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Keren Weitzberg. *We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017. xiii + 274 pp. $32.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8214-2259-5.

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Keren Weitzberg's *We Do Not Have Borders* could not be more timely in a worldwide political context in which so much stress is put on the idea of "securing" all borders. The text presents the case of the vision of a nomadic people who deal with borders with great flexibility, controlling the territory and, at the same time, being able to integrate newcomers. Weitzberg writes about border conceptualization amongst Somalis who have lived for generations in contemporary northern Kenya. The book illuminates how these conceptualizations operated in a colonial context that progressively undermined the Somalis' legitimate rights to inhabit their territory, through the enforcement of a national order in which people must settle permanently and respect the boundaries arbitrarily set by the colonizers. Following the implementation of sedentary ideologies, by the late 1960s the Somalis had been transformed into foreigners in their own land—not recognized as truly Kenyans—and their political activity was regarded as criminal revolt.

Using both oral and written sources as well as observations from the field, Weitzberg guides the reader through a marvelous journey across older and more recent histories of the Somalis mainly living in northern Kenya, from early colonial times through the period in which today's North Eastern Province of Kenya was called Northern Frontier District (between 1925 and Kenya's independence in 1963), across the rise of the Pan-Somali idea of the greater Somalia, and finally to the present day. In the historical path she traces, Somaliness appears as a "category and mode of thought, which has changed across time and place" (p. 5), thus de-essentializing its very ethnic construct. Weitzberg's entire intellectual work challenges the use of the ethnic paradigm that is widely applied to understand the northern Kenyan sociopolitical context, as well as most of the African sociopolitical concerns, so as to avoid a deterministic explanation that would see "ethnic" groups heading inevitably toward a gradual convergence into "modern nations."

This historical analysis repeatedly illuminates a Somali way of looking at mobility, which does not consider national borders as a natural order of things. It also shows that the Somalis' translocal livelihoods, their system of interaction among groups as well as translocal ties of kinship, stand as a practical resistance to an ideology, and consequent practice, that considers maintaining strictly surveilled national borders as the only possible option. That mobility of people should be controlled by a national state is a recent construction and people like the Somalis have held different ways of dealing with mobility, in that mobile or nomadic Somalis have also lived "together in a

polity, not as citizens and aliens, but as hosts and guests" (p. 179). As Weitzberg puts it, "older forms of cosmopolitanism, diaspora, and nomadic life came to coexist and compete with the modern territorial state" (p. 3).

The first chapter deals with the early times of colonial rule, describing the reconfiguration of what Muslim and non-Muslim meant, and how this contributed to a general redefinition of the idea of being Somali. The second chapter discusses the new racialization of the vocabulary concerning the identity of the Somalis who started claiming to be "a race of Asiatic Origins" between the early decades of colonial rule and 1930 (p. 11). This was also coupled with the new, self-constructed image of the Isaac and the Harti, prevalent Somali clans in the British Somali colony, as imperial citizens in the British colony as well as members of the larger Islamic community. This process grafted newly coined marks of distinction onto the relatively little stratified panorama of the Somali clans.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 analyze different nationalistic ideas and practices as they emerged after World War II. Chapter 4 in particular shows how "nonsecular and nonterritorial affiliations were mobilized in the service of a territorial project." The effort was also to transform a national project into a popular movement "among transhumant nomadic inhabitants" (p. 10).

The sixth and the seventh chapters are dedicated to the debates sparked after the defeat of the irredentist movements and the civil war in Somalia. Thereby, the discourse on Somaliness takes new deterritorialized facets in an era where Somali-speakers in the diaspora constitute a huge number and the Somali collectivities stretch over many national borders.

From Weitzbergs's finely detailed discussion of several stages of the Somalis' history in northern Kenya emerges the picture of a local mode of interaction across boundaries through kinship ties that have legitimacy and functionality of their own, notwithstanding the expectations and impositions of the different national governments. An understanding of these modes of life without borders is a key also to comprehend why and how in the territory nowadays inhabited by Somali-speakers and elsewhere, "supranational forms of organisation may prove to be more important sites of mobilization than the nation-state" (p. 176).

This book depicts a way of conceiving borders from the point of view of a nomadic livelihood, which normally resists territorial fixity. It will help scholars of Somali and Kenyan studies to revisit the way they look at the recent history of their respective countries with regard to nationalism but it is also absolutely worth reading for scholars and practitioners of refugee issues as they will learn to look at the choices refugees make from a different perspective. It is a marvelous example of how historical research that combines archival material with fieldwork can shed light on contemporary events.

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