AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF EVERYDAY GOVERNANCE: COLLECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND SUBJECT-MAKING

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The state in Africa has undergone dramatic change in recent decades. Weakened by structural adjustment policies, discredited by corruption and contested by the parallel bureaucracies created by the system of international co-operation, its administrative services lack motivated staff and the necessary resources to function and struggle to fulfil the tasks which are, in principle, central to the role of the state. The doctrine of 'good governance' may appear to be no more than a new condition attached to foreign aid, however it is becoming the sole point of reference, on which any critique of the state may be based. This normative concept—defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank 1992: 1)—refers to a political regime that respects human and civil rights and can rely on an effective, competent, responsible and incorrupt bureaucracy to implement its measures. It incorporates both a technical dimension (in the sense of improved public administration) and highly political elements. The latter, which take the form of the narrow link proposed between sustainable economic development and the establishment of the rule of law based on the model of the Western democracies, are the less explicit of the two. The very notion of governance as it is used in development parlance is paradoxical: it recommends a vigorous civil society to counter-balance and control a state which is always suspected of various shortcomings, but also leaves unspoken the specific role of social forces in this process, tending to concentrate on the production of technical rules for the efficient administration of public services.

Despite the existence of a vast literature on 'good governance', current debates remain strongly organised along dualistic lines. On the one hand, we find research produced by institutions closely connected to the World Bank, endowed with a rich statistical apparatus

and aiming to show that "governance matters" (Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobatón 1999; see Schacter 2000 too)—possibly to legitimate this new modality of aid conditionality. As opposed to these normative and instrumental conceptions of governance as "sound development management" (World Bank 1992: 1), radical and poststructuralist critics (for example Escobar 1995) stress the hegemonic nature of development narratives without analysing actual practices. As a result, deconstructivist approaches suffer from both ethnographic anaemia and historical amnesia (Moore 2000: 659). We also feel uncomfortable with excessively schematic theses which tend to either 'euphemise' or 'pathologise' the dysfunction of the states in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa (see, for example, Chabal & Daloz 1999 or Bayart et al. 1999).

This book proposes to go beyond the notion of 'good governance' to explore empirically the meanings behind the concept of governance when it is relieved of its normative elements. As we will see below, the concept of governance is neither recent, nor solely dedicated to legitimate exogenous reforms aimed at transforming dysfunctioning bureaucracies into providers of quality public services. Policy analysts in the North have used this term since the 1970s to highlight the emergence of actors who do not belong to the traditional governmental sphere, but still play a part in the control of the public affairs and establish complex (antagonistic, complementary or juxtapositional) relationships with the state. In other words, the notion of governance would apply to situations in which "ordering is neither restricted to the state, nor located in its 'other', that is in traditional or local/indigenous institutions" (Eckert, Dafinger & Behrends 2003: 19).

The contributions in this book describe and analyse in very concrete terms the institutional and political processes stemming from the provision of a number of public, collective and communal goods or services by individual actors and social groups, be they state, parastate, or private in nature. They deal with a range of topics such as health (*Gruénais, Okalla & Gauvrit*), water supply (*Tidjani Alou*), sanitation and waste management (*Bouju, Obrist van Euuwijk, van der Geest & Obirih-Opareh*), education (*Fresia*), security (*Hornberger*), humanitarian aid (*Fresia, Turner*), access to land (*Nauta*) and taxation and local government reform (*Becker*) and aim to address a number of questions concerning: 1) the identification of the actors involved in the constitution of, or exclusion from, these processes and the criteria of eligibility or legitimacy applied; 2) the ways in which the rules for such services are produced, debated, transformed and controlled; and 3) the ways in which the services

themselves are performed, i.e. the precise situations and the range of technical, economic and political factors involved.

These empirical questions are explored in a variety of contexts. The objective is not only to reach an understanding of how social actors administer or steer their affairs, but also to identify and examine the discourses they produce in connection with these practices and the representations and models of strategic behaviour they develop in relation to the other actors involved, be they associated with the state or not. The case studies are taken from a range of national settings in Francophone and Anglophone Africa: i.e. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Niger, Senegal (with reference to Mauritanian refugees in *Fresia*), South Africa and Tanzania (with reference to Burundian refugees in *Turner*). They deliberately bypass the rural-urban divide, which would appear to be largely irrelevant as far as governance and the delivery of state services are concerned. The rural-urban pairing should instead be conceived in terms of "connection" (Geschiere & Gugler 1998) and of the flows of individuals, norms, ideas and resources that contribute to the reshaping of the issue of collective and public services. The case studies also try to go beyond the traditional dichotomies between the centre and periphery and local and global levels: instead, they opt for a 'meso' point of view, observing at intermediary levels how the different logics (of the central state, international and national NGOs, local bureaucracies, grassroots associations, etc.) interact in the daily delivery of public services (see also Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2003: 150).

We are, of course, aware of the heterogeneities between the chapters. We believe, however, that they contribute to the relevance of this collection as they provide complementary perspectives on governance and collective services. Furthermore, beyond the differences of approach—ranging approximately from methodological interactionism going back to Barth and Bailey to more Foucauldian perspectives—all of the texts focus on history and social processes and deal with specific technologies of governance that form a common ground for interventions and policies, which are otherwise driven by a variable combination of state, economic and third sector actors and instances. These technologies belong to the discursive and social field of participation (Callon et al. 2001, Mosse 2003, Ackerman 2004) which includes a wide array of negotiation forums, committees and associative forms. All these technologies of government are found in highly diverse contexts of public and collective service delivery via development projects, political

or administrative decentralisation, humanitarian intervention, private entrepreneurship or grassroots organisations. As well as that of political mechanisms of accountability and legitimacy, the role of participatory devices in governance and public service delivery will constitute major threads in the analysis presented in the chapters of this book.

In this introductory chapter, we begin by trying to clarify the semantic field revolving around the very elusive concept of governance and terms associated with it, such as participation, accountability, legitimacy and, of course, politics. As part of this discussion we will introduce Foucault's concept of governmentality to assess its potential in terms of an empirically grounded anthropology of governance. The second section will focus on the delivery of collective services as both an instantiation of everyday governance and a promising fieldwork approach for a renewed political anthropology. The following three parts of this chapter explore three topics that feature in all of the contributions, despite their differences in focus and approach. We begin with a presentation of what could be an ethnography of front-level or interface bureaucracies. We then explore the mutually constitutive interaction between collective services, public space and subject-making. In the final section of the chapter we focus on the forms of brokerage, mediation and translation that structure the interface between service providers and users and contribute to the production of both practical norms and collective services.

Governance and governmentality: genealogy and use

The concept of governance carries a heavy ideological load, particularly in its usual formulation of 'good governance'. Is it relevant or even possible to rid the noun of the adjective? In other words, can we use governance in a non-normative way for descriptive and analytical purposes? A brief excursion into the genealogy of the concept and its uses in the social and political sciences may help clear the way; among other things, it will show that the disembedding of governance from its normative straitjacket is no easy task.[1]

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[1] This section draws on Le Meur (2006c: 72–80).

Governance: concept, ideology or institutional apparatus?

In the introduction to an anthology on governance, political scientists Guy Hermet and Ali Kazancigil note that, its unstable and polemical nature notwithstanding, "governance does exist". The definition they present faithfully reflects its "uncertain conceptual status, as a multiform phenomenon" (2005: 7–8). Drawing up a list of eight features that are simultaneously present in varying proportions in the uses of the term, they eventually define governance in normative and substantial terms, stressing its horizontal and negotiated nature which would abolish the private-public divide. Governance is defined along a line that is at once liberal (the market as a model of government) and neo-corporatist (according to a network-like and co-optation pattern), a definition that raises questions as far as participation and representation are concerned. One chapter in the book, which clearly reveals the authors' concern, bears the title "Is governance the name for post-democracy?". For Hermet, even when stripped of its normative qualification, governance offers a way to escape from "a too much pressing popular political expression" (2005: 23).

Hermet identifies five "heterogeneous and non cumulative" layers in the archaeology of the word, also stressing its early origin in the French and English Middle Ages (ibid.: 24–34). The first layer, which can be traced back as far as the 1930s, constitutes corporate governance which is linked to the discovery of transaction costs (Coase 1937) and the birth of the neo-institutional economics (North 1990, Coase 1998, Williamson 1998). A few decades later, the notion of urban governance emerges, stemming from diverging ideological backgrounds, neo-conservative on the one hand (the Thatcher's era in Great Britain) and progressive on the other (originating in the social urban movements of the 1960s/70s). The third moment involves the rise of developmental "good governance" in the 1980s (see World Bank 1989 and above) and was quickly followed by the fourth topic of the 'global governance'. However, in a way, the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and WB) were already the tools of a global and developmental governance, and, as Cooper (2000) reminds us in a fair critique of the term, globalisation is not that new. The fifth layer, in the early 21st century, sees governance entering European Union terminology as one of the first attempts to lend governance "the substance of a truly-built concept" (ibid.).

Two points arising from this brief outline of the recent history of governance are worthy of note in this context. The historical shift of

the concept from the business world to public affairs, whereby the origin of the term still influences the ideological background underlying its uses and representations, must be acknowledged. It is interesting to note that the term 'empowerment' underwent a similar semantic journey, a story which is all too often forgotten. The second point raises a question arising from the EU use of the term, which is closely linked with the construction of a specific institutional apparatus. At an initial glance, developmental 'good governance' would appear to be a mode of management or organisational toolbox rather than an institutional apparatus which, in fact, development is. Non normative approaches to development in the social sciences are based on the hypothesis of a defined social field comprising organisations, projects, ideas, discourses, resources and actors who claim to be part of it: "'Development' simply exists where the 'developers' are; where one of the groups that claims to be engaging in development organises an intervention measure on other social groups"[2] (Chauveau 1985: 164). This non-normative definition of development enables its description as a social situation without engaging in ideological debate around the nature of development (see Olivier de Sardan 2005). Could the same perspective be adopted in relation to governance? There is no straightforward answer to this question and our position is located in the domain of productive compromise; productive because it allows space for empirical exploration and generates heuristic gain.

This compromise involves three stages. First, we differentiate analytically between etic and emic definitions of governance. Second, we focus on the Foucauldian concept of governmentality. Finally, we consider, from this point of view, the possibility of an analogy between governance and development as an institutional configuration. The first step towards the formulation of an answer here lies in the clearly non-normative use of the concept: governance as a set of regulations emerging out of repeated interaction between actors and institutions.

> For sociologists of governance [...], the object of investigation is understood as an emergent pattern or order of a social system, arising out of complex negotiations and exchanges between 'intermediate' social actors, groups, forces, organizations, public and semi-public institutions in which state organizations are only one—and not necessarily the most

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[2] Authors' translation.

significant—amongst many others seeking to steer or manage these rela-
tions. (Rose 1999: 21)[3]

Governance is conceived as a set of interactions (conflict, negotiation,
alliance, compromise, avoidance etc.) resulting in more or less stabilised
regulations, producing order and/or disorder (the point is subject to
diverging interpretations between stakeholders) and defining a social
field, the boundaries and participants of which are not predefined.
This etic definition—crafted by the external observer—is exploratory.
As suggested by Bruno Latour (2006), the concept is made as "empty"
and neutral as possible to allow social actors to fill it with their own
(emic) theories and practices of governance.[4] This includes their views
of participation, accountability, public and service and of state, wealth,
justice and politics. This exploratory attitude constitutes the starting-
point for an ethnography of public service delivery that considers
how—and to what extent—social actors articulate their views and uses
of governance. When we consider powerful actors such as the World
Bank, for example, we cannot but be struck by the fact that governance
is presented as a commonsensical notion that requires no definition.
For example, whereas it lists and discusses at length the "indicators of
governance quality", the chapter entitled "Strengthening governance,
from local to global" in the draft of the forthcoming 2008 World Bank
report on *Agriculture for Development* never defines governance, as though it
goes without saying.[5] In this case, governance acts as a cultural marker, a

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[3] See, in the same vein, Woodhouse et al. (2000: 22–23) on the local governance of
natural resources, "understood in terms of the following elements: the structures and
processes of power and authority, cooperation and conflict that govern decision-making
and dispute resolution concerning resource access and use, through the interaction of
local government and non-governmental, formal and non-formal, organisations and
social institutions. This definition of 'local governance' recognises the importance of
practices of informal institutions, which may parallel or interact with formally defined
institutions, including those of the state (...). The exploration of moments of conflict
and their outcomes is particularly useful for illuminating how power is exercised and by
whom, through both formal and informal institutions and their interconnections."

[4] In Bruno Latour's view, social scientists should refrain using substantive concepts
(meta-languages) and resort to empty concepts (infra-language) to let actors develop
their own and much richer meta-languages (2006: 45).

[5] See the World Bank's *Governance Matters*: "We define governance broadly as the
traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes
(1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the
capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies,
and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic
and social interactions among them" (Kaufmann et al. 2000: 1). The authors add in
a footnote: "There does not appear to be a single accepted definition of governance.

sign of mutual recognition among 'developers', as much as an analytical or descriptive concept. As Harrison shows in his exploration of World Bank theory of political action (2004), governance as discursive practice also relies on political thinking which remains largely implicit.

Governmentality: useful, though elusive

It is not enough, however, to differentiate between etic and emic views of governance. The first difficulty arises from the fact that the divide between the observer and the observed is not as clear-cut as one might think—a fact that has been highlighted by post-modern and, to some extent, modern anthropology.[6] This gives rise to a second difficulty, namely that the neutral and empty concept Latour calls for will not remain clear of normative interferences. For this reason, some scholars believe it is impossible to strip governance of its normative load and thus prefer to abandon it. For example, Jean-François Bayart proposes substituting the "off-putting" concept of governmentality for "this 'governance' hackneyed by the liberals" (2004: 11). In a book on "the future of anthropological knowledge", Henrietta Moore implicitly follows the same path: the section devoted to the "anthropology of governance" (1996: 10–14) only discusses the concept of governmentality and how it is used in anthropology.

Our view is less radical in this respect. We argue that the analytical and interpretive power of governmentality could be combined with the exploratory and descriptive use of governance. Both concepts share basic similarities. They pay more attention to social processes than social structures. They advocate a decentred approach to the state and

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Our definition of governance is in part motivated by those suggested by the Institute for Governance, IDEA, and the IMF". In fact, they are not really concerned about defining governance. A few years later, Kaufmann adopts the same definition in a draft discussion paper which aims to "Rethinking Governance. Empirical Lessons Challenge Authority."

[6] Anthropology also engages in the field of governance: "Governmentality involves techniques of knowledge and power which touch all individuals and collectivities, whether directly or indirectly. Health care, family planning programmes, irrigation schemes and education provision are all part of these disciplinary techniques, and they are all intermeshed with expert knowledges, including those of the social sciences. Many anthropologists all around the globe, whether or not they are working in anthropology departments, are involved in the techniques of government" (Moore 1996: 13). For a colonial genealogy of anthropologists' engagement in governmentality, see also Pels (1997) and Le Meur (2007) on the (joking) relationships between anthropology and development.

do not impose a priori boundaries between private and public, state and society, knowledge and power (the latter issue being mainly tackled through the lens of governmentality). Nonetheless, the routinisation of the use of governmentality outside of a strict Foucauldian canvas and for the sake of the social anthropology of policy, for which we plead for in this book, is no easy task. First, the notion was introduced by Foucault in several papers and lectures without being systematised. Thus, scholars refer to different texts and definitions in their use of the term. Sally Engle Merry, who makes perceptive use of Foucault, rightly argues that "Foucault's work on governmentality is both tantalising and frustrating. He never developed a full theory nor wrote a book on the subject, yet his concepts and approaches are suggestive and intriguing, if also often unclear and even contradictory" (2001: 27n). The second point is about possible inconsistencies in Foucault's work. To be more precise, as far as governmentality is concerned, it is possible to observe an oscillation between substantive and exploratory definitions of the concept. The most frequently quoted definition is that proposed in the famous article on "governmentality":

> By this word I mean three things: 1. The ensemble formed by the insti-
> tutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics
> that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power,
> which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge
> political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of
> security. (Foucault 2002: 221)[7]

This definition cannot be separated from the notion of biopolitics, "that is the set of mechanisms by means of which, that which constitutes its fundamental biological features within the human race will be entitled to enter into a policy"[8] (2004: 3; see also Lemke 2001). For Foucault, the issues of biopower and governmentality are historically rooted. They are intrinsically linked with the rise of Western modernity in the 16th and 17th centuries with governmentality being conceived as an emerging form of government along with sovereignty, which is exerted

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[7] This definition echoes the distinction made by Foucault between "governmentality of the policy-makers which will give us the police [and the] governmentality of the economists which, I believe, will introduce us to some of the fundamental thrusts of modern and contemporary governmentality" (2004: 356) Authors' translation. On this, see also Wedel et al. (2005: 35–36).

[8] Authors' translation.

within a bounded territory, and discipline, focusing on bodies and
individuals. When Foucault highlights the central role of population
expressed by the rise of biopolitics in Europe from the 16th century
on, he does not mean that the earlier forms of sovereignty and disci-
pline fade away from the issue of government.[9] Instead, he evokes an
evolving triangle constituted by the three forms of government, namely
sovereignty, discipline and governmentality (2004: 111; see also Rose
et al. 2006, Li 2007: 12–17). The shape of this triangle is context-
dependent and we may well ask whether substantive approaches that
reduce governmentality to a set of institutional techniques based on
uniform and standardised procedures are useful when applied to non-
Western contexts. As Nuijten recalls in relation to Mexican bureaucracy,
"we do not find standard procedures but a bewildering world of labyrin-
thine offices and infinite administrative measures" (Nuijten 2004: 226).
This also applies to African bureaucracies.

   In addition to the substantive definition of governmentality, an
exploratory definition can also be found in Foucault's texts: "I call
'governmentality' the encounter between techniques of domina-
tion exercised over others and the techniques of the self" (Foucault
2001: 1604).[10] Rather than a use of the term that is closer to an instru-
mental evocation and aims to denounce the implacable character of
the developmental machine working as an avatar of state bureaucratic
domination,[11] it would appear far more interesting to focus on the link
between government techniques and subject-making. Subject must be
understood here in its double sense, i.e. both an object of domination
and an active agent, in relation to forms of government that do not
necessarily emanate from the apparatus of state. "It is not the impact
of the state on society which is of interest, but the impact of govern-
mentality on ways of living and on social institutions, including the
state" (Moore 1996: 12). In the same passage she adds that "Foucault
uses the notion of governmentality to indicate a certain mentality, a
particular way of thinking about the sorts of problems which can and
should be addressed by particular authorities and through particular

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[9] For a critique of Rose & Miller (1992), see Curtis (1995), according to whom the
former over-estimate the productive side of power and internalised forms of "gov-
ernment at a distance" implied by the rise of governmentality and biopolitics, and
downplay the forms of domination and hegemonic procedures of "disciplinarisation"
(cf. Miller & Rose 1995 for a reply).

[10] Authors' translation.

[11] James Ferguson (1994: 255 *et sq.*) represents this perspective.

strategies" (ibid.). Thus, governmentality focuses on a conception of governing as a problematising activity, as stressed by Rose:

> The analytics of governmentality [...] distinguish between historically variable domains within which questions of government have been posed: the way in which certain aspects of the conduct of persons, individually or collectively, have come to be problematised at specific historical moments, the objects and concerns that appear here, and the forces, events or authorities that have rendered them problematic. (Rose 1999: 20–21)[12]

The heuristic strength of governmentality lies in its ability to weave domination and subjectivation into a common framework[13] while paying attention to the knowledgeability and capability—the agency (Giddens 1984)—of all of the actors involved. When we speak of government as a problematising activity, we include the subjects of the policy as active co-producers of this policy, which can mean as "consumers" in the sense of de Certeau (1990).

It is our view that the combination of the heuristic and interpretive power of governmentality and the descriptive use of governance is useful for documenting and analysing policies and, more specifically, the social fields defined by the production and delivery of public and collective services. The final point that remains to be addressed is the analogy with development, and the question that arises here is whether we can identify a configuration or mechanism of governance in the way that we have observed it thus far in the case of development. As proposed above, it may be asserted that 'development' exists wherever there are 'developers', where people who claim to be 'carrying development out' organise and implement a specific apparatus intervening in targeted social groups. Governance appears to be rather situated at the rhetorical level of discursive practices. However, the case of the European Union shows the emergence of an institutional apparatus that claims to be aimed at the embodiment and implementation of

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[12] The definition of governance given by Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1997: 5–6) in a text otherwise influenced by the Foucauldian perspective is an intermediary one located between the merely descriptive approaches and those that take the hypothesis underlying the notion of governmentality into account: "We use 'governance' to refer to the more complex processes by which policies not only impose conditions, as if from 'outside' or 'above', but influence people's indigenous norms of conduct so that they themselves contribute, not necessarily consciously, to a government's model of social order".

[13] A point which is absent from the sociology of governance and constitutes its "philosophical weakness" (Bayart 2004: 51).

governance (Shore & Wright 1997, Hermet et al. 2005). In developing countries, the pairing constituted by international development agencies and NGOs is key in the construction of what might be termed an apparatus of governance (Atlani-Duault 2005). Actually, NGOs, programmes and administrations increasingly claim that they 'are' instances of governance and 'implement' (good) governance. In doing this, they play a performative role, making governance happen as a set of organisations beyond the discursive level.

The chapters that compose this book all aim to identify the actors, institutions and resources involved in the organisation of collective and public service delivery. Herein lies the originality of our project. What happens at the interface between service provider and user is a matter of governance in the non-normative and descriptive sense of the concept as discussed above. A second issue concerns the actors and the extent to which they resort to governance as a discursive resource. Finally, the third point remains as to whether all of this can be analysed as participating in an apparatus of governance. Our specific point of entry—the description of the processes of public and collective service delivery—allows us to leave this question open as an empirical issue.

The next section will present the disciplinary background and the ethnographic project that underlie our way of handling the collective services/governance nexus.

An empirically-grounded anthropology of collective service delivery

Throughout the 1990s, the 'projects', in the sense of arenas in which strategic groups equipped with their own logics and action strategies confront each other, constituted the main terrain of the European anthropology of development (mainly structured around the APAD network, the Wageningen school and the EIDOS network).[14] However, it progressively extended its research objects by appropriating other topics such as the "areas in which development operations and policies straddle current local political, economic and administrative practices in Africa" (Olivier de Sardan 2004b: 37), i.e. the forms of local anchorage of the

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[14] APAD: Euro-African Association for the Anthropology of Social Change and Development; EIDOS: European Inter-University Development Opportunities Study-group. See Elwert and Bierschenk 1988, Olivier de Sardan 1995, Long 1989, 2001, the EIDOS series published by Routledge and the APAD series published by Karthala (in French) and Lit Verlag (in English).

state and recomposition of local political arenas,[15] the politics of access to land and natural resources,[16] the local and transnational dynamics of intermediation and brokerage within the field of development and in association with policy production[17] and, finally, corruption and public service (dys)function.[18]

In other words, the anthropology of development changed in the process of the extension of its objects (closely associated with the historical change experienced by the societies affected by 'development'), into the "socio-anthropology of public spaces" (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 488). Thus, its perspective was extended to the forms of delivery of services and public and collective goods and to the social and political processes that underpin them.

The provision of collective services can be studied from different perspectives. First, it can be seen from a technical point of view (in a broad sense, including institutional technology and engineering). For example, access to water depends on a water supply system, the concession or sub-contracting of the work to a private company or contractor, the choice between charging for water use and selling water, and accountability procedures. Second, services differ in terms of their nature. Warranting security or justice is not subject to the same technical constraints as "getting out of the shit" (*van der Geest & Obirih-Opareh*) or bringing classrooms to refugees (*Fresia*). The particular nature of the 'object' classified under the broad category of 'collective services' will strongly influence the solutions developed to provide or supply it. Moreover, the provision of collective services is necessarily linked to the issue of exclusion and inclusion, at once in terms of access and control (Ribot & Peluso 2003). In this respect, it is a matter of access to the rights of a citizen. This central issue can be framed in a problematic of government, one which goes beyond the limits of a state-centred approach (Rose & Miller 1992, Mitchell 1991) and resorts to the heuristic power of the concept of governmentality. Of major interest for us is the way in which women and men define and regulate the affairs

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[15] Bako Arifari and Laurent 1998, Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 1998, Blundo 1998 and 2001b, Blundo and Mongbo 1998, Kassibo 1998, Laurent 1995, Nuijten 2003, Lund 2006.

[16] Chauveau, Jacob & Le Meur 2004, Le Meur & Lund 2003, Lund 1998, Chauveau et al. 2006, Jacob 2007.

[17] Arce 1993, Blundo 1995, Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2000, Bako-Arifari and Le Meur 2001, Mosse 2005, Lewis and Mosse 2006, Le Meur 2006b.

[18] Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006, Jaffré and Olivier de Sardan 2003.

they consider public or, in other words, how they govern themselves. Of course, people do not govern themselves in isolation and we will observe various combinations of state, associative, individual, entrepreneurial and exogenous aid-driven organisational forms in the case studies on the production of collective services presented in this book.

In fact, public is not synonymous with state. Beyond the classical points of observation of the relations between public services and their users, it is essential to examine the new spaces in which public services are produced. The originality of the research presented here lies in the fact that it is not limited to the production of public services by state administrations but takes an interest in complex configurations in which the African state is no longer the only actor of economic and social change and sole provider of public and collective services. Multiform institutions of a non-state nature (associations of producers, neighbourhood groups, national and international NGOs) and private actors (notables, investors, large traders) contribute to the production of goods and services which were formerly provided by state administrations. Thus the description and analysis of 'everyday governance' enables to take into account the transformations of traditional centres of power, on the one hand, and the emergence of original configurations which render obsolete and inoperative—if they ever were relevant in the first place—the distinctions between state and civil society or the public and private sphere, on the other.

Thus, apart from the 'traditional' sites and actors involved in the interaction between state services and the citizen-users of the administration, such as customs services or the justice system (see *Olivier de Sardan*), the police (as studied by *Hornberger*), territorial administration and decentralised government (see *Gruénais, Okalla & Grauwit*), the studies presented here identify and describe new spaces for the production and management of public affairs and services: these include water management committees (*Tidjani Alou*), rural associations (*Nauta*), refugee camps (*Fresia* and *Turner*), the management of private and public sanitation systems (*Van der Geest* & *Obirih-Opareh*), the processing of urban waste (*Bouju*) and the institutional mechanisms and gender relations organising environmental health (*Obrist van Eeuwijk*).

Other sites and actors from a wide variety of areas can be enrolled in the management of public affairs, including national political arenas, whose involvement in local matters varies considerably from one country to another, religious institutions, which contribute in an often unexpected manner to the redefinition of the public sphere, and non-

government assistance, whose development is often formed through extraversion and complex logic behind the rhetoric of participation and the ideology of disinterested service (see *Fresia* on Mauritanian refugees in Senegal). These are all features of the public affairs landscape. Finally, the sites in which public services are produced can be highly informal and syncretic (for example, *Anders* identifies interstitial spaces in which the resources associated with the occupation of a position in the higher echelons of the Malawian administration are socialised and redistributed) or barely bureaucratised (even in the case of the police as paradoxically shown by *Hornberger* in South Africa).

These different 'terrains' reveal the multiplicity of actors involved and contribute to the rupture of some of the categories traditionally used in the analysis of African societies. In the described situations, there can be no monolithic state involved in the control or domination of a 'civil society' in turn involved in resisting the former or turning in on itself (see also Bayart et al. 1992). Entry through a public or collective service opens the way to the compilation of ethnographies which demonstrate that there is no longer any public service in Africa whose deliverance does not include the greater or lesser involvement of the four following instances: the state administrative services, the development administrations (NGOs and international agencies), the 'community-type' organisations (from associations to the municipal council) and private operators.

Thus, *Fresia* shows that the management of health centres and schools in refugee camps in Senegal is the product of negotiation and cooperation between the refugees, their representatives, the national and international NGOs, UNHCR and the administrative services of the Senegalese state, whereby the latter play an ambiguous role somewhere between a 'wait-and-see' approach and retrieval. Even simple committees for the management of water infrastructure (as described by *Tidjani Alou*) are becoming new centres of power which are superposing themselves over the local chieftaincy and decentralised technical services and, as a result, compete with them.

Several of the book's contributions demonstrate the difficulty in contemplating the separation of public and private. Their boundaries remain extremely blurred: as demonstrated by *Van der Geest and Obirih-Opareh* in relation to the responses to the public problems posed by the personal and private activity of defecation, private actors and interests may trigger initiatives that target the general interest. In the face of a lack of initiative on the part of decision-makers and service users,

even private service providers (latrine makers, septic tank emptiers etc.) appear to open up to governance, defined in pragmatic terms by the authors as the successful management of community affairs through a mixture of public, private and associative actors with the aim of contributing to the individual common good.

Fresia reaches similar conclusions in her article on the humanitarian space. Services of a general interest (in this instance health and education) initially promoted through the convergence of private interests (embodied by refugees and their non-state partners) subsequently become the object of an attempt at retrieval on the part of the state which has the paradoxical effect of eliminating the assets that made them successful in the first place: i.e. less expensive healthcare and high quality education. In the described case, the officials from the state services who were in competition with the humanitarian apparatus demonstrated a corporative reflex: therefore the state authority is able to produce forms of public action which ultimately do not serve the general good.

The issue here also concerns the making of the subjects involved in the very process of producing boundaries between the public and domestic spheres. This process lies at the heart of the demarcation of actors' life worlds and public services domains of intervention. The problem is raised and described very well by *Hornberger* in relation to the question of police intervention in cases of domestic violence in South Africa. The boundary is defined differently by the two interacting actors, entailing different strategies of intervention (for the police) and calls for assistance (on the side of women submitted to conjugal violence). The way of constructing and using the public and the domestic is inherent in the self-definition of a subject (Rose 1987) and in his/her conception of belonging to a political and moral community (*Bouju*).

The ethnography of front-level bureaucracies

While the state in Africa may no longer be the sole provider of services or the sole locus of exercise of public authority, it nonetheless remains a central actor of post-colonial governance.[19] As Hibou suggested

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[19] Even in certain situations of extreme political and institutional crisis, of informalisation of administrative apparatuses or criminalisation of the economy, the state does not disappear completely. Reno (1995) showed that, in Sierra Leone, the decline in the

(1999), rather than the decline of its structures, the apparent retreat of the state under the privatisation policies may mean its redeployment in other forms. According to this hypothesis, the state would retain a certain level of control over society, relying on private intermediaries, as indirect colonial rule had done.[20] More than a mere withdrawal of the state, what is involved is the reorganisation of governmental techniques, the transfer of previous competencies in the area of official regulation to non-official, individual or collective actors, to whom the qualities of accountability and rationality are also granted.

Following Nuijten, who herself leans on Abrams (1988), it is possible to identify three—profoundly interconnected—dimensions in the study of the state: "the idea of the state, the state machine and the culture of the state" (Nuijten 2004: 210–11). The first dimension refers to "the belief in the existence of a coherent state system", an ideological frame which reproduces itself independently of the actual functioning of bureaucracies. The second concerns "governmental institutions, made up of diverse sets of practices linked to the political system". Finally, the third dimension relates to "the practices of representation and interpretation which characterise the relation between people and the state bureaucracy and through which the idea of the state is constructed" (ibid.). In Nuijten's terms, the notion of "culture of the state" does not refer to a particular culture pertaining to state institutions: for her, it "is the way in which this 'mighty actor' or 'neutral arbiter' is imagined through administrative procedures, stamps, maps, theories about power and the belief in the 'right connection'" (Nuijten 2004: 228). It is worth noting that the idea of the state powerfully pervades local political arenas, even in contexts in which governmental institutions are absent or weak. As Lund argues, we observe in contemporary Africa "certain forms of institutionalisation and formalisation of the exercise of authority alluding to state, law and bureaucracy, encoded in

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formal institutions of the state went hand in hand with the construction of parallel forms of political authority which was exercised de facto by business men and politicians who controlled the resources produced by the illegal diamond industry. In this context the state was both a 'shadow' and a 'real' state. It was not merely a pale imitation or distortion of the Weberian state but represented something radically different.

[20] We may, however, note, together with Olivier de Sardan (2000: 221), that Hibou's lack of a definition of the state risks subjecting elements as diverse as the privatisation of public companies, the drugs economy, corruption and the warlords to the same label (indirect government) and, above all, of attributing to the state the private activities of its functionaries. On colonial intermediaries and brokers, see Spittler (1981), Lawrence et al. (2006), and of course Ba (1973).

official language and often exercised with the paraphernalia of modern statehood" (Lund 2006: 5).

It may be noted that the anthropological investigations of the state placed the emphasis in particular on the third element of Nujiten's typology: the modes of embeddedness of the idea of the state into local societies and the expectations, representations and fantasies associated with it (Gupta 1995, Hansen & Stepputat 2001, Masquelier 2001). At the same time, the machine of state remains a kind of black box. The African state appears as a "state without civil servants" (Copans 2001), a state grasped more in terms of its desired or perceived essence, than through the reality of its routine functioning.

Nevertheless, the decline in the economic position of state employees, the strong influence of political networks, which are often able to short-circuit administrative action, the growing impotence of the state in the provision of even the most basic services and the spread of illicit transactions, varying from racketeering and active or passive corruption to favouritism of all sorts, all contribute to the general discrediting of public power, which becomes the scapegoat of economic crisis. At the same time, the non-state sector is seen as the source of all virtue in development circles. This raises an entire series of questions: i.e. how is the public function considered at a time when the state is being privatised, as much by its own agents as by users? What career prospects exist both within and outside of government service? Is economic success linked in popular perception to the tenure of a position in the public administration? What place—if any—do civil servants, as the "chameleons bureaucrats" described by *Anders*, assume in the definition of the contemporary "figures of success" (Banégas & Warnier 2001) in Africa? And, ultimately, who are the civil servants of today, how do they perceive their functions and within which professional cultures do they move?

The colonial heritage

The functioning of the bureaucracy, the social position of bureaucrats, the representations associated with their behaviour and itineraries: it is impossible to understand these issues if they are not contextualised within their historical trajectory. This trajectory is of course that of the colonial and postcolonial state in sub-Saharan Africa (Bayart 1989). More specifically, historical processes have given African state bureaucracies a specific shape, in particular with regard to their relations with

users and the delivery of public goods and services. For *Olivier de Sardan*, the local modes of governance in Africa have undergone a two-fold rupture: the colonial rupture (transformation of the pre-colonial forms of power) and the bureaucratic rupture which introduced a formal opposition between public and private spaces. The main consequence of this process is the conjunction of a "social construction of indifference" (a concept borrowed from Herzfeld 1992) and a "colonial and postcolonial construction of contempt and privilege". The main characteristics of the colonial administration—despotism, privilegism and role of intermediaries—are referred to in this analysis to demonstrate the continuity with the postcolonial period, during which phenomena like clientelism, the absence of sanctions, impunity and unproductivity of civil servants were exacerbated.

The topic of continuity between the colonial and contemporary periods also lies at the heart of *Becker*'s contribution. While she shares the same historical perspective, the field of observation shifts from Sahelian societies, some of which had centralised powers at the time of the arrival of the colonialists, to the acephalous societies of south-east Tanzania. Becker shows that the narratives of corruption and the complementary rhetoric of 'good governance' have a long history in rural Tanzania. In this case, the British colonial administration adopted a pragmatic and opportunistic approach to dealing with practices of 'bad governance'. Having adopted a benevolent attitude vis-à-vis the *wakululngwa* (i.e. the local chiefs), from 1936 the district officers described these political intermediaries as corrupt and incompetent. This shift in opinion was intended to conceal from—or justify to—central government the poor results achieved by the colonial agents and their collaborators in the area of tax collection. *Becker* shows that, throughout the colonial period, the rhetoric of 'bad governance' became an instrument used for the purpose of explaining the constant difference between the formal ideal of the functioning of local political institutions and the way they functioned in reality.

In addition to new administrative norms, colonialism exported to Africa a different conception of inhabited space as well as new standards of public salubrity and health. The popular memory of these colonial public policies still echoes in contemporary local debates concerning urban governance: according to *Bouju*, the urban dwellers of Bobo Dioulasso contrast the current failure of the municipal authorities to keep public spaces clean with the practices of the colonial period which

they associate with the authoritative enforcement of domestic hygiene measures and effective technical services in the area of sanitation.

However, the analysis of the historical production of bureaucracies must not be restricted to state bureaucracies. Processes of bureaucratisation have also been highlighted in the case of the customary chieftaincy, and the specific state-making processes, in which it participates (Le Meur 2006a). Furthermore, as shown by *Turner* and *Fresia*'s studies on the governance of refugee camps, the development aid and humanitarian system have been playing an increasing role in the genesis of new parallel bureaucracies and in creating overpaid and functional bureaucratic 'enclaves' within the state administration. As a result, absenteeism, moonlighting and bribery become widespread among the civil servants who are excluded from the development 'manna' (Blundo & Olivier de Sardan 2006).

The daily negotiation of bureaucratic powers

State agencies grant, control and sanction. In order to exercise these three functions, administrative services have a stock of norms which are sometimes inadequate (for example in relation to the administration of land law in certain countries) and sometimes excessive (for example in customs administration). Between over and under-regulation, the actual application of laws and rules is often dependent on widespread arbitrary powers: fraud may be overlooked if the sum involved is small. Alternatively, offenders may be sanctioned, but the size of the fine is open to negotiation. In contexts in which the public is rarely familiar with administrative laws and rules, the monopoly of technical-bureaucratic knowledge combined with a low degree of accountability enables the daily negotiation of the powers of the administration. As well as being a factor in the emergence of various forms of corruption, as demonstrated by *Olivier de Sardan*'s historical analysis of the (dys)function of West African bureaucracies, the general opacity in this regard combined with a selective application of the rules often gives rise to the adoption of evasion and anticipation strategies by the service users.

In their relations with unpredictable and arbitrary bureaucracies, users have to undergo a real process of initiation in order to understand how the system really works. This apprenticeship in informal codes presupposes the development of a detailed local knowledge of both corruption and the building of trust. The acquisition of such knowledge of local bureaucracies, be they state or non-state, is often facilitated

by individuals offering administrative services, such as messengers, secretaries, clerks, volunteer workers and interpreters, whose personal trajectories and range of influence are worthy of study in themselves (see Blundo 2006a). In this respect, an ethnography of "bureaucratic itineraries" constitutes a good point for obtaining simultaneous access to the informal codes, strategies and representations embedded in the interaction between the providers and beneficiaries of public services. One of the most accomplished examples of the study of "bureaucratic itineraries" is that carried out by Gupta (1995). In one of the case studies presented, he follows the paths of two young farmers in a district of Northern India who go to the office of a minor official—Sharmaji, who is responsible for issues concerning land ownership—in order "to add a name to the title of their plot" (Gupta 1995: 379). Accompanied by two collaborators, Sharmaji managed several transactions at the same time and took financial advantage of the prerogatives associated with his work, particularly that of adjudicating in land disputes. Through the dynamic description of 'a botched bribe', Gupta succeeds in demonstrating that the ignorance of the social world of Indian bureaucracy (particularly the role of brokers in channelling bribes to officials) is the main cause of the peasants' failure in accessing land rights:

> The 'practice' of bribe giving was not (...) simply an economic transaction but a cultural practice that required a great degree of performative competence. When villagers complained about the corruption of state officials, therefore, they were not just voicing their exclusion from government services because they were costly (...). More important, they were expressing frustration because they lacked the cultural capital required to negotiate deftly for those services. (Gupta 1995: 381)

Bako Arifari's study (2001) on the port authorities of Cotonou provides another fine example of this approach. Based on an inquiry combining loose and systematic observations, documentary research and non-directive interviews with a wide variety of actors (customs officers, formal and informal agents, shopkeepers, importers, policemen etc.), this author offers an ideal-typical description of the steps necessary to "get a merchandise out of the port". This itinerary consists of nineteen steps, each of which involves different sites and actors and necessitates recourse to corruption to ensure that the file required for customs payment moves to the next stage. However, Gupta's and Bako-Arifari's observations focus mainly on the 'front-office': their gaze is more that of the user who meets the representatives of the local state directly or through intermediaries. The 'back-office', i.e. the social world of civil

servants, remains more opaque. The ideal would be to approach the state agent in his specific social universe.

This is why we also need a fine-grained ethnography of bureaucratic behaviours and their social embeddedness, as produced by *Anders* on Malawi administration. In his contribution, *Anders* shows how civil servants juggle three sets of deeply intertwined norms on a daily basis: i.e. the official rules, the social norms and the informal codes of conduct governing the administrative realm. The latter are conceived by Anders as a 'parallel order', based on two central characteristics of social relations within bureaucracy: asymmetrical power relations and indebtedness vis-à-vis superiors. The everyday actions of the representatives of the state and their behaviour within the services are dictated by 'situational' adjustments between these three normative systems. This analysis updates current policies of 'good governance" which are fixated on the sole improvement of official norms using projects, training and workshops without taking into account the environment of normative pluralism within which African civil servants evolve. Moreover, while the fight against political-administrative corruption and the promotion of citizens' participation in governance are among the main themes of current development policies, the aid organisations appear to ignore, or are reluctant to acknowledge, that their projects are pervaded by, or indirectly encourage, the phenomena of 'bad governance' and corruption, as suggested by recent empirical studies (Bähre 2005; Mathieu 2007; Smith 2003).

Corruption as a part of the governance 'for real'

Anthropology also 'ignored' the phenomenon of corruption for a long time, albeit for very different reasons (cf. Blundo 2006b). As evidenced by various recent publications, this trend has now been reversed (Blundo & Olivier de Sardan 2006; Nuijten & Anders 2007; Shore & Haller 2005; Smith 2006). What is involved here is not, however, a belated reconversion to the principles and rhetoric of 'good governance'. Anthropology does not conceptualise corruption in normative terms as the opposite of good governance. Instead, it considers it as a particular mode of political and administrative management, in other words one mode of governance among others. In this book, corrupt practices are treated in the same way as other ethnographic material. They emerge empirically through the popular terminology and expressions used to describe them (cf. *Anders* and his analysis of the ambiguous meaning associated

with the word *katangale* in Chichewa) or in governmental discourses (cf. *Becker* who traces the long historical course of the rhetoric of good governance in Tanzania), in the strategies of Mauritanian refugees in pursuit of identity papers (*Fresia*), in the sometimes embarrassed and sometimes cynical remarks of state officials (*Olivier de Sardan*), in political rumour (*Turner*), in the new rules implemented by the committees for the management of hydraulic infrastructure in Niger to limit the risk of embezzlement associated with the management of a collective resource (*Tidjani Alou*) and even, indirectly, through the voluntary dirtying of urban public spaces in support of popular demand for the clean-up of public practices (*Bouju*).

It must be acknowledged that the field of corrupt practices is strewn with conceptual and methodological pitfalls (Blundo et Olivier de Sardan 2000; Blundo 2007). However, in agreement with *Olivier de Sardan*, we believe that it is possible to avoid the pitfalls of pathologisation (Afro-pessimism) without succumbing to the temptation to euphemise (Afro-optimism) the scope of political and administrative practices which constitute both a factor in access to and exclusion from public resources and, as a result, are dependent on ambiguous—both benevolent and stigmatising—local perceptions. As confirmed across several chapters of this book, describing and analysing the failings and dysfunction in the production of public services does not, moreover, involve welcoming the reformist paradigm of the Bretton Woods institutions but confirming the gap between the functioning of these services and the expectations of users and analysing it in the light of the historical trajectories of colonial and postcolonial governmentality.

Moreover, these observations are not restricted to the relationships entered into by users with state administrations. As demonstrated by the studies of *Bouju* and *Tidjani Alou*, the decentralised and participative management instances (local associations, municipalities) do not constitute a barrier against corrupt practices, mismanagement or incompetence.

It is, therefore, less helpful to interpret corruption in functional terms (i.e. as a help or hindrance, oil or sand in the machinery of government) or as a simple deviation from the legal norms of bureaucratic organisations, than to consider it as part and parcel of 'real' governance. Such an approach provides an opportunity to reconsider the boundaries between public and private functions, institutions and resources (see Gupta 1995), which are fluid and shifting, even in Western societies. From the heuristic point of view, corruption can thus function as a

descriptive indicator in the analysis of concrete instantiations of public space (Le Meur 1999, Sivaramakrishnan 2000), the professional ethics of civil servants (*Anders*) and the relations between bureaucracies and people (Blundo & Olivier de Sardan 2006).

The politics of collective services:
normative pluralism, public space and subject-making

Donor-oriented good governance policies try to impose an institutional toolbox (decentralisation, participation and administrative efficiency) which is supposed to be merely technical in nature and politically neutral. In this respect, as argued respectively by Hermet et al. (2005) and Ferguson (1994), good governance and development policy share a common tendency towards de-politicisation. However, several chapters in this book unveil another picture. The apparently atypical case of refugee camps is significant in this respect. As *Turner* and *Fresia* show for Burundian and Mauritanian refugees, the technical apparatus of humanitarian aid is promptly pervaded by political strategies and power struggles that develop not alongside, but within the very work of delivering services to displaced populations.

The chapters of this book highlight three major areas of struggle for resources and meaning. The first is linked to the institutional and normative pluralism that pervades the negotiation of public and collective services. The plurality of instances and normative orders works as both a resource and constraint and, thus, a frame for action for all actors. However, those who are best endowed with different forms of capital can make the best use of pluralism for pursuing their interests, for example in leadership struggles. A second dimension lies in the definition of the public-private (or domestic) boundary, which, as feminist studies have long shown, is the subject-matter of contest and negotiation rather than a given. Drawing a domestic issue towards the political field is a matter of making it visible (O'Barr 1975). It is both a research and a policy question. The third field of political process and contest is related to the previous one. It concerns the interaction between subject-making and state-making that arises in the course of collective service delivery and appropriation and gives both processes their specific shape. This brings us back to the issues of accountability and governmentality.

Pluralism

Policy production (in terms of service delivery) is therefore inherently a political process that is both influenced by and influences power relations and institutional pluralism (Shore & Wright 1997, Winter 2001, Wedel et al. 2005). *Anders* uses the notions of legal pluralism and normative plurality in his analysis of bureaucracy in Malawi. He describes bureaucrats as chameleons who adopt the colour of the current environment and are, therefore, social actors who strategically exploit the different sets of rules or normative orders at their disposal on the basis of the situation and people they must deal with in their everyday lives. Speaking of normative plurality avoids giving pre-eminence to one or other set of rules, be it the state normative order; this does not imply that we deny any specific consistency to state instances (see Griffiths 1986, Moore 2000). However, state instances themselves generate different layers of rules, norms and enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, legal and normative pluralism is also inherent in state functioning. Since the state is challenged by other institutions in the delivery of public goods and services, these everyday forms of governance imply a shift in power distribution and resource control. As *Becker* shows in the case of colonial Tanzania, this is in no way a new phenomenon.[21]

We observe the emergence of new elites and new forms of leadership which enjoy relative autonomy, claim to stand for development, represent associational life and make use of discourses from the worlds of enterprise, religion and tradition, combining extraversion with a strong local grounding (see *Turner*'s and *Fresia*'s emerging leaders in Burundian refugees camps in Tanzania and in Mauritanian refugees camps in Senegal). In this respect, the norms of public ethics tend to evolve towards autonomy in the face of the state and its supposed centrality, and public authorities tend to lose legitimacy in the public arena, as highlighted by *Bouju* in the case of waste management policy in Burkina Faso. Conversely, other cases present processes of the strengthening of the state as an unintended effect of administrative reform. For example, *Gruénais, Okalla & Gauvrit* show how health sector reform supported by bilateral and multilateral development agencies in Cameroon has contributed to the reinforcing of the central state hegemonic project. The new medical map focusing on health districts composed of health

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[21] See Pels (1997), Sivaramakrishnan (1999) and Agrawal (2005) on colonial governmentality.

areas aimed to grant greater autonomy and power to the local (district) level. In fact, due to under-management and the lack of political will, decentralisation—which, in this case, tends to constitute a form of administrative deconcentration—opened up new canals for downward patron-client ties and allowed the state to continue to define the rules of the game. Such forms of "recentralising while decentralising" (Ribot et al. 2006) have been observed in the case of forest policy in Africa and elsewhere. Ribot et al. stress political processes limiting downward accountability and empowerment of local bodies as explanatory factors behind the shortcomings of decentralisation policies.

Boundaries

As in microbiology, the more you approach the object under study, the more complex and intricate seemingly linear boundaries prove to be. And, like cell boundaries, social interfaces are constructed and reshaped through interaction, flows and exchanges. In other words, collective services-centred interfaces are social fields in which subjects, localities and institutions are mutually constituted. By the same token, the delivery of collective goods and services contributes in contrasting ways to the creation of the public-domestic boundary and relations. The political nature of the public service issue lies, at least partly, in the definition of this boundary.

For service suppliers, the issue concerns the extent of their legitimate sphere of intervention. For their part, the users may be tempted to stretch or restrict the domain of intervention and interaction with public administrations and authorities. The issue is related to institutional and normative pluralism. *Anders* argues that rules should not merely be seen as a "normative system of defined rights and obligations". Instead, they constitute a "cluster of basic principles, which order the sphere of personal relationships. Instead of speaking of rights and duties it seems more appropriate to talk about expectations and feelings of obligation." This view of normative pluralism is directly related to how actors deal with the drawing of the limits between the public and the private, and the political and the domestic.

Hornberger's detailed description of community policing and domestic violence in Sophiatown, South Africa, highlights the strategic importance of the "boundary work" carried out by both participants in the interaction: i.e. the women who are victims of domestic violence and the policemen who are called on (or not) to intervene in a domain

they do not spontaneously regard as belonging to their field of action. The interpretation women give to policemen's intervention and the strategic use they make of it reveals an interesting ambiguity. People's interpretation of public-private boundaries and relations stands at the centre of the analysis. More specifically, the text highlights a kind of paradoxical privatisation: not of the police itself as a public service, but of the meaning of police intervention.

The analysis of sectors like sanitation (*Bouju, van der Geest & Obirih-Opareh*) also deals with the public-private boundary. They show how a personal domestic matter is constructed as a public problem (of health, environment) and thus as an object of government. The "politics of neglect" detected by *van der Geest & Obirih-Opareh* in Ghanaian sanitation policy expresses at once discriminatory behaviour on the politicians' side and a way of getting rid the question, if not its contents, on the users' side and leaving it to private entrepreneurs. If the governance of sanitation is "mainly a matter of not thinking about it", this raises questions about how people define themselves as members (citizens or subjects) of a political and moral community and also about state-making.[22] The idea of the "politics of neglect", of governance as a matter of thinking or not thinking about an issue, is a key idea for understanding the politics of policy. It is an aspect of it.

State-making and subject-making: the accountability issue

More broadly, policy can be conceived as a kind of distorting lens, making 'things'—i.e. people, problems, knowledge, interests, institutions etc.—more or less legible (Scott 1998, Li 2005), but also visible or invisible (van der Ploeg 1993, Le Meur 2008). Governing is also a matter of spatial and mapping practices: "To govern, it is necessary to render visible the space over which government is to be exercised" (Rose 1999: 36). This echoes the empirical evidence presented by *Bouju* in his analysis of sanitation and waste management in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. People's everyday practices around dirt and their perception of cleanness express the way they negotiate their participation in, and belonging to, a political and moral community. The observations

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[22] We follow here Sivaramakrishnan when he defines state-making as "the ways in which institutions of government and ideas of governance are negotiated in specific contexts by local actors and agents of central design or bearers of official ideologies" (2000: 433).

made may be summarised as follows: public space belongs to everyone and thus no-one and it does not appear to be structured by an mechanism of accountability. This case demonstrates in a radical way how important the link between public space and accountability is. The very existence of a public is linked to procedures of accountability and is inherently a political issue. John Lonsdale stresses the ambiguity of accountability as a dual notion encompassing both ideas of being 'responsible for (something or somebody) and to (someone)': "Rulers claim to be responsible to their people; people try to hold them to account (...) Accountability is then, quite simply, the problem of power. [...] without its public exercise power cannot exist" (Lonsdale 1986: 127–128). Peoples' responses in *Bouju*'s chapter are meaningful in this respect. The individuals he describes conflate the spatial and moral dimensions of the public by denying any moral value to areas located outside the domestic sphere. By so doing, they contribute 'from below' to the spatialisation of governmentality, whereas spatial governmentality is often seen (in a literature generally dealing with developed countries) as expressing a neoliberal turn in the welfare state, a shift from 'correcting' to 'zoning': "The expansion of spatial governmentality diminishes the scope of collective responsibility for producing social order characteristic of governance in the modern state" (Merry 2001: 17). As a renewed expression of biopolitics, focusing on populations as a whole and not on individuals like disciplinary mechanisms, spatial governmentality is produced in *Bouju*'s case by the potential subjects of sanitation policy who do not endeavour to correct the state "politics of neglect", preferring to draw a line between an accountable domestic sphere and a public zone outside of any accountability structure.

The pairing formed by accountability and responsibility is, of course, related to the anchoring of state and formation of subjects. State-making is intertwined with the making of subjects, a process combining, as already noted (section I), the making of political subjects and the subjects of governmental devices. As Agrawal puts it in the case of environmental subjects, the making of subjects and subjectivity is about "when and for what reason...socially situated actors come to care for, act, and think of their actions in relation to something they define as the environment?" (2005: 164). *Obrist van Eeuwijk*'s approach to sanitation practices focusing on the concept of "task-centred interactions" is also about people's practices and representations of a specific domain of their daily life. This is actually a "problematic of government" (Rose & Miller 1992), a matter of governing the self in relation

to other peoples, which contributes to the production of subjects, goods and services through the definition of representational boundaries and practical fields of action.

Brokerage, translation, mediation

One central aim of this book is to identify circuits for the production and allocation of resources designated for public use and to examine the processes in which conversions take place between private, individual, collective and public resources. However, being interested in the locations in which services of public interest are produced (or not) does not mean that the perspective is fixed on the local. On the contrary, the reduction of the focus of observation enables the empirical identification of the links between the local, national and international.

The cases presented in this book highlight hybrid processes involving state and non-state actors interacting in different arenas (at local and supra-local levels). Various forms of brokerage and mediation contribute to the shaping of everyday governance by bridging (and controlling) normative and social gaps between actors.[23]

The historical importance of administrative and power brokers is stressed by *Becker* for Tanzania and *Olivier de Sardan* for West Africa. The latter shows how brokerage logics contribute to the blurring of state-society boundaries and to the dualistic and "schizophrenic" functioning of public administration, which evolves on a daily bases and ranges between formal procedures and actual informal arrangements. For its part, the ethnography proposed by *Anders* records the fact that policies of good governance and modernisation of the administration do not upset the patronage networks within the public service. On the contrary, the civil servants see their legitimacy as administrative brokers as being reinforced by the negative effects of the economic crisis on Malawian households.

However, the recent evolution of development policies towards state withdrawal and the decentralisation of aid has furthered the emergence of new forms of intermediation. The traditional functions of the political or administrative broker—i.e. facilitating the access of the

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[23] See Blundo (1995), Bierschenk et al. (2000) and Lewis & Mosse (2006) on development brokerage; Nuijten (2003: 14–15) on brokerage and the idea of the state; Le Meur (2006b) on brokerage and translation in the field of land policy.

population to the administration's decisions and resources, acting as the transmission belt of a state that lacks a hold on its territory—are today joined by new competencies mobilised by individual or collective actors for the purpose of channelling locally—economic, cognitive and symbolic—resources based on development aid (Bierschenk, Chauveau & Olivier de Sardan 2000: 7).

In the case described by *Nauta*, a local NGO established itself as an intermediary between the South African Department of Land Affairs and a community of ex-farmers with no land. The author, who draws on the seminal study by Cohen & Comaroff (1976) on brokerage as a strategy for the "management of meaning", identifies three forms of "strategic translation" used by the association to convince the public authorities of the validity of the transfer of land to "its" local community: the investment in forms of applied research, the organisation of workshops with the beneficiaries and the production of reports. *Nauta*'s study highlights the political dimension of the mediation processes at the heart of governance situations: behind these seemingly neutral modes of translating knowledge and information, combining a scientific approach and participative discourses, it is possible to glimpse techniques of power which aim to reinforce the legitimacy or even "indispensability" of the intermediary vis-à-vis the groups being brought together. "There is no equivalence, there are only translations" (Latour 2001: 248): The forms of "strategic translation" highlighted by *Nauta* are all about the transformation of reality and the construction of alliances, thus close to Latour's notion of translation as a political process, in the sense of transforming the world we live in and involving shifting constructions of groupings and interests (see also Callon & Law 1982, Callon 1986).

Fresia analyses the intermediary role played by two categories of actors who have emerged in the humanitarian space created around Mauritanian refugees in Senegal: the representatives of the refugees and a Senegalese NGO. These "humanitarian brokers" have gradually acquired real legitimacy in the eyes of both the refugees and the heads of UNHCR. According to *Fresia* this legitimacy has established them as de facto public authorities. The refugees' spokespersons ensure the resolution of problems in the camps and assistance in obtaining finance. The Senegalese NGO was assigned all of the tasks involved in the coordination and control of programmes targeting the refugees by the international aid agency. Contrary to the traditional interpretations which tend to confine the brokerage functions to the subtle and

manipulative art of linking people and information with the view to making a gain (Boissevain 1974: 148), *Fresia* suggests that the pursuit of individual or private interests is not incompatible with the production of a public utility service (i.e. health and education in the case presented). The action of these brokers also contributed to the redefinition of both matters of general interest—and which in this case evaded the administrative authorities—and of a new identity associated with refugee status which displays greater awareness of the latter's rights and its importance as a political actor.

Anders and, perhaps more strikingly, *Fresia* highlight "the work of generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters and so sustaining interpretations" (Mosse & Lewis 2006: 13). Brokerage is not only about monopolising information for strategic purposes, it is also a device for making 'real' development interventions, thus contributing to the "production and protection of unified fields of development" (ibid.: 14). Brokers are not only strategic users (in an interactionist sense) or cunning consumers (in the sense of de Certeau 1990; see also Laurent 1998) of development, they also produce it. They participate in the construction of 'target groups' or 'communities', making them visible to developers, and contribute to the inclusion of development in localised landscapes (Mosse 2005, Le Meur 2008). Administrative and legal brokers act similarly with respect to the state (Blundo & Olivier de Sardan 2006), making, if not the 'idea of the state' at least a certain instantiation of it emerge as a practical domain characterised by blurred boundaries and uncertain rules. Social interaction and brokerage that structure the negotiation of public services are thus integrated into an extended conception of intermediation which corresponds to the notion of the mediator proposed by Latour, i.e. a category encompassing entities (actors, objects, ideas) that "transform, translate, distort and modify the meaning or elements they are supposed to convey" (2006: 58). In our view, this is a key point in terms of the exploration of how public services are generated, delivered, negotiated, interpreted, used and consumed, not only as expressing individual and collective logics, but also as producing and reshaping the representation and domain of the state and of the public, thus enacting the political work of composing a common (although contested) world (Latour 2002).

Ten years ago, Shore and Wright pleaded for the inclusion of policy in the field of anthropology: "The book sets out to chart a new domain of anthropological enquiry, the anthropology of policy" (Shore & Wright

1997: 3). This notwithstanding, three years later, a review of this topic published in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Okongwu & Mencher 2000) appeared to be more concerned with anthropologists' involvement in policy than in exploring the empirical and theoretical dimensions of this field of inquiry. "Applying anthropological methods and categories to a non-traditional ethnographic object" (Le Meur 1997: 309–310): our book takes its inspiration from this mundane idea, and the chapters that compose it contribute to making governance and policy everyday objects of investigation for anthropologists.

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