

INTRODUCTION

Approaching the Dynamics of Identification and Conflict through the Anthropology of Günther Schlee

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In a programmatic article, published shortly after he took up his post as one of the founding directors of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Günther Schlee referred to a situation that arose fairly often during his fieldwork among the Rendille and their neighbours in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia:

When a herdsman meets a stranger at a watering-hole – the typical trigger-situation for violent conflicts – . . . the existence of cross-cutting ties opens up the following possibilities . . . He can either emphasize their difference ('We belong to different tribes, go away before our young men come!'), or he can refer to a shared identity ('Though we belong to different tribes, we belong to the same clan', or 'You belong to my wife's clan'). (Schlee 2004: 144)¹

This illustration, which touches on a range of themes, including social structure, social networks, territoriality, resources, history, conflict, identification, agency and choice, provides a fitting point of departure for introducing Schlee's empirical and theoretical contributions to anthropology and the social sciences, generally. Once the type of situation depicted in this quotation is contextualized, unpacked, generalized and prepared for recontextualization, it may also serve as a framework for introducing the themes of the various contributions to this volume.

Schlee began his fieldwork in the mid-1970s among the Rendille on the Kenyan side of the border between northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia – in 'the hot, dry lowland from Lake Turkana in the west to the Juba River in the east and beyond', which, for the last several centuries has been 'populated by pastoral nomads and hunter-gatherers', who often also practise shifting cultivation

(Schlee 1994: 31). In the late nineteenth century, Emperor Menelik pursued the southward expansion of the Ethiopian empire, sending troops into this region, which, '[a]ccording to Abyssian ideology', was 'wild and dangerous, infested with disease, and inhabited by savages' (Donham 2002: 20). As the historian Bahru Zewde (1991: 93) writes, '[s]outh-western Ethiopia became a hunting-ground for humans as well as animals', as the Ethiopians imposed their rule in the territory, massacring and enslaving local inhabitants in the process (Almagor 2002; Donham 2002; Gabbert 2012). The British colonialists, in reaction to this expansion, moved to establish their northern Kenyan territories as a buffer zone against Ethiopia's imperial ambitions (Schlee 1994: 44), while building 'hardly any roads or schools or hospitals' there and even denying entry to missionaries, lest they 'instil new desires in the local population' (Schlee 1994: 45). Under these conditions, northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia remained relatively isolated peripheries characterized, culturally, by 'heterogeneity in a very confined space' (Schlee 2008: 11). The region is home to multiple ethnic groups of varying sizes, including the Boran Oromo, Somali, Gabra, Garre, Sakuye, Rendille and Arbore (Hor), some of whom had resided in the region for quite some time, while others, including some Somali groups, had arrived from the northern Horn only in the second half of the nineteenth century (Fekadu Adugna 2009; Schlee 2010c).

Clearly, the various ethnic groups in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia are not timeless features of the ethnographic landscape; rather, they are manifestations of historical processes of migration, separation and incorporation, operating in accord with principles of social fission and fusion that Schlee, among others, has sought to unravel. What he observed during fieldwork were dynamic relations among the various groups that modulated between alliance and enmity, ritual exchange and raiding, and between expansion, dispossession, dispersal and regrouping. Such social and political fluctuation was, evidently, the general rule, at least before ethnicity became more rigidly territorialized under the corresponding colonial and postcolonial administrations (Schlee 2010c).

The relationship of the ethnic groups in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia to the territory they occupy and to each other may be understood in terms of several variables, including a common pastoralist livelihood, the history of the migration to this peripheral region, conflicts and agreements over the use of resources, the establishment of cooperative relations and coalitions that have been periodically revamped, and the actions of representatives of Ethiopian, British and Kenyan administrations. During his fieldwork, Schlee found that, despite current divisions among ethnic groups, traces of past connections were kept alive through an 'inter-ethnic network of clan identities' (Schlee 1994: 3). That is, many ethnic groups included clans that were also represented in the other groups, so that, for example, 'some of the clans found among the Gabra were believed to be the same as certain Rendille, Sakuye or Garre clans' (Schlee 2010b: 218). Therefore, clan members had the option of activating ties based on descent and

alliance within their own ethnic group or of referring to shared narratives of common origins across ethnic boundaries.

Schlee (1997) refers to links between ethnic groups through common clan membership as cross-cutting ties, which, taken together, form an alternative network spanning local divisions among groups, the members of which are often in conflict over scarce resources – pasture, water and cattle.² Max Gluckman (1965: 13, 20–21) stressed the importance of divided loyalties for cohesion and for ‘peace in the feud’ in societies without centralized rule. With reference to E.E. Evans-Pritchard’s (1940) description of Nuer society, Gluckman (1965: 12) argued that the co-residence of Nuer from different patrilineal descent groups in villages used mainly during the rainy season diminished the probability that conflicts between descent groups would escalate into violence – since their members depended on each other as neighbours in the villages. What is more, the rule of exogamy and relationships established through marriage forced a man not only to be loyal to his agnates but also to maintain good relations with his in-laws. While emphasizing the significance of cross-cutting ties, Schlee cautions against taking too sanguine a view of their effects, noting that they serve less to prevent violent conflict than to provide some sort of social support in its wake (Schlee 2008: 50–52).³

With the arrival of agents of the British and Ethiopian empires in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia, respectively, another dimension of social complexity and normativity was superimposed on the multifaceted relations among local people: the policies of colonial and, later, postcolonial administrations, the representatives of which, typically, have viewed pastoralists and their way of life as ‘primitive’ or ‘underdeveloped’. While Ethiopian forces sought ivory and slaves (Almagor 2002; Bahru 1991; Donham 2002; Turton 2002), the British, though largely uninterested in this apparently unproductive land, wanted to quell what they saw as ‘incessant conflicts over pasture and water’ (Schlee 1994: 45). On the basis, first, of their assumptions about the nature of tribal organization and, second, of their misunderstandings of the pastoralist adaptation to regional ecological conditions, colonial administrators attempted to impose rigid ethnic categories on the inhabitants and to promote the territorialization of ethnicity and pastoralism, irrespective of the mobility that is required to cope with ‘the uneven and unpredictable spatial distribution of the rains’ (Schlee 1994: 45). These policies only aggravated the economic and ecological problems, which the British wrongly attributed to soil erosion due to overgrazing (Schlee 1994: 45). The postcolonial Kenyan governments, beholden to dominant ethnic groups in the agricultural south of the country, have adopted measures similar to those of the British – measures which have deepened distinctions among ethnic groups and intensified their competition for resources (Schlee 2010c; see also Galaty in this volume). For their part, successive Ethiopian governments have used the label ‘backward’ as a kind of political magic formula to dispossess pastoralists and drive them from their territories (Schlee 2021; Gabbert et al. 2021).

The basis for understanding pastoralists in social, political and ecological context and for reflecting, more generally, on the complex dynamics of conflict and identification is, of course, intensive and long-term fieldwork – to which Schlee, his collaborators and his students are committed. Schlee’s general approach to anthropological research can be described as a form of ‘critical empiricism’ that finds expression in two closely interrelated orientations: a commitment to ethnographic research in the spirit of ‘epistemological realism’ (Schlee 2010b: 215) and engagement with people in the field – socially, personally and politically. Schlee has expressed confidence that, through fieldwork, facts can be established adequately enough for the purposes of anthropological scholarship, even if these facts must be regarded as provisional and subject to revisions in light of further evidence (Schlee 2010b: 221–25). By combining classical participant observation, linguistic analysis, genealogical research and oral history, Schlee has laid the foundation for his social and political analysis and for his theoretical reflection, both of which have led him to challenge widely held misconceptions, for example, about pastoralism, conflict, identity, migration and social integration – the themes featured in this volume.

In Schlee’s view, working to establish the facts of people’s lives is an obligation not only to scholarship but also to the people themselves – in whose interests he has often spoken out (e.g. Schlee 2013, 2021). Accepting the responsibility to get to know and to represent people’s way of life as best one can by conducting fieldwork conscientiously and creatively is a prerequisite for grounding one’s understanding and also for speaking truth to power.

Over the years, Schlee has returned repeatedly to field sites in northern Kenya and in other regions of northeast Africa, including Sudan, establishing many close personal ties. Characteristically, his relationships with the people in these places have always been ‘coeval’ (Fabian 1983). For example, drawing on people’s knowledge of their own history, among the Rendille and others, Schlee has gone to great lengths to acknowledge the contribution of his interlocutors, whom he has always viewed as research partners. This attitude, which, according to one reviewer, lends Schlee’s work ‘a dialogical postmodern scent’ (Galaty 1992: 220), is evident in his decision to cite these partners by name whenever this is possible without endangering them:

What would give me the right to treat my conversation partners among the pastoral nomads of northern Kenya differently from colleagues in Germany? The fact that . . . they have never undergone any formal education in the Western sense? To me all that mattered little in comparison to their right to individual acknowledgment. (Schlee 2010b: 219–20)

As Director of the Max-Planck-Institute for Social Anthropology, Schlee has collaborated with a number of colleagues with whom his interests overlap. He has also trained a new generation of anthropologists (including many from the

'Global South'), funded long-term fieldwork and encouraged the use of innovative ethnographic methods; and he has supported and worked together with research partners in northeastern Africa. In many ways, this volume bears witness to this collaboration, training and support.

Part I. Pastoralists and Others: Identity, Territoriality, History and Politics

The chapters in the first section of this volume concern, on the one hand, the flexibility of identification and re-identification among pastoralists and, on the other hand, conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary people such as agriculturalists, urbanites, state authorities and development agents – conflicts which are based in part on the latter's misinterpretations of and discrimination against the former. Bilinda Straight challenges pejoratively tinged interpretations of gender identities among the Samburu of northern Kenya, paying particular attention to relations between young women and young men and to the oft reported role of the women in inciting violent behaviour among the men. With reference to his long personal history of research on pastoralist Maa-speakers of southwestern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania, commonly referred to as Maasai, John Galaty provides insight into the history of population movements, the permutations of social formations and the development of 'protocols' for the allocation of resources among groupings that are often in intense competition. As elsewhere, however, the social and geographical flexibility of herding communities has been hindered by the demarcation of Maasailand by state authorities, which took the form of the administrative crafting of sectional boundaries during the colonial period and which today continues with the so-called Group Ranches of the postcolonial state.

State policies vis-à-vis pastoralists take an even more drastic turn in the chapter by Elhadi Ibrahim Osman and Al-Amin Abu-Manga, which traces the widely varying fate of two different pastoralist groups of the Blue Nile area whose patterns of transhumance were foiled by civil war, the imposition of an international border between Sudan and the new state of South Sudan, and the expansion of mechanized farming. Finally, members of the two groups were forced to settle in different regional states of Sudan under conditions that were favourable, in one case, and highly unfavourable, in the other.

With the chapter by Steve Tonah, we shift to Ghana in West Africa, where the state is controlled, once again, by those with social origins among agriculturalists, and where basic rights are denied to members of mobile populations, including pastoralists and traders. Michaela Pelican employs innovative ethnographic methods to explore relations among pastoralists, agriculturalists and traders in the Grasslands of northern Cameroon, where she documents and analyses theatrical performances and local video productions that dramatize such relations.

The authors of the chapters in this first part of the volume focus either on relations among pastoralists or on pastoralists in relation to agriculturalists, traders, and representatives of state and development agencies. They intend not only to depict social, political and economic dilemmas, while exploring their implications, but also to correct misperceptions of pastoralists and their way of life. Schlee and his colleagues, including contributors to this volume, have analysed pastoralism as a kind of double adaptation: first, to harsh environmental conditions and, second, to the presence of others with whom resources are perforce shared (e.g. Catley et al. 2013; Schlee 2013).

Schlee, among others, has repeatedly refuted social-evolutionist clichés which hold that nomadic pastoralism represents an early stage of human development by referring to ethno-archaeological and socio-geographical evidence of shifts between agricultural and pastoralist adaptations throughout history (Schlee 1991: 137; Schlee 2012a; Scholz and Schlee 2015). Pastoralism did not precede agriculture, it co-exists with it; and it has evolved together with it under varying ecological conditions. Today, pastoral nomadism is ‘a rather sophisticated, economically successful and sustainable way of life’ in drylands (Scholz and Schlee 2015: 838), where herders may now use mobile phones to coordinate the movements of herds, to plan attacks in remote areas in the context of feuds, to negotiate and make peace, and to be able to react flexibly to changing climatic challenges (Krätli 2006; Schlee 2012a: 3; Hoehne 2022: 155–57).

Herding in semi-arid regions under unpredictable climatic conditions requires good range management, which is achieved through an intimate knowledge of the environment, through mobility and also through adaptation to the prevailing social and political conditions. Well organized livestock distribution, ownership variation, multiple property rights and strategic livestock exchange provide social security networks through ties of friendship and kinship, which buffer risks in challenging environments and foster bonds of solidarity and cooperation within and across ethnic and clan boundaries (Schlee 1989; see also Khazanov and Schlee 2012; Schlee 2012b). As Schlee’s friend Ginno Ballo, a herder from Arbore in southern Ethiopia, states: ‘Cattle open as many ways between people as they have hair on their hide’ (Ginno Ballo personal communication with Gabbert, August 2011). Clearly, however, these ‘many ways between people’ may serve as the basis for the formation of groups, alliances and coalitions not only with but also against others – a point to which we return below.

On the basis of his ethnography, Schlee has helped to lead the way in developing a grounded critique of state-driven and developmental discourse that is directed against pastoralists (Gabbert 2021). In many African settings, as Schlee describes in detail for the Sudan, the state favours farmers and urban dwellers, ‘from whom a larger proportion of the ruling class has been recruited’ (Schlee 2015: 134). This helps to explain the harmful policies that Elhadi and Schlee (2014) saw in the Blue Nile region, where nomads were taxed multiple times and

had to pay to use pastures on fenced but uncultivated land to feed their animals. Here, state policies actually increased inequality, disorder and conflict potential through land registration and taxation (Schlee 2013: 13). The same is true elsewhere: nomads from Kenya compare government chiefs who collect money from pastoralists to lions, who ‘wait at the water holes and prey on the animals that come to drink’ (Schlee 2013: 13).

Even more extremely, authorities cause pastoralists to be removed from their land, often violently, because of so-called ‘development’ interventions such as the implementation of large-scale agricultural projects in southern Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya (Gabbert et al. 2021). In-depth studies show, however, that land taken from pastoralists often provides less revenue than it did before ‘development’ occurred (Atkeyelsh 2019; Behnke and Kerven 2013; Gabbert 2021).

If, however, land is under-used after it has been taken from pastoralists, what is its benefit even for elites? Schlee considers a number of possible answers to this question, ranging from corruption, i.e. the identification of elites not with the whole national community but with their own narrow interests (Schlee 2013), to class warfare in the name of ‘development’ (Schlee 2021). The class warfare in question takes the form of the war of ‘progressive’ forces, including, especially, national elites, against the ‘backward’ sectors of the population, for example, the agro-pastoralist communities of southern Ethiopia:

If your group is classified as backward, then your ethnicity is not associated with any entitlement to resources and does not have a voice in politics. So this distinction might mark a new class division that runs across the entire country. Ethiopia is divided into those who know the direction of progress and therefore know where the directions ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ point and those who are said not to know. (Schlee 2021: 67)

In this context, it does not matter if the land was used more productively or less destructively before being ‘developed’. What matters is which class membership or ideological orientation defines the rules and goals of what is ‘better’. To ‘relieve’ people of their ‘backward’ existence benefits those who claim to know the right direction, insofar as they get credit for this noble achievement.

Of course, this brief review of Schlee’s critique of the policies of East African states that are harmful to pastoralists only scratches the surface of a complex set of issues, which, however, Schlee, his colleagues and his students continue to explore in greater depth (Abbink et al. 2014; Gabbert et al. 2021). Recently, ethnographic and historical insights have led some of them to ask if the nation-state may be considered to be the wrong model for politics in the Horn of Africa (Markakis et al. 2021).

In situations of resource conflict between farmers and pastoralists, ‘development’ agents, more often than not, support official goals of the state that are detrimental to pastoralist economies and ecologies. They fail to recognize that

pastoralists already contribute to developing agendas of long-term national sustainability and to finding solutions for global challenges in times of ecological crisis.

Clearly, there are a number of dedicated NGO staff members who have devoted themselves to understanding the value of pastoral livelihoods. Often, however, those involved in development aid have project assignments that do not exceed a few years. Consequently, they have limited possibilities to learn about the many time-tested practices of pastoralists that are based on flexibility, mobility and continuous innovation. A low yield cow that does not give large amounts of milk might be sorted out quickly by quantitative enhancement measures, ignoring the fact that families in drylands prefer animals that lactate steadily over the year and survive with limited inputs (Schlee 1988; Schlee und Salentin 1995: 102). Such drylands might look like a disaster to a sedentary person who seeks stable planning patterns; but a pastoralist with a mobility map in mind sees which measures are necessary for maintaining good environmental conditions, e.g. letting the dry pasture rest until the rains come (Schlee 1991: 134). Land titling and fencing only makes sense to those who do not understand the concept of free movement of people and livestock on open lands, where rainfall is unpredictable and water sources are impermanent. Based on short-term and spatially static observations, development interventions such as privatization and concentration of land ownership are often counterproductive to long-term land-use challenges (Schlee 1991). Therefore, weighing the historically grounded evaluation of the costs of misconceived development against the benefits of the subsistence economies of pastoralists (Schlee 1984, 1989: 44; 1991; Schlee and Shongolo 2012), Schlee concludes that 'anti-pastoralism policies are outdated' and that, 'in most of the world's dry belt, mountainous areas and tundra, reliable food production depends on mobile livestock-keeping' (Schlee 2013: 6; see also Schlee 2012a: 11; Istomin and Habeck 2016; Istomin et al. 2017).

Rather than pursuing this topic further, however, we shift gears, thematically, turning to the next part of this volume, which shows how Schlee's empirical research may serve, and has served, as a point of departure for developing a theory of conflict and identification in human societies generally.

Part II. Conflict and Identification, Interests and Integration

For Schlee, field research – on the political ecology of pastoralists of northern Kenya (e.g. Schlee 2010c) and the Blue Nile region of Sudan (Elhadi and Schlee 2014) and on the peace process in Somalia (Schlee 2006, 2008: 107–48) – has resulted not only in contributions to the specialist literature on pastoralism on the Horn of Africa but also in the formulation of a general theory of conflict, identity, interests and integration. While, in Schlee's scheme of things, these four

concepts are intimately intertwined, it is ‘identity’ that seems to have aroused the most controversy among anthropologists, social scientists and historians.

In the vast literature on ‘identity’, there is scant acknowledgment that the term is used rather indiscriminately in a number of different senses. Historical semantic investigation shows that the English-language term ‘identity’ – along with its cognates in French, German and no doubt other languages as well – has long been used in the fundamental sense of the ‘sameness’ of two or more things: the identity of x and y or of x_1 and x_2 (Eidson 2019; see also Dubiel 1976; Fraas 1996; Wagner 1999: 63). On this fundament, the idea of individual identity emerged in the early modern period; but the two senses invoked most commonly in the human sciences, which might be glossed, respectively, ‘collective identity’ and ‘social-psychological identity’, became widely established, beginning in the mid-twentieth century (Gleason 1983; Mackenzie 1978; Weigert 1983; see also Eidson 2019).⁴ In the literature of the various human sciences, ‘identity’ began to appear more often in the 1950s and 1960s; and, by 1980, the frequency of the use of this term had increased dramatically, as competing concepts, such as ‘character’, which had served a comparable function in setting apart and distinguishing one collectivity from another, were largely abandoned (Eidson 2019; Riesman 2020: lx).

As is well known, the ascent of ‘identity’ to conceptual or at least terminological dominance has been accompanied by a critical reaction, especially because the use of this term may entail the reification of groups in ways that can be, and have been, exploited for political purposes, many of them reprehensible (e.g. Handler 1994; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Malešević 2002; Judt 2010). However, in early ethnological and social anthropological texts, the term ‘identity’ was used to express the fact that tribal segments often set themselves off and distinguish themselves from other segments of the same order (e.g. Marett 1920: 190; Mooney 1902: 385; Schoolcraft 1845: 28–29). Subsequently, Fortes (1940: 251–53), Gluckman (1940: 40, 49) and Nadel (1950: 346–48), among others, showed that the concept of ‘identity’ is thoroughly compatible with approaches emphasizing the flexibility inherent in processes of identification and in relations of amity or enmity.

More recently, some of the fiercest critics of the concept of ‘identity’ have seemed to concede that it is sometimes useful. At the turn of the millennium, Rogers Brubaker, with Frederick Cooper, published a widely cited article excoriating common usage of ‘identity’, suggesting, practically, that it be stricken from the social scientific lexicon (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Subsequently, however, Brubaker published a book in which ‘identity’ serves as a central concept – indeed, it appears in plural form in the title – and which contains no critical reflection on the use of the term (Brubaker 2016). Given the near ubiquity and the apparent indispensability of the term ‘identity’, the solution to any difficulties surrounding its use is not to purge it but to define and employ it in analysis appropriately.

For Schlee, the identity of a collectivity, or of its members in their relations to that collectivity, is based on the actors' activation of one or more available categories of likeness, distinction and solidarity (e.g. Schlee 2004; Eidson et al. 2017). It is something that may vary, within the limits of plausibility, depending on the circumstances, the social situation, the motivations and the intellectual agility of different actors – a point to which we return below. For now, perhaps the most important issue to clarify in a discussion of Schlee's understanding of identity and processes of identification is his rejection of the distinction between resource-based conflicts and identity-based conflicts.

'Identity' and 'resources' are not qualifiers of different kinds of conflict but different aspects of all conflicts . . . The . . . study of 'identification' aims at answering questions starting with 'who'; while the resource issue addresses the question 'about what'. Who-questions (e.g. who sides with whom against whom, along which lines of identification, religious, ethnic or whatever) need to be asked in the analysis of any conflict, and the same is true for the question 'about what' (e.g. water, oil, jobs, political representation, etc.). (Schlee 2018a: 11)

Since, in conflict situations, the question 'about what' always involves resources of some sort, whether natural, economic or political, and since the determination of the resources in question varies with each particular case, Schlee focuses in his general conflict theory on 'who-questions', that is, on the bases of identification. Thereby, he distinguishes three relevant aspects: (1) 'social structures and their cognitive representations'; (2) 'the politics of inclusion and exclusion'; and (3) 'the economics of group size' (Schlee 2004: 137). Articulating these aspects of the larger problem and their interrelations also serves to provide the rationale for Schlee's own way of synthesizing such apparently diverse approaches as structural functionalism, cognitive anthropology, sociolinguistics, rational choice theory, ecological anthropology, action anthropology and theories of agency and the self.

With the phrase 'social structures and their cognitive representations', Schlee is referring especially to the following aspects of identification processes: dimensions of identification, i.e. frames of reference for purposes of identification (e.g. nationality, ethnicity, clan, lineage, gender, religion, 'race', etc.); and categories of identification within such frames (e.g. Rendille or Samburu within the frame 'ethnicity', or Rengumo or Matarbá within the frame of Rendille 'clans' and so on). These social structural and cognitive aspects also include various combinatory principles governing the perceived compatibility or incompatibility of different categories, the relations of nesting among them and their susceptibility to prototypical interpretations, i.e. the degree to which they allow for distinctions between central and marginal members (Eidson et al. 2017).

Identities are set in motion in the second phase of Schlee's analysis, when actors engage in the 'politics of inclusion and exclusion' by choosing, consciously or unconsciously, between alternative forms of identification in particular situa-

tions and under particular circumstances. Schlee (2004: 136) argues that, very often, there is ‘room for identity work – that is, room for people reasoning about their identities and changing them’. Given the cases on which he has focused – for example, competition among Somali warlords in raising forces (Schlee 1995: 283–86) – Schlee has often emphasized the role of the ‘virtuoso’ of identification processes, whom he defines as ‘someone who successfully navigates different identities, responding to threats, expectations, and opportunities, while always remaining himself’ (Eidson et al. 2017: 355). Whether or not actors are virtuosos of identification, and whether they are engaging in power politics or simply navigating the variegated situations of everyday life – from, say, family life to extra-familial forms of sociability – they necessarily make choices, with or without reflecting on these choices, among categories of identification that include some other actors as their fellows, while excluding others.

Finally, with his emphasis on the ‘economics of group size’, Schlee explores the qualitative and especially the quantitative consequences of inclusion and exclusion via choices among categories of identification – consequences that may have far reaching effects in situations of conflict. Some options in identification may result in larger, more heterogeneous collections of group members and some in smaller, more homogeneous ones; and, for some strategically minded actors, having many comrades or associates may be advantageous when sharing the costs of collective action, while having fewer may be preferable when sharing the benefits that result from that action.

Schlee is intrigued by the possibility of manipulating identification and re-identification in order to minimize costs and maximize benefits – from the point of view of a particular actor or of a small set of closely allied actors. But he also notes that the possibilities open to the virtuoso of identification may be limited by ‘social structure and the conventional logic of identification’ (Schlee 2008: 58). Thus, the clan organization in Somalia provides warlords ‘with the tools and the material of military recruitment’, but it also ‘limits their freedom of choice in recruiting whom they want’, for example, by preventing them from discriminating, during recruitment, among more or less suitable members of any given clan. For, when manipulating the terms of identification, the warlords in question ‘need to behave plausibly and follow socially accepted patterns’ (Schlee 2008: 58). By taking into account both the narrow interests of individual actors and the social obligations in which they are entangled, Schlee merges, in his conception of agency in processes of identification, the rationally calculating, gain-maximizing *Homo oeconomicus* with the role-fulfilling and norm-abiding *Homo sociologicus* (Schlee 2008: 53, 58; cf. Elwert 1997, 2002).

Of course, Schlee’s conception applies not only to the local logic of self-identification or mutual identification, e.g. in the Somali setting during the escalation of civil war, 1991–1993. It may also help to illuminate the mobilization of categories globally, for example, when the USA and its allies declare war on ‘ter-

ror' and define certain individuals as 'terrorists'; or, conversely, when Al Qaeda and ISIS invoke the category 'mujahideen' to attract followers from around the globe (see Roche and Reyna in this volume). Therefore, external delineations of identities, following their own normative and ideological logic, need to be taken into account when analysing local dynamics of identification.⁵

Although inspired by empirical research in particular locations and directed, initially, toward solving particular problems, Schlee's scheme for the analysis of identification processes is universal in scope, providing a matrix for analysing a wide range of problems in various settings – as is clear in the case of the contributions to the second part of this volume. Sophie Roche applies Schlee's ideas on group size to what are basically regional conflicts between the Tajik government and the political opposition in a peripheral area, showing how some representatives of oppositional forces, deprived of access to political channels domestically, align themselves with jihad on an international scale, thus giving the central government the opportunity to seek allies among international players in the 'war against terrorism'. Reflecting generally on identification processes in cases of transgression and retaliation, Bertram Turner, with reference to Schlee's work in East Africa and his own in Morocco, shows how diverse injured parties may discover or rediscover the identificatory bases of their solidarity – although he also emphasizes 'the fragility of large sizes and great numbers' in groups formed in this way, a point for which Roche's case study might serve as an example.

Aleksandar Bošković continues with the theme of group size by focusing on potential contradictions between the commitment to a particular national identity – Serbian, in this case – and to universal human rights, which are, arguably, an expression of 'the collective identity' that is 'most difficult to mobilize', namely, 'our common humanity' (Schlee et al. 2018: 230). Contradictions between ways of identifying that are particular or universal in scope emerge with force when the concept of human rights is broadened to include cultural rights – a potentially dangerous development, according to Bošković, insofar as the right to exist as a nation might seem to imply the right to defend the integrity of the nation in the face of 'enemies'.

At very different scales, Wolbert G.C. Smidt, Dereje Feyissa and Stephen P. Reyna focus on narratives of identity, conflict and integration as expressions of dominance, resistance or counter-hegemony. In the oral tradition of the Tigray of northern Ethiopia, Smidt has discovered a poem that was composed in the 1940s in a kind of Italian pidgin. In the poem, the Italians lament being driven from the good land that they have occupied by a Tigrayan bandit; but, on closer inspection, Smidt discovers a narrative formula for resistance to usurpation, which, in Tigrayan oral tradition, has been applied to conflicts in various contexts and at different scales. Dereje shows how the claim of representatives of Orthodox Christianity to provide the sacred narrative underpinning Ethiopian national identity is being challenged by Muslims advocating a counter-narrative that of-

fers an alternative basis for national identity. Thus, in their efforts to distinguish themselves from one another by offering mutually exclusive bases for identification, ‘enemies become alike’ (Schlee 2008: 11). In seeking to illuminate the causes of contemporary conflict on a global scale, Reyna characterizes two forms of ostensibly deviant behaviour in the Global South – cargo cults and terrorism – as reflections, respectively, of the ideology and the military force of the imperial powers of the Global North, particularly the United States. Participants in so-called cargo cults anticipate the arrival of abundant riches from the land of the imperialists, because the imperialists have first identified themselves as suppliers of these riches; similarly, those branded as terrorists respond in kind to the violence perpetrated against the populations of the former colonies.

Part III. Migration and Exclusion, Displacement and Emplacement

In our presentation of the contributions to this volume, we set migration apart as a special topic to which Schlee’s approach to processes of conflict and identification may be applied fruitfully. While migration has always numbered among Schlee’s topics, he had for many years restricted his attention to population movements within East Africa or from West Africa to East Africa (Dereje and Schlee 2009). Then, during his time as director at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Schlee started to engage in diasporic and transnational issues, investigating, together with Nina Glick Schiller and others, pathways for the integration of migrant groups in Germany (Glick Schiller et al. 2004). As part of the larger EU-funded project ‘Diasporas for Peace’, coordinated by colleagues at the University of Jyväskylä (2008–2011), with Markus V. Hoehne, Dereje and Schlee involved at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Schlee and Isir Schlee examined the transnational engagement of Somalis in Germany, especially that of the second generation of Somali migrants who were losing interest in social ties to and affairs in war-torn Somalia (Schlee and Schlee 2010).

Schlee took up the topic of migration from the Global South to the Global North in 2017 when he joined the Max Planck Initiative ‘The Challenges of Migration, Integration and Exclusion’ (known by the German acronym WiMi), which is the subject of the contribution by Marie-Claire Foblets and Zeynep Yanasmayan. Conceived in the wake of ‘the memorable summer of 2015’, when the German government, largely in response to the Syrian crisis, decided to admit a record number of immigrants, this initiative combined the expertise of six Max Planck institutes and included Foblets, Yanasmayan and Schlee in the planning commission. Not wanting to replicate the work of earlier or of parallel projects on the topic of immigration, which have focused overwhelmingly on ‘pathways to successful integration of immigrants’, the members of the commission chose to

emphasize ‘processes and mechanisms of exclusion’ in migration. In accord with Schlee’s thinking, ‘exclusion’ was conceived not as the opposite of integration but as an inevitable, if highly variable, aspect of it. Inspired by that conception, Hoehne and Tabea Scharrer (2021), who were part of the WiMi initiative, have emphasized that, among Somalis in Germany, certain practices that are often thought to be (self-)exclusionary, such as establishing ethnic associations, can become a basis for linking with the non-Somali majority society in Germany, while seemingly inclusionary practices, such as leaving behind basic Islamic provisions of clothing for women in public, might effectively lead to more exclusion (within the Somali diaspora, but sometimes also within the larger society). As Foblets and Yanasmayan show in this volume, social anthropological projects within the WiMi initiative, which address migration within Africa (often a precondition of migration from Africa to Europe) and the experience of migrants in Halle (Saale), Germany, challenge the common assumptions that the integration of migrants depends necessarily on their ‘sameness’ with the receiving society and that the receiving society necessarily displays social and cultural homogeneity or ‘sameness’ with itself (see also Schlee and Horstmann 2018).

In her chapter, Rano Turaeva focuses on internal migration in Uzbekistan, specifically on the dilemmas confronting migrants from the western province of Khorzem to the distant capital, Tashkent. In Tashkent, Khorezmian migrants are torn between ethnic solidarity, on which they are dependent, both economically and legally, and their narrower interests as individuals or as household heads, which cannot be ignored if they and their families are to survive. Turaeva thus provides a classic example of the need to shift strategically between wider and narrower forms of identification, depending on the elusive answer to the questions ‘Who?’, ‘With whom?’ and ‘For whom?’.

Peter Finke and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann offer contrasting case studies, both of which concern transnational relations among members of a single ethnic group or nation who, in the course of history, were separated geographically and then reunited, decades later, only to discover the degree to which they had, in the interim, grown apart. In Finke’s case, which features the concept of ‘bounded rationality’ in an analysis of decisions regarding migration, political restrictions on the movement of pastoralists were suddenly lifted when the Soviet Union dissolved and the new Qazaq (or Kazakh) state invited Qazaqs living in Mongolia and elsewhere to ‘return home’. In Benda-Beckmann’s case, Moluccans who had migrated to the Netherlands in the 1940s, when the Dutch colony in island Southeast Asia became the new nation of Indonesia, attempted, decades later, to re-establish ties with compatriots with whom they had little in common in a ‘homeland’ that was no longer their home.

This final section closes with the contribution by Nina Glick Schiller, who, while acknowledging the ubiquity of migration, along with the resulting transnational relations, also sees it as something of a red herring. Rather than focusing

on the exclusion of migrants in receiving societies and, thus, emphasizing the binary of ‘native’ and ‘stranger’, Glick Schiller directs our attention to the displacement of people, including migrants and non-migrants alike, through capital accumulation worldwide. All victims of displacement, whether from the city centre to the low-rent district, or from one corner of the world to another, seek emplacement through activation of ‘multiscalar’ social relations within ‘hierarchies of networks of power’. The search for emplacement may lead to ‘fundamentalist ethnonationalism’, often coupled with religious beliefs; but it can also take the form of engagement in political movements for social and economic justice. Understanding these processes requires, Glick Schiller suggests, following Schlee’s lead in linking the actor’s perspective with the system perspective.

Processes of Identification across Scales of Social Integration

[W]hen the different individual rationalities behind individual identification and bonding have been explained, what comes next? An obvious question concerns the connections between processes understood at the level of particular actors and the behavior of large aggregates of people, in other words the micro/macro problem. This remains among the most intractable of social science conundrums. (Schlee 2008: 17)

Schlee addresses what he calls the micro/macro problem by working, simultaneously, with the concepts of ‘identification’ and ‘integration’ – concepts he associates with theories of action, in the first case, and with system theory, in the second. Compared with ‘identity’, ‘integration’ – though occupying, along with a number of equivalent expressions, a central position in the vocabulary of the social sciences – has not, in recent years, received the same degree of critical scrutiny, with some exceptions (e.g. Schinkel 2018; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). It is, however, no less deserving of re-examination, since, like ‘identity’, it is used extensively not only as a ‘category of analysis’ but also as a ‘category of practice’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 4), especially in public discourse regarding immigration (Hoehne and Scharrer 2021: 2). Schlee clarifies his understanding of ‘integration’ by noting that he uses it ‘not in the sense of politicians or social workers who want to achieve something and for whom the idea is laden with a positive value, but in the sense of system theory’ (Schlee 2018a: 31, note 2). By way of example, he adds that ‘[i]f we understand our enemies to the extent that we can engage in meaningful hostile relationships with them, we are part of the same social system’ (Schlee 2008: 11).

What are the implications of a theory of action, based on the idea that identities are (within limits) mutable, for a theory of systems, based on the idea that integration entails both the linking and separating of participants in larger aggregates (cf. Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 23)? While offering no simple answer

to this question, Schlee does find his own path through the corresponding difficulties by exploring social relations across different scales of social integration, such as those one might call tribal, national or ethnic, imperial and universal. Glick Schiller, in this volume, insists that human subjects occupy and engage in networks that are ‘unbounded’ and ‘multiscalar’ insofar as the search for integration or ‘emplacement’ does not proceed systematically through a hierarchy of bounded territorial units, from local to national to global, but branches out simultaneously, if selectively, in all directions at once. This precision of Schlee’s position might serve as a fitting point of departure for highlighting the varying approaches to problems of integration in this volume.

Straight, Galaty and Smidt start with local or tribal relations, which they follow outward or inward in various ways. Straight shows how gender relations among young Samburu women and men vary in sync with intertribal relations in subtle ways. In Galaty’s chapter, we find an example of pastoral groupings with ‘self-chosen names’ but with no ‘fixed outside border’, so that the demarcation ‘between the “we” and “the others” shifts depending on the point of view of the observer’ (Schlee 2008: 7). ‘Here, ethnicity frequently only emerged as a result of colonial administration, when districts were divided according to the tribes allegedly settled there’ (Schlee 2008: 7). Smidt shows how people in the part of Tigray where he has done fieldwork apply a kind of narrative schema that opposes an in-group to an out-group, establishing a demarcation that can be expanded, contracted or shifted this way or that, depending on the circumstances and the intentions of the narrator and the understanding of his or her audience.

Agents of colonial administrations operate at a grander scale, according to a mode of integration that entails ‘the levelling of ethnic differences among members of the ruling elite . . . and . . . the maintenance and even formalization and instrumentalization of ethnic difference between ruler and the ruled and within the ruled populations’ (Schlee 2018b: 191; see also Dabhoiwala 2021). Members of the ruling elite often identify with a homogeneous national or international community, while the subjected peoples are divided into ethnic groups that are perceived to be homogeneous within but heterogeneous vis-à-vis one another. Upon gaining independence from colonial rule, the former colonies were faced with the apparent necessity of becoming a nation, bridging ethnic diversity or other differences, be they sectarian, regional or cultural. In different ways, the chapters by Elhadi and Abu-Manga, Tonah, Pelican, Dereje, Foblets and Yanas-mayan, Turaeva, Finke and Benda-Beckmann all deal with manifestations of such postcolonial dilemmas.

In the contributions by Roche, Bošković, Reyna and Glick Schiller, integration at a universal scale clashes either with various forms of ethnonationalism or with alternative visions of universality. In the chapter by Roche, the former member of the Tajik presidential guard who vanished mysteriously, only to reappear in a video from Syria in which he announced his impending return to

Tajikistan in the name of jihad, opts to identify with – or, in Glick Schiller's terms, to seek emplacement in – what he understands to be a just and universally valid movement against corrupt political regimes, including that of his own country of origin. Bošković, in contrast, reports on Serbians who choose a particular form of national integration over integration in a larger community of nations that are united, supposedly, in the name of international law and human rights. For Reyna, the claim, particularly, of the United States to be ushering in a new era of peace and prosperity on a global scale is, in truth, an imperial quest for domination, which provokes resistance in the form of 'terrorism'. His analysis challenges us to ask which side, in this struggle, really represents generally valid human values. Finally, Glick Schiller shows how the dispossessed and displaced people of two cities in the USA and in Germany, respectively, seek emplacement through the activation of what she calls 'multiscalar social relations . . . within various hierarchies of networks of power'.

In the ways just cited, this volume takes the herdsman at the watering-hole, whom we met in the quotation at the beginning of this introduction, through a whole series of transformations. It ends with the conviction that all herdsmen and women – indeed, all people everywhere – should be included within the circle of those whose experiences and whose opinions matter, so that they do not end up among the dispossessed and displaced, as too many already have.

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Notes

1. For reflection on why, in such cases, a herder might decide one way or another, see Gabbert (2012: 105) and Schlee (2010a: 10).

2. More recently, Gabbert and Thubauville (2010) have referred to communities that traverse ethnic boundaries with the concept of a 'cultural neighbourhood', to which we return in our epilogue.

3. Hoehne (2016: 1389) has emphasized that cross-cutting ties during the civil war in northern Somalia (1988–1991) helped to keep lines of communication open between the enemy groups. 'Given the intensity of civil war', however, 'the power of these ties to curtail conflict was limited'. Earlier, Helander (1996: 198) took inspiration from Schlee's original findings, when he emphasized that 'Rahanweyn clans' living in southwest Somalia 'do contain large numbers of members from other Somali clan-families'; and, in the context of domestic migration, relatives help each other to become adopted into the Rahanweyn grouping. The personal networks which transgress clan boundaries reminded Helander of what Schlee had found among the Rendille, Gabra, Sakuye and some Somalis in northern Kenya. Helander has concluded 'that the existence of such cross-clan kinship links serves to mitigate inter-clan warfare' (ibid.).

4. By 'collective identity' we mean the notion that a collectivity may have an identity that is in some ways analogous to that of the individual person; and by 'social-psychological identity' we mean 'the identity which an individual can find through a collectivity' (Mackenzie 1978: 39; see also Eidson 2019).

5. This has been illustrated by Schlee (2008: 167), who, while serving in 2002 and 2003 as an expert at the peace conference for Somalia that took place in Kenya, was able to observe how some of the Somali participants, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, tried to outdo each other in depicting themselves as 'moderates' and their opponents as 'terrorists'.

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