Alternative citizenship
The Nuer between Ethiopia and the Sudan
ABORNE Workshop on Sudan's Borders, April 2011

Dereje Feyissa

Abstract

A lot has been written about state borders as constraints to local populations who are often 'artificially' split into two and at times more national states (Asiwaju 1985; Kolossov 2005). The Nuer, like many other pastoral communities arbitrarily divided by a state border, have experienced the Ethio-Sudanese border as a constraint, in as much as they were cut off from wet season villages in the Sudan and dry season camps in Ethiopia. As recent literature on the border has shown, however, state borders function not only as constraints but also as opportunities (Nugent 2002), and even as 'resources' (Dereje and Hohene 2010). The paper examines how the Nuer have positively signified state border by tapping into - taking advantage of their cross-border settlements -fluctuating opportunity structures within the Ethiopian and Sudanese states through alternative citizenship. Nuer strategic action is reinforced by a flexible identity system within which border-crossing is a norm.

Sudan's Southeastern frontier: The Toposa and their Neighbours (abstract)

The Topòsa and some of their neighbours have long been among the groups in particular remoteness from the political and economic metabolism of the state system. Until recently, the borders of the Sudan with three other nations, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, that touch on their area could be considered mere notions and lines on maps of another world. This situation has substantially changed since the 2nd Sudanese Civil War – and with it the meaning of terms like "their area". In my paper I try to give an overview of these changes.

All three neighbouring countries were strong supporters of the SPLA and in spite of temporary violent frictions with parts of the Toposa and other Equatorian groups, the border areas became important retreat and deployment zones for the rebels. This and the transit of millions of war refugees initialised the buildup of substantial infrastructure, implemented largely by the Catholic church and INGOs. Since then the integration of the area into the modern system is an ongoing process, altering orientation and composition of the population fundamentally.

While this process and the general armament of the Toposa and their Nyàngatom allies with modern weapons allowed them to permanently expel the Suri from a huge area that has since become their most prosperous one, a similar process led to the dominance of the Turkana in the Elemi Triangle where the Kenyan government, churches and NGOs have created an infrastructure that integrates about 70% of its territory into the Kenyan system, with the most prominent exception of Naita / Lotímor, the stronghold of the 'Sudanese Nyangatom' in the extreme north, and a southwest-northeast frontier belt.

This is the scene of most of the disputed claims to territory touching on border issues. Their potential was most acutely demonstrated by the violent flare-up of conflict around Nàdapal border point between Kenya and Southern Sudan in 2009 in which traditional tribal rivalry became explosively mixed up with local politics and national concerns. Departing from these events, I intend to discuss the political dynamics of border issues on the 'modern scene' in relation to the spatial dynamism of pastoralist societies as an intriguing case of entanglement of different concepts of territoriality and mobility.

Abstract: James, Wendy

Durham workshop on Sudan's Borders, April 2011

Minority languages as a strategic resource? Rethinking the *longue durée* in the Blue Nile Borderlands

The paper will suggest that the patchwork of minority languages often found on the periphery of state-building heartlands, or especially in the borderlands between two different such heartlands (eg central Sudan and the Ethiopian highlands) should not be understood simply as remote left-overs. Living betwixt and between the projects of these centres, for centuries and even millennia, minority language speakers may have opportunities to come and go, change sides, participate and withdraw, and share secrets in various strategic ways. Examples will be given from ancient times and modern (including the uses of Uduk as between fighters on either side of battles in the recent civil war, and uses of various Sudanese vernaculars in political discussions online). Modern international frontiers offer new variations on what is perhaps an old theme, and helps us appreciate the conditions under which threatened languages may persist.

The Implication of Internationalizing North-South Boundary along the Contested Border Region of the Nuba Mountains

Guma Kunda Komey

University of Juba

Abstract

The Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile are widely known in the Sudanese politics as 'contested', 'transitional', or 'border' areas/territories for they are socio-politically and geo-administratively located along north-south divides. The emergence of South Sudan State as a result of the 2011 referendum has created new dynamics: parts of the administrative internal boundaries of the two areas are now being *internationalized*. This unfolding situation is likely to have far-reaching security, political and social, and economic ramifications, as many border areas/ points along north-south divide, are still highly disputed in the on-going process of boundary demarcation.

The crux of the matter here is that most of the highly disputed border areas/points along the north-south internationalized boundary are located in the contested Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan State, namely Abyei, some actual and or potential oil fields, grazing and arable lands, and water resources.

In view of this reasoning, this paper attempts to analytically trace the unfolding dynamics associated with the process of internationalization and fixation of the internal boundaries in the contested Nuba Mountains and their repercussions on political stability, economic choices and social peace in the region and, consequently, on the entire future relation of two neighboring states.

Abstract

The Ilemi Triangle: the challenges of disarming trans-frontier communities of Southern Sudan– Dr Nene Mburu

A conservative estimate is that there are 2 million guns in southern Sudan, one for every 4 citizens. Almost all are in the hands of civilians. I am positing that the culture of arms-bearing is the tragic synthesis of various factors mainly: (i) pristine traditions that place an enormous burden on young males' rite of passage, (ii) a symbiotic relationship between security and economic development; (iii) the proliferation of guns is the outcome of national and international vectors, mainly political alliances that were forged within Sudan by both the SPLA and the government of Khartoum during 50 years of civil war and also by the governments of neighbouring countries.

My presentation will relate to and draw lessons from my research on Uganda's effort since 2001 to disarm the Karamojong. In the end I will be posing the question: in the light of its long struggle to statehood, given the proliferation of illegal weapons and its disputed borders, will Southern Sudan, as the saying goes, choke on the tail after swallowing the whole cow?

Abstract

Conflicts and Cooperation in Sudan's North-South Border Zone

Leben Nelson Moro

Assistant Professor,

Center for Peace and Development Studies,

University of University

10 March 2011

As Sudan will split into two in July 2011, tensions over the borders of the new states have been increasing. Indeed, deadly clashes have occurred recently. The North-South border zone is politically sensitive not only because of the traditional tensions among its inhabitants but also because of the valuable natural resources, particularly oil, that political elite in the North and South are keen to control.

Despite the tensions over the border, there are areas of positive, reciprocal relations among the diverse groups that subsist along it. For example, nomadic Baggara Arabs, who drive their livestock from the North to the South during the dry season, frequently conclude agreements with Southerners on access to grazing and watering points. Most of these agreements have been adhered to, and hence many potential conflicts are avoided.

This paper examines the complex relations among the people who live, or seasonally migrate into, the North-South border zone. It is mainly based on fieldwork conducted in the counties of Unity State bordering Northern Sudan this year as part of Cross-Border Relations Project implemented by the Center of Peace and Development Studies and a UK-based NGO.

Bordering on War: The relevance of oil production and border proximity in Unity State, South-Sudan

Øystein H. Rolandsen, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

State-centred research tends to regard borders as barriers and border communities as disadvantaged. Most African states have, however, a tenuous presence in border areas and borders tend to be porous. In such settings borders are institutions that offer opportunities and give room for the local population to exercise agency in terms of trade and migration as well as in interaction with the central government. However, living close to a border also have consequences that people may find difficult to control or even influence, for instance related to large scale conflict and management of strategic resources in Unity State, South Sudan. A combination of border proximity, oil production and deeply embedded legacies of war is important when explaining political developments in Unity state in the period 2005-11. The border area of Unity State and Southern Kordofan has for decades been an internal political fault line, which after the peace agreement took on many of the properties of an international border. By investigating key issues of the South Sudan post-conflict environment – violence and insecurity, democratisation and reform of local government, and land and natural resource management – as they manifest themselves in Unity State period, the paper demonstrates the importance of border proximity as an explanatory factor and how this factor impinges on a number of political, social and economic processes in Unity State. At a more general level the article paper explores the ambiguity of borders as simultaneously being structural constraints and opportunities to exercise agency. The paper is based on research conducted in Unity state in 2009 and 2011 and related studies of the Sudan over the past decade.

Abstract

Borderlands and the uncertainties of citizenship: The Ambororo

Mareike Schomerus

In Sudan, the Ambororo (or Mbororo or Fellata) have lived across the internal and external borderlands for decades. With a new international border forming, simmering issues regarding the Ambororo's presence have come into sharp focus. Broadly considered—without a sufficient evidence base—as a loyal ally of the North and the Lord's Resistance Army, the Ambororo are now viewed by some as territorial enemies of the new southern Sudanese state. Over the last few years, numerous public allegations of connections with Khartoum have been made; the Fellata/ Ambororo are regularly referred to as *janjaweed*.

Violence committed against the Ambororo, particularly in Western Equatoria, has been dramatic in the past two years; retaliation equally bloody. Evidence that the Ambororo are involved in strategic political violence does not exist, yet during the Sudanese elections and the referendum, the status of the Ambororo as citizens of Sudan and possibly the South became contested. The debate was raging whether the Fellata would be allowed to vote; in the end, each state came up with a different regulation.

This paper looks at the uncertainties of citizenship as seen by the Ambororo, who view themselves as persecuted people in South Sudan and as marginalised in North Sudan. It examines the broader implications of the role of the Ambororo, looking at how southern Sudanese authorities replace fledgling internal state-building measures with an overemphasis on external threats and how Southern Sudanese identity is defined rather differently in different southern states

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Cross-border connections in Western Bahr el Ghazal

The most emphatic north-south border in Sudan's recent history ran between Darfur and the Western District of Bahr al-Ghazal. In 1930, colonialists established a no-man's land the Western District (now Western Bahr al-Ghazal state) from Darfur, moving district's population to a new road that was to be built by tax labour. Colonial policy was partially motivated by the desire to end the slave trade, which persisted in the through the instability of the first decades of the twentieth century in Sudanic and central Africa, which saw the incorporation of stateless populations into rapidly changing states based on coerced labour. At the time, the people of the district probably conceived of those borders as lines separating different labour regimes. Groups were motivated by the labour exactions to migrate from one labour zone to another, often accepting harsh consequences for their decision. This paper examines the relationship between labour systems and vernacular understandings of the border in the 1930s. Cultural differences between north and south Sudan, and within northern Sudan were largely shaped by differences in nineteenth and early twentieth century labour regimes, and the paper examines some of the implications of the 1930s period for today.

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This paper focuses on the border between Southern Darfur and Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal during the Condominium period, imagined by colonial officials as a 'tribal' - and indeed racial - boundary between Rizeigat Baggara and Malual Dinka.

There are current concerns about the internationalisation of this boundary, and the potential impact of this on a hardening of relationships between Malual and Rizeigat. Yet if we are to look back to the relative stability of this area during the colonial period to inform present-day border management policy, we need to understand what colonial arrangements across this provincial boundary were *not*. Cross-border relationships were not managed by detached, disinterested, neutral state arbiters: rather they were managed by officials who often identified more closely with the interests of 'their' chiefs, than they did with their supposed colleague across the border. Indeed, the tensions between administrators at inter-provincial meetings were at times obvious to all participants, and undermined efforts to produce an impression of cross-border government unity.

The history of this border also challenges some common academic assumptions. Often in the literature on pastoralists, it is demonstrated that colonial boundaries restricted pastoralist mobility, and damaged local livelihoods: that they were an artificial and alien imposition on peoples who knew no borders. More generally, mapping tribal homelands and delineating boundaries between them appears to be one manifestation of the tendency of modern states to reduce 'complex, illegible and local social realities' to simplistic, legible representations that facilitate the exercise of state power.[1] Yet the history of the Darfur-Northern Bahr el Ghazal border, and pastoralist borders in Darfur more generally, suggests that some state representatives recognised the need to preserve some degree of local 'illegibility' to avoid risking the overall goal of maintaining local order. In particular, they often accepted that pastoralists could *not* be confined within territorial boundaries. In the Rizeigat-Malual case, colonial officials accepted that both peoples had shared rights to grazing in the borderland between them: managing these shared rights was a recurrent challenge for the administration. In the 1930s, as I will explain, officials introduced schemes to regulate the grazing movements of Malual and Rizeigat, in an effort to reduce the illegibility of this shared space. Ultimately however colonial regulation of this shared grazing remained something of a fantasy: and, again, officials were well aware of this, and indeed eventually welcomed the attendant flexibility as contributing to local stability. State regulation was never consistently imposed on local patterns of land use.

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[1] J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (Yale, 1994), pp. 2-4.

Abstract

Pulling the ropes
      Negotiations of power through the conduct of the state at the Southern Sudanese borders

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This article aims to unpack the discursive web of power relations in the emerging legal-rational frame of governance in Southern Sudan. The paper looks into two Southern Sudanese border crossings. The two are at only 10 miles distance from one another. Kaya borders with neighbouring Uganda and Bazi borders the Democratic Republic of Congo. The two villages are closely connected in numerous ways, yet quite different in their respective challenges regarding governance.

As will be demonstrated relations between central and local levels of government in the same area, or within the same state agency, are complex and subject to constant negotiation. Through a grounded analysis of the manner in which agents conduct government, notions of the daily practice of Southern Sudanese state building are developed. Old repertoires of authority still play an important role, as do feelings of mistrust and envy. It is argued that these elements are more decisive in the negotiations of statehood than the legal-rational framework of the offices.

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Wolfgang Zeller

Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh

'Borderlands - Zones of Protracted Conflict or Sites of Emerging Sovereignties?'

This presentation will seek to bring two bodies of literature into a productive dialogue: These are, firstly, recent - mostly anthropological - insights into so-called governable social spaces, where the exercise of public authority becomes associated with multiple, partly overlapping, territories (Lund 2006) and group identifications (Arnaut and Højbjerg 2008; Das and Poole 2004; Engel and Mehler 2005; Roitman 2005). Secondly, I will draw on an ongoing debate about the evolution of state- and peace building in borderlands (Boege et al. 2008; Colletta et al. 1996; Milliken and Krause 2003; Rotberg 2003; Goodhand 2008; Raeymekers 2007; Nugent 2002; Zeller 2010). The borderlands perspective involves an important paradigm shift, in that it seriously questions dominant notions of state formation as a top-down, exogenous process of power diffusion from the centre into the periphery. Rather than 'unstable' frontier zones that are waiting to be pacified, this perspective considers that borderlands can manifest as socially productive zones in their own right, generating important political and economic outcomes that have a decisive impact on state formation in a broader sense (see also Scott 2009; Donnan and Wilson 1999).

ABSTRACT ABORNE

Making a life and a living in the Sudanese-Kenyan border area: the rise of a thriving cross-border trade network.

Anne Walraet

Abstract:

This paper documents the making of a life and a living in situations of protracted conflict, displacement and mobility, while simultaneously shedding light on state making and the exercise of power from a borderland perspective. It more in particular zooms in on the Sudanese-Kenyan border area where throughout the war until today IDPs, refugees, migrants and military meet. The paper in particular explores the nature, role and effectiveness of the social networks of these non-indigenous residents in building a livelihood within urban perimeters and investigates the reasons behind the differential success of one particular cross-border business network.

The paper draws on information and insights accumulated during down-to-earth and multi-sited fieldwork between 2006 and 2011.