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Exploring the context of service provision in Senegal: Social dynamics and decentralisation in the Senegalese countryside¹

Mayke Kaag

- ¹ In this paper, I will not be directly concerned with the everyday practices of public and collective services and those who make use of them. Instead, I aim to take a broader view on the social, political and cultural context in which services take shape and the role of decentralisation therein. In this regard, I will focus on some dynamics that are important for the functioning of public and collective services in Senegal today: dynamics of interaction between different elites striving for power, dynamics of shifting norms and values, and dynamics of changing relationships between the local level and the supra-local level of government. I will explore their character starting from concrete examples of interaction and investigate how they are part of longer term social processes. As governance and service provision in Senegal take place in a context of decentralisation policy, this empirical processual perspective will allow the role of decentralisation to be evaluated in concrete terms, as opposed to generalised and normative ideas on decentralisation that are used by many donors. Furthermore, as we will see, such a perspective may complement observations made from a more practice-oriented angle.
- ² In Senegal, as in many other African countries nowadays, public and collective services take shape in a context of decentralisation policy. In the new paradigm of "good governance", decentralisation is an important component, since it, it is assumed, will contribute to democratisation as well as to a more efficient mode of service delivery (World Bank 1989a, 1992, Hyden & Bratton 1992). At the end of the 1980s, in development circles there was a strong sentiment of feasibility in this respect: with the descent to the local level, the developmental problems encountered seemed easier to estimate and to deal with. The ideal was that local communities would take control of their own affairs.

As the central state retreated from the countryside as a result of structural adjustment programmes, international NGOs prepared to work with decentralised government and other local organisations. In response, many local NGOs were founded.

- 3 Discussions on decentralisation are often rather technical, focusing on issues such as which responsibilities should be delegated and how new structures of decentralised government should be organised (e.g. World Bank 1989b, Topan 1994). Even now that decentralisation policies have been introduced in many African countries and evaluation studies start being published, feeble performance of decentralisation is often explained by factors such as legislative and organisational weaknesses and lack of financial means. The measures proposed centre around the strengthening of the capacities and the legitimacy of institutions, for example by means of better education of local administrators, clearer definitions of competencies of different actors, and enlargement of financial funds (e.g. Vengroff & Johnston 1987, Villadsen & Lubanga 1997, Gellar 1997). Critics, however, have argued that that these technocratic approaches conceal the political fact that decentralisation has often been introduced (in such a way as) to serve the needs and preoccupations of the international donor community and national African governments, rather than being set up on the basis of the needs and perspectives of the local populations and working from political realities on the ground. (e.g. Jacob & Blundo 1997; see also Kaag & Venema 2002)
- 4 We could do away with concepts like decentralisation, disqualifying them as hollow statements, mere subjects on the political agenda of donors and, in their wake, of African states. It is however important to realise that the implementation of this political agenda provokes and animates real processes in society, of which the content and direction should be studied. It then becomes clear how decentralisation policy is linked to, and feeds into actual dynamics at play.
- 5 In the following sections, I will focus on some of these actual dynamics that can be distinguished at the country-side of Senegal: dynamics of interaction between different elites striving for power, dynamics of shifting norms and values, and dynamics of changing relationships between the local level and the supra-local level of government². I shall thereby give ample room to concrete examples³, hoping that some richness of detail may contribute to our discussions. Yet while my aim is to provoke reflection, comparison and debate, rather than to offer completed analyses of the dynamics and cases described, I will treat them rather loosely. In the conclusion, I will return to the consequences of my observations for decentralisation and the study of service provision in rural Senegal⁴.
- 6 Throughout the last few decades a new elite of educated youngsters has emerged in many places across Africa, who threaten the hegemony of the old elite of high-born and affluent families (see for example Blundo 1995, Geschiere 1996, Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 1998). To illustrate how these dynamics of interaction between different elites striving for power may present themselves in the countryside of central Senegal, I shall start with the following case.
- 7 In 1989, the village of Kaymor was given a water tower, which was financed by the Italian government. A management committee was installed, but after continued problems, this committee was removed in 1993 due to mismanagement. A new committee was installed, which functioned until the pump of the water tower broke down in May 1994. By 1995, the water tower had been repaired and it had been furnished with solar plates, this time financed by the German government; Kaymor had been selected by the Hydraulic Service

of Kaolack to profit from this project. In order to obtain the solar energy system, the population had to collect a sum of CFA 450.000 to be earmarked for management costs.

- 8 When I arrived in Kaymor at the end of 1995, I wanted to interview the management committee of the water tower, and was therefore brought into contact with Mahmadou, one of the teachers of the primary school. I was told he was the president of the committee. During the interview, I learned that the committee was currently inactive; the people were waiting for the reparation of the water tower to be finished and the solar plates to be installed. It was only a year later, at the putting into use of the water tower under the new system, that I learned that there was a problem with the committee.

"December 9th, 1995, there is a gathering under the trees at the marketplace. A team from the Hydraulic Service of Kaolack has come to instruct the local population on the new mode of management of the water tower. There are only men amongst the audience; the young woman who is a member of the team of the Hydraulic Service says that it is a pity that the women are absent. The village head explains that this is the time of the year that the women work in the fields.

The agent of the Hydraulic Service tells that the project will guarantee the installation and the maintenance of the equipment for a period of five years. In addition, a monthly fee is asked from the population, which will be used for development purposes. For the management of the water tower, five commissions will be formed: one commission for health issues, one commission for development issues that with the fees collected will initiate little development projects such as the purchase of a millet mill, one financial commission, charged with managing the money for the maintenance and the reparation of the water tower, and one commission for maintenance issues that is charged with the supervision of cleanliness, reparation of eventual defects, etc. He concludes by saying that within a few days, the water tower will be connected to the taps of the village.

The chief of the CERP asks if there are still any questions. Babacar takes the floor, thanking for the assistance the village has received from the project. Following this, he says that he has heard a broadcast from Radio Kaolack in which the composition of the management committee had been mentioned; the name of the president, however, had not been mentioned; had there really been a change on the board?

Another man rises and asks in an emotional voice where the money collected by the population has gone. Many people in the audience side with him, noisily expressing their approval.

Mahmadou defends himself, saying that all information is available, all notes and all correspondence. At that moment, El Hadji Touré takes the floor. He speaks calmly, an amused smile on his lips. It then appears that in fact, he had been the president, and that Mahmadou had only been the vice-president. When the committee had come to his house to ask him to take care of the money collected by the population, he allegedly refused to do so because he feared that things would be unclear afterwards; if, for example, he died, nobody would know that the money did not belong to him personally. As a consequence, Mahmadou and his fellows created a new committee, with Mahmadou as the president. Now, at the meeting, El Hadji Touré says he had not been informed about that; thus, could this change be considered legitimate?"

The agent of the Hydraulic Service intervenes, saying that "family problems have to be solved within the family", but the heat is on, and the discussions continue without anyone listening to the agent. The senior men gather around the village chief while the others attack each other with Mahmadou caught in the middle.

Finally, after some hot debate, the calm returns. It appears that the committee has returned to its original composition: El Hadji Touré as the president, Mahmadou as the vice-president".

- 9 To understand this case, one has to know that although Mahmadou originates from the village, he is of low birth. He adheres to faction A of the Parti Socialiste (PS)⁵, and he is the administrative secretary of the party board at the level of the sub-district. El Hadji Touré is one of the notables of Kaymor, and he is closely related to the most important family of the sub-district, the Touré family in the sub-district's capital. In addition, he is one of the richest men in the village, exploiting some taxi-brousses. He adheres also to faction A, but he is not directly involved in politics; it is his first wife who is the president of the women's group of the village and who also presides over all the women's groups in the rural community. El Hadji Touré's mother was the first woman councillor in the rural council of Kaymor.
- 10 Knowing this, we can see that the two men in fact represent two kinds of elites. On the one hand, there is the 'traditional' elite, consisting of notables like El Hadji Touré who owe their prestige to their high birth and wealth. At the other side, there is a 'modern' kind of elite, intellectuals like Mahmadou who owe their importance to their education and to the fact that they are lettered. Often, this goes together with a good position as a teacher or a civil servant, and a rather high position in the party (cf. Blundo 1998).
- 11 In this example, it is the ancient elite that still wins the battle for power, also because of the 'natural' superiority that radiates from El Hadji Touré. Mahmadou and his supporters try to attack this power, but they do not (yet) succeed. What can be deduced from this example is that the coming elite, which is judged to a larger extent upon its behaviour, is more vulnerable than the established elite. The latter is to a large degree bolstered by its established status, and in this manner has more room for manoeuvre.
- 12 It is clear that decentralisation has contributed to the dynamics of contest between elites by opening up new arenas to fight over means. In particular the upcoming elite of intellectuals often profit from the opportunities created by decentralised government and the interventions of NGOs due to their ability to act in a bureaucratic and formal environment. This example, however, shows that their efforts to act as 'development brokers' are not always successful, thus providing some counter-balance to studies of 'development brokers' that often tend to focus on success-stories only.
- 13 Yet, I want to emphasise that it would be wrong to perceive these dynamics of interaction simply as a battle between two social categories that are diametrically opposed. In fact, the person who unites the characteristics of both elites, that is, the one who is educated and of high birth at the same time, is the one that has the best chance of attaining a position of power. In the rural community of Kaymor, for example, at the 1996 local elections, the notable who had presided the rural council for 22 years was ousted: the new president of the rural council was a young man who had gone to school, and who was the son of the Kaymor village chief.
- 14 From a processual perspective, this suggests that the one elite does not simply take over from the other, that there is no clear succession, but that mechanisms of continuity instead play a role. We might compare this to another example of interaction between an established elite and an upcoming elite in Senegalese history, because, of course, this dynamic is not a new phenomenon. In the beginning of the 20th century, a new elite developed, consisting of people who were able to profit from the booming peanut

business in Senegal, among them people of slave descent and foreigners. Continuity was reached by these people being absorbed by the established elite of high born locals. What actually occurs is more difficult to pinpoint, but it boils down to the fact that qualities that are the strength and weapon of the new elite are also incorporated as a weapon by the established elite. This suggests that instead of radical change, a process of gradual adaptation and transformation of the established elite is perhaps more likely. In this situation, the old elite remains in power while its characteristics slowly change.

- 15 Governance today in the countryside of Senegal is not only influenced by dynamics triggered by the interplay of established and upcoming elites, but also by dynamics due to changing norms and notions of what is good and desirable and what is not. Of course neither these dynamics are something new: to the values of honour and generosity traditionally highly valued among the Wolof, for example, religious values such as piety and modesty were added when Islam spread over the country from the 16th century onwards. And, just as in the case of elites, the one idea is not simply exchanged for an other. Often, new norms and values are added to existing ones, exist side by side (rightly or not in a harmonious way), are contextually valid, or merge into something new. The following example clearly illustrates how different norms concerning governance actually come to the fore in the Senegalese countryside.
- 16 During the preamble to the local elections of 1996, a political meeting of faction A of the Parti Socialiste was held in Kaymor, the chief village of the rural community.
"Sambu, the leader of faction A at the level of the sub-district arrives by car, accompanied by a team of fellow politicians. He sets himself at the table in front of the audience, Moussa, the local leader of faction A taking a seat at his side. The meeting begins, and some speakers take the floor.
At a given moment, it is Old Babou's turn to speak. As with the other speakers, the band starts to beat the tam-tam, and they sing to his glory. The old man evidently enjoys it, above on the podium, and to thank the band, he takes a 5000 CFA note out of his pocket to give to them. The singers start to sing still louder, the tam-tam is beaten with still more force, and the women in the room show their appreciation by dancing with ever more energy. Babou, as a real juggler, starts to conjure more 1000 and 5000 CFA notes out of his pocket, and the enthusiasm of the audience seems unlimited. Temperature rises, and the room becomes too small for the moving people. During this spectacle, Sambu seats there, still and with a neutral expression on his face. Also Moussa, his young local homologue, does not bat an eye-lid."
- 17 Babou's behaviour seems to belong to a political world very different from that of Sambu and Moussa. Babou is an old borom barke who has built his prestige on his wealth in combination with a large degree of generosity. And that last quality is greatly appreciated. As a young man remarked one day later referring to this incident: "Having the capacity to give is a gift from God". Sambu and Moussa evidently belong to a new generation of politicians that is more technocratic and more business-like, and - apparently - not in favour of personal myth-making.
- 18 At firstglance the issue seems rather clear: the old generation apparently adheres to 'traditional' norms and 'traditional' ideas about who is legitimated to speak and act; the new generation has adopted more technocratic ideas on governance from outside. The people in the audience, however, all seem to highly appreciate the old man behaving in a 'traditional' fashion. And what about the young man expressing his admiration for Babou's generosity the day after? In fact, it is not simply that one social category adheres

to one set of norms, while the other social category adheres to the other set. Moreover, the adherence to norms may be highly contextual. That is, someone might apply one norm in one context, but adhere to another in a different context. One may, for example, value a politician at the national level being business-like and formally strict, and at the same time expect that the local politician one has voted for, distributes his favours selectively to his clients. This suggests that different norms apply to those far away and those nearby, for those foreign and those familiar. The 'claims of familiarity', among other reasons, make it difficult for local politicians to not become corrupt. The young president of the rural council cited in the section above, for example, could be characterised as rather 'technocratic' and 'development-oriented' and he was highly motivated to put an end to all favouritism and corruptive practices in the rural council. During his mandate, however, he was confronted with the expectations of his supporters, who wanted him to distribute his favours as former patrons had done, and it was difficult for him to resist these claims, also because he himself wanted to be a good leader for his followers⁶.

- 19 The preceding sections have already shown interaction between, and intermingling of contexts and levels of governance. In the first example, the hydraulic service is confronted with local power dynamics when it, as a consequence of decentralisation policy, starts to co-operate with the local population in a participatory setting. In the second example, we have seen how norms and ideas about how a politician should behave trickledown from the 'outside' into the rural community. Here, decentralisation has an influence because the vertical pyramid of political relationships is strengthened by decentralisation (cf. Blundo 1997), while external co-operation with the local level is stimulated. The relationship between the local and higher levels of administration and political organisation is not one-dimensional, however, consisting only of upward or downward influences. In fact, it comprises a complex dynamic of mutual influence, as the following example reveals. This process of mutual influence is intensified by decentralisation policy, but also by other developments, such as the introduction of new means of communication.
- 20 In 1996, a big American NGO started a project for the communal management of natural resources in the rural community. The funds for this project had to be administered by a local management committee, composed of representatives of different categories of the population, such as women, youngsters, cattle-holders, agriculturists, parents of children in primary school. The committee was officially under supervision of the rural council that also had three representatives in the committee. In reality, however, from the outset there was strong competition between the president of the management committee of the project and the president of the rural council, who belonged to opposite factions: the former adhered to faction A of the PS, the latter to faction B of the same party. In this way, while the management committee had been intended to serve as an asset for the rural council, in reality it turned out to be a rival body. The American NGO that had chosen to work with the decentralised government and by way of a local management committee in this way got involved in local power struggles; this 'localisation' surely had an impact on the implementation of the project (see also Kaag 1999, 2001). So far for the project in general. In the context of this paper, I want to focus on the re-election of the management committee that took place in 1998.

- 21 For the re-election of the management committee, all categories of the population were summoned to choose their candidates so that they could be presented during a meeting with the project staff.
- 22 "A team composed of the sub-prefect, some agents of the rural extension service, and three members of the project staff have come from the capital of the sub-district. They are received in the community home and take their places behind the table together with the president of the management committee and the president of the rural council. The women's groups are first to vote their representatives; the others presents are sent outside. The vote passes without major problems. It is only when it is the rural councillors' turn to present their candidates that the quarrels start.
- 23 After a discussion between the councillors in the room, the president of the rural council refuses to take part in the vote and leaves the building. A member of the project staff goes after him to talk to him in the court; there all the others who had been sent outside follow the incident with great curiosity. However, the efforts of the project official are apparently fruitless and finally, all councillors of faction B leave the community home, leaving the team with faction A behind in the room... There, it is finally decided to proceed with the election of the representative of the water tower committees. At the house of the president of the rural council, the president addresses the mass of followers crowded in his court yard."
- 24 The commotion during this meeting is difficult to understand without some knowledge of what happened some days earlier. That is, the sub-prefect had sent a letter to the president of the rural council to tell him to convene a meeting of the rural council before the day of the meeting with the project staff in order to be able to present the candidates of the rural council.
- 25 The meeting of the rural council was held on Sunday; the meeting with the project staff was scheduled for Tuesday. During the meeting of the rural council, twenty-three of a total of thirty-one councillors were present (one woman-councillor had died but had not yet been replaced): the quorum had been reached, but it must be said that the majority of the councillors present adhered to faction B and to the PDS⁷. By secret vote, two young councillors, one of the PDS and one of faction B of the PS were elected. Until that moment, there was no reason whatsoever for dissatisfaction. However, what made the councillors of faction B so furious was the fact that after this meeting, the sub-prefect had convened yet another meeting of the rural council, the reason being that for an official meeting of the rural council the presence of the sub-prefect or one of the agents of the rural extension service is required to take the minutes. The sub-prefect, however, had convened the meeting by means of the president of the management committee, which was evidently not according to the rules, and which evoked the suspicion that the latter had been involved in the initiative. What is more, the successor of the deceased woman councillor had also been summoned to attend, while he had not yet been officially installed. It was due to this course of events that the president of the rural council refused his participation during the meeting described above.
- 26 How could this deadlock be overcome? It was decided that there would be a second meeting with the rural council, the sub-prefect and the project staff on Thursday. The councillors of faction B and the PDS however declared that they would not be attending this meeting. On Wednesday, the president of the rural council went to the district's capital to talk to the prefect. The latter gave the advice to always ensure in the future

that a representative of the administration would be present to take the minutes. The president of the rural council would have answered that he agreed to that, but this time the sub-prefect had been clear in simply saying that the rural council had to be convened before the meeting with the project staff. After the president of the rural council had returned at night, the sub-prefect called him. He had talked extensively with both the president of the rural council and the councillor of the PDS who was a candidate for the management committee. After that, the councillors had decided to participate in Thursday's meeting.

- 27 At that meeting, faction A had proposed to choose one representative of faction A and one representative of faction B to participate in the management committee of the project. The president of the rural council, however, declared again that in fact the rural council had made their choice on Sunday, and if the project staff did not want to accept this choice then they had to make their own plans, but in that case, he, the president of the rural council, would no longer join them. Then, the representative of the project manager declared that the project could not work in a rural community when it lacked the support of the president of the rural council. Moreover, it was the president of the management committee who became angry, since he thought that the project staff took the president of the rural council too much into account while it was he who was the president of the management committee of the project.
- 28 It is clear that also during this meeting no solution was reached. It was only on Tuesday, the week thereafter, that the affair could finally be settled. During a third meeting, the councillor of the PDS who was elected as a representative in the management committee agreed to resign for a councillor of section A of the PS. It seems that during a very call, the sub-prefect had pressed him to give up because otherwise, he had said, the project would leave the rural community. In this way, a councillor of faction A and a councillor of faction B finally entered the management committee of the project as representatives of the rural council.
- 29 Considering this case, we can conclude that in fact, all actors involved have tried to manipulate the affair, and for this, they have played the margins of the official rules, sometimes staying within their limits, sometimes crossing the border. The president of the rural council, for example, convenes a meeting, but it suits him well that it is mainly the councillors of his own faction B who turn up. When two councillors of faction B and the PDS are chosen, he tries to defend this outcome, while the sub-prefect in his turn tries to turn things around others in noticing a person that has not yet been installed, may be at the instigation of the president of the management committee. Moreover since nobody can wash his hands for blame, no one can immediately attack an other for the way they have conducted themselves.
- 30 What may also be concluded is that there is a clash of different competencies: the office of sub-prefect, president of the rural council and president of the management committee are supposed to supplement and support each other, but in reality a strong rivalry exists between them. In addition, there is a clash between personalities who all want to play a role of importance and whose sense of honour is easily violated.
- 31 It is interesting that after the process of localisation that had characterised the start of the project in the rural community, the conflict presented here shows an enlargement of scale. The project had been implicated in the local dynamic, but from there it ties the rural community strongly to supra-local interests and centres of decision-making, such as

those of the district and the headquarters of the project in Dakar. These come to directly feel the effects of local dynamics.

- 32 The telephone plays a particular role in this. In fact, the rural community had only been connected to the national telephone network since early 1998. From the case described above, it can be deduced that this has already changed local politics. The influence of higher levels of administration such as that of the sub-district and the district on the local situation can be executed more directly than before⁸; on the other hand, by these new means of communication, local opinions can equally more easily be made known at higher levels of administration.
- 33 In the above, I have tried to pinpoint some dynamics that in my view are important for understanding the factual functioning of collective and public services in the countryside in Senegal today, pointing to the way governance takes form in reality, as opposed to the ideas on (good) governance and decentralisation held by many donors. Starting from concrete examples of interaction between people I have tried to put these examples in perspective by applying a processual approach. From this perspective, it becomes clear that decentralisation is only another element that adds to historical dynamics in operation. Yet, it certainly has an influence, however not exactly as foreseen in the official discourse that is conducted among donors.
- 34 Thus, in considering the dynamics of interplay between different elites, I have examined the interaction between an established elite of affluent and mostly high-born men and an upcoming elite of educated locals who try to establish their power by attaining important positions in development projects and committees. I concluded that there is a struggle for power. Decentralisation has stimulated this struggle in opening up new arenas for contest over power and resources. From a broader historical perspective however we can identify not only struggle but also mechanisms for elitist continuity. This suggests that instead of radical change, a process of gradual adaptation and transformation of the established elite is perhaps more likely in the Senegalese countryside. More generally, we may conclude that decentralisation is not the direct road to democracy but that it feeds into ongoing processes of inclusion and exclusion.
- 35 Furthermore, in considering the dynamics of shifting norms and ideas, I have argued that decentralisation has facilitated the trickle-down of external ideas concerning governance to the local level. By an example, I showed how the existence of different norms and values with respect to how a politician should behave came to the fore in a Senegalese rural community. In applying a processual perspective, I highlighted that the one idea is not simply exchanged for another idea, but that, in fact, different norms continue to co-exist and are contextually applied. The observation that the contextual application of norms is often related to the question of who is considered familiar and who is not, suggests that processes of inclusion and exclusion also play an important role in the dynamical interplay of norms and ideas concerning governance. In general, we may conclude that decentralisation does not automatically lead to more transparency and more efficiency as its advocates assume, but that it may contribute to a proliferation of norms and ideas, on the one hand facilitating flexibility on the part of the social actors, but on the other hand also leading to more administrative complexity and less transparency.
- 36 Finally, in considering the dynamics of interplay between different levels of governance, we may conclude that decentralisation does not readily lead to more control of local communities over their own affairs. In fact, different influences, such as decentralisation

measures and the introduction of new means of communication, lead to a complex intermingling of levels and bodies of governance, having consequences for the issues of inclusion/exclusion and familiarity/unfamiliarity mentioned above, which I think are worth further study.

- 37 By pointing to some actual dynamics influencing governance, relating them to longer term processes of which they are a part, and placing decentralisation in this historical dynamic, I have tried to outline part of the context in which public and collective services are performed today in the countryside of Senegal. In so doing, I have wanted to indicate that actual service provision should not be studied merely from the angle of decentralisation, as decentralisation is only one element in a complex historical dynamic. My plea is to study the functioning of public and collective services in Africa today by focusing on practices of service provision as part of actual social dynamics in which policy measures such as decentralisation play a role, and by placing these actual dynamics in a longer term perspective of historical change and continuity.

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NOTES

1. Paper prepared for the APAD-conference "The Governance of Daily Life in Africa: Public and Collective Services and their users", Leiden, 22-25 May 2002.
 2. For analytical purposes I will treat them in separate sections. In fact, however, these dynamics are of course interrelated, as also will appear throughout the argument.
 3. These stem from fieldwork conducted in the rural community of Kaymor in the southern central part of Senegal as part of my PhD-research (see also Kaag 2001).
 4. Here, I will not deal with the decentralisation policy pursued by the Senegalese government extensively. What is important to know is that decentralisation has a relative long history in Senegal: from the 1970s onwards rural communities were created consisting of some ten to twenty villages and administered by a rural council of elected locals. The mandate of these rural councils has been gradually extended, finally in 1996 when a number of competencies that had previously been the domain of the central state, such as healthcare and the management of natural resources, were delegated to the communities. For further information, see for example SAFEFOD 1996, Blundo 1997, Kaag 2001.
 5. Although Senegal is a multiparty democracy since the 1970s, the Parti Socialiste, the party of Senegal's first president Senghor, retained its hegemony until very recently. There has however always existed a strong rivalry between different factions within the party.
 6. See also Chabal & Daloz (1999) who make comparable observations concerning the room for manoeuvre for African leaders at the national level.
 7. At the local elections of 1996, faction B of the PS had made a deal for co-operation with the PDS in order to beat faction A, which had always been the main faction in the rural community.
 8. In this context, I would like to refer to Bayart who states that the introduction of information technology in Sub Saharan Africa has permitted not only a change of scale of the political space but also an intensification of social control, offering the rulers the means to control, constrain and persuade their subjects (1996: 17).
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