

MIGRATION AND ACQUISITION OF NEW CLAN IDENTITIES AMONG THE ARIAAL OF NORTHERN KENYA

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Historical studies have shown that the current ethnic groups of East African pastoral societies have been created through a long process of group fission and fusion during inter-ethnic migrations. As a result, different ethnic groups often contain groups of people who recognize themselves as descendants of common ancestors. Although past studies have suggested that group affiliation identity is dynamic and fluid among East African pastoralists, no study has examined the actual process by which individuals self-identify and define others in various situations. In this study, I focused on the Ariaal people, who inhabit border regions between the pastoral Samburu and Rendille in northern Kenya, and examined the process of immigration and acquisition of new clan identities.

Keywords: East African pastoral societies, Identity, Inter-ethnic segment link, Rendille, Samburu