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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910790394303321 |
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| Titolo | Namibia's Red Line [[electronic resource]] : The History of a Veterinary and Settlement Border // by G. Miescher |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | New York : , : Palgrave Macmillan US : , : Imprint : Palgrave Macmillan, , 2012 |
| ISBN | 1-280-88077-5 9786613722089 1-137-11831-8 |
| Edizione | [1st ed. 2012.] |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (340 p.) |
| Collana | Palgrave Series in African Borderlands Studies |
| Disciplina | 968.8102 |
| Soggetti | Imperialism Africa—History Ethnology—Africa Physical geography Anthropology Oral history Imperialism and Colonialism African History African Culture World Regional Geography (Continents, Countries, Regions) Oral History Namibia Boundaries Namibia Colonization Namibia History 1884-1915 Namibia History 1915-1946 Namibia History 1946-1990 |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | "This book is adapted from the German manuscript 'Die Rote Linie. Eine Geschichte der Veterinar- und Siedlungsgrenze in Namibia (1890er-1960er Jahre)', completed in 2009 and published in 2012 by the Basler Afrika Bibliographien in Switzerland." |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Nota di contenuto

The history of the red line as a contribution to Namibian historiography
-- Historiography and the struggle for Namibian independence --
Studies on region and ethnicity -- New trends in historiography -- A
history of the red line as a history of borders -- Territorial boundary
and frontiers -- The imperial "barbarian border".

Sommario/riassunto

Based on archival sources and oral history, this book reconstructs a border-building process in Namibia that spanned more than sixty years. The process commenced with the establishment of a temporary veterinary defence line against rinderpest by the German colonial authorities in the late nineteenth century and ended with the construction of a continuous two-metre-high fence by the South African colonial government sixty years later. This 1250-kilometre fence divides northern from central Namibia even today. The book combines a macro and a micro-perspective and differentiates between cartographic and physical reality. The analysis explores both the colonial state's agency with regard to veterinary and settlement policies and the strategies of Africans and Europeans living close to the border. The analysis also includes the varying perceptions of individuals and populations who lived further north and south of the border and describes their experiences crossing the border as migrant workers, African traders, European settlers and colonial officials. The Red Line's history is understood as a gradual process of segregating livestock and people, and of constructing dichotomies of modern and traditional, healthy and sick, European and African.