforced in 1893, and the bulk of expropriation continued until 1895.³⁷ In Akkele Guzai alone, 90 per cent of cultivable arable land was appropriated (refer to table 1 and 2).³⁸

³⁴ Ibid. 1225.

³⁵ Ciampi, “Cartographic Problems of Eritreo-Ethiopian Border,” 177-178.

³⁶ Yemane Mesghenna, *Italian Colonialism: A Case Study of Eritrea 1869-1934: Motive, Practices and Results* (University of Lund, 1988), 144-147.

³⁷ Kjetil Tronvoll, *Mai Weini, A Highland Village in Eritrea: A Study of the People, Their Livelihood, and Land Tenure During Times of Turbulence* (Asmara: Red Sea Press, 1998), 197.

³⁸ Mesghenna, *Italian Colonialism*, 145.

No.	Territory	Hectare
1.	Medri Ruba	1,300
2.	Adi Mahli, Adi Ghermai and Tzellemt Eman	585
3.	Abur, Netait, Badot, Zabarit and Medir	2,500
4.	Araghebda and Ahsaa	1,000
5.	Egri Berad, Laalai Mergaz, Mai Shionca, Laalai Mado ruba	1,600
6	Adi Zeba, Adi Iacob Abi, Adi Iacob Nishto, Kerni Seba Uoina and Monghuda Arha	2,050
7	Hazemo	15,000

Sources: Yemane Mesghenna (1988, 146)

Table 1: The extent of expropriated land from Akkele Guzai, 1899-1902

N	Territory	Hectares
1	Aitela (Tsenadegle)	770
2	Zeguaru (Deki Admekom)	425
3	Amba Temit and Gomalo	2,710
4	Merbet (Tedrer)	320
5	Gomba (Tahti Agraf)	158
6	Guna Guna (Shimezana)	305
6	Hazemo	18,543
7	Hadish Adi	2,300
8	Faghe (Metzhe)	770
9	Sassoe, Hacir Cudo, Adi Areisghi, and Tekelabe	2,080

Sources: Yemane Mesghenna (1988, 147)

Table 2: The extent of expropriated land from Akkele Guzai, 1902- 1907

As a consequence, the region became a hub of disgruntled peasants and provoked an atmosphere of rebellion. The first short-lived and ill-organized resistance against Italian colonial rule was instigated by Bahta Hagos, commonly known as Bahta Hagos Segeneiti. His rebellion had no broad support. It was easily quelled when he was killed in battle on December 19, 1894.³⁹

In a similar vein, most former members of the *Shum Additat and Shum –Gultitate* were replaced by new appointees, accorded with a salary and a rank. Based on the demands of the local people and the interest of the Italian government, some others maintained their status.⁴⁰ Generally however, the penetration of Italian colonial rule in the region put an end to the election system. The overwhelming majority of the village elders in the region were appointed, and power was not permanent.⁴¹ However, Italy had little power of interference with the traditional customary law of the local people.

British Military Administration and the region

Following the defeat of Italy in World War II, this administrative organization was turned over to the British Military Administration (BMA) along with other Eritrean territories for ten years (1941-1952), but with no difference in the pre-existing administrative and territorial structure. The Italian administrative and territorial structures were retained without significant changes, under varying degrees of British supervision. As Longrigg argues, the BMA had no legal alternative to maintaining the *status quo* and operated a formula of care and maintenance.⁴² Key posts were filled with British military officers to run the region under martial law, similar to elsewhere in Eritrea. In the 1940s the British governor of the region was Grizman, and the area was known as *Wereda Senafe*.⁴³

³⁹Richard Caulk, “Black Snake, White Snake:Bahta Hagos and His Revolt Against Italian Overrule in Eritrea,1894,” in *Baditry, Rebellion and Social Protests in Africa*, ed.by Donald Crummey (London: James Currey, 1986), 306.

⁴⁰ Parini, *Mereb Melash*,197.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Longrigg, *A Short History of Eritrea*, 148.

⁴³ Alemseghed Tesfai, *Eritrea: From Federation to Annexation (1952-1962)* (Asmara, HDRI Publishers, 2016), 202.

Like elsewhere in Eritrea, the major positive step taken by the BMA was in the field of education. Access to school had increased at all levels for all section of the societies.⁴⁴ The first formal schools in the region were those of the BMA. As Berhane Teklehaimanto recounted, ‘BMA educational goal in the country was to train interpreters, clerks, and professionals who would act as vanguards in the ‘civilizing mission’.⁴⁵ The BMA also needed workers for the ports, in the military bases and in the development and maintenance of infrastructure.

In the same vein, community-based rehabilitation of degraded land and the use of different fertilizers were encouraged. The BMA reformed the regulation of *Shehena*, village ownership of land. During Italian colonial rule, land was distributed every year in August. This regulation changed to every 7 years. The result was a more equitable use of land by villagers, and many barren lands were made cultivable.⁴⁶ Also, cactus (በለስ), sisal (ዲቃ) and eucalyptus (ቀላሚጦስ) plantations were encouraged.⁴⁷

Nevertheless the peasants’ expected more from the BMA than these trivial elements. Tronvoll stated that they ‘hoped that the new British administrators would help to ease their situation by redistributing more than 70 acres of land which had been acquired by Italian agriculturalists’.⁴⁸ On the contrary, the BMA encouraged Italian agriculturalist to retain their large tract of agricultural land and even involved them in land alienation projects during the first phase of their administration.⁴⁹ They encouraged private land holdings but were not involve in any land reform acts as the local people expected, because the framework of their mandate in Eritrea entailed that they only maintain existing laws.

⁴⁴ DO. Akele Guzai Access No.1-10: *Administration, Social organization and Cultural systems: Pilot Study conducted by PFDJ cultural affairs from May 18, 1997 to May 9, 97*, 455.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Les Gottesman, *To Fight and Learn: The Praxis and Promise of Literacy in Eritrea’s Independence War* (Red Sea Press, 1998), 78.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ DO. Akele Guzai Access No.1-10, 455.

⁴⁸ Tronvoll, *Mai Weini*, 33.

⁴⁹ Tesfay Abraham, “The Diessa Land Tenure System and the Land Proclamation No. 58/1994 in the Kebessa Rural Area.” BA thesis, (University of Asmara, 1998); Tronvoll, *Mai Weini*, 203-204.

Meanwhile, the idea of restructuring the colonial boundaries of Eritrea was widely entertained in British parliament. However, it was only in 1943 that the matter was seriously brought forward. The chief proponent of this proposal was Stephen Longrigg, the Military administrator of Eritrea. Tekeste Negash points out that he was passionately pushing Eritrea to be partitioned between Ethiopian and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.⁵⁰ His proposal was solely stemmed from his country's narrow imperial interest, disregarding the wishes of the local population. 'He argued that Tigrinya in Eritrea had always belonged to the Abyssinian political state system which was in turn made up of the Tigrinya and the Amhara'.⁵¹ Unfortunately, he had no stamp of approval and the proposal was promptly aborted.

The Bevin-Sforza plan is another proposal that ties in closely with the above. This plan was submitted to the House of Commons by then British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin in 1949. The purpose of the plan was for Eritrea to be partitioned between Ethiopia and Sudan.⁵² The plan was first negotiated between Bevin and his Italian counterpart, Count Sforza. According to this plan, Ethiopia would have gained the highlands, including Akkele Guzai, Seraye and Hamassien, and the eastern lowlands. Sudan, in turn, would have the western lowlands.⁵³ However, this proposal was rejected too, due to conflicting interests in the UN General Assembly.

On December 2, 1950, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 390(V).⁵⁴ The resolution created a loose federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Subsequently, the administration continued to become an integral part of the autonomous unit of Eritrea with its outer edges being an international border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. It maintained the whole administrative and territorial units inherited from the colonial borders of 1900. Ethiopia's 1962 annexation of Eritrea however, brought about a substantive change both in the form and function of this border. The administration's international border was reduced into an internal administrative border between four Ethiopian administrations, Eritrea,

⁵⁰ Tekeste Negash, *Eritrea and Ethiopia: The Federal Experience* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 19-20.

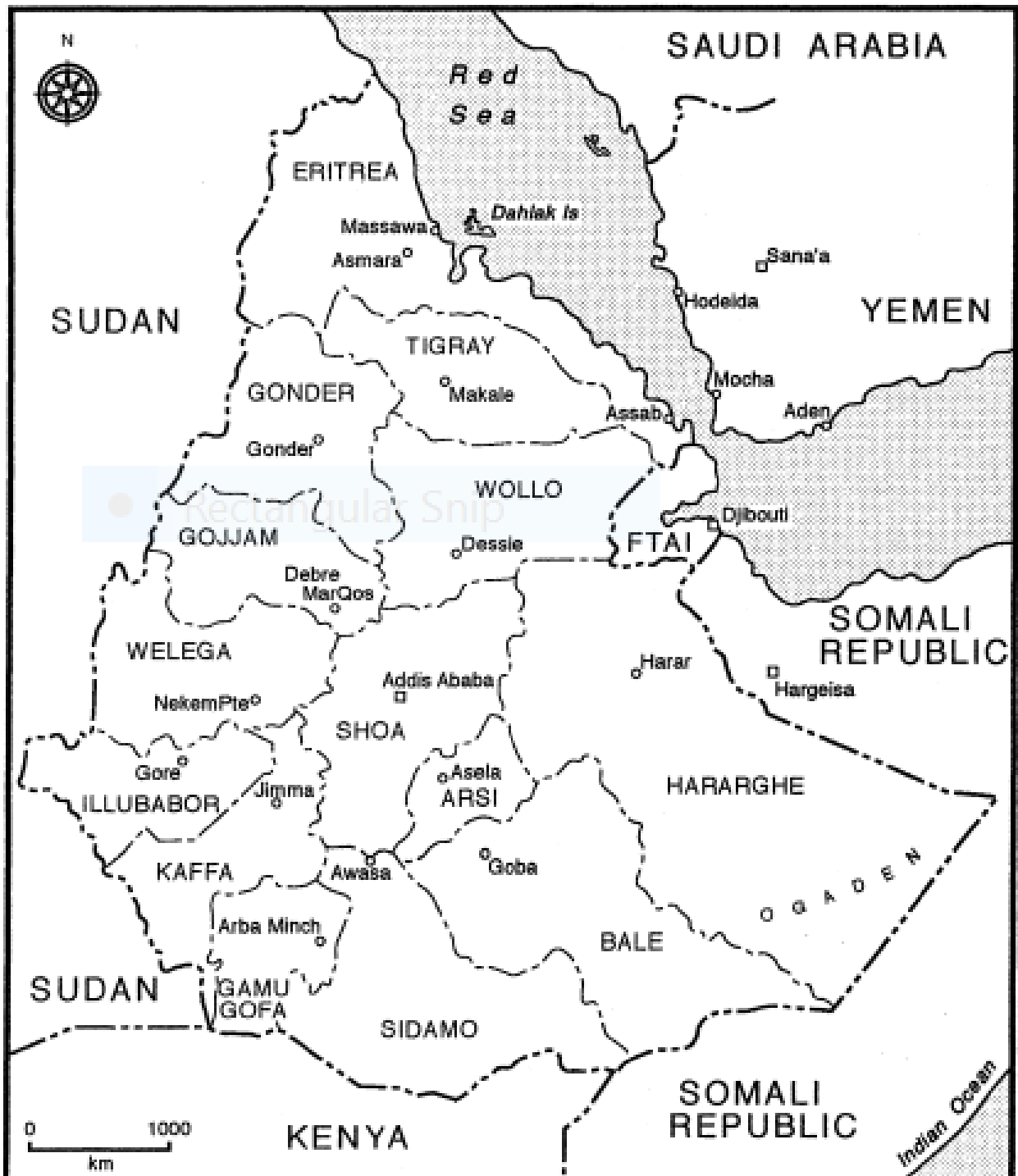
⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵³ Mburu Nene, "Patriots or Bandits? Britain's Strategy for Policing Eritrea 1941-1952," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 9(2), (2000): 93.

⁵⁴ General Assembly resolution concerning the report of the United Nations Commission for Eritrea and the report of the Interim Committee of the General Assembly A/RES/390 (V), December 2, 1950.

Gonder, Tigray, and Wollo. Local people consequently lost some economic advantages that they had been enjoying, being at the edge of two different political entities.



Map 2. Political Map of Ethiopia, 1946-1980

Source: Paul B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia*, Palgrave, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2000), xxiii

The region During the Ethiopian rule (1962-1991)

After the dissolution of the federation in November 1962, the region was annexed by Ethiopia, together with the remaining parts of Eritrea.⁵⁵ This represented a transformation in the nature of the border: the Eritrean-Ethiopian border was changed from an international border into an internal administrative border. This action was unconscionable for Eritrean nationals. It was tantamount to a flagrant violation of Eritrea's sovereign rights in violation of international law, and triggered the Eritrean armed struggle against Ethiopia.

The Senafe and Tserona border regions were remote and neglected areas of Ethiopia at the time of this armed struggle, and economically weak compared with the rest of the Southern region. Because of their geostrategic positions, the territories were the main training and launching grounds for the Eritrean Armed fronts, the ELF⁵⁶ and the EPLF. In particular, the areas of Tserona facing the border and most parts of Senafe are mountainous, making them very convenient hiding places for the Eritrean national movements.

For its part, the Ethiopian central government had a very good reason for checking the advance of these insurgents groups from the regions due to their geostrategic significance. The two areas were crossed by roads that connected Northern Ethiopia to the Red Sea through Asmara or Deki Mehare and then Massawa. In other words, they were a critical lifeline for government-controlled official imports.

In the meantime, the borderland communities were subjected to a life of coercion and fear of reprisal from Ethiopia.

⁵⁵ A written statement read to the members of the Eritrean Assembly by then Chief Executive or vice-representative of the Emperor in Eritrea on November 14, 1962.

⁵⁶ ELF is short for Eritrean Liberation Movement, which was the first independent armed movement against Ethiopian colonial rule. The movement was established in July 1960 by a group of Eritrean intellectuals and students in Cairo. By September 1961, its military wing had been formed in Eritrea by Hammid Idris Awate, but it had failed to last due to internal split and a civil war with the EPLF.

In the 1970s, with a spiraling escalation of the conflict between the Eritrean armed fronts (ELF and EPLF) and the Derg regime, many people were being subjected to extrajudicial killings. These actions were taken in the name enemy collaborators, guerilla fighters or traitors. Many youths, men and women were also being sent to various prisons in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Many villages were also set on fire and reduced to ashes. I also know of many friends and counterparts who were tortured at various times.⁵⁷

There was a marked escalation in the number of killings, rapes, and episodes of violence against people from different backgrounds. Inhabitants of the borderland resorted to a variety of adaptation or coping strategies: some collaborated fully with the fronts; government employees on the whole equated survival with their salaries, but mostly surreptitiously worked for the fronts; others tried to escape to the main cities in Eritrea or Ethiopia; and some went to Sudan or other parts of the world. Many simply lived with the risks.

The region and Post-1991 developments

In 1991, the fall of the Col. Mengistu's 17-year socialist regime and the independence of Eritrea after 30 years of armed struggle against Ethiopia had once again changed the whole situation. The border went from being an internal administrative border between two Ethiopian provinces to an international border between two sovereign states, Eritrea and Ethiopia. This means that Eritrea re-established the colonial status of its border with Ethiopia as per the *uti possidetis* principle in Africa.⁵⁸

This development in turn fundamentally reshaped the economic and political landscape at the border, and had an enormous impact on the surrounding border areas. The borderland communities experienced a trend of fast economic growth, which was further stimulated by the cross-border structural adjustment programs implemented in both countries.⁵⁹ Trans-

⁵⁷ Interview: AS (68), July 17, 2017, Senafe.

⁵⁸ Paragraph 3 of Article III of the 1963 Charter of the OAU states all member states pledge 'respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state'. The OAU meeting in Cairo in July 1964 elaborated: 'Considering that border problems constitute a grave and permanent factor of dissension, all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence.

⁵⁹ "Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea," September 29, 1993.

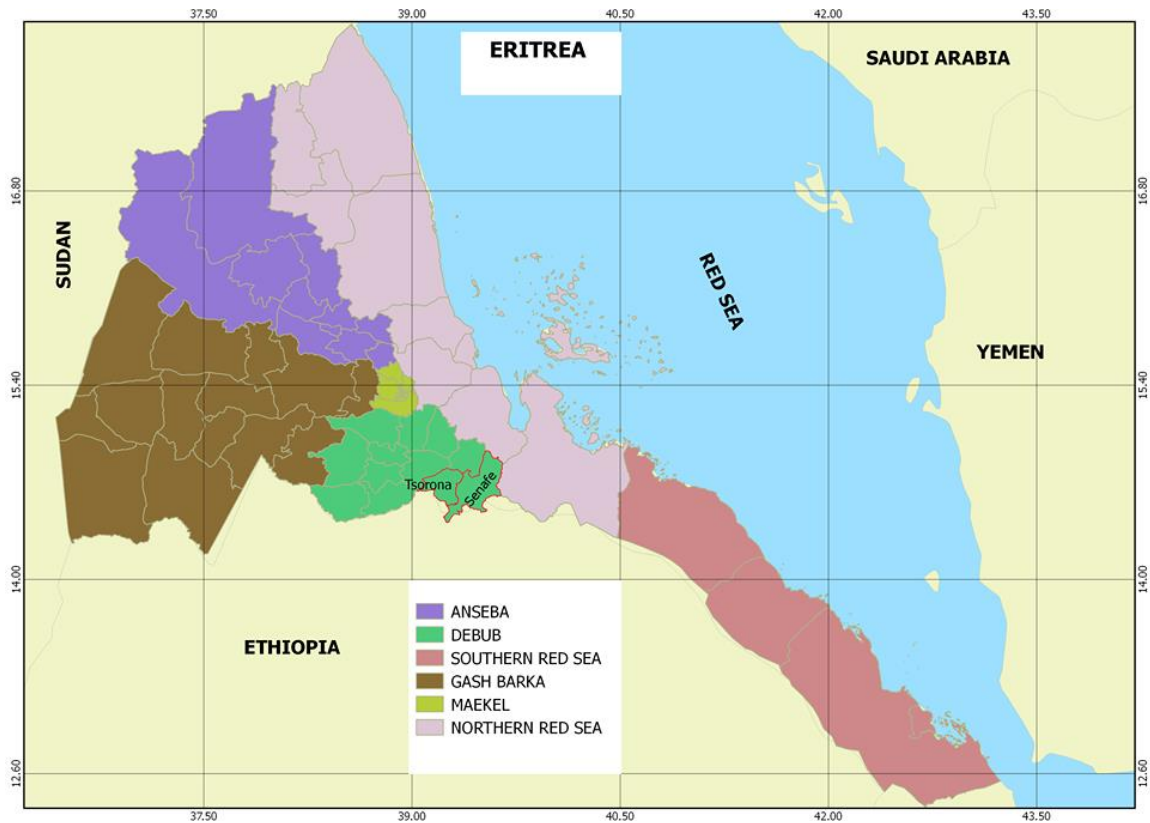
border trade emerged as a new livelihood strategy among borderland communities, and as a result, the border area rapidly became a site of socio-economic exchange. However, the transformation in border's form was largely driven by the framework of the agreement reached between the Government of Eritrea and the Transitional Government of Ethiopia on July 29, 1993, allowing the free flow of people, goods and services across their common border areas.⁶⁰ I will return to this in detail in section (2.3.2).

Meanwhile, the internal administrative structure of this sub-region changed, following the Government of Eritrea's Proclamation No. 86/1996, which restructured the existing internal administrative divisions from nine *Aweraja* into six *Zobas* instead.⁶¹ These regions are: Northern Red Sea, Anseba, Southern Red Sea, Debub (Southern), Gash-Barka and Central. The decision was taken to promote a strong Eritrean national identity that transcends ethno-communal and religious affinities in the service of consolidating the nation-building project. Accordingly, Senafe and Tserona merged to become Nus-Zoba Senafe, an integral part of the Debub (Southern) region.

In April 1996, these regions were further divided into administrative sub-divisions or Nus-Zobas, which themselves were divided into *Kebabi/Adi*, the smallest administrative unit in Eritrea. As part of this process, the former *Wereda* Senafe was sub-divided into two: Nus-Zoba Senafe and Nus-Zoba Tserona. This division was only for the sake of effective administration due to some inconveniences owing to colonial administration systems. A synopsis of these two regions', therefore, demands identification of the geography, demography of the society, economy, and religion.

⁶⁰“Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea,” September 29, 1993.

⁶¹ Eritrean government Proclamation No. 86/1996 for the establishment of regional administration.



Map 3. Political Map of Eritrea.

Sources: Department of Geography, College of Arts and Social Science, Adi Keih.

2.2.1. Senafe sub-administration/Nus- Zoba Senafe

The Senafe sub-region is one of the fifteen administrative sub-units of the southern region. It borders Adi Keih to the north and Zoba Debubawi Keikh Bahri to the east and northeast, Tigray regional state of northern Ethiopia at the southern border and Tserona to the southwest. The region is full of rugged and barren hills and mountains, and it is widely known for its varieties of granite stones.

The average annual rainfall in the area ranges between 514.7 mm and 1024.6 mm, while the temperature is estimated to be between 15° C and 21° C. Due to the mild temperature (*Dega*), relatively fair annual rainfall and fertile cultivable land, the region is widely endowed with various forest resources including, a diversity of plant species and animals. The original wild plants, consisting mainly of *Juniperus Procera*, *Olea Africana* and varieties of *Acacia*, olive trees and cactus species are the most visible, though heavily affected by five decades of fighting. The climate, soil and variety of topographic features, ranging from 1800 to 2000

meters above sea level, make the region a good home to various wild animals such as hyenas, monkeys, rabbits, cheetahs, etc.

According to the local administration's statistics office and Eritrean Mapping and Information Center (EMIC) reports of 2016, the total population size is 75,125, with 70 inhabitants per square kilometer.⁶² The majority of the people are Tigrinya and Saho. In most villages, the two ethnic groups live together although some villages are exclusively inhabited by one of the groups. Most Saho live on the eastern side of the sub-regional capital, whereas the Tigrinya people, the majority, live in the most southern tip. However, all the Saho speaking people don't belong to the same tribe. They belong to many different tribes: Assawrta, Miniferae, Toroa, Hazzo, Debre Mela and Irob. The latter group, Irob, also live beyond the border, especially around the Endeli projection.⁶³

While the majority of Tigrinya speakers are sedentary agriculturalists, there are few people who rely on economic activities other than agricultural practices namely; trade, commerce, and other forms of employment. The agriculturalists and semi-agriculturalists mainly rely on livelihood activities such as rearing livestock, bee keeping, and cultivating cereals and vegetables. They grow different cereals such as sorghum, wheat, and teff (*taff*). In addition, they cultivate a great variety of leguminous crops, including chickpeas, beans, lentils, green peppers, onions and linseeds. Before the area was turned into a military field, herding and livestock production were also critical livelihood strategies of these people.

Most Saho people are nomadic pastoralists, including some of those who live in Senafe and its adjacent territories. During the winter, they migrate with their herds to areas facing the coastal littorals of the Red Sea coast (*Bahri*) in search of grazing land and water, while in the summer they return and make shift toward the west or the Mereb river banks as the rain starts.⁶⁴ During winter, most of the areas in this region dry up; the vegetation recedes only to the main riverbanks of the Mereb river, while elsewhere water is found only in scattered

⁶² Zoba Debu Statistics Office and EMIC Report of 2016.

⁶³ Jan Abbink, "Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio-Eritrean War," *Africa: Rivista*, no. 4 (2001): 451.

⁶⁴ I.M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho*, (London: Ipswich Book Company, 2017), 174-176.

wells and waterholes. *Bahri* encloses a different environ; the rain falls in winter between November and February. Their seasonal migratory tradition enables them to make use of this seasonal variation. In parallel, the Ethiopian side of the Mereb river also used to be their grazing land until the closure of the border after the outbreak of the border war in 1998. However, their activities are not limited to pastoralism; they are also known for their bee-keeping practices, especially people who live in the areas facing the eastern escarpment.

Religiously, the Tigriyna belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, apart from a few Catholic communities, mainly in the Menekuseyto border village and Senafe. Saho, on the other hand, are exclusively Sunni Muslims. Notwithstanding these differences, Christian and Muslim communities, live side by side with a high degree of tolerance and respect for one another. They all share social, cultural and religious practices together with no distinction. There is no border between them in their social, cultural and everyday activities.

Senafe

Senafe is a border town and the capital of the sub-region. It is located among the highest mountains in the country. The town is comprised of three administration units: Hakir, Metera and Meakel Ketema, with a total population of 17,123 inhabitants.⁶⁵ The land is broken up by many rifts, gorges and river valleys, often with deeply eroded edges and banks.



Figure 2 Senafe border town

⁶⁵ Senafe Sub-region's Statistics Office Report of 2018.

According to Alberto Pollera, the author of the *Native Peoples of Eritrea*, the name Senafe, formerly known as Hakir, originates from its founding father's aboriginal place, 'Sanaa Fere',⁶⁶ meaning the son or people of Sanna.⁶⁷ The local people claim that their forefather, Abdalla Sanna, came from Sana, the capital of present Yemen. The descendants of this tribe now live in two neighboring Senafe villages, Addi Awilio and Ahyasen.

During Italian colonial rule in Eritrea, Senafe was a small shanty village. It had only a few muddy houses, with no economic significance. When the Italians established its administrative and revenue centers within its present heartland, the town emerged as a developing border town.⁶⁸ Since then, it has been serving as the sub-region's capital and is home to two ethnic groups, the Tigrinya and the Saho. During the Eritrean armed struggle for independence (1962-1991), however, it became an important battleground for the Eritrean armed movements and Ethiopian forces, opposing political objectives. The town was subsequently devastated.

After Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia, the town was quickly revived from the wreckage of the war that had raged for 30 years due to the open border policy adopted by Eritrea and Ethiopia. For the first seven years, it was the main exchange and trading center for the frontier people of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Economically, it was strongly connected to a border town from the Ethiopian side, Zalanbsa. This was a vital supplement to its rural socio-economic bases. The borderland people of Eritrea and Ethiopia converged in this town to exchange their agricultural and livestock products, which had a significant advantage for both sides. Obviously, the availability of enough potable water, fertile agricultural land and the size of the population, in addition to the booming post-independence economy, made it possible for the town to become a center of gravity.

Unfortunately, however, the border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia turned the town almost into a neglected town. The public service buildings in the town, including the social, health,

⁶⁶ Alberto Pollera, *The Genesis of the Different Peoples of Eritrea*, trans. Linda Laapin (Red Sea Press, 1998), 66.

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Interview: Tekie Hiru (90), July 11, 2017, Senafe.

and education service centers were either intentionally or unintentionally destroyed by Ethiopian forces. Most of the damage was caused during the third round of the war (2000). The houses were all stripped bare.

At the same time, crosscutting economic relations were cut off, and the economy declined. Employment opportunities were squeezed and the state of insecurity became rife due to increasing militarization at the border due to a persistent ‘no war, no peace’ situation. These problems, in their part, stripped the youths’ outlooks for a better future in their homeland. I will return to these issues in more detail in Chapter 5.

2.2.2. Tserona Sub-region/ Nus ZobaTserona

The Tserona sub-zone is an extension of the Senafe sub-zone, located southwest of Senafe sub-districts. It shares other borders with sub-administration of Mai-Ani in the North and Ethiopia to the South, and Adi Kheyihi to the Northeast. According to Zoba Debu administrative statistical reports of 2016, the region is the second most densely populated area of Zoba Debu, with a total population of 39,736.⁶⁹ The sub-region’s main center is Tserona. I will add more detail in the next section.



Figure 3 Tserona

⁶⁹ “Zoba Debu Statistics Office and EMIC Report,” 2016.

Tigriyna and Saho are the two principal ethnic groups of the region, but there are also a few scattered Tigre communities living among them. Except in the sub-regional capital, Tserona, and a few other villages, the two largest ethnic groups have separated and scattered patterns of settlement.⁷⁰ The majority of the Tigrinya speakers live in Tserona, Mai-Aini, Una Nazo logo Sarda, Una Andom and Emaba Bariya, whereas the Saho live in Ayba, Egri Mekhel, and other small isolated villages. There are also four Eritrean Saho villagers who were completely uprooted after the border crisis in 1998. These are the former inhabitants of Begena, Mai-Hamato, Leyto, and Wutuh, now some of them live in Enda Aba Estifanos and Ena Adndom, whereas others resettled in the far west along the Eritrea-Sudanese border.

Topographically speaking, this sub-region is more heterogeneous than the Senafe sub-region. It consists mainly of the Hazemo plain (1400-1700 meters above sea level) and some isolated rocky plateaus (1800-2000m) in the most southeastern part of the region. In the south, the Belesa river and its tributaries flow across wide and open ravines. The average rainfall is estimated to be between 350 mm and 420 mm.

Compared to Senafe region, this area is highly endowed with various domestic and wild animals. Among others, wild animals such as hyenas, cheetahs, monkeys, and as well as different species of birds are part of the mosaic of the region's features. But their numbers have drastically declined due to persistent wars, deforestation, land degradation, landmines, and poor farming methods.

In terms of religion, the largest portion of the population adheres to the Christian Orthodox Church and Islam. The Tigrinya people belong to the Orthodox Church, while the Saho are Sunni Muslims. In addition to this, the Tigrinya people have a complex set of cultural practices celebrated in different seasons, attached to different rituals and beliefs. However, like in the previous region, the two communities have no fault-lines constructed along religion or otherwise; they all have a history of peaceful co-existence. Both communities share many cultural and social ceremonies together and they visit each other in any circumstance.

Traditionally, the local people were semi-agriculturalists with few exceptions. During the summer season, they practiced agricultural activities around their villages in the Hazomo plains, the most cultivable land in the region, while in winter they used to traverse long distances in search of water and grazing land for their herds of camels, goats, sheep, and cattle. Since the outbreak of the border war however, the nomadic livelihood has been weakened for two fundamental reasons. First, the border war caused displacement, the majority of the villagers were returned back to their original villages from the makeshift camps with empty hands as their herds died from a lack of enough food and an unsuitable climate. Second, the local people are living deprived of the right to move freely as before since the area has become a frontline between the Eritrean and Ethiopian armies.

Following the independence of Eritrea in 1991, the region had also new livelihood strategies. With the changes in the form and function of the international border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, cross-border trade and investment emerged to support more viable livelihood strategies. The local borderland people of Tserona and its neighboring villages were particularly advantaged. They strengthened their economic bases by diversifying their walks of life and grew prosperous. I will return in more detail to these changes' implications in Section 2.3.2.

With the outbreak of war in 1998, the border, once completely invisible and a source of livelihood, changed into a playground of provocation between Eritrean and Ethiopian soldiers. The borderland became disadvantaged, and the people were deprived of their basic livelihood activities. Most of them were badly affected by the course of the war, particularly from indiscriminate shelling, looting, and harassment.

Tserona

Tserona is a border town in the southern part of Eritrea, lying very close to the Belessa river, the Eritrea-Ethiopian international border (between 14.53° North and 39.04 -39.37° East), and 106 kilometers south of Asmara, the Eritrean capital. As seen above, it is the sub-region's capital. It is mostly populated by two different tribes, the Tigrinya and the Saho. Most of the inhabitants are Tigrinya-speaking people. According to Tserona Administration

statistics office report, the number of households in Tserona in 2018 was 5,737. There were 2,687 males, 3,050 females, and the total number of families was 1,407.⁷¹

The name Tserona derives from a Tigriyna word '*Tserina*', literally meaning 'cleaned'. According to the local tradition, this name was supposedly given by caravan people who were regularly flocking around the region. The former name of the town, however, was *Atikaro*, meaning the land of *Atikaro* trees.

The traditional economic foundation of Tserona is not too different from its surrounding rural areas including subsistence agriculture and herding, with its fundamental component being sorghum, *Zangada*, *dagusha* (eleusine tocusso) and teff farming on the Hazomo plain. As a supplement to farming, the residents herd camels, goats, sheep, and cattle. To further supplement their household economic base, some of the inhabitants engage in different wage labour and trades.

From independence of Eritrea in 1991 to the outbreak of war in 1998, Tserona was economically the fastest growing border town. It was an epicenter of exchange of goods and services for people from the Eritrean and northern Ethiopian sides. As many stories from the local residents describe (see Section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2), it had vast and diverse economic ties with all adjacent pockets of villages and towns. This economic foundation of the town has been damaged since the Eritrea –Ethiopia border war began in 1998.

During the course of the third round of war (2000), the town became a military garrison for the Ethiopian army and was severely damaged. All civilian buildings were either dismantled or looted and public sectors were ruined. Uprooted people fled into Mai-Ani first and then to Deda until the United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)⁷² arrived in 2001.

When they went back, thanks to rehabilitation funds raised by the government of Eritrea, Italy and the Netherlands, the people quickly rebuilt their town from scratch, and town life has been revived but at a snail's pace. Small-scale businesses, including restaurants, hotels,

⁷¹ Tserona administration Statistics Office Report of 2016.

⁷² Following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1320 (2000), UNMEE deployed in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The decision was taken by UNSC during its 41 97th session (see S/RES/1320(2000)).

service centers, bars and of course shops have slowly been growing in number. The existing state of uncertainty and the resulting stresses, however, still find their expression in the everyday life of the town and its vicinities, and wreak havoc in the lives of the residents. The town is marked by massive unemployment, and persistent downward economic and social trends. In addition, the inhabitants suffer from spiraling levels of cross-border war shocks, increasingly fragile environments, growing insecurity, recurrent family breakdown and non-stop migration.

2.3. Pre-War realities of the two towns: The nexus between the People and the border

For both Eritrea, a small state, and Ethiopia, a regional power, the period from 1991 to 1998 represents an important rupture from their past. As stated in chapter two (section 2.2), the independence of Eritrea after 30 years of war for independence marked a shift in the form of border, from internal administrative border between two administrative into an international border between two sovereign states, Eritrea and Ethiopia. This means that Eritrea has resumed the colonial status of its border with Ethiopia. However, this split doesn't entail an end to the existing interactions and relations between the borderland communities living in both sides of the border. This is demonstrated by an extensive field research conducted on everyday experiences of Senafe and Tserona residents during the summer season of 2017 and winter and autumn of 2018.

2. 3.1. Localized cross-border encounter and interactions

After the secession of Eritrea from its old foe, Ethiopia, in 1991, the maintenance of the colonial border and the subsequent division of ethnic groups, increasingly complex cross-border trajectories between the borderland communities of Eritrea and Ethiopia were naturally to be anticipated, but my respondents' everyday experiences reveal that the opposite was true. Almost all the interviewees mention that movements of people for various reasons such as social, religious, cultural and other everyday activities had been rife. This was largely associated with a long history of cross-border family ties. A 68-year-old interviewee from Senafe told me:

In Senafe and Zalanbsa, the Ethiopian border town,⁷³ there were two worlds: Eritrean and Ethiopian. But we had all been living together with a high degree of tolerance and understanding. Our children grew up together and learned together in the same schools without distinction. People from neighboring Eritrean and Ethiopian villagers often used to visit, study and shop in these towns without paying much attention to the border. No one used to ask who was who, or who was going where. We complemented each other, as our cultural, social and religious foundations are similar. There were no red lines drawn among us in our minds or on the ground; we lived side by side like brothers, and felt at ease. Many people were trans-border: they led their lives by moving to and fro to farm, work and study or to acquire what their families needed on an everyday basis.⁷⁴

Seventy-year-old Tiumizghi Tekhile⁷⁵ was another borderland resident with similar cross-border life credentials. In fact, he was a true representative of the border-straddling life. He was originally from Acuran, a small border village in the Tserona sub-region, where he was born and brought up, and where he spent most of a happy youth. Later, however, when he reached his early twenties, he changed from herding to an itinerant cross-border life, moving back and forth between Zelambesa, Mekelle, Senafe and Tserona for business, and emerging as one of the most successful businessmen in the region. Ato. Tiumizghi recalls his everyday cross-border life experiences:

From the independence of Eritrea in 1991 to 1998, and even before, the cross-border life along this section of the border was a blessing. I had two wives – one from the Eritrean side of the border and the other from the Ethiopian side. I used to cross the border regularly for business, entertainment, family visits, religious festivals, funerals and marriage ceremonies and for other reasons.⁷⁶

I asked him about his childhood experiences. He explained:

⁷³ Zalanbsa is a tiny town located in the north part of Tigray region, around 42 kilometers from Adi Girat and a few kilometers from Seriha, a small Eritrean border village. After the independence of Eritrea, the residents of the town found themselves in new geopolitical reality due to the changes in the form and functions of the border. They experienced a new pattern of employment. Their old agrarian livelihood system was supported by many new wage-earning jobs and commercial activities. However, the border tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia left it as a mere military garrison rather than a town, and all cross-border commercial activities were interrupted as the border areas set out on a collision course.

⁷⁴ Interview: WSS (68), September 3, 2017, Asmara.

⁷⁵ Interview: Tiumizghi Tekhile (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

In Acuran, we had a common life with our brothers from the Ethiopian side of the border. People had the unregulated right to move freely.”

“Do you mean you had no set of governing rules and regulations as members of two different countries?” I asked.

“What are you talking about? We had no restrictions of any kind, and no obstructions.

We even used to bury family members across the border, let alone there being any restrictions on everyday cross-border movements. We used to bury our family members in *Debre Damo*, the famous monastery on the Ethiopian side, for instance. Everyday life in small villages such as Qnin-Mezabir, Qnin- Eta Abir, Qunito – Eta Abir and Haz Hasan-Deqi Leyton (very small pockets of border villages) was highly intertwined. In particular, the residents of Enta, an Eritrean border village, and Damân, which was an Ethiopian village, even used to cross the border when they need fire, as there was hardly any distance between them. Our herders, farmers, and kids shared almost everything, just as neighboring villagers within the same country do. There was nothing to read between the lines about.⁷⁷

The stories reveal that even though the international border between Eritrea and Ethiopia was delineated on maps, the local border communities did not clearly acknowledge it in their everyday lives. They continued to move over the borderland from birth to death without paying attention to haphazardly drawn lines. Neither “what the map divides” nor the waves of the political and historical itinerary between Eritrea and Ethiopia did anything to change their cross-border familial patterns of attachment. Their relationships and mobility were also only slightly governed by the quirks of a border or a different legal status.

Uninterrupted cross-border inter-marriages and the subsequent familial ties were the most persistent basis for this pattern of cross-border mobility. Except for a few from Senafe town, the majority of my interviewees (75.6%) confirmed that they had family ties across the border that had been established by cross-border inter-marriage. This pattern of kinship connections was not a new phenomenon: it owes its existence back through the centuries, as Alemseged Abay has skillfully demonstrated in his well-known book *Identity Jilted or Re-*

⁷⁷ Ibid

*Imagining Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrinya Nationalist Struggles.*⁷⁸

A resident of Senafe provided a further explanation:

The residents of this town are a mixed society. For instance, I have a sister who is married to a Tigrean in Zelambesa. This is not a unique feature of our family or town; it applies to the whole border region. The majority of the borderland communities have the same family make-up. Just behind my house you have a woman from the Ethiopian side of the border who is married to an Eritrean. We have always been dependent on one another in all aspects. The relationship was like that of a mother and child attached by an umbilical cord. It was therefore a must for everybody in this area to cross the border regularly for social and cultural events or other livelihood demands.⁷⁹

Qeshi Tesfamichael Ghebremickeal, an 80-year-old interviewee, told me something similar to what the previous interviewees had recounted:

For many decades, we cemented our cross-border relationship through blood ties, with brothers from Senafe and its periphery marrying women from neighborhood Ethiopian villages and vice versa. These cross-border kinship ties in turn compelled us to move to and fro across the border on a daily basis for many decades.⁸⁰

As these examples show, the subject of cross-border inter-marriages emerges repeatedly, indicating that the reactivation of the international border did not create any sort of abstraction in their cross-border blood ties. A 56-year-old man from the south-east of Senafe elaborated on this in some detail:

We are umbilical brothers. We have brothers, sisters, daughters, cousins and nieces on the other side of the border and vice versa. Our religious and cultural make-up is also the same. We even used to visit each other for normal

⁷⁸ Alemseged Abay, *Identity Jilted or Re-Imagining Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrinya Nationalist Struggles* (The Red Sea Press, 1998), 151-171.

⁷⁹ Interview: LGS (50): August 29, 2017, Senafe.

⁸⁰ Interview: Qeshi Tesfamichael Ghebremickeal (80), August 14, 2017, Senafe.

celebrations such as *mera* (marriage), *Timqet* (baptism), *Teskar* (commemoration), *Nigidet* (pilgrimage) and other family occasions.⁸¹

The overlapping cross-border nomadic culture was another normal and indispensable fact of life in the area under investigation because of the similarities in their livelihood strategies with their kin on the other side of the border. Under normal circumstances, they often crossed the porous borders during the winter season in search of water and grazing land, with the direction of movement depending on the availability of these resources. Disputes over grazing and farmland were normally settled by traditional authorities from both sides of the border. They never involved the state authorities from either side except in two isolated areas of the periphery of Senafe, Menekhuseyto and Gelleba, where there were disputes over grazing and farmland respectively.

A former soldier and owner of a herd of camels illustrated the push-and-pull factors in the pre-border war cross-border nomadic life with his own example:

Before the border war (1998-2000), we crossed the Mereb and Belesa rivers daily since we have the same livelihood system, which is pastoralism or semi-pastoralism. You can't put in lines for cattle or camel herding communities as the pattern of our livelihoods goes against it. The nomadic life has its own inherent rules and regulations that you need to comply with (*this was a kind of lecture for me*). For this reason, we, the residents of the borderland, used to move into the deep interior of Tigray, especially during *hagay* (the dry season) or *derqi* (drought), and the same was true of our neighbors the Tigreans. The downward spiral only began when the border conflict started to grab our minds following acts of aggression in the western and eastern sectors of the Eritrea-Ethiopian borders. Otherwise, I don't remember a single noteworthy incident or dispute that turned our cross-border relations into the different ones you see today.⁸²

Cross-border movement of labor was an equally important variable that helps explain the everyday cross-border realities of the area. Although no statistics can be found on either side of the border due to the lack of regularity of everyday cross-border movements, many Eritreans and Tigreans commuted from one side of the border to the other for work, mainly

⁸¹ Interview: YFS (56), August 14, 2017, Senafe.

⁸² Interview: SA (42), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

from the immediately adjacent Tigrean border villages to the Eritrean side.⁸³ This was partly due to high labor demand on the Eritrean side of the border, specifically in the agriculture, livestock and construction sectors, and a labor surplus on the Ethiopian side of the border.

Zeid Miraci, who is known by her nickname Bashay Zeid, has been living in Tserona and its close surrounding area for almost 75 years. Here she reflects on how vital the cross-border labor movement was for the borderland communities' livelihood:

Cross-border migration among the borderland communities was common. Hundreds of people from the Tigrean side of the border would flock to this town in search of opportunities. They used to take on farm work such as tilling, weeding, thrashing or herding. They also worked on different construction projects to make a living. The pattern of labor migration was mainly one-directional, however, from Tigrean villages and towns to here. This was because of differences in labor demand. Compared to this place, the demand for labor in Tigray was lower, partly due to population size, low wages and a sluggish economy.⁸⁴

These references may indicate that the state border was slowly losing its symbolic function against the framework of the construction of the new State of Eritrea because of conflicting interests between the borderland communities and the political center. The borderland communities, as our findings reveal, did their best to take advantage of their geopolitical position and cross-border socio-cultural and kinship ties to meet their everyday needs. The political center, on the other hand, subscribed to a more rigid state border in symbolic terms, but a soft border in political-economic terms.⁸⁵ However, the socio-cultural and economic configuration of the borderland communities meant that the political interests were unattainable, and thus the border remained fluid and invisible.

Although this study is limited to the Eritrean side of the border alone, these stories of cross-border attachments and everyday experiences are also largely confirmed by their kin from the

⁸³ Local people use the name Tigreans to describe the inhabitants of the Regional State of Tigray.

⁸⁴ Interview: Zeid Miraci (76), August 18, 2017, Tserona.

⁸⁵ Kjetil Tronvoll, "Borders of Violence - Boundaries of Identity: Demarcating the Eritrean Nation-State," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6 (1999):1037–60, accessed July 13, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329233>.

Ethiopian side of the border. As Behailu's ethnographic work reveals, there was no form of disjunction between the people of Zelambesa and its neighboring villages on the one hand and their brothers' on the Eritrean side on the other.⁸⁶ They have long used their cross-border ethnic ties to facilitate their socio-economic activities and relationships.

The Ethiopian political center, especially the regional state of Tigray, subscribed to a more flexible view of the border in symbolic terms, but to a rigid border in economic terms. This view was deliberately projected by Tigray's regional state actors against the framework of an agreement reached between the Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia on July 30, 1993 to prevent the excessive dominance of Eritrean business communities in the area.⁸⁷ The symbolic border was left permeable, however. Individuals from each side of the border were free to inter-marry, make visits to family or relatives, herd and attend social ceremonies.⁸⁸ As the local informants from the Eritrean side of the border told me, the local cadres of the TPLF did not want the international border to become rigid so that they could slowly advance their "Greater Tigray" strategy.⁸⁹

The cross-border everyday lives of these trans-border societies were thus fluid and ambiguous. Despite the changes in the form and function of the border as the result of modifications to the political landscape of the border in 1991, there was no state impediment to local acceptance of each another. The borderland communities continued to carry out their everyday routine business as before. The only thing that distinguished them from one another as border communities was their respective national flags. This is why they maintained their strong pre-independence social, cultural and religious networks: people intermingled freely without set limitations, lived together, and shared their routine everyday livelihood practices.

⁸⁶ Behailu Abebe, "War Stories, Displacement and Coping Experiences of the Displaced from the Ethio-Eritrean War," in *People, Space and the State: Migration, Resettlement and Displacement in Ethiopia*, ed. by A. Pankhurst and Francois Pigué (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2004), 230.

⁸⁷ "Extract from Final Report of the Joint Review Committee on the Implementation of the Ethio-Eritrea Economic Agreement" (Addis Ababa, 1997).; "Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea" Addis Ababa, 1993.

⁸⁸ Abebe, "War Stories," 210-35.

⁸⁹ Interview: SMT (53), July 29, 2017, Tserona.

2.3.2. Commercial traffic and movement of people

Similarly, the border region was an area of overlapping cross-border trade networks, particularly after the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia. In 1991, when Eritrea became a separate political entity, the formerly war-shattered and economically marginalized Eritrean-Ethiopian border became an international border, resuming its colonial status. This transformation influenced not only the border's form, but also its function. It brought enormous economic advantages to the arbitrarily divided borderland populations, and borderland inhabitants from both sides benefited from a variety of activities – both legal and illegal – despite the existence of only two border crossings: Serha-Zalembesa and Tserona-Gerhu Sirnau.

Moreover, the treaty of friendship and cooperation signed between Eritrea and Ethiopia in July 1993⁹⁰ resulted in an unprecedented upsurge in investment and business, particularly in Tserona and Senafe. Much of the money was generated from the private business community in Eritrea when the two governments set up the necessary cross-border business environment. The large- and small-scale flows of goods were a normal fact of cross-border life.⁹¹ The region was rapidly changing from a long isolated and marginal area to a potential center of cross-border trade between Eritrea and Ethiopia. This was reflected in the economic fortunes of the two border towns, Senafe and Tserona, which emerged as being of the greatest economic importance both in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Indeed, many people on both sides of the border survived thanks to the number of small businesses, including shops and market stands.

At this time, the Eritrean side was a source of products such as salt, sugar, cooking oil, iron sheets, reinforcing bars, kerosene, wheat, and maize. Heading towards Eritrea in return were items such as coffee, untanned leather, *rhamnus prinioides* buckthorn leaves (*Gesho*), red pepper, white and red teff, chickpeas, field peas, beans, spices, cotton and horses. The majority of my interviewees reasoned that this vibrant new cross-border flow of goods and

⁹⁰ “The Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea,” July 30, 1993.

⁹¹ Interview: YSA (56), July 3, 2017, Tserona.

people happened because of price differences on either side of the border due to the changes in the political landscape between the two countries in 1991.

Mohammed, a 57-year-old man who owned a small enterprise and stores in Senafe, explained the development and its positive impact to me about in these terms:

Immediately after the independence of Eritrea in 1991, Senafe became a land port town, with booming centers of commerce and trade that had been built from the wreckage of the war that had raged for 30 years, mainly with the support of local private investment, much of it from Senafe businessmen. This was further empowered by various social services that provided institutions built by the government of Eritrea. Many exported or imported goods destined for either Eritrea or Ethiopia were landed, unloaded and rerouted from here in different directions. The local people also derived a huge benefit from processes and other types of work.⁹²

A similar version of the story was provided by Mebrahtu:

This town was a hub of opportunities, not only for local people but also for many people who commuted from all directions. Most of the inhabitants had invested their money heavily in store buildings and service sectors, as the town was the launchpad for a spiraling network of cross-border movement of goods across the borderland.⁹³

There were consistent corresponding accounts about Tserona as well. It had competing relevance for local inhabitants and commuting businessmen who constantly moved across the border and the borderland. It offered a variety of opportunities to people from places such as Acuran, Dagian, Englea Hatsin, Chealo, Hadamu, Zerie Musi, Derechen, Mai-Ambesa and Tegeleba. Many made their living by transporting small amounts of goods across the border, whether legally or illegally.

Tsighe, the member of the defunct parliament, recalled his old memories as follows:

⁹² Interview: Mohammed Mahmud Omer (57), July 3, 2017, Senafe.

⁹³ Interview: Mebrahtu KS (73), July 23, 2017, Senafe.

The markets in all these important border towns were not held on the same day. Here (in Tserona), for example, the market is held on Saturdays. Local people from both sides of the border used to travel to the town for various reasons. Some came with their livestock products, and others to buy or exchange other goods. In addition, the town functioned as a springboard for trans-border imports and exports. Many businessmen from other parts of Eritrea and Ethiopia bought or rented warehouses in the town to facilitate their cross-border business transaction. In the process, the town became the main station for a variety of opportunities for the local inhabitants and daily cross-border commuters from neighboring villages.⁹⁴

In this trans-border network, the sources of the largest volumes of merchandized items, both formal and informal, were the Asmara-Deki Mehare, Adi Keih and Senafe-Serha, and Massawa-Deki Mehare, Adi Keih and Senafe-Serha routes. The Mekelle route had an equal role: its branches extended as far as Ethiopia, and it arrived at the border area through Adigrat and Zelambesa. Some export and import items end up in Eritrea, while the remainders were shipped out through the Red Sea for overseas trade purposes. These two routes took advantage of the asphalt road that had been built during the apex of Italian colonial rule in Eritrea. The third route is the Asmara-Tserona-Tigray one, which runs from Asmara to the Deke-Mahire-Mai Ani-Tserona road. It lies on the opposite side to the former route, which comes from the Ethiopian side through Hawizen,-Bzet-Mai-Nhayg-Acurran-Tserona.

Compared with first two trade routes, the volume of goods passing along the third and the fourth ones was smaller because of inconveniences in the transport system due to the seasonal nature of the road. However, all these routes played an essential role in revitalizing the livelihoods not only of the border towns but also of the surrounding villages, which carried out varying forms of business. One young interviewee from Senafe, for instance, recounts his childhood memories:

Trucks loaded with Ethiopian exports, cars full of Eritrean imports and exports, cattle loaded in transport tracks, crowds of nomads, buses from

⁹⁴ Interview: Tsighe Tekhile (44), July 27, 2017, Tserona.

different parts of Eritrea and Ethiopia along this road were very common, and so we had everything in front of us.⁹⁵

During my fieldwork in the outskirts of the town, an 86-year old man shared a similar story with me:

This was the busiest land border crossing into Eritrea and Ethiopia. It was a place where lots of loaded trucks and a long line of cars and people on foot backed up on either side of the border. Trucks loaded with Ethiopian eggs, cereals and other foodstuffs, and trucks full of exported materials from the Eritrean side including iron bars, products for the home and electronic equipment waited for the normal bureaucratic procedures. Almost every member of this region was doing business through these procedures in one way or another.⁹⁶

Simultaneously with cross-border transactions of goods, an intensive cross-border livestock exchange was established. Livestock from around Hazomo, Shimezana and the northern Tigray areas, which were especially rich in cattle, goats and camels, was taken to the Senafe and Tserona market centers and then on to major cities, particularly Adi Keih, Deqemahire and Asmara, supporting the livelihoods of hundreds and thousands of borderland residents.⁹⁷ The residents of Northern Tigray in particular used to bring and sell their livestock in these centers because it was more valuable than on their side of the border. However, this cross-border exchange of livestock products was not the result of the change in the borderland milieu: it had deep historical roots, as the existence of the majority of borderland people was based principally on agriculture and the nomadic life. The independence of Eritrea only contributed to a further upsurge. Tesfamichael, a farmer and the best-known elder from Tserona, recalls his vivid memories:

Every Saturday, Tserona became the main station for exchanging cross-border livestock products. We used to purchase and sell all types of livestock and livestock products from Tigray, mainly Gerhu Sirna, Kele Lie and other

⁹⁵ Interview: Birhane (30), August 14, 2017, Senafe.

⁹⁶ Informal Conversation with GMS (86), May 23, 2018, Serha.

⁹⁷ DO. Akele Guzai, Access no. 3. *Economic studies: Trade and commerce*: [Unpublished Ethnographic survey conducted from June 19, 1997 to July 12, 1997]. Asmara: RDC, 1997, 803.

surrounding Eritrean and Ethiopian villages. The livestock and livestock products from the Ethiopian side of the border were relatively cheaper for us.⁹⁸

In addition to the economic factor, the cross-border livestock market in this area had a much broader social value because it allowed local borderland communities to forge an extensive intra-kin cross-border network. It served as a hub for the circulation of information. Family members would flock to the market centers not only to buy or sell their livestock products, but also to update one another on various issues such as family wellbeing, pastoral and livestock matters, rain and other life-related issues.

2.3.3. Conclusion

In this article, I have illustrated the phenomenon of a border in terms of its everyday dimension in the light of the modification of the political landscape between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1991, based on lived everyday experiences and narratives from the Eritrean side of the border.

Against a backdrop of the conventional view of borders in the Horn of Africa, which accepts borders as barriers and constraints, this empirical data shows that the arbitrarily superimposed international border between Eritrea and Ethiopia has had no effect not only on the existing social, cultural and religious homogeneity among people living across the border, but also on everyday cross-border experiences and relationships. In a more everyday sense, they have maintained their intra-ethnic socio-economic relationships and contacts. The function of this border as a political barrier has been overshadowed by cross-border family and socio-economic ties. There have been no significant forms of obstruction at the border, and people from both sides have continued to cross it freely in order to meet the demands of their everyday lives, intermarry, visit family or relatives, herd, and attend social ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals and worship. The border and identity lines have therefore remained fluid and invisible.

⁹⁸ Interview: Tesfamichael Abbay (73), July 15, 2017, Tserona.

However, this case study also reinforces another facet that has been widely accepted in the recent literature on the Horn of African: borders as “economic resources”.⁹⁹ This refers to the rebuilding of cross-border economic relations. The change in the form and function of the border due to the modification of the political landscape between the two countries opened them up to new economic opportunities, facilitating formal and informal cross-border trade stimulated by price differences. The borderland communities were fully aware of their mutual interest in benefitting themselves and have established successful cross-border neighborly relations against the backdrop of the symbolic border. The border and identity lines have remained fluid and invisible.

⁹⁹ Dereje Feyissa, “Borders and Borderlands in the Horn of Africa,” 2010.

Chapter Three

The Border War

My son, war victimized us. War is not the right choice. And the border is not the main source of the displacement. I can't tell you that we had never had a border dispute, we had, but we used to resolve them through local elders' intervention. However, the course we pursued during the border conflict and our current realities are unexplainable rages.

Ismael Ahmad

I. Introduction

This chapter traces the unfolding of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict (1998-2000). The aim is to highlight how the course of the three rounds of war changed the existing cross-border relations between the people living across the border. Following a brief introduction on Eritrea-Ethiopia post-independence relations, this chapter mainly focuses on how the territorial disputes, strained party-to-party relations and an economic imbalance between the two states contributed to the outbreak of the border war that killed around 100,000 soldiers on both sides.¹ It then explores the role of political leadership in Eritrea and Ethiopia and the unfolding of the crisis. Finally, it provides some highlights on the Algiers Peace deal of December 12, 2000, and seeks to understand how the peace package became an embrace of monumental consequences, the premise of the 'no war, no peace' situation.

¹ Wuhibegezer Ferede Bezabih, "Fundamental Consequences of the Ethio-Eritrean War [1998-2000]," *Journal of Conflictology* 5, no. 2 (2014), 42, accessed November 15, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7238/joc.v5i2.1919>.

3.1 Pre-dispute atmosphere: 1991-1998

Following the demise of the *Derge* regime in 1991, after 17 years at the helm of Ethiopian political gamut, the EPLF² led government filled the power vacuum in Eritrea, whereas TPLF dominated the coalition of the ethnicity-based EPRD government in Ethiopia. In 1993, two years after *de facto* independence, Eritrea became a formal member of the international community following an astonishing plebiscite that resulted in favor of independence; 99.81 per cent of the voters voted for independence.³ The secession process was amicable - with full-fledged support from the transitional government of Ethiopia.⁴

Since then, the two countries had cultivated harmonious bilateral relationships involving diplomatic, trade, investment, and economic, political, social and cultural relations. The relationship was based on a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed on July 30, 1993.⁵ Both states shared common values and norms not only on bilateral relations issues but also on many regional and international issues. The aim of the agreement's framework was to strengthen the war-torn economies and societies, and in turn to promote regional level political and economic cooperation and engagement rather than walls and barriers.

They agreed on several terms in the economic field, including agreements for the gradual elimination of all sort of trade barriers, and the harmonization of customs duties and policies.⁶ They also shared a common currency – the Ethiopian Birr - until the government of Eritrea introduced the new Eritrean currency, the Nakfa, in 1997.⁷ The common currency had worked due to common fiscal and monetary policies.

² In 1994, EPLF reconfigured itself to be PFDJ and became a singular political party in the history of the newly established country, Eritrea; while TPLF led coalition government of EPRD formed a semi-multiparty system in Ethiopia.

³ "Eritrea: Africa's New State," *African Confidential*, April 30, 1993, accessed July 2017, https://www.africa-confidential.com/special-report/id/25/Africa's_new_state.

⁴ John Young, "The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (1996): 105–6.

⁵ "Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea" July 30, 1993.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kinfe Abraham, *Ethio-Eritrean History and the Ethio-Eritrean War* (London: EIIPD, 2004), 110-116.

In addition to promoting cross-border economic integration, the two states agreed over the issue of port usage. Ethiopia was allowed to use two Eritrean ports, Massawa and Assab, as free trade outlets. The result was a huge success for both countries. The Ethiopian share of transit traffic through these two port cities jumped from 700,000 tons in 1991 to 2.7 million tons in 1995 and accordingly the service return to Eritrea.⁸ 90% of Ethiopian imports and 50% of its exports were passing through the Assab port alone.

In a similar vein, as per the agreement reached between the Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia on September 23, 1993, both countries harmonized their immigration policies.⁹ The main objective was to facilitate the free flow of goods, services and people from one side of the border to another, and this was largely perceived as a significant departure from the war ravaged region's traditional order.¹⁰ Citizens were moving, investing and borrowing freely on both sides of the border without any restriction or duress.¹¹ Eritreans and Ethiopians lived in each other's countries for an indefinite period of time without any troubles obtaining a permit. The border communities used to cross the international border not only for economic purposes but for social and cultural activities, such as marriage ceremonies, funeral services or religious festivals. The border was almost meaningless, as the local people did not conceive of any border in the ground or in their minds.¹²

Equally important was the agreement on the area of investment. The two countries and their nationals were allowed to invest freely in both countries enjoying same and equal treatment.¹³ Similarly, under the framework of the Protocol agreement on cooperation in the field of Planning and Economic Development, agreed on September 27, 1993, Ethiopian

⁸ Alexandria Magnolia Dias, "An Inter-State War in the Post-Cold War Era: Eritrea-Ethiopia (1998-2000)," PHD thesis, (London School of Economics and Political Sciences, 2008), 55.

⁹ Alemseged Tesfai, "The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict Part I, Part II and Part II," accessed September 23, 2017, <http://www.dehai.org/conflict/analysis/alemsgghed1.html>.

¹⁰ During his Africa visit in March 1998, president Bill Clinton of U.S.A dubbed Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and few other as a 'renaissance African leaders' based on their exceptional magnanimity and initial reformist tendencies.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kjetil Tronvoll, *War*, 100.

¹³ Protocol Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Planning and Economic Development was signed on September 27, 1993.

airlines was allowed to take Eritrea's quota of IATA¹⁴ flight space and privilege.¹⁵ In addition, Eritreans were their regular clients.

The Eritrean-Ethiopian joint military and security package was also a vital component of their domestic and regional vision. The agreement was reached on May 13, 1994, by Neizghi Keflu, Deputy Chief of Internal Affairs of Eritrea and Kuma Demeska, Minister of Internal Affairs of Ethiopia.¹⁶ The core element of the agreement was to assist one another under the banner of attack against one shall be considered an attack against all. In order to put the terms of this agreement on a firm foundation, the two countries agreed to set out programs for joint military and security training, operation, fighting drug-trafficking etc.¹⁷ From the very beginning, they coordinated their efforts against any threats posed from terrorist and terrorist outfits, coming from Sudan and some Middle Eastern and North African countries.¹⁸

What happened between Eritrea and Yemen over their maritime border, particularly over Hanish Saghir Island in 1995, also helped the two countries further the terms of their agreements on action. During the conflict, Eritrea received four military helicopters and other war ammunitions.¹⁹ According to Paulos Milkias, Ethiopia took the initiative in order to shore up Eritrea's war effort despite some opposition from the inner circle of the TPLF party.²⁰

¹⁴ IATA stands for International Air Transport Association.

¹⁵ Protocol Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Planning and Economic Development was signed on 27 September 1993.

¹⁶ Agreement on Security and Related matters between the Ministries of Internal Affairs of the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea signed in Addis Ababa on May 13, 1994 by Kuma Demeska, Minister of Internal Affairs of Ethiopia and Naizghi Keflu, Vice Minister of Internal Affairs of Eritrea, art.1.3.

¹⁷ Ibid. art.1.3.

¹⁸ Sally Healy, "Peacemaking in the Midst of War: An Assessment of IGAD's Contribution to Regional Security," *International Affairs* no.59 (2009), 5.

¹⁹ Paulos Milkias, "Ethiopia, the TPLF, and the Roots of the 2001 Political Tremor," *Northeast African Studies* 10, no. 2 (2003):13–66, accessed January 11, 2018,

http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/232427685?accountid=14771%0Ahttp://bf4dv7zn3u.search.serialsolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid/ProQ%3Aibss&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:

²⁰ Ibid.

Likewise, in the field of international relations, Eritrea and Ethiopia vowed to change the Horn of Africa's image problem and contributed their fair share to the maintenance of peace and security in the Red Sea region.²¹ The newly elevated leaders, including Isaias Afowerki and Melese Zenawi, together with Y. Museveni of Uganda had revived the then toothless regional organization called IGAD, comprised of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda.²² Their membership and commitment had expanded the scope of its mandate from a mere environmental preservation organization into regional-level security and economic cooperation platform. They had played a leading role in defusing the civil war in Sudan and Somalia.²³

Unfortunately however, these friendly relations soon took another course. Tensions cropped up in 1997 over issues of territory, cross-border trade relations, currency and contrasting political projects of the ruling parties and leaders in Eritrea and Ethiopia. This will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

3. 2. Border War

3.2.1 Remote Causes

This sub-section discusses the remote causes for the border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. It includes the disputes surrounding the border territories, party-to-party, economy and political leadership.

Territorial dispute

The territorial dispute along the Eritrean-Ethiopian borderland communities' over grazing and farming land was not just a post-independence phenomenon. Farming and herding communities from both sides of the border had a long track record of claims and counter-

²¹ Kinfe Abraham, *Ethio-Eritrean History and the Ethio-Eritrean War* (London: EIIPD, 2004), 99. See also Kidist Mulugeta, "The Ethiopian-Eritrean War of 1998–2000: An Analysis of Its Causes, Course, Impacts and Prospects," in *Regional Security in the Post-Cold War Horn of Africa*, ed. by Roba Sharamo and Berouk Mesfin (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2011): 34.

²² "Agreement Establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD): Assembly of Heads of State and Government," *IGAD*, November, 2009.

²³ Marc Michaelson, "The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict : Part 2-Explanations," *ICWA VIII*, November (1998): 9.

claims, stretching back to the colonial era.²⁴ But the triggering problem over the Badme plain, brought the issue into broad daylight just after the outbreak of the border war in 1998, although its roots go back to the decades of armed struggle. The following section will briefly highlight the whole course.

Badme is a small village in the western segment of the Eritrea-Ethiopian borderline, and lies in the *Yirga* triangle, ringed by a large tract of plains, called the Badme plains. This is between 14° 37' 60 N latitude and 37° 55' 0 E longitude.²⁵ Originally, it was the homeland of the Kunama people, speakers of a Nilotic language, most of whom practiced herding and farming. For years, they were challenged by their Christian and Muslim neighbors. Since the end of the Second World War, the area has been populated by farmers coming from the immediate neighboring Tigrean villages and the Eritrean highlands (Hamassien and the Middle course of Anseba river).²⁶

As Jean-Louis Péninou and Aregawi Berhe underscore, during the armed struggle, the ELF and the TPLF fought over who owns the Badme plain, particularly in 1976 and then in 1981.²⁷ Until the total liquidation of the ELF force by the EPLF, the bulk of the disputed land was under ELF control.²⁸ In 1984, however, the EPLF and the TPLF decided to unite against their common enemy, the *Derge*, rather than deal with trivial issues of the border or otherwise.²⁹ As a result, the disputed territory was left out to the TPLF to be a temporal rearing ground pending the deliberation issue for the future. But the issue has again come back to the spotlight two years after Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia.

²⁴ Behailu Abebe, "War Stories, Displacement and Coping Experiences of the Displaced from the Ethio-Eritrean War," 210–235. See also Alemseghed Tesfai, *Eritrea: From Federation to Annexation (1952-1962)* (Asmara: HDRI Publishers, 2016), 210–211.

²⁵ Jan Abbink, "Badme and the Ethio-Eritrean Border: The Challenges of Demarcation in the Post War," *Africa*: LVIII, No.2 (2003): 219–31.

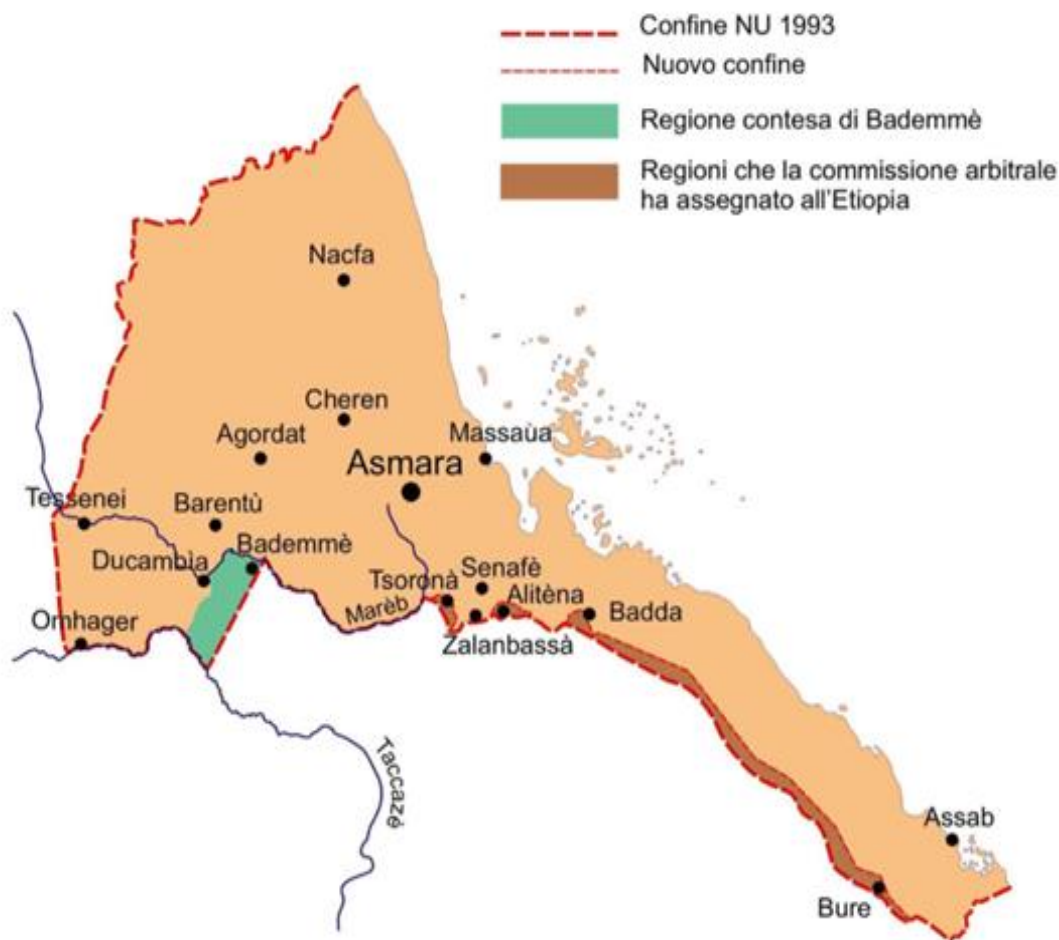
²⁶ Jean-louis Péninou, "The Ethiopian – Eritrean Border Conflict," *Boundary and Security Bulletin* 6, no. 2 (1998): 47.

²⁷ Aregawi Berhe, "A Political History of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (1975-1991): Revolt, Ideology and Mobilisation in Ethiopia," PHD thesis, (Vrije University, 2008), 253-259; Péninou, "The Ethiopian – Eritrean Border Conflict," 6.

²⁸ Jan Abbink, "Badme and the Ethio-Eritrean Border: The Challenge of Demarcation in the Post-War Period," *Africa*: no. 4 (2003): 219–31, accessed June 12, 2016, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40761693>.

²⁹ Kjetil Tronvoll, "Borders of Violence - Boundaries of Identity: Demarcating the Eritrean Nation-State," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6 (1999): 1037–60, accessed March 20, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329233>.

Between 1992 and 1993, local Tigrean authorities were involved in several unlawful cross-border infringement practices. In Tahtay Adiabo area alone, unknown numbers of Eritrean families were reportedly forced from their settlement areas by the local Tigrean authorities for reasons of illegal entry to sovereign territories of Ethiopia.³⁰ These incidents finally led to a high-level talk between EPLF and TPLF delegates - Alamin Mohammed Said and Tewelde Weldemariam respectively.



Map 4. Geography of Badme/Bedemmè

Source: Alberto Vascon, "Eritrea - Bademmè and the Question of the Borders with Ethiopia," 2004, accessed, November 16, 2019, <http://www.ilcornodafrica.it/gt-bad1.htm>.

³⁰ Alemseged Tesfai, "The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict'," in *Paper Presented at Conference Organized by Heinrich Boll Foundation in March 15–17, 1999* (Kenya:Nairobi, 1999).

During the session, the two parties agreed to strengthen the relations between the two peoples, carry out political indoctrination activities and discuss issues of common interest through regular cadre meetings.³¹ The end result of the agreement, however, was not productive, because counterparts from the Tigray region failed to appear at two scheduled meetings, and subsequently the dispute over the grazing and cultivable land stretched to the central sector of the Eritrea-Ethiopian border.

In 1993, thirty-two Eritrean Saho families' houses were completely bulldozed and the inhabitants were driven out from their original ancestral land by local Tigrean local authorities.³² Similar events had also been reported from the western sector, more specifically from the Badme plain and its vicinities.³³ According to the local Eritrean authorities from Gheza Sherif and Adi Maharai, local Tigray authorities and militias carried out harassment, forced eviction, and imprisonment, to counter what they called a flagrant violation of Ethiopian territorial sovereignty.³⁴ This happened between 1995 and 1996 after the regional government of Tigray unilaterally redrew the borderline between Eritrea and Tigray against the colonial border treaties and OAU framework of understanding reached in Cairo on July 24, 1964.³⁵

Such an act of forced displacement, however, did not stop there. On June 17, 1996, the inhabitants of Adi Maharai were completely displaced and exposed to socio-economic limbo. A total of 18 similar cases were also registered from Gheza Sherif, Denbe Himbrty and other small pockets of villages from the same territory. These happened between the rainy season of 1996 and summer season of 1997.³⁶

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid.

³³ According to the colonial border agreement, reached between Italian-Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1900, 1902 and 1998, the Badme plains slightly fall under the territorial orbit of Eritrea.

³⁴ Tesfai, "The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict," 15.

³⁵ Leenco Lata, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea War The Ethiopia-Eritrea War," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2003): 380 ; AHG/Resolution 16(1) adopted by OAU in Cairo, Egypt, 1964.

³⁶ Tesfai, "The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict," 16.

Lt. Col. Berhane Yohannes, Eritrean chief commander of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 2001st Division, explained the situation:

I had been in the area around Shambiko since early 1997 and I knew about the border problems. The Ethiopians had always been pushing for more territory, but in the summer of 1997, it started to get a lot worse and more violent. More and more often, local administrators were coming to us to complain and ask for our help. Their stories were similar. They told us that heavily-armed Ethiopian soldiers had come into their villages and taken over. The Ethiopians told the villagers that they couldn't allow Eritreans to live on their land and forced them to leave.³⁷

In the eastern sector, the Adi Murug dispute was another similar incident and coincided with the deteriorating situation in the western sector. On July 24, 1997, Ethiopian local authorities demanded an immediate and unconditional evacuation of Eritrea's local administration from Adi Murug, but the request was rejected.³⁸ A few days later, they took control of the territory. Neither Eritrea's military intervention nor a referral to the central governments would be able to mitigate this act of territorial transgression. Ethiopia claimed that Adi Murug was an integral part of Ethiopia's territorial units, which is completely at odds with the local population and Government of Eritrea's claim.

Party-to-party disputes

The EPLF and the TPLF's long-standing hot and cold relations, were categorized as the remote causes of the renewed war. But there is no space to provide deep details about its long trajectory. I shall, therefore, focus on certain key periods and facts that contributed to the outbreak of the border war between the two states in 1998 as more precipitated details in this topic were given by Aregawi Berhe³⁹, among the founding fathers of TPLF.

Two parties, the EPLF and the TPLF were born out of need to put an end to the ruthless Ethiopian regime, the *Derge*. The formal relationship between the two fronts began in 1975,

³⁷ Lt.Col.Berhane Yohannes Statment,at Pragrapgh 4. Eritrea's Aggression/Economic Counter-Memorial Annex A. January 17, 2005, 15-16.

³⁸“Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission Counter-Memorials of the State of Eritrea,” January 17, 2005, 11

³⁹ Aregawi Berhe is a distinguished member of TPLF from its inception in 1975. He was also among the TPLF core members who had acquired military training in EPLF's base along his other 22 compatriots.

the EPLF had played a pivotal role in the emergence of the TPLF in 1975 by military training, arming and good working relations.⁴⁰ High-ranking TPLF leaders, were trained in EPLF's military training camps. Moreover, the TPLF received full-fledged propaganda, diplomatic and material support.

However, tensions in EPLF-TPLF relations rose over the TPLF manifesto of 1976. The EPLF was not satisfied with the TPLF's quest for self-determination and definition of a nation as overriding the aims and objectives of Eritrean armed struggle.⁴¹ The TPLF attempt to associate the Eritrean question with the Tigray one was basically perceived by the EPLF as not only a fundamental threat to the notion of the Eritrean nation but also to its territorial integrity.⁴² As a result, the TPLF turned to the ELF, another archrival of the EPLF.

The TPLF and the ELF had no record of cordial bilateral relations despite some goodwill gestures by the TPLF in its formative stage. The issue of the Tigray Liberation Front (TLF), border territories and initial TPLF-EPLF relations were among the major reasons for their strained relations.⁴⁴ At this time, however, their relations suddenly took a new shape. The ELF and the TPLF appeared to cultivate a new military and material cooperation. Aregawi carefully noted that:

The ELF gave the TPLF few arms and ammunition, which the TPLF needed but was not desperate for. It also lifted restrictions on the TPLF outlet to Sudan through western Eritrea. The ELF also assisted the TPLF on the diplomatic front, introducing it to Arab regimes such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, which offered advantages to the TPLF.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ "Yemane Kidane Interview with TV Tigray" TV Tigray, February 15, 2017, accessed June 17, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LusHbL1dnwI>.

⁴¹ Manifesto of the Tigray People's Liberation Front Vol. 1 February, 1976. See also Leenco Lata, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea War," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2017), 373.

⁴² Redie Bereketeab, "The Complex Roots of the Second Eritrea- Ethiopia War : Re-examining the Causes," *African Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 1 and 2 (2013): 41, accessed February 12, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajia.v13i1-3>.

⁴⁴ Girma W.Senbet, "Perspectives on the Eritrea-Ethiopian Relations and Outcomes: Part IV," November 17, 2003, accessed May 5, 2018, https://ethiomediamedia.com/release/eritrean_separatist_movement.html.

⁴⁵ Berhe, *A Political History*, 256.

The ELF, in turn, received donations such as cars, bulldozers, generators, etc. In addition, both fronts carried out a joint military operation against the *Derge*. In May 1978, for instance, they quelled the *Derge's* biggest military operation in Shire.⁴⁶

However, this friendly relation ended prematurely. Relations between the ELF and the TPLF were soured due to their opposing political positions with respect to the EPLF, and their other outstanding historical differences.⁴⁷ By the end of 1979, they were involved in a series of offenses and counter-offensives in their common border areas such as Beleseha, Maihamato, and Wolkait.⁴⁸ From then on, the tension hit new heights and created a situation that was unbearable not only to the two adversarial parties, but also to the borderland inhabitants.

In the middle of those political and military troubles, the EPLF took advantage. At the beginning of 1981, it dispatched a high-level delegation to the TPLF headed by Sibhat Ephraim.⁴⁹ At the meeting, the two sides agreed to forge a common front and force. The aim was to end the perennial provocation from the ELF and counter the *Derge's* military attacks. Meanwhile, in August 1981, the EPLF launched an all-out civil war against the ELF. The fratricidal war went on for almost one year until the ELF was completely pushed out of Eritrea into Sudan.⁵⁰

After the dispersal of the ELF, the EPLF and the TPLF had every reason to further reinforce their relations. Both of them came to realize that they needed each other more than at any time before. The primary objective was to strengthen the military response capacity of the two fronts in case the *Derge* regime resumed military operations. They continued to strengthen their warm relations in all aspects, such as diplomatic and media propaganda, joint military operations, cohesive information, and material exchange and assistance.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 257.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 258.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 259.

⁵⁰ Michael Weldeghiorghis, "The Eritrean Liberation Front: Social and Political Factors Shaping Its Emergence, Development and Demise, 1960-1981," MA thesis, (Leiden University, August 2014), 135.

This amicable relation, however, was short-lived. Differences built up over military and ideological positions. In the military sphere, tension exploded when the TPLF openly underestimated the EPLF's conventional military strategy being in favor of mobile strategy. The TPLF was of the opinion that the Ethiopian regime's advantage in human and material resources could easily drain the capacity of the front, something the EPLF strongly dismissed. On the ideological front, likewise, the TPLF condemned its mentor front, the EPLF, for its pro-Soviet Union position, as they were pro-Maoist China or Albanian.⁵¹ The TPLF was not convinced to accept the Soviet Union as a genuine socialist state model, mainly due to their interventionist policies in the Horn of Africa. In 1985, TPLF leadership went as far as to declare Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union as a revisionist.⁵² The EPLF, for its part, had considered such disputes as trivial elements that should not strain the warm relationship and in 1985, it downplayed the whole critique through its mouthpiece, the *Journal Adulis*.⁵³

The EPLF –TPLF fault-lines were constructed not only along ideological and military lines. Inferiority and superiority complex was starkly juxtaposed with other infamous activities to refuel the already burning fire. The TPLF claimed that the EPLF were supremacist, which the EPLF leadership denied. The good thing was that such trends of discords were limited mainly to the high-ranking members. Rank and file members were less influenced by these hysterics.⁵⁴

In 1988, with the four-day meeting in Khartoum, bilateral relations eased again. Both fronts agreed to put aside their ideological, psychological and positional terminology in order to focus more on their common interest.⁵⁵ Henceforth, both parties unleashed an all-out war against their common enemy. Joint military operations resumed and continued until the end

⁵¹ “Yemane Kidane Interview with TV Tigray,” *TV Tigray*, February 15, 2017

⁵² Young, “The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples Liberation Fronts,” 114–15.

⁵³ “Eritrean People's Liberation Front,” *Adulis I*, 9, March 1985, 8.

⁵⁴ Berhe, “A Political History,” 284.

⁵⁵ John Young, “The Tigray Liberation Front,” in *African Guerrillas*, ed. by Christopher Clapham (James Currey, 1998), 36–52.

of the *Derge's* military regime on May 24, 1991. After Eritrea's independence, the EPLF formed a transitional government in Eritrea, whereas the TPLF along other three ethnic-based parties filled the power vacuum created after the departure of Col. Mengistu Hailemariam to Harare.

The post-independence relationship was not different. From 1991-1998, there was an unprecedented improvement in their bilateral relations. They took several practical steps for cross-border engagement and cooperation. Different agreements were signed on health, education, agricultural, air service, economic cooperation, land and sea transport and easing cross-border mobility of the two side people, as well as in the military sector. High-level visits and meetings were common exercises. However, all these engagement efforts proved to be superficial. It only took eight years for the two poorest countries to be dragged back into the worst border war. This implies that the two parties were suffering from guerilla syndrome. This is why many observers of the political dynamism of the region argue that the border-war is an extension of the old problem between the two fronts. Hence, it is from this context that EPLF-TPLF relationship and role in the border war has to be contextualized.

Economic Dents

Although multidimensional agreements and protocols were going well, friction over economic relations had been simmering since the beginning of the new posture. For the first time, the problems came to the forefront during the Joint Review Committee meeting held on January 1, 1997.⁵⁶ The committee members identified five fundamental constraints working against the spirit of the protocols, on matters related to trade and customs and their substantive aspects. These were: a) divergences in the two countries' economic policies; b) differences in their regulatory systems; c) differences in their interpretation of various articles of the agreement; d) gaps in the agreements which provided loopholes for maintaining or introducing tariff and non-tariff barriers; and e) a failure to establish institutional mechanisms for following-up and implementing the agreements.⁵⁷

⁵⁶“Final Reports of the Review Committee on the Implementation of the Ethio-Eritrea Economic Agreements,” Addis Abeba, 1997.

⁵⁷ Ibid

As many scholars of the Horn of Africa have elaborated, the issue of incongruent expectations of the terms of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was the main source of contention. Redie Bereketeab explains that '[through its open economic policy], the Ethiopian government was indeed aiming to trap Eritrea in a state of political dependency'.⁵⁸ This assertion was drawn by the author following a scrupulous examination of their economic and historical trajectories between 1991 and 1998.

This is further corroborated by Richard Trivelli:

The TPLF Leadership... hoped that the benefits of the economic privileges given to Eritrea and Eritreans would ultimately induce or even force the Eritrean leadership to re-enter into some form of political union with Ethiopia.⁵⁹

Paul B. Henze, an American Scholar, broadcaster and former CIA agent, has also underscored this set of arguments based on his informal conversation with Ethiopian president Meles Zenawi on April 1, 1991. Melese Zenawi told him that:

We look at this from the viewpoint of the interests of Tigray, first, and then Ethiopia as a whole. We know that Tigray needs access to the sea and the only way is through Eritrea.... There are many Tigreans in Eritrea....They don't want to be treated as foreigners there ... They have the same history. We are worried about Eritrea because we are not sure that the differences among different groups can be kept under control.⁶⁰

In his seminal studies, '*The Ethiopia –Eritrea War*', Leenco Lata an executive member of the Oromo Democratic Front (ODF) and lecturer in African Affairs, also further confirmed the authenticity of this story: 'The Ethiopian Prime minister offhandedly informed me of his expectation that Eritrea will immediately rejoin Ethiopia.'⁶¹ Thus, it could be argued that the

⁵⁸ Bereketeab, "The Complex," 45.

⁵⁹ Richard M. Trivelli, "Divided Histories , Opportunistic Alliances : Background Notes on the Ethiopian-Eritrean War," *African Spectrum* 33, no. 3 (1998): 280.

⁶⁰ Paul B. Henze personal conversation with Meles Zenawi, April 1, 1990.

⁶¹ Leenco Lata, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea War ," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2017), 377.

two countries contested expectation from the terms of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation had much to do with the new outbreak of war in 1998.

On the same front, was the misunderstanding over the question of comparative advantage from existing export and import spirals. It is true that the new relationship helped the revival of the war-ravaged economy in Eritrea and in Ethiopia. For example between 1995 and 1997, the total volume of export of manufactured goods between Eritrea and Ethiopia was about 65% and 9% per cent respectively.⁶² Eritrea had also a total import value of 63,968,197 in 1993, rising to 274,600,000 in 1997, leading to a negative trade balance of -56,400,000 in thousands of Birr.⁶³

Critics, disgruntled members of the EPRD government and the remnants of the old regime were not happy with the trade balance. They accused Meles's government of failing to protect businesses and industries from oversizing impacts of Eritrea.⁶⁴ They were of the opinion that the post-independence treaties were a burden to Ethiopia rather than an advantage.⁶⁵ Ethiopia's privileges in other sectors in Eritrea, particularly in air and port services, were completely overlooked.

Local actors from the regional state of Tigray in particular, had a similar position, but for different ends. In fact, they went as far as to take some practical action. They adopted some protective measures against imported goods from Eritrea.⁶⁶ This is in addition to some border enforcement practices against the spirit of the terms of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Similarly, Ethiopia, particularly the Tigray regional state, did not respect

⁶² Sally Healy, "Hostage to Conflict Prospects for Building Regional Economic Cooperation in the Horn of Africa" (A Chatham House Report, 2011), 15.

⁶³ Kidane Mengisteab, "Some Latent Factors in the Ethio-Eritrean Conflict," in *Eritrea-Ethiopia: From Conflict to Cooperation to Conflict*, ed. by Gebre Hiwet Tesfagiorgis (New York, 1999), 100–102.

⁶⁴ Amanuel Iyassu, "PM Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia interview with Assena" (Addis Abebba, Febiuary 15: Radio Assena, 2011), accessed January 20, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lrjPhT1A7M>.

⁶⁵ Richard Cornwell, "Ethiopia and Eritrea: Fratricidal Conflict in the Horn," *African Security Review* 7, no. 5 (1998): 62–63, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.1998.9627879>.

⁶⁶ Biyan Ghebreyesus, "The Border Regions of Senafe and Tserona: The People without Border" in Paper Presented at 20th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies(ICE20), but not published (Mekelle University, 2018), 15.

Eritrea's comparative advantage in the Ethiopian market by investing in overlapping products.⁶⁷

The economic ties between the two countries, however, plunged into an unending crisis only when Eritrea issued its own new currency. As previously mentioned, Eritrea and Ethiopia had one common currency, from the independence of Eritrea in 1991 up to 1997. It was the Ethiopian *Birr*. On November 8, 1997, Eritrea introduced its own new national currency, called the *Nakfa*. This development brought about two fundamental questions to be dealt with; firstly the question of the exchange rate, and secondly, the question of the Ethiopian *Birr* in Eritrea.⁶⁸

On matters related to the first problem, Eritrea suggested two options. The first option was that the use of local currency in local cross-border trade relations should be subject to a one to one exchange rate, as the rate of exchange between the two local currencies to the dollar was almost the same.⁶⁹ Another alternative that Eritrea proposed was the use of the dollar to carry out trade between the two states. Ethiopia, on the other hand, demanded that the dollar be the only standard means of exchange-denominated letters of credit. Neither party was ready to accept the demands of the other.

With regard to Ethiopian *Birr* in Eritrean banks, the two countries again did not agree. Eritrea demanded Ethiopia take back its national currency in exchange for dollars as the international monetary law entails. Ethiopia, on its part, was not in a position to do so as its national bank was out of hard currency, somehow Eritrea accused Ethiopia of betrayal.⁷⁰ As a result, the

⁶⁷ Konrad Licht, "The Ethio-Eritrean Relationship," *Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien* WS 2001 / 2002 , Accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.konradlicht.com/Texts/ethno/ethio-ertria.html>

⁶⁸ Trivelli, "Divided Histories," 282-283.

⁶⁹ Alemseged Tesfai, "The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict," 1999, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://www.dehai.org/conflict/analysis/alemsghe2.html>.

⁷⁰ "Voice of Assenna Interview with PM Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia."

uneven relationship continued. The Nakfa-Birr tension completely disrupted existing cross-border trade relations.⁷¹

Political Leadership

“When it comes to the issue of war, for me, there was no rational calculation from either side (leadership in Eritrea and Ethiopia); it was a matter of their personal enigma. Both of them went to the unaffordable war without giving due attention to its plausible impact on the two poorest societies on the continent. People became a fieldwork site to their zero-sum game and this ended up leading to quagmires”.

Senafe elder

At independence, the political leadership in Eritrea and Ethiopia was highly praised for their aspiring political leadership and unshakeable like-mindedness, most importantly for their ability to sell their vision to their people and stakeholders in the region.⁷² During Eritrean Independence Day, Meles was able to persuade the two people to see beyond the two countries’ historical fences. He states:

I know you have wounds because I know your wounds either from nearby or from afar [and] because I know that similar wounds exist on my back and on the backs of my comrades. I will not ask you to forget the past. It is something that cannot be forgotten because it is educational. However, we should not scratch our wounds. You should not scratch your wounds. The worst is gone. The worst is buried.⁷³

This point of optimism was further supplemented by another grand historical speech by his Eritrean counterpart, President Isaias Afowerki, on July 30, 1993. During the press conference at the National Palace in Addis Abeba, he openly reiterated that:

⁷¹ Ibid..

⁷² Tronvoll, *War*, 75; see also P. Gilkes and M Plaut, “War in the Horn: The Conflict Between Eritrea and Ethiopia,” Discussion Paper, (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), 37.

⁷³ *Haddas Ertra No.77*, May 27, 1993.

The Government of Eritrea and the people of Eritrea have proved that they are prepared not only to forget the wounds of past but to work together to develop and cultivate new relations between the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia...⁷⁴

These optimistic speeches were widely translated by many as hope and peace over despair and fear in the conflict-ridden region. It was also interpreted as a coming together of the two bitter forces. Few expected the two leaders to come to say that the era of war was over and enough. However, these statements took a short time to take another form. After four years, they were involved in dangerous diplomatic and media campaigns against one another with disregard of its possible impact on people as the informant in the first section put it. Subsequently, they were subjected to wider public criticism. The critics were not just about the failure of things to be done as they promised: it was about how they upset the relations with inflammatory rhetoric.

As Paul Henze argues, the fundamental source of conflict between the two political leaderships had basically emerged because of their incongruence in governance and policies.⁷⁵ While Eritrea developed the one-party system, where other parties were outlawed and there were no checks on power, Ethiopia favored an open public sphere where the mushrooming of different political parties, media outlets, and private presses were nominally tolerated.⁷⁶

Jan Abbink, on the other hand, tends to characterize the problem from their personal enmity. He says:

These issues were a combination of personal arrogance of the two regimes (and leaders) with authoritarian tendencies, political indecisiveness (especially on the part of Ethiopian), and lack of clear-cut statesman-like agreements on mutual politico-economic

⁷⁴ “Joint Declaration of Relationship,” *Haddas Ertra No.96*, August 4, 1993. See also ERITV, “Isaias Afowerki Press Release” (Addis Abebba: ERITV: April 25, 1993), accessed April 25, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdj1o0Pt39c>.

⁷⁵ Paul Henze, 'Eritrea's War against Ethiopia: Causes and Effects, Reflections, Prescriptions' *Ethiopian Embassy website*, 2000, 3, accessed June 25, 2000, <http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/articles/march-00/paul%20B.%20Henze%201.htm>.

⁷⁶ Leenco Lata, “The Ethiopia-Eritrea War The Ethiopia-Eritrea War,” *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2003): 375.

relations of the two new states after 1991, when the two leaders came to power with a momentum of hope and promise.⁷⁷

Something else that related to this issue was also at work: their style of leadership and the nature of their personal informal relationship. The two leaders didn't have any check and balance systems in their hands and their relations had neither institutional roots nor bureaucratic infrastructures. The political landscape was also fractal in the sense that the same pattern of policy execution was reproduced in both countries. Neither opposition parties nor civil society organizations had a significant decision making role. The parliaments or other branches of governments had a subservient or symbolic role –with no real power to repeal or initiate laws or to put off the acts in question.

The same was true with their individual character, shrouded in secrecy. As the *Economist* wrote in 1998:

Both Mr. Issaias and Mr. Meles are tough ex-fighters whose language rarely exceeds their intentions. At one time their personal friendship would have overcome a relatively trivial border dispute but now they both may be looking to victory to protect themselves. Mr. Issaias, whose economic policies have brought little benefit to the country's ex-guerrillas, is using anti-Ethiopian sentiment to build nationalism. Mr. Meles, suspected by other Ethiopians of being too soft on Eritrea, has had to prove he is a true defender of Ethiopia. His private letters to Mr. Issaias in the lead-up to the border dispute were published and severely criticized at a meeting of the ruling party. Significantly, he has been left off the military council set up to conduct the war.⁷⁸

From these lines of arguments, therefore, it is crystal clear that the Eritrea-Ethiopia border war was an outcome of multiple factors and was hidden in a smokescreen of propaganda and nationalist illusive talks by the political leadership from both sides, as the informant at the beginning of this section argues. The wider background of war, therefore, derived from the ups and downs inherited from the EPLF and the TPLF's common historical trajectory between the 1970s and 1991. Then, it was further fueled by their post-independence drifts,

⁷⁷ Jan Abbink, "Badme," 221.

⁷⁸ "Eritrea and Ethiopia: Spit and Slung Out," *The Economist*, September 17, 1998.

diverging visions of governance, a lack of an institutionalized intra-state bilateral relationship, and individual leadership ambitions.

3.2.2 Immediate causes of the War

The war between Eritrea and Ethiopia was fought in three sectors: western, central and eastern, from May 12, 1998, to June 18, 2000. There were many remote causes, as discussed above, but the controversies surrounding the immediate causes, however, remain contested. According to an Eritrean government official, the war broke out when six members of the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF), on their way to the disputed territories to discuss the matter with their local counterparts from the other side in Tigray, were assaulted by Ethiopian local militia.⁷⁹

The Ethiopian government account, on the other hand, contends that:

On 6 May 1998, 70 to 80 troops near Lalai Deda traveled southeast to Dembe Asmara.... [T]he Eritrean military forces encountered Ethiopian police officers in Dembe Asmara around 3:00 p.m. The Ethiopian police officers brought to the attention of the Eritrean armed units that it was prohibited to cross into Ethiopian territory bearing arms. The Eritrean soldiers refused to disarm, and the commanding officer of the Eritrean unit opened fire on the Ethiopian police officers. The rest of the unit followed suit by firing on the police officers from three different locations. Fighting ensued for approximately two hours as the fire was exchanged from a distance of between 50 and 500 meters, claiming at least two lives.⁸⁰

However, neither the international community nor evidence from the local communities or the two states were able to provide a precise answer to the question of who initiated the border war that would further devastate the already war-torn people? The efforts ended up with no result, diluted in the process by the two parties' secretive natures. But, the border problem grabbed the whole world's attention only when the

⁷⁹ The State of Eritrea, "The Government of Eritrea, Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission: Counter-Memorial of the State of Eritrea," January 27, 2005, 15.

⁸⁰ Ethiopia's Statements of Claim (December 12, 2001), 23.

Ethiopian parliament publicized the fact that Eritrea had encroached on its sovereign territory on May 12, 1998.⁸¹

3.2.3 The course of the War

First round of war

The border war, as described above, started in the western sector, specifically in the Badme plains and then expanded like wildfire over 1000 miles of common border. It continued from May 12, 1998 to June 18, 1998. The two countries amassed more than 500,000 soldiers, an unknown number of tanks and aircraft in addition to other short and long-range weapons. It was also accompanied by an intense media propaganda war. The two states undisputedly traded their blunt information to their people and the international communities.

In the first stage, the war was limited only to the disputed territories in the western sector, but later scaled up into all-out war including Ali-Tiena and Zalenbesa. Strategic aerial bombings had no territorial limits. On 5th June 1998, for example, Ethiopia launched a pre-emptive air strike against Asmara airport, the only international airport. The action was taken to gain complete air superiority but it did not work. On the contrary, the Eritrean air force bombed Mekelle, the regional capital of Tigray, just one hour after the Ethiopian attack.⁸² The two countries were then involved in continuous attacks and counter-attacks.

On the frontline, the war featured concentrated military operations and counter-operations. It was infamous for the lack of military civility. Both countries were unable to abide by international law to protect the safety of innocent civilians living in war zones. The fighting resulted in heavily civilian casualties among children, women and elderly people. Livelihoods along the borderland were also completely upset by the indiscriminate shelling and by an upsurge in the number of soldiers and amount of heavy war machinery.⁸³

⁸¹ Michaelson, "The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict," 3.

⁸² Ibid., 5.

⁸³ "UN: Reports of International Arbitral Awards Recueil Des Sentences Arbitral: Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission: Final Award - Ethiopia's Damages Claims 17," Volume XXVI, August, 2009 .

For Eritreans, this war was a question of survival and continuity. This was the reason why the people overreacted in favor of war. In fact, the public wanted the government to be effectual. The whole public remained alerted for any eventualities because they had reasonable ground to believe that the war was part of the old narratives of the Ethiopian political elites against the independence of Eritrea.⁸⁴ The soldiers on the frontline also showed an incredible resilience to resist Ethiopia's offensive, and their morale was high.⁸⁵

In terms of military tactics, the war was basically characterized by the trench warfare of World War one (WWI). They engaged in massive infantry assaults and counter-assaults, backed with heavy weapons and sometimes with air strikes. Ethiopia adopted the attacking strategy, whereas Eritrea preferred a defensive position. Ethiopia, however, seemed unprepared to face lightning counter-attacks from its small immediate neighbor. Despite their numeric and hardware advantages, its poorly organized and ill-trained soldiers failed to make any progress.⁸⁶ Its alphanumeric coded military operations, which were waged in cycles of in the western and central section of the border, produced nothing. On May 31, 1998, the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF) controlled all Eritrean sovereign territories set out in the colonial treaties of 1900, 1902, and 1908 and remained invincible. However, the result of the war affected the border communities of the two states more than other sections of the population.

The second round of war (*Wefri Tsehay Araribo*) - 23 February 1999

The Second round of war was triggered by Ethiopia on February 6, 1999. This decision was taken after one year of military preparation. It was initiated as Operation Sunset (*Wefri Tsehay Araribo*). The Ethiopian aim was to recapture its lost territories, more importantly, the Badme-flash point, which was under Eritrean control since May 6, 1998. Eritrean field commanders, on the other side, were resolute on their counter-offensive strategy.

⁸⁴ Martin Plaut and Patrick Gilkes, "Conflict in the Horn: Why Eritrea and Ethiopia are at War," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 1999, 73.

⁸⁵ Dan Connell, "A Shootout in the Horn of Africa: A View from Eritrea," *Middle East Report*, 1999, 4-5.

⁸⁶ Dominique Jacquin-Berdal, "Ethiopia-Eritrea: Addis Ababa's Victory," *West Africa*, 2000, 34.

In the field, in the first phase, Ethiopia mounted its ground and air operations to disable the EDF, pressed forward, but finally failed.⁸⁷ The event was seen as a national humiliation not only by the military, but also by the jubilant crowds of people living in the war areas. However, the military disaster was kept away from the wider public. Media outlets were boasting to the general public about a fictitious victory.⁸⁸ They were encouraging the people that they would have lunch in Asmara, the Eritrean capital.

On February 23, 1999, Ethiopia made a second attempt. The ultimate aim was to neutralize the EDF position in Badme, which it had failed to do in its first attempt. It had deployed more than 43,000 ground troops, an unknown number of heavy artilleries and 70 tanks.⁸⁹ After a series of attempts, advancing forces were now able to break the EDF position in Badme, and controlled the village on 28th February 1999, albeit at great cost. For Eritrea, this military defeat was a shock not only to the political leadership but also to the general public.

On the contrary, Ethiopia's offense in the central sector was counterproductive. Initially, the aim was to repeat its victory in the western sector in the central sector. Despite its initial success, it was not able to move further. Its forces were repulsed and defused by the EDF, combined forces of 525 (commandos) and other EDF divisions, at the battle of Igrri Mekhel from March 14 to 16, 1999.⁹⁰

The Third round of war

On May 12, 2000, after a one-year stalemate, the military balance took another shape. Ethiopia made a groundbreaking military invasion over the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Eritrea. The offensive started in the western sector in unexpected direction, the Badme plains.⁹¹ In terms of military strategy, it adopted an offensive approach, accompanied by a dense mass of infantry.

⁸⁷ Connell, "A Shootout in the Horn of Africa," 5.

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ This figure was given by Yemane 'Jamaica' Kidane to Kjitel Tronvell on March 2, 1999.

⁹⁰ Interview: GMA (42), October 13, 1999, Tserona.

⁹¹ Informal Interview: BAK (45), May 12, 2017, Keren.

Operationally, Ethiopian military engineers had skillfully used their geographic landscape knowledge to form a massive surprise offensive. This was the smartest decision in their war preparation. Ethiopia's intelligence had revealed when, how and where the EDF was most vulnerable. They were also superior in terms of number of soldiers, airpower and artillery.⁹²

The outcome of the war was the strategic withdrawal of Eritrean armies from the most vulnerable front to avoid unnecessary losses. As a result, Ethiopia controlled almost the whole western segment of the border within just two weeks, and they went deep inside Eritrean sovereign territory (the Gash Barka zone). On May 17, 2000, they controlled Barentu, the regional capital, which was terrible news to be accepted by the Eritrean public.

Similarly, on May 24, Eritrea's Independence Day, advancing Ethiopian forces hoisted the Ethiopian flag in Zalambesa, another disputed border town in the central sector. But a further advance in the same direction was contained by the EDF between gigantic mountain passes of Emba Sera and Keshe'at. This is the place where the author spent four months as a soldier fighting with the 15th division.

The Ethiopian advance through Kisa Eqa-Rama line was also not productive. On May 22, 2000, four Ethiopian ground army divisions, each composed of 10,000-12,000 men, supported by tanks and other long and short range weapons penetrated deep into Eritrean territories through the *Kisa Eqa* front, central flank. The aim of this operation was to weaken the EDF position by stretching in multi-frontal warfare and at last to make sure that it was toothless to take any counter-offensive initiative. The result was counter-productive. The advancing forces were easily quelled by the EDF when they pushed to reach the steep mountains around Adi Quala due to strategic disadvantage. Ethiopia lost almost half of its forces at the battle of Adi Begio on 22-23 May, 2000.⁹³

⁹² Informal Interview: WDS (52), February 24, 2018, Asmara.

⁹³ "Lt. Col. Tikabo Sium Interview with ERITV about the Battle of Adi Begio on May 22-23, 2000" (Asmara: ERITV, August 12, 2014).

In the eastern sector, the war toll was negative too. Ethiopian troops' attempt to control Assab resulted in a ferocious battle, but with no award to gain. EDF was determined to defend their position until the last man. They had adaptability advantage over Ethiopian troops. Unlike in the western segment, the Ethiopian concerted assault by 5 army divisions was not able to make any significant advance.⁹⁴ Nothing went according to their military engineers' desert trafficability map or training; consequently, Ethiopia's series attempts gained no success and compelled to accept the Algiers Peace offered by the international community.

3.3 Algiers Peace deal –June 18, 2000, and the immediate developments

Costing hundreds of millions of dollars and around 100,000 soldiers, the Algiers armistice ended the brutal two-year war.⁹⁵ The agreement was signed by Eritrea and Ethiopia on June 18, 2000, to be followed by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on December 12, 2000.⁹⁶ It was brokered by Algeria on behalf of the OAU and was witnessed by the UN, USA, EU, and OAU.

Under the framework of this agreement, the two parties agreed on the following main issues in details: 1) to cease military hostilities, 2) to respect and fully implement the provisions of the agreement, 3) to work under the international humanitarian law, 4) to accept the establishment of a neutral boundary and claims commission, 5) to release and repatriate all prisoners of war in accordance with Article 4 of the Geneva Convention, 6) to cooperate fully with the independent investigation body, 7) to respect the borders existing at independence as adopted by the OAU summit in Cairo in 1964, and 8) to accept the EEBC delimitation and demarcation as final and binding (See appendix 1 for more detail on the agreement).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ "General Sebhat Efreem Interview with ERITV on Eritrea-Ethiopian War" (Asmara: ERITV March 5, 2000).

⁹⁵ Bezabih, "Fundamental Consequences," 42.

⁹⁶ "The Algiers Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (S/2000/118, 2000)," December 12, 2000.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

In the initial stage of the agreement, both countries abided by the terms of the agreement. The Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), 25 km wide, was established only within Eritrea's sovereign territory. This is an indication of Ethiopia's upper hand in the course of the war. In line with this, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which consisted of 4,500 members, took up the mandate for peacekeeping. This mission was entrusted to facilitate the process of delimitation and demarcation.⁹⁸ The EEBC comprising of 5 members was simultaneously set up. The mandate of this commission was to delimit and demarcate the disputed borders according to the colonial border treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908).

In a similar vein, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claim Commission (EECC) was established and charged to assess the gross loss, damage, and injury perpetrated in different levels by both parties during the course of the border conflict. Nonetheless, this peace package was unfulfilled because of the two states' contrasting claims over the EEBC ruling. Subsequently, the countries were plunged into a 'no war, no peace' situation.⁹⁹ They closed their common border for 18 years. In the following sections, we will look at the events surrounding the two countries' common border arising from their 18 years of closed border policy, though the case studies of Tserona and Senafe.

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Sigatu Tadasse Kaleab, "No Peace No War: The Ethiopia - Eritrea Conflicts," *Aarms* 18, no. 1 (2019): 79–91, accessed August 14, 20 19, <https://doi.org/10.32565/aarms.2019.1.5>.

Chapter Four

'No war, No Peace' Policy: Border closure

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores a wide range of border enforcement practices at the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia by Eritrea, a counter-strategy against Ethiopia's post-war 'no war, no peace' policy. The aim is to understand how a set of border control practices redefined the spatial and social boundaries between Eritrea and Ethiopia since the end of the border war between the two countries in 2000. The result shows that the border has continuously been constructed by the building-up of heavy equipped armies, landmines and security agents. Crossing the border became difficult because the checkpoints on the main road and state border politics. These continuous border control practices were serving to: a) control Ethiopian army or security agent infiltration, b) discourage cross-border people-to-people contacts at the border, and c) control illegal border crossings. However, these multiple layers of border control activities were not able to completely achieve their desired objectives. The finding reflects that the control mechanisms drove the local people underground.

4.2. Border Militarization

Since the end of the border war through a comprehensive peace Agreement on 12 December 2000, the only contact line between Eritrea and Ethiopia in Tserona and Senafe sub-region border areas was a military front line, consisting of networks of trenches. The trenches are long and narrow, beneath them lays a network of boxed underground houses (*Juba/tat*), which are all well connected to one another. Those *Jubatat* are built to shelter the infantry forces from light arms and artillery fire. Under normal circumstances, the troops lived in them.



Figure 4. The Serha-Zelambesa frontline

For 18 years, heavily armed soldiers faced one another over the front line. Neither the road lines nor irregular routes remained open for strategic security reasons. In 2005 Ethiopia had over 17 military divisions; each comprised of around 3,500 soldiers and they extended throughout the disputed territories.¹ The redeployment was taken in the name of reorganization, training, and defense purposes.

Eritrea, on its part (although there is very little accessible material), had roughly the same amount of soldiers, and the positioning was said to be for development projects.² In the summer season of 2017 and the winter season of 2018, it had three military divisions between the Tserona and Senafe sub-administrative divisions. In addition, there were local militias throughout the border areas. These militias were limited only in their respective villages and surroundings and served only for a limited time. Except in few emergency situations, they are not used in full-fledged military campaigns.

¹ Martin Plaut, "Ethiopia and Eritrea: Returning to War," *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): 184.

² UNMEE, "UNMEE Media Briefing Notes 3," (November 3, 2005), accessed July 23, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/eritrea/unmee-media-briefing-notes-3-nov-2005>.

The most intensive military build-up between the two countries, however, started immediately after the UNMEE withdrawal, following the UNSC resolution 1827 on December 23, 2008.³ In August 2008, Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) re-occupied parts of Eritrean sovereign territories which were under the mandate of UNMEE as part of the Algiers Agreement since September 2000. As one informant explains, the key driver for Eritrea's decision was its sensitivity toward Ethiopia.⁴ In fact, this was not an emotive argument because Ethiopian forces had already been in control of many uncontested sovereign Eritrean territories, disregarding the EEBC's decision of April 13, 2002, or international law.

Once the EEBC's final and binding decision became crystal clear, although Ethiopia initially hastily accepted it, it later rejected the decision. In a letter dated 19th September 2003 to a then UN Secretary General Kofi Anan, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi belittled the decision, calling it unjust, illegal and irresponsible, and proposed the Security Council should set up "an alternative mechanism to demarcate the contested part of the boundary in a just and legal manner so as to ensure lasting peace in the region".⁵ This diplomatic exercise, however, did not stop there. In 2004 Zenawi wrote another letter to the UN Security Council outlining a "Five Point Peace Proposal". Under this proposal, Ethiopia sought to "start dialogue immediately with a view to implementing the EEBC's decision in a manner consistent with the promotion of sustainable peace and brotherly ties between the two people".⁶

Eritrea, on the other hand, accepted the deliberation but rejected to accommodate Ethiopia's request for dialogue as a condition for the implementation. It repeatedly said that dialogue, as precondition of the decision, was not part of the Algiers Peace Agreement of 2000 (Article 15(4)).⁷ Eritrea saw the Ethiopian dialogue initiative as another attempt to renegotiate the

³ "UN Security Council Resolution S/Res/1827(2008)," July, 30, 2008.

⁴ Interview: TTA (55) March 12, 2017, Tserona.

⁵ Letter dated 19th September 2003 from the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to United National Security General Council Kofi Anan.

⁶ "Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2004/973/)," *United Nations Security Council*, Vol. 694, 2004.

⁷ "The Algiers Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (S/2000/118)," December 12, 2000.

final and binding decision. In response to this inflexible position, Ethiopia refused to withdraw its troops from occupied Eritrean territories. The Algiers Peace package thus lingered unfulfilled.

The Badme decision to Eritrea was particularly unswallowed pill to the TPLF-led coalition government in Ethiopia as the message behind the decision was in favour of Eritrea's leadership. Technically speaking, the decision legitimized Eritrea's territorial claim and the payoff, while painting Ethiopia as the aggressor. It was from this perception that the EPRDF chairperson, Meles Zenawi, bluntly urged the international community to come up with an alternative mechanism to re-define the disputed territories. He openly said: "It is unimaginable for the Ethiopian people to accept such a blatant miscarriage of justice."⁸

The EEBC decision was not only rejected by the Ethiopian government, but also by the local borderland communities. Ethiopian borderland communities voiced their opposition, particularly those of Badme and Irob. The Irob, for instance, explained that the EEBC decision would divide brothers, which will be a problem. They also warned that the imposition of the new border could wreak havoc with their way of life, as it would prevent them from living their lives unhindered by division.⁹

There were also similar stories of dissatisfaction from Badme, the flashpoint. In many occasions, they chant to 'fight to the death' rather than hand over an inch of their territory to Eritrea. For example, Weldegewergis Weldedemariam, a local Tigrean administrator, openly stated: 'It's impossible to say what we'd do if Eritrea got Badme because we can't believe it would happen'.¹⁰ Many of the village inhabitants pose the question: "Why did we fight for it just to give it away? All these sacrifices for nothing? For this?"¹¹

⁸ Letter from Prime Minister Meles Zinawi to the President of the UN Security Council, September 18, 2003.

⁹ Interview: WTA (70), November 15, 2018, Adi Girat.

¹⁰ Quoted in Marc Lacey, "Badme Journal; Torn Town Changes Countries, but Not Conviction," *The New York Times*, April 16, 2002.

¹¹ Ibid.

Despite the fact that the stories from the Eritrean side of the border had rarely been noticed, there was also a similar set of grievances in the Tserona area. As one known village elder from Tserona said, the local people are not happy with the arbitrarily imposed new border.¹² There are many sovereign Eritrean territories from the region left out to Ethiopia. The people don't want to end up divided. They want to resolve the disputes surrounding the demarcation of the border around their territories by synchronizing the views of the local people from both sides of the border instead of adapting the EEBC decision as is.

In fact, these stories were also openly shared by the political leadership in Ethiopia. For instance, Meles, during his extensive interview with Radio Assena in 2011, said that:

For demarcation of the border on the ground, the two sides should negotiate because there are Eritrean houses which are left out in Ethiopia and vice versa. The same story is true with some border villages. In Tserona, for instance, there are villages that consider themselves Eritreans becoming part of Ethiopia. Similarly, there are also Ethiopian border villages going to Eritrea.¹³

However, Meles highlighted these concerns only as a diplomatic stunt. In reality, he was of the opinion that the resolution of the border conflict between the two countries depended on addressing the fundamental issues that divide the political leadership in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

After the end of the military and political standstill between the two countries in 2018, I walked through the former security zone between the two countries, a region in which hundreds and thousands soldiers had been stationed. I felt the horrible feeling that the new border had been sanctioned without regard for the local people's demographic, ethnographic or topographic conditions. As the local people reiterated, the new border is levied based on geometric lines of latitude and longitude with little or no human face. During the implementation stage, many families, small villages and houses will be left in limbo.

¹² Interview: TTT(70), July 13, 2017, Tserona

¹³ Amanuel Iyassu, "Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia interview with Assena" (Addis Abeba, February 15: Radio Assena, 2011), accessed June 29, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lrjPhT1A7M>.

These contrasting positions together with other outstanding historical differences, plunged the two countries into a ‘no war no peace’ situation, and wide-ranging animosity. For 18 years, both states built up hundreds and thousands of troops along their common border, and each side was watching the other 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Billions of dollars were wasted on arms procurement. The lion’s share of their economies was spent on arming, funding, training, and abetting each other’s opposition forces and on proxy wars. Media propaganda was also powerful. People lived under the constant fear of future war. Beyond the two state borders, the situation posed serious challenges to peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

What were the everyday practices of the people who had to live in the border area after the UNMEE mission ended? The archival military reports can provide details. Unfortunately, these were hard to access. The only sources of information were stories from those who were personally involved or who observed the situations as they unfolded. Furthermore, there are some formal reports, correspondence and newspapers.

Since then, the borderland has been a battleground for recurring cross-border skirmishes and other destabilizing activities. On January 2, 2010, for example, the Ethiopian armies assaulted Eritrean border troops stationed at the doorsteps of Zalembeša.¹⁴ An Eritrean soldier interviewed by the author at the Eritrean-Ethiopian crossing said, ‘the attack was very rapid; the aim was to easily outmaneuver our military balance and to enter deep inside our territories’.¹⁵ However, they did not take control over Eritrean territories. Their advance was easily checked by countermeasures from the Eritrean troops. They returned losing 10 troops in the undertaking, which Ethiopia categorically denied.

This event, however, was only the beginning of the other rounds. On December 26, 2010, Eritrean-Ethiopian forces fought over some pockets of land near Tserona but there was no

¹⁴ “Eritrea Says It Killed 10 Ethiopian Troops,” *Reuters*, January 2, 2010, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE60206K20100103>. This also further corroborated by many informants from the battle ground areas, both civilians and soldiers.

¹⁵ Interview: YSS (43), August 15, 2018, Serha.

significant impact. Similar cross-border military attacks and counter-attacks also happened in 2012. This move was started in the Afar region, the southeastern part of the common border, although it didn't take long to spread to the southern region. According to Shimeles Kemal, then Ethiopian government spokesperson, the initial military initiative was taken by Ethiopia as part of its national security strategy in order to discourage cross-border attacks by 'subversive groups' in Eritrea.¹⁶ This was an accusation that Eritrea repeatedly refuted.

On June 12, 2016, Ethiopia and Eritrea were also involved in the worst cross-border fighting along the Tserona section. According to one informant from Tserona:

The Ethiopian division started its advance toward Tserona through Accuran. This was around 10:30 AM while the civilians were carrying out their normal everyday activities. Initially, Eritrean forces offered a little resistance since they concluded that this was a diversion rather than the main attack. Ethiopian force went down deep inside Eritrea's sovereign territories. However, as the advance continued, the Eritrean resistance ramped up after the reinforcement force sent and stopped the advance. Suddenly, the Ethiopian army came under intense EDF fire and retreated with a heavy loss. Another similar attack happened the next morning, but it was also restrained, and the war wrapped up after three days of concentrated attacks against one another.¹⁷

This account was confirmed by Eritrea's Minister of Information, Yemane Ghebremeskel. He says: "The aggression came from the Ethiopian side and it should be condemned unequivocally."¹⁸ Ethiopian government spokesperson, Getachew Reda, rejected the accusation and claimed that:

Eritrea fired first, but they did not expect the kind of response that we were able to mount. The extent of the damage they have suffered will hopefully make them think twice.¹⁹

¹⁶ "The Ethiopian Raid on Eritrean Bases Raises Fears of Renewed Conflict," *The Guardian*, March 16, 2012..

¹⁷ Interview: TTM (56), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

¹⁸ Eritrea Ministry of Information, "Press Release," *Haddas Ertra*, June 14, 2016.

¹⁹ Ethiopia's Government Spokesman Getachew Redia Press release, June 14, 2016.

No matter who triggered the hostility and why, this war embittered the normal life of the borderland communities. It caused displacement, disruption, and the destruction of property of the people at the border.²⁰ Many borderland communities, particularly these from Quinin, Accuran, Quinito, and Kudo- Weyiba, were forced to abandon their villages to relatively safe settlement areas such as Enda Aba Estifanos and other remote areas, and have not yet returned. The war expunged their financial capital; they lost their herds and farmlands, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Another similar but isolated incident was also held in the foothills of the Irob territories, in Aromo village, a few kilometers from the regional capital Senafe. Eritrean-Ethiopian forces fought for three consecutive nights on July 15-17, 2017. The gunfire exchanges started when I was carrying out my ethnographic fieldwork in Senafe. It broke out by the Ethiopian soldiers when Eritrean soldiers started to dig a trench at the upper side of the Aromo village.²¹ But it did not receive such a wide smokescreen of propaganda like in the Tserona case. Neither party suffered a serious loss.

4.3. Positioning of other agents

Aside from border militarization, Eritrea and Ethiopia deployed police, reserves, and members of their respective intelligence agencies to further monitor the security situation on the ground and to check out any sort of interaction between the two people living at the border. In addition, these forces were charged with controlling illegal border-crossings. As one of my interviewees put it, the degree of espionage and border inspection on the Eritrean side was much stricter than on the Ethiopian side.²² This was because of the persistent security threats from the Ethiopian side.

In the case study area, the mandate and roles of these agents were not different. They enforced law and order throughout the border area. They were entrusted with detecting and preventing illegal border crossings, taking countermeasures against intruders, checking-out cross-border crime and illegal human trafficking, and maintaining the borderland

²⁰ Interview: TAT (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

²¹ Interview: SSD(40), March 15, 2018, Serha

²² Interview: TAA (39), July 16, 2017.

communities' safety.²³ They were also engaged against some ethno-communal based subversive elements coming from Ethiopia. At the grass-roots level, in the working process, there were several collaborators from different sections of the societies; including representatives from the main office, traders, farmers, pastoralists, students or members of different local and national organizations.

Usually, the militia and police had a specific area for investigation. They also had nationwide known uniforms of their own. But this is not true with the security agents. They had neither a specific area to cover nor a known uniform. They worked with all branches of the governments and the local people. They also lived and shared everything with local ordinary people. They didn't have a different lifestyle than the common people in the country, nor did they have preferential treatment. However, no data are available about their size and the scale of their coverage or their working process. In fact, it is hard to even find out where their office is, let alone their working processes and procedures.

According to several informants, these cohesive strategies of work and clear working plans within these groups helped the Government of Eritrea to strictly follow day-to-day movements across the border areas. The fieldwork and local life indeed provided me a lot to note about how the local people and different government agents' allied together to make the border crossing harder. New people without permission to work or visit the areas are simply spotted, caught or reported to those agencies by anyone. Everybody watches carefully. It was very hard for any stranger to carry out any evil activities against the people, government infrastructures or institutions. As one local government officer from Tserona told me, this was the result of collective work carried out by local residents and different government agencies.²⁴

In the summer of 2017, for example, when my research assistant and I moved from Senafe to Serha, the last Eritrean village, to see the peripheries, we found out how much mobility and

²³ Interview: TTH (38), February 15, 2017.

²⁴ Interview: TTM (55), July 20, 2017, Tserona

access to outsiders in the area was hard. Much of our information logging was carried out by community cooperatives or members of the army. Otherwise, it was hard. The local people were very cautious about any new face. They did not allow free movement of unauthorized people around their areas nor provide information. They posed many questions and challenges until they get to know you.

My experiences in my main study sites in bars, restaurants, eateries or shops or coffee centers were similar. Everybody was asking me questions: What is your name? Where are you from? Why did you come all the way? Where do you work? Who is with you? Where do you spend the night? Who do you want to meet? Etc. However, they asked me only until they knew me. Asked why they posed such a series of questions so frequently, a small eatery center owner in Tserona expressed:

Do you know this area very well? The distance between the town and the front is very short. It is not more than 30 minutes walking distance. Many people of different agendas can slip out from the enemy side to carry out evil activities. If we don't care, how do you expect to contain them? Do you know how much the Ethiopian government has been pursuing different evil activities for the last 18 year by sliding out many agents of different agenda?²⁵

Hotels were also not free from these kinds of questions and checks for two reasons. Owners were unwilling to accommodate any undocumented individual regardless of his status or the size of his wallet. They strictly observed the rules and regulations from the local administrations. A local hotel owner told me that they were not allowed to host any individual with no national identification card for security reasons. Any individual with no valid identity card has to come up with a supporting letter from his nearest police station. They don't want to be accountable for any failures. Second, the police or sometimes the security agents, visit to check compliance with their directives.

4.4. Politicizing the border crossing

By 2008, Eritrea was voluntarily or involuntarily self-isolated from the international community. Following its withdrawal from the AU and IGAD in 2003 and 2006 respectively,

²⁵ Interview: BTT (50), June 29, 2017, Tserona.

Ethiopia skillfully utilized the vacuum and advocated the international community to condemn and isolate Eritrea. The diplomatic maneuver was framed under the orbit of Eritrea's alleged role of supporting terrorist groups in Somalia and refusing to withdraw its forces from disputed border areas with Djibouti.²⁶

In this process IGAD, the AU and some non-governmental and governmental organizations were skillfully employed by Ethiopia.²⁷ Indeed, the role of the Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia was exceedingly wide-ranging. This organization peddled several unsubstantiated narratives to further support Ethiopia's claim of Eritrea's alleged role in Somalia. As a result, Eritrea was slapped by UN Security Council sanctions. On December 23, 2009, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (1907) was adopted and exposed Eritrea and its people into unending economic and security difficulties.²⁸

In the area under investigation, the resolution had dire consequences. As Eritrea's economy was virtually paralyzed, the government had little to support the local people who had already been suffering from multi-faceted problems at the border and in border regions. As a result, terrible economic and security situations left many families out of rations and prompted an unprecedented influx of youths and unaccompanied children into Ethiopia or other cities in the country. Many families were left with few producers and many dependents.

Given all these odd conditions, the Government of Eritrea was forced to adopt a tough stance on people crossing the border. The influx of youths categorically became a national security issue, and the border crossing was widely dubbed as an act of treason (*Kedeat*). The courts' ruling was also used to be conditioned in this way at least at the beginning. There was a clear discrepancy in treatment between those who arrested while crossing the Eritrea-Sudan border

²⁶“United Nations Security Council Report Addressed to the President of the Security Council ,” S/2010/14), January 7, 2010.

²⁷ Redie Bereketeab, “The Morality of the U.N. Security Council Sanctions against Eritrea: Defensibility, Political Objectives, and Consequences,” *African Studies Review* 56, no. 2 (2013): 146, <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2013.46>.

²⁸ “UN Security Council Resolution 1907 (S/Res/1907),” December 23, 2009.

and the Eritrea-Ethiopia. The aim of all these measures was to discourage border-crossing until other options were created for them.

Here is a part of a long story told as part of an interview with a 39-year old Eritrean man from Tserona who had been extradited from Sudan and punished for the illegally crossing from Eritrea:

When I decided to cross the border to Ethiopia, I was 34 years old. From the very beginning, my intention was not to stay in Ethiopia. I used it just as transit for Sudan, and then to Israel. Unfortunately, I was eventually caught by the Sudanese National Security Force on April 22, 2001, at an Ethiopian-Sudanese border crossing point, along with other six refugees and was deported back to Eritrea.

Upon Arrival in Eritrea, for the first three months, I was in isolated prison, not allowed contact with family members or otherwise. The interrogators were trying to check whether I had a link either with the enemy country (Ethiopia) or some subnational elements based in Ethiopia. But when they proved that I was a minor offender, they almost set me free within the prison. They treated me like a normal prisoner and I had the rights of any other prisoner in the detention center. My family members were also free to visit me as they like as per the prison center's visitor schedule.²⁹

After 2013, such treatment and the kind of politics related to border crossings were changed because of the increase in illegal border crossings of common people. Individuals who were arrested only for trying to cross the border on individual problem bases were now regarded as minor delinquents; they were free from any form of extrajudicial treatment or detention. The term of imprisonment also decreased over time.

However, those reform measures and levels of improvement did not work on *Asigerti* (smugglers) and their collaborators. Eritrea was compelled to do so to avoid the regrouping of evil. One informant from Tserona adds:

Illegal border-crossing is not acceptable under any circumstance considering the existing political condition between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The worst is with those who encourage and facilitate the wave of human migration. While hundreds of thousands of soldiers face one another for competing national agendas, how on earth someone to accept to someone who crosses the border toward the enemy line

²⁹ Informal conversation: DYT (39), February 24, 2018, Tserona.

normally; and how do you expect the rule to treat them normally with the minor offenders in same eye. This is not a normal border; people are paying everything for the fatherland, whereas these (smugglers) are serving for other agenda, depleting the working force from the country. So, this is the reason we treat them separately. The ultimate objective is nothing but to discourage the network of criminals and largely to end the influx of people to other countries until a sustainable solution is found.³⁰

The quotation above reflects that the ultimate objective of all measures against the giant dealers and smuggler was simply meant to discourage the human trafficking business across the border, because the wave of the movement threatened not only Eritrea's defense capacity but also the labor force of the country. As the narratives of the inhabitants of the border indicate, the political decision, nevertheless, did not completely purge them. Using local geographic knowledge, they continue to carry out the business in hiding.

In parallel, there were also many other soft border controlling strategies to deter the mobility of people toward the most sensitive border areas and the proliferation of the smuggling network. In the next section, we will focus on one of these strategies: checkpoints.

4.5. Checkpoints and Permit Papers (*Menkesakasi*)

The majorities of my interviewees agree that the form and the function of the border and border areas had completely changed since the outbreak of the border war in 1998, and particularly after 2005 mainly due to several checkpoints (*Kelatat*) and travel permit (*menkesakasi*) requirements. The conflation of checkpoints with other state security apparatuses disrupted the free flow of the people, goods, and services across the international border and also the everyday life activities of the borderland communities.

Checkpoints on the main roads were made with a view to containing evaders, deserters and some foreign elements coming from Ethiopia. Normally, public and private buses and cars were stopped and searched. People, particularly youths regardless of their sex, could no longer enter into the security zone unchecked or without the permit paper. If an individual is found without *menkesakasi*, checkpoint guards, border patrol or other forces deliver him/her

³⁰ Informal interview: R (55), March 12, 2018, Senafe.

either to the police station or some other temporary locale for further investigation and action. Usually, draftees with no intent to cross the border were sent back to their respective military units, whereas the deserters are sent to prison. This decision is determined by preliminary investigation either by the checkpoint guard members or some other border security branches linked to the border guards.

By 2018, during the second phase of my ethnographic fieldwork, there were five checkpoints within 66 Kilometers just between Dekemarei and Tserona. At each checkpoint, the border guards asked for *menkesakasi* or supporting letters (*Mesenyita*), which allows someone to cross the checkpoints for work, farming, business, family visit or other social issues. Usually, these two types of travel permits are issued only by one's respective ministry based on hard evidence from the claimants. The paper defines the particularities of the holder including full name, address, work, ministry, issue and expiry date of the paper, the address of issuing department or ministry and the area permitted to be visited and even the person who issued the paper. The bearer of the paper is permitted to reach any place within the premises specified in the permit paper. Detours outside the specified area are not allowed.

The Senafe sub-region situation, however, was loose. As the majority of my informants argue, in this section Eritrea relied more on surveillance service than checkpoints. Neither Asmara to Senafe nor Senafe to the border was strictly controlled. There were no congested checkpoints either. In the whole sub-region, there were only two checkpoints and both are found in the same line. One is on the main road to the border, and the second was 300 meters from the dividing line between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The checkpoint guards were less strict compared to the other area. A 45-year old interviewee, a member of the EDF, justifies the difference as follows:

Civilian and non-civilian agents involve in the process of the border control in the hide. But even the normal ordinary people report when an outsider-looking or unauthorized person comes to this area. There is a strong bond of work between the people, the military and national security agents when it comes to the whole working processes. They are all working together in hiding and proved to be productive.³¹

³¹ Interview: P (40), August 16, 2018, Senafe.

For the majority of the borderland communities, the stricter border inspection through checkpoints to the local community, however, was a hard reality, as everybody was subjected being checked now and then. A businessman, who crosses the border area inspection points every day stated:

Our life under such circumstances entails a lot to someone who really feels it. These (checkpoints) are the worst obstruction to our everyday routine practices. We spend 15 to 30 minutes at each checkpoint. You need a permit paper just to move from one village to another village no matter who you are. These checkpoints turned everybody *into* nobody.³²

Another interviewee from the outskirts of Tserona concurs with the first informant's displeasure. He illuminates how the everyday activities of farming and herding communities are limited:

The border control method in this area is strict. Usually, the standing armies provide us information about where to move and not through our civilian administrators.....They govern our everyday action. The movement toward what they called a prohibited area requires prior notification to the armies or a permit from the administrator. Otherwise, it makes us subjects of speculation.³³

Regardless of state considerations and narratives about the necessity of border inspection, the majority of the informants disagree with the degree of security solidification at the border and border regions. One informant, serving in the army for over 18 years, complained that:

I don't ignore the security threat on us from Ethiopia and their close allies. But I dispute the degree to which we get paranoid by them. Such an unprecedented proliferation of checkpoints across the region in the name of state-related security and sovereignty is undesirable. People know their enemies and can tell us easily when they found alien elements. We need to be a bit relaxed. These webs of checkpoints have made mobility, life and survival strategies at border and border region terrible.³⁴

³² Interview: TTT (73), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

³³ Interview: TMS (43), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

³⁴ Interview: SST (43), August 13, 2017, Senafe

As the interviewee above reflected, the solidification of the state border security at the border and its surrounding challenged the borderland peoples' sense of familiarity with local border control, and many seemed frustrated. The majority of the interviewees found not enough evidence to recognize the desirability of such great securitization efforts at the border and its resulting hostage situation for over 18 years. They were all looking forward to seeing the mental and physical borders being uplifted to resume their normal everyday life at the border.

However, even if the border appears to be impermeable due to the state's multi-layered efforts, illegal crossings did not completely cease. An unofficial or clandestine network of smugglers emerged to overcome state efforts to control the border. Many people from different background have escaped through this border for Ethiopia with the help of the network of human traffickers. One of my Tserona interviewees told me the details of how the clandestine border-crossing practices work against the state efforts:

The network of smugglers is a bit complicated. Most of the time, they undertake their activities in hiding. You never see them simply in daylight being chased by the security forces. They have people working for them for commission. Most of them are members of their close family or relatives. In some instance, they could also be from outside, the families simply tied-up to each other by their cross-border business. Usually, the dealers aren't directly involved in the business. They just facilitate and organize, act as a bridge between the border crossers and human traffickers, preparing people for border crossing purely for cash. Their return is usually conditioned by the number and the kind of people they prepare for migration.³⁵

As the above interviewee reveals, the illegal border crossing was aggravated by the increasing role of the smugglers regardless of the state border inspection efforts. From 2005 onwards, however, there were also other compelling domestic factors that resulted in illegal cross-border outflow. As many informants described, Ethiopia's refusal to accept the EEBC rulings and the U.N., EU and OU's failures to uphold their responsibility as mediators have forced many youths to leave the country to avoid the insecurity menaces looming at their doorsteps

³⁵ Informal Interview: Q (40), July 17, 2017, Tserona.

at the border. One interviewee, returned from Israel after 12 years in exile, shares his experiences related to these arguments as follows:

The uninterrupted building up of armies and ammunition at my doorstep, and the everyday drumbeat of war in the media by the two states made me feel that I was sitting on a time bomb. These were the reasons that pushed me out of my beloved town and country. Otherwise, I had no intention to leave the country. This was a town of opportunity...people were coming here to live and make a better life, unlike today.³⁶

Another push factor was the failure of the rainy season in 2008 and 2009, particularly in Tserona and Senafe. The most affected area was the Senafe administration. A 50-year old man added:

In 2008, the magnitude of the drought in the region severely affected the food security and livelihoods of the majority of the people. In particular, the farming communities were directly affected. The worst was with those who relied on agro-pastoralism. They lost their herds and felt insecure. As a result, they went en mass either to the main cities or beyond the border to Ethiopia.³⁷

This was further exacerbated by the international community's failure to immediately respond with desired food aid, due to some misunderstandings with the Eritrean government.

4.6. Landmines

During the three-year border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, almost all of the common border was sealed off by landmines planted by the two sides. As fieldwork informants indicate, the landmines were planted to protect themselves from each other's attacking troops. However, it had far-reaching negative consequences on the borderland people. It blocked their access to water, grazing areas, and cultivable land. Many people were either killed or maimed. In short, the impact ranges from a severe toll on the lives of the local people to the disruption of everyday life.

³⁶ Informal Interview: TTD (35), March 3, 2018, Tserona.

³⁷ Interview: SST (50), July 16, 2017, Senafe.

The issue came to the attention of the UN and other affiliated organization just after the Algiers Peace Accord in 2000. That year, the U.N. Security Council had adopted Resolution 1320/2000 to take practical action by establishing a UN Mine Action Coordination Center (MACC).³⁸ This body was charged with coordinating and providing technical assistance for humanitarian mine action activities within the buffer zone established between the Eritrean and the Ethiopian border and its adjacent territories. According to MACC reports, the mission cleared 1.9 million square meters of land from both sides of the border just within its eight-year life span and give land back to communities, mainly for farming and grazing.³⁹

In the Tserona and Senafe sub-regions, the MACC impact was tremendous. Without this mission's activities, the repatriation schemes would have not been possible. Thanks to the mission, non-government organizations such as Halo Trust, and Danish Church aid along with Eritrean government landmine clearers helped the whole region to return back to their respective villages and towns by clearing landmines from their residential land, farmland and grazing areas. They also provided them landmine risk education. These achievements reduced the chances of death and injury. Life for the local people had also improved beyond measure. The people were about to come out from the post-war landmine caused trauma until another cycle of threats re-emerged after the June 12, 2016, incident, a surprise military attack by Ethiopian forces.

³⁸ "U.N. Security Council Resolution" 1320/2000, September 15, 2000.

³⁹ "The United Nations Mine Action Service Annual Report," 2007.



Figure 5. Tserona border landmine area

Following the June incident, Eritrea reinforced its front infantry force with landmines. The landmine fields extended from the lower side of Tserona to Eastern section of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border. These landmines were laid down to keep Ethiopian armies from carrying out any other similar surprise military strike in the future. The decision created another unintended consequence for the people living at the border. As a herder from Tserona stated, the risk of landmine-related accidents limited their freedom to move and their safety in their herding life.⁴⁰ Moreover, the local borderland communities were subjected to a state of uncertainty. They had always been worrying about their children and herds due to the risk of accidents from landmines, which happen regularly.

The cost of landmine-related losses was higher on the Eritrean side than in Ethiopia. The majority of the victims were herders and border crossers. The herding communities were the first victims. As the majority of the informants explained, the landmines had been causing them a regular loss of herds including donkeys, camels, goats, sheep, and cows. An old man

⁴⁰ Interview: TAS (43), July 16, 2017, Tserona.

from Tserona provided further details, focusing particularly on his experiences between 2016 and 2018. He explains:

In essence, our routine herding life is disrupted not only by the presence of the two sides' standing armies but mainly because of the landmines. We always feel insecurity. We always think about whether our herds will be back or not. It has been a long time since the loss of herds from landmines was a common occurrence. To be honest, this area has been losing a lot. It has been losing its children, herds, and opportunities.⁴¹

Usually, the incidents happen when the herds attempt to cross into the landmine zones in search of water or good pastures near the riverbank. Their owners, particularly children, are also victimized when they try to follow their herds, either to offer them rich vegetation for grazing or risk them when they cross the red line.

The second category of victims was illegal border crossers. Most of the time, they fall victim to landmines due to a lack of knowledge of landmine risk. In 2017, for instance, there were five victims from Tserona constituents alone, and all of them were reported to have a link with illegal border crossing. Many other border crossers and human traffickers have also been reported killed and maimed in the buffer zone.

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, by linking different border control strategies, I have attempted to understand the ways in which policy-makers in Eritrea and Ethiopia in general and Eritrea in particular, have turned the Eritrea-Ethiopian border from being blessed with economic opportunities, into a barrier, by erecting different barriers over territories and preventing population movements since the end of the border war in 2000. The most important finding is that the preoccupation of the two states with Agamben type of state of exception.⁴² In Eritrea, in

⁴¹ Interview: YST (53), November 16, 2018, Tserona.

⁴² Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception (Stato Di Eccezione)*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

particular, this state of mind is expressed by the diffusion of multiple border control practices in everyday life. These practices, in turn, made the common border between Eritrea and Ethiopia one of the most militarized and protected zones in the world, next to the North and South Korean border, and threatened the lives of borderland communities for 18 years.

In addition to hundreds of thousands of the standing armies, Eritrea and Ethiopia deployed different government agencies to make the common border more definitive and impermeable. As the majority of the informants expound, the degree of securitization on the Eritrean side of the border was much greater. Arguably, the main rationale behind this action was to contain the security menaces from Ethiopia in light of the 'no war, no peace' situation between the two states. However, there is no significant difference in the degree of border control between the two case study sites of Tserona and Senafe.

Furthermore, Eritrea was also involved in a project politicizing the border, calling an illegal border crossing as tantamount to treason against the fatherland. This measure was taken when an influx of youths crossed the border. The aim was to discourage illegal border crossings. However, these activities were stopped in a short time when it became apparent that illegal border crossing to Ethiopia would not end soon. Instead, Eritrea was involved in other protective measures such as the multiplication of checkpoints on the main roads and border patrolling around the main crossing points. Subsequently, the contemporary common border between the two countries became a fundamental symbol of state control over territories and the movement of people.

Chapter 5

The border's impact on the borderland communities

The current life at border entails a lot to someone who really feels it. This is a border that separate families, disturbed livelihood character and locked the whole mystery of opportunities.

Tiumizghi Tekhile¹

On both side of the border, people share the same culture and the same language. But, most families have lived cut off for almost two decades.

Borderlander woman²

I. Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the everyday practices of border control by different state actors, which persistently redefined the territorial and social boundaries between Eritrea and Ethiopia from the end of the war on 18 June 2000 to 2018. This chapter, Chapter five, presents the core research question, i.e., the impact of the border enforcement on livelihoods of the borderland communities of the Tserona and Senafe sub-regions, the Eritrea-Ethiopia borderland. Importantly, this chapter illustrates the effect of the Eritrea-Ethiopian border on the livelihood resources and livelihood strategies in relation to the limits set on mobility and access to livelihood bases. It takes the discussion further by comparing the extent of their impacts on three socio-economic groups: farmers, agro-pastoralists and traders.

¹ Interview: Tiumizghi Tekhile (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

² Interview: LSS (50), July 29, 2017, Serha.

As stated by Tiumizghi Tekhile and echoed by borderlander woman, the ‘no war, no peace’ situation imposed a border that created hassles on local communities. It had not only caused losses of livelihood assets, but also limited the people’s mobility and access to their routine livelihood strategic bases, and thereby engendered their general socio-economic decline. However, there is a difference in the extent of the impacts between those living in the Tserona and the Senafe sub-regions. The degree of difference is mainly observed among those who depend on farming and agro-pastoral economic activities.

5.1. Loss of main livelihood assets

5.1.1. Loss of Financial assets

The overwhelming majority of the interviewees pointed out that border closure, triggered by the ‘no war, no peace’ situation, had led to an unprecedented loss of their core livelihood assets: financial, human and natural resources, with almost leveling effects across entire groups in the region. The losses of financial assets for the majority of the inhabitants (farmers and agro-pastoralists), were in the form of livestock, lost because of the multi-layered obstructions at the border. In particular, rings of anti-personnel mines at random intervals on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border in Tserona and Senafe areas were killing and injuring herds and sometimes herders. A Tserona resident described his personal experiences as follows:

I personally lost more than 15 camels just because of the wall that you see in front of us, which is tightly protected by landmines and excessive armies from the outbreak of the border war in May 1998 to present. The lack of access to the border area prevents me from closely tracking their mobility. During *Hagay* (the dry season) or *Derqi* (drought) particularly the camels cross the border in search of grazing land or water. It is hard for me to completely control them, and they became victims of landmines, soldiers, war or wild predators.³

However, the intensity of losses and damages from landmines varied from one place to another. In some areas, the consequences were mild, whereas in Tserona’s outer-edges they were huge. As stated in chapter two, Tersona is located next to the plains of Hazomo, which lie considerably lower than the Senafe plateau. It has less topographic obstacles compared to Senafe. Being at the outer-edges of Tserona, Ethiopian forces easily slip out or control the

³ Interview: TAS (43), July 16, 2017, Tserona.

movement of the Eritrean army and take surprise military actions. Describing one incident, a middle-aged Tserona man said:

On June 12, 2016, the Ethiopian forces came across this table-land, Loggo Sarda (broken by many rifts, gorgeous and river valleys). This was early in the morning while everybody was asleep. Nobody expected that to happen. I, myself, was on my farmland with my herds. First I did not realize that it was serious military offensive as such kinds of maneuvers were common. It was around sunrise that everything became clear to me. All of a sudden, the whole environ turned into a living hell. Both sides started to exchange heavy and small-scale artilleries. As a result, I left my herds and ran out to save my life and to catch up with my family who were in the main town, Tserona.⁴

To check these cross-border aggression activities, Eritrea was then compelled to seal off the whole border in Tserona with rings of landmines. This action, however, was not without consequences. As the former interviewee highlighted, it led to frequent incidents in which many farmers and herders lost their herds in Tserona.

The loss of access to some of the important resources in the shrublands, because of the border enforcement practices, also affected inhabitants' abilities to help their herds cope with droughts and other climate-related disasters. This led to congested settlement, resulting in the loss of soil cover due to over-use of soil and erosion. Slowly, it also led to a scarcity of water and the over-use of land resulting in loss of soil fertility, food shortages, deforestation, and biomass disturbance. The net result was loss of herds. A 89-year-old man I interviewed, originally from Aromo and living in Senafe, described his harrowing experiences in the following words:

After the third round of offensive, we were displaced first to Senafe and then to Mai Habar as the whole region fall under Ethiopian occupation. In this process, I took only some of my livestock to makeshift camps as the war was moving fast. Worst was also in the camp. Months later, I lost almost 70 % of my remaining herds from drought, changes in climate and disease. But these were not the only factors. Congested settlement in a temporary camp and lack of enough rangelands had also exacerbated their lives.⁵

⁴ Interview: YTT (53), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

⁵ Interview: SAT (89), July 14, 2017, Senafe.

Another resident shares the following story:

Before the border war (1998-2000), these chains of mountains were the main grazing lands (Irob area). We lived a kind of semi-nomadic life there for generations, wandering with herds of sheep, cattle, and goats and selling livestock production to fill in a diet mainly based on livestock milk. But, this kind of life is no longer possible. The presence of soldiers and some adventurist Ethiopian civilian individuals at the border areas have changed the whole life mysteries. They loot *us* and limit us. For these reasons, for almost 18 years, we have been confined only in these dusty areas (depleted areas behind the front) and as a result, we have lost most of our livestock.⁶

The looting of herds by Ethiopian army members and some adventurist Ethiopian individual civilians, however, was repeated throughout the Senafe region only, but not in Tserona. In later areas, unlike in Senafe region, they have good memories of helping and supporting each other by transcending many obstacles at the border. At Mai-Agam, the western section of Tserona town, a resident explains his cumulative good experiences:

When the Tigrean cattle, goats, donkeys, camels or other animals come to this side of the border, we gather and give them to kids to send them back as aged people are not allowed to approach the border except in some instances. The Tigrean neighboring villagers do the same. Sometimes, we communicate indirectly to pass the needed information about lost and found heads of herds or their whereabouts. But most of the time we transmit our messages through kids since they meet each other at the river bank (Belesea), Eritrea-Ethiopian border. We don't use the existing military and political situation at the border to advance our personal or community interests. We do respect and collaborate *with* each other's interests regardless of the kind of abstractions in front of us.⁷

There are similar sets of stories from Tserona local regional administration. One informant told me that herds that crossed from the Ethiopian side of the border or vice versa, identified as being from another side of the border, would safely be returned back to their respective owners. In his words:

⁶ Interview: SAG (75), July 14, 2017, Senafe.

⁷ Interview: TAY (53), July 12, 2018, Tserona.

Both sides of the border know which herds belonged to whom easily because they used to share everything. In addition, the majority of the residents have their close relatives on the other side of the border. It is not easy for individuals from either part of this border to hold herds from Eritrean side or otherwise illegally. Family members inform each other by phoning their relatives abroad or by sending messages through children who gather around the Belessa river bank.⁸

As the above stories reflect, the cross-border alliances of the borderland communities enabled them to maintain and defend their cross-border interests regardless of the obstructions at the border.

In the Senafe context, the strained cross-border ties were in large part imbued by some historical difference over disputed *resti* land⁹ at the outer-edges of the town. South of the town, for example, there are historical contrasting claims and counter-claims over Shishet, *resti* land between Geleba, an Eritrean border village, and Ligat, an Ethiopian border village. Since the BMA (1941-1952), this disputed land pushed the two villages closer and closer to confrontation over many years.¹⁰

Attached to the Shishet issue is the significant land dispute between Menekhuseyto and Aiga over Zegebila, grazing, and bee-keeping land. This is a few kilometers from the town. As in the first case, the history of this conflict also stretches back to the BMA period. It has long been seen as a source of conflict between them, and disputes have been frequent. Menekhuseyto's position is that Aiga villagers should respect the actual colonial borderline that was sanctioned under the framework of colonial border treaty agreements of 1900 and

⁸ Interview: TTM (55), July 20, 2017, Tserona.

⁹ The *Resti* land /system was one of the most well established form of land tenure systems in the highlands of Eritrea during the pre-colonial era, though today it is limited only to the central highlands of Eritrea. This system entails an exclusive ownership of land to individuals and provides a right to land inheritance from generation to generation through male line.

¹⁰ Abebe, "War Stories, Displacement and Coping Experiences," 211-12.

1902, whereas the Aiga rejects them.¹¹ Due to these conflicting claims, many mediation efforts have failed, and the issue has remained as back burner for years.¹²

During my fieldwork at the outer edges of Senafe in 2017, my first impression was the prevalence of those historical local claims of land and their spillover effects in their cross-border relations. Many informants were not hesitant to express their dissatisfaction about their brothers living on the other side of the border for their illegal use of their land and the looting of their livestock in broad daylight. This was particularly emphasized at the southeastern edges of Senafe, especially among people who were living between the two armies. Using the deteriorating political and military situation on the ground, some Ethiopian individuals, both civilians and soldiers, compromised the cross-border ethnic and familial ties in order to advance their personal interest.

However, the loss of financial capital was not only limited to farming and herding communities, traders were also badly affected. Although it is hard to get precise statistical figures, they claimed to have been hit by the border closure. Market failures, a lack of access to the market in Ethiopia, the decline of the purchasing power of the borderland communities and a lack of commodities for circulation were the most widely mentioned reasons by trader respondents. They were no longer able to find any special opportunities that the border used to offer them.

Before the outbreak of the war, as described in the second chapter, traders from Tserona and Senafe were benefitting from their geopolitical position and price differences. They traded salt, sugar, cooking oil, iron sheets, reinforcement bars, kerosene, wheat and maize to Ethiopia. They were also buying and selling goods coming from the Ethiopian side to the mainland of Eritrea. These items included coffee, unprocessed leather, rhamnus prinioides-leaf buckthorn, red pepper, taff-white, taff-reddish, chickpeas, field peas, beans, spices,

¹¹ Alemseghed Tesfai, *Eritrea: From Federation to Annexation (1952-1962)* (Asmara, HDRI Publishers, 2016), 210 -211.

¹² Ibid.

cotton, horses, etc.¹³ One informant, whose father was once the wealthiest trader in Tserona, recalls that this is no longer the case, mainly due to the border closure:

Can't you see how we live? Where is the business? Where is the exchange of goods and services? Where is life? We are completely bankrupt. No money, no investment. Yes, before the war the town had the capability of providing something for every day, but now things are completely changed. No business, no life, no security. We are just relying on the money coming from our brothers and sisters living in Europe, USA, Israel and oil-rich Arab countries in the Middle East. The border closure and the deadlock at the border dried up every business opportunity. Many shops, services providers, and stores went out of business and turned either into simple living houses or were abandoned.¹⁴

These frustrations were repeated throughout the region. As I could personally observe during the fieldwork, all the inhabitants with whom I had lived, interviewed, worked, and relaxed, had deep-seated frustrations about their future and the future of the next generation. The whole set of border enforcement practices prevented them not only from making their everyday business transactions but also pushed them into marginal and vulnerable situations. They must depend on remittances if they are to live with these sets of overlapping restrictions.

In a nutshell, all the stories from the socio-economic groups can be condensed into one point and that is the grave consequences the border had on their core financial bases. The border closure destroyed their longstanding and manifold cross-border networks, and thus their financial bases. Over the past 18 years, living in relation to the border meant living with different ways in which the movement of people across the border was regulated or restricted. Unlike many borders in the Horn of Africa, there were continuous barriers along this border, stopping people not only from moving from one political jurisdiction to another but also within the same border regions. Subsequently, the financial bases of the border community were ruined, and the people were exposed to unemployment. A young man from Senafe described his tragic experiences to me:

I don't want to tell you about the people's hassles in this town for the last 18 years, because the reality is much more than what I can

¹³ Interview: SSQ (59), August 12, 2017, Senafe.

¹⁴ Interview: TTD (36), March 26, 2018, Tserona.

describe. We are living with it (border) because we know nothing beyond it, just for the sake of very survival. But we cannot live with this hardship for a long time. Things are getting out of control. We have nothing to do in front of us, to work, to invest or to involve in agriculture or other activities. Over the last 18 years we lost everything, all opportunities have dried up. We all, the young people originally from the town and its outer edges converge here (the main part of the town) and spend the whole day eying one another in bars, tea rooms, and coffee rooms.¹⁵

5.1.2. Physical Assets

The loss of physical assets is another very pronounced impact of the existing situation at the border. As the war damage statistical report and the overwhelming majority of my informants' reveal, the loss started in May 2000 when the region fell under Ethiopian forces, although it was further aggravated by the current situation at the border. 2,282 and 17,093 houses were destroyed in Tserona and Senafe respectively,¹⁶ and Ethiopian forces and civilians carried out this systematic destruction. Most of the informants, however, accept this loss as the course of war reality. What it is totally intolerable to them is the existing standstill between the two forces at the border and its toll on their physical assets. Farmers and agropastoralists were unable to use their arable land for almost 18 years. Their land was no longer safe and accessible to them for their daily routines. The soldiers on the ground, the landmines and the general insecure military and political climate became the main sources of obstruction for them. The result was food insecurity for both them and their herds.

In addition, Ethiopia occupied large tracks of farm and grazing lands. The owners didn't have any sort of access for any purposes. Subsequently, they are destined to confine their activities mainly around the towns or government-allocated farmland. In Tserona, for instance, most of the victims were granted new farmland by the Government of Eritrea in the open Hazomo plains or in Gash Barka, at the Eritrean-Sudanese border area, around 300 kilometers away from their original homeland. Some others already left to main cities in Eritrea and others to Ethiopia as making a living without their land became unaffordable.

¹⁵ Interview SSB (30), March 27, 2018, Senafe.

¹⁶ Ibid.

A 60-year old man from Kolet now living in Senafe ponders the story of how his family affairs were completely deserted from this situation:

Since the UNMEE withdrawal from the border region in 2008, my farm and grazing land have been between the two armies. I have been prohibited from traveling to the areas. I have no right to freely access them. Yet the Ethiopian herders have been free not only to use it for grazing alone but also to establish a temporary settlement. Worse still, the Ethiopian armies and some civilian individuals from neighborhood Ethiopian villages enter into my farm and seasonal settlement area and loot everything that they need. In short, my community and I have been passing through such a terrible period.¹⁷

Another resident from Senafe also confers a similar set of stories:

Until now the Ethiopian soldiers have denied us access to our own farmland. Whenever they see us, they simply shoot without any reason. On June 29, 2017, for example, my brother barely survived a gunshot wound from Ethiopian soldiers while he was tilling his land. He is now at Asmara Halibet hospital for medication. He is about to recover from his critical situation. This is a simple case. We have been suffering much more than this. We can say that we are living almost in an enclosure. We have no rights within the premises of our forefather land. Everyday activities around our farming and grazing land became unsafe and difficult. This is the reason why I do business only in the town.¹⁸

These many stories of intimidation and violence, however, were not shared among Tserona residents as in the previous context. Although there are huge tracts of uncultivated land, for safety and security reasons, the borderland people supported one another. One informant recalls from his experience of living near the border in Tserona:

The political conflict surrounding this border is, of course, most visible in this area since there were continuous skirmishes between the two states over 18 years. However, the situation did not create fault lines between the civilian populations living over the border

¹⁷ Interview: SKD (25), March 29, 2018, Senafe.

¹⁸ Interview: SAT (61), September 2, 2017, Asmara.

areas. We supported each other. We didn't use the situation for temporary advantage.¹⁹

In 2016 tension had arisen between the two countries along the Tserona border crossing line and both states sealed off the border with many landmines, in a very diverse topography. Thus, opportunities for farming and grazing along the protected security zone remained difficult. Large tracts of farming and grazing land remained unused, and fell under Ethiopia's control. Ethiopian borderland communities, however, declined to use it as gesture of goodwill to their brothers on the other side of the border.

5.1.3. Loss of Social capital

Border enforcement not only resulted in losses of financial and physical capital for the people living at the border, but also tremendously affected their social capital. The cross-border relationship among those who live on the Eritrean and Ethiopian sides of the border was dramatically undermined. When the borderland people describe the situation from this angle they often use the expression, "this is a curse". This saying conveys the literary meaning. It indicates the gravity of the border closure on people bound by blood, language, religion, culture and everyday cross-border social relations.

The majority of the interviewees mentioned the negative impacts on family ties in particular. Families of mixed background were separated over 18 years from their family members, cut off from their cousins, brothers, sisters, and daughters. In the words of an old woman whose daughter had married to a Zalenbesa:

It has been exactly 20 years since my daughter and I have not seen each other. I have been receiving information about her whereabouts, health or her family status only through my family members living in UK and Israel or the Red Cross. I know that she already has a large family. But it is not possible to meet or speak to each other as there is no line of communication. The border closure has completely separated us from one another. Recently, I have heard that her elder son has married, but nobody has crossed the border. She did it without our presence, which is not only hard to believe it but hard even to imagine.²⁰

¹⁹ Interview: TTT (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

²⁰ Interview: SSU (73), September 2, 2017, Senafe.

The above sad experience was echoed by another informant from Tserona:

For those of us that live near the border, the situation did not help us. It hurt us more than anybody in the region. For instance, I have three daughters born from an Ethiopian mother and living in Mekelle. I met them only once in the last 20 years when their mother passed away from a natural death. But even this was not an easy task for me. Although it is three hours' drive from Tserona or Senafe to Mekelle, I took flight from Asmara to Khartoum and then to Addis Abeba and then back down to Mekelle. I made unnecessary expenses just because of the hard border between the two countries.²¹

More lived stories were echoed by many other informants. For instance, a 55-year-old said:

My mother is now in Ethiopia. She went to visit her sister married to a Tigrean. This happened after 20 years due to some policy changes in Ethiopia on matters related to the people-to-people relations, but at a huge cost. Although the distance between Tserona and my aunt's village is three hours away on foot, she was compelled to take a long way; first, she went from Eritrea to Sudan, and then to Ethiopia.²²

Many respondents confirmed that the presence of soldiers at the border was not only putting restrictions on normal cross-border family visits but even on social events such as death ceremonies of family members which had been considered normal before the border closure. There are many grief-stricken parents. Many families, friends, and relatives have been living with their pain. Describing the real situation on the ground a Tserona elder said:

Regardless of the type of the obstructions, we get information about deaths and marriages from our family members in the other side of the border from some sources. However, cross-border visits are unthinkable. Everybody lives with his or her pain.²³

Cross-border mixed marriages also badly affected. As the finding of social experiences from Chapter two reveals, there was a high degree of cross-border intermarriage and the resulting formation of transnational families. This played a crucial role in local borderland strategies.

²¹ Interview: TTT (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

²² Interview: HSS (55), April 3, 2018, Senafe.

²³ Interview: WSS (68), September 3, 2017, Asmara.

It has also been understood as being among other social integration factors between the borderland communities. This trend is deeply affected by the current border realities. Here is a story of 67-year-old informant on how the formation of the trans-national family has been made impossible:

Before the outbreak of the war, cross-border intermarriage was quite common. My own daughter, for instance, was born of an Ethiopian mother. There are also many other similar families of mixed background. Many of us have relatives in Kelelie, Gherhu Sirnayi and other border villages and towns in Tigray. We had extensive familial relations. The current hard border between the two states, however, made the continuity to be arduous affairs. The border crossing itself poses many problems let alone to think about cross-border intermarriage. Both authorities forced us to remain completely cut off.²⁴

Life stories from the Senafe border region are similar. One middle-aged interviewee expresses the same sentiments:

Cross-border marriage is not possible. In fact, it is a kind of a mission impossible. This is because of the strong border between the two states. We are made to be completely disassociated from one another.²⁵

Another sad social impact is the family breakdown mainly because of the international migration, which was the norm in the whole country. Due to existing military and political tensions at the border, many youths were forced to leave their homeland through the hard border leaving their siblings and elderly parents behind them since the border-crossing was high risk. During my personal fieldwork experiences, I discovered that the towns of Tserona and Senafe, were populated only with aged people and children. It was a hard for me to find youths in the age range between 17- 35 years except those who come from the frontline when they are off duty.

²⁴ Interview: TTT (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

²⁵ Interview: HGS (50), March 3, 2018, Senafe.

On August 23, 2017, I went to the outer-edges of Senafe in order to get a clear picture of what had been happening out of the town too, and I interviewed two Aramo village elders. They were both peasants who had just come from their farmland located between the Eritrean and Ethiopian armies. They had been leaders of the village for a long time. The youngest was a former Eritrean soldier and he was amongst the first to complete junior school. The other was a priest who was widely respected in the area. He was one of the first villagers to obtain a good base of church school.

Over the course of the interview, it became crystal clear to me that the impact of migration was far worse than what I had witnessed in the towns. There was a strong sense of powerlessness and speechlessness in their faces and words. They were repeatedly mentioning that they were worrying about their continuity as a community. In his own words, the priest expressed:

Now, we are left alone. Our children are not here with us. They became so frustrated by the existing military and political situation at the border and went in an unknown direction. Some of them fled to Ethiopia and others to Sudan, and then to Israel, Canada or America. The situation becomes so serious.²⁶

Most of these who left the areas were without legal documents. They faced horrific experiences crossing the Libyan Desert, crossing the Mediterranean Sea with wrecked ships or boats, crossing the fenced Egyptian-Israeli border on foot without proper water and food.²⁷ Many of them died on the way. The journeys were usually paid for by family members living abroad or in Eritrea. A 17-year-old Eritrean refugee from Cagliari temporary refugee camp, originally from Senafe, shared his experience as follows:

When the situation at the border became a nightmare, I left to Ethiopia first and then to Sudan. In Sudan, I stayed for almost 9 months and then moved to Libya. My ultimate objective was to reach Europe at any cost. I didn't think of the cost of travel or otherwise. Crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean Sea, however, was not easy. It was the most traumatizing experience in my life. I witnessed the difference between life and death. I also witnessed how the

²⁶ Interview: TTA (89), February 23, 2018, Tserona.

²⁷ United Nations Human Rights Council, "Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights on Eritrea," June 5, 2015, accessed June 26, 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIEritrea/A_HRC_29_CRP-1.pdf.

Mediterranean Sea is a graveyard for us. It was a journey of full horrors.²⁸

At home, the immediate victims of migration are mainly children and women. There were many abandoned young women living alone with their children, as crossing the border was not simple for them. Here is a self-revealing story of a woman from Tserona:

I have been here in Tserona for the last 8 years, and my children too, while my husband is in Israel. It is hard for us to follow his footsteps. The border crossing is incredibly tough. For this reason, here, we are making life just by the remittances coming illegally from their father. ...Their father is simply reduced to being a money sender. The last three children have no memories of him. He left them when they were very young".²⁹

The social impacts of the migration, however, were more visible among the aged people than woman and children. There were frequent stories of frustration stemming from a sense of loneliness. A 89-year man that I informally communicated with during a traditional coffee ceremony in Tserona told me that:

This is a difficult time for me. I have 7 children but they are all gone. They dispersed like the children of partridge (*Zagira*). Some of them are in Europe, others in Israel. I have also two children in Canada. My wife has passed away recently, and I felt abandoned. No one is around me. My children send me money regularly but it cannot be a substitute for them. I need them to be around me. I become a terrible burden to my immediate neighbors and others around me.... This was the time that I was supposed to enjoy with my grandchildren and siblings. Unfortunately, I am not lucky. I have lost these privileges. I have never thought to remain alone in the four corners of my house.³⁰

An elder from Senafe, on his part, expressed the agonizing social troubles in the whole specter of the border life generated from the depletion of human capital in the following words:

We are afraid that if the situation goes in this way, we will not find people able to bury us. Even now there is a critical problem of getting capable men to dig graves or assist in the funeral services, especially in the outer edges of the

²⁸ Informal Conversation: SCF (17), June 25, 2018, Cagliari.

²⁹ Informal conversation: (41), TTR (49), February 16, 2018, Tserona.

³⁰ Informal communication: TTA (89), February 23, 2018, Tserona.

town. If you tour around the whole constituents of this town, I tell you that you will be shocked. You will barely find a young people between the age of 16 and 45 except some unfit ones, illegible for the military. They have all gone either to Ethiopia or other countries. The remaining ones are in the military services; they come only once or twice in a year if they are lucky enough. In fact, I don't need to tell you, you can observe the real situation on your own. You will find everything that I am telling you on your own eyes. You will also feel it easily when you stay longer. You will never find people of your type in the whole town, which was different in the past. It is hard to find your own age group in the whole town. They were all compelled to leave because of the existing state of insecurity at the border and its implication on their everyday activities.³¹

However, cross-border international migration was not the only cause of widespread family breakdown and related developments. Internal migration to main towns and cities in Eritrea had also equally been affecting the social fabric of the society. According to several informants, a significant number of the youths had left the towns to other cities and towns in the country due to their frustration with the lack of jobs and other economic opportunities at the border for over 18-years, and having to make a living based on economic activities other than their traditional one.³²

In short, these sets of narratives entail that the border closure had negative social consequences. The impacts constitute the effects on individuals and families. Many borderlanders' households were dispersed from one another for over 18 years due to internal and international migration. This decreased their human resources, vital to their everyday livelihood strategies.

5.1.4. Decline of other livelihood elements

Since independence in 1991, the Government of Eritrea has undertaken multi-layered nation-building and reconstruction projects under which public service was one aspect. It paid special attention to the most basic of public services, including transport, communication, education, and health. The aim was to enhance the socio-economic development of the rural and urban populations by providing basic infrastructure and public services.

³¹ Interview: SZH (75), August 14, 2017, Senafe.

³² Interview: HTT (41), July 13, 2017, Tserona.

In the transport sector, the total number of roads increased from 26 in 1993 to 294 in 2018.³³ The number of buses also increased from 257 in 1993 to 1800 and the total number of other trucks from 267 to 15,000 in 2018.³⁴ Similarly, it achieved significant progress in installing land and mobile communication networks both in rural and urban sectors.

The development of the education sector was also a focal area. It grew not only in terms of equity and efficiency but also in access. According to the Ministry of Education report of 2011, Eritrea's literacy rate doubled from 33% at independence in 1991, to 67% in 2011.³⁵ The number of elementary and middle schools also shot up from 273 in the time of independence to 747 in 2001/2.³⁶ In a similar vein, there was a record of 132% increase in the number of secondary schools throughout the country.

Progress in the healthcare sector was similarly promising. To improve access to health services, the government constructed a wide network of regional and sub-regional branches of hospitals, clinics, and small health stations. As the Ministry of Health report indicates, 78% of the entire population now has access to medical facilities within 10 kilometers.³⁷ This shows a 32% increase since independence in 1991. The country has now "25 hospitals, 52 health centers, 180 health stations and 113 clinics".³⁸ In addition, it has over 60 different locally produced medical drugs. Health services are subsidized throughout the country in line with the macro-policy of social justice, and have an equitable spatial distribution.

In the border area, to which this study is limited, these basic public service provision efforts were an integral part of the larger development projects. The aim was to provide the borderland communities with basic social and infrastructural services such as schools, health

³³ "Cabinet of Ministries Holds Meeting," *Eritrean Profile Vol. 25 No.13*, April 14, 2018.

³⁴ *Ibid*

³⁵ Kesete Ghebrehiwet, "Ministry of Education 20 Years of Purpose" (Asmara, Eritrea: Shabait.com, 2011), accessed January 11, 2018, <http://www.shabait.com/articles/nation-building/4825-ministry-of-education-20-years-of-purpose>.

³⁶ Ministry of Education, "Ministry of Education National Education Policy" (Asmara, 2003), 1.

³⁷ Ministry of Health, "Health Millennium Development Goals Report: Innovations Driving Health MDGs in Eritrea" (Asmara, 2014), 6.

³⁸ World Health Organization, "Eritrea" (Asmara, Eritrea, 2009), 1.

centers, rural roads and water supplies. It was also said that the proliferation of such social service projects would enhance production and productivity. The activities were also given important attention by the government to reducing center-periphery disparities and to raise national consciousness in the borderland communities. In general, the central government considered the expansion of social services as a perfect panacea for solving Eritrean peripheries' socio-economic, political and environmental issues.

In the period since the independence of Eritrea in 1991, in Senafe and Tserona, the percentage of children attending elementary schools was estimated at 97.1 % and 85 % respectively.³⁹ Similarly, the towns had 96 and 36 health service facilities respectively.⁴⁰ Moreover, there were 206 different government office rooms in Senafe and 18 in Tserona.⁴¹ However, all these social services infrastructures were totally destroyed by Ethiopian armed forces during the course of the Eritrea-Ethiopian border war. Local people were exposed a lack of and a continued decline of most basic public service provisions, such as hospitals, schools, communication, transport, etc.

After the UNMEE entry, however, thanks to the Government of Eritrea and some donor countries and organization (including the UNDP, EU and OXFAM), the dilapidated public services centers in Tserona and Senafe were reconstructed but not restored to their pre-war capacity. Today, Tserona has 3 elementary schools, 1 junior and 1 secondary school. Senafe, for its part, has 4 elementary schools, 1 junior and 1 secondary school. Health service centers have also expanded. Tserona, for instance, has 2 health centers, whereas Senefe has 1 sub-regional hospital and 7 peripheral health facilities.

Despite these gradual improvements in infrastructure, almost all sectors suffered from lack of skilled human resources or a state of insecurity. This led to an underdevelopment or closing of some public service centers. In the education sector, for instance, I witnessed an acute

³⁹ World Bank, "Implementaion Completion ReportT (IDA-34340 TF-27801 GRD-H0510)," 2006.

⁴⁰ Univesity of Asmara Group, "Consequences of Ethiopia's Invasion of Eritrea:A Preliminary Monetary Estmate of Destroyed and Looted Properties" (Asmara, 2000),24.

⁴¹ Ibid.

problem of both quality and quantity of teachers. All schools in the region each year lost many of their experienced teachers. Teachers, who have the opportunity to escape, crossed the border to Ethiopia leaving the students and the school administration in a dilemma.

In July 2017, when I had become confident that people knew me, I conducted several interviews and informal conversations with teachers, students and local authorities in Tserona in order to grasp the real problem behind the scenes. Among the most common responses were: low promotion, lack of attention in the profession, low fringe benefits, low salary structure, persistent state of fear and violence, and most importantly the multitudes of questions about basic needs at their home.

Listening to these narratives from different people, what struck me the most was the predominant sense of financial insecurity and frustration about low salary. The role of financial insecurity is perhaps self-evident, but frustration requires some elaboration. I have argued that frustration is the net result of the low salary structure. It did not fit with the teachers' existing demands. It appears that the teachers had become frustrated when they couldn't get a clear picture of their future because of the meager income they received from their permanent job.

The problem of human resources, however, was not limited to the education sector only. The health sector was also badly hit. For the same reasons, many health centers and clinics were left without experienced professional nurses, and therefore functioned at a low standard. On July 17, 2017, I spoke with a midwife-nurse who had worked in one health center in Tserona for 6 years. She explains the reason:

Most young graduates from the colleges spend a maximum of six months or one year here, not more than that. They are all leaving us. The problem is that the amount of work they are required to do and their wage is very different. They work a lot, and they get paid very little, 800 -3000 Nakfa per month. The amount of money is not

sufficient for them even for one week let alone for one month or saving.⁴²

Moreover, the transport and communication facilities had deteriorated. In 1991, when Eritrea was liberated, as stated above, a network of transport and communication infrastructure had been put in place in different parts of the region. In the transport sector, for example, there were enough buses and trucks for the transportation of people and goods from the main cities to these border towns and their outer-edges. People had easy access of all types of transport facilities at a fair price. Subsequently, as one of my informants indicates, they had been able to carry out their daily activities without any difficulties.⁴³ This was part of the Government of Eritrea's utmost priority for peripheral development activities.

From the outbreak of war in 1998, however, those services decreased. This is because of the state of insecurity in the region. In fact, the case of Tserona was frustrating. Except the Harat Transport Company, there were no other regular transport services. Due to the seasonal road problems, in addition to security concerns, the private owners of buses and trucks did not take a risk. Moreover, they couldn't compete with subsidized transport facilities provided by the Harat Transport Company. For example, the cost of transport from Asmara to Tserona in public a bus in 2017 was less than 30 Nakfa, whereas in the private buses it was from 60 to 80 Nakfa. For these reasons, the local people preferred to use the scheduled public buses. Most of the time, they would have to wait either for Wednesday or Friday services. They didn't choose the private buses unless they had urgent issues. For these and other reasons, the transport system was time consuming, untrustworthy and often interrupted.

The situation in Senafe was not very different. Although it has an asphalt road, the buses connecting the town with the main cities in the country were not regular and numerous enough to meet the demands of the local people. People wasted at least two days at the bus station waiting for their turn. Proximity to a hostile border prevented investments, and the result was a general deterioration in entire sectors.

⁴² Interview: MSS (36), July 17, 2017, Tserona.

⁴³ Interview: YSS (56), August 14, 2017, Senafe.

Even worse was the impact of the border closure on communication facilities. The military and political standstill had severely affected the provision of mobile and landline communication networks. From mid-2016 in particular, the cross-border skirmishes prompted a recurrence of state of violence and fear among the borderland communities. The consequence was the permanent interruption of the EriTel Company's mobile network for security reasons, whereas the Internet service had never existed. To communicate, the local people had to go at least 50 kilometers away. The situation in Senafe, however, was relatively better. They at least had access to a few CDM telephone lines, but at a huge cost.

5. 2. Adaptation strategies

As described in the previous section, the livelihood strategies of all socio-economic groups, including farmers, agro-pastoralists, and traders were directly or indirectly affected by the border closure. However, they were not deterred by the risk and uncertainty. They adjusted to the local situation by adopting different living strategies in order to secure their livelihoods. The coping strategies, nevertheless, differed from one socio-economic group to another as the situation at the border had quite a different impact on each of them based on the activities they engaged in. In this section, I focus on these strategies to understand the changes and the continuities in their livelihoods in response to the dire situation.

A. Agro-pastoralists and farmers

The agro-pastoralists and farmers took a risk, mainly those who lived in Tserona. During the drought or winter (*Hagay*) season, in particular, they set their herds free to cross to the protected grazing land, prepared for the prospect of losses due to landmines, predator animals and soldiers. Other times, they sent their children to follow in their herds' footsteps in order to minimize the risk of loss. A 53-year-old man from Tserona expressed his cumulative lived experiences in the following words:

The living situation at the border was terribly bad particularly between 2008 and 2009. The failure of the harvest season coupled with a cross-border provocation between the two armies made our lives unbearable, the death of livestock was an everyday experience, the food shortage was alarming. The herds had nothing to eat, we ourselves were depending on government handouts. The last option for our herds was using the protected area with all its challenges.

Sometimes, we set the herds alone and other days with little kids. But the children know all the risk areas. They are naturally trained to deal with these kinds of challenges. And sometimes, we used to seek support from the Eritrean armies, especially when the herds crossed toward the riskiest areas.⁴⁴

Despite the two states' barriers and obstructions at the border, hidden people-to-people collaboration was another option of coping with the situation, especially among agro-pastoralists and farmers. This mutual collaboration was mediated by their traditional institutions. They deliberately undermined the restrictions on them imposed by the hard border through their own hidden supporting mechanisms. When herds crossed over to the Eritrean or Ethiopian side of the border, the local elders collected them and sent them back to their respective owners. They would also keep them safe until a safe passage was found. This strategy, however, did not work in Senafe as it did in the Tserona border areas due to their outstanding land dispute, as we saw in Section 5.1.1.

Despite the persistence of conflict between the two states, local farming and pastoralists also continued sharing common resources. In Tserona, for example, they shared common water sources and grazing lands in or around the Belesa river bank, the dividing line between the two countries. A southern Tserona settler described his family's experience:

We all shared the water and grazing land located between the two armies along the Belesa river regardless of the existing restrictions and risks. But, most of the time, we used it during the winter, as we could not find enough water and grazing land beyond it. However, we all sent only the children. Adults cannot cross beyond the restricted areas due to restrictions from both sides.⁴⁵

Partial resettlement was another survival strategy. As their core livelihood strategies (such as bee-keeping, farming, cross-border herding, border straddling life, livestock production and selling) could not be pursued in new settlements, some household families sent only their

⁴⁴ Interview: TAY (53), July 12, 2018, Tserona.

⁴⁵ Interview: SA (42), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

children and women to relatively more secure places both for living and schooling purposes. One informant says:

It is hard to have the whole family here with me since we have many illuminating experiences. It is hard to know when or where the border clash between the two confronting soldiers might be triggered, I sent them to my nearby settlement area. They come to help me only during the weekends or holydays. But this is only during daytime. I don't allow them to spend the night with me because most of the time the wars in this segment of the border start at night, particularly between 4 and 5 AM.⁴⁶

This strategy, however, does not belong to a particular socio-economic group. Most interviewees from different socio-economic backgrounds had directly experienced it at some point over the last 18 years, although the reasons were different.

Some farming communities had also sought protection from the army. The rationale behind this action was to avoid the specter of disruption by the Ethiopian army. Most of the time, they adopted this strategy during the summer season. This was particularly critical to these farming communities who had farmland between the frontlines. In the words of a farmer and an influential community elder:

During the summer, the Eritrean soldiers took care of us since we cross into the security zone with their authorization to carry out our routine farming activities despite the fear. But they can only protect us from those who come to abuse or loot us, as the whole area is within their range. They cannot protect us from the bullets coming from the other side. What they do always is a counter-attack to contain the evil activities.⁴⁷

Agro-pastoralists, on their part, responded to the loss of rangelands by adopting farming as a means of enhancing food security. They grew crops such as taff, barely, dagusha and other great varieties of leguminous chickpeas on the Hazomo plains. In this process, the

⁴⁶ Interview: TTT (73), April 12, 2018, Tserona.

⁴⁷ Interview: TSS (80), August 14, 2017, Senafe.

government of Eritrea had stepped up machine support. Through its local PFDJ authorities, it also set up the entire necessary road infrastructure. Networks of seasonal roads were constructed throughout the Hazomo plains. The aim of this road construction was to encourage and boost the everyday agricultural activities of the borderland communities and then increase productivity.

In order to cope with environmental degradation, some pastoralists stopped keeping cattle and sheep and started rearing camels and goats. The latter two animals were preferred because of their capability to adapt to the persistence of drought in the regions. They could survive even during the worst droughts. A male resident of Tserona recounts his harrowing experiences as follow:

Most of us were terrorized by an uninterrupted loss of sheep and cattle. They are not largely browsers and cannot endure even on the few twigs available during hard drought seasons. Sheep and cattle waited only for our handouts, unlike the camels and goats.⁴⁸

B. Traders

As we saw in Chapter two, trade was a critical livelihood strategy for some borderland communities. Over the last 18 years, however, the history was different. Cross-border trade was halted by the border closure. Traders, especially those who were involved in cross-border business, were hardly hit. Their cross-border trade activities were abandoned, and some of them changed their activities into small-scale businesses, mainly in service-provision, whereas the others left the business and turned to their traditional economic base, which was farming. There were also few businessmen who barely escaped bankruptcy by redirecting their investment, and made new businesses in Asmara, another part of Eritrea or in neighboring countries. The proceeding section, therefore, explores these new adapting strategies of this socio-economic group.

As many respondents pronounced, the majority of the former trading communities turned their cross-border everyday activities into small-scale business just for making a living. They

⁴⁸ Interview: SA (42), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

opened small-scale businesses, such as tearooms, music shops, small eateries, bars, barber shops, etc. The majority of them, however, claimed to have had difficulty making a profit. This was partly because of the fall in the purchasing power of the great majority of the population, and partially due to bad working conditions due to a lack of security.

A relatively smaller proportion of the traders, on the other hand, left their businesses and became farmers. This was possible with an assistance package from the Government of Eritrea.⁴⁹ Some of them were given two hectares of land in the Hazamo plains, whereas the others along some other socio-economic groups in remote vacant agricultural areas, were given land along the Eritrea-Ethiopian border areas. The latter group, however, had some difficulties in dealing with the harsh climate in their new destination. Soon after their arrival, the majority of them suffered from malaria and some other diseases related to changes in weather, though this was easily contained thanks to an immediate intervention by the Ministry of Health.

A few former traders redirected their investments to other African and Middle Eastern countries such as Angola, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Dubai. In the words of a young Senafe boy:

When the existing military and political situation at the border started to cause wanton and reckless destruction in our business, many individuals from the business communities withdrew their capital and invested in some other countries, including Ethiopia, Sudan, South-Sudan, Juba, Uganda, Dubai and other countries and made money.⁵⁰

Added to these was the rerouting of the trade activities from the Eritrean-Ethiopian border to the Eritrean-Sudanese border. This coping strategy, however, was not without cost. As one informant mentioned, the rerouting of Eritrean trade from pre-existing routes via Eritrea and Ethiopia to Tsennai –Asmara- Kesella, involved major additional costs, and thereby created a 300-500-fold increase in the price of goods, which the local people could not afford.⁵¹ This

⁴⁹ Interview: MHT (56), March 18, 2018.

⁵⁰ Interview: SSB (30), March 27, 2018, Senafe.

⁵¹ Interview: TTT (43), July 27, 2017, Tserona.

can be easily discerned from the following retail price index of consumer goods in Eritrea between 2000 and 2018.

S.NO.	Cereals	Unit	Price in Nakfa	
			31/07/2000 ⁵²	February-April, 2018
1	Sorghum	Quintal	430	2,000.00
2	Millet	”	500	2,200-2,400.00
3	Wheat	”	400/320	1,900-2,000.00
4	Mixed wheat and barley	”	300	-
5	Maze	”	430/400	1,900-22,00.00
6	Rice	”	540	3,000-3,500.00
7	Wheat flour	”	385	1,500-2,800.00
7	Taff -white	”	1450	7,000-8,000.00
7	Taff -reddish	”	850	6,000-7,000.00
	Building materials	Qtl.		
1	Cement	Qtl.	104	2500-2,800.00
2	Lime	”	75	700.00-800
3	Gal Iron sheets	PC	55	350-500. 00

Table 3. Retail price index of consumer goods in Eritrea in 2000 and in the border areas in 2018
Source: National Council of Commerce and Trade, “Focus on Business,” vol. 3, 2000.

In 2017, when I had first arrived in Tserona, what shocked me the most was the cost of foodstuffs in eateries and tea rooms. The first morning that I ate in small unclean tea room, I paid 40 Nakfa for a single *Fritata* (consists two fried eggs, small piece of tomato and two layers of onion) and 5 Nakfa for a cup of tea, which was shocking to me: it was almost double the cost in the capital, Asmara. The first person I talked to about the issue was the owner of the tea room, old woman who had nobody around her. She was born on the outer-edges of Tserona, but she grew up and had been living in Tserona, and in here she rented a tea room. She explains:

You know, I buy everything from the traders or smugglers. I have no stamina to bring directly from Tessenei. And these people increase the price of every item by at least four. They have no sense of humanity. They use the state of exception in the business

⁵² National Council of Commerce and Trade, “Focus on Business,” vol. 3, 2000.

ambiances to their own respective advantages. In this way, the common people become victims.⁵³

The experiences from Senafe and its nearby villages were also broadly similar to that of Tserona. The distance between the two ends, the Eritrea-Sudan border and the garrison town (Senafe), gave rise to immense market pressures. The result was a marked escalation of the prices of different commodities. It then created a life of hassle for the borderland community. As can be observed in Table 3, what is particularly shocking was the cost of cereals. It was beyond the purchasing power of the great majority of the inhabitants. The prices of leguminous crops, including chickpeas, beans, lentils, green paper, onions, and linseed, so vital for their very existence, were similarly exorbitantly expensive. Thus, any story of any kind in the region must be framed by this marked escalation in the prices of these commodities.

However, all these additional costs were not solely attributed to rerouting, but also to the proliferation of checkpoints and restricting mechanisms throughout the journey to these areas from Tessenai, at the Eritrea-Sudan border area. Of those who saw these proliferations as having significant negative personal effects on them, one informant recounts:

From Tessenai to this town, you see at least 20 checkpoints. At each checkpoint, we have to be checked again and again. The checkpoint guards check everything. For this reason, the journey takes us at least three days. People always complain that the long wait costs them so much.⁵⁴

C. Other new livelihood strategies

1. **Remittances:** As in the other parts of Eritrea, remittances are a central element to the new strategies of survival for the borderland communities. According to the stories of my informants, the great majority of the inhabitants rely on remittances from their daughters,

⁵³ Interview: DST (76), July 1, 2017, Tserona.

⁵⁴ Interview: BTT (39), April 13, 2018, Tserona.

sisters, sons, cousins, and brothers who live abroad in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the USA. They use the money to meet their everyday demands.

In August 2017, I spoke to a former private business runner from Senafe, who emphasized the importance of remittances:

You know life for me and the rest of these people living in the town would have not been possible without the remittances coming from our children living abroad. We would have been in a miserable condition. Only very few members of this community would have afforded the costs of living in this town at this time. I have four children living abroad and they send me between 300-500 USD every two or three months. The same story is true with other families. Almost all families have one or more family members working in Israel, Europe, Canada, USA, and Australia or in some Arab countries.⁵⁵

However, it is hard to get detailed statistical figures to measure the extent of its impact on local people's livelihood bases. This was because of the underground nature of remittance transaction methods. Before the issuance of the new monetary and fiscal policy in November 2015⁵⁶, the rate of exchange was 100 USD to 5,500 Nakfa on the black market, or 100 USD to 1,500 Nakfa in the government-owned or government-affiliated financial enterprises. Thus, the majority of the diaspora borderlanders' were using the black market because of price difference advantage, which was hard to track.

In 2016, the issuance of the new currency and the unavailability of enough Nakfa at the hands of the black market dealers changed the whole situation. The exchange rate in the black market and state-owned enterprise had almost been the same. There was no significant difference. It was between 1,550 Nakfa and 1,600 Nakfa for 100 USD. Thus, the borderland community started to use other ways. The decision used to be based on which service center was nearest to them, but this was short-lived. As time passed by, however, a gap emerged in

⁵⁵ Interview: SSM (73), August 23, 2018, Senafe.

⁵⁶ The Government of Eritrea, "Legal Notice No. 124/2015 Legal Tender Nakfa Currency Notes Regulations" (2015).

the exchange rate, and people were compelled to seek out black money launderers. As such, attempts at complete data collection become impossible.

2. **Human smuggling**⁵⁷ - was another new strategy of making a living regardless of its risks. Some youths from different socio-economic groups took risks and were involved in human smuggling networks. This phenomenon originally started around 2004 but hit its peak between 2009 and 2015. It involved the open exploitation of domestic victims in Eritrea and traffickers' victims abroad.

According to my local informants, the activity was initiated by members of UNMEE, but hit its alp when some local actors started to get involved.⁵⁸ However, later, it had reportedly been said that it was an integral part of a larger international, organized criminal network linking the Eritrean-Ethiopian border to Sudan and then to Libya or the Sinai and beyond.⁵⁹

The income from this business usually depended on migrants' steps. Those from the core cities usually paid more than those from the peripheral areas. The cost generally ranged between 2000 USD and 4500 USD per person. For example, a 34-year old former college student told me that he paid USD 2000 to cross the Ethiopian side of the border, which takes not more than one hour's walk.⁶⁰

However, the whole process was covert because of its grave repercussions for all members of the business empire. Regardless of the critics, the Government of Eritrea had zero tolerance for this business. As stated in Chapter 4, a significant number of security and police agencies

⁵⁷ The legal definition of human trafficking is well enshrined in the Palermo Protocol of May 18th, 2006. It is defined as: 'The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.'

⁵⁸ Interview: TYS (39), July 12, 2017, Tserona.

⁵⁹ Rachel Humphris, "Refugees and the Rashaida: Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Eritrea to Sudan and Egypt," *UNHCR: Research Paper*, no. 254 (2013):1–23.

⁶⁰ Informal conversation: S (39), February 24, 2018, Tserona.

were working day and night to break up these networks, though it became an unattainable reality.

3. **Migration:** Internal and international migrations were also part of the wider narratives of the new coping strategies. Educated and some relatively rich members of these socio-economic groups migrated to urban centers (Asmara, Dekemahire, Medeferera, and others) and coped with new livelihood strategies, including daily income-generating activities, trade, and professional work. While this may be good for the individuals, it is harmful to the communities left back home as it robs them of the necessary and required working force to realize development projects in the area.

However, as stated in section 5.1.3, many youths from all socio-economic groups were also involved in international migration. This often covered long distances. Some individuals move from one country to another or even from one continent to another. Ethiopia was usually the first stop in their long journey, but not the final destination. Indeed, this pattern of migration dominated not only in this specific area but also across the whole nation.⁶¹

5.3. Conclusion

The border closures by multiple border enforcement practices around the border area drastically diminished the borderland communities' physical, financial and social assets, leaving them with limited livelihood strategies. In particular, the situation impaired them from their proven coping strategies of farming, herding, bee-keeping, trading, livestock production and commerce, by restricting access and mobility to their livelihoods bases, which are critical economic bases.

⁶¹ Human rights Council, "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea," Twenty-ninth session (A/HRC/29/C), June 24, 2016, accessed June 26, 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIEritrea/A_HRC_29_CRP-1.pdf.

Moreover, it has undermined the cross-border social and cultural ties and the effectiveness of their traditional institutions and systems. Neither the ordinary borderland residents nor the traditional elders can make use of their cross-border social networks or traditional authorities to negotiate access to limited strategic natural resources (except in few instances, particularly in times of ecological stress). As a result, they were in socio-economic limbo.

The military situation at the border, on one hand, and the top-down interventions by government actors in everyday life, on the other, hurt the confidence of borderland communities, who were relying on cross-border trade and commerce as a livelihood base. This resulted in hopelessness within the borderland communities, which know that straddling cross-border business is the most appropriate livelihood strategy. Some of them, however, barely escaped from the existing state of illusion by investing their money in other countries, including Sudan, Uganda, Dubai, Angola, Rwanda and South Africa.

In addition, the restrictions at the border became a cause of underdevelopment in the region. The lack of social, economic, cultural and political developments and restricted upward mobility exposed the border communities to various human security difficulties, including widespread poverty, deprivation, and a lack of proper infrastructure, limited education and health facilities. Similarly, the region was excluded from proper transport and communication facilities. This situation, in turn, pushed the most productive section of the borderland communities into neighboring countries, and then beyond.

To conclude, the end result of the 18-year state of stalemate, tension and territorial reconfiguration between the two countries at the border resulted in the breakdown of social ties, migration, and has largely undermined the coping mechanisms of the borderland communities and thereby engendering a general socio-economic decline. It also contributed to the degradation of the grazing land, as mobility was impeded and the institutions that traditionally ensure the sustainable use of land were rendered ineffective.

Chapter Six

6.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings of this thesis, implications for future research and presents a conclusion. As underscored in the introduction and Chapter one (Section 1.1.5), there is a noticeable knowledge gap about the Eritrean side of the border. This gap was the base and justification for this study. The main aim of this chapter, thus, is to link the main research question with the empirical findings. Following the summary section, the chapter considers some outstanding issues for further study arising from the limitations and challenges of this research. The final section is the conclusion. In this section, I illustrate some implications of the arguments in the main body on theories about borders in the Horn of Africa. The chapter is therefore, sub-divided into three sections; findings, implications for further study and the conclusion.

6.2. Summary of Findings

As pointed out in the introduction section, the fundamental objective of this research is to critically examine the impacts of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border on borderland communities' livelihoods. The border region around Senafe – Tserona is a good litmus test for the whole transformation at the border as well as its impacts. The study is limited to the 'no war, no peace' period, from the end of the border war on June 18, 2000, up to July 9, 2018. The summary drawn in this part is the précis of the outcomes of the four sub-central research questions that were set out by the study.

The research questions, framed on the bases of the research objectives, were:

- A. What were the changes brought forth at the border by Eritrea and Ethiopia after the end of the border war in 2000? What were the causes behind the change?
- B. How have people living along the border been affected by the changes in the functions of the border in their everyday lives and livelihoods?

C. How have borderland communities adapted to the change in relations between the two countries at the border?

Research question one was addressed in chapter 4; research questions two and three were explored in chapter 5.

6.2.1. The change in the form and function of the common border

As Chapter two reveals, the imposition of the colonial border following the advent of Italian Colonial rule and the subsequent splitting of the same ethnic populations did not entail an end to the cross-border connections and encounters between socially, linguistically, culturally and economically homogenous borderland communities, now living on both sides of the Eritrean-Ethiopian border. They continued to maintain all sorts of connections and engagements, including everyday cross-border experiences and relations. They transcended the normal regularities of international boundaries.

This was also true for the post-independence period (1991-1998). Despite the change in the form and function of the border owing to the change in the political landscape between the two countries after Eritrea's independence in 1991, the borderland communities maintained their ties. Cross-border visits for various reasons were routine practices that ignored the border. As the majority of the informants agree, their cross-border familial networks, rooted on cross-border inter-marriages, mostly mediated these attachments. Cross-border identity lines thus remained fluid and invisible.

What is important to this period was that, as many informants state, the borderlanders' had more economic benefits because of their distinctive geopolitical advantages arising from differences in price at the border, due to changes in the political landscape, the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia. Official and unofficial cross-border trade relations on both sides of the border boomed and continued for almost seven years. The people enjoyed free trade across the international border. These trade relations were formalized by the signing of the treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1993, furthered by a series of supplementary protocols signed since then.

In fact, cross-border ethnic connections were the crucial component of their livelihoods bases, which included farming, herding, and trading. Disregarding physical divisions, they continued to enjoy free access to the other side of the border. They were regularly sharing all opportunities. Tigrayans were working in Eritrea as wage laborers in different sectors. They were also trading their merchandized items and livestock products, and living without visas or residence permit troubles.

On their part, Eritreans were trading in the Ethiopian market, herding on Ethiopian grazing land, sharing Ethiopian hospitals and schools without distinction. For the majority of them, life without a soft border was hard to imagine. Their relationship with the border was alive in their everyday practice. This is described in more detail in Chapter two (Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2).

Unfortunately, however, the friendly relations were interrupted by the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict in 1998. Tensions cropped up over the issues of territory, cross-border trade relations, currency and contrasting political projects by the ruling parties' and leaders in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The fallout of the war on the civilian population was appalling. Eritrea and Ethiopia lost around 70, 000 soldiers.¹ In addition to this, Eritrea and Ethiopia had 2,600 and 1,100 prisoners of war (POW) respectively.² The total number of displaced civilians reached 600,000.³ These were in addition to the disruptive impact on people-to-people connections.

The 'no war, no peace' situation (or policy), a continuation of the border war by other means, also continued to cut-off the borderland communities. A hard border was constructed for almost all walks of life, mainly by narratives deliberately constructed by

¹ Xan Rice, "Total War Casualties on Both Sides," *The Times*, April 13, 2017.; "Press Release: ERITV and Radio Demtsi Hafashi," (Eritrea: ERITV, June 20, 2001).

² J. Romesh Weeramantry, "Prisoners of War (Eritrea v. Ethiopia), Eritrea's Claim 17/Ethiopia's Claim 4, Partial Awards: Central Front (Eritrea v. Ethiopia), Eritrea's Claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 22/Ethiopia's Claim 2, Partial Awards," *The American Journal of International Law* 99, no. 2 (2006): 465, accessed May 12, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1562511>.

³ Franklin Steves, "Regime Change and War: Domestic Politics and the Escalation of the Ethiopia--Eritrea Conflict," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2004): 119–33, accessed May 23, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757032000075744>.

the two states' political institutions. The border became a spot where different local and national interests and actors drew their roles against the interests of the local people. It turned out to be more concrete and definitive. New sets of measures for the regulation of the movement of people and goods across the common border were put into place in order to completely curb mobility and connections between the two people.

As the findings show, in Eritrea the border was continuously constructed by the building-up of heavily-equipped armies, landmines and security agents. Border crossing became difficult because of the checkpoints on the main road and state border politics. These continuous border control practices were serving to a) control the Ethiopian army or security infiltration, b) discourage cross-border people-to-people contacts and c) control illegal border crossing. However, these multiple layers of border control activities were not able to completely achieve their desired objectives. The findings reflect that excessive control mechanisms drove people to adapt new livelihood strategies (Chapter 5.2).

6.2.2. Impact of the border on borderland communities' livelihoods

The second finding was that the borderland communities were bearing the burden of the new realities at the border over the last 18 years. This was attained by assessing the extent to which the borderland communities' livelihoods were endangered by dynamics at the border. In particular, the situation impaired the border communities' proven coping strategies of farming and agro-pastoralism, by restricting access and mobility to their farming and grazing land, which were critical economic bases of the great majority of the borderland inhabitants.

The state of military and political uncertainty at the border in general, as well as the border closure in particular, also dipped the confidence of the borderland communities who were relying on cross-border trade and commerce as their main livelihood bases. As a result, economic development in Tserona and Senafe turned out to be difficult. The economic lives in the towns slowly declined. The market places that had been busy on Wednesdays and Saturdays suddenly collapsed. Some businesses were also closed.

The situation also undermined the cross-border social and cultural ties and equally the effectiveness of traditional institutions and systems. The border cut across complex cross-border religious and social ties. As a result, for 18 years, many families were separated from one another. Borderland communities' shared experiences of routinely dealing with the border became engrained.

In addition, the restrictions at the border emerged to be a cause of underdevelopment in the basic service sectors. The lack of a functioning infrastructure made transportation a dangerous and time-consuming activity and created the feeling of being isolated from the rest of the country. Incidents of cross-border skirmishes forced the government of Eritrea to restrict or shut down communication facilities. The lack of social, economic, cultural and political developments restricted upward mobility. Subsequently, the border communities were exposed to various human security difficulties, including widespread poverty, deprivation, a lack of proper infrastructure, and limited education and health facilities.

The end result of the 18-year state of stalemate, tension and territorial reconfiguration between the two countries at the border was general socio-economic decline, and thereby engendered hopelessness, migration and continued displacement of the borderland communities. It also contributed to the degradation of the land, as mobility and access to the other side of the border areas were inhibited.

6.2.3. Adaptation strategies:

Coping and adaptive strategies are the immediate outcomes of the impact of the new realities at the border (2000-2018). Based on individual lived experiences, this dissertation reveals that the borderland communities tried to develop various new living strategies against the risks and shocks surrounding the hard border during the 'no war, no peace' decades. The adoptive or coping strategies, however, were flexible based on their previous livelihoods bases and the human capital available.

The most touching finding is that borderland communities decided to continue living at the border regardless of the risk, by managing their personal risk. Neither the increased militarization nor the sustained border enforcement practices by different actors from both sides of the border completely stopped them.

Apart from that, underground cross-border support amongst kin groups played a significant role, as the border crossing became a critical security issue. This coping strategy, however, limited mainly to herding and farming communities as the repercussions of the cross-border economic risks were completely intolerable. As the most common responses confirm, this cooperative relationship was sustained because of the local residents' trans-border ethnic groups' relations regardless of the hawkish tones between the two countries over 18 years.

However, there is some degree of difference between the two towns. Informants from Tserona tended to have more cooperative cross-border relations than those from Senafe. In the latter case, some individuals from the Ethiopian side of the border took advantage of the existing military and political situation in order to advance their personal interests. They were involved in some malpractice such as the looting of herds and the forceful use of Eritrean grazing and farming lands.

Leaving a permanent place of residence or grazing and farming land is another new strategy. This was mainly observed in Tserona due to its greater proximity to the border. However, most of the family members return to exercise their daily farming or herding activities by leaving their families in relatively safe areas.

Borderland communities also sought protection from the Eritrean army. According to the great majority of the respondents, this decision was taken to avoid the spectre of disruption by the Ethiopian army mainly during the summer season. This strategy was mostly adopted by farming communities.

In a similar vein, some cross-border trading communities were also compelled to adopt a new course of livelihood. Some of them changed their activities to small-scale

business, mainly in the service sectors such as tea-rooms, bars, barber shops, etc., whereas others left the business, turning to their traditional economic bases of farming, and herding.

There were also few businessmen who barely escaped bankruptcy by diverting their capital, investing in Asmara or another part of Eritrea or in other countries, such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Juba, Uganda, Dubai and Angola. Their proximity to the insecure border prevented their investment in local commerce and construction. However, there were also insignificant numbers of traders depending on rerouted trade, the Asmara-Tessenai-Sudan line, regardless of the obstructions and the cost of transport.

Some other individuals were involved in the human trafficking business. This business empire involved a number of parties, stretching beyond the national borders. Their main activity was smuggling migrants, estimated between 2000 USD to 4500 USD per person. However, the government of Eritrea adopted a zero tolerance policy against them both in substantive and procedural terms. This applied not only to those directly involved in the business but also to their collaborators.

Remittances were equally important determinants for households to cope with stress and shocks at the border area. In fact, the life of the majority of the borderland communities would have not been possible without this new source of livelihood. The money was coming from family members living in Europe, the U.S.A and Middle Eastern countries. Usually, the remittances were carried out by a network of black market money launderers, a process widely known as *Hawala*.

6. 3. Implication for future research

This research was based mainly on a non-traditional, non-state-centric approach, within the framework of border studies. The focus is the consequences of the border on the borderland communities. In the course of the study, many issues and challenges were thrown up but remained beyond the scope of the study. As described in the introduction, the scope of the research was principally the borderland between Eritrea and Ethiopia around the specific border region. It is limited in scope to the Senafe and

the Tserona border regions, occupied mostly by Tigrinya and Saho-speaking ethnic groups on the Eritrean side of the border. Issues of border militarization and enforcement by the two countries on one hand and the impact on the borderland communities' livelihoods, on the other, have been studied. However, the inclusion of stories from the Ethiopian side of the border would have made it more subjective and balanced.

The methodological technique assumed for this research reflects the scope and objective of the research question. In the attempt to address the research questions relating to the changes at the border, specifically on bordering processes, the research methodology is necessarily featured by fluid, micro and macro perspectives and accidental observations of a wide range of actors across a limited geographic unit. However, bearing the role of the two states and their agents, a top-down approach or a macro-macro comparison, focusing on the sum of their efforts across space, may be more compelling. As Wilson and Donnan argued, multiplicity in the approach would also permit a more authoritative representation of the reality at the border.⁴ It would also be wise if future research on the given topic was considered not only simply from a top-down model or otherwise, but from multiple local actors or agents within the state territories.

Apart from geographic and methodological considerations, the lessons discerned and challenges faced by this research would demand more comments. The uneasiness of the topic due to the turbulent nature of the two states' relations and the unavailability of enough primary or secondary resources for research for obvious security reasons, posed many challenges to further investigation. Hence, further research is necessary particularly on issues related to expanding tough border enforcement practices.

⁴ Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, ed. "A Companion to Border Studies," (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012), 14.

Relatedly, the emphasis on the border impacts on livelihoods opened up avenues for independent research on its grave consequences on the women and children of the borderland communities.

6.4. Conclusion

This thesis has contributed to our understanding of how borders function as barriers and dynamics of inter-state relations that drive their hardening. Coming from an interest in the Horn of African borders and borderlands, this dissertation has provided a view into the fields of the border that have animated the functioning of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border over the last 18 years, with a particular emphasis on border closure and its impact on the livelihoods of borderland communities.

By piecing established historical accounts together with borderland communities' narratives about their lived experiences related to developments and changes at the border, it became possible to make sense of certain contradictory events. I found out that different historical timelines of the border are meant to have different functions to the borderland communities. This perspective allowed me to craft the analytical tools necessary to chart out the differences between stories referring to the barrier function of the border and vice versa, often linked to the impediment of access and mobility, which typically focused on control and exclusion. This distinction proved helpful in understanding and organizing the dataset.

Mapping the typology of actors at the border and border practices exposed the political tussle between Eritrea and Ethiopia and their shoring up of sovereignty at the border, through which border control methods denied opportunities to borderland communities. Bringing each of these under the rubric of bordering, this empirical case entails the mobility of knowledge about the border as a source of abstraction in everyday

activities. This runs completely contrary to rhetorical expectations about the impact of globalization, a borderless world, based mainly on economic considerations.⁵

Due to restrictions in mobility and access in everyday activities, the people in this micro-study area experienced the worst socio-economic damage to their everyday livelihoods activities. The hardship was expressed in all aspects of their everyday life. Entire socio-economic groups suffered from the situation and development of entire regions stagnated. Thus, I want to make a strong point, a careful analysis of the change of border from completely open to a hard border (because of the ‘no war, no peace’ situation between the two countries for 18 years), shows that Eritrean-Ethiopian border is a barrier and a constraint. Multiple layers of border control and policing, particularly by Eritrea, posed critical challenges to livelihoods of the people living on the Eritrean side of the border. The rational and cooperative uses of natural resources at and across the boundary were inhibited. All socio-economic groups living in the borderlands were therefore subjected to stress for 18 years.

⁵ Peter Taylor, “Territorial Absolutism and Its Evasions,” *Geography Research Forum* 16 (1996):1–12.

Post –script development

The wall of fear, despair, and guilt is now put to an end. Now, I can be everyone to build my own future.

Borderlander from Tserona

After an eighteen year-long deadlock, on July 9, 2018, the political leadership in Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace deal to bring an end to their 20 years conflict. This happened when Ethiopia suddenly accepted the terms of the EEBC ruling and its implementation modalities on June 5, 2018, welcomed by Eritrea on June 20, 2018.¹ The agreement was received with euphoria and broad support from wide sections of the rural and urban public in both countries. Additionally, the international and regional actors' reactions to the process were largely encouraging. This degree of transformation immediately transformed the conflict-ridden region, the Horn of Africa, from a theatre of proxy wars into an exemplary case of regional conflict resolution and regional alliances.

At the domestic level, in Eritrea, the peace had positive ramifications on economic and social developments, although short-lived. Within a few months, things changed at high-speed. Checkpoints, landmines, and permit requirements became obsolete. Military and security agents at the border and border regions were pushed back to their respective permanent bases. Cross-border trade and tourism thrived not only in the peripheries but even deep inside the country. Ordinary families could cross the border as a group or individually for several reasons, bringing life to what were once the most militarized and protected border areas. A nascent scene of economic and social interactions and activities replaced images of fear and despair linked to the border for the past two decades. The once-abandoned towns across both sides of the border region turned into scenes of revived cross-border trade and constant traffic.

¹ “Commemoration of Martyrs Day: Eritrean Government Will Send a Delegation to Addis Abeba,” *Eritrea Profile Vol. 25. No.33*, 2018,1.

This dramatic change, however, would not have been possible without a substantive change in the political landscape of Ethiopia. On April 2, 2018, Dr. Abiy Ahmad became the first Oromo origin Prime Minister of Ethiopia. During his inauguration speech, he promised reforms not only in domestic affairs but also on regional and international issues. As a first step toward those reforms, he purged Samora Yunis, Chief of the general staff of the defense forces and leading TPLF party figure for over four decades, and replaced him with Seare Mekonnen.² Getachew Assefa, former Head of the National Intelligence and Security Service, was also substituted by Adem Mohamed, a former Head of the Airforce.³ In addition, 575 former political prisoners and dissidents were released. Among many others, Andergachew Tsege, the principal figure of *Ginbot Sebat* was freed from death row.⁴ Martial law was also formally lifted.⁵ People were free to speak their minds. Hope was immediately restored.

However, there was a thorny issue in front of him that needed to be immediately resolved. This was the question of the ‘no war, no peace’ policy against Eritrea, which served as a tripwire for Ethiopia for 18 years. But nothing was impossible in the eyes of the new leader, Dr. Abiy, who really understands compromise politics, power-sharing, and taking into account the views of the opposition forces to be assets under his new concept of *Medemer*.⁶ As mentioned above, he suddenly announced that he would fully and unconditionally abide by the terms of the Algiers Agreement of 2000 hoping that Eritrea would follow. Eritrea accepted the overture with no precondition.

² “Premier Appoints General Seare Mekonnen as Chief of Staff of National Defense Force of Ethiopia,” *Fana Broadcasting Corporation*, June 7, 2018.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Jon Temin and Yoseph Badwaza, “Aspirations and Realities in Africa: Ethiopia’s Quiet Revolution,” *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 3 (2019): 139–53.

⁵ Mohammed Ademo, “Abiy’s Year One: Ethiopia’s Best Hope for Stability: PM Abiy Ahmed Faces Many Challenges, but He Has Achieved Much and Can Do Even More, If given a Popular Mandate.,” *Al Jazeera*, 2019, accessed January 1, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/abiy-year-ethiopia-hope-stability-190331151858910.html>.

⁶ The origin of the word *Medemer* is Amharic which means to come together or in more literal terms to be added to one another. This is a people-centered reform agenda and has three interdependent pillars. The first pillar is a vibrant democracy intended to provide inclusive democracy. The second is economic vitality and the last one is regional integration and openness to the world.

On June 8, 2018, Dr. Abiy Ahmed arrived in Asmara to put an end to the two decades of hostility between the two countries. The occasion was historic in all its proportions. Hundreds of thousands of Asmara residents came out to welcome him holding Eritrean and Ethiopian flags and pictures of the two leaders, and banners with different slogans.

During this occasion, Isaias Afewrki came out and expressed his happiness as follows:

The chance and opportunities were there for us and we were hoping to use them. But, they were locked for us for the past twenty years. Twenty-five years is not a short time. The loss we incurred in the past twenty-five years cannot be recovered. But, still I feel as if we did not lose anything. We feel as if we got what we lost.⁷

Briefly noting the effects of the ‘no war, no peace’ policy on the two poorest countries, Dr. Abiy Ahmad for his part, spoke of his optimism from the new course of diplomacy stating:

The wall that was built between our people against their will for the last twenty years needs to be demolished. The wall that took the life of thousands and waited many years and costs dearly have finally become a war without death.....The bridge of love has now destroyed the border.⁸

The next morning, on July 9, 2018, the two leaders came out jointly and declared the end of the ‘no war, no peace’ era. The terms under the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between the two countries states that: 1) the state of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has come to an end. A new era of peace and friendship has been opened; 2) the two governments will endeavor to forge intimate political, economic, social, cultural and security cooperation that serves and advances the vital interests of their peoples; 3) transport, trade and communications links between the two countries will resume; diplomatic ties and activities will restart; 4) the decision on the boundary between the two countries will be implemented; 5) both countries will jointly endeavor to ensure regional peace, development, and cooperation.⁹

⁷ ‘Eri-TV, Eritrea: Speeches by President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed during State Dinner in Asmara’ *ERITV*, July 8, 2018.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹“Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia," *Eritrean Profile* Vol. 25 No. 38., 2018, 1.

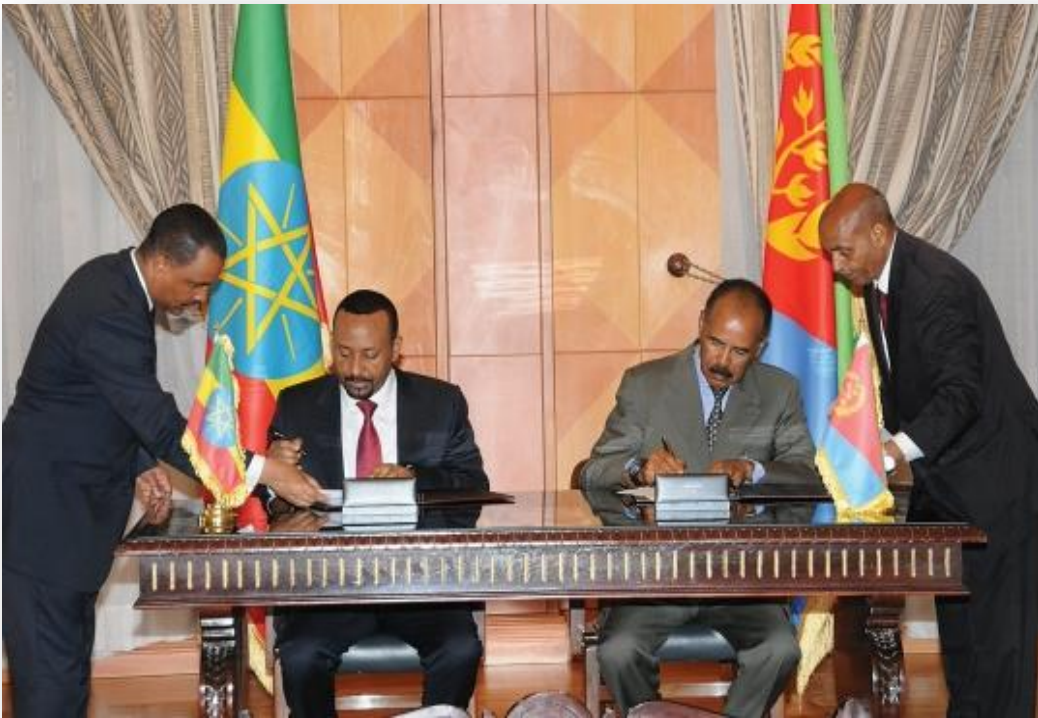


Figure 6: The end of the state of war between Eritrea and Ethiopia on July 9, 2018.
Source: Eritrean Profile Vol. 25 No. 38., 2.

Soon after, the two countries opened four border crossings. Of these, two were in the Central segment of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border, one is in Senafe sub-region and the second is in Adi Quala sub-region which is popularly known as Rama-Kessad Eiqa or the Mereb crossing. The third and fourth-tiers are found in the eastern and western sectors. Except for the western sector crossing, the remaining points were opened on the same date, on September 11, 2018, whereas Humera-Omhajer was opened on January 11, 2019. However, the first two border crossings were closed after three months. The rationale behind the abrupt decision was to put normal cross-border norms in place. The first new decision, however, did not affect the borderland communities. For one year, they continued to maintain their cross-border socio-economic and cultural ties.

Additionally, the two states have also been involved in cross-border infrastructure development projects. This was a central pillar of the Asmara agreement. Eritrea has almost completed the road expansion and maintenance work from Massawa to Senafe and Asseb to Bure, the Eritrea-Ethiopian border town. A project to enlarge port services has also been developing well. For its part, Ethiopia

has been rebuilding the road linking its hinterland with Eritrean eastern port, Asseb.¹⁰ This cross-border network linking co-operation at the top level was envisaged in the Agreement and promised to have support from the EU, as a way of fostering sustainable peace and reconciliation and enhancing the regional economic integration process.¹¹ Italy had also already ‘pledged to finance a feasibility study for a planned rail line linking the Eritrean port city of Massawa and the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa’.¹²

7.1. Border: The nexus of Peace

As part of the Peace agreement, reached between the government of Eritrea and Ethiopia, particularly in pursuit of Article. 2, the three border crossings between the two states were opened on September 11, 2018, during the Geez New Year, the most celebrated event on the calendar in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The occasion immediately turned the frontier of death into the frontier of peace and friendship. Thousands of soldiers and civilians from both countries watched a border opening ceremony in Zalembeša, an Ethiopian frontier town.¹³ Emotional family reunion scenes irrupted between the people of both sides of the border 20 years after they were separated by the border war.

Soon after, as stated above, soldiers, stationed along the case study border for two decades, moved back to their respective camps to further ease the tension. For six months, the central and eastern segments of the common border set free for a free flow of people and goods without any binding rules or regulations. The decision was taken temporarily to let the people have relief from the tolls claimed by the pre-existing state of anxiety at the border. According to one of my informants, at the Zalembeša-Serha (Senafe) formal crossing point, more than 2000 vehicles of different types and functions crossed the international border each day.¹⁴ This was a major step to further strengthening their rapprochement.

¹⁰ “Ethiopia Eyes Better Road Connection with Eritrea as Relations Improve,” Xinhua, September 10, 2018, accessed December 23, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/10/c_137456729.htm.

¹¹ “President Isaias Met and Held Talks with Mr. Neven Mimica,” *Eritrea Profile* Vol.25. NO.29, 20019.

¹² Abdur Rahman Alfa Shaban, “Italy to Fund Ethiopia – Eritrea Railway Feasibility Study – Abiy,” Africanews, 2019, accessed January 1, 2019, <http://www.africanews.com/2019/01/22/italy-to-fund-ethiopia-eritrea-railway-feasibility-study-abiy//>.

¹³ “Roads Connecting Eritrea and Ethiopia Re-Opened,” *Eritrea Profile*, September 12, 2018.

¹⁴ Interview: AGD (29), October 4, 2018, Zalembeša.

From the very beginning, however, there were concerns over the sustainability of the peace deal, because the crux of the two states' previous tense relations remained unresolved. As far as the border dispute was concerned, there was opposition from the local people. The Ethiopian borderland communities from Badme and Irob for example, voiced their opposition to the EPRDF government's decision to hand over the territories awarded by the EEBC, and seem unready to make any compromise. Even many border communities from the Tserona area, on the Eritrean side of the border, have discomfort against the controversial EEBC rulings but not the peace processes. The local people believe that the disputes surrounding the demarcation of the border around Badme, Irob and Tserona territories should be resolved by synchronizing the views of the local people instead of adapting the EEBC decision as it is.

The outstanding differences between the EPLF and the TPLF are also yet to be brushed off. Neither the Government of Eritrea nor the Federal Government of Ethiopia have attempted to address the critical historical controversies between these two parties, which were among the other factors behind the border war of 1998-2000 as described in Chapter three. It is true that the TPLF role as an important force in Ethiopian politics is over, as President Isaias Afewrki underscored during his speech on the occasion of the national Martyrs' day celebration on June 20, 2018.¹⁵ However, the party still has huge potential to create obstruction on the on-going peace-making process between the two countries, as its bond with its powerhouse in Tigray regional state still remains untouched.

The lack of institutional working mechanisms in the new rapprochement also raised concerns. In the first place, the peace deal has yet to be confirmed by the legislative or other alternative bodies in either country. Second, the new round of talks and the new framework of the agreements remain undetailed, raising suspicion and mistrust among different forces in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The technicalities of the agreements and the way forward are also unclear. In addition, the discussion on cross-border trade and port usage were halted in the first draft. Eritrea and Ethiopia have not made much more progress as they did in the first three months. Many informants reiterated that any attempt to restore the pre-war situation

¹⁵ "President Isaias Afewerki Speech during National Celebration Day" *Eritrean State TV broadcast*, 20 June, 2018.

without properly addressing these grey areas will barely support sustainable peace between the two countries.

Notwithstanding those concerns, the cross-border people-to-people contacts and encounters and trade networks were well re-established. For six months, cross-border integration took place every day. There was no sense of fear or tension among the people at the ground level. Instead, the re-opening of the border helped them create unexpected harmonious relationships. As several informants point out, this is attributed to their past shared experiences of mundane suffering in dealing with the border and its inconvenience, but more importantly by their social ties and cross-cutting economic interests.

What does this reopening of the border represent to the borderland communities' everyday livelihood practices? Interviews (N10), group discussions (1) and observations carried out between September 29, 2018 and January 17, 2019, provided me a deep insight into this topic. I also had many opportunities to have long informal conversations with people from different backgrounds. Although this part of the fieldwork lasted only for a brief period, this time I had several opportunities to include views from the other side of the border. Since the reopening of the border, I have conducted four rounds of trips to Zalembesa, Adigrat, and the Belesa riverbank. There I met many Ethiopians active in Senafe and Tserona. The whole discourse unfolded mainly into two intertwined themes of cross-border family visits and cross-border trade.

7.2. Cross-border family visits

After six hours of journey in a local bus in a very winding gravel road from Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea, I arrived in Tserona on misty grey day. I made this trip for two reasons: firstly, in order to observe changes in the border work since it's reopening, because it was very relevant to reconnect with the main research question, and secondly, to congratulate and share my happiness with many friends whom I am greatly indebted to for their invaluable contributions throughout my research. I had met many of them, but with different states of mind and feelings. I also missed many of them because of family visits or other businesses mostly to their immediate Ethiopian border towns and villages. Tigrean youths, with their

unique hairstyles, a taper fade haircut, were not hard for me to recognize. These new facts took me completely by surprise.

After nearly two decades, many families were reunified with their families and friends. Here is the story as told by one Eritrean informant:

The moment that the border re-opened, I have not taken time to come here. I did not even think about any possible repercussions. The social bondage, the emotional and the psychological attachments that I have with this land and people encouraged me to take the decision. It was not easy. We were cut off from our brothers, sisters, cousins, and aunts and everyone else for such a long time. We were living under all sorts of duress.¹⁶

A 53-year-old Ethiopian informant also expressed the same sentiment:

After a long dark chapter, holding hand in hand, we started to visit each other, work together and look forward to opportunities for a better tomorrow, and we hope the peace to be sustainable.¹⁷

For many local people, cross-border visits became easy regardless of the accounts of the past because of their social bonding. A 36-year-old Tigre man explains the situation as follows:

After 20 years, here we are chatting and visiting each other. There is nothing bigger than this. This is a chance. The wall of chauvinism, hatred, and destruction of each other has already worn-out. We have now started a new chapter of friendship and brotherhood. Families are meeting freely and visiting one another without any problem. I believe that everyone should be grateful to Almighty Allah.¹⁸

Local people from both sides of the border discounted previous narratives of hate, chauvinism, and dispossession. More than half of the informants and discussants crossed the international border at least three times since the reopening of the border on September 11, 2018. This had much to do with their cross-border family connectedness, on one hand, and

¹⁶ Interview: BTT (36), November 28, 2018, Tserona.

¹⁷ Interview: WST (53), December 23, 2018, Zalenbesa.

¹⁸ Interview: TTT (73), November 13, 2018, Tserona.

living near the border region, on the other. They have been able to freely cross the border where it runs over vast former landmine fields, in a most diverse topography. The landmines were removed by the Eritrean Defence force as a peace gesture following the agreement reached between Dr. Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afowerki on July 9, 2018.

In this region, Eritrea and Ethiopia had one formal border crossing, the Serha-Zalembesa border crossing. This is in the Senafe region. There, almost the majority of the people crossed in local or Ethiopian mini-buses at a staggering rate without the requirement of a passport or visa. There was only one nominal checkpoint. The border guards in the border crossing points registered only the number of vehicles and people entering each day. As per the information from the authorities on the ground, the aim of the registration is to check the identity of the people in order to curb any security threats. This crossing point, however, was seldom used by the local people living at the border areas because they were free to cross at any point. The army or other border agents' duties in the other parts of the border were limited only in their permanent camps. One of the off duty-guard members' explained to the researcher:

We were instructed to remain in our camp; we don't have the mandate to regulate the movement of people in either direction as we used to do for many years. They (top commanders) told us to simply observe them without making any obstruction. In fact, we are also set-free to visit or enjoy being on the former enemy side. We often cross the border without any requirements but with two conditions: be unarmed and wear civilian clothes.¹⁹

During my ethnographic fieldwork, I was able to confirm the authenticity of all this information. Border crossings for social events or otherwise were an integral part of the new life of the borderland communities. On the occasion of St. Michael's feast in Tserona, on December 3, 2018, for instance, many people from immediate Ethiopian bordering villages and towns crossed the border and visited the town despite the transport problem in the former buffer zone.²⁰

¹⁹ Interview: WLL (29), December 2, 2018, Senafe.

²⁰ The Festival of *Qudus* Mikeal (Saint Michael) is a yearly cultural and religious event on December 12th (Ethiopian calendar). Hundreds of people from all over the region and even from the main cities flock to

In summary, the normalization of the Eritrean-Ethiopian relations, in general, and border reopening, in particular, have made the border crossing for family and social events much easier. This process of normalization has become easy because of the intra-ethnic homogeneity between the people living on the two sides of the border. The hard border that had effectively been dividing localities, regions and people with a close social and familial network, became history. People were set free to travel and visit their families on the opposite side of the border. They would easily reach each other in a matter of few minutes or hours, significantly reducing the previous long journeys.

7.3. Cross- border trade

Free flows of goods were permitted in both directions for borderland communities and others. As interviewees and discussions in focus group explained, the decision as to which side of the international border to shop depended on what an individual wanted to buy or to who he may want to meet. The border didn't come into their consideration. As a result, cross-border trade boomed. Ethiopian exports to Eritrea, from daily consumer foodstuffs to manufactured items of higher quality, flooded the Eritrean market (see the lists of the imports from Ethiopia in table 4). Most mechanized items were coming from Mekelle and Adi-girat. To Ethiopia, Eritreans traded cloths and imported electronic materials, mostly originating from Dubai. This had a far-reaching positive impact on the Eritrean side of the border.

Before the normalization of the Eritrea-Ethiopian relationship in September 2018, most consumer and construction materials in Eritrea were beyond the reach of most of the Eritrean population. This was due to two main factors. The first was the UN Security Council sanctions. Since 2009, Eritrea was under UN Security Council sanctions (Resolution 1907) for its alleged role in supporting terrorist groups in Somalia and refusing to withdraw its forces from the disputed border with Djibouti.²¹ This had visible negative consequences on Eritrea's economy. It prevented Eritrea from enjoying the freedom of trading on an open market.

Tserona to enjoy the celebrations and congregate. During the day, the inhabitants of the town invite their family members or others to drink coffee, *suwa*, or to eat with their family members.

²¹ "UN Security Council Resolution 1907(S/Res/1907)," December 23, 2009.

Secondly, the perpetuation of Ethiopia's 'no war, no peace' policy over Eritrea did not help the country have a normal state of affairs. It was forced to give priority to national security. For almost 18 years, it maintained a huge military presence at an unbearable cost. As a result, development projects were particularly badly affected. The country's import and export bounced back until the mining sector gave it new life after 2011.²²

As De Waal states, in 2011, the mining sector became Eritrea's biggest source of revenue and transformed the country's import-export balance sheet. 'Its exports shot up from \$13 million in 2010 to \$388 million in 2011 and \$457 million, of which 95 per cent were mineral exports to Canada.'²³ However, the income was only used for importing strategic materials. It had a negligible impact on the immediate demands of the ordinary people. The people had difficulties meeting their needs. The cost of the basic materials was out of reach for most people.

In the borderland region, on which this dissertation focuses, the resulting impact of these problems was worst indeed, as described in detail in Chapter 5. After the normalization of the two states' relations, however, things seemed promising. Cross-border trade revived at a steady rate. It performed in the form of trade fairs in separate places, popularly known as *edaga selama*,²⁴ that easily enabled the exchange of petty goods among the borderland communities. As a result, food and construction material costs fell abruptly. This can be easily discerned from a reading of Table 5.

The benefits from the dynamics on both sides of the Eritrea-Ethiopian border have indeed extended beyond the realms of petty trading. It generated new local ties among the local borderland communities and expanded better chances for both sides to sustain their cross-

²² Waal Alex De, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015.), 152.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The literary meaning of "edaga selama" is a peace market.

border economic collaborations. This is in addition to the social reintegration process. One informant speaks of the types of trade ties that exist across the international border:

Because of the mobile and Internet networks across the border, it became very easy for me and my business partners here on the Eritrean side of the border to be easily connected. Whenever they want to send them, they call me and send them regularly with daily border crossers. But, we also meet each other most of the time on market days or holidays in Tserona.²⁵

S.NO.	Cereals	Unit	Price in Nakfa	
			31/05/2018	December25, 2018
1	Sorghum	Quintal	2000.00	700-800.00
2	Wheat	”	2000.00	700-800.00
3	Rice	”	4,500.00	1,500.00
4	Wheat flour	”	1,800.00	600.00
5	Taff -white	”	7,500-8,000.00	1,500.00
6	Taff -reddish	”	7,500-8,000.00	1,500.00
7	Red Paper	1KG	130-150.00	35-50.00
8	Tomato	I KG	25-50.00	10-15.00
9	Orange	1KG	25-70.00	10-15.00
	Building materials	QTL.		
1	Cement	Qtl.	2500-2,800.00	155. 00
2	Lime	”	700.00-800	-
3	Gal Iron sheets	PC	350-500. 00	150- 180.00
4	Eucalyptus	PC	40-60	230-350.00

Table 4: showing the price differences in consumer and construction materials in Eritrea before and after the re-opening of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia because of imports from Ethiopia.

The new course of diplomacy and its spillover effect, however, advantages Senafe and its peripheries more than Tserona and its environs, for two main reasons. First, Senafe has a geopolitical advantage. It is located at one of the four international border crossings that were designated by the central authorities in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Second, although it has been badly affected by the 18 years of ritualized cross-border shelling between Eritrea and Ethiopia, it has a proper land transport infrastructure built during Italian colonial rule. From

²⁵ Interview: WKK (37), November 26, 2018, Tserona.

September 11, 2018, this road directly connected the region with its immediate Ethiopian border towns although it requires some improvement. These advantages have helped the local people in this area to easily scope out new trade opportunities to sustain their livelihoods.

On the other side, Tserona has neither an asphalt road nor a seasonal road directly connecting it with its immediate Ethiopian neighborhood villages and towns. The tension created by the state of ‘no war, no peace’ situation destroyed the pre-existing seasonal infrastructure. On the Eritrean side, the seasonal road doesn’t continue beyond the town. For this reason, donkeys and camels are the only reliable means of transport. Many interviewees pointed out that the two governments should attempt to reconnect the road transport infrastructure gap between Tserona town and Belessa river, the dividing line between the two countries. They want to see the cross-border trade business flourish at the same magnitude as in the case of Senafe-Zalenbesa line.

However, while the short-lived unchecked movement of people and goods across the international border created by the reopening of the formerly hard border created relief, it also caused unintended consequences. On the Eritrean side, the lack of regulations at the border paralyzed the local businessmen involved in petty business.²⁶ They could not compete with their counterparts from the Ethiopian side of the border. They want the government to take action.

For their part, Ethiopians had concerns over the Nakfa–Birr exchange rate. In December 2018, the exchange rate was 180-185 Birr to 100 Nakfa. With this advantage, Eritrean borderlanders could buy more Ethiopian commodities at a low cost. Many Ethiopian informants claimed that such imbalance in the exchange rate would negatively affect their local communities and their region. They want the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Eritrea to settle and hammer out this problem before causing unnecessary tense feelings between the two people. Many of them also recalled how this grey area had contributed to the outbreak of the border war of 1998-2000. A participant in a focus group held at Serha-Zalembesa crossing expressed those concerns specifically:

²⁶ Interview: ATT (41), November 22, 2018, Tserona.

Yes, the reopening of the border is good for the people living on both sides of the border, but the two countries didn't come into a formal and fair engagement. So far, Eritreans are benefiting more than us. They are taking advantage of the exchange rate difference between the Nakfa and the Birr in the black market. With 100 nakfa, they can buy so many things from our sides, but we cannot do so on theirs. Hence, it is good to have regularities in our cross-border exchange.²⁷

7.4. Border pulls infrastructural developments

For a while, the re-opening of the border also paved the way for wider possibilities for the distribution and expansion of some social service-providing infrastructures. Before the peace, this was extremely difficult for security reasons, as described in Chapter 5 (paragraph 5.2.4). Senafe and Tserona had two telephone network services - EriTel and Ethiotelecom. In addition, the residents had cheap and fast internet service access from the Ethiopian side of the border, with an average speed of at least four times faster than 10-50 Kbytes speed per second in urban areas in mainland Eritrea, which was previously non-existent.

This nascent improvement, however, was felt more among the youths than the older generation. With few problems using smartphones, they used the new communication opportunities offered by their location at the border more than others. These opportunities helped them not only reconnect with their family members in the mainland or abroad but also create new business opportunities across the border. Particularly, the network facilities helped them easily facilitate their cross-border business transactions. The overwhelming majority of the youths used to have dual SIM card smartphones, with Eritrean and Ethiopian SIM cards.

Beyond the above-mentioned developments, road maintenance and expansion projects were central to the border region. Members of the Eritrean army were involved in the renovation and the expansion of road networks connecting the two states. These activities were further helped by heavy machinery. The objective of this infrastructural development project was originally meant to speed up the people-to-people re-connection, and in turn to reinvigorate

²⁷ Interview: BSZ (28), November 29, 2018, Zalenbesa.

the already-resumed import and export trade networks as part of the deal reached in the Asmara Peace agreement of July 9, 2018.

Through the creation of the new opportunities, the local communities also engaged in house maintenance and construction, held back by the pre-existing state of uncertainty between the two states. This was particularly visible in Senafe more than in Tserona because of its direct road link with Ethiopian towns and cities. Seizing the opportunities offered by the open border, Ethiopian petty traders brought them cheap construction materials in lively periodic marketplaces or in their doorsteps, even to the periphery residents. Many capable residents also crossed the border to bring the construction materials on their own trucks or hired trucks from either side of the border.

In a similar vein, there was a dramatic shift in the transport landscape. There was regular public and private transport. Since the rapprochement, people were no longer required to spend days queuing for buses. They were using either Eritrean or Ethiopian cars. The only problem was along the buffer zone between Tserona and its immediate Ethiopian villages and towns because of the road problem. The previously built seasonal road linking the two countries required renovation, having been kept as a buffer zone during the whole military and political standoff period. However, the recent facts on the ground reveal that the situation had been reversed. All border crossing points are closed without any clear explanation from the two sides. Except for air travel, there are no other avenues for cross-border connections.

7.5. Conclusion

After nearly two decades of military and political tension, Eritrea and Ethiopia have reversed their course toward peace and reconciliation. The tension was formally defused following an unprecedented agreement reached between President Isaias Afewerki and Prime minister Dr. Abiy Ahmad on July 9, 2018. Since then, the two governments have been involved in numerous high-level meetings and visits. The aim was to further consolidate the terms of the peace agreement reached in Asmara on matters related to cross-border co-operation. In this process, the borderland communities, who experienced the personal and wider effects of the border closure, were optimistic, hoping to benefit from the social and economic dynamics at

the border. For a while, they were able to cross the international border where it runs through fields, deep forest areas or open areas disregarding the international rule norms, for different socio-economic activities. There was no barrier to stop them passing from one political jurisdiction to another for social or economic reasons or otherwise. Those emerging cross-border relationships were shaped mainly by their pre-existing networks of ethnicity and kinship disregarding their two-decade state of tension. Unfortunately, however, these friendly relations were hampered when the border informally closed again on April 19, 2019.

Appendix 1

Algiers Peace Agreement December 12, 2000

Agreement Between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia And the Government of the State of Eritrea

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea (the "parties"), Reaffirming their acceptance of the Organization of African Unity ("OAU") Framework Agreement and the Modalities for its Implementation, which have been endorsed by the 35th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Algiers, Algeria, from 12 to 14 July 1999,

Recommitting themselves to the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, signed in Algiers on 18 June 2000,

Welcoming the commitment of the OAU and United Nations, through their endorsement of the Framework Agreement and Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, to work closely with the international community to mobilize resources for the resettlement of displaced persons, as well as rehabilitation and peace building in both countries,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

1. The parties shall permanently terminate military hostilities between themselves. Each party shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the other.
2. The parties shall respect and fully implement the provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

Article 2

1. In fulfilling their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions relative to the protection of victims of armed conflict ("1949 Geneva Conventions"), and in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the parties shall without delay release and repatriate all prisoners of war.
2. In fulfilling their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the parties shall without delay, release and repatriate or return to their last place of residence all other persons detained as a result of the armed conflict.
3. The parties shall afford humane treatment to each other's nationals and persons of each other's national origin within their respective territories.

Article 3

1. In order to determine the origins of the conflict, an investigation will be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date which could have contributed to a misunderstanding between the parties regarding their common border, including the incidents of July and August 1997.

2. The investigation will be carried out by an independent, impartial body appointed by the Secretary General of the OAU, in consultation with the Secretary General of the United Nations and the two parties.

3. The independent body will endeavor to submit its report to the Secretary General of the OAU in a timely fashion.

4. The parties shall cooperate fully with the independent body.

5. The Secretary General of the OAU will communicate a copy of the report to each of the two parties, which shall consider it in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Framework Agreement and the Modalities.

Article 4

1. Consistent with the provisions of the Framework Agreement and the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, the parties reaffirm the principle of respect for the borders existing at independence as stated in resolution AHG/Res. 16(1) adopted by the OAU Summit in Cairo in 1964, and, in this regard, that they shall be determined on the basis of pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law.

2. The parties agree that a neutral Boundary Commission composed of five members shall be established with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border based on pertinent colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and applicable international law. The Commission shall not have the power to make decisions *ex aequo et bono*.

3. The Commission shall be located in the Hague.

4. Each party shall, by written notice to the United Nations Secretary General, appoint two commissioners within 45 days from the effective date of this Agreement, neither of whom shall

be nationals or permanent residents of the party making the appointment. In the event that a party fails to name one or both of its party-appointed commissioners within the specified time, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall make the appointment.

5. The president of the Commission shall be selected by the party-appointed commissioners or, failing their agreement within 30 days of the date of appointment of the latest party-appointed commissioner, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after consultation with the parties. The president shall be neither a national nor permanent resident of either party.

6. In the event of the death or resignation of a commissioner in the course of the proceedings, a substitute commissioner shall be appointed or chosen pursuant to the procedure set forth in this paragraph that was applicable to the appointment or choice of the commissioner being replaced.

7. The UN Cartographer shall serve as Secretary to the Commission and undertake such tasks as assigned to him by the Commission, making use of the technical expertise of the UN Cartographic Unit. The Commission may also engage the services of additional experts as it deems necessary

8. Within 45 days after the effective date of this Agreement, each party shall provide to the Secretary its claims and evidence relevant to the mandate of the Commission. These shall be provided to the other party by the Secretary.

9. After reviewing such evidence and within 45 days of its receipt, but not earlier than 15 days after the Commission is constituted, the Secretary shall transmit to the Commission and the parties any materials relevant to the mandate of the Commission as well as his findings identifying those portions of the border as to which there appears to be no dispute between the parties. The Secretary shall also transmit to the Commission all the claims and evidence presented by the parties.

10. With regard to those portions of the border about which there appears to be controversy, as well as any portions of the border identified pursuant to paragraph 9 with respect to which either party believes there to be controversy, the parties shall present their written and oral submissions and any additional evidence directly to the Commission, in accordance with its procedures.

11. The Commission shall adopt its own rules of procedure based upon the 1992 Permanent Court of Arbitration Optional Rules for Arbitrating Disputes Between Two States. Filing deadlines for the parties' written submissions shall be simultaneous rather than consecutive. All decisions of the Commission shall be made by a majority of the commissioners.

12. The Commission shall commence its work not more than 15 days after it is constituted and shall endeavor to make its decision concerning delimitation of the border within six months of its first meeting. The Commission shall take this objective into consideration when establishing its schedule. At its discretion, the Commission may extend this deadline.

13. Upon reaching a final decision regarding delimitation of the borders, the Commission shall transmit its decision to the parties and Secretaries General of the OAU and the United Nations for publication, and the Commission shall arrange for expeditious demarcation.

14. The parties agree to cooperate with the Commission, its experts and other staff in all respects during the process of delimitation and demarcation, including the facilitation of access to territory they control. Each party shall accord to the Commission and its employees the same privileges and immunities as are accorded to diplomatic agents under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

15. The parties agree that the delimitation and demarcation determinations of the Commission shall be final and binding. Each party shall respect the border so determined, as well as territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other party.

16. Recognizing that the results of the delimitation and demarcation process are not yet known, the parties request the United Nations to facilitate resolution of problems which may arise due to the transfer of territorial control, including the consequences for individuals

residing in previously disputed territory.

17. The expenses of the Commission shall be done equally by the two parties. To defray its expenses, the Commission may accept donations from the United Nations Trust Fund established under paragraph 8 of Security Council Resolution 1177 of 26 June 1998.

Article 5

1. Consistent with the Framework Agreement, in which the parties commit themselves to addressing the negative socio-economic impact of the crisis on the civilian population, including the impact on those persons who have been deported, a neutral Claims Commission shall be established. The mandate of the Commission is to decide through binding arbitration all claims for loss, damage or injury by one Government against the other, and by nationals (including both natural and juridical persons) of one party against the Government of the other party or entities owned or controlled by the other party that are (a) related to the conflict that was the subject of the Framework Agreement, the Modalities for its Implementation and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, and (b) result from violations of international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, or other violations of international law. The Commission shall not hear claims arising from the cost of military operations, preparing for military operations, or the use of force, except to the extent that such claims involve violations of international humanitarian law.

2. The Commission shall consist of five arbitrators. Each party shall, by written notice to the United Nations Secretary General, appoint two members within 45 days from the effective date of this agreement, neither of whom shall be nationals or permanent residents of the party making the appointment. In the event that a party fails to name one or both of its party-appointed arbitrators within the specified time, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall make the appointment.

3. The president of the Commission shall be selected by the party-appointed arbitrators or failing their agreement within 30 days of the date of appointment of the latest party-appointed arbitrator, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after consultation with the parties. The president shall be neither a national nor permanent resident of either party.

4. In the event of the death or resignation of a member of the Commission in the course of the proceedings, a substitute member shall be appointed or chosen pursuant to the procedure set forth in this paragraph that was applicable to the appointment or choice of the arbitrator being replaced.

5. The Commission shall be located in The Hague. At its discretion it may hold hearings and conduct investigations in the territory of either party, or at such other location as it deems expedient.

6. The Commission shall be empowered to employ such professional, administrative and clerical staff as it deems necessary to accomplish its work, including establishment of a Registry. The Commission may also retain consultants and experts to facilitate the expeditious completion of its work.

7. The Commission shall adopt its own rules of procedure based upon the 1992 Permanent Court of Arbitration Optional Rules for Arbitrating Disputes Between Two States. All decisions of the Commission shall be made by a majority of the commissioners.

8. Claims shall be submitted to the Commission by each of the parties on its own behalf and on behalf of its nationals, including both natural and juridical persons. All claims submitted to the Commission shall be filed no later than one year from the effective date of this agreement. Except for claims submitted to another mutually agreed settlement mechanism in accordance with paragraph 16 or filed in another forum prior to the effective date of this agreement, the Commission shall be the sole forum for adjudicating claims described in paragraph 1 or filed under paragraph 9 of this Article, and any such claims which could have been and were not submitted by that deadline shall be extinguished, in accordance with international law.

9. In appropriate cases, each party may file claims on behalf of persons of Ethiopian or Eritrean origin who may not be its nationals. Such claims shall be considered by the Commission on the same basis as claims submitted on behalf of that party's nationals.

10. In order to facilitate the expeditious resolution of these disputes, the Commission shall be authorized to adopt such methods of efficient case management and mass claims processing as it deems appropriate, such as expedited procedures for processing claims and checking claims on a sample basis for further verification only if circumstances warrant.

11. Upon application of either of the parties, the Commission may decide to consider specific claims, or categories of claims, on a priority basis.

12. The Commission shall commence its work not more than 15 days after it is constituted and shall endeavor to complete its work within three years of the date when the period for filing claims closes pursuant to paragraph 8.

13. In considering claims, the Commission shall apply relevant rules of international law. The Commission shall not have the power to make decisions *ex aequo et bono*.

14. Interest, costs and fees may be awarded.

15. The expenses of the Commission shall be borne equally by the parties. Each party shall pay any invoice from the Commission within 30 days of its receipt.

16. The parties may agree at any time to settle outstanding claims, individually or by categories, through direct negotiation or by reference to another mutually agreed settlement mechanism.

17. Decisions and awards of the commission shall be final and binding. The parties agree to honor all decisions and to pay any monetary awards rendered against them promptly.

18. Each party shall accord to members of the Commission and its employees the privileges and immunities that are accorded to diplomatic agents under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Article 6

1. This agreement shall enter into force on the date of signature.

2. The parties authorize the Secretary General of the OAU to register this agreement with the Secretariat of the United Nations in accordance with article 102(1) of the Charter of the

United Nations.

DONE at [Algiers, Algeria] on the [12th] day of December, 2000, in duplicate, in the English language.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA:

[Prime Minister Meles Zenawi]

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF ERITREA:

[President Issaias Afewerki]

Date faxed: December 12, 2000

Appendix: II

Ethiopia and Italy 2nd May, 1889

His Majesty Humbert I, king of Italy, and his Majesty Menelik II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, in order to render profitable and secure the peace between the two kingdoms of Italy and Ethiopia, have decided to conclude a treaty of Friendship and Commerce:

And his Majesty the king of Italy, having sent as his representative and Envoy extraordinary to his Majesty King Menelik Count Antonelli, and c., whose power have been duly recognized, and His Majesty King Menelek, negotiating in his own name as king of kings of Ethiopia, have concluded and do concluded the following articles:-

Art. I.- Perpetual Peace and Friendship.

Art. II: - Appointment of Diplomatic and Consular Officers.

Boundary between Italy and Ethiopia

Art. III: - In order to remove any doubt as the limits off the territory over which the two Contracting parties exercise sovereign rights, a special Commission, composed of two Italian and two Ethiopian Delegates, shall trace with permanent landmarks a boundary – line, the leading features of which shall be the following:-

- a) The boundary between Italy and Ethiopia shall follow the high table-land.
- b) Starting from the country of Arafaili, the villages of Halai, Soganeiti, and Asmara shall be within the Italian boundary.
- c) Adi Nifas and Adi Johannes, in the direction of the Bogos tribe, shall be within the Italian boundary.
- d) From Adi Johannes the boundary between Italy and Ethiopia shall be marked by a straight line running east and west.

Convent of Debra Bizen

Art. IV: - The Covent of Debra Bizen, with all its property, shall remain in the passion of the

Ethiopian government, who shall not ,however, be able to make use of its military purpose.

Art. V: - Customs Dues payable by Caravans. 8%. ad Valorem.

Freedom of Commerce in Arms and Ammunitions through Massowah for King Menelek

Art. VI: -Commerce in arms and Ammunition to and from Ethiopia shall be free to pass through Massowah only for King Menelek, who will be bound to make a regular application to that effect to the Italian authorities, furnished with the Royal seal.

The caravans, arms and ammunitions will travel under the protection and with the escort of Italian soldiers as far as the Ethiopia frontier.

Art. VII: - Freedom of Travel and Commerce. Armed Men prohibited from crossing Frontier to intimidate or molest inhabitants.

Art. VIII: - Freedom of Commerce with Natives in Italy and Ethiopia.

Art. IX: - Religious Liberty guaranteed.

Art. X: - Jurisdiction. Disputes and Lawsuits between Italian in Ethiopia to be settled by Italian Authorities in Massowah or their Delegates. Disputes between Italian and Ethiopians to be settled in Italian Authorities at Massowah, or by Italian and Ethiopian Delegates.

Art. XI: -Disposal of effects of Italians dying in Ethiopia and Ethiopians dying in Italy.

Art. XII: Jurisdiction. Italians accused of a crime to be judged by the Italian Authorities at Massowah . Ethiopian accused of a crime committed in Italian territories to be tried by Ethiopian Authorities.[Altered by Art. IX of Additional Convention of 1st October, 1889].

Art. XIII. Extradition of Criminals.

Art. XIV. Prevention of Slave trade. No caravan of slaves to be allowed to pass through King Menelek's territories.

Art. XV:- Validity of Treaty in the whole of the Empire.

Art. XVI:-Power of either party to modify Treaty after 5 years, on giving a year notice. Concessions of Territory to be unalterable.

Negotiations of Ethiopia with Foreign Powers to be Made through Italian Government.

Art. XVII:- His Majesty the King of Kings of Ethiopia consents to avail himself of Italian Government for any negotiation which he may enter into with the other Powers or Governments.

Preferential Treatment to Italians in Ethiopia in regard to the establishment of House of Commerce or Manufactures.

Art. XVIII:- If at any time His Majesty the king of Ethiopia should have the intention of granting special privilege to subjects of a third State in regard to the establishment of

houses of commerce or manufactures in Ethiopia, he shall always give preference, when all other conditions are equal, to Italians.

Art. XIX:- Both Italian and Amharic Texts of Treaty to be considered official, and of the same authority.

Ratification of Treaty

Art. XX:- The present treaty shall be ratified.

In faith of which Count Pietro Anotonelli, in the name of His Majesty the king of Italy, and his Majesty Menelek, king of Kings of Ethiopia, in his own name, have signed and sealed the present treaty in the encampment of Uccialli, on the 25th Mazzio, 1881, corresponding to the 2nd May, 1889.

For his Majesty the king of Italy
(LS) Pietro Antonelli
(Imperial Seal of Ethiopia)

Appendix: III

Treaty between Italy and Ethiopia for the Delimitation of the frontier between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Signed at Addis Abeba, 10th July, 1900.

(Ratified by the king of Ital 13th April, 1901)

(Translation)

In the name of the Holy Trinity

His Majesty Humbert I, King of Italy, and his Majesty Menelek II, king of Kings of Ethiopia; in the desire to regulate the question of the frontier between the colony of Eritrea and Ethiopia which has remained open since the conclusion of the Treaty of Addis Abeba of the 26th October, 1896 (17 Tekemt, 1889), have agreed on and concluded the following Convention:-

Art. I. - The line Tomat-Todluc –Mareb-Belesa–Muna, traced on the map annexed, is recognized by the two contracting Parties as the boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Art. II.- The Italian Government binds itself not to cede or sell to any other Power the territory comprised between the Line Tomat, Todluc, Mareb-Mai Mabessa Mai, Feccia-Mai, Mareta-Mai, Mahio, Piano galine Faraone, and the line Tomat, Todluc, Mareb Belesa, Muna, left by his Majesty Menelek II, King of King of Ethiopia, to Italy.

His Majesty Menelek II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, in his own name, for himself and for his successors, and Captain Federico Ciccodicola, in the name of his Majesty king of Humbert I, King of Italy, for himself and his successors, in the mutual agreement, have written this convention, in the of Italian and Amharic languages, both to be considered official save that in case of error in writing the Emperor Menelek will relay on the Amharic version, and in witness of their approval have sealed it with their seals.

Written in the city of Addis Abeba, the 10th July, 1900 (3 Hamlie 1892, year of Pardon

(Seal of the Emperor Menelik.)
 (L.S) Captiano FEDERICO CICCODICOLA
 Representative of his Majesty the king of Italy in Ethiopia.

Appendix IV

Treaty of May 15, 1902

Annex to the Treaty of 10th July, 1900, regarding the frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the treaty of 15th May, 1902, regarding the frontier between the Sudan and Ethiopia.

His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik II, Major Ciccodicola, Italian Minister in Ethiopia, and Lieutenant Colonel Harrington, His Britannic Majesty's Agent in Ethiopia, have mutually agreed that:

Frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea

Art. I. The frontier Treaty between Ethiopia and Eritrea, previously determined by the line Tomat-Todluc, is mutually modified in the following manner Commencing from the juncture of the Khor Um Hagar with the Setit, the new frontier follows this river to its junction with the Maietab, Following the latter's course so as to leave Mount Ala Tacura to Eritrea and joins the Mareb at its junction with the Mai Ambessa.

The line from the junction of the Setit and Maieteb to the junction of the Mareb and Mai Ambesa shall be admitted by Italian and Ethiopian delegates, so that the Cunama tribe belong to Eritrea.

Frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea

Art.II. The frontier between Sudan and Eritrea, instead of that delaminated by the English and Italian delegated by the Convention of the 16th April, 1901, shall be the line which, from Sabderat, is traced via Abu Jamal (Gamel) to the junction of the Khor Um Hagar with Setit.

The Present Agreement shall come into force as soon as its notification by the British and Italian Governments shall have been notified to the Emperor of Ethiopia.

In faith of which His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelek II, in his own name and that of his successors; Maggiore Federico Ciccodicola, in the name of His Majesty Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, and his Successors; and Lieutenant - Colonel Harrington, in the name of his majesty Edward VII, king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

and of the British Dominions beyond the seas, Emperor of India, and his successors, have signed the present Note in triplicate, written in the Italian, English, and Amharic Languages identically, all texts being official, and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Addis Abeba, this 15th Day of May, 1902.

(L.S) JOHAN LANE HARRINGTON, Lieutenant-Colonel

(L.S) MAGGIORE FEDERICO CICCODICOLA

(Seal of His Majesty, the Emperor Menelek II

Appendix V

Treaty of May 16, 1908

Convention between Italy and Ethiopia for the settlement of the frontiers between the Italian Colony of Eritrea and the Province of Ethiopian Empire, signed at Adis Ababa, 16th May, 1908.

His Majesty Victor Emmanuel, in his own and in the name of his successors, by means of his representative in Adis Ababa, Cavaliere Giuseppe Colli Di Felizzano, Captain of Cavalry, and his Majesty Menelek II, King of Kings of Abyssinia, in his own name and that of his successors, desiring to regulate definitely the frontiers between the Italian Colony of Eritrea and the provinces of the Ethiopian Empire, have determined to sign the following Conventions:-

Art. I.- From the most Easterly point of the frontier established between the colony of Eritrea and the Tigre by the Convention of the 10th July, 1900 (No. 120) the boundary proceeds in a south-easterly direction, parallel to and at a distance of 60 kilometers from the coast, until it joins the frontier of the French possessions of Somalia.

Art. II.- The two Governments undertake to fix the above-mentioned frontier-line on the spot by common accord and as soon as possible, adapting it to the nature and variation of the ground.

Art. III.- The two Governments undertake to establish by common accord and as soon as possible the respective dependency of the limitrophe tribes on the frontiers on the basis of their traditional and unusual residence.

Art. IV.- The two Governments undertake to recognize reciprocally the ancient rights and prerogatives of the limitrophe tribes without regard to their political residence, especially as regards the working of the salt pans, which shall, however, be subject to the existing taxes and pasturage dues.

Art. V.- The two Governments formally undertake to exercise no interference beyond the frontier-line, and not to allow their dependent tribes to cross the frontier in order to commit acts of violence to the detriment of the tribes on the other side; but should questions or incidents arise between or on account of the limitrophe tribes the two Governments shall settle them by common accord.

Art. VI.- The two Governments mutually undertake not to take any action, nor to allow

their dependent tribes to take any action, which may give rise to questions or incidents or disturb the tranquillity of the frontier tribes.

Art.VII.- The Present Convention shall be, as regards Italy, submitted to the approval of Parliament and ratified by the King.

Done in duplicate and identic terms in the two languages, Italian and Amharic. One copy remains in the hands of the Italian Government, and the other in the hands of the Ethiopian Government.

Given in the City of Adis Ababa, the 16th day of the Month of May,
GIUSEPPE COLLI DI FELIZZANO.
(Seal of Menelek)

Appendix VI

List of Key Informants

1. Interview: Memhir Weldegebreal SS (68), September 3, 2017, Asmara.
2. Interview: LGS (50): August 29, 2017, Senafe.
3. Interview: Qeshi Tesfamichael Ghebremickeal (80), August 14, 2017, Senafe.
4. Interview: YFS (56), August 14, 2017, Senafe.
5. Interview: SA (42), July 12, 2017, Tserona.
6. Interview: Zeid Miraci (76), August 18, 2017, Tserona.
7. Interview: Mohammed Mahmud Omer (57), July 3, 2017, Senafe.
8. Interview: Mebrahtu KS (73), July 23, 2017, Senafe.
9. Interview: Tsighe Tekhile (44), July 27, 2017, Tserona.
10. Interview: Tesfamichael Abbay (73), July 15, 2017, Tserona.
11. Interview: Birhane (30), August 14, 2017, Senafe.
12. Interview: TTA (55), March 12, 2017, Tserona.
13. Interview: Tiumizghi Tekhile (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.
14. Interview: YSS (43), August 15, 2018, Serha.
15. Interview: TTM (56), July 12, 2017, Tserona.
16. Interview: TAT (70), July 13, 2017, Tserona.
17. Interview: SSD(40), March 15, 2018, Senafe.
18. Interview: TAA (89), July 16, 2017, Tserona.
19. Interview: TTH (38), February 15, 2017.
20. Interview: TTM (55), July 20, 2017, Tserona.
21. Interview: BTT (50), June 29, 2017, Tserona.
22. Interview: DYT (39), February 24, 2018, Tserona.
23. Interview: SMB (40), August 16, 2017, Senafe.
24. Interview: TTT (73), July 12, 2017, Tserona.
25. Interview: TMS (43), July 12, 2017, Tserona.
26. Interview: SST (43), August 13, 2017, Senafe.
27. Interview: TAS (43), July 16, 2017, Senafe.
28. Interview: YST (53), November 16, 2018, Tserona.
29. Interview: TAS (43), July 16, 2017, Tserona.
30. Interview: YTT (53), July 12, 2017, Tserona.
31. Interview: SAT (89), July 14, 2017, Senafe.
32. Interview: SAG (75), July 14, 2017, Senafe.
33. Interview: TAY (53), July 12, 2018, Tserona.
34. Interview: TTM (55), July 20, 2017, Tserona.
35. Interview: SSQ (59), August 12, 2017, Senafe.
36. Interview: TTD (36), March 26, 2018, Tserona.
37. Interview SSB (30), March 27, 2018, Senafe.
38. Interview: SKD (25), March 29, 2018, Senafe.
39. Interview: SAT (61), September 2, 2017, Asmara.

Informal Conversation

1. Informal Conversation: SCF (17), refugee, June 25, 2018, Cagliari.
2. Informal conversation: TTR (49), February 16, 2018, Tserona.
3. Informal communication: TTA (89), February 23, 2018, Tserona.
4. Informal conversation: SLK (39), February 24, 2018, Tserona.

Bibliography

- Abay, Ghidewon and Ogbazgy Abay. "A Study of the Evolution of the Eritrean Ethiopian Border through Treaties and Official Maps." In *Eritrean Studies Review*, ed. by Tekie Fessahatzion, 43–88. Red Sea Press, 1999.
- Abbay, Alemseged. *Identity Jilted or Re-Imagining Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrinya Nationalist Struggles*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red sea Press, 1998.
- Abbay, Alemseged. "The Trans-Mareb Past in the Present" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 2 (2017): 321–34.
- Abbink, Jan. "Badme and the Ethio-Eritrean Border: The Challenge of Demarcation in the Post-War Period." *Africa:LVIII*, No.2 (2003): 219–31. Accessed June 12, 2016. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40761693>.
- Abbink, Jan. "Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio-Eritrean War." *Africa*: 56, no. 4 (2001): 447–58.
- Abbink, Jan. "Ethiopia-Eritrea: Proxy Wars and Prospects of Peace in the Horn of Africa." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21, no. 3 (2003): 407–25. Accessed December 2, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0258900032000142446>.
- Abbink, Jan. "The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Dispute." *African Affairs* 97, no. 389 (1998): 551–65.
- Abebe, Behailu. "War Stories, Displacement and Coping Experiences of the Displaced from the Ethio-Eritrean War." In *People, Space and the State: Migration, Resettlement and Displacement in Ethiopia*, ed.by Pankhurst and Francois Piguet, 210–235. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2004.
- Abraham, Kinfu. *Ethio-Eritrean History and the Ethio-Eritrean War*. London: EIIPD, 2004.
- Abraham, Tesfay. "The Diessa Land Tenure System and the Land Proclamation No. 58/1994 in the Kebessa Rural Area" BA thesis. University of Asmara, 1998.
- Adugna, Fekadu. "Making Use of Kin beyond the International Border." In *Borders and Borderlands in the Horn of Africa*, ed.by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, 45–60. Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Agnew, John. "Borders on the Mind: Re-Framing Border Thinking." *Ethics and Global Politics*:4951, no. 1:4 (2008):175–91. Accessed October 12, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.3402/egp.v1i4.1892>.
- Aguilar, Mario. *The Politics of Age and Gerontocracy in Africa*. African World Press, 1998.
- Ahuja, Ram. *Research Methods*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2001.
- Alesina, Alberto, Janina Matuszeski and William Easterly. "Artificial State." *Journal of the*

- European Economic Association* 9, no. 2 (2011): 246–77.
- Alshenqeeti, Hamza. “Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review.” *English Linguistics Research* 3, no. 1 (2014): 39–45.
- Anderson, James and Liam O’Dowd. “Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance.” *Regional Studies* 33, no. 7 (1999): 593–604.
- Anderson, Malcolm. *Frontiers: territory and state formation in the modern world*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.
- Anene, Joseph C. *The international boundaries of Nigeria, 1885-1960: The framework of an emergent African nation*. Humanities Press Intl, 1970.
- Anfray, Francis. *Les anciens Ethiopiens: siècles d'histoire*. Fenixx, 1990
- Asiwaju, A.I. “Borderlands in Africa: A Comprehensive Research Perspective with Particular Reference to Western Europe.” *Journal of Borderland Studies* 8, no.2 (1993):1–12.
- Asiwaju, A.I. “Borders and Borderlands as Linchpins for Regional Integration in Africa: Lessons of the European Experience.” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 8, no. 1 (1993):45-63.
- Asiwaju, A I., ed. *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations across Africa’s International Boundaries, 1884-1984*. C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1985.
- Bellucci, Stefano and Massimo Zaccaria. “Wage Labor and Mobility in Colonial Eritrea, 1880s to 1920s.” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 86 (2014): 89–106.
- Bereketeab, Redie. “The Complex Roots of the Second Eritrea- Ethiopia War : Re-examining the Causes :” *African Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 1 and 2 (2013): 15–59. Accessed July 7, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajia.v13i1-3>
- Bereketeab, Redie. “The Morality of the U.N. Security Council Sanctions against Eritrea: Defensibility, Political Objectives, and Consequences.” *African Studies Review* 56, no. 2 (2013): 145–61.
- Bezabih, Wuhibegezer Ferede. “Fundamental Consequences of the Ethio- Eritrean War [1998-2000].” *Journal of Conflictology* 5, no. 2 (2014):39-47. Accessed November 15, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7238/joc.v5i2.1919>.
- Berhe, Aregawi. “A Political History of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (1975-1991): Revolt, Ideology and Mobilisation in Ethiopia.” PHD thesis. Vrije University, 2008.
- Berkeley, George Fitz-Hardinge. *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*. Great Britain: The Naval and Military Press, 1969.
- Bernard, Nancy. “Africa/Eritrea: Annual Results Report, Incorporating the Bada Irrigated Agricultural Project.” Asmara, 1998.

- Blake, Gerald. "Borderland Under Stress:Some Global Perspectives." In *Borderland Under Stress*, ed.by Martin Pratt and Janet Alison, 1-16. London: Kluwer La International, 2001.
- Bluntschli, John Kaspar. *The Theory of the State*. Kitchenere: Batoches Book, 2000.
- Boahen, A.Adu. *African Perspectives on Colonialism*. Baltimore,MD: Johns Hapkins, 1987.
- Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford university press, 2016.
- Bustamante, Ana Marleny. "The Impact of Post-9 / 11 US Policy on the California – Baja California Border Region." *Borderlands Studies* 28.3, January (2016): 307–19. Accessed June 12, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2012.751729>.
- "Cabinet of Ministrys Holds Meeting." *Eritrean Profile Vol. 25 No.13*. April 14, 2018.
- Carcangiu, Bianca Maria. *Il territorio conteso. L'Ogaden etiopico e i somali Ogaadeen*. Rome: Aracne, 2017.
- Caromba, Laurence. "Redrawing the Map of Southern Africa? A Critical Analysis of the Arguments for the Unification of South Africa and Lesotho." *Politikon* 44, no. 1 (2017): 93–109. Accessed February 17, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2017.1278636>.
- Chambers, R. and Conway, G.R. "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods:Practical Concepts for the 21st Century." 1991.
- Chelati Dirar, Uoldelul. "Rivalry, Antagonism and War in the Nation & State-Building Process: The H Factor in the Relations Between Eritrea and Ethiopia." In *The 1998-2000 War between Eritrea and Ethiopia*, ed. by A. de Guttry, H.H.G. Post and G. Venturini, 25–51. The Hague: T.M.C.ASSER Press, 2009.
- Choi, Eunyoung Christina. "Everyday Practices of Bordering and the Threatened Bodies of Undocumented North Korean Border-Crossers." In *The Routledge Research Companion to Border Studies*, ed. by Thomas M. Wilson and and Hastings Donnan, 529-550. Routledge, 2016.
- Ciampi, Gabriele. "Cartograpghic Problems of Eritreo-Ethiopian Border." *Africa* 3, no. 3 (2016): 155–89.
- Clapham, Christopher. *Africa and the international system: The politics of state survival*. Vol. 50. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Clapham, Christopher. "Boundary and Territory in the Horn of Africa." In *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. by P. Nugent & A.I.Asiwaju, 237–50. London: Pinter, 1996.
- Clapham, Christopher. "The Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict." *Forced Migration Review* 2 (1998): 34.
- Cliffe, Lionel. "The Unfinished Business of Liberation Eritrea 2008." *Review of African*

- Political Economy* 35, no. 2 (2008): 323–30. .Accessed June 20, 2017.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240802197094>.
- Connell, Dan. “A Shootout in the Horn of Africa: A View from Eritrea.” *Middle East Report*, 1999, 4–5.
- Connell, Dan. “Eritrea/Ethiopia War Looms as Washington Watches & Waits,” *Groosroots International*, 2004.
- “Commemoration of Martyrs Day: Eritrean Government Will Send a Delegation to Addis Abeba.” *Eritrea Profile* Vo. 25. No.33, 2018.
- Caulk, Richard. “Black Snake, White Snake’:Bahta Hagos and His Revolt Against Italian Overrule in Eritrea,1894.” In *Baditry,Rebellion and Social Protests in Africa*, ed. by Donald Crummey, 145-151. London: James Currey, 1986.
- Cornwell, Richard. “Ethiopia and Eritrea: Fratricidal Conflict in the Horn.” *African Security Review* 7, no. 5 (1998): 62–68. Accessed January 12. 2017,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.1998.9627879>.
- De Waal, Alex. *The real politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, war and the business of power*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
- De Waal, Thomas. *Black garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through peace and war*. NYU press, 2013.
- Dewalt, M.Kathleen et al. “Participant Observation.” In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed.by R.H. Bernard, 259-300. California: Altamira Press, 1998.
- DFID. *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets*. London, 1999.
- Dias, Alexandra Magnolia. “An Inter-State War in the Post-Cold War Era: Eritrea-Ethiopia (1998-2000).” PHD thesis. London School of Economics and Political Sciences, 2008.
- Dias, Alexandra Magnólia. “The Conduct of an Inter-State War and Multiple Dimensions of Territory: Eritrea-Ethiopia War 1998-2000.” *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, no. 22 (2011): 21–41.
- Dirar, Chelati. "Rivalry, Antagonism and War in the Nation & State-Building Process: The H Factor iIn the Relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia." In the 1998-2000 War between Eritrea and Ethiopia ed. by De Guttry, H.H.G. Post and G. Venturini, 25-51. ASSER Press, 2009.
- Donnan, Hastings and Thomas M.Wilson. “An Anthropology of Frontiers.” In *Border Approaches: Anthropological Perspectives on Frontiers*, ed. by Hastings Donnan and Thomas M.Wilson, 1–14. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994.
- Donnan, Hastings and Thomas M. Wilson. *Border approaches: Anthropological perspectives on frontiers*. University Press of America, 1994.
- Donnan, Hastings and Thomas M.Wilson. *Borderlands:Ethnographic approaches to security, Power, and Identity*. University Press of America.Inc, 2010.

- Donnan, Hastings and Thomas M. Wilson. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. United Kingdom: Biddles Ltd, King's Lynn., 2001.
- Drysdale, John. *The Somali Dispute*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1964.
- Duranti, A. *Etnografia Del Parlare Quotidiano*. Rome: NIS, 1992.
- Dutta, Sujan. "State of No War, No Peace." *The Telegraphy*. October 30, 2016. October 23, 2017. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/state-of-no-war-no-peace/cid/1484331>.
- Dwyer, Sonya Corbin, and Jennifer L. Buckle. "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009): 54–63. Accessed July 14, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>.
- "Eritrea." *Africa Confidential*, Vol.34. no.9, 1993.
- "Eritrea and Ethiopia: Spit and Slung Out." *The Economist*, September 17, 1998.
- Eritrea National Council of Trade. "Focus on Business." Vol. 3, 2000.
- "Eritrea Says It Killed 10 Ethiopian Troops." *Reuters*, January 2, 2010. Accessed May 12, 2017. <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE60206K20100103>.
- ERITV. "General Sebhat Efreem Interview with ERITV on Eritrea-Ethiopian War." Eritrean State TV broadcast (ERITV), March 5, 2000.
- Estifanos, Zera Yacob, Wolde Mariam Abraham and Gherima Gbere Meskel. *አገገ ስርዓትና ናይ መሬት ግደቦ: Collection of Codes and Bylaws of Eritrean Regions and Counties in Tigrinya and Tigre*. Asmara: Petros Printing Press, 1990.
- "Ethiopia Eyes Better Road Connection with Eritrea as Relations Improve." Xinhua, September 10, 2018. Accessed December 23, 2018. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/10/c_137456729.htm.
- Ewing, Jonathan. "Ethiopia and Eritrea in Turmoil: Implications for Peace and Security in a Troubled Region." *Institute for Security Studies*, (2008): 1–8.
- Fairhurst, Ann E. and Linda K. "The Ethnographic Case Study: An Experimental Approach to Teaching Retail Management." *Development in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises* 18 (1991): 16–18.
- Favali, Lyda and Ray, Pateman. *Blood, Land and Sex*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Fenton, S. *Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003.
- Fetterman, David M. *Ethnography Step by Step*. London: Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1998.
- Feyissa, Dereje and Markus Hoehne. "Borders and Borderlands in the Horn of Africa." *Max Planck Institute For Social Anthropology*, 49, no. 107 (2008): 1–25.

- Feyissa, Dereje. "The Cultural Construction of State Borders: The View from Gambella." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 4, no. 2 (2010): 314–30.
- Feyissa, Dereje and Markus Virgil Hoehne, eds. *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*. Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.
- "Final Reports of the Review Committee on the Implementation of the Ethio-Eritrea Economic Agreements,." Addis Abeba, January 1, 1997.
- Fischer, E. "On Boundaries." *World Politics* 1(2): (1949): 196–222.
- Foucher, Michel. "African Borders : Putting Paid to a Myth." *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, (2019): 1–20. Accessed November 18, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2019.1671213>.
- Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Macmillan, 1989.
- Fukui, Katsuyoshi and John Markakis, eds. *Ethnicity & conflict in the Horn of Africa*. James Currey Publishers, 1994.
- G.Bhatti. "Ethnographic and Representational Style." In *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*, ed. by L. Arthur, J., Waring, M., Coe, R. & Hedges, 80–84. Los Angeles.: SAGE, 2012.
- Gbenenye, Emmanuel M. "African Colonial Boundaries and Nation-Building." *Inkanyisa. Jnl.Hum and So. Sci.* 8, no. 2 (2016):117–24.
- Galaty, John. "Boundary-Making and Pastoral Conflict along the Kenyan-Ethiopian Borderlands." *African Studies Review* 59, no. 1 (2016): 97–122. Accessed May 14, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2016.1>.
- Ghebreab, Habtu. *Ethiopia and Eritrea: A Documentary Study*. Trento, 1993.
- Ghebrehiwet, Kesete. "Ministry of Education 20 Years of Purpose." Asmara,Eritrea: Shabiat.com, 2011. Accessed January 11, 2018, <http://www.shabait.com/articles/nation-building/4825-ministry-of-education-20-years-of-purpose>.
- Ghebreyesus, Biyan. "The Border Regions of Senafe and Tserona: The People without Border." Paper Presented at the 20th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies(ICE20), but not yet published. Mekelle University, 2018, 1-33.
- Gilkes, Patrick and M. Plaut. "Conflict in the Horn: Why Eritrea and Ethiopia are at war." *Briefing Paper*, (1999).
- Gilkes, Patrick and Martin Pluat. "War in the Horn : The Conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia." Discussion Paper. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999. Accessed May 19, 2017. <https://books.google.it/books?id=VOs-AAAACAAJ>.
- Ginty, Roger Mac. *No War, No Peace*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Gottesman, Les. *To Fight and Learn: The Praxis and Promise of Literacy in Eritrea's Independence War*. Red Sea Press, 1998.

- Griffiths, Ieuan. "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries." *The Royal Geographical Society* 152, no. 2 (1986): 204-216. Accessed June 15, 2017. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/634762>.
- Guazzini, Federica. "La Geografia Variable Del Confine Eritreo-Etiopico Tra Passato e Presente." *Africa: LIV*, no. 3 (1999): 309-48.
- Guazzini, Federica. *La Ragioni Di Un Confini Coloniale Eritrea 1898-1908*. Torino: Editrice L' Harmattan Italia, 1999.
- Haddas Ertra No.77*. May 27, 1993.
- Hagmann, Tobias and Alemmaya Mulug, "Pastoral Conflicts and State-Building in the Ethiopian Lowlands." *African Spectrum*, 43, no. 1 (2016): 19-37.
- Hanson, Gordon H. and Antonio Spilimbergo. "Illegal immigration, border enforcement, and relative wages: Evidence from apprehensions at the US-Mexico border." *American Economic Review* 89, no. 5 (1999): 1337-1357.
- Haselsberger, Beatrix. "Decoding Borders. Appreciating Border Impacts on Space and People." *Planning Theory and Practice*. 15:4. (2014), 505-526.
- Healy, Sally. "Hostage to Conflict Prospects for Building Regional Economic Cooperation in the Horn of Africa." A Chatham House Rport, 2011.
- Healy, Sally. "Peacemaking in the Midst of War: An Assessment of IGAD's Contribution to Regional Security." *Royal Institute of International Affairs*, no. 59 (2009):1-22.
- Henze, Paul B. *Layers of time: A history of Ethiopia*. Springer, 2000.
- Henze, Paul B. *The Horn of Africa From War to Peace*. London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1991.
- Herbst, Jeffrey. "Challenges to Africa's Boundaries in the New world order." *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 46, no. 1 (2018): 17-30.
- Herbst, Jeffrey. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Herbst, Jeffrey. "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa." *International Organization* Vol. 43, no. 4 (1989): 673-92.
- Hermanowicz, Joseph C. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 4 (2002): 479-99.
- Hertslet, E. *The Map of Africa by Tretry*. London: Frank CASS, 1967.
- Heyman, Josiah M. "Culture Theory and the US-Mexico Border." In *A companion to border Studies*, ed. by Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, 48-65. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012.
- Hoehne, Markus V. "Mimesis and Mimicry in Dynamics of State and Identity Formation in Northern Somalia." *Africa* 79, no. 2 (2009): 252-81. Accessed June 13, 2016.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/afr.0.0086>.

- Human rights Council. "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea:A/HRC/29/C." June 24, 2016. Accessed June 26, 2015,http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIEritrea/A_HRC_29_CRP-1.pdf.
- Humphris, Rachel. "Refugees and the Rashaida:Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Eritrea to Sudan and Egypt" UNHCR: Research Report No. 254 (2013): 1–23.
- Ibn al-'Assal, Abu al-Fada'il Majid. Fetha Nagast: The Law of the Kings, 2nd ed. Trans. by Paulos Tzadua; ed. by Paulos Tzadua, Peter L. Strauss, & Peter Sand. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2009.
- Ikome, Francis Nguendi. "Africa's International Borders as Potential Sources of Conflict and Future Threats to Peace and Security." *Institute for Security Studies Papers* 2, no. 233 (2012): 1–16.
- International Crisis Group. "Eritrea:ending the Exodus?, ICG African Briefing, 100, August, 2014.
- International Crisis Group. "Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?" *ICG African Affair No 68*, September (2003): 1–25.
- "Isaias Afowerki." Eritrean State TV broadcast (ERITV), April 25, 1993.
- Iwona Markuszewska, Minna Tanskanen and Josep Vila Subiros. "Boundaries From Borders: Cross-Border Relationships in the Context of the Mental Perception of a Borderline – Experiences From Spanish-French and Polish-German Border Twin Towns." *Quasesiones Geographicae* 35, no. 1 (2016).
- Iyassu, Amanuel. "Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia interview with Radio Assenna." Addis Abebba, Febiuary 15, 2011. Accessed January 20, 2017.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lrjPhT1A7M>.
- Jackson, Stephen. "Borderlands and the Transformation of War Economies: Lessons from the DR. Congo." *Conflict, Security & Development* 6, no. 3 (2006): 425–47. Accessed November 12, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800600933621>.
- Jackson, Stephen. "Making a Killing: Criminality and Coping in the Kivu War Economy." *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 93–94 (2002): 517–36. November 12, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240208704636>.
- Jacquin-Berdal, Dominique. "Ethiopia-Eritrea: Addis Ababa's Victory." *West Africa*(2000): 24–25.
- James, W., D. Lewis Donham, E. Kurimoto and A. Triulzi. *Remapping Ethiopia Socialism & After*. UK: Long House Publishing Services, 2002.
- James, Wendy, and Donald Lewis Donham, eds. *The southern marches of imperial Ethiopia: essays in history and social anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Jones, Reece and C. Johnson. *Placing the Border in Everyday Life*. Ashgate Publishing Company, 2016.

- Junaenah, Sulehan, Noor Rahamah Abu Bakar, Et al. "Development at the Margins: Livelihood and Sustainability of Communities at Malaysia - Indonesia Borders." *Prethodno Priopcenje*. Vol. 52,(2014), 548-562. Accessed 12, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.5673/sip.51.3.6>.
- "Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia," *Eritrean Profile Vol. 25 No.38*. July 11, 2018.
- "Joint Declaration of Relationship." *Haddas Ertra No.96*. August 4, 1993.
- Kaleab, S. Tadasse. "No Peace No War: The Ethiopia - Eritrea Conflicts." *Aarms* 18, no. 1 (2019): 79–91. Accessed August 14, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.32565/aarms.2019.1.5>.
- Krantz, Lasse. "The Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Poverty Reduction." *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*. February (2001): 1.
- Krauss, Clifford. "Ethiopian Rebels Storm the Capital and Sieze Control." *The New York Times*. May 28, 1991.
- Kristof, Ladis K. D. "The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 49, no. 3 (2018): 269–82.
- Lewis, I.M. *People of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho. North Africa*. London: Ipswich Book Company, 2017.
- "Lt.Col.Berhane Yohannes Statement at Pragraph 4. Eritrea's Counter-Memorial Annex A.," January 17, 2005, 15-16.
- Lacey, Marc. "Badme Journal; Torn Town Changes Countries, but Not Conviction." *The New York Times*, April 16, 2002.
- Larémont, Ricardo René, ed. *Nationalism and the African State*. London: Lynne Reiner, 2005.
- Lata, Leenco. "The Ethiopia-Eritrea War." *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2003): 369–88.
- Lavie, Smadar and Ted Swedenburg. "Introduction." In *Displacement, Diaspora and Geographies of Identity*, ed. by S. Lavie and T. Swedenburg, 1-26. London: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Licht, Konrad. "The Ethio-Eritrean Relationship." Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, 2002. May 28, 2017. Accessed June 14, 2017. <http://www.konradlicht.com/the-ethio-eritrean-relationship/>.
- Lichtman, Marilyn V. *Qualitative Research for the Social Sciences*. Virginia,United States of America: SAGE Publications,Inc., 2013.
- Longrigg, Stephen H. *A Short History of Eritrea*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945.
- Lyons, Terrence. "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict and the Search for Peace in the Horn of Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (2009): 167–80. Accessed

June 13, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240903068053>.

- Mac Ginty, Roger. *No war, no peace: the rejuvenation of stalled peace processes and peace accords*. Springer, 2016.
- M.Trivelli, Richard. "Divided Histories, Opportunistic Alliances: Background Notes on the Ethiopian-Eritrean War." *African Spectrum* 33, no. 3 (1998): 257–89.
- Martinez, Oscar J. "Border people: Life and society in the US-Mexico borderlands." In *Border people: life and society in the US-Mexico borderlands*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1994.
- Markakis, John. *Ethiopia: The last two frontiers*. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2011
- Markakis, John. *Pastoralism on the Margin*. London: Minority Rights Group International, 2004.
- Markakis, John. "Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa." *International Affairs* 74, no. 2 (1998): 477–478.
- Markakis, John. "The nationalist revolution in Eritrea." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 26, no. 1 (1988): 51-70.
- Markakis, John. "The politics of identity: The case of the Gurage in Ethiopia." *Ethnicity and the state in Eastern Africa* (1998): 127-146.
- Medina, Marcela Ceballos and Gerardo Ardila Calderón. "The Colombia?Ecuador Border Region: Between Informal Dynamics and Illegal Practices." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 30, no. 4 (2015): 519–35.
- Mengisteab, Kidane. "Some Latent Factors in the Ethio-Eritrean Conflict." In *Eritrea-Ethiopia: From Conflict to Cooperation to Conflict*, ed. by Gebre Hiwet Tesfagiorgis, 89–106. New York, 1999.
- Mesghenna, Yemane. *Italian Colonialism: A Case Study of Eritrea 1869-1934: Motive, Practices and Results*. University of Lund, 1988.
- Mezzandro, S. and B. Neilson. *Border As Method, Or, The Multiplication of Labor*. Durham and Landon: Duke University, 2013.
- Michaelson, Marc. "The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict : Part 2-Explanations." *Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA): VIII*. November (1998): 1-11.
- Milkias, Paulos. "Ethiopia: the TPLF, and the Roots of the 2001 Political Tremor." *Northeast African Studies* 10, no. 2 (2003): 13–66. Accessed January 11, 2018. <http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url>
- Milkias, Paulos and G. Metaferia.eds. *The Battle of Adwa Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory Against European Colonialism*. New York: ALgora, 2005.
- Milkias, Paulos and Getachew Metaferia, eds. *The Battle of Adwa: reflections on Ethiopia's historic victory against European Colonialism*. Algora Publishing, 2005.

- Ministry of Education. "Ministry of Education National Education Policy." Asmara, 2003.
- Ministry of Health. "Health Millennium Development Goals Report :Innovations Driving Health MDGs in Eritrea." Asmara, 2014.
- Ministry of Information of Eritrea. "Press Release." *Haddas Ertra*, June 14, 2016.
- Miran, Jonathan. "Constructing and Deconstructing the Tigre Frontier Space in the Long Nineteenth Century." In *History and Language of the Tigre-Speaking Peoples. Proceedings of the International Workshop Naples, February 7-8*, ed. by Gianfrancesco Lusini, 33-50. Napol.:, 2008.
- Morrison, K., L. Manion and L. Cohen. *Research Methods in Education. Taylor and Frnacis Group*. 8th ed. London, 2013.
- Moyo, Inocent, and Christopher Changwe Nshimbi, eds. *African Borders, Conflict, Regional and Continental Integration*. Routledge, 2019.
- Müller, Tanja R. "Borders and Boundaries in the State-Making of Eritrea : Revisiting the Importance of Territorial Integrity in the Rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia." *Review of African Political Economy* , no. (2019): 1–15. Accessed September 12, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2019.1605590>.
- Müller, Tanja R. "State making in the Horn of Africa: notes on Eritrea and prospects for the end of violent conflict in the Horn: Analysis." *Conflict, Security & Development* 6, no. 4 (2006): 503-530.
- Mulugeta, Kidist. "The Ethiopian-Eritrean War of 1998–2000:An Analysis of Its Causes, Course,Impacts and Prospects." In *Regional Security in the Post-Cold War Horn of Africa*, ed. by Roba Sharamo and Berouk Mesfin, 31–65. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2011.
- Naaeke, Anthony, Anastacia Kurylo, Michael Grabowski, David Linton, and Marie L. Radford. "Insider and outsider perspective in Ethnographic research." *Proceedings of the New York State Communication Association* 2010, no. 1 (2011): 9.
- Nadel, S.F. "Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau." *Journal of the International African Institute* 16, no. 1946 (2019): 1–22.
- Negash, Tekeste, and Bianca Maria Carcangiu. *L'Africa orientale italiana nel dibattito storico contemporaneo*. Carocci, 2008.
- Negash, Tekeste and K. Tronvoll. *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean Ethiopian War*. Oxford: James Currey, 2000.
- Negash, Tekeste. *Eritrea and Ethiopia: The Federal Experience*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997.
- Nene, Mburu. "Patriots or Bandits? Britain's Strategy for Policing Eritrea 1941-1952." *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 9(2): (2000): 85–104.
- Newman, David. "Borders and Bordering: Towards an Interdisciplinary Dialogue." *Journal*

- of Asian and African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2006): 171–86. Accessed July 23, 2017.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006063331>.
- Newman, David. "Contemporary research agendas in border studies: An overview." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* ed.by Doris Wastl-Walter, 55-70. Routledge, 2016.
- Newman, David. "On Borders and Power: A Theoretical Framework." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 18, no. 1 (2003): 13–25. Accessed April 11, 2018.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2003.9695598>.
- Newman, David. "Territory, Compartments and Borders: Avoiding the Trap of the Territorial Trap." *Geopolitics* 15 (2010): 773–778.
- Nugent, Paul and Anthony I. Asiwaju. *African Boundaries: Barrier, Conduits and Opportunities*. London: Frances Pinter, 1996.
- Nugent, Paul, and A.I. Asiwaju. "Introduction: The paradox of African boundaries." *African boundaries* (1996): 1-17.
- Nugent, Paul. *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Lie of the borderlands since 1914*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers; Legon: Sub-Saharan Books; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002
- United Nations. "The United Nations and Independence of Eritrea." New York, 1993.
- "Omhajer-Humera Border Point Re-Opened." *Haddas Ertra, No.111*, January 8, 2019.
- Organization of American States. "Handbook of Livelihood: How to Rapidly Assess the Effects of the Application of Cities Decisions on Livelihoods in Poor Rural Communities." Washington D.C, 2015.
- Paasi, Anssi. "Boundaries as Social Processes :Territoriality in the World of Flows
 Boundaries as Social Processes : Territoriality in the World of Flows" *Geopolitics* (2007):69-88.
- Paasi, Anssi. "Constructing Territories , Boundaries and Regional Identity." In *Contested Territory : Border Disputes at the Edge of the Former Soviet Empire*, ed. by T. Forsberg, 42-61. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995.
- Paasi, Anssi. "Inclusion, Exclusion and Territorial Identities: The Meanings of Boundaries in the Globalizing Geopolitical Landscape." *Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift Nr. 23*, no. 23 (1996): 6–23.
- Paasi, Anssi. "A Border Theory: An Unattainable Dream or a Realistic Aim for Border Scholars?" In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* ed.by Doris Wastl-Walter. 33-54. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011.
- Paasi, Anssi and D. Newman. "Fences and Neighbours in the Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography." *Progress in Human Geography* 22, no. 2 (1998): 186-207.

- Paasi, Anssi. *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness*. Chichester: John Wiley, 1996.
- Payan, Tony. "Theory-Building in Border Studies: The View from North America." *Eurasia Border Review* 5, no. 1 (2014): 1–18.
- Péninou, Jean-louis. "The Ethiopian – Eritrean Border Conflict." *Boundary and Security Bulletin Summer*, (1998): 46–50.
- Perini, Ruffillo. *Mereb Melash Trans. by Vittorio Roncalli*. Italy: Roberto Chiaramonte Editore, 1907.
- Plaut, Martin. "Ethiopia and Eritrea : Returning to War ?." *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): 179–94.
- Pollera, Alberto. *The Genesis of the Different Peoples of Eritrea*. Red Sea Press, 1998.
- "Premier Appoints General Seare Mekonnen as Chief of Staff of National Defense Force of Ethiopia." Fana Broadcasting Corporation, June 7, 2018.
- "President Isaias Afewerki Speech during National Celebration Day." Eritrean State TV broadcast (ERITV), June 20, 2018.
- "President Isaias Met and Held Talks with Mr. Neven Mimica." *Eritrea Profile Vol.25. No.29*, 20019.
- "Press Release" Eritrean State TV broadcast (ERITV) and Radio Demtsi Hafashi, July 9, 2018.
- "Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2004/973/)." United Nations Security Council, December 27, 2004.
- G.Bhatti. "Ethnographic and Representational Style." In *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*, ed. by L Arthur, J., Waring, M., Coe, R. and Hedges, 80–84. Los Angeles.: SAGE, 2012.
- Reid, Richard. "Defining Frontiers: Violence and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Eritrea." *The Eritrean Studies Review* 5, no. 1 (2007): 1–30.
- Reid, Richard J. *Frontiers of violence in North-East Africa: genealogies of conflict since c. 1800*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (A/HRC/29/CRP.1)," Agenda Item 4: June 5, 2015. Accessed June 15, 2015. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIEritrea/A_HRC_29_CRP-1.pdf.
- Raeymaekers, Timothy. *Violence on the margins: States, conflict, and borderlands*. Springer, 2013.
- Ramutsindela, Maano. "African Boundaries and Their Interpreters." *Geopolitics* 4, no. 2 (1999): 180–98. Accessed November 14, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650049908407646>.

- Reader, J. *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*. London: Penguin Book, 1997.
- Rennie, J. Keith and N.C. Singh. "Participatory Research for Sustainable Livelihoods : A Guidebook for Field Project S." Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1996.
- Rice, Xan. "Total War Casualties on Both Sides." *The Times*, April 13, 2017.
- Rippl, Suzanne, N. Bücken, A. Petrat and K. Boehnke. "Crossing the Frontier: Transnational Social Integration in the EU's Border Regions." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* , no.1–2 (2010): 5–31. Accessed May 18, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715209347065>.
- Rosaldo, Renato. "Ideology, place, and people without culture." *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (1988): 77-87.
- Robinson, Richard. *Narratives of the European Border: A history of nowhere*. Springer, 2007.
- "Roads Connecting Eritrea and Ethiopia Re-Opened." *Eritrea Profile*. September 12, 2018.
- Rubenson, Sven. "The Protectorate Paragraph of the Wichalē Treaty." *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 2 (1964): 243–83.
- Sahlins, Peter. *The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- Scoones, I. "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods:A Framework for Analysis." Brighton, UK., 1998.
- Scott, James W. "Borders, Border Studies and EU Enlargement." *Leibniz-Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning Workpackag* (2002): 1-24.
- Sergei V. Sevastianov, P.Laine and A. A.Kireev. *Introduction to Border Studies*. Dalnauka: Vladivostok, 2015.
- Shaban, Abdur Rahman Alfa. "Italy to Fund Ethiopia – Eritrea Railway Feasibility Study – Abiy." Africanews, 2019. Accessed January 22, 2019. <http://www.africanews.com/2019/01/22/italy-to-fund-ethiopia-eritrea-railway-feasibility-study-abiy/>.
- Smoot Coleman, James. "Nationalism and Development in Africa: Selected Essays." California: University of California Press, 1994.
- Soi, Isabella and Paul Nugent. "Peripheral Urbanism in Africa: Border Towns and Twin Towns in Africa." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 32, no. 4 (2017): 535–56. Accessed June 13, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1196601>.
- Spradley, James P. *The Ethnographic Interview*,. New York; Bolt, Rinehart, and Winston., 1979.
- Spradley, James P. "The People of Gilford: A Contemporary Kwakiutl Village." *American Anthropologist* 70 (5), (1968): 1006–7. Access May 12, 2017.

doi:10.1525/aa.1968.70.5.02a00540.

Stern, W.B. “The Treaty Background of the Italo-Ethiopian Dispute.” *The American Journal of International Law* 30, no. 2 (2019): 189–203

Steves, Franklin. “Regime Change and War: Domestic Politics and the Escalation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict.” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2004): 119–33. Accessed May 23, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757032000075744>.

Sulehan, Junaenah, Noor Rahamah Abu Bakar, et al. “Development at the Margins: Livelihood and Sustainability of Communities at Malaysia - Indonesia Borders.” *Prethodno Priopcenje*: Vol. 52, 2014. Accessed June 12, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.5673/sip.51.3.6>.

Taddia, Irma. “Land Politics in the Ethiopian– Eritrean Border Area between Emperor Yohann’s IV and Menilik II.” *Aethiopica* 1 (12) (2009): 58–82.

Taylor, Peter. “Territorial Absolutism and Its Evasions.” *Geogrphy Research Forum* 16, no. November (1996): 1–12.

Temin, Jon and Yoseph, Badwaza. “Aspirations and Realities in Africa: Ethiopia’s Quiet Revolution.” *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 3 (2019): 139–53.

Tesfai, Alemseghed. *Eritrea: From Federation to Annexation (1952-1962)*. Asmara: HDRI Publishers, 2016.

Tesfai, Alemseged. “Progress Towards the Introduction of Nakfa and the Disposition of the Birr,” 1999. Accessed June 12, 2016. <http://www.dehai.org/conflict/analysis/alemsghed2.html>.

Tesfai, Alemseged. “The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict’.” In *Paper Presented at Conference Organized by Heinrich Boll Foundation*, March 15–17, 1999. Kenya:Nairobi, 1999.

Tesfai, Alemseged. “The Cause of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Conflict Part I, Part II and Part II.” Accessed September 23, 2017. <http://www.dehai.org/conflict/analysis/alemsghed1.html>.

“The Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea,” July 30, 1993.

“The Ethiopian Raid on Eritrean Bases Raises Fears of Renewed Conflict.” *The Guardian*, March 16, 2012.

The State of Eritrea. “The Government of Eritrea, Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission: Counter-Memorial of the State of Eritrea.” January 17, 2005.

“The United Nations Mine Action Service Annual Report,” *UNMEE Report*, 2007.

Teshome, Wondwosen. “Conial Boundaries of Africa: The Case of Ethiopia’s Boundary with Sudan.” *Ege Academic Review* 9, no. 1 (2009): 337–67.

- Touval, Saadia. *The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Touval, Saadia. "The Sources of Status Quo and Irredentist Policies." In *African Boundary Problems*, ed. by Carl Gosta Widstrand, 101–118. Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1969.
- Trivelli, Richard M. "Divided Histories , Opportunistic Alliances : Background Notes on the Ethiopian-Eritrean War." *Institute of African Affairs at GIGA , Hamburg, Germany* . 33, no. 3 (2019): 257–89.
- Triulzi, Alessandro. "Ethiopia: the making of a frontier society." *Occasional Paper* 11 (2014): 235-246.
- Triulzi, Alessandro. "I conti con il passato. Memoria e violenza nel conflitto tra Etiopia ed Eritrea, 1998-2000." In *Dopo la violenza. Costruzioni di memoria nel mondo contemporaneo* ed. by A. Triulzi, 271-85. Napoli, L'ancora del mediterraneo (2005).
- Triulzi, Alessandro. "The Past as Contested Territory: Commemorating New Sites of Memory in War - Torn Ethiopia." In *Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa*, ed. by P. Kaarsholm, 122–38. Oxford; Athens, OH; Pietermaritzburg: James Currey, 2006.
- Triulzi, Alessandro. "Trade, Islam, and the Mahdia in Northwestern Wallaggā Ethiopia." *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 1 (1975), 55-71.
- Tronvoll, Kjetil. "Borders of Violence - Boundaries of Identity: Demarcating the Eritrean Nation-State." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6 (1999): 1037–60. Accessed March 20, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329233>.
- Tronvoll, Kjetil. *Mai Weini, A Highland Village in Eritrea: A Study of the People, Their Livelihood, and Land Tenure During Times of Turbulence*. Asmara: Red Sea Press, 1998.
- Tronvoll, Kjetil. *War and the Politics of Identity in Ethiopia: The Making of Enemies and Allies in the Horn of Africa*. New York: James Currey, 2009.
- "U.N. Security Council Resolution 1320/2000, " September 15, 2000.
- "UN: Reports of International Arbitral Awards Recueil Des Sentences Arbitral: Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission: Final Award - Ethiopia's Damages Claims 17," November 27, 2006.
- "UN Security Council Resolution S/Res/1827(2008)." July 30, 2008.
- "UN Security Council Resolution 1907 S/Res/1907." December 23, 2009.
- "United Nations Security Council Report Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/14)." January 7, 2010.
- University of Asmara Group. "Consequences of Ethiopia's Invasion of Eritrea: A Preliminary Monetary Estimate of Destroyed and Looted Properties." Asmara, 2000.

- UNMEE. "UNMEE Media Briefing Notes 3." November 3, 2005. Accessed July 23, 2017. <https://reliefweb.int/report/eritrea/unmee-media-briefing-notes-3-nov-2005>.
- Upadhyay, V. S. and Gaya Pandey. *History of Anthropological Thought*. New Delhi: Ashok Kumar Mittal, 1993.
- Vascon, Alberto. "Eritrea - Bademmè and the Question of the Borders with Ethiopia," 2004. Accessed November 16, 2019. <http://www.ilcornodafrica.it/gt-bad1.htm>
- Vila, Pablo. *Ethnography at the Border*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- "Voice of Assenna Interview with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi." Addis Abeba: Assena Febuary 15, 2011. Accessed January 20, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lrjPhT1A7M>.
- Wastl-Walter, Doris. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011.
- Waal, Alex De. *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.
- Waal, Thomas De. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War, 10th Year Anniversary Edition*. New York: London: NYU Press, 2013.
- Wafula, Wekesa Peter. "Magendo & Survivalism: Babukusu-Bagisu Relations & Economic Ingenuity on the Kenya-Uganda Border 1962-1980." In *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* ed. by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Viral Hoehne, 151–168. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2012.
- Weeramantry, J. Romesh. "Prisoners of War (Eritrea v. Ethiopia), Eritrea's Claim 17/Ethiopia's Claim 4, Partial Awards: Central Front (Eritrea v. Ethiopia), Eritrea's Claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 22/Ethiopia's Claim 2, Partial Awards." *The American Journal of International Law*, no. 2 (2006): 465-472. Accessed June 23, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1562511>.
- Wilson, Thomas M., and Hastings Donnan, eds. *A companion to border studies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2012.
- Wilson, Thomas M. and Hastings Donnan. "Nation, State and Identity at International Borders." In *Border Identities Nation and State at International Frontiers*, ed. by Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, 1–30. Lanham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Winders, Jamie. "Ethnography at the Border (Review)." *Journal of Latin American Geography* 4, no. 1 (2005): 144–46. Accessed July 20, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2005.0031>.
- Woodward, Peter. *US foreign policy and the Horn of Africa*. Routledge, 2016.
- World Health Organization. "Eritrea." August, 2009.
- W.Senbet, Girma. "Perspectives on the Eritrea-Ethiopian Relations and Outcomes: Part IV."

Accessed May 5, 2018. <http://danielkibru.tripod.com/dkibru.html>.

Yass, Shlomi. "Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers : Conflict and Legitimacy." *Military and Strategic Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2014): 65–82.

Yasin, Yasin Mohammed. "Five Trans-Border Political Alliance in the Horn of Africa The Case of the Afar-Issa Conflict." In *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, ed. by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Viral Hoehne, 85–96. Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.

"Yemane Kidane Interview with TV Tigray." TV Tigray, February 15, 2017. Accessed June 17, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LusHbL1dnwI>.

Young, Crawford. *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. Yale University Press, 1994.

Young, John. *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: University Press, 2006.

Young, John. *The Fate of Sudan: The Origins and Consequences of Flawed Peace Process*. London: Zed Books, 2012.

Young, John. "The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples Liberation Fronts : A History of Tensions and Pragmatism." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (1996): 105–20.

Young, John. "The Tigray Liberation Front." In *African Guerrillas*, ed. by Christopher Clapham, 36-52. Oxford: James Currey, 1998.

Zeller, Wolfgang. "Get It While You Can: Governance between Wars in the Uganda–South Sudan Borderland." In *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflict, and Borderlands*, ed. by Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, 193-217. Springer, 2013.

Zeller, Wolfgang. "Special Issue: African Borderlands." *Critical African Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013): 1–3. Accessed November 12, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2013.779479>.

Zenawi, Meles. "States and Markets: Neoliberal Limitations and the Case for a Development State." In *Good Growth and Governance in Africa*, ed. by Akbar Noman, Kwesi Botchwey, Howard Stein and J.E. Stiglitz, 140-174. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Archival Materials

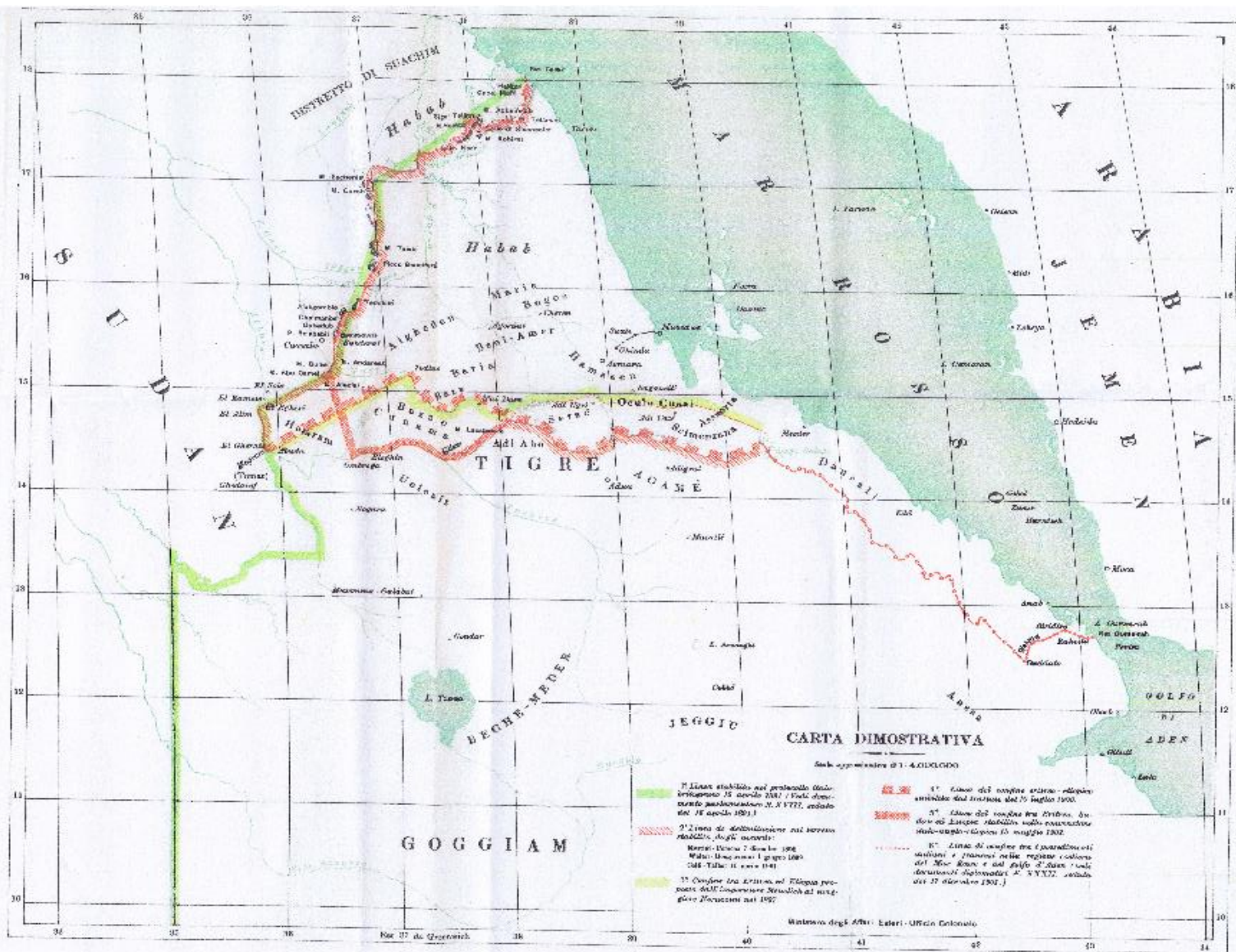
DO. Akele Guzai Access No.1-12: Administration, Social organization and Cultural system: Pilot Study conducted by PFDJ cultural affairs from May 18, 1997 to May 9, 1997.

DO. Access No.3-6: Economic studies: Trade and commerce: [Unpublished Ethnographic survey conducted from June 19, 1997 to July 12, 1997]. Asmara: RDC, 1997.

Do. Akele Guzai. Access No.1-17: Historical Background of the People and the land.
[Unpublished Ethnographic survey conducted from June 19, 1997 to July 12, 1997].
Asmara: RDC, 1997.

MAP
TO
ILLUSTRATE THE FRONTIER
BETWEEN
SUDAN AND THE SOUDAN,
AND
SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA.

- 1. Great Britain and Italy,
April 16th, 1891. No. 283, p. 949.
- 2. Agreements, Italy and Egypt,
December 7th, 1898. No. 340, p. 1110.
June 1st, 1899. No. 342, p. 1113.
April 16th, 1901. No. 348, p. 1115.
- 3. Italy and Ethiopia,
July 10th, 1900. No. 125, p. 460.
- 4. Great Britain, Italy, and Ethiopia,
May 15th, 1902. No. 100, p. 433.
- 5. France and Italy,
January, 29th, 1900. No. 200, p. 653.
July 10th, 1901. No. 201, p. 664.



--- Line of frontier between Dankalia and Ethiopia as laid down in the Convention between Italy and Ethiopia of the 16th May, 1908.