Introduction
Connective Borders and Divided Cities

Magaalo Qiyaamo, some of the women call it: Judgment Day Town. The minibus driver, a middle-aged man in white robes and a sheikh's turban, maneuvers gently off the asphalt onto the narrow gravel shoulder, cutting the engine behind twenty other minibus taxis. As thirteen other passengers and I unfold our cramped legs to walk the rest of the way to the checkpoint, more minibuses roll into line behind ours. Below the roadside's steep embankment, soldiers are removing seats and pulling dashboards out of cars entering Ethiopia. They examine every crevice for *kontarabaan* (contraband). Beyond them, the windswept plains, green after last month's rains, roll toward volcanic hills on the Somaliland border in the distance. Black plastic bags litter the landscape. More bags roll like tumbleweeds down the embankment and into the brush as soldiers start pulling goods from our minibus. Shampoo bottles, babies' clothes, and flashlights fall to the dusty gravel. The wind takes the bags where it will.

Eight of my fellow passengers are self-professed *kontarabaan* traders, all Somali women. Behind us in Tog Wajale, on the border between Ethiopia and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, they filled bags with clothes, cosmetics, and household goods. On the minibus, they often ask other passengers to carry a small bag. As the sole foreigner on these minibus rides, I usually end up carrying two or three on the assumption that soldiers will not harass me. Travelers avoid paying Ethiopia's exorbitant import taxes by claiming goods as personal items. The Somali Soldiers of the Liyu Police – paramilitary forces in Ethiopia's Somali Regional State (SRS or Somali Region) – rarely challenge this bluff directly.[1] They do, however, damage *kontarabaan* goods and

[1] Every region of Ethiopia has its own "special police" force (liyu police, in Amharic). When I use the term Liyu Police, I am referring specifically to SRS's Liyu Police, which function as regional military forces carrying out counterinsurgency and security activities that were previously the domain of the national military, the Ethiopian National Defense Force.

sometimes confiscate them as they make a show of searching for more threatening objects, namely, guns and explosives from Somalia.

After a hundred-meter walk, we enter the checkpoint queue, women in one line, men in another. Liyu Police hands violate travelers' bodies in an intense pat-down. On this day in June 2018, Liyu soldiers force every traveler to unlock their phone and scroll through photos and WhatsApp messages. At the direction of SRS's president ʿAbdi Moḥamoud ʿUmar (usually called by his nickname, ʿAbdi Iley), they are looking for "propaganda" from political opposition groups. Ethiopia is undergoing a tense transition. SRS is one of nine regional states, and the power of regional presidents including ʿAbdi Iley depends on federal elites. Abiy Ahmed was recently appointed Ethiopia's prime minister and began reshuffling the country's leadership. This leaves regional presidents including ʿAbdi Iley worried about their positions and suspicious of constituents' loyalties. In these eastern borderlands, the Orthodox Christian influence in Ethiopia's political center has long confronted Somali rebels who do not wish to be ruled by Ethiopia. Since the neighboring Republic of Somalia collapsed in 1991, Islamist movements such as al-Itiḥaad al-Islamiyya and, after 2006, al-Shabaab, have gained influence. Where Ethiopian governance is present along the border, it appears in the form of militarization, hyper-securitization, and suspicion.

In unprecedented fashion for a Somali leader, ʿAbdi Iley has participated enthusiastically in Ethiopia's counterinsurgency and border security projects. In 2018, however, he feels the foundations of his regime crumbling. In turn, border-crossers feel the regional government's insecurity in the hyper-suspicion at checkpoints. A message from a family member who happens to support an opposition movement could lead to any traveler being arrested and labeled as a terrorist trying to infiltrate Ethiopia from Somalia.

My fellow travelers pass the judgment and reunite in the sparse shade of one of the corrugated shacks lining the roadside west of the checkpoint. We drink tea and make up for a missed lunch with spaghetti boiled over charcoal, served by an elderly woman in a *hijab*. The fact that clusters of shops and restaurants have popped up at the region's larger checkpoints indicates just how much time travelers spend waiting. We keep an eye on vehicles rolling through the checkpoint, so as not to miss ours. Eventually, a soldier lowers the rope across the road and our minibus crosses. Traders check if their goods made it through the inspection, and if so, what damage they suffered. These goods are their daily livelihood. They are also a foundation of eastern Ethiopia's urban economies. A half-hour after leaving the checkpoint, we crest a gentle rise and the minibus rolls downhill into the city of Jigjiga, which sprawls across a

shallow valley carved into Ethiopia's rolling eastern plains. Below us into the distance westward, corrugated roofs shimmer in the afternoon sun.[2]

Located between Ethiopia's international borders and the "internal" borders between Ethiopia's federal states (Figure I.1),[3] Jigjiga finds itself in a contradictory position. It remains a hub for cross-border smuggling that has long provided livelihoods for Ethiopia's native Somali population. It is also the capital city of an SRS government that since 2010 has been bent on unprecedented hyper-securitization of the Ethiopia–Somalia borderlands. At this juncture, Somali Region's capital and largest city is booming. Known for a century as a dusty town full of smugglers, Jigjiga has come into its own alongside other African cities where diaspora investors and top government officials are carving out spaces of wealth amid widespread poverty and lack of basic infrastructure.[4] More clearly than in other African cities, however, this collision of worlds is directly linked to border security interventions and changing perceptions about the meaning and significance of territorial boundaries.

Smugglers, Speculators, and the City in the Ethiopia–Somalia Borderlands is about the relationship between border security and urban inequality. Restrictive border regimes have become entrenched across the globe since the beginning of the war on terror.[5] While they are legitimized in terms of violent threats such as terrorism, security arrangements often explicitly seek to control the movement of workers and money across international borders and thereby maintain inequalities in wealth and opportunity between countries.[6] Even as these borders maintain inequalities, however, migration and globalization mean that the twenty-first-century economic landscape is in many ways defined less by disparities *between countries* than it was in the past and more by growing divides between wealth and poverty within countries.[7] These inequalities are

[2] This transit through Magaalo Qaran is recorded in field notes, June 26, 2018.

[3] While the figure and subsequent figures in this article show approximate lines between Ethiopia's federal regions, it is important to note that the "internal" borders around SRS were not clearly demarcated at the time of research and indeed were being hotly contested, as discussed below with reference to the Awaday massacre. For deeper discussion and a map of the contested territory, see Thompson, "The Border as Temporal Horizon."

[4] See, e.g., Badiey, *The State of Post-Conflict Reconstruction*; Grant, *Globalizing City*; Melly, *Bottleneck*; Terrefe, "Urban Layers of Political Rupture."

[5] On African migration at Europe's borders, see Alexander-Nathani, *Burning at Europe's Borders*; on transformations more generally, see Jones, "Introduction"; Longo, *The Politics of Borders*.

[6] Besteman, *Militarized Global Apartheid*; Chalfin, "Border Security as Late-Capitalist 'Fix'"; Hyndman, "Border Crossings."

[7] Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*; The World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016*.

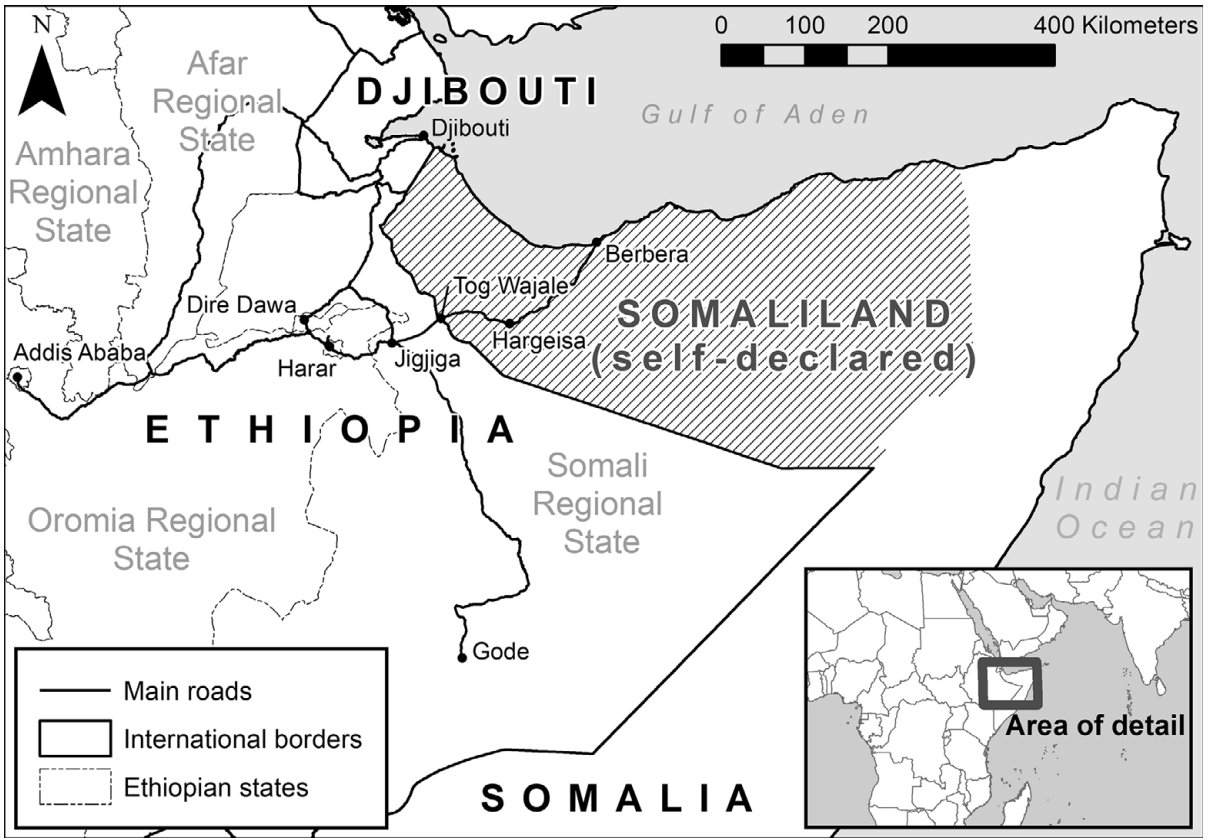

Figure I.1 The northeastern Horn of Africa, showing major towns and cities discussed in the text, as well as main roads leading to Jigjiga. Boundaries are approximate and do not imply endorsement.
Map by author.

especially concentrated in today's cities, where the haves and have-nots sometimes live in striking proximity. SRS's unprecedented border security measures are associated in popular experience with a growing gap between government-linked elites and the general population. The restrictive border regime that marginalizes *kontarabaan* traders benefits the politically connected. In this city at least, it appears that border securitization is driving urban disparities.

Exploring the relationship between border security and urban life in Jigjiga has broader implications for how scholars, security experts, and development practitioners think about the agency of African urbanites and transnational migrants vis-à-vis today's securitized border regimes. This book addresses two main questions. First, what actors are engaged in constructing African border security regimes amid the twenty-first-century war on terror, and in what ways do various actors participate in making borders? I seek to complicate the idea that African border security regimes are shaped primarily by Western security prerogatives – what can be called the "externalization" of Euro-American border controls into new frontiers that seek to contain and immobilize Africans and other citizens of the Global South.[8] In widespread perception, the Somali Horn of Africa is a classic example of how divisive geopolitical borders have been imposed by foreign powers, disrupting precolonial social organization.[9] Colonial authorities separated Somalis into five territories (today: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Somaliland) without Somalis' consent. Today, foreign powers continue to play important roles in border regimes, especially the US with its support for Ethiopia as an ally in the war on terror. Security in the borderlands has for decades been managed by non-Somali elites perceived as aligned with US interests and inimical to the local Somali population. More subtle foreign influences operate in the guise of education campaigns such as the European Union (EU)-backed "Better Migration Management" initiative that sees restraining emigration from Africa as a humanitarian imperative.[10] Thus even as ethnic Somalis under the command of ʿAbdi Iley took control of border security functions

[8] Akkerman, "Expanding the Fortress"; Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene*; for a review of border externalization and internalization processes, see Menjívar, "Immigration Law Beyond Borders."

[9] Examples of work criticizing the divisive role of boundaries in the Horn include FitzGibbon, *The Betrayal of the Somalis*; Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*. For more critical approaches to Somalis' agency in these processes, see Morone, "The Unsettled Southern Ethiopian–Somali Boundary on the Eve of Decolonization"; Thompson, "Border Crimes, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, and the Racialization of Sovereignty"; Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*.

[10] "Better Migration Management in Ethiopia." Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). www.giz.de/en/worldwide/40602.html.

after 2010, many Jigjigans regard the new border enforcers as the Somali face of non-Somali interests.

I suggest that Somalis in eastern Ethiopia, as well as many living abroad, are not merely bystanders who confront borders imposed by foreigners (whether from Western countries or from Ethiopia's federal government). They are active agents who constantly work to refashion the role of borders and create opportunities from them. My analysis in this regard is focused on territorial borders (the border as a material space rather than as a metaphor) and expands on the idea that borders are not just lines on the ground but also constructs that are given efficacy and "reality" by human labor. I build on the argument that "borderwork" – everyday practices of upholding, subverting, or reframing borders – involves a host of actors within and outside domains of state authority.[11] However, I depart from earlier analyses of borderwork by focusing not only on the border itself but also on the relationship between borders and urban life. Much, if not most, of the borderwork shaping the security situation on the Ethiopia–Somaliland border does not occur at the borderline. It takes place in cities. This includes regional or "local" cities like Jigjiga *and* cities where diaspora Somalis work to carve out their lives outside of the Horn of Africa – from Minneapolis to Stockholm and Johannesburg to Guangzhou.

Foregrounding the agency of African urbanites vis-à-vis borders sets the stage for the second question this book addresses: How do border security initiatives affect urban life and livelihoods for transnational populations linked across these increasingly surveilled and regulated lines? Parallel with the idea that Western borders are "externalized" into Africa and elsewhere, a powerful notion is that borders are being "internalized" or "re-scaled" into urban social relations.[12] In this formulation, urban manifestations of migration or trade management seem to derive from the nation-state border. My focus on urban borderwork complicates this idea. I show how multisited urban social relations, replete with

[11] The term "borderwork" is traced to Rumford, "Introduction: Citizens and Borderwork in Europe," but has been treated at length by others including Frowd, *Security at the Borders*, and Reeves, *Border Work*. My use of the concept also draws on a longer tradition that foregrounds the wide range of social actors involved in making and managing borders, including people living in border areas (see, e.g., Sahlins, *Boundaries*) as well as more "deterritorialized" border- and identity-making practices (e.g., Ferme, "Deterritorialized Citizenship and the Resonances of the Sierra Leonean State").

[12] On the "re-scaling" of borders into urban life, see De Genova, "Border Struggles in the Migrant Metropolis." For broader discussions of border proliferation, internalization, and externalization, see Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene*, 75–100; Johnson et al., "Interventions on Rethinking 'the Border' in Border Studies"; Menjívar, "Immigration Law Beyond Borders."

unexpected encounters and the "ensemble work" of relationship management,[13] establish the constraints and conditions of possibility for the conjuncture of border security and transnational urbanism. I argue that the link between urban life and border management regimes runs through people's everyday efforts to manage relationships and that this relationship management is significantly oriented around material transactions as people work to move across space and to circulate resources across securitized borders.

For Somalis, the pursuit of livelihoods and relationships has historically been tied to cultural practices that analysts describe as "classless" or "egalitarian."[14] In this book, I show how everyday norms of reciprocity in what Jigjigan Somalis call the cultural economy (*dhaqan-dhaqaalaha*) work in contradictory ways to reinforce new border securitization strategies and emerging urban inequalities. New border management strategies have established avenues for Somalis to craft alliances and enact forms of solidarity in selective ways across a transnational landscape. Harsh checkpoints and exclusionary borders play important roles in *enabling* these transnational connections and reciprocities, not simply in closing them down.

Checkpoints and Transnationalism

The official name of the main checkpoint between Tog Wajale and Jigjiga is not Magaalo Qiyaamo, but *Magaalo Qaran*: Town of the Nation. It is not a town, unless the few semipermanent restaurants and shops with flimsy corrugated walls could earn that designation. The checkpoint's two names – the official reference to the nation and the popular reference to the Judgment Day faced by small-scale *kontarabaan* smugglers – signal how ethnicity, religion, and economic practice intersect in these borderlands. The name Magaalo Qiyaamo, "Judgment Day Town," plays on Islamic concepts of morality and temporality. Islam has historically not

[13] This approach builds on geographers' notions of encounter. See Valentine, "Living with Difference"; Wilson, "On Geography"; on "ensemble work," see Simone, *Improvised Lives*.

[14] The classic colonial-era ethnography of the Somali pastoralist ethos in the northern Horn is I. M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*. Cassanelli points out by way of critique that egalitarian tendencies coexisted historically with the periodic rise of states along the Somali coast (Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 85); Geshekter ("Anti-Colonialism and Class Formation," 7) remarks how an egalitarian ethos situated Somalis as a distinct community in Ethiopia: "… a common language and ethnic origins, Islam, egalitarian legal and political institutions to resolve disputes, and nomadic husbandry as their dominant pattern of existence distinguished the Somali way of life and ethos from that of the feudal Christian states of the Ethiopian highlands."

only linked Somalis in Ethiopia with Somalis across the border in Somaliland, Puntland, and Somalia. It has also created farther-flung ties to the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, and to networks of Yemeni and South Asian traders who ran much of the Horn's colonial-era trade.[15] To some extent, it has shaped Somali visions of a "borderless" identity grounded in shared faith and culture.[16] Yet Islam in Ethiopia has also generated its own borders. Religion historically differentiated eastern Ethiopian Muslims (especially Somalis, eastern Oromos, and Hararis) from central government elites who considered the country a bastion of Orthodox Christianity (and to some extent still do).[17]

In a context where Islam and shared Somaliness (*Soomaalinimo*) connect Ethiopia's Somalis to those on the other side of the border, Magaalo Qaran represents part of a narrower effort to construct a new "national" identity for Somalis in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's system of multinational federalism, commonly called "ethnic federalism," enshrines ethnic identity as a building block of the country's politics.[18] Ethnic federalism has been in place since 1995, but it took dramatically new directions in SRS after 2010. The strict security measures imposed at checkpoints like Magaalo Qaran result from new collaborations between SRS authorities and Ethiopian federal elites. ʿAbdi Iley rose to power, advocating both enhanced border security and the need to "Ethiopianize" Somalis who have long considered themselves distinct from Ethiopians. Magaalo Qaran is a potent symbol of this transformation and a locus of enforcing it. The Liyu Police are known to judge the "Ethiopianness" of Somalis who cross the border, attempting to filter out suspected migrants from Somalia or Somaliland.

The issues of security and of Somalis' relative autonomy in the federal system are deeply intertwined with Ethiopia's role as a US ally in the war on terror. US security organs routinely turn a blind eye to Ethiopia's human rights abuses and autocracy in order to maintain their partnership in the diffuse fight against Islamist networks in the Horn of Africa.[19] SRS is a frontier in this fight. Ethiopian officials have utilized US counterterrorism support to pursue harsh counterinsurgency against Somali rebels. In Somali Region, the most prominent rebel group is the

[15] Thompson, "Capital of the Imperial Borderlands." [16] Abdi, *Elusive Jannah*.
[17] Sellassie, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress*, 1:118; Clapham, *The Horn of Africa*, 16–19; Donham, "Old Abyssinia and the New Ethiopian Empire"; Marzagora, "History in Twentieth-Century Ethiopia."
[18] On Ethiopia's ethnic-federal structure more generally, see Aalen, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Ethiopia*; Kefale, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia*; Turton, "Introduction."
[19] Ingiriis, "From Al-Itihaad to Al-Shabaab"; Thompson, "Respatializing Federalism in the Horn's Borderlands."

Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), an organization that was started and widely supported by diaspora Somalis living in the Persian Gulf, Europe, and North America.[20] Diaspora Somalis were often perceived as enemies of Ethiopia. This makes the rise of Jigjiga as a hub for diaspora investment and return migration a fascinating case of shifting transnational relations.

Unexpected Encounters

It is not only Ethiopia's international borders that have harsh checkpoints. Internal borders between regions are also sites of securitizing and policing identities. A fifteen-minute drive west of Jigjiga, toward Ethiopia's interior, lies Kara Marda Pass and another checkpoint. The north-to-south line of mountains known as the Gureys Range marks the transition between Ethiopia's agricultural eastern highlands and the nomadic rangelands that stretch across the border. This physical location has long made Kara Marda a symbolic frontier of identity divisions. The combination of landscape and internal checkpoints makes it feel like travelers are leaving the country when they arrive in Jigjiga. SRS and its capital city are notorious in Ethiopia as peripheral spaces. Ethiopian politicians often describe SRS as an undeveloped margin, an "emerging region," a frontier of development and state-building inhabited by Somali nomads, smugglers, secessionists, or even terrorists.[21]

My first experience of Jigjiga brimmed with contradictions between the region's marginality and centrality, its frontier status and its rising transnational relevance. In June 2015, I left Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, in the dark morning hours on a lime-green Selam Bus, the apex of Ethiopia's intercity ground transportation. When I told the hotel receptionist I was leaving for Jigjiga, he was confused about my rationale and even about Jigjiga's location: "Why Jigjiga? Isn't that in Somalia? It's dangerous there!" Late in the afternoon, we reached Kara Marda, where Somali soldiers seem to embrace the role of affirming Jigjiga as a space apart. Travelers crossing Kara Marda are routinely forced to disembark

[20] Abdullahi, "The Ogaden National Liberation Front"; Hagmann, "Punishing the Periphery."

[21] Østebø (*Islam, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Ethiopia*, 237) discusses the relationship between geographies and perceptions of civilization, arguing: "The highland Amhara viewed the lowlands as the very definition of the periphery, in fact, representing nothing short of a geographical 'otherness'. As agriculturalists, they looked upon these areas with distain [*sic*] as a distinct ecological and cultural zone – hot and arid, [un]inhabitable, ridden with disease, and unstable. With agriculture as the model for an advanced form of living, the Somali and Oromo as pastoralists were imagined as backward, primitive, and lazy."

buses, undergo intense pat-downs, and explain their purpose in traveling to Jigjiga (see Chapter 2). That June, we passed the checkpoint without incident and descended the winding road into Jigjiga. A thunderstorm was drenching the city. I dialed the number of the one contact I had in Jigjiga – the uncle of a friend I had worked with in South Africa in 2011–2012. Although he had assured me the evening before that he would fetch me from the bus station, there was no answer. A fellow passenger kindly escorted me by taxi to a single-floor lodge at the far end of the city.

Everything so far, from the brusque pat-down at Kara Marda to the ankle-deep mud on the streets, the thrum of beat-up transport trucks shifting gears, and the camouflaged Liyu soldiers wielding AK-47s at checkpoints within the city, affirmed the impression of Jigjiga as a rough-and-tumble frontier town. Inside the hotel, I greeted a group of bearded men wearing kufiyahs and drinking tea in the twilight. "Oh, brilliant!" one exclaimed in Brummie English. "Where'd you learn to speak Somali? What are you doing in Jigjiga?"

Thousands of diaspora Somalis from across the globe have flocked to this dusty borderlands city emerging from decades of conflict. Some visit for holidays or send their children to stay with relatives for cultural education (*dhaqan-celis*). Others invest in hotels, restaurants, private schools, and trade businesses. Perhaps this should not have surprised me. Diaspora Somalis are famous for living transnationally.[22] I spent almost a year in a Somali neighborhood in Johannesburg, South Africa, between 2010 and 2012 and wrote about refugees' transnational business strategies. Somalis I knew had left South Africa to start businesses or nonprofit organizations in Somalia as well as Kenya.

But this is Ethiopia. Although Somalis are indigenous to the territory, SRS's status as a "homeland" is dubious. Most Somalis born in Ethiopia who I had met in South Africa or the US insisted that they would never return. In Johannesburg, ONLF cadres showed me a film about the Ethiopian government's persecution of Somalis: the man-made famines, assassinations, and targeted decimation of pastoralists' livestock. Insurgencies and counterinsurgency campaigns had ripped through Ethiopia's eastern borderlands since the 1960s and continued into the 2010s.[23] The neighboring Republic of Somalia supported ethnic Somali

[22] Al-Sharmani, "Living Transnationally"; Hammond, "Diaspora Returnees to Somaliland"; Horst, *Transnational Nomads*.

[23] Clapham, *The Horn of Africa*; Hagmann, "Punishing the Periphery"; Hagmann, "Talking Peace in the Ogaden"; Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*. Parallel patterns of conflict have also affected Somalis in Kenya – see Lochery, "Rendering Difference Visible."

secessionists in the 1960s–1970s. Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1977 to reclaim the territory many Somalis and foreign observers believed should have been part of Somalia all along.[24]

Probably close to a million Somalis fled Ethiopia in the 1970s–1980s as Ethiopia's Soviet-backed Derg dictatorship worked to depopulate the eastern borderlands. Somalia's refugee camps brimmed with Ethiopian Somali evacuees. Up to 25 percent of Somalia's population was comprised of encamped refugees.[25] Other refugees fled farther abroad and became the first wave of "the diaspora" (*qurba-joogta*). It was diaspora Somalis who established the ONLF in 1984 to seek their homeland's autonomy from Ethiopia. After 2001, conflict between the ONLF and Ethiopian federal forces became entangled with the global war on terror. Although the US did not designate the ONLF as a terrorist group, the Federal Government of Ethiopia did and used US assets and logistical support to fight ONLF rebels.[26] In SRS, diaspora Somalis were famous as the main base of support for the ONLF. Widely shared anti-Ethiopia sentiments were repeatedly affirmed in my interviews with diaspora Somalis. For example, a middle-aged engineer who now runs a business in Addis Ababa describes the view he held in the 1980s, when he reached the US: "I would never go back to Ethiopia."[27]

Many who had fled SRS's persistent conflict and never expected to return are now doing business in Jigjiga. This includes refugees who left the Horn in the 1970s and younger emigrants who escaped during counterinsurgency campaigns in the 2000s. On my second visit to Jigjiga in June 2016, I was walking down the bustling main street when I almost bumped into a man in his early thirties whom I had met in Johannesburg. He was a member of the Ogaden clan, for which the ONLF was named, and an avowed supporter of Somali autonomy from Ethiopia. It was only four years since the ONLF insurgency had been fought to a standstill. Jigjiga's jail was full of accused ONLF supporters, giving it the nickname "Jail Ogaden."[28] SRS's administration was notorious as an autocratic regime bent on hyper-securitization. One wrong word uttered in front of officials or their informers could get you locked up. What were these diaspora Somalis doing in Jigjiga?

This is not just my question. Locals (*dad wadani*) debate the topic constantly. "Most of the diaspora are looking for what they can benefit

[24] Tareke, "The Ethiopia–Somalia War of 1977 Revisited."
[25] See Brittain, "From the Archive, 20 May 1980: Ethiopia Forces Ogaden Exodus"; Jaynes, "Ogaden Refugees Overwhelming Somali Resources."
[26] Turse, "How the NSA Built a Secret Surveillance Network for Ethiopia."
[27] Interview, Addis Ababa, March 30, 2018.
[28] Human Rights Watch, "'We Are Like the Dead'."

here," argues one middle-aged bureaucrat I will call Qadir. "They come to get free land, to get contracts – for their own interests."[29] Like Qadir, many view diaspora-return migration and investment in Jigjiga as a self-interested but temporary collaboration with an autocratic government. These relationships are materializing in the city's built environment. New diaspora-dominated neighborhoods have popped up on Jigjiga's outskirts, with lavish houses built by diaspora investors who are profiting from the regional administration's border management strategies.

The Project and the Argument

Diaspora return and investment are part of a broader set of processes and relationships this book brings into view. *Smugglers, Speculators, and the City* analyzes people's everyday strategies of navigating borders, checkpoints, and urban spaces in the Horn of Africa and cities abroad. Diaspora-return migration and local borderlands social relationships are often treated as separate subjects, the first as the purview of migration studies and the second as the focus of borderlands studies. In Jigjiga, they are deeply intertwined. This book shows how people's daily strategies of navigating borders and urban encounters in an out-of-the-way frontier city are part of a wider change in how Somalis within and beyond the Horn of Africa think about and enact their place in the world amid the early twenty-first century's tightening security regimes. The project is to understand the relationship between border security and city life by examining people's strategies as they move, live, and work across a landscape marked by borders and urban inequalities.

My argument is twofold. The first point is that African urbanites are active players in processes of border-making, even as much of the apparent impetus for African border securitization stems from Western security prerogatives. The second is that urbanites' borderwork shapes the spaces of city life, meaning that urban space and border space are intertwined through daily practices of mobility and exchange. In other words, border security regimes do not simply impinge on cities; cultural-economic practices enacted through exchange and distribution in urban environments also determine how border securitization unfolds. In the Ethiopia–Somalia borderlands, everyday enactments of solidarity and reciprocity in the city contribute in paradoxical ways to processes that appear to be undermining this very solidarity: border hyper-securitization and urban inequality. At the same time, they render border

[29] Field notes, Jigjiga, May 12, 2018. All informant names used in the text are pseudonyms.

securitization and urban inequality only provisionally stable. Enactments of solidarity and reciprocity can entrench a provisional status quo in which bordered divisions drive urban inequality, but they also create undercurrents that work against these trends and point to more open future possibilities for urban life in a bordered world.

Jigjiga is a fascinating and important location from which to think through the relationships among social reciprocity, border security, and urbanization. Jigjiga's Somalis are widely committed to egalitarian or, more accurately, "nonhegemonic" ideals grounded in pastoralist culture. These values align with three characteristics of an ideal-type nonhegemonic society laid out by Hermann Amborn.[30] First, people tend to value a high measure of personal autonomy. Somalis have a reputation as risk-takers who voluntarily attempt hazardous migration routes and establish entrepreneurial ventures in unstable environments.[31] Second, social coexistence is seen as collective negotiating among individuals with equal rights. This plays out even in government offices where people interface with the autocratic SRS administration. While Somali kinship organization is patrilineal and male elders garner particular respect, everyone in such contexts, including women and youth, generally has a chance to speak. They do speak, though today they tend to carefully avoid politically contentious topics in public spaces.

Third, and most directly related to my argument, essential economic resources are subject to social control, and wealth accumulation is not an explicitly valued outcome: "Greed and envy are scorned; instead, there is an imperative to share."[32] The idea of nonhegemonic values foregrounds how strategies of entrepreneurship and resource capture coexist with the ever-present necessity of what Dua describes as "embedding" material gains "within a social world of obligation and reciprocity."[33] In this social world, claims of ownership and entitlement often hinge more on moral status and social connections than on legal property regimes. While the term "egalitarianism" has been misused to describe decentralized societies characterized by the interplay of autonomy and mutuality (including Somalis),[34] I use the concepts of "egalitarian orientations" and

[30] Amborn, *Law as Refuge of Anarchy*, 13.

[31] On risky migrations see, e.g., Steinberg, "The Vertiginous Power of Decisions"; on entrepreneurship in risky locations, see Thompson, "Risky Business and Geographies of Refugee Capitalism."

[32] Amborn, *Law as Refuge of Anarchy*, 13. [33] Dua, *Captured at Sea*, 44.

[34] For a general critique of anthropological uses of "egalitarianism," see Buitron and Steinmüller, "The Ends of Egalitarianism." I. M. Lewis wrote of "the fundamentally egalitarian character of Somali society" (Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, 197), and terms like egalitarianism and egalitarian society have been used regularly in literature on

"enactments of egalitarianism" to describe how assertions about equality underpin context-specific claims to reciprocity and shared command over material resources, even as inequalities are tolerated and in some cases (as with successes of a close relative) even celebrated. Jigjiga's cultural economy is significantly grounded in a nonhegemonic ethos, even if it does not perfectly match the ideal. Nevertheless, my argument is that the way people live out these principles in today's world of borders and urban environments reproduces elements of separation, differentiation, and inequality.

My focus on Somali urbanism links studies of transnational culture to urban theory in ways that deepen both. Research about Somali diaspora life has demonstrated that reciprocal kinship relations, mutual care, and practices of redistribution are important elements of Somali transnational society even as social relationships are stretched across immense distances and impassible borders.[35] This book explores how this nonhegemonic ethos plays out in urban space, where relationships and the resulting demands for recognition and redistribution are compressed and densified. It is one thing for a diaspora businessperson in Minneapolis to field phone calls from relatives in Jigjiga requesting remittances from 12,500 km away. It is another for a diaspora returnee to have five relatives suddenly show up on the doorstep in Jigjiga, requesting payments, employment, and business partnerships. The density of urban social relations poses challenges and new possibilities for enactments of reciprocity.

The analytic approach I employ foregrounds everyday transactions – exchanges or distributions of resources among individuals – as a nexus of agency in relationship management. In exploring the ways in which urban transactions are caught up in nonhegemonic orientations, I seek to rethink prevailing narratives about capitalist urbanization. Urbanists since Simmel and Wirth have emphasized the depersonalized and market-based orientations of urbanites.[36] By the mid twentieth century, a broad consensus emerged that "egalitarian societies" were of a

Somalis (e.g., references in footnote 14; Ali, "Somali Resistance Against Ethiopian State Nationalism," 143, 151; Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*, 55). Critics note that, in practice, egalitarian ideals and norms of reciprocity may be leveraged to uphold inequalities among Somalis (Schlee, "Customary Law and the Joys of Statelessness") as elsewhere (Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 120).

[35] Abdi, *Elusive Jannah*; Horst, "Connected Lives"; Horst, "The Transnational Political Engagements of Refugees"; Kusow and Bjork, *From Mogadishu to Dixon*; Lindley, *The Early Morning Phone Call*; Little, *Somalia: Economy Without State*.

[36] See Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," 12. Louis Wirth's discussion of how the density of relationships relates to culture is particularly apt: "The contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental. The reserve, the indifference, and the blasé outlook which urbanites manifest

fundamentally different sort than "urban societies."[37] In the now-classic *Social Justice and the City*, David Harvey grounded what was to become his enduring focus on Marxist class analysis in assertions such as "an economy dominated by reciprocity cannot sustain urbanism."[38] Today, however, attention to urban networks,[39] shifting coalitions and temporary collaborations, and the way these take shape in urban built environments including "urban borderlands"[40] all point to the interplay of multiple relational logics besides class and capitalism shaping urban economies.[41]

I focus on the transaction as a key practice through which people adopt, reject, or otherwise negotiate their social relationships through material interaction and exchange. As I use the term, transaction refers to the act of negotiating distribution of resources or information through interpersonal exchange, sharing, lending, borrowing, or appropriation. While mainstream economists tend to treat transactions as once-off exchanges in an impersonal market, anthropologists and heterodox economic analysts point out that the transaction is not simply a material exchange. It is also a nexus through which people create and uphold social categories, stake their claim to belonging, and manage relationships.[42] Exchanging resources is not just something that people do.

in their relationships may thus be regarded as devices for immunizing themselves against the personal claims and expectations of others" (Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," 12).

[37] The table in Berreman, "Scale and Social Relations: Thoughts and Three Examples," 46–48, contains a useful summary of these typologies.

[38] Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, 209.

[39] Anthropologists working in African Copperbelt cities pioneered the analysis of social networks in urban situations: See Mitchell, "The Concept and Use of Social Networks." More recently in urban studies, there have been debates about the topological nature of networks (e.g., Amin, "Regions Unbound"; Allen, "Topological Twists"). I build empirically on Allen's theoretical discussion of power in networks. In contrast to Amin and others who frame network topologies as a "horizontal" relationship undermining hierarchies, Allen argues that urban power has "rather more to do with the power exercised to hold the networks together, to forge the connections and to bridge the gaps." In sum, he states, power within networks is more about exercising "power *with* rather than *over* others" (Allen, "Powerful City Networks," 2896, emphasis added).

[40] Büscher and Mathys, "Navigating the Urban 'in-between Space'"; Iossifova, "Editorial: Searching for Common Ground"; Iossifova, "Borderland Urbanism"; Ramírez, "City as Borderland"; Thompson, Mohamoud, and Mahamed, "Geopolitical Boundaries and Urban Borderlands."

[41] On the need for an interdisciplinary rethinking of urban economies, see, e.g., Obeng-Odoom, *Reconstructing Urban Economics*; Myers, *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*; Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis."

[42] My focus on transactions builds on a long history in anthropology. Fredrik Barth argues that "transactions are of particular analytic importance because (a) where systems of evaluation (values) are maintained, transactions must be a predominant form of interaction; (b) in them the relative evaluations in a culture are revealed; and (c) they

It defines the boundaries around who "we" are: who is entitled to sharing, borrowing, and discounts – and, in contrast, who is a legitimate target for cheating or robbing.[43]

Jigjiga's businesspeople work constantly to shift between more temporary, instrumental business relationships and more enduring moral commitments to the people with whom they transact. A once-off exchange may slip toward a pattern of mutuality or long-term obligation. Conversely, a businessperson might manipulate kinship obligations for material gain, potentially harming family connections and trust in the process. These shifting social relations are the stuff of economic anthropology. Drawing on decades of anthropological research, in the 1970s Marshall Sahlins theorized kinship obligations, marketized transactions, and mutual hostilities as types of exchange on a spectrum of reciprocities, from generalized reciprocity (e.g., sharing) to balanced reciprocity (such as market exchange), and finally negative reciprocity (mutual exploitation, cheating, or raiding).[44] Thinking about temporary, instrumental relationships versus more enduring obligations on a spectrum is analytically useful.

In their own descriptions, people often work to assert clear distinctions between such forms of exchange, for example, insisting that a seemingly unequal relationship with a relative or business partner involves "favors" rather than "exploitation." However, the boundaries of these forms of exchange are often highly situational and contested. To whom is one materially obligated? Who is a legitimate target for exploitation? How much inequality is acceptable within a family or friend group? These are questions that Jigjiga's businesspeople constantly negotiate. In classic economic anthropology, the answers often foreground how transactions align with or even produce social group boundaries. They are questions about

are a basic social process by means of which we can explain how a variety of social forms are generated from a much simpler set and distribution of basic values" (Barth, *Process and Form in Social Life*, 40). For Barth (ibid., 38), reciprocity "lies at the heart of an analytic concept of transaction: one may call transactions those sequences of interaction which are systematically governed by reciprocity." Barth, however, frames transactions as value-maximizing exchanges and the analytic opposite of group integration. Others, from Malinowski (*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*) and Mauss (*The Gift*) to Guyer (*Marginal Gains*), Graeber ("Debt, Violence, and Impersonal Markets"), and Zelizer ("The Proliferation of Social Currencies"), have focused more on how people construct social groups through a more variegated range of transactions, in which group integration has its own longer-term payoffs.

[43] By including modes of transaction that are usually considered "extra-economic," I build on work by Raeymaekers ("Protection for Sale?"; Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in the Eastern Congo*) and Roitman (*Fiscal Disobedience*), who highlight the ways that regimes of exchange are intertwined with recurrent efforts to construct authority and redraw boundaries of identity and citizenship.

[44] Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 173.

"us" versus "them" – sometimes tied specifically to ethnicity, religion, or kinship, but generally about a sense of groupness or peoplehood. For Sahlins and other anthropologists studying so-called precapitalist, small-scale, or "primitive" societies, there is often an apparently simple spatial element to this groupness: Group boundaries tend to appear as concentric circles radiating outward from villages or cohabiting kinship groups. In such a situation, somebody geographically far away usually belongs more firmly to a category of others.[45] In today's transnational urban worlds, social relations map onto space in much more complicated ways.

This book traces how people's everyday transactions produce space in cities and at geopolitical borders. In doing so, it weaves together ideas from cultural anthropology and human geography. Transactions are spatial practices. To put borders on the same analytic plane as the city, I think about how the material spaces of borders, checkpoints, and urban built environments function as *transactional frontiers*: sites where people engage in embodied exchanges and, in doing so, define the relationships underlying the transaction. The concept of transactional frontiers brings into view how spatialized encounters and exchanges shape spatial organization and social hierarchies as intertwined dimensions of collective life. One does not precede the other: Space shapes social relations, and social relations shape space. I suggest that a key nexus between these two dimensions is transacting as a spatial practice that encompasses varying degrees of visibility, copresence, negotiability, and physical mobility.

Understanding these complex interactions across multiple spaces requires mobile and multisited research strategies. The ethnographic evidence presented in this book draws mainly on participant-observation in which I accompanied businesspeople and government officials on bus rides, in private cars, and on foot through Jigjiga and across surrounding checkpoints and borders. Most of this participant-observation took place from July 2017 to July 2018, supplemented by observations from shorter visits in 2015, 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2023. In addition to field notes from participant-observation, I draw on formal interviews with approximately seventy businesspeople and officials in Jigjiga. In participant-observation and interviews, I paid close attention to documenting spatial elements of experience and practice.

Conducting research in Jigjiga under an authoritarian regime was extremely difficult. I am immensely grateful to the people who provided

[45] Sahlins (ibid., 179) states: "For the purpose of creating a general model, attention should also be given to the power of community in stipulating distance. It is not only that kinship organizes communities, but communities kinship, so that a spatial, coresidential term affects the measure of kinship distance and thus the mode of exchange."

candid interviews even as Ethiopian citizens were being arrested for simply questioning the government on social media. I took months to establish trust with people before beginning interviews and gradually selected interviewees carefully. I usually conducted interviews one-on-one, in English or Somali, and using an audio recorder. Occasionally an informant preferred to be interviewed alongside a trusted friend, relative, or business partner. To expand my reach, I also had two research assistants conduct a total of twelve interviews (focused on women, who were often reticent to be interviewed in private by a male foreigner) as well as two market surveys. The fact that Ethiopia's government was gradually collapsing around us at the time of the research probably helped with data collection. Anti-government protests had been troubling Ethiopia's federal government for two years, but they took a new direction in September 2017 after Somali businesspeople were massacred in Awaday, near Harar, about two hours' drive west of Jigjiga. In December 2017, the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition reorganized in an attempt to maintain power. Nevertheless, in February 2018, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn stepped down. His successor, Abiy Ahmed, gradually dismantled the EPRDF over the following two years. Amid these shakeups and correctly anticipating that the authoritarian regime in SRS would be ousted in 2018, people began to speak more openly about the connections between governance, border security, and business.

The book also draws on participant-observation in two sites with large diaspora Somali populations. The first is Johannesburg, South Africa, between 2010 and 2012, when I was a master's student in geography. Results from this research have been published in a series of journal articles, but in Chapter 6 I reassess some of the data from Johannesburg in light of my findings in Jigjiga, and after re-interviewing two informants from my Johannesburg research who now reside in the Jigjiga area. I also conducted several interviews and almost weekly participant-observation in Atlanta, Georgia, during my time as a PhD student at Emory University from 2014 to 2019. I compare my findings from these sites of diaspora life with literature on diaspora Somalis from other contexts, some of which I have visited for short periods (including parts of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Nairobi, Kenya; and Southall, UK).

The Significance: Borders in Urban Theory

People's everyday work of negotiating belonging and mobility in Jigjiga and the surrounding borderlands sheds light more broadly on the role cities and borders play in the spatial ordering of today's world.

Mainstream narratives about globalization, as well as academic discussions about global urbanism, often heuristically represent the world as if cities and borders play opposite roles: Cities are connectors or "nodes" in globalized networks, while borders are exclusionary and divisive. Thus, we find representations of globalization in terms of a "world city network" on the one hand,[46] and "global Apartheid" on the other.[47] Yet the physical existence of cities or borders is not inherently connective or divisive: What matters is how people construct, maintain, and utilize borders and urban built environments as they manage relationships with other people.

Jigjigans are no strangers to the exclusionary nature of securitized borders. My first visit to Jigjiga in 2015 occurred at the height of what came to be known as the "European refugee crisis." EU countries received 1.3 million asylum applications in 2015.[48] The crisis triggered tightening border policies in countries like Hungary, as well as Britain's "Brexit" from the EU. It intensified border externalization strategies that sought to contain migrants in camps in countries such as Morocco and Turkey. While most asylum seekers arriving in the EU came from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, migrants from the Horn also made up a substantial portion. Even as a wave of diaspora Somalis flocked back to Jigjiga, young Somalis in Jigjiga sought to move abroad to seek asylum and employment. I spent many evenings that June in front of TV screens with Jigjigans who eagerly counted how many Somalis were plucked from overcrowded boats floundering across the Mediterranean. They nervously anticipated seeing friends or relatives on the screen. I have been with people in Jigjiga when their relatives or friends call from Libya to ask for payments for their human traffickers to place them on a boat bound for Europe. In early 2021, my close friend's brother perished in Libya. A Somali comedian in Atlanta told me how his vessel capsized off the Tunisian coast and nearly all the other passengers drowned. For people on the move, the post-2001 era of border securitization can prove deadly.

There is, then, a clear element of truth to the "connective cities, divisive borders" portrait of globalization. While Africans die in the Mediterranean or find themselves enclosed in camps awaiting the processing of their asylum claims, multinational corporations, for example, are intensifying financial ties between cities around the globe. Yet

[46] Taylor, *World City Network*.
[47] Besteman, *Militarized Global Apartheid*; see also Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene*, ix.
[48] "Number of refugees to Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015." Pew Research Center, August 2, 2016. www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/.

connection and division are not categorical opposites. As with Sahlins' description of reciprocity, they are positions along a spectrum of possible ways people structure their relationships with other people. As Brachet and Scheele note in their analysis of the Chadian Sahara (drawing on Jim Ferguson's work in southern Africa), disconnection is "not an absence of a relation, but rather a certain type of relation."[49] Differentiation, exclusion, and inequality are relationships that are actively produced as people work to uphold some social connections while disavowing others, and as they circulate resources and manage uncertainty.[50]

Achille Mbembe argues along these lines in an essay called "The idea of a borderless world." From a precolonial African standpoint, "[t]he business of a border is, in fact, to be crossed." Historically in Africa, mobility "was the motor of any kind of social or economic or political transformation. In fact, it was the driving principle behind the delimitation and organization of space and territories."[51] While Mbembe's focus is on precolonial Africa, elements of this outlook remain prevalent. Cultural understandings of space in Africa are shaped by a history of low population density. With land available, mobility was often an option for groups of people who were experiencing oppression, or facing conflict with other groups, or where agricultural land was simply getting too crowded. This undercut the ability of political leaders to forcefully organize an exclusive territory: People could simply take the "exit option" and establish what Kopytoff calls an internal frontier between existing polities.[52] Because their followers could often escape the spatial extent of a ruler's force, social control on much of the continent centered on managing relationships ("wealth in people") and regulating material circulations at strategic sites like crossroads, checkpoints, and other "margins," rather than on delimited territorial control.[53]

This perspective on African borders has implications for conceptualizing power relationships in migration and transnational studies. If borders can be used to manage relationships with people beyond the state's reach, it stands to reason that African diaspora groups who have taken the exit option in recent decades are also significant players with stakes in "local" border security arrangements.

[49] Brachet and Scheele, *The Value of Disorder*, 21; Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*, 238.
[50] For parallels in West Africa, see Walther, "A Mobile Idea of Space."
[51] Mbembe, "The Idea of a Borderless World."
[52] Kopytoff, "The Internal African Frontier."
[53] See, e.g., Guyer, "Wealth in People and Self-Realization in Equatorial Africa"; Guyer, *Marginal Gains*; Lombard, "Navigational Tools for Central African Roadblocks"; Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience*.

The focus of Mbembe's essay is on borders, but we can also think of African cities in terms of a social landscape that operates in relation to social connections and historically entrenched mobilities, and less in relation to a cartesian landscape of fixed territory, settlement, and property. "Historically, sub-Saharan Africa has been a continent associated with land abundance amidst scarce labour and even scarcer capital resources," writes Deborah Bryceson. "Not surprisingly under these circumstances, it has been the world's least urbanized continent."[54] As I argue in Chapter 3, assertions like Bryceson's mobilize a sedentarist definition of urbanism, associating "the urban" with permanent settlement. In the Horn of Africa, nomadism, extra-regional mobility, and urban power have long worked more in tandem than in conflict. Circular migration from rural areas to regional cities, as well as seasonal concentrations of populations in market settlements that were otherwise sparsely inhabited, characterized the interface between people's pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods and the outside world.

This directs attention toward the ways that people manage belonging and access in specific spatial locations with reference and connection to a broader and highly mobile universe of relationships and possibilities. Discussions of such relations in urban studies have oriented largely around (urban) citizenship, on the one hand, and social networks on the other, but more nuanced and flexible conceptions may be useful. Toward the end of the essay, "The idea of a borderless world," Mbembe turns to the concept of "peoplehood" rather than nationhood or ethnicity as a more flexible category for understanding the "repertoire of alternative forms of membership" between "being a citizen and being a foreigner."[55] What is important for Mbembe is that territorial borders do not simply reflect preexisting separate identities, but contribute dynamically to the way people construct groups and differentiate themselves from others. As Terje Østebø shows, further developing the concept of peoplehood, it is embodied, visceral experiences of locations, landscapes, relationships, and violence that provide the raw material from which people abstract to broader imagined groups such as clans, ethnicities, and religious communities.[56]

My arguments in this book suggest that a view of African borders as sites for managing belonging and connection is incomplete without an understanding of urban life. As African populations rapidly urbanize, the meanings of group boundaries and their relationship to geopolitical borders are increasingly worked out in cities. Struggles over the moral

[54] Bryceson, "Fragile Cities," 39. [55] Mbembe, "The Idea of a Borderless World."
[56] Østebø, *Islam, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Ethiopia*.

valence of material exchanges and their connection to people's relationships inscribe themselves in space. They affect the way people produce, inhabit, and traverse the lived terrains of cities and borders. Changing the requirements for people to cross a border, building walls around a house or neighborhood, or dividing previously communally owned land into parcels for sale are all potential ways of transmuting relationships from more enduring solidarities to more temporary and instrumental exchanges, or vice versa. Looking at transactional frontiers where people produce space by exchanging things points to the links between routine urban activities and the social power of the border.

Finally, the management of geopolitical borders and group boundaries is not – or at least not only – about peoplehood or groupness as an end in itself. It is also about how today's striking disparities in wealth and opportunity relate to constructions of peoplehood. The management of spatial borders and social relationships at transactional frontiers is to a large extent about upholding or contesting the unstable line between two types of inequality. The first is what Tilly calls categorical inequalities – inequalities in opportunity and livelihoods that are tied to and legitimized by social categories (such as ethnicity, gender, or citizenship) whose "boundaries do crucial organizational work" in a social structure.[57] This contrasts with situational inequality, in which people perceive differences in social position to be always potentially temporary, coexisting with what Tocqueville calls an "imaginary equality" that negates the durable relevance of hierarchies.[58] When I discuss Somalis' egalitarian orientations, I point to people's claims about obligation and reciprocity that mitigate against categorical inequalities such as class boundaries and the differentiation in citizenship between "local" (*wadani*) and "diaspora" (*qurba-joog*) that are increasingly impinging on this space. At the same time, these egalitarian orientations have their own categorical boundaries: Imaginary equality among Somalis coexists with and, in Jigjiga, relies on the continued relevance of ethnic boundaries and the exploitation of non-Somali labor, as well as that of certain Somali occupational or "outcaste" clans.

Closely analyzing Ethiopian-Somali peoplehood in this context speaks to broader debates about what solidarity and personhood mean in African cities amid the twenty-first-century world of securitized borders and urban inequalities.

[57] Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, 6.
[58] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 668, cited in Garrido, *The Patchwork City*, 13.

Jigjiga: A Story of Roads and Borders

After *Magaalo Qaran*, the highway from Somaliland westward into Ethiopia slopes imperceptibly downhill through gently rolling rangelands. These plains transform dramatically from lush fields during the annual rains (April–September) to fine brown dust blown by the dry-season winds (October–March). Shortly before Jigjiga, the road rises to a red shoulder of barren hills (Garab-ʿAse), which commands a sweeping view across the city toward Kara Marda and the Gureys Range (Figure I.2). Descending from Garab-ʿAse into the city, the road reaches a roundabout. The left fork is the regional highway that turns gradually east-southeast past the newly completed SRS government compound – the *Madaḥtoyo* – then continues past Jigjiga's airport, and southeast past Kebri Beyaḥ, the site of a famous camp hosting refugees from Somalia. Finally, about 80 km southeast of Jigjiga it turns almost due south and gradually downhill from the fertile mid-altitude plains into the arid lowlands known as the Ogaden – and beyond this, across Somalia's border, toward Mogadishu.

The right fork is the main highway that connects Jigjiga to neighboring Oromia Region, to the ancient city of Harar, and beyond these, to Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's geographical center. Below the roundabout, this highway widens into the ruler-straight main road that bisects Jigjiga, east to west. The straight line of black tarmac slopes gradually downhill for 2 km to the seasonal stream, the *Tog Jerer*, just east of the city center. After crossing a low bridge over the *tog* (which is just a muddy ditch for much of the year), the road climbs sluggishly for 3 km through the central city and its growing western margin. East to west, the city roughly spanned this 5-km stretch of ruler-straight road in 2017–2018, though it has since grown.

The Road in History

On Jigjiga's main road, minibuses coming from Tog Wajale dodge past slow-moving trucks hired by import–exporters, dump trucks carrying construction materials to building sites, and the small three-wheeled motor-taxis known by their brand name as *Bajaj*es. Over the past century, though, Jigjiga's main road has carried much more varied traffic, including invading armies, foreign merchants, and European diplomats intent on controlling the fertile plains around the town. Amhara soldiers descended from the Gureys Range into the Jigjiga Valley and constructed a stockade fort in the early 1890s, soon after Menelik II's Ethiopian Empire conquered the ancient Islamic center of Harar. In the same years,

Figure I.2 Looking from the Tog Wajale road westward toward Jigjiga, with Kara Marda in the center background. Photo by author.

British officials approached Jigjiga from the opposite direction, exploring the interior of the British Somaliland Protectorate that had been established on the Gulf of Aden coast. After a few years of jostling over where the frontier between their colonies should be, in 1897 Ethiopian administrators and British officials delimited on a map the Ethiopia–Somaliland border that still exists today. The border, however, did not impede either Somali mobility or British influence. Somali herders and traders crossed the boundary readily, hardly recognizing its existence.[59] The road from Tog Wajale brought Muslim merchants who were British subjects from Somaliland, Yemen, and South Asia into Jigjiga to do business in the growing town. It also brought British Somaliland officials who worked to "protect" these extraterritorial merchants from the predations (and especially taxation) of Ethiopian authorities.[60] By the 1920s, what had been a rather diffuse trade landscape of camel caravan paths congealed around the road as British-backed import–export firms brought trucks full of goods from Somaliland's Berbera port across the border and up the dirt track from Tog Wajale to Jigjiga.

The road also brought several armies through Jigjiga in the twentieth century. In 1936, fascist Italy's forces advanced from their colonial headquarters in Mogadishu up the Ogaden route through Dhagaḥbur and Kebri Beyaḥ. They conquered Jigjiga en route to occupying all of Ethiopia. In 1941, Nigerian units under British command marched up both highways – from Mogadishu and from Tog Wajale – as part of Britain's campaigns against Italy during World War II. Converging on Jigjiga that March, the colonial troops fought what British propagandists dubbed "a real soldiers' battle" for control of Kara Marda.[61] When the Nigerians took the pass, Italian resistance in eastern Ethiopia began to dissipate. The British quickly restored Emperor Haile Selassie to Ethiopia's throne. However, while the rest of the country was formally returned to Ethiopian sovereignty, much of what is today SRS remained under British military control from 1941 to 1948 (the British Military Administration or BMA). This had significant effects on how Somalis in Jigjiga viewed their place in the world, as detailed in Chapter 3.

Britain's decolonization of their Somaliland Protectorate in 1960 paved the way for a different invading army. Independent Somaliland joined with the former Italian Somalia to form the Republic of Somalia. Then, in 1977, Somalia's army marched up the same road that the Italians had

[59] Thompson, "Capital of the Imperial Borderlands."
[60] Thompson, "Border Crimes, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, and the Racialization of Sovereignty."
[61] Great Britain War Office, *Official History of the Operations in Somaliland*, 1:93.

paved and Britain's Nigerian units had traveled from Mogadishu through the Ogaden. Passing through Jigjiga that August, they found Ethiopian and supporting Cuban troops dug in at Kara Marda, and once again the pass and the rocky highlands beyond it became a fierce battleground that frustrated the Somalian advance. The Somalian army controlled Jigjiga until March 1978, when the Soviet-backed and Cuban-assisted Ethiopian military pushed down from Kara Marda into Jigjiga. They drove not only the Somalian forces but also Jigjiga's Somali civilians across the border. By 1980, many Jigjigans were among the million Somali refugees who had fled Ethiopia. Some slowly began to trickle back into Jigjiga over ensuing years as insurgencies weakened Ethiopia's socialist Derg regime that had succeeded the Ethiopian Empire. Many more returned when Somalia collapsed in 1991. The EPRDF coalition took over Ethiopia the same year and initiated the shift toward federalism, heralding new possibilities for Somalis' belonging in Ethiopia.

The Road as a Border

In the town, the highway that enabled mobility across nearby borders functioned as an intra-urban boundary that limited other types of movement. From the early days of Jigjiga's establishment, the thoroughfare divided mainly Christian and Amhara soldiers and administrators who settled in the northern part of the town from mainly Muslim Somali, Harari, and British-protected Arab and South Asian merchants who settled to the south. Ethnic segregation was not part of Ethiopian imperial policy, in contrast to schemes of racial segregation that indelibly marked other African cities. However, Ethiopian towns often developed as distinct neighborhoods that sprang up around religious sites such as churches and shrines.[62] For much of Jigjiga's history, the central landmark to the north of the road was St. Michael Orthodox Church, a symbol and site of congregation for the "foreign" Amhara. South of the road, the Masjid Jamaʿ was a gathering place for Somalis and their fellow Muslims, and several shrines and graveyards named after sheikhs mark the landscape. Muslims dominated trade in Ethiopia more generally, so it is hardly surprising that spatial separation reflected not only distinctions in identity but also distinctions in political–economic roles that defined peoplehood in the local context.[63] Politics and administration were the domain of Amhara and other so-called Abyssinians or *Habesha*s from

[62] See Bonsa, "City, State and Society"; Tufa, "Historical Development of Addis Ababa."
[63] Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia*, 348.

Ethiopia's northern highland regions.[64] Trade, in contrast, was the realm of Somalis and other Muslim merchants, many of whom had cross-border links with Somaliland and Djibouti, or sites farther abroad – such as Aden, Mecca (Makkah), Bombay (today Mumbai), or Cardiff.

This functional separation with the long, straight road as a dividing line provided the raw material for political struggles over identity that deepened under Italian and British administrations in the 1930s–1940s. Unlike Ethiopian imperial administration, Italian and British administrators encouraged ethnic segregation as a matter of urban policy. Italian officials divided the town into the "native district" to the south, which contained Jigjiga's main market areas, and the "national district" to the north, dominated by Europeans and Amhara.[65] In the 1940s, British administrators likewise sought to maintain ethnic differentiation in the town (see Chapter 3).

How did Somalis experience these intra-urban borders in comparison with nearby geopolitical boundaries? There is good reason to believe that after the BMA withdrew from Jigjiga in 1948, Somalis felt the localized neighborhood boundaries in Jigjiga as clearer and more divisive socio-spatial lines than the geopolitical border between Ethiopia and Somaliland. People who grew up in Jigjiga during the 1960s and 1970s describe crossing the border into Somalia more readily and comfortably than they crossed Jigjiga's main road into the "Ethiopian side of town."[66]

Jigjiga's main highway is just one example of how built environments organize social encounters and thereby shape people's efforts to construct and enact shared identity. The road facilitated mobility and enabled Jigjiga's Somalis to maintain connections across the borderlands. At the same time, the line of tarmac marked a social division at which people enacted Somali peoplehood in contrast to "Ethiopian" identity. Today the highway is paved all the way from Addis Ababa via Harar to Tog Wajale, where it meets the potholed road that was built from Tog Wajale to Hargeisa, Somaliland, in the 1970s. Mobility along the road has persisted and even accelerated, but the territorial borders that the road crosses have changed. The introduction of ethnic

[64] Abyssinian and Habesha or Habasha are contested terms that today are often used by Jigjiga's Somalis to describe Amhara, Tigrayans, and related Semitic-speaking groups from northern Ethiopia. The labels are also sometimes embraced by Ethiopians from these areas. For a discussion of the term in a critical historical context, see, e.g., Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent & Ancient Oromo Nation*, 68–79. For the terms' use in emigrant contexts, see Grant and Thompson, "City on Edge"; Habecker, "Not Black, but Habasha."

[65] Eshete, *Jijiga*; Thompson, "Capital of the Imperial Borderlands," 546.

[66] Interview, Atlanta, January 11, 2017.

federalism in the 1990s promoted Jigjiga from a commercial entrepôt to a regional political capital. In doing so, it changed the town's demography. Somalis from across SRS settled in the town – north side and south side. Jigjiga grew explosively, more than tripling in physical size between 2006 and 2018 alone and boasting an estimated 350,000–400,000 inhabitants during my fieldwork in 2017–2018.

These changes have affected the geography of encounter and interaction within Jigjiga and at the borders and checkpoints the highway traverses. Today, as Somalis constitute a majority of Jigjiga's population, the road has lost much of its relevance as an ethnic boundary in the city. Nevertheless, constructions of peoplehood and efforts to mobilize relationships and social connections continue to play out in people's everyday activities in the city as well as at checkpoints. The rest of this book moves back and forth between the city and borders, following Somali businesspeople as they navigate transactions and mobility. In doing so, it also traces their relationships and the categories of belonging that shape their economic practice.

From African Borders to Urban Borderwork: An Outline

Chapter 1, "Urban Borderwork," shows how the problems of moving goods across Ethiopia's borders create coalitions of interest and activity in the city. It analyzes an unexpected situation in which I find myself racing frantically around Jigjiga with a local smuggler and a diaspora returnee known as a raucous opportunist as the two work to release a truck impounded at a checkpoint. In analyzing their management of relationships in the urban environment, it introduces more of the context, including SRS's political culture and some of the structure of Ethiopian federalism. It also illustrates how elements of Somalis' nonhegemonic ethos converge to reinforce rather than challenge government hierarchies, border securitization, and urban differentiation.

The argument that Somalis' nonhegemonic ethos can work in contradictory ways to reinforce border securitization and urban inequality requires a broader explication of Somali economic culture in the Jigjiga area. Chapter 2 takes up this task. Returning to borders, it follows self-professed *kontarabaan* traders and other travelers across the Ethiopia–Somaliland border and Ethiopia's internal checkpoints. Examining their interactions at these sites, it argues that people's understandings and enactments of Somaliness in the Jigjiga area are significantly oriented around economic principles of solidarity and reciprocal exchange. These are not abstract principles, but rather have taken specific shape in the

Jigjiga area through practices of evading taxation and border regulation imposed by non-Somali Ethiopian authorities. To be Somali in Jigjiga has long meant participating in, or at least sympathizing with, *kontarabaan* trade. Because of this, the advent of Somali-led border securitization has prompted new efforts to construct the meaning of peoplehood and social relations.

While Somali identity plays an important role in cross-border interactions today, the main location in which the relevance of this category emerged in daily life over the past century is the multiethnic city. Chapter 3 considers how Jigjiga's urban merchants talk about the relationship between identity and economic culture and contextualizes identity categories in relation to Jigjiga's urban history. It argues that expectations about transactability in the urban market shape the way Somalis draw categorical boundaries through which they conceptualize their place in Ethiopia.

Chapter 4 delves into how border securitization and trade regulation have changed under federalism, and how transformations since 2010 have reorganized relationships between diaspora Somalis and SRS's regional government. Focusing on how diaspora businesspeople navigate these relationships, it argues that border securitization is not just a matter of topography – of razor wire and security patrols. It is also a matter of reorganizing topological relationships, forging new alliances, and mobilizing Somalis' nonhegemonic ethos in new ways to incentivize loyalty.

How have these reorganizations at borders affected Jigjiga's cultural economy? Chapter 5 takes up this question, turning once more to urban life. I delve into Jigjiga's market to understand the logic of transactions and how they relate to relationships. I argue that while Somalis' nonhegemonic ethos militates against instrumental relationships in principle, in practice, reciprocity and instrumentality are often deeply intertwined. Viewing enactments of reciprocity on a spectrum and revealing how they entwine with self-interested transactions shows how inequalities and egalitarian orientations coexist and sometimes mutually reinforce each other in the city.

Finally, Chapter 6 extends the analysis of Jigjiga's cultural economy into transnational relationships and sites of diaspora life. It theorizes Somali transnationalism as a spatial practice of navigating built environments and constructing intercity links. It shows how urban life in Jigjiga is closely linked to Somalis' spatial strategies in cities abroad. The chapter argues that Jigjiga's increasing socioeconomic inequality appears in part as a result of diaspora Somalis' enactments of reciprocity and the challenges of inequality that they face in cities abroad.

For Somali urbanites in the Horn of Africa and in diaspora, elements of Somali pastoralist culture play an important role in daily life. As Scharrer and Carrier note, "the nomadic imaginary still remains a key aspect of identification for many."[67] To illustrate how nonhegemonic expectations and practices shape both urban space and geopolitical borders, I turn first to an unlikely location: an urban *chat* den.

[67] Scharrer and Carrier, "Introduction. Mobile Urbanity," 9.