

This paper examines the controversy between Kenya and Uganda over the ownership of Migingo Island in the shared Lake Victoria waters, in the context of general debates regarding African boundary disputes. The Migingo controversy brings to the fore unresolved issues around the emergence, nature and transformation of African borders generally, and their significant role in addressing pertinent questions of territoriality, citizenship and nationhood. Like other border controversies elsewhere in Africa, the Migingo case challenges the perception that border areas are marginal spaces that can be ignored. Migingo's troubles underscore the realities of Africa's colonial borders, bringing into focus the border populations and the social, cultural and economic relations they generate across the dividing lines. While challenging eastern Africa's states to view local communities as important agents in fostering change along common borders, the paper emphasizes the need for harmonious border relations as a barometer in testing good neighbourliness and regional integration.