



# **The eight modes of local governance in West Africa**

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# The Eight Modes of Local Governance in West Africa

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan\*

*We begin by addressing different problems which are posed both by the generally accepted meanings of the term 'governance' and criticisms of that meaning, and offer our own definition of 'governance', leading to the analysis of clearly defined empirical objects, one possible application of which is research into local governance. We then attempt to distinguish the highlights of a series of 'modes of local governance', which seem to us to be omnipresent in Francophone West Africa. These modes are respectively chiefly, associational, communal (equivalent to elected district or municipal councils), state, project based, patronage based, religious and business. Thirdly, we provide a comparative table to serve as a basis for an inventory of the goods provided within each of these modes, the standards which govern their delivery and any factors which could serve to record any variations in the quality of the way these goods are delivered. A more speculative conclusion focuses on possible future uses of concepts such as local political culture and local public space.*

## 1 Governance and modes of local governance

'Governance' is a very plurivalent term, used at a number of different levels and covering objects of a variety of types.<sup>1</sup> Inter alia, it is sometimes analytical, sometimes descriptive, often both at the same time.

However, in the absence of a term which would be both more accurate and less ambiguous, we have chosen to use it in our own way which, as will be seen, is very specific.

### 1.1 *Misconceptions of governance*

The term 'governance' is not universally recognised in the social sciences. Most definitions of governance remain too general and/or reveal very debatable ideological agendas, such as, for example, the definition proposed by Charlick (1995: 22), inspired by Hyden (1992): 'Governance is a process by which societies manage their public affairs by stimulating and structuring an underlying normative consensus using rules based on the meaning of mutual or reciprocal benefit'.

It is easy to see the moral and ideological assumptions which underlie a definition like this, along with many others. Many commentators have criticised the notion of governance for being 'polluted' by its normative definitions (developed in particular by the World Bank, a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example Gaudin (2002); Bellina, Magro & de Villemeur (eds) (2008). A great deal has been written about this term.

disciple of ‘good governance’ strongly tinted with neo liberal ideology),<sup>2</sup> and/or to mask a ‘depoliticisation’ of public affairs to the benefit of a purely managerial or technocratic vision, which is either illusory or misleading.<sup>3</sup> One of the modern sources of the concept of ‘governance’ is the one from the world of business (*corporate governance*),<sup>4</sup> and this has been exported little by little to the world of public action, giving additional strong reasons for suspicion. It is true that this concept has been accepted elsewhere, for example in Anglophone political science during the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> Be that as it may, ‘governance’ today has become a key term in public development aid policies carried out in the North (through the neo-institutionalist influence on the World Bank).

Much misconception or confusion can be discerned about this, often uncontrolled, usage of the concept of governance towards the world of development, in particular because of the concatenation, around this term, of phenomena of different kinds. In our opinion, four distinct processes, induced by the international institutions and aid agencies, have become ‘confused’, since the 1980s: subsidiarisation, privatisation, associationism, managementism. This confusion has blurred the question of the relationship between governance and management in terms of development. We must therefore ‘unravel’ these processes, particularly since they have had a decisive impact on the various modes of local governance found in Africa today.

1) Firstly, in the world of development we have seen pressure to extend the old ‘delegation of public service’, which has become a *subsidiarisation*, in various forms, of the delivery of public or collective services (in particular to territorial collectivities). Moving the delivery of public or collective services and goods closer to those who should be the beneficiaries is at the heart of *subsidiarisation*. At a local level, and of particular interest to us, decentralisation is obviously the defining example of subsidiarisation, one which has been a major factor in the last decade in Francophone Africa. The communal mode of local governance is linked to this process.

2) Secondly, aid and cooperation institutions have driven a process of *privatisation* of services which used to be public and have now been ceded or transferred to the private sector. Policies of structural adjustment have given great emphasis to this aspect, at the level of major public enterprises. At a local level, giving public services a corporate structure (extraction of drinking water, for example) has become more and more frequent, but not necessarily as a result of the neo-liberal ideology which has governed the large-scale privatisations. The merchant mode of local governance is partially a result of this policy.

3) Thirdly, the promotion of ‘civil society’ by development agencies and Northern NGOs, for a myriad of reasons, associated with the themes of ‘participation’ and ‘*empowerment*’, has given rise to a strong *associationism* (in different forms: national NGOs, groups of producers, management committees, cooperatives, umbrella organisations, etc.). The associational mode

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. World Bank (1992): this defining text associates ‘good governance’ closely with the creation of an environment favourable to international businesses.

<sup>3</sup> Abrahamsen (2002); Hermet, Kazancigil and Prud’homme (2005).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. works by Coase.

<sup>5</sup> The aim then was to escape from the restrictive nature of ‘government’ and to incorporate previously untried forms of public action involving collaboration with non-state institutions and networks (with thanks to Richard Crook for reminding me of this point).

of local governance is the direct result of this, but it has been largely driven by ‘development projects’, themselves present locally (project based mode of local governance).

These three levels, which do not necessarily derive from the same political vision, share the fact that they have released African states from an earlier monopoly over the delivery of public services and goods, in other words, they converge in a dynamic of *de-statisation with respect to this delivery*. This is the issue of ‘less State’. One of the reasons for the success of the concept of ‘governance’ in development circles has furthermore been that it enabled the shaping of a new phenomenon, namely a multitude of players and institutions now delivering public services and goods where, previously, only the State was supposed to do so.

4) Fourthly, the development agencies have wanted to promote, within public bodies in the South, management concerns that had been largely neglected thus far by post-colonial States. We can talk here of *managementism*. We are now in the realm of the ‘better State’. The *technical* dimension of such processes is undeniable (sorting out budgets and accounts, respecting certain procedures, calling for expert reports and audits, massively using computer tools, assessing action using results, creating logical templates, etc.), and must be taken seriously, even if questions may be asked about the effectiveness or relevance of the management techniques that have been implemented in Africa. Various conditions for aid, applied through budgetary aid or programme-based approaches, tend to encourage this managementism. The bureaucratic mode of local governance and the communal mode of local governance are the relevant ones here.

This question of managementism calls for some reflections. It is true that we have often criticised the management perspective as involving at least a denial or a neglect of politics, as being an ‘anti-politics machine’.<sup>6</sup> But why must a ‘management’ perspective and a ‘political’ perspective be antinomic? The association of ‘governance’ and ‘management’ is not necessarily a reason for condemning the concept. For public actions (or collective actions) to incorporate a formal management dimension which can be analysed as such is not, *de facto*, scandalous. It would be absurd to discredit any analysis of forms of management, and their specific characteristics, because of an assumption that they are necessarily agencies of depoliticisation, or manoeuvres to hide the underlying effects of domination. Rather, it is necessary to understand how the management dimension operates, and how it articulates with the social and political dimensions of the problems in hand. That, in our opinion, is where the real debate about governance lies.

It is certainly undeniable that development policies, while they are public policies, are most often presented in a resolutely apolitical mode (as has often been emphasised by critical approaches to development),<sup>7</sup> which masks or avoids political blockages, power struggles, the fight against privilege, inequalities, corruption and cronyism, in favour of a purely technical or technocratic vision of the problems to be solved (that is the effect of the language of development, omnipresent in MDGs, project documents, logical frameworks, public declarations, etc.). But managementism can be associated with very different types of policies, in the same way as it can assume or on the other hand deny its anti-politics

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<sup>6</sup> Ferguson (1990).

<sup>7</sup> Much has been written in the anthropology of development on the subject of ‘development as discourse’, and how to deconstruct it (for a critical assessment, cf. Olivier de Sardan, 2001)

implications. With respect to the sociological analysis of forms of management, there is nothing to oppose its incorporation into a larger analysis of governance, conceived in a radically different way, without normativeness, and including in a non-ideological mode the varied political dimension of public or collective actions.

## 1.2 *An empirical perspective on governance*

Taking the concept of ‘governance’ in a purely descriptive and analytical sense, being as empirical as possible, we can define it as *any organised method of delivering public or collective services and goods according to specific norms (official and practical), and to specific forms of authority*. Any organised form of this delivery (each institutional arrangement), operating according to specific official and practical norms, and involving a specific form of authority, can then be considered to be a ‘*mode of governance*’.

There have of course been various attempts to escape normative visions of governance, and we are not the only ones whose goal is ‘to explore empirically the meanings behind the concept of governance when it is relieved of its normative elements’ (Blundo & Le Meur, 2009: 2). Many non normative definitions have been proposed, for example: ‘The means of coordinating players and the integration of collective action’ (Dubresson and Jaglin, 2002: 72); or: ‘Governance refers broadly to how the formal and informal rule are managed and enforced or how power and authority are exercised’ (Boesen, 2007: 84, with reference to Scott and Hyden); or again: ‘Governance is conceived as a set of interactions (conflict, negotiation, alliance, compromise, avoidance, etc.) resulting in more or less stabilized regulations, producing order and disorder (the point is subject to diverging interpretations between stakeholders) and defining a social field, the boundaries and participants of which are not predefined’ (Blundo & Le Meur, 2009: 7). But these definitions remain very general: they refer to collective action, the exercise of power and authority, or interactions which produce rules.

Our definition on the other hand focuses on a *specific function* of collective action, authority or regulation, which for a long time was associated with the State, and which today can be implemented by other types of institutions and players. In our opinion it is therefore more useable, and better suited to the analysis of specific empirical materials.<sup>8</sup>

This delivery of public or collective services and goods can be carried out in a liberal or bureaucratic manner, centralised or decentralised, clientelist or despotic, formal or informal, driven by the market or the State. It can either be efficient or not, delivering high quality goods or services or not. It involves all levels of society and the State. It is true that the anthropological tradition encourages a locus on the local interfaces between those delivering public or collective services and goods and the users or recipients of these goods and services, but there is nothing to prevent the goal of the enquiry being the highest decision-making level in this field (*studying up*),<sup>9</sup> or the choice of sites relating to the operation of organisations which carry out this delivery. The scope of research enables a combination of *studying down*, *studying up* and *studying in the middle*.

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<sup>8</sup> Blundo (2002) also suggests using the term of governance as an empirical investigative tool relating to the delivery of services.

<sup>9</sup> Nader (1974).

Furthermore, the players (or institutions) who deliver public or collective services and goods are more and more numerous, particularly in Africa. The modes of governance there have become very varied, which opens up the analysis even more. On the one hand, because of the importance of the ‘development rent’ and the economic weight of the development agencies, which play a leading role in the implementation and financing of public policies, developmentalist governance has taken its place alongside state governance (moreover the two often overlap) On the other hand, as described above, an increasing number of non-state players now deliver public or collective services and goods, because of the processes of subsidiarisation, privatisation and associationism. Because of this: ‘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 administration (NGOs and international agencies), the “community-type” organizations (from associations to the municipal council), and private operators’ (Blundo & Le Meur, 2009).

Thus, the definition of governance which we propose generates for social anthropology a broad and original set of fieldwork topics, including:

- (a) all state and non-state institutions, at all levels, delivering these goods and services and their day-to-day operation;<sup>10</sup>
- (b) their relations with the public, their users, their citizens;
- (c) the national or local implementation of public actions (which inspire, organise or finance this delivery to a great extent), regardless of the players (State, development agencies, local authorities, associational sector, clerks, private companies) who design, implement or use these public actions;
- (d) the discrepancies which exist between the official standards for the delivery of public or collective services and goods and the practical norms which regulate the behaviour of the parties responsible for this delivery.

The concept of governance is necessarily multiple: there is never, even in a centralised and collective economy or in a despotic State, just one form of governance. We must always deal with an inevitable diversity of modes of governance.<sup>11</sup> This diversity can be apprehended externally (several ‘modes of governance’ coexist) and internally (a single mode of governance involves different players and institutions).

For example, the analysis of the bureaucratic mode of governance in Africa will be interested in the operation and the management of public services, the professional culture of State servants, the day-to-day sociology of the authorities, the interactions between public servants and citizens, the administrators and the administered, civil servants and users, the diverse types of clientelism, corruption or political intervention which can be seen in public machinery, etc. The project based mode of governance has its own different characteristics: the function of institutes and development aid agencies, the strategies and types of intervention by their local divisions, the system of projects and its unintended effects, the

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<sup>10</sup> We can add here what C. Lund (2006) names *twilight institutions*, in other words ‘half and half’ institutions which are non-state institutions fulfilling state functions and looking for recognition in their own right.

<sup>11</sup> Sylvie Jaglin also uses the plural to speak of ‘modes of governance’, with reference to the delivery of drinking water in Africa (Jaglin, 2008).

concrete means of passing to the aid programme, the role of technical assistants, recourse to national and international consultants, audit, monitoring and control methods, relations with technical departments, the implementation of imported institutional engineering, etc.

### 1.3 *Governance, State, public policies*

Our definition of ‘governance’ enables us to complete the traditional anthropological approaches to the State in Africa which, for the most part, ignore the role of the State as delivering goods and services and as the manager of this delivery<sup>12</sup> (or more specifically as co-deliverer, and co-manager, alongside other institutions), and which systematically favour other functions which are already well known, in particular repressive functions (Foucault or Scott being abundantly quoted). The State, its agents and its machinery, have been perceived by a whole critical tradition as being in essence and above all formed of the machinery of repression and ideological conditioning. Thomas Bierschenk, who also calls for an anthropological analysis of the daily operation of public services in Africa, has clearly analysed the bias of a certain ‘State anthropology’, essentially Anglophone, without any solid empirical foundation, which is only interested in the machinery of domination, or in the margins of the State.

Yet the role of the State, in the North as well as the South, is not adequately expressed only in terms of domination phenomena (the monopoly of legitimate violence, according to Max Weber, or the discipline and control of bodies and minds, as emphasised by Foucault), of legitimation or of ideology. The administrative machinery and public services *also* provide (more or less well, more or less effectively, with more or less justice) the following functions: protection, support, development, dispute arbitration, infrastructure creation, implementation of public policies, day-to-day administration, front-line provision (by ‘street-level bureaucracies’)<sup>13</sup> and interaction with users, professional experience, collective action, organisational processes, programme and budget management, institutional reforms, etc. This applies under a progressive democracy and under a retrograde dictatorship.<sup>14</sup> The repressive State does not exhaust all the functions of the State. We must also consider ‘*the State as a provider of services*’ (the *Delivering State*).

The Delivering State is inseparable from the implementation of public policies. Indeed, all public policies intend to deliver public and collective services and goods.

While the analysis of public policies has come to be recognised in recent years as a specific field of political science, empirical studies of an anthropological nature remain uncommon in this field. The only texts which explicitly undertake an anthropology of public policies remain strongly ideological, dedicated on the one hand to critical studies of the disarticulating effects of structural adjustment policies (Okongwu & Mencher, 2000), or on the other hand to a typically Foucauldian reading of public policies and governance as sophisticated modern forms

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<sup>12</sup> We note, however, the invitations from Darbon (1985, 2001) or Copans (2001) to turn in this direction.

<sup>13</sup> Lipsky (1980).

<sup>14</sup> Neo-liberalism is therefore one form of governance among many. At the time of the USSR, there was for example a Soviet form of governance, with shared features in common and others which distinguished it from Maoist governance.

of domination (Shore & Wright, 1997). Neither of these currents is much interested in the ethnography of the formulation and implementation of public policies.

We must note however that the new anthropology of development has in a certain manner opened the path to an anthropology of public policies,<sup>15</sup> due to the fact that development policies are *de facto* public policies (even if they are driven from the outside). The advantages of this approach have been recognised, moreover, by analysts of public policy in specialised sectors in Africa (health, land use planning, water, etc.).<sup>16</sup>

This public-policy dimension, which has often been neglected in favour of a focus on politics, is closely bound up with the modes of delivering public or collective services and goods. Thus an anthropology of governance is also an anthropology of public policies (from their conception and formulation to their implementation).

Of course, neither public policies nor the means by which public or collective services and goods are delivered are disconnected, far from it, from relations of power ('power to' and 'power over'), at micro, meso or macro levels. Our approach does not aim to contrast the analysis of the modes of delivering goods and services with the analysis of political relations, the analysis of *policy* with the analysis of *politics*. It aims to combine them. It was from a similar perspective that Blundo and Le Meur (2009) suggested associating a certain usage of the Foucauldian concept of 'governmentality' (in passing they stress its polysemy) with the concept of 'governance', in order to combine the 'political' connotations of one and the 'managerial' connotations of the other. It is not certain that Foucault is the best reference when it comes to analysing the complexity and the diversity of phenomena of power associated with empirical forms of governance, but we share their concern to analyse simultaneously *policy* and *politics*.

An *empirical* analysis of the modalities of this function of delivering public or collective services and goods, which we call 'governance', and how relationships of power manifest themselves in these processes, is in our opinion a priority for the social sciences in Africa. A detailed study of everyday governance, of its *modus operandi*, of the forms of management involved, of how public or collective services and goods are delivered (or not) to users/citizens, remains largely to be done in Africa, in spite of some pioneering research,<sup>17</sup> while it is increasingly well documented in Europe.

Understood in this way, governance becomes a 'semi-autonomous field',<sup>18</sup> one which for sure is not independent of the prevailing power structures, or the type of regime or government, but which has a depth and responds to logics of its own.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Olivier de Sardan (2007).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Ridde (2006), Leroy (2006), Tidjani Alou (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. for social anthropology Bierschenk (2007, 2008); Anders (2009); Blundo (2006); Blundo & Le Meur (2009); Tidjani Alou (2009a); Jaffré & Olivier de Sardan (2003). Other work, in political science or geography, points in the same direction.

<sup>18</sup> To repeat the expression used by S.F. Moore (1978) when speaking about the legal space.

<sup>19</sup> A study of governance is, in socio-anthropology, the study of 'true' governance and not 'ideal' governance, in other words examining the gap between official standards and practical norms (cf. Olivier de Sardan, 2008b).

#### 1.4 Some clarification of the concept of 'local governance'

Thus far, the term of governance has only been used as it is accepted nationally or internationally, in other words in a register and on a scale which cannot be dissociated from the State and from central authority, on the one hand, and development institutions on the other. *Local* governance, for its part, is subject to other constraints and displays other characteristics. The State, through decentralised administrative or technical services, in other terms the 'local State', is, more clearly even than on a national scale, only one partner among many. The nature of relationships with the populace changes according to typically local factors: proximity relations, collective micro-identities, clientelist links, conflicts between factions or individuals, ancestral or personal alliances or hatreds, the weight of shared knowledge, tributary relation, and so on. The notion of '*local arena*', where the institutions and players united by 'multiplex' ties (Gluckman, 1955), confront each other almost 'physically', captures this specificity well.<sup>20</sup>

Yet, the perspective of the delivery of collective or public goods and services can also be applied on a local level. Local power is not only about legitimacy, authority or representativeness, but also has a *managerial, technical and procedural dimension*. The notion of local governance has the merit of emphasising the concrete forms of action by local powers as deliverers of services and their direct interaction with users/citizens. From this point of view, a local mode of governance includes all methods by which a local institution (formal or not, public or not), delivering any public or collective goods or services, manages the symbolic and material resources which it controls for this purpose, in the name of a certain conception of its interest and the public or collective interest. Each mode of local governance has its specific forms of authority and legitimacy, which are more or less accepted or disputed, and more or less effective in terms of the delivery of goods and services.

The coexistence of many forms of local governance seems to us to be a central characteristic of African countries. The process of 'piling up' different types of power in local arenas<sup>21</sup> has become generalised: when a new form of political authority is set up (either by the State or by development agencies) it does not substitute for the layers of institutionality already in place but adds to them. This is what gives village power its polycephalous character. There are many layers of power and legitimacy dating from different periods. None of them has truly disappeared, but all have been recycled and reconstituted, interlinked and interwoven in a coexistence which sometimes is only peaceful in appearance. A long time ago, the first occupiers, chieftains, warriors and conquerors, emirs or sultans; the day before yesterday, colonial governors; yesterday, postcolonial local authorities, chairs of cooperatives or groupings, or representatives of the ruling party; today, mayors – that is a non-exhaustive list of the particular forms of authority, and the claims to legitimacy, from a more or less recent past, which can all coexist in the same socio-political space, displaying a complex mixture of mutual recognition and blind competition, of tolerance and masked rivalry.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> On the notion of local arena, cf. Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (1997, 1998); Dartigues (1997). Cf. more generally Swartz (1968), Bailey (1969).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (1998, 2003) for Benin.

<sup>22</sup> This diversity of forms of power, whose competences always overlap to a certain extent, explains the complexity of the territorial conflicts so well described by Lund (1998) in East Niger. There are two simultaneous challenges: on the one hand, the permanent quest by each protagonist for the institution which in their opinion is best placed to settle the dispute in their favour ('*institution*

## 1.5 From Niger to Africa

The analysis we propose of eight ‘modes of local governance’ is based first and foremost on a body of empirical data collected by LASDEL researchers over a number of years as part of a research programme on local powers and decentralisation in Niger.<sup>23</sup> It is based, therefore, on the reality of Niger.

We have, however, attempted to widen our analyses to provide a comparative framework. The eight modes of local governance summarised below are in fact not only present in Niger: we have played a part in various regional research programmes, and it appears that most Francophone African countries present similar characteristics (naturally with some important differences: Senegal has experienced decentralisation since 1973; the system of chiefs was never ‘abolished’ in Niger while it was in Mali and Benin; etc.). It also appears to us that, in Anglophone countries, despite obvious differences (British indirect rule, for example, and its systematic ethnic policies; or the existence of strong indigenous economic dynamics in Ghana or in Nigeria), the general framework set out here remains essentially valid, and can therefore serve as a basis for discussion with the aim of characterising these various modes of local governance. Certain of these modes of local governance are the direct successors to the colonial period, others from post-independence political turmoil or development policies driven from the North, but they all represent original and composite forms of public or collective action and interactions with users, and all undergo continuous adjustments.

## 2 The modes of local governance

Here we are placing particular emphasis on three modes of local governance, the chiefly, associational and communal modes,<sup>24</sup> not only because we have more systematic data about them, but also for three core reasons: (a) the recent awakening of interest in development aid agencies of ‘cultural factors’ or ‘local realities’ often leads them to become interested in chiefs and in making them development partners; (b) the multiplication of associations delivering services, according to the participatory model promoted by development agencies – albeit often appropriated in their own way by local populations (or ‘hijacked’ by them) – makes them unavoidable focus of attention; and (c) the communes are now the leading official bodies of local power, and have become, in some cases, the preferred partners of the development institutions.

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*shopping*’, to use Bierschenk’s expression; cf. Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (1998: 38); Benda-Beckmann (1981) had proposed the concept of ‘forum shopping’, and on the other hand, a competition between institutions to obtain a surplus of legitimacy to the detriment of others by acting as arbiter in some dispute or other.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the many reports edited in *Etudes et Travaux du LASDEL* ([www.lasdel.net](http://www.lasdel.net))

<sup>24</sup> The chiefly and associational modes in Niger were described in a preliminary way in Olivier de Sardan (2009). For the history of chiefdom in Niger, cf. Tidjani Alou (2009b).

## 2.1 *The chiefly mode of local governance*

The administrative system of chiefs was a fundamental institution of the colonial state apparatus, found throughout Africa, and was the main form of local power, in the service of colonisation, for more than 60 years. It was inspired by various pre-colonial institutions, from which its legitimacy was supposed to derive. However, these ‘administrative’ chiefs (we call them this to distinguish them from pre-colonial chiefs) had only a little in common with the varied and heterogeneous political structures of the pre-colonial era, even if they took over their symbolic attributes and if the holders of the positions were often descended from the pre-colonial aristocracies. Indeed, there were many different political systems in the 19th century, from councils of elders and chieftains, to kingdoms, emirates and sultanates, as well as confederations and a wide variety of vassal relationships. In many cases, they were based more or less on family relations, on age classes, classes, castes or social orders, raids, war (sometimes holy), slavery or the caravan trade. On the other hand, the administrative chiefs were in all cases agents of the colonial State – and the colonial settlement – their main function being to provide the interface between the colonial despot and the populace.<sup>25</sup>

In this respect, the differences between British colonial administration and French colonial administration, which are clear, are nevertheless based on a common root: in both cases, it involved delegating to a fraction of the local aristocracy, assumed to have traditional legitimacy, the task of carrying out, with a certain degree of autonomy, the day-to-day management of the population on behalf of the occupiers. But it is true that, with indirect rule, the chiefs’ room for manoeuvre was larger, and respect for certain pre-colonial procedures stronger, while the control of chiefs by the French ‘*commandants de cercle*’ was more direct.<sup>26</sup> Yet we can find cases of weak or more or less ‘invented’ chiefdoms in British colonies, just as there are cases of strong chiefdoms anchored in tradition in French colonies. It is thus a matter of a continuum between two poles (strong pre-colonial legitimacy and strong autonomy of certain administrative chiefdoms at one extreme, weak pre-colonial legitimacy and weak autonomy of other administrative chiefdoms at the other extreme), with the two colonial powers leaning one way or the other.

After independence, the system of chiefs was often attacked, or even abolished, by the new regimes, in particular those which assume a socialist orientation. It has never completely disappeared from the political landscape. Everywhere however, with democratisation, it has returned to the forefront of the local scene, at least symbolically, presenting itself as ‘traditional’ chieftancy (thereby obliterating its colonial roots), but much transformed in its recruitment as well as in its functions.

There are many variables which influence the roles performed by the innumerable forms of chieftaincy found across the continent today. Sometimes (as in Niger) the administrative system of chiefs has remained an essential, and official, cog of the local post-colonial administration, while elsewhere (Mali, Benin, Tanzania) the administrative system of chiefs has been abolished, and no longer appears in official organisation charts. Sometimes the modern state recognises in the system of chiefs deemed traditional certain powers of

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Olivier de Sardan (1984); cf. Mamdani (1996).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Miles (1987, 1994).

arbitration, justice and financial regulation, while elsewhere chiefs' functions are purely informal or belong mainly to a certain political folklore.

Everywhere the chiefs' profiles have profoundly changed. Today most chiefs (at least at canton or district level, and even more at provincial level) are former civil servants or political managers, whose earlier career has included some time within the administration.

But what interests us here is not to propose a comparative, historical analysis of the system of chiefs as an institution, in all its detail. It is rather to highlight the key points of the chiefly mode of local governance, in West Africa, inasmuch as the different ways in which the chiefs exercise their power and fulfil their public duties in the local arena, either formally or informally, present some shared characteristics, including among others patrimonialism; predation and corruption; patronage; and absence of accountability to the people (to which one might add aristocratic ostentation; the confusion of powers, intestine rivalry; and the defence of an aristocratic and patriarchal ideology).

### Patrimonialism

The chief's personal resources and expenditure and office resources and expenditure are confused: that was common practice during the colonial period with the official backing of State, and is still sometimes the case today. The chief in the best cases only receives from the state an 'allowance' or personal grant, and must therefore finance his official responsibilities from his own income. Yet, he has a 'position to maintain' and his role requires a great deal of expenditure. Alms and gifts, providing help, supporting emissaries, travel and visits, welcoming visitors: he must continually reallocate, give, distribute. The chief very officially finances 'out of his own pocket' activities linked to his function, and there is therefore complete confusion between office expenditure and personal expenditure: that is true 'patrimonialism'. He must 'sort things out' to find the resources he needs, and these resources indissociably and simultaneously enable him to cover the expenses associated with his function, and to maintain or increase his prestige and his assets. Thus, most cantonal or provincial chiefs have their own resources, because inter alia of the creation of a vast family financial resources, generally obtained by the chieftaincy over many years to the detriment of its subjects, with the tolerance of the colonial and then post colonial authorities. Often, traditional functions concerning appointments, control, religion or land arbitration are transformed into privatised financial domains. Certain chieftaincies have invested in trade and have been able to build up significant fortunes.

### The confusion of powers

In his canton, under colonisation the chief held all the power, in particular the powers of administration, justice and policy, like the '*commandant de cercle*'. He represented the *commandant*, issued his instructions, maintained social peace, organised requisitions, collected taxes, and could have any subject arrested by his 'cavaliers', his guards or his emissaries, and have them delivered to the prefecture or the gendarmerie.

Today, his powers have been significantly eroded, either because of 'anti-chief' policies followed by most independent States or because of the recent emergence of other modes of governance (in particular, as a result of decentralisation, communes, development projects, or

the boom in associations). However, the chief retains a specific position of authority, more or less informal, which remains marked by a certain confusion of powers. He can summon villages from time to time, individually or collectively, in the name of the administration, and can initiate collective actions. He still often represents the community to the authorities. He occupies a certain position, directly or indirectly, in the protection of society from the forces of the occult. He receives strangers. He acts as arbiter in land litigation, inheritance disputes, divorce or adultery matters, quarrels between individuals, larceny, conflicts between livestock and arable farmers, applying what is called 'customary' law often reorganised to his advantage, with imprecise boundaries, leaving a large margin for personal evaluation.

### Predation and corruption

The canton chief has always enjoyed a great deal of toleration from the colonial authorities allowing him to raise taxes known as 'customary' and other 'contributions' or 'traditional' tributes (often neo-traditional) from those he administers.<sup>27</sup> It is true that the colonial period was not uniform and must be classified by period: the mix of wide-scale exaction and brutal repression, so characteristic of the system of chiefs at the beginning of the colonial period, declined progressively (because of the RDA's struggle, then the abolition of the *indigénat* in 1945, and finally the Defferre legal framework), and the scale of collection had significantly fallen by the eve of independence. The taxes today are to a great extent symbolic, without for all that being negligible.

Today, for chiefly governance, the acquisition of revenue is a decisive matter. The chief finds new resources in the growing venalisation and commodification of agricultural land, by selling land himself, or by taking a commission or under-the-table payments to guarantee sales or to adjudicate in disputes.

The justice delivered by the chief has also remained a significant source of revenue. Various more or less obscure taxes feed, thanks to this legal function, the coffers of the canton chief or his henchmen: 'the right to summon', fines inflicted and collected directly, commission on damage and interest and, above all, large sums very often passed in an underhand manner to win the favour of the chief or his counsellors, before a judgement, or to thank them afterwards. The venality of justice in Africa finds its source in part in the administrative system of chiefs.

### Clientelist habits

On the other hand the chiefs redistribute a large part of these 'informal' resources to their dependants, their court and some of their subjects. The chief maintains a complete network of clients and practices various forms of patronage. But richness in men, like richness in assets (and the permanent conversion of financial capital into social capital, and *vice versa*), are *sine qua non* conditions for access to chieftaincy and the success of a 'reign'.

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<sup>27</sup> On these customary taxes in the colonial period in Western Niger, which were far from reflecting 'precolonial customs' and more generally on the colonial administrative system of chiefs and its differences from the precolonial system of chiefs, cf. Olivier de Sardan (1984).

What is more, the chief is responsible for a 'household', which provides his support personnel. He needs guards, people to represent him to higher authorities in the capital, capital, tax collectors to collect market dues, emissaries that he can despatch to villages, counsellors to deliver justice, and a secretary for administrative tasks and to keep the necessary records, without speaking of the inevitable hangers-on attached to his person and singing his praises.

For all these various charges associated with the chieftom, the chief appoints and dismisses who he likes, as he wishes and when he wants. He systematically chooses his collaborators and auxiliaries among his relatives and dependants. They are rewarded by him, informally. They are only beholden to him.

Little or no accountability to those who are administered

The inherent patrimonialism of the system of chiefs involves the absence of any accounting. No budget, no accounts. But, looking beyond accounts in the strict sense of the term, the chiefs avoid any formal accountability to those they administer.<sup>28</sup> They are in fact appointed for life by the administration, and are therefore not subject to any control by their 'subjects'. The only threat to them is the cancellation of their appointment, if they displease the central authorities too much, which doubtless explains why the chiefs have, in the great majority of cases, favoured the incumbent regime. The other side of this compliance is the fact that their hands are free in terms of local politics. Only significant excesses resulting in popular hostility to the extent that it would worry the central State can threaten their position.

Aristocratic ostentation

The canton chieftaincy has remained a central component of the local nobility. This aspect of the prestige of the chief is produced and reproduced on a daily basis by particularly effective devices of ostentation: the 'palace' where the chief lives, the courtiers who surround him, his guards, the *griots* proclaiming his praises, the titles he distributes, the audiences he grants, those who present themselves to solicit favours, the ceremonial displays that surround it all and the deference shown to him.

During the colonial period, the canton chiefs in general adopted the etiquette and forms of protocol once reserved to certain precolonial kingdoms or sultanates, and made the display of their rank and privileges into a central feature of their political behaviour. This still applies today, though sometimes with recent inventions and modifications.

These devices and the symbolic prestige associated with the system of chiefs doubtless explains why political elites from the aristocracy,<sup>29</sup> in other words those 'having the right', have as a career goal the desire to become a canton chief, and why the nomination of a new canton chief and his investiture are national events.

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<sup>28</sup> We can wonder whether the concerns a chief may have for his reputation among his subjects is not a subtle form of accountability, or perhaps whether he is accountable to his family. But this is not the place for a debate about *accountability*, which deserves a separate analysis (cf. for example Lindberg, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Within the modern political elite, being a member of the aristocracy is a significant political resource.



## Intestine rivalry

The visibility and centrality of the canton or group chief do have their downsides: they imply innumerable conflicts and intrigues, in particular within the clan of the local aristocracy whose members could be candidate to chieftaincy. On the death of a chief, the successor is chosen from different candidates within his family. With the parents dispossessed, the disinherited cousins do not hold back the sourness and rumours. Hardly any chieftaindom exists where there is no internal plotting against the incumbent chief, pitching one part of the ruling family against another. Among the pretenders, each seeks to plot to achieve the disqualification of his adversaries by the central power and his own qualification, by citing a decision by an earlier colonial administrator, by claiming an ephemeral colonial canton which has disappeared in the meantime, by wielding a dispossessed grandfather or an uncle unjustly impeached, sometimes appealing to more or less contested precolonial references or 'traditional' procedures which have been reinterpreted to a greater or lesser extent. Since the colonial era and the creation of administrative chieftaindoms, chiefs from rival branches have been appointed and removed everywhere following arbitration decisions and the preferences of the colonial and then postcolonial power, thus multiplying disputes and claims between the various descendants of successive chiefs. Furthermore, canton boundaries have also been changed, thus excluding or including a given faction of the local aristocracy from the group of pretenders to power.

These two elements, the concentration of the signs of local power in a single person and the monopolisation of the function by different branches of the same family, converge to explain the permanence and severity of 'conflicts of affinity' or 'conflicts of kinship' around the canton chieftaindom. Appointed for life, the chief therefore has a lifelong opponent, generally the cousin or nephew sidelined during the race to the title. But these conflicts are internal, masked, subject to dissimulation.

## The defence of an aristocratic and patriarchal ideology

A doubly inegalitarian ideology (reproducing the supremacy of the aristocracy over the masses, and the supremacy of first born males over women and younger members) is affirmed and reproduced in particular by the system of chiefs. It results in two major forms of discrimination. The first is exercised over the lower castes, the little people, the most recent arrivals, or the descendants of slaves or artisans, depending on the social context, who most often are excluded from political positions. Another form of discrimination and exclusion is practised against women. They remain almost everywhere marginalised in the public arena. The system of chiefs, with its habitual forms of condescension (between contempt and paternalism), has been and remains the locus *par excellence* of the reproduction and legitimisation of the superiority of aristocrats and the inferiority of the masses and of women. This aristocratic ideology is showing few signs of dying out, even in educated circles.

### *2.2 The associational mode of local governance*

Introduced by the development agencies from the North to provide for the operation and management of the infrastructures financed by them, this mode of governance has been significant over at least the last twenty years, and sometimes much more (in the case of the

cooperatives, for example). Development cooperation agencies and NGOs in effect required the setting up of an institutional architecture based on the Western associational model as a conditionality of their local intervention. As a result, such structures are widely distributed in all African countries, with the same core elements almost everywhere regardless of region, sector or donor: the setting-up of community-based organisations (or cooperatives, development associations, etc.), elections of representatives, establishment of management committees, the designation of an executive board, written accounts and general meetings. The system is more or less pyramid-shaped (village councils, district committees, regional boards, etc.). In recent years it has included local development funds, managed by grants committees linked to apex institutions to which the village councils submit financing projects (with the help of 'drafters'). Often, the Northern development agencies require a certain quota of women in the various offices and committees, in the name of a policy of empowerment. This institutional architecture is founded on a few keywords which characterise the type of governance which it aims to promote: public interest, community participation, transparency, accountability, partnership, promotion of women and training for democracy.

This associational mode of local governance is fundamentally an import, promoted and guided over an extended period by the various kinds of development institutions from the North (international organisations, bilateral or multilateral cooperation, development banks, small and large NGOs), and steered from a distance by them.<sup>30</sup> Another characteristic of this institutional architecture is its combination of abundance and ephemerality. The external interventions are not coordinated, so each creates its own 'committees' as it sees fit across the country. This means that every important village has a good dozen associational management structures, each independent of the others. But the life of these structures depends on the resources and the power granted by the providers of the funds, giving them a fundamentally transient nature. When a development project comes to an end, and all projects reach an end after a few years, the associations which it has set up also disappear.

This picture, in which the bulk of the local associational world delivering services depends directly or indirectly on development aid, has one major exception. In the sectors of plantation economy or export cultivation (e.g., cotton, coffee, cocoa), strong associations of producers have existed for a long time (based on the surpluses generated and intensive technical management). In this case, the associations of producers although they have been implemented and supported by development agencies, deliver services on the basis of internal rent, which they control, while other associations linked to the development agencies are subcontractors of an external rent (the 'development rent'), controlled in the North. We might therefore see in this a specific mode of governance (or a variant of the associational mode?). But we will not consider it here because of its strongly regional nature (it is absent in much of West Africa), while the associational mode linked to development organisations is omnipresent.

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<sup>30</sup> Apart from the 'participationist' paradigm of the end of the 1980s, which widely extended the scope of the associational mode, we must remember the existence, from independence and sometimes earlier (cf. Chauveau, 1994), of cooperative or community structures set up from the outside (e.g. in Niger the *animation rurale* service which was so important under the RDA regime).

The associational world, especially in its informal dimensions, is of course much more diversified than this account suggests (it includes, for example, home-town associations, youths associations, *tontines*, funeral groups, vigilantes etc.). Some of them deliver services in their own manner, without being helped by development agencies. But we will not take those into account in this paper, focussing on the model imported by the development agencies, which more or less deliver everywhere the same services in the same manner: wells, grain mills, credit, seeds, market gardening, etc.

Over the years and successive projects and waves of promoters, the imported model has been 'appropriated' by the target populations, becoming an essential part of the local institutional landscape. However, this 'appropriation' of associational governance has not really followed the direction anticipated by the development agencies, far from it. For there are two types of appropriation, 'ideal appropriation' (the kind dreamed of in project documents) and 'real appropriation' (the kind actually undertaken by the local people).

The first would entail the internalisation of the imported model by the people involved. That is based on the scenario promoted by the development operators, the associational model slowly becomes part of village reality, the transplant 'takes', the imported standards are adopted, democratic ideology is quietly incorporated into the local political culture, little by little the model's required management procedures come to be routinely applied by local players, and the system is reproduced spontaneously following the departure of the 'project'.

The second kind of 'appropriation', the one which passes a reality check, is much more complex. It involves a move away from formal rules and the following of practical norms with quite a different content, operating on lines which bear multiple relationships with the assigned goals, and bring into play social mechanisms which are largely opaque to external actors. The way associational structures operate is actually quite different from what their Western designers planned and their local promoters had in mind.

In fact it is possible to distinguish two ways this real appropriation takes place: on the one hand, anticipation by the peasants of the 'associational' conditions set by the development institutions; and on the other hand, the different ways the democratic ideology can be hijacked and the procedures can be worked around in the way associations operate.

#### The 'endogenous' creation of groups

At the beginning, cooperatives, groups and management committees were all creations *ex nihilo*, initiated by actors from outside the villages, namely field promoters acting on behalf of the development agencies. But increasingly we are seeing the 'spontaneous' creation of this type of associational structure. The process is therefore now assuming an 'endogenous' appearance and is undoubtedly expressing certain local dynamics. But this does not imply a break with extraversion, to the extent that the principal aim of these creations is to attract finance from development institutions. In other words, there are more and more local players able to anticipate 'project' conditionalities, creating more or less empty 'associational shells' with the aim of seducing eventual providers of funds, and thus attracting 'development rent'.

This appropriation of the model therefore seems largely opportunist, driven by the desire to capture a share of the 'development rent', but is no less real for that. It exemplifies a capacity

for innovation and adaptation to the modern development context, and it has sociological consequences: the ‘local brokers of development’<sup>31</sup> have become a factor in local arenas, and have taken their place alongside the project promoters as a new type of social mediator.

### Hijacking and redirection within the associational operation

With the benefit of anthropological fieldwork, we can see that the way associational structures operate is actually quite different from what their Western designers planned and what the local promoters had in mind. Thus, elections are often replaced by appointments based on consensus or remote control by the chief. Annual general assemblies and office meetings do not take place on the expected dates, far from it. Accounts are not provided, and management remains opaque. Funds which are accumulated in the community coffer are ‘borrowed’. Accusations of hijacking are omnipresent, but the presumed authors are not punished. Factional-type village rivalries erupt incessantly into the daily life of the associations. When a project ends or when there is no more support, the structures collapse.

We will examine three examples of these discrepancies.

#### *Untouchable or ‘borrowable’ coffers?*

The monetarisation of daily life is very important today, not only to ensure family subsistence by buying food, but also because of the importance of money in social exchanges, gifts and counter-gifts, family ceremonies and required forms of social recognition (a portion of the millet stock of even the poorest households is sold after the harvest to satisfy such obligations). The circulation of money is quite marked; there is permanent pressure to search for cash, for inseparable social and subsistence purposes: it has even been possible to speak of ‘over-monetarisation’.<sup>32</sup> The importance of loans between individuals and the massive success of all forms of credit in rural areas, bear witness to this. In such conditions, where there is unused money asleep in a community coffer, this is a sort of affront to common sense, and the temptation to ‘divert’ it despite everything is particularly strong. The resulting ‘emergency expenditures’, ‘exceptional loans’ or instances of ‘putting deposits to work’ are often the source of the many ‘holes’ found in association coffers. Accusations of hijacking are omnipresent and feed permanent suspicions, which form the backcloth to the management of all these structures.

#### *Imposed or accepted voluntary work?*

In the name of devotion to the general interest and community participation, the ‘projects’ generally impose a rule of voluntary work for positions in associational boards or management committees. They consider that this rule speaks for itself, in other words that it will be met with agreement from the interested parties who, it is true, at first appear to accept it without question. But in our research we have never encountered a chairman or treasurer who does not bitterly complain about this state of affairs and demand a salary (an ‘incentive’)! It is a relevant fact that generally across the country, carrying out any voluntary

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan (eds) (2000).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Olivier de Sardan (1999; 2008a); it was Raynaut (1977) who was the first to draw attention to the importance of monetary circulation in the Maradi region of Niger.

work is seen as a stepping stone to a salaried position.<sup>33</sup> The *per diem* now systematically demanded openly or discreetly by peasants for meetings or training, including in their own villages, is a way of collecting what they consider to be their due.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Community associations or factional associations?*

While in the spirit of their designers, the cooperatives or management committees must represent the collective interest and be the expression of the 'community', field research has revealed on the contrary a process driven with factionalism. In fact, Nigerien villages, like most villages around the world, are profoundly divided, along multiple lines: first occupants *versus* new arrivals; former slave districts *versus* the aristocratic quarter; the chief's clan *versus* the clan opposing the chief; arable *versus* livestock farmers; and, naturally, rifts between political parties, between networks of clients, even between 'ethnic groups' (most villages are 'multi-ethnic').

Hence, the frequent power one 'faction' has over the management committee or the cooperative inevitably causes the opposition or disaffection of the other. The associational structure is seen more as a device in the service of a particular group (which has been able to benefit from a 'project) than as a common asset serving everyone.

### *2.3 The communal mode of local governance*

Long present in Senegal (1973), and introduced somewhat later in Côte d'Ivoire, it is only in more recent years that the communal, or municipal-council mode of local governance has truly been implanted in several Francophone countries of Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) through policies described as decentralisation. Although largely driven by external partners, its motivations have sometimes intersected with internal political considerations (e.g. peace agreements with Touareg rebels in Mali and in Niger).

The modalities of these decentralisation reforms vary quite significantly between countries, but the result is almost the same everywhere: the setting up across the whole national territory of elected municipal councils, with a mayor chosen from among the councillors, which administer territorial districts with budgetary autonomy and take on various responsibilities once handled by the central State.

In rural areas of Francophone countries,<sup>35</sup> it has been a fundamental innovation, introducing unfamiliar ways of organising the delivery of public goods and services, opening up a local space of positions of power and establishing, through communal elections, a new form of accountability to all citizens.

The experience in Niger, although recent, provides various lessons in terms of the operation of the communal mode of governance, which may have some validity elsewhere.

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<sup>33</sup> Thus, many volunteers work in Health Centres (as first aid assistants, etc.) in the hope of being employed one day (Jaffré and Olivier de Sardan, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> The *per diem* culture was introduced by 'projects', where it applied to staff and experts or extension agents: the peasants consider that they too should have 'their share'.

<sup>35</sup> The major towns have often been formed into communes since the 1960s, but these have been governed by appointed non-elected mayors (delegates of the central powers).

## The election and deposing of mayors

Everywhere, once the municipal councillors have been elected, the choice of the mayor from their number has been the focus of severe battles. Whether because of shifting alliances (sometimes quite unrelated to national alliances) between the parties seeking a majority, or because of factional struggles within the locally dominant party, it is very rare for a mayor to be chosen by consensus.

Most often, once elected, mayors are subject to strong and permanent internal contestation, which has resulted in many attempts to depose them, sometimes successfully (two conditions are required for a mayor to be deposed officially: for the majority of councillors to vote for his deposition; and for the titular authority – the prefecture – to intervene).

Furthermore, the government has taken the initiative, in the name of a suddenly stated policy to fight corruption, to depose (and bring to justice) a certain number of mayors for embezzlement and bad management.

## Commissions

Everywhere, municipal councils are organised into committees (between two and five in most cases), which enables them to divide tasks, and give ‘official’ responsibilities to certain councillors. But these are almost never operational. The main reason cited is the lack of resources to enable them to operate (in other words a *per diem* to enable them to meet).

## The Community Development Plan (CDP)

This tool for planning the commune’s investments and activities figures prominently in the training the elected representatives get from projects, and is almost a precondition set by the development institutions for the communes to receive investment and various forms of aid. CDPs have therefore been formulated in the communes supported by the donors, but only where a project or the prefecture’s technicians have taken them in hand. The Community Development Plan, where it exists, is therefore owned hardly at all by the representatives, who remain mainly outside the process. We can also ask questions about its future implementation. It remains very largely the product of external initiatives, finance and knowledge, and thus figures chiefly as a conditionality for donor support.

## The training of representatives

There has been a great deal of training, throughout the country, provided by ‘projects’ either to all councillors, or to mayors and deputy mayors. It is not possible therefore to speak of a training deficit, if by that we mean these sessions lasting a few days organised on an *ad hoc* basis. But we should ask questions about the effectiveness of such training, disconnected from the day to day running of the municipal council.

## The treasury

The continued use of a single commune account is a major obstacle for mayors. They are usually required to deposit all income with the Prefecture's Treasury agent, on whom, at the same time, they depend to execute all of the commune's expenditure (except the former urban communes, who have their own collectors [*receveurs*]).

Naturally, this situation results in 'diversionary' strategies, on the part of both the prefecture and the municipal authorities (in the latter case, retaining a portion of taxes at communal level, to cover a portion of expenditure without needing to call upon the prefecture).<sup>36</sup> These informal, even illegal, situations in the context of general suspicion which characterises the villages, result almost automatically in rumours of hijacking. It is based on such practices among others that the government has undertaken its campaign to unseat and charge mayors, accusing them of poor management or of prevarication (while even the State is not clear about the procedures to follow, and did not provide any technical or financial support to communes).

## The local implantation of parties

Decentralisation has been a bonanza for political parties. It has enabled them on the one hand to establish themselves in a sustainable manner in the interior of the country (where previously they had only played a very sporadic role, and only during national elections). On the other hand, it has offered them 'fresh' positions to fill and an opening up of the political field – in other words, new categories of prominent people and new forms of political recompense. Formerly, the local arena in rural areas was in a certain sense limited to quarrels around chieftaincy or the 'committees' of 'projects'. One observes that the social forces that run the parties (whether local or national residents) are essentially members of the local aristocracy (pertaining to the system of chiefs), traders, civil servants (in the towns), the retired, and certain categories of out of school youth.<sup>37</sup>

However, the political parties must not be considered in a uniform or national way. Indeed, we have come across particularly complex local political games, which are far removed from the strategies of the head office in the capital. Frequently, the observed patterns of partisan loyalty, shifting alliance and political nomadism seem to stem from purely local conflicts and from factional rivalries which can be explained by long-standing conflicts or quarrels between individuals.

More often than you might believe, the national party structures are 'manipulated' by the local notables (in much the same way that 'development projects' are). They are 'using the parties' to promote their personal interests, or strengthen their own client network, or simply to enjoy an income or pecuniary advantage.

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<sup>36</sup> Everybody 'settles up' after the event: the prefect who has spent from the commune budget and gives orders to the collector without the mayor's permission, and the mayor who retains income to spend himself without going through the collector.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Mohamadou (2007): using the results of a LASDEL research programme, it appears that the aristocrats on the whole control the major parties, while the small local traders lead the small parties.

The political game between parties is also systematically fed by various local contradictions (between natives and new arrivals, between the chiefs and their opponents, between aristocrats and dependants, between antagonistic villages, etc.).

The most frequent case is for a local leader or the chief of a party faction, disappointed with the party's attitude towards him (because of local or national managers who, in most cases, have refused him a position or have supported a rival), leaves his party taking everything with him (in other words his relatives, friends, clients and supporters) to join a rival party. In other words, the local strength of the parties, enhanced by decentralisation, must be considered along with three supporting phenomena: clientelism, transhumance and factionalism.

Many voters in fact follow a local notable, and vote less for a given party and more for a political 'patron'. Political patronage is a complex phenomenon, which includes the following in varying proportions: (a) the distribution of favours, benefits, money and gifts by a local 'big man' (which can sometimes be understood as 'buying votes'); (b) sponsorship [*mécécat*] or public-interest interventionism (obtaining infrastructure for the village, or financing it, bringing in a 'project'); and (c) the holding local symbolic and social capital (reputation, descent, networks). In fact, clientelism goes hand in hand with political transhumance – a local notable's ability to change party with his clientèle, according to his interests, his negotiations or his disagreements with the regional or national headquarters.

In addition, a party's success does not in any way mean a peaceful majority. Each party is riven by personal struggles, which when conjugated with clientelism results in an exacerbated factionalism. Thus, within the communal council, the councillors passed over for the position of mayor are not gentle with their victorious competitor, the current mayor, which shows the strength of internal rivalries within a party. To a certain extent, within a dominant party, 'local factionalism' is the rule, expressed through rivalries, underhand attacks, treachery, suspicion and denigration comparable to those found within the aristocracy (in relation to chieftaincy struggles). The persistence of violent internal (or local) rivalries is doubtless a facet of the 'local political culture' (cf. Conclusion below), one which is as important as the search for consensus. Just as a canton chief, elected for life, is faced with a lifelong opponent, his disappointed competitor, who is, moreover, his cousin or nephew, so the mayor will have a sworn opponent (or several) throughout his mandate. Even though they are from the same party, since they did not achieve his position they will not be generous with him. This explains the large number of mayors deposed by their municipal councils, even though they were elected by them, following internal factional struggles within the dominant party and switching local alliances, and the even larger number of attempts to depose mayors that are not successful.

### Electoral rent

In the view of the actors, in all research sites, elections are perceived as an opportunity for the voters to 'eat', in other words as 'rent' from which the maximum benefit must be obtained. Unlike the 'development rent, which is permanent (although governed by individual project timetables), electoral income is episodic or sporadic.

What is sometimes termed 'electoral corruption' has thus become a central element of the political landscape, and decentralisation has clearly accentuated and 'democratised' this

phenomenon. The widening of the electoral boundaries with generalised local elections creates more opportunities to capture electoral rent and a multiplication of occasions for taking part.

Yet this is not just about ‘corruption’, ‘conscience buying’ or the buying of votes, or just a matter of informal or illegal mechanisms.<sup>38</sup> Public and legal procedures also contribute to electoral income redistribution mechanisms. For example, a point where both development rent and electoral rent meet is the ‘culture of per diems’ (or of ‘inducements’).<sup>39</sup> Generalised by development projects, per diems and inducements have now become a part of local culture, and are at the forefront of methods of getting access to electoral rent (per diems for the militants, ‘inducements’ for meetings, per diems for the key staff of polling stations).

### The weight of the *ressortissants*

By opening up the local political arena, decentralisation has opened it up in particular to the *ressortissants* (those originally from the region, who have moved to the major towns, the capital or abroad). Until now, these people were not very involved in chiefly quarrels (except in the case of some aristocrats) and were by definition excluded from the committees linked to development projects (reserved for local residents), so they remained absent from the key modes of local governance. Those among them who kept links to their region of origin restricted themselves to specific acts of patronage or sponsorship (construction of a mosque, rebuilding a bore hole, one-off contributions, etc.) – either individually, through *ad hoc* payments or, more rarely, through ‘home-town associations’. National elections mobilised some of them, mostly for a specific appearance in electoral campaigns, and just a few of them as candidates.

These *ressortissants* belong to two major groups (some of them to both): civil servants on the one hand; and merchants on the other hand (located in the large towns, but also often in neighbouring countries). Many of them have now started participating in local elections, strengthening an already burgeoning ‘return home’ movement (sometimes this return is personal and permanent, in particular for civil servants nearing retirement;<sup>40</sup> most of the time, it is sporadic, taking an absenteeist form, passing through clients, relatives or dependants who still live in the locality).

This recent investment by *ressortissants* in the local political arena has essentially taken place with the support of the political parties, since they were the only means of access to any posts as councillor or mayor. This has further complicated the political game (see above) by introducing a number of contradictions between *ressortissants* and local notables. At the same time, the arrival of the *ressortissants* in local campaigns has tended to intensify the phenomena of electoral corruption and vote buying.

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<sup>38</sup> Naturally, care must be taken with normative judgements implied by the use of such vocabulary. The advantage of the ‘rent metaphor is that it is less tarnished with value judgements.

<sup>39</sup> Today, in popular language this term signifies all types of bonus.

<sup>40</sup> Remember that this takes place early (between 55 and 60), and that most of those retired do not have a pension, but just a severance payment when they leave: both of these factors certainly influence this ‘return home’.

A certain number of *ressortissants* have taken on positions as mayor. The category of ‘absentee mayor’<sup>41</sup> has therefore become widespread, which poses many problems for the way communes are run (particularly since deputy mayors are also often absentee *ressortissants* as well).

### Privilegism and informal privatisation

It is hardly surprising if the new communes tend to reproduce the mechanisms which characterise public governance from the top to the bottom levels of the State.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the opposite would have been surprising. Maximisation of the benefits associated with a given function seems to be commonplace, as we saw above in regard to the number of privileges granted to mayors. The creation of a High Council of local districts is a move in the same direction, with considerable advantages granted to those participating in its governing bodies.

With respect to ‘informal privatisation’ (in other words banal forms of daily corruption)<sup>43</sup> it is still too early to make a balance-sheet of this at communal level. What is certain is that, rightly or wrongly, the conversations, in most of our sites, are pointing in a similar direction. For some, decentralisation is firstly a decentralisation of corruption.

As with management committees, evidence of proven embezzlement is hard to find, but suspicion and accusations are always there. In other words, from their very first months at the head of the commune, many mayors, or their deputies if they are active, have been the target of rumours of mismanagement, with or without foundation, often based on an informal, opaque style of management. But, there again, as in the case of management committees, there is no legal follow up on a matter, even if it seems proven. Recognition of being at fault, or reimbursement, is sufficient, and financial or legal sanctions are avoided. On the other hand, these matters are often used for political ends – for example, as mentioned, to attempt to unseat the presumed guilty party. As in management committees, accusation or rumours of mismanagement are at the heart of (often internal) opposition manoeuvres to unsettle those responsible, or even to unseat and replace them.

## 2.4 *The other modes of local governance*

We now turn to a much briefer review of the five other modes of local governance.

### The project-based mode of local governance

The term ‘project’ has been added to the local language (*porze* in Zarma) to mean all forms of development aid present on a local scale, regardless of the promoter (national or international).

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<sup>41</sup> It must be noted that the precedent already existed in the context of chieftaincy. Because of the increasing involvement of *ressortissants* of aristocratic origin (managers, but also traders) in the search for chiefly positions, more and more canton and village chiefs in fact live in the capital, and are therefore ‘absentees’, leaving a younger brother or a village cousin to manage the chieftaincy on a daily basis instead of them and in their name.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Olivier de Sardan (2004).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Blundo & Olivier de Sardan (2007).

While the project-based mode engenders, feeds and finances the associational mode described above, which is in many ways a subset or extension of it, it also has its own independence and exists in the field in the form of enclave or as a management, training or monitoring body.

In one sense, the project-based mode of local governance is part of the same political and management space as the bureaucratic mode of local governance and it fulfils some of its functions, either in its place, in competition with it or in addition to it. But unlike the latter, characterised by extreme poverty, it represents on the contrary an oasis of prosperity which is the envy of all public servants, whose ambition is to be hired by a project, or failing that, to be financed by it.

The project-based mode is organised around a sophisticated and functional logistical model, which is not in keeping with the social and administrative environment. With office infrastructure, an IT network, means of travel (4x4, maintenance, fuel), travel and operating expenses, and trained and properly compensated personnel, it represents a form of mutualisation of spectacular bureaucratic privileges, financed by a Northern agency in accordance with extra-territorial accounting and administrative procedures, in the service of 'developmentalist' missions. A development project is both a financing agency supporting various local actors (in particular the local associations it has itself created), and a fulfilment agency, providing certain goods and services either directly or indirectly.

The managers, once essentially expatriates, are more and more frequently nationals, generally obtained from the best elements of the civil service (according to an internal 'brain drain' which has become systematic).

The projects also call upon cohorts of salaried agents, recruited locally and present throughout the country,<sup>44</sup> who act as the interface between the 'developmentalist complex [*configuration développementiste*]<sup>45</sup> and local populations. They are responsible for promoting associational structures, 'sensitising' the populations, leveraging village boards and committees, and training local players in the operation of this new institutional framework, its democratic ideology and its procedural mechanisms.

The projects are by definition provisional structures, intended to create the conditions for their own disappearance: in other words, to enable the goods and services which they deliver to be progressively delivered by local players. Naturally, they tend to allow themselves to continue for as long as possible, unless they take on other forms. It is common that when a project disappears, it also results in the disappearance of the goods and services which it provided.

Following the Paris Declaration, the move to sector-based aid, and then to budgetary aid, has in fact not resulted in the ending of projects, particularly at a local level, but the modalities have changed little by little. Among these recent changes, note: (a) a larger presence in the field of NGOs from the North or Arab countries, with either developmentalist or humanitarian objectives, as well as of local-government entities from the North (decentralised cooperation),

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<sup>44</sup> There are no villages where there are not now recognised and known, to the extent that they are often identified by their all-terrain motorbikes, which have become the symbol of their professional identity in the eyes of peasants.

<sup>45</sup> Olivier de Sardan (1995).

relative to the large bilateral agencies and the ‘major projects’ of yesteryear; (b) more subcontracting by national NGOs; and (c) the growing influence of projects on the local State and, above all, on the communes.

### The bureaucratic mode of local governance

Under the colonial regime, which created the modern State in Africa (in a markedly derogatory form, particularly under the *indigénat* regime), the presence of the State at a local level was symbolised by the presence of the ‘*commandant de cercle*’ and the individuals in his service. Their mode of governance was essentially of a despotic kind. Security (both political and military) and fiscal and human levies (forced labour, conscription) were priority tasks, with a large margin for manoeuvre, leaving room in particular for many privileges, such as the ability to call upon intermediaries and various local brokers [*courtiers*].<sup>46</sup> Even the delivery of a public good as important as food security was carried out despotically, in the form of mandatory reserve storage barns (*greniers de reserve*).

The administrators, prefects and sub-prefects took up the baton at independence, often reproducing the same mode of despotic governance. At the same time, independence saw the progressive installation in the interior of the country of the State’s technical services (at the level of small rural towns): health, education, agriculture, animal husbandry, water, etc. The bureaucratic mode of local governance virtually encompasses what we have elsewhere called the ‘Local State’,<sup>47</sup> namely the decentralised State services, or in other words the segments of the State present in the interior of the country.

With decentralisation and democratisation, a major change to the bureaucratic mode of local governance has taken place over recent years. On the one hand, the significantly named ‘command’ system of administration has had to make a break with the key characteristics of old fashioned despotism, and to change, at least officially, into a body supported the communes and under their control. But because of this, the current phase is marked by a great deal of friction between the communes and the prefects or governors. The latter are keen to retain some of their prerogatives, and aim to ensure the pre-eminence of the local State’s political branch over the mayors. For their part, the decentralised technical services, now stripped of much of their previous role, are attempting to reconvert themselves and become the technical support arm of the local collectivities, with the support of foreign partners.

The situation in rural towns and in the villages must be clearly distinguished.

#### *Rural towns*

Rural towns are the local State’s territory par excellence (prefecture and technical services). The State has been at the heart of the urban development process in the country’s interior. Administrative boroughs undergoing urbanisation, despite their still very rural character, are also purely State creations, since the spontaneous development of homes and shops follows above all the arrival of a school, and then an administrative office or a sub-prefecture.

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<sup>46</sup> Privilegism and use of intermediaries are among the practical norms which are still in operation in the bureaucracy today and which date from the colonial era. Cf. Olivier de Sardan (2004).

<sup>47</sup> This term has been used by LASDEL since 1999, inter alia, in its scientific programme. It has since been used among others by the West African department of the Swiss Cooperation Agency and by Ace-Recit in Burkina Faso.

But the main characteristic of the local State is doubtless that the civil servants assigned to these towns (officials, administrators, technical services) are only there for a short time: they are just passing through. Because of this, they may be considered to be there for rapid enrichment before returning elsewhere, except if they have a personal project (familial or political) in the locality.

This local 'rurban' State is characterised by:

- a derisory number of civil servants, most of whom are idle and unproductive, except a few who, on the contrary, are overwhelmed;
- a systematic politicisation, which in almost all cases grants political decisions supremacy over technical choices, and partisan appointments over the promotion of skills;
- a dramatic absence of operating resources, which should have been provided through normal State channels, yet are not;
- an almost complete disengagement of the State from its investment and infrastructure providing functions; and
- a very important place taken by development 'projects' (if any). The availability of a project determines the likelihood of a service operating (it will operate if it is connected to a project) and the provision of infrastructure (only projects build), but all this applies only for a limited time (the duration of a project) and randomly (obtaining a project is luck, like a lottery).

### *Villages*

In rural communes (cantons), the State was essentially absent, and the creation of the commune paradoxically represents a form of local State construction, in the form of the mayor, the council and municipal agents. At the same time, the mayor's relationship with the prefecture (in the town) is fundamental: it is from the prefecture that the mayor of a rural commune can hope personnel will be made available, a subsidies will be paid and municipal council decisions will be validated, and it is the prefecture which manages the commune's funds (cf. points above about the single account).

It is true that the prefect, who still sometimes enjoys, although less and less, the popular title of *commandant*, inherited from the colonial period, has seen his prestige considerably reduced, for various reasons set out above: the capacity of local political notables to engage in intrigues at a national level; the strong politicisation of the administration; the democratisation of political life; and the place projects have taken to the detriment of the State. Furthermore, other local players, officially under his orders, such as some canton chiefs (and, today, certain mayors) can, because of their interpersonal skills and their direct relations with the capital, get the upper hand over him. But the control he exercises over the communes can in a certain manner give him new authority.

A potential source of conflict could be procurement. Their allocation is still prerogative of the department, through the departmental procurement commission.

As for the decentralised technical services, which remain under the authority of the prefects, profound changes have taken place in their interactions with the communes, although most often in response to the arrival of projects. They are increasingly becoming service providers to the communes (as they sometimes already had become vis-à-vis projects), financed by donors wanting to develop the communes. In other words, the State's technical services now deliver commercial private expertise to the communes.

#### The sponsorship-based mode of local governance

The role of sponsorship patronage has been largely underestimated and under-studied in Africa. Yet, Bierschenk (2006: 551) clearly shows – writing about Parakou in Benin; although it is also true in Niger, and many other countries – that the *logic of sponsorship* is at the heart of local (and national) political life. We could say the same for certain public or collective services which are regularly delivered in this way. The main manifestations are the construction or repair of infrastructure (religious infrastructure, village water supplies and health centre or school buildings), the paying in the name of the populations of taxes to the state or the commune or of the quotas required by the projects, food aid in the event of shortages.

The social players likely to play the role of sponsors are varied. Alongside the model of the rich trader established in the town, or a neighbouring country (often illiterate El Hadj), other models also exist: such as that of the politician or senior civil, the politician who hails from the area, or the senior civil servant. Temporary or permanent migrants can also undertake sponsorship initiatives. But while this sort of patron has a foothold in the village or district of origin, he generally lives elsewhere, and his sponsorship activities are a means of achieving a high profile in the local arena (either to play a role himself, or to enable 'placement' of his dependants or clients).

#### The religious mode of local governance

The delivery of public or collective services and goods by religious bodies sometimes seems close to the sponsorship-based mode, and sometimes to the associational mode, but there are sufficient specific features to justify speaking of a religious mode of local governance. However, these religious institutions include not only the major religions (Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam), but also different currents within the major religions (a variety of Protestant churches, charismatic movements, Islamic brotherhoods) or on their periphery (syncretic and prophetic churches, sects). This diversity raises the question whether, in spite of everything, it is possible to distinguish points in common, over and above the religious background.

In our opinion, the answer is 'yes'! For example, there is a form of social action that is very specific to this mode of governance, which is seen as a collective, societal extension of the charity demanded of the faithful, and is particularly prominent in the form of social services (education, health) or humanitarian intervention. An ability to mobilise networks of its own apart from the local, national or international communities, is also a feature of the religious mode of local governance. The role of charismatic leaders, supported by religious legitimacy, must also be emphasised.

## The merchant mode of local governance

The privatisation of certain areas of service-provision in favour of multinational businesses has been a strong theme in recent times as a result of international neo-liberal policies. At the same time, there is increasing recourse, at local level, to private providers to deliver public or collective services and goods, often responding to other types of logic. Like the sponsorship-based and religious modes of local governance, the merchant mode is an aggregate of various practices by a heterogeneous set of players. However, these players share the feature that they have emerged from and been shaped by the everyday world of mercantile exchange. Hence, the collective goods and services that they provide are paid-for services, resulting in income-generation and profit.

We might be tempted to suppose that, since it involves a commercial transaction, privatised provision is in contradiction with an approach in terms of public goods and services. Nothing is less certain. Just as sponsor-patrons and the associational sector play a public action role, so do some private operators. Decentralisation and pressure from donors have opened up a whole range of ways of delivering public or collective goods and services which are commercial but nevertheless under the communes or the state's responsibility. They include public service outsourcing, concessions and *mise en régie*.

The merchant mode of local governance must not be confused, in this respect, with the privatisations of public agencies in the large towns, which under the pressure of IMF and structural adjustment programmes opened up the water, electricity or telephone markets to large international groups.<sup>48</sup>

### **3 A comparative extension of the analysis of modes of local governance?**

In section two, we have described the eight modes of local governance. In our opinion, these encompass the essential elements of the delivery of public goods and services in Niger, and our experience of research carried out in other countries of the region suggests they can be found, in more or less the same forms, in other Francophone countries of West Africa.

To enable a more detailed comparative analysis, not only including these countries, but also Anglophone countries whose colonial and post-colonial history is somewhat different, we propose the series of tables below, which may be completed or adapted at will.

A single good or service is most often delivered, in a manner which can be complementary or competitive, by various modes.<sup>49</sup> These goods and services are addressed to more or less specific publics, but we consider it too complex to state the extension and nature of these publics in a specific column. Each mode delivers a more or less wide range of goods and services, and can be more or less specialised, while tending to deliver certain specific public or collective services and goods (which is why there is an *ad hoc* column).

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<sup>48</sup> Cf Jaglin (2005).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Blundo (2009).

These modes coexist, in general, in the same political space, in the same local arenas. Yet they are not all present everywhere, and even less present with the same intensity or the same density across administrative levels or regions: the bureaucratic mode is essentially located at the in principal towns of territorial districts, the project-based mode varies greatly in space and time, the small villages remain largely out of reach of the communal mode, etc.

Some of these modes are of relatively ancient origin (the chiefly mode dates back to colonial times, the sponsorship-based mode is sometimes even older, as are some forms of religious mode) but they have changed a great deal over the years, and in particular since independence. Others are recent innovations (the project-based mode and the communal mode). All take on different forms according to context (which is why there is a 'changes and variants' column).

These modes, while close to Nigerien data, are of an 'ideal-typical' nature. This has two consequences:

- In concrete terms, they occasionally or even regularly overlap: a chief, a mayor, a prophet or a prefect can also undertake sponsorships; role changes and the accumulation of functions are not uncommon.
- Each is also cut across by strong internal differences: a village chief can be a simple peasant without resources or audience, which is never the case for canton chiefs.

The nature of the norms which officially or publicly regulate them (official standards and social standards) and the discrepancies between these and the corresponding practical norms must also be considered. The bureaucratic, communal, project-based, and associational modes are ringed by a vast network of formal, written norms and procedures, while the sponsorship-based, merchant, chiefly and religious modes derive above all from social norms (even if various legal texts more or less define their activities). The discrepancies between official norms and practical norms, and the games that are played by social actors between both, are therefore quite different from one mode to the other.<sup>50</sup>

### *3.1 Explanatory variables and contextual variables*

Using this experimental table, the aim is also to move towards the search for relevant data about the quality of the goods and services delivered (or the corresponding developmental outcomes).<sup>51</sup>

*None of these modes is a 'variable' in itself.* In our opinion this is a very important point. *For each mode*, we need to look for the independent variables likely to explain the existence or not of developmental outcomes. We have not got there yet, so it is with more caution that we have inserted a column identifying 'Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided'. These possible factors are very provisional, and are nothing more than leads which may be followed in the search for explanatory variables.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. Olivier de Sardan (2008b).

<sup>51</sup> This perspective on aid for public action is specific to the APPP programme, under which this text has been written.

But there are other variables which we must also consider when choosing research sites, which we will call contextual variables: In our opinion it is impossible to consider them as explanatory variable, but they can be useful in a comparative context, either to standardise the sites as much as possible, or alternatively to distinguish them.

Take the presence of Islam for example. We could decide to only consider Muslim sites across Africa, to enable comparisons which are internal to this contextual variable. We could also (which would no doubt be more realistic) make one half Muslim sites and the other half Christian sites, to have sites with greater variety at a religious level. But in any event, it would be absurd (and dangerous) to consider Islam or Christianity as defining factors, which explain in themselves whether or not local leaders succeed!

The same applies to the urban or rural nature of sites, their degree of ethnic, social or professional homogeneity, their isolation or on the contrary their lack of enclave features, and even the importance of local economic resources. Thus we can suggest the following list:

Homogeneity or diversity of population
Religious homogeneity or diversity
Dominant religion (order, sect, etc.)
The extent of social stratification
Isolation or connectedness
The scale of local economic resources
Land tensions
The scale of the State's presence

In our opinion it is extremely important to distinguish these two types of variables.

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Chiefly	Canton and group chiefs Home chiefs Town chiefs	Arbitration, conciliation, local justice Organisations for certain collective actions (cf. cleaning operations) Land regulation Intermediation with State Intermediation with development projects (occasionally) Representation outside the community Local representation of the State Social Aid Hosting foreigners Fiscality: collecting tax ( ??) <sup>52</sup> Magico-religious protection of the community	Venal justice Land grabbing Illicit withdrawals Major internal conflicts ( <i>baabizey</i> ) Indirect control of infrastructure (management by kinsmen and dependants) Access to and direct interventions with high-level state managers	<u>Official</u> : Ministry of the Interior <u>Practical</u> : Local aristocracy; reputation ( <i>maa</i> )	Leader's personality (i.e. his personal ethical or religious investment, his biography, etc.) Local legitimacy (pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial) Presence of a council of notables or elders Educational capital Economic capital Social and political networks Previous functions Nature of internal opposition to the aristocracy ( <i>baabizey</i> ) Age	Colonial creation (administrative chiefdoms), with recovery of more or less real pre-colonial legitimacy; differences due to British/French colonisation Often attacked or marginalised at independence (not everywhere) Recent symbolic resurgence and renewed Development Partner interest Chiefs today members of the State bourgeoisie

<sup>52</sup> Is fiscality a public or collective good or service?

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
State	Governors, prefects, sub-prefects, district officers Technical services	Justice Security Social services (health, education, water) Infrastructure construction and management (public goods or club goods) Social Aid Environmental protection Local representation of the State Conflict management Accounting and public finance (Treasury)	Privilegism Informal privatisation Commitment to a party Seek recruitment by projects Missions and vacations through projects Financing of specialists in the occult <sup>53</sup>	<u>Official:</u> Ministries <u>Practical:</u> political parties; citizens and users; communal councils	Leader's personality (i.e. his personal ethical or religious investment, his biography, etc.) Professional training (ENA national school or not) Membership of party Previous functions Nature of position and type of service delivered Degree of margin for local manoeuvre Peer pressure Social networks Social status and gender	Before = fundamentally despotic (including after independence) Recent progressive loss of authority by the command administration (not everywhere) Reconversion (and semi-privatisation) of technical services as 'support', under Development Partner influence

<sup>53</sup> Sometimes termed 'immaterial public service'!!

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Communa l	Municipal councils Mayors Local councils	Civil status register Intermediatio n with State Intermediatio n with development agencies Land regulation Community representatio n Social Aid Conflict management Security Infrastructure management Fiscality: collecting taxes	Privilegism Absentee mayors Importance of attempts to depose Financing from communal budget of State missions and intervention s Delegation of investment to projects Markets as main resource Honorific recognition of chiefs Financing of specialists in the occult Fictional budgets	<u>Official</u> : voters; municipal council <u>Practical</u> : political parties and merchants; chiefdom (sometimes)  NB: The case of mayors deposed in Niger; they provide a pointer to the 'real' accountabilities; they are requested: - by the council - by the controlling authority - by the parties - or achieved via elections	Leader's personality (i.e. his personal ethical or religious investment, his biography, etc.) Social status Richness Professional training Political membership Social networks Relations with the controlling authority Ability to manage and organise Political consistency with the communal council or the dominant party (factional struggles) and mayor- councillor relations Importance and nature of communal infrastructure Role and skills of Communal personnel Presence of a local popular or social movement Nature of the opposition Links with Development Partners, NGOs, decentralised cooperation, etc.	Recent in Francophone areas (except Senegal and urban communes managed by civilian administrators), associated with decentralisation reforms; Older in Anglophone areas No real State support Increasing Development Partner interest Rules of the game introduced from above, or from the exterior

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Project based <sup>54</sup>	Development agencies Northern NGOs National NGOs	Infrastructure Institutional engineering and training (cf. local NGOs and associations) Various financial (micro-credits, etc.)	Fiction of stated partnership (injunctions and conditionalities) Suspicion of local structures Oasis of privilege Many reciprocal misconceptions with local players Regionalist pressure	<u>Official:</u> Taxpayers in the North, subscribers in the North, councils in the North; National State <u>Practical:</u> development professionals (cf. understanding of the official language of the development institutions); accounts audits	Institutional strategies Economic weight Finance procedures Presence over a shorter or longer period Operational devices in the field	Following independence; recent 'participationist' dimension (hence connection with associational mode) Remains present even after sector aid and budgetary aid Coexistence of interventions 'short circuiting' the local State and interventions supporting the local State

<sup>54</sup> The French term *projectal* is a neologism derived from 'development projects', widely known in Nigerian languages by the term '*porze*'

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Associational	Management committees Offices Associations Cooperatives Local NGOs Groups Nationals	Intermediation with development agencies Infrastructure management (public goods or club goods) Social services (health, education) Protection of the environment Conflict management Creation of public debate Project fulfilment agencies Security (cf. militias) Social Aid Social link, cooperation, collective action	Learn Northern language and procedures Non-respect for procedures Factional hoarding Prospects for social promotion and careers with projects Supporting welfarist strategies Manipulation by the chiefdoms or the parties (depending on what is at stake)	<u>Official:</u> adherents, users <u>Practical:</u> development projects (understanding of the official language of the development institutions; client relations); State; chiefdoms parties	Leader's personality (i.e. his personal ethical or religious investment, his biography, etc.) Literacy Gender Relations with the chiefdom Social status Social network Richness Type of service delivered or collective action Divisions within village or chiefdom Independence/dependence on Development Partners; DP strategies Ability to manage and organise	Appeared with projects and development agencies New rules introduced by DPs 'Affirmative action' imposed by PTF (gender) Recent emergence of new elites with new skills and new functions Increasing formalisation of associations

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Sponsorship-based <sup>55</sup>	Merchants Politicians Sons of the locality Migrants	Infrastructure management (public goods or club goods) Social Aid Social services (health, education) Various responsibilities (taxation, payment, quotas, students) Intermediation Representation outside the community (informal ambassadors)	Private appropriation of infrastructure Important political usage Clientelism	Official/Practical: God Ego and reputation ( <i>maa</i> ) Family, clients, community Political party	Leader's personality (i.e. his personal ethical or religious investment, his biography, etc.) Degree and type of political investment Local client network Economic capital Social network Types of goods and services financed	1) Recent and very localised (enclaves) 2) Old and everywhere; very accepted and socially valued

<sup>55</sup> The French term *mécénal* is a neologism derived from *mécénat*.

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Factors which may lead to an improvement in the quality of the services provided</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Religious	Churches Brotherhoods	Social Aid Social services (health, education) Intermediation with development agencies Social link and cooperation Management of collective religious places (mosque, church) Civil status Justice	Electoral influence Enrichment of managers Symbolic security	<u>Official</u> : God; the faithful <u>Practical</u> : religious hierarchy; chiefs; State; sponsors	Leader's personality (i.e. his personal ethical or religious investment, his biography, etc.) Educational capital Religious knowledge Religious references Economic capital Social network Local insertion of religious group Religious conflicts Ability to manage and organise	Differences between Islam /Christianity /various sects Links with external confessional networks Strategies of greater or lesser rupture (cf. Pentecostalists, Isalists) and investment in local political life

<i>Local modes of governance</i>	<i>Strategic players (institutions)</i>	<i>Goods delivered</i>	<i>Examples of practical norms</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Possible variables</i>	<i>Historical changes and major geographical differences</i>
Merchant	Registered companies Merchants Carriers Health centres, private schools	Infrastructure construction and management (public goods or club goods) Social services (health, education, water) Local businesses (including mills, telephone, etc.) Markets Transport	Political capitalisation	<u>Official</u> : Social need; users <u>Practical</u> : chiefdom; parties; State	Personality (incl. personal religious investment, biography, etc.) Degree of informality Educational capital Economic capital Social networks	Recent development of modern formal forms (registered companies = donor influence; schools and private surgeries = because of the crisis in public services) A greater or lesser degree of coordination with public services or State control

### 3.2 *A provisional table*

The modes of local governance defined above are not definitive. We could delete some of them, if we considered them to be irrelevant to our research, or even suggest others, which might have been forgotten. We can also modify the composition of the ones contained in the table. For example, we might consider that the sponsorship-based mode of local governance should be split (companies on one side, merchants and politicians on the other), or that the religious mode of local governance should be expanded into different variants according to church characteristics, brotherhoods and sects considered, or that the chiefly mode of governance covers categories of chiefs which differ too much not to be distinguished. In other words, each mode can, depending on empirical considerations, give rise to a series of ‘sub-modes’.

The ‘*accountability*’ column could be deleted, and the information captured in the ‘official’ characteristics of the mode of governance or the practical norms. We might also consider inserting a ‘*reformers*’ column to attempt to record, for each mode, which social players are most likely to move this mode in a ‘developmentalist’ direction, or a ‘*conflicts*’ column, to analyse the key tensions and contradictions specific to each mode.

Finally, these modes of local governance approach is not exclusive, and can certainly be combined with other approaches, in particular the one proposed by Giorgio Blundo, which favours an entry-point based on the nature of the goods or services delivered.<sup>56</sup> We have developed elsewhere an analysis of such ‘delivery configurations’.

## 4 **Conclusion: local political culture, public space, accountability?**

But can we not, behind the diversity of modes of local governance, see some common cross-cutting characteristics? Indeed, various types of political behaviour can be found in several modes of local governance, sometimes even in all of them. ‘Informal privatisation’ (paying a fee to receive a service which is normally free), which can be considered to be a form of corruption,<sup>57</sup> is an inseparable feature of the bureaucratic mode of local governance, but is widely observed in the communal mode, in the associational mode and even in the project based mode. Patron-client relations are present everywhere, regardless of mode, and we noted, with reference to the chiefly mode, that the management style of the canton chiefs was becoming a point of reference for all political leadership.

Asking the question which practices and representations are shared by all the modes of local governance, implies asking the dreaded question of ‘local political culture’.<sup>58</sup> Can we, in fact, use the concept of ‘local political culture’ without falling into the ‘culturalist-traditionalist’ trap, with its host of clichés, amalgams and resuppositions?

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<sup>56</sup> Blundo (2009).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Blundo & Olivier de Sardan (2007).

<sup>58</sup> I follow the concept used by Hahonou (2006) to make sense of political behaviour in north-west Niger. The more general concept of political culture naturally has a long history in political science, since its use by Almond & Verba (1966). Summarising the debate on the question would take us too far from the point.

We think you can. Precise, circumscribed, empirically based uses the concept of ‘culture’ are possible.<sup>59</sup> Local political culture is not the political culture of the elites in the capital, neither is it the expression of ‘tradition’, and it obviously has nothing to do with any distinctive ‘African culture’.<sup>60</sup> Local political culture is a set of *shared practices and representations cutting across the different modes of local governance*. It incorporates the different experiences had by the villagers: the way in which groups of people have experienced or managed successive political regimes at their level (colonisation, one party state, military dictatorship and the *samaria*, multipartyism and electoral corruption); the compromises and tricks played on the State technical services and on ‘project’ managers; the clientelist relations habitually established with the El Hadj merchants who have made their fortune outside the country in the last two decades, taking advantage of their sponsorship-oriented charitable behaviour; etc.<sup>61</sup>

Our experience at the many sites covered by LASDEL’s Observatory on Decentralisation, spread across the interior of the country, makes us think that there is indeed a largely shared local political culture across the whole of Niger, over and above the inevitable regional variations. But there is nothing to say that it is exactly the same in other countries. We might suppose that, elsewhere, certain features will be the same (because, for example and *inter alia*, of the colonial heritage, and the considerable standardisation of post-colonial development policies) and that others on the contrary will be quite different (because, for example and *inter alia*, of special post-colonial political configurations, or specific patterns of rent).

A comparative consideration of local political cultures could therefore be envisaged, even though it implies various dangers of abusive homogenisation and generalisation.

One of the characteristics of the local political culture in Niger (underlined by Hahonou, 2006a) – one which is not necessarily valid for the national political culture and is applicable only in certain situations (for example in public, or in the presence of outsiders) – is to favour the taking of the final decision by consensus (using adversarial voting as little as possible), and avoiding raising issues publicly in a way that is likely to humiliate a rival who is also a neighbour or a relative. But this ‘unanimity is often just dressing façade and, behind the

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<sup>59</sup> Curiously, whereas some do not agree with our criticism of ‘culturalism-traditionalism’, we ourselves have sometimes been accused of ‘culturalism’ (Dahou, 2005) in relation to an earlier attempt to identify certain ‘cultural logic’ playing the role of ‘facilitator’ (no more, no less) for corrupt practices (Olivier de Sardan, 1999; the paradox, in the case against us put forward by Dahou, is that his own interpretation of corruption is itself profoundly culturalist; cf. Blundo, 2007). Everything is put in such a way that you must either accept absolutely any use of the term ‘culture’, or never use it at all! We think on the contrary that *the culturalist ideology* (the source of much bias in the social sciences and the legitimisation of numerous clichés, and whose ‘traditionalist’ component is essential) should not be confused with a *rigorous* (and therefore prudent) approach to the concept of ‘culture’, which suggests being clearly defined in time and space, in other words to refer to *shared contemporary social practices and representations, in given contexts, shown by the research*. In the article described here on the moral economy of corruption, we were however careful not to criticise culturalism, and to use the term ‘cultural logic’, stating: ‘*all these logics are syncretic, none is “traditional”, none is coming directly from a so-called precolonial culture*’ (Olivier de Sardan, 1999: 44).

<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, we have emphasised the central role of the colonial heritage in the modern configuration of African States (Olivier de Sardan, 2004).

<sup>61</sup> Bierschenk does not use the term ‘political culture’, but instead employs the similar notion of ‘political style’ (2006: 567).

consensus, conflicts proliferate, as with the family conflicts inherent to the chiefly mode of local governance or the numerous attempts to unseat mayors. Local conflicts, the existence of unspoken opposition, widespread discontent and even outbursts of violence, are perfectly compatible with this practice of consensus which has nothing to do with unanimity or loyalty.

Factionalism, clientelism, local conflicts, generalised suspicion, priority given to network affiliations, the appearance of consensus, absence of transparency, hegemony of the merchants, associationism as a means of obtaining aid, political transhumance, vote-buying and electoral cheating, privilegism, ostentatious generosity, selective mutual support, Islamic legitimisations, informal privatisation or neo-patrimonialism, the reduction of women to window-dressing roles, internal factionalism within the parties: all of these characteristics can be found, in varying degrees, in Nigerien local political culture. Yet *neither can we exclude from it expectations of justice or equity*, which are expressed for example in the strong criticisms of the behaviour of urban elites, politicians and certain canton chiefs which feature regularly in our interviews. In other words, the unsatisfied expectations of the people, as described in emic discourse, and challenges to established power, in word or deed, are in our opinion part of the local reality as much as the practices generated by the modes of local governance (each of which is, furthermore, is criticised in many forms). Taking this into account is important, in our opinion, from the point of view of the potential for 'internal reforms'. Neither must we neglect the forms of real solidarity, the various efforts by militants, or the episodes of collective mobilisation, which can be seen here and there.

In one way, we might represent local political culture as a shared ideological construct, latent, changing, ambivalent, underlying the different modes of local governance, and interacting with them. The chiefly, sponsorship-based and merchant modes of local governance which seem to be the most 'native' or 'endogenous', appear to be the closest to this culture, without never being confused with it. The bureaucratic, communal, project-based and associational modes are much more distinguished from it at a formal level, relating to the rules, but are closer when it comes to actual practice. In other words, *from one mode of local governance to the next, the discrepancy between the official standards and the practical norms can vary considerably. Hence, we can represent the local political culture as being made up of all the shared practical norms, around collective action, power and the delivery of goods and services, regardless of whether these norms are close to official norms.* They cut across the different modes of local governance, which can be split into two groups: in one, official standards are not very different from practical norms; in others they are substantially different. Yet that tells us nothing about the respective effectiveness of these modes in terms of the delivery of public or collective services and goods.

This question hides another one, about the respective capacity of each of the modes of governance to build a 'local public space'.<sup>62</sup> The chiefly mode of local governance appears to be quite a long way from the notion of public space, with its strongly patrimonial and clientelist character. With respect to the associational mode of local governance, which formally presupposes the shared existence of such a concept, we have seen that the reality,

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<sup>62</sup> By 'local public space', we mean a political space where the different conceptions of local public matters, and, *inter alia*, the delivery of public or collective services and goods, compete in the name of public interest. This definition therefore differs somewhat from the one Habermas (1978) gives of *Offentlichkeit* (as *public sphere* or as *public space*), where he rather insists on the formation of a *public opinion*.

dominated by factionalism and the quest for development rent, is quite different. The communal mode could, for different reasons, appear to be the one most likely to strengthen the notion of public space (or build it, if we adopt the hypothesis that it is largely absent), if it is sufficiently adopted by local political cultures so that it is not perceived as an imported model which has been more or less imposed, and if distinguishes itself sufficiently from the clientelist or neo-patrimonial modalities that many mayors have attempted to impose on it.

One might suggest that the local political culture is more concerned with group affiliations and particularistic solidarities, and is hardly favourable to the notion of a public interest over and above these particular cleavages. There are many examples. The canton chief is in the first place the representative of a lineage, and the spokesman for a family and social caste (the aristocracy). The chair of the management committee of the cereal bank is first and foremost a man from a particular neighbourhood, the representative of a local pressure group and even the protégé of a project. The village is firstly the 'property' of the lineage which founded it, rejecting any claims by 'recent arrivals' (even they arrived two centuries ago). A well, even if used collectively, remains the responsibility of the person who sank it. A community pump repaired by a sponsor then becomes in practice his personal property. All land is appropriated (on an individual, family or clan basis), and the notion of a village patrimony in land is absent. The *imamat* is inherited, instead of its incumbent's being chosen by the faithful on the basis of religious competence.

It should be clear, nonetheless, that the specific forms of solidarity which 'brake' or block the emergence of a general interest and the public space are far from being mainly of the 'traditional' or 'primordial' type (no more than they can be reduced to 'community pressure'). They are all modern, regardless of the forms of legitimacy which they may claim. Elements of personal interest are far from absent. We have seen this with the chiefly and with the associational modes of local governance. Furthermore, client-, patronage- or allegiance-based networks encompass more than membership of a particular family or ethnic group, and are built on very modern 'globalised' foundations, even at local level, be it in terms of business networking (for example, the merchant from the village now established in Lomé, who finances the mosque and the bore hole, regularly goes to Dubai and trades with China) or in the sphere of partisan politics (for example the local big man who has strong friendships in Libya and receives financial support from Nigeria).

From this point of view, decentralisation, while introducing political parties into the local arena, has not necessarily encouraged the construction of a communal public space. Indeed, local elections have been reserved to the parties, which are all of urban origin and based in the capital, who alone were allowed to present lists of candidates. Thus, these parties have been able to establish a long-term presence at village level, whereas previously their presence was only sporadic, during national elections. Yet, the parties in Niger speak far less for a certain vision of the general interest than for a highly factional interest. In other words, the 'partisan' political culture of which they are the bearers generally represents the same conception as the local political culture, in other words the primacy of specific affiliations, clique-based strategies, and the search for privileges for members of the group, to the detriment of prospects for citizens and a quest for the public interest.

But, despite this, we must not forget that, during our research, the theme of the public interest, even if it was contradicted by people's actions, was present in many interviews, if only to express the expectations of some or the disappointments of others.

Local popular representations are therefore far from having no idea of the public good or the general interest. These concepts are without doubt part of the discursive repertoire or the mental tool-kit available to the players, both the educated and the illiterate. It is passing from discourse to action that is the problem, not only for the political elites, but also for each individual, caught up as he is in a web of family, amicable, factional or network obligations.

Will popular representations favouring a 'communal public space' become translated into reality, slowly becoming a significant element in local political culture and being concretised in the communal governance system currently being built, and even in other modes of local governance? Time will tell.

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## **Annexe: Qualitative database on communes and local powers in Niger (LASDEL reports)**

### *Introduction*

Since 2001 LASDEL has carried out a series of investigations into local powers and decentralisation in Niger, which has resulted in the production of 78 site reports to date (38 have already been published in the 'Etudes et travaux du LASDEL' [LASDEL Studies and Research] series) and five interim summary reports, as well as a book in press (with two other works in preparation)<sup>63</sup> and some planned articles.

A systematic re-analysis of this set of reports is currently being prepared (under the Africa Power and Politics Programme).

Our studies of local powers have been carried out within a number of research programmes. At the core was the 'Niger Decentralisation Observatory' programme, established by LASDEL in 2001 with financial support from several sources (Swiss Cooperation, French Cooperation, European Union and FICOD-KFW). Other LASDEL programmes have investigated similar or related problems: 'La place des femmes dans les arènes locales à l'heure de la décentralisation (quatre sites sur la rive droite du Niger)' [Women's place in local arenas at the time of decentralisation] (AFD finance); 'Veille sociologique dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du Projet Coopération Décentralisée Phase II (PCDII)' [Sociological monitoring as part of the implementation of the Decentralised Cooperation Project Phase II (European Union finance)]; 'La fourniture des services publics dans les communes de quatre pays' [The provision of public services in communes in four countries] (Ace-recit, SNV finance).

New studies have been carried out in 2009 on the delivery of four public goods in 3 communes (APPP programme), and will be carried out in 2010 on local elections in different places (financed by the Swiss Cooperation and Aires Sud).

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<sup>63</sup> 'Local powers in Niger. Tome 1: on the eve of decentralisation' (Olivier de Sardan & Tidjani Alou, eds.) will shortly be published by Karthala. Tome 2, currently being prepared, will examine the communes' first steps.

<i>Sites</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Year order</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Finance</i>	<i>Study manager</i>	<i>'Etudes et travaux du LASDEL' issue number</i>
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		2		SCAC	Abdoua Elhadji Dagobi	
Ngourti	Diffa	1	2001	SCAC	Hadiza Moussa	12
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Tabelot	Agadès	1		SCAC	André Bourgeot	
		2		SCAC	AbdoulkaderAghali	
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In Gall	Agadès	1		European Union	André Bourgeot	
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Guéladjo	Tillabéri	1	2003-04	AFD	Hadiza Moussa	36
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Abala	Tillabéri	1	2004-05	European Union	Hadiza Moussa	
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		3	2006-07	European Union	Hadiza Moussa	
Karguibangou	Dosso	1	2004-05	European Union	Amadou Oumarou	
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		3	2006-07	European Union	Amadou Oumarou	
Baninangou	Tillabéri	1	2004-05	European Union	Oumarou Hamani and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
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Koré	Dosso	1	2004-05	European Union	Tahirou Ali Bako and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
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			07	Union	Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
Tibiri	Dosso	1	2004-05	European Union	Tahirou Ali Bako and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
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Tombokoyrey 2	Dosso	1	2004-05	European Union	Hassan Moussa Ibrahim and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
		2	2005-06	European Union	Hassan Moussa Ibrahim and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
		3	2006-07	European Union	Hassan Moussa Ibrahim and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
Tondikiwindi	Tillabéri	1	2004-05	European Union	Moumouni Goungoubane, Hassan Moussa Ibrahim and Abdoulaye Mohamadou	
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*Summary reports*

<i>Sites concerned</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Finance</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	
Shadakori, Birnin Lalle, Bana, Albarkaizé, Gorouol, Dessa- Famale- Diomana, Ngourti, Balleyara, Tabelot, In Gall	2003	BUCO, SCAC, European Union (Niger decentralisation observatory)	Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan	<i>Des pouvoirs locaux en attente de la décentralisation [Local powers awaiting decentralisation] (Niger)</i> Brief provisional summary of the results of research carried out in 2001-2002	
Birnin Lalle, Bana, Balleyara, Tamou, Gueladjo, Kohan, Filingue, Namaro, Tchintabaraden, Abalak, Tillaberi	2006	BUCO, FICOD, AFD (Niger decentralisation observatory )	Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan	<i>Vers la gouvernance communale: premiers pas et premières difficultés [Moving to communal governance. The first steps and the first difficulties].</i> Summary of the results of research carried out in 2004-2005	
Abala, Karguibangou, Tombokoyrey 2, Tondikiwindi, Tibiri, Baninangou, Filingué, Koré	2005	European Union (Sociological monitoring)	Abdoulaye Mohamadou	Summary report of sociological monitoring programme, year I	
Abala, Karguibangou, Tombokoyrey, 2, Tondikiwindi, Tibiri, Baninangou, Filingué, Koré	2006	European Union (Sociological monitoring)	Abdoulaye Mohamadou	Summary report of sociological monitoring programme, year II	

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