

CHAPTER 9

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Historical and comparative reflections on state apparatuses of capture and rhizomic forces



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It is certainly true, that ‘the State as such ... cannot be easily attacked or destroyed’ (Badiou 2005:110). Even in the current age of neoliberalism and intensified globalization, argues Harvey (2006:28), the wide-ranging reconfigurations of state institutions and practices indicate that the state is not redundant. Harvey substantiates, convincingly, the claim that states have the capacity to prevail in the face of new challenges in a radically changing world. In my view, these notions reflect the fact that states are vested with a transcending omnipotence that, in the words of Kapferer (2008:7), is ‘oriented to achieving an exclusive and overarching determining potency in the fields of social relations in which it is situated and which state or state-related practice attempts to define’ (see also Gulbrandsen 2014:14ff.). At the same time, however, Clastres (1989:189ff.) was certainly right in contending that no matter how omnipotent and sustainable they are, states are always circumscribed by non-statist forces, exterior to the state, working – at least potentially – in ways destructive to the order of the state.

This duality of forces that, on the one hand, are vested in the state and, on the other hand, surround and confront the state, suggests a fundamentally antagonistic relationship between the interiority and exteriority of the state. Such a conception is reflected in Deleuze and Guattari’s (2003:424ff.) important view of the state as vested with an ‘apparatus of capture’ that is always challenging and being challenged by rhizomic forces denoted, in these authors’ terminology, as ‘war machines’. In their conception, the strength of ‘the State’ basically depends on the capacity of the ‘apparatus of capture’, as they argue that ‘the State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of internalizing, appropriating.’ (2003:360). They hold that

the state is vested with sustainable 'organs of power' and 'has always been in relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship'. This is not a matter of 'foreign policy' in relation to other states. Rather, Deleuze and Guattari's concern is with, on the one hand, 'huge world-wide machines' like multinational organizations or religious formations such as Christianity and Islam, and on the other, 'local mechanisms of bands, margins, minorities, which continue to affirm the rights of segmentary societies in relation to the organs of State power' (ibid.).

These are, as suggested, all forces exterior to the state vested with a capacity to challenge the state, i.e. 'war machines', which, in Deleuze and Guattari's conception, always operate in fundamental conflict with the order of the state and its 'apparatus of capture'. In their scheme, the 'state apparatus of capture' and the 'war machine' are irreducible to one another while simultaneously having no independent existence; they co-exist in 'competition in *a perpetual field of interaction*' (2003:360, italics original). The state is hence always potentially or manifestly threatened by its exteriority; that is, by what 'escapes the State or stands against States' (2003:361).

In these authors' conception, such antagonism does not involve, in any sense, a stable balance of power. On the contrary, the relationship is highly dynamic; any successful advance of the state apparatus of capture readily triggers war-machine metamorphoses, generating rhizomic forces in new disguises. Hence, states are always challenged by forces exterior to themselves or are facing the challenge of capturing what escapes their structures of domination. But, of course, the ways in which the interior-exterior dynamics have worked themselves out differ tremendously cross-culturally and historically.

I have found these theoretical considerations helpful in my present effort to discuss transmutations of power in processes of colonization in the long-term perspective of changing historical realities. I am pursuing this overall issue by, firstly, discussing colonial states' struggles to expand their realm in the face of challenging rhizomic forces. Secondly, I want to address the challenge for post-colonial states of establishing a modern, independent state, in view of their generation of new exteriorities, even at the heart of the state, manifesting rhizomic forces in ever changing disguises. In order to demonstrate how contrastingly the expansion of colonizing forces can work themselves out in different colonial contexts and historical situations, I shall pursue these issues by reflecting comparatively upon the colonization of the island of Sardinia in the Mediterranean, and of the Tswana and other peoples of the present Botswana. In this, I shall draw upon my recent fieldwork in Sardinia and many years of research in Botswana.

As we shall see, while Sardinia was subject to consecutive colonizing states, from the Phoenicians onwards, these always struggled to gain full control over the population of the island. However, Britain's establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was hardly ever resisted; to some extent, it was even appreciated. The development of the modern Italian state by capturing Sardinia into its trajectory is perceived by many Sardinians I have encountered as highly exploitative, and is even seen as another colonization of the island. The establishment of the modern state in Botswana brought, by contrast, the Tswana and other peoples of that country into full control of the modern, post-colonial state. In both of these cases, we shall see how the modern state is vested with a forceful apparatus of capture, containing a pervasive capacity to incorporate the population into its structures, yet at the same time creating new exteriorities with challenging potentialities.

I want to demonstrate that state interior-exterior dynamics in the two cases differ sharply by means of what Sahlins and others have dubbed uncontrolled comparison, which I find helpful in achieving a higher degree of reflexivity conducive to comprehending the significance of some important cultural and social-political phenomena pertaining to the two cases (Herzfeld 2001:259ff.). Due to space limitations, and because I have analysed the Tswana case extensively in previous publications,¹ my analysis will privilege the Sardinian case, using the Tswana for comparative reflection. Nevertheless, I will represent the two cases sufficiently comprehensively to demonstrate huge differences in forms of colonial state expansion and modern state formation in relation to challenging forces generated in exteriorities of the state.

Challenges of colonial state formation

Located in the middle of the Mediterranean, the population of Sardinia has, as far back as historical accounts go, been in interaction with peoples from the wider world. While there is evidence of human settlements on the island dating as far back as 120,000 BC, the first records of actual colonial settlements, by Phoenicians, 'only' go back to 900 BC (Tanda 1995). During Sardinia's prehistoric past, its population was ostensibly in full control of the island, especially in the era of what is presently conceived as the Nuragic civilization (e.g. Lilliu 2003). The people of this era have left momentous stone constructions – according to some sources more than 8,000, erected from 1,800 BC onwards – that are, to a great extent, still found over significant parts of the island. They feature in popular discourse as major symbols of a proud ancient past of prosperity and social order, although very little is actually known about their social and political organization..

1 Especially, Gulbrandsen 2014; see also 1993, 1995, 1996a and b, 2003 and 2007.

The Nuragic era allegedly prevailed for some 1,500 years; that is, until significant exterior forces commenced encroachment on the island. There appears to have been a soft start to what, in due course, would become ever more violent confrontations between internal and external forces. Thus, the first historically recognized people of significance to arrive – Phoenicians from Carthage – restricted, in the beginning, their occupation to establishing some coastal settlements, including Tharros, ostensibly in peaceful intercourse with Sardinians. However, when the Phoenicians, around 650 BC, established a military force and expanded into the island's fertile plains, they began exploiting the wheat production there at the cost of the indigenous population. In due course, they also extracted salt and silver. The Sardinians responded to the intrusion by violently attacking Phoenician settlements. By calling upon assistance from Carthage, the Sardinians' offensive was successfully counteracted and the Phoenicians took firm control of significant parts of southern Sardinia.

The long Roman era on Sardinia – lasting for almost 700 years – was initiated in 238 BC, in the wake of the First Punic War, with the establishment of Sardinia and Corsica as Roman provinces (Mastino 1995). Existing coastal settlements on Sardinia were expanded, and new ones were established and populated by Roman immigrants. Wilson points out that Sardinia was more fertile than Corsica and represented 'a major corn supplier of Italy at the time of the late Republic; herein lay her sole political importance. Yet her inhabitants were not to be trusted, *banditry was rife*.' (2006:442, italics added).

This observation of banditry reflects that, first Phoenician, and then Roman expansion into Sardinia's fertile lowland plains, progressively instigated Sardinians to escape into the highlands of central Sardinia. These regions of the island were highly inaccessible – and remained so to a significant extent into the twentieth century – which meant that they were only partially under Roman and successive colonizing states' control, despite the deployment of military garrisons in places such as the present-day village of Mamoiada in the central highland of Barbagia.²

2 According to Wilson (2006:443) 'The sending of 4,000 Jewish dissidents to Sardinia in A.D. 19, as raw recruits to help quell the still rebellious interior, with a clear hint that they were expendable in case of disease, suggests continuing problems in establishing a firm military stranglehold. To Rome this was the hostile territory of Barbaria, and although its collective peoples (*civitates Barbariae*) are recorded as paying homage on an inscription of either Augustan or Tiberian date, a military garrison of auxiliary units was needed to keep a watchful eye on the interior for much of the first century.'

We have at hand the initiation – some 2,000 years ago – of a very long series of relationships of conflict between the successive state forces colonizing Sardinia and the resisting populations of the island, generating, as I shall explain, patently rhizomic forces, the remains of which are still at work. In other words, the generation of exteriorities to the state – which has been identified in many parts of the Mediterranean (see, for example, Hobsbawm 2003:7ff.; Sorge 2014) – has a very long genealogy in Sardinia, where anti-state orientations are still, as we shall see, quite strong.

From the time the Romans were defeated by the Vandals in 456 AD and until the eighth century AD, the island was invaded by Vandals and Byzantines, with the latter finally withdrawing in response to mounting Arab attacks.³ At that time, indigenous state processes were set in motion through which the island was divided into four sovereignties, known as *giudicato* (pl. *giudicati*),⁴ each with military forces to defend their respective realms against the notoriously challenging Arabs. Moreover, for the exercise of jurisdiction and collection of tax, each *giudicato* was divided into administrative units (*curie*) comprised of a number of villages. The *giudicati* had no feudal structure (see Bloch 2004:247), but were supported by a class of independent landlords to whom I shall return in a subsequent section. The *giudicati* came under the influence of Genevan and Pisan forces. Furthermore, Pisa's attempt to frustrate the Papal State's (under Innocent III, r.1,198–216) effort to establish authority in Sardinia was only partially successful (see Moore 1987).

After a complex interplay between Sardinian and external forces, the island was finally conquered by the Kingdom of Aragon in the early fifteenth century; the Spanish henceforth embarked on colonizing the island. That was the end of indigenous state processes in Sardinia, as the Spanish colonial state entailed the progressive formation of a new hierarchical order, notably by establishing a feudal system with predominantly Spanish nobles as landlords. This nobility's integration into the colonial state is underscored by the fact that numerous landlords retained their residences in Spain, and were closely connected to the Spanish crown. Compared with Britain's light colonization of the Tswana (see below), which entailed virtually no settler colonization (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 1 and 2), the Spanish on Sardinia set in motion a much more radical transformation, in which the Spanish themselves engaged extensively, in particular by appropriating vast areas of fertile land and establishing feudal structures of domination.

3 See Galoppini 1995; Mastino 1995; Tanda 1995.

4 They grew out of the preceding Byzantine administrative division of the island (see, for example, Galoppini 1995).

This feudal system was instrumental in the colonial state's efforts to expand its realm on the island by capturing ever larger sections of the Sardinian population, especially on the plains, and subjecting them to heavy taxation, fees and obligatory services (*corvè*). Hundreds of fiefs occupied large parts of Sardinia's most productive land, catching people up in feudal structures controlled by the colonial state. During the centuries of Spanish exploitative colonization of Sardinia,⁵ most of the Sardinians – largely an impoverished population recurrently victim to plagues – experienced the colonial state as a persistently brutal force of repression.

This brings me to a chief concern of this chapter: how the expansion of the various colonial states into the island of Sardinia entailed a polarization between state forces and local communities, a process lasting for about four centuries. The repressive Spanish colonial state caused many Sardinians to flee, notably to locations beyond the territorial limits of the feudal structures and colonial state control. This consolidated some sections of the population in the mountainous heartland of predominantly shepherd communities, above all the central highland of Barbagia (a name derived from the Romans' identification of the population as 'barbarians').

These communities – composed of shepherds with great capacity to move and hide in terrain quite inaccessible to colonizing forces – generated a multitude of rhizomic forces consisting of highly mobile bands that raided, in ever new disguises, feudal estates and villages in the lowland. Sardinians' reactions to the colonizers' conquest thus took many forms, yet might be summarized by the generic notion of banditry (*banditismo*; see, for example, Moss 1979). The structural contradictions vested in the relationship between statist processes and the challenging forces beyond their reach has, as we shall see, set the stage for the generation of rhizomic attacks on the order of the colonial state in successive historical contexts.

Sardinia presents a case that resembles many colonial-state situations around the world, characterized by an expanding colonial frontier of exploitative forces. Such settler-state developments were, of course, also distinctive of southern Africa, where violent expansion of imperial and colonial forces gave rise to European regimes, capturing indigenous populations into state structures of brutal racist domination. As I have discussed extensively

5 As Berger (1986:136) notes, 'the feudal system was particularly parasitic, since large surpluses extracted from rural producers were removed from the island to fund the courtly lifestyles of absentee feudal lords who maintained their residence in Spain. According to Mori (1966), of the 376 fiefs eventually created by Spain in Sardinia, 188 belonged to residents of Spain while 32 were in the name of the Spanish king himself.'

elsewhere (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 1), in this violent context, the ruling groups of three major Tswana kingdoms (Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bangwato) – located beyond the expanding frontier of the settler-states of Rhodesia and South Africa – accepted rather than resisted the British decision to take direct control over the vast tableland between Transvaal and the present Namibia.⁶ Determined to establish supremacy of this enormous territory at minimal cost, the British were advantaged by the existence of a number of Tswana kingdoms (*merafe*, singl. *morafe*) that proved highly instrumental to implementing principles of indirect rule, as they established the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885 (preceding the present modern state of Botswana established as an independent state in 1966).

These *merafe* had, over the preceding hundred years, grown very significantly in strength and scale, as the kingship-monopolized fur and ivory trade had tremendously reinforced their apparatus of capture. The proceeds of this trade resourced the expansion of a cattle-centred political economy that strengthened the apparatus of capture vested in these polities, expanding their socio-political hierarchies by incorporation of vast alien groups. They were largely groups on flight westwards from the violent turmoil in the Transvaal, only to be incorporated in the structures of these Tswana *merafe*. The rhizomic potentialities of the increasingly complex assemblages of people of different origins were, as I have explained elsewhere (Gulbrandsen 1993, 2007), efficiently counteracted by a powerful mill of assimilation vested in the hierarchies of the politico-jural courts of the *merafe*.

Such a state apparatus of capture, embedded in each of the Tswana *merafe* officially recognized by the British, constituted a major force that proved to be highly instrumental for expanding the control of the colonial state beyond the limits of these *merafe* (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 1). At the same time, the Tswana kings (*dikgosi*, singl. *kgosi*) of each of the *merafe* within the Protectorate prevailed as the supreme authority over all the peoples living in the territories demarcated and assigned to each of the *merafe* by the colonial state, denoted as ‘tribal reserves’.

6 The British’ decision to establish the Bechuanaland Protectorate was ostensibly much motivated by increasing German activity in the western part of Southern Africa. The British worried, argues Sillery (1974:75), ‘that the Germans might join hands with the hostile Boers, or with the Portuguese, or even with other Germans who were in East Africa, cut the road to the north and thus permanently bar the Cape from access to central Africa?’ As Maylam (1980:25) states, being ‘in danger from three sides: South African Republic, Germany and Portugal’, the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate served the British imperial interests in blocking South African and German expansion.

It is true that the practices of incorporation and assimilation into the dominant Tswana *merafe* were met with considerable resistance from several larger communities that opted for a direct incorporation in the colonial state. However, assisted by the colonial power at the very few occasions when violent enforcement was required, the Tswana rulers compelled these communities to subject themselves to these rulers' domination.

The colonial situation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate contrasts sharply with that of the Spanish one in Sardinia, where rhizomic forces worked in ever more challenging ways. This difference reflects the manner in which the respective state apparatuses of capture were operating in the two contexts. The Spanish established a colonial state by creating a feudal structure in the hands of mainly Spanish lords, who appropriated vast parts of Sardinia's fertile land. They expanded, as suggested, violently into the island in ways that created extensive exterior spaces, especially as substantial sections of the Sardinians escaped into the not easily controllable highlands, generating progressively more challenging rhizomic attacks.⁷

The main interest of the British, however, in the overall control of the vast territory of the southern African interior, was the blocking of other expanding, imperial forces. Only a very small colonial state administration was established, as the British relied on a selected number of Tswana rulers to control people and territory. These were rulers in control of polities with their own inherent apparatus of capture, which ensured that vast subject communities were brought under colonial state government (Gulbrandsen 2014:46ff.).

Smaller groups of people living scattered in areas distant from Tswana royal towns were captured by the Tswana and brought into serfdom, or they escaped to parts of this enormous country that were not under Tswana control. While Sardo communities of Sardinia's heartland were breeding grounds for mobile bands with extensive rhizomic capacities, the numerous small semi-stationary or mobile groups, like the foraging San-speaking peoples that resisted Tswana state apparatuses of capture by moving beyond their frontier, never had any force with which to challenge the *merafe* or the colonial state. With the Tswana pastoral frontier expanding far into the Kalahari, these peoples – classified by Tswana as inferior human beings – were progressively caught up in Tswana hierarchies, virtually as serfs (Wilmsen 1989:64ff.). They formed a highly exploited 'underclass of herders' at Tswana 'cattle posts' (ibid:130ff.), or they escaped the Tswana by moving to distant areas for hunting and gathering only – in due course – to find their

7 Actually, this process of escaping colonizing forces had already been anticipated in the times of the Romans (Meloni 1990).

hunting grounds deteriorated by cattle farming, whose spatial expansion were accelerated by post-colonial 'development' programmes. Foragers' highly egalitarian-commensal orientation did not provide the cultural or social conditions for standing up against these forces (Gulbrandsen 1991), in salient contrast to Sardinian pastoralists' competitive egalitarianism of *banditismo*, which instigated rhizomic attacks on the successive colonizing state forces.

We have, in other words, two radically different processes of colonial state expansion. Under the conditions of societies within the Protectorate, the British easily established a mild overrule that peacefully and efficiently captured the Tswana *merafe* and all other peoples into the order of the colonial state. The Tswana polities embodied state apparatuses of capture that were strengthened under colonial conditions and hence highly instrumental in expanding the interiority of the colonial state. The Spanish – and, as we shall see, subsequently, the kingdom of Piedmont – were far less capable of exploiting local structures of authority vested in feudal and semi-feudal landlords for capturing highland Sardinian communities into the interiority of the state.

Intensification of rhizomic forces in Sardinia

Having thus explained why the colonial state apparatus of capture in Sardinia gave rise to much more challenging, violent reactions than in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, I shall proceed by examining more closely the historical development of the apparatus of capture versus war machine/rhizome dynamics in the Sardinian case. The violent character of the colonial state apparatus of capture and the generation of rhizomic forces became ever more evident after Sardinia had, by virtue of the London Treaty of 1718, been handed over from Spain to the kingdom of Piedmont on the mainland, which was ruled by the House of Savoy. By this territorial expansion, the House of Savoy elevated itself to what was named the kingship of Sardinia, albeit they remained seated in Turin. During the first hundred years of Piedmont-Savoy overrule, the efforts to crack down on what was identified as Sardo banditry intensified, although only to the effect of stimulating violent reactions in ever new ways. Hence, the state's apparatus of capture – in its violent form – provoked an expansion of the exteriority of the colonial state on Sardinia, generating ever more challenging rhizomic forces.

This development gained further impetus after Piedmont-Savoy was conquered by Napoleon (1798) and brought into the orbit of the associated enlightenment and revolution. Under Napoleonic supremacy, feudalism was abandoned and land was commercialized, entailing 'a shock to the still relatively traditional economic structure by introducing a set of successful commercializing reforms that utterly transformed north central Italian society'

(Ziblatt 2006:62). In due course, this transformation paved the way for the industrialization that gave rise to the dominant position – ever since – of the North, in the modern Italian context. The force of the Piedmont-Savoy rulers, evolving thus, proved highly instrumental within the major state-formation process on the mainland, which ultimately culminated in the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, following the annexations of several polities along the entire length of the Italian peninsula by the House of Savoy.⁸

With the fall of feudalism on Sardinia, a new colonizing tactic was implemented. As the customary communal land-tenure system was perceived as a major condition facilitating the prevalence of mobile pastoralists and hence *banditismo*, Piedmont-Savoy rulers initiated a land-enclosure movement on the island by the *Editto delle Chiudende* ('Edict of closure') of 1820. Although this reform was, at an overall level, probably related to the enclosure movements of the wide-ranging agricultural transformations in Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in Sardinia the reform aimed at capturing pastoralists into structures of tight state control. That is, by tying them to a restricted piece of land as cultivators and developing an enterprising patronage class of agriculturalists with a dependent client class of agricultural labourers.

However, this endeavour was largely unsuccessful, mainly because the new landlords found it more beneficial to invest in sheep than agriculture. Many of them appropriated as private property vast areas of communal pasture, upon which impoverished pastoralists had depended, generating wide-ranging rhizomic forces that manifested in extensive sheep robbery and riots, and a series of murders of landlords (see Clark 1996:83; Lai 1998:76ff.; Sorge 2015:34f.). The state reacted with armed retaliation that further heightened popular reactions to the perceived escalating state oppression. The prevailing challenges to the state were also aggravated by feudal landlords' support of the peasantry, motivated by fear of their feudal estates being dissolved and made available for market transactions, as had been the case on the Italian mainland.

Despite this, only a decade after the introduction of the enclosure policy (1835), the Piedmont did indeed endeavour to modernize Sardinia more comprehensively by abandoning the feudal system on the island, as they had on the mainland. This venture amplified deprivation amongst the pastoral section of the population that depended heavily upon access to feudal land for off-season pasturage, generating further violence. Moreover, due to access to favourable French and US markets – where Sardinian cheese was treasured – the value of sheep and pasture increased substantially, escalating competition

8 The House of Savoy ruled Italy until 1946 when Italy was declared a republic.

for beast and land, and hence adding momentum to rhizome-generating forces.

In other words, state efforts to capture the challenging pastoral communities into a controllable societal fold, through projects of economic modernization and privatization, had serious repercussions. The consequent enhanced value of sheep and (now increasingly commoditized) land only intensified violent pastoralist attacks on farming communities (see Del Piano 1995:276). In the emerging imaginary of state officials – and, apparently, the Italian mainland population – this trend of violence identified Sardinia as a dangerous island, plagued extensively by delinquency. Thus, when the Savoy-driven process on the mainland culminated with the establishment of the modern nation-state of Italy in 1861, *banditismo* was, from the outset, recognized as the single most challenging problem facing the modern Italian state on Sardinia.

In order to establish a 'scientific' knowledge base for comprehending the problem, Niceforo (1977[1879]) conducted a major sociological study that initiated a long ethnocentric tradition of research, identifying pastoralists of the interior of Sardinia as constituting the island's *zona delinquente* ('a criminal area'). The pastoralists were alleged to be vested with a pathology that could infect the other, ostensibly healthy part of Sardinia (Marongiu 2004:73ff.; Schweizer 1988:21). The state saw this as a serious problem and major challenge that resulted in the development of a new and violent apparatus of capture in the form of a major military campaign, known as *caccia grossa* – 'the big hunt' (Brigaglia 1971:113ff.). A 'hunt' that fed into the dynamic of progressive polarization, expanding the exteriority of the state and hence the spaces with the potential for generating rhizomic forces.

During the twentieth century, economic development in Sardinia was focused on coastal areas, while the pastoral communities of the interior remained in an economically depressed backwater. These circumstances gave rise to a new kind of rhizomic activity, as *banditismo* now manifested itself in a major wave of kidnappings of people of power and wealth in urban centres and tourist zones, reaching their apex in the 1960s and 1970s (see Marongiu and Clarke 1993). For example, one high-profile target was the luxurious ghetto of the Aga Khan initiated exclusive tourist development at Costa Smeralda, where highly affluent and conspicuous consumption was displayed a relatively short distance from deprived pastoral communities of the Barbagia. The Italian state reacted to these challenges by substantially extending and strengthening its military police force (*carabinieri*) in all the villages of the Barbagia, and by deploying special state troops, *i caschi blu* ('the blue berets'), who embarked on spectacular hunts for bandits in the high mountains of the central Gennargentu range. This campaign, which at times amounted to no less than guerrilla warfare, only reinforced popular

ideas about Sardinians' capacity to stand up against the state. This occurred in a context where 'bandits' were often celebrated by people in Sardinia – far beyond Barbagia – as hero figures; the most famous ones⁹ featuring in films that reached the wider world, where they were very well received.¹⁰

In other words, a major effect of the tremendous expansion of violent state power in efforts to bring the Barbagia under control was the reinforcement of an imaginary in which the Italian state was a brutal, alien force. This development exacerbated a major challenge to the state: people's rejection of the state's claim of a monopoly of jurisprudence and the exercise of violence. From the state point of view, these challenges further confirmed Italian notions of Sardinian primitivism rooted in pre-modern backwardness; that is, conditions in obvious conflict with the major virtues of a modern nation-state.

The prevalence of banditry in Sardinia in the context of the Sicilian mafia

The heroization of bandits reflects a prevailing undercurrent in the population against agents of the state and affluent people. This corresponds with Hobsbawm's (2003:20) notion of 'social bandits', identified in his seminal work on banditry as,

peasant outlaws whom the landlord and state regarded as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case men to be admired, helped and supported.

(Hobsbawm 2003:20)

Blok (2001:22) has attacked this notion by claiming that 'Hobsbawm's comparative treatment of banditry over-emphasizes the element of social protest while at the same time obscuring the significance of the links that bandits maintain with established power-holders.' What Hobsbawm has

9 Amongst these was perhaps the most famous bandit on Sardinia in recent times, Graziano Mesina of Orgosolo. He was a hero-bandit in the view of many Sardinians in the 1960s and 1970s, especially because of his exceptional ability to escape from jail (see, for example, Pisano 2004; Ricci 2009). Schweizer (1988:222) relates that 'The young good-looking bandit Graziano Mesina... was found in one study to be the most popular model for young men in Sardinia, before the football hero Gigi Rivi... TV teams and reporters came even from the mainland to get the story of the popular "king of the mountain region" (Marongiu 1981).'

10 Notable films were *Banditi a Orgosolo* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=itnOVhr3H7w) and *Disamistade* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ON3SvjIn458).

identified as 'social banditry', Blok (2001:16) insisted, is empirically highly marginal, as 'bandits quite often terrorize those from whose very ranks they managed to arise'. With reference to a broad range of case studies from different parts of the world (ibid.:22ff.), Blok argued that 'banditry' most commonly appears in the form of robber bands that selfishly struggle for power and wealth by means of violence, and with little regard to the social status of victims. He claimed that rather than being governed by 'Robin Hood' virtues, bandits are often associated with oppressors and rarely with the oppressed. Bandits' association with the holders of power, he claims, reflects their dependency on protection, increasingly so the more successful they are (ibid.:18). Blok (2001:21) pointed out that in mid-nineteenth-century Palermo many delinquents and bandit leaders in Sicily 'were given special responsibility for public security', an avenue to 'respectability' as institutionalized in the mafia. In other words, there are 'conversions in which bandits turn into retainers and help reinforce oppression of peasantry'.

Blok's attack on Hobsbawm's analysis and his attempt to establish a different theory of banditry receives no support from my Sardinian ethnography, however. In this context, the notion of *banditismo* includes a wide range of violent practices that have never, as in Sicily and some other places, operated in support of the state, a ruling class or other elites. Hence, rhizomic forces generated in the contexts of Sardinia and Sicily have worked in radically different ways. This contrast can be related to Blok's (1974:10) point that in Sicily the *Mafia* emerged in the early 19th century when the Bourbon State tried to curb the power of the traditional land-owning aristocracy and encouraged the emancipation of the peasantry. The consequent abolishment of feudal rights and privileges, the formation of new entrepreneurial elites and the rising aspiration of the peasantry set the stage for the development of mafia (see Schneider and Schneider 1976:174ff.). Persons 'were recruited from the ranks of the peasantry to provide the large estate owners with armed staff to confront both the impact of the State and the restive peasants ... turning outlaws and bandits into allies' (Blok 1974:11). And, note, the development of mafia activity involved, in this rendering, significantly more than organized violence: it captured people into structures of protection in a context where this could not be provided by the state. In particular, it ensured the entrepreneurial and propertied classes a degree of security that the weak presence of the state on Sicily was not able to provide (see Gambetta 1993).

Although the development of mafia on Sicily thus involved a certain degree of institutionalized – i.e. statist power beyond official state institutions – its relationship to the state proper became on the whole ambiguous rather than antagonistic. Their complex intercourse has been examined in a number of studies (e.g. Lupo 2004; Pezzino 1995) showing the extent to which mafia

activities and organizations have been conducive to the state's societal control and political leaders' electoral support, at the same time as representing major challenges to official virtues of democracy and state justice.

Many scholars have tried to come to terms with the conditions on Sicily responsible for its distinctive form of mafia practices and organization. Davis (1998:217), for one, argues interestingly that the 'paternalistic order' of the South collapsed much earlier than in Lombardy, Piedmont and Tuscany, making the South 'one of the principal epicentres of political upheaval, revolution, and endemic unrest and protest in Europe down to the middle of the nineteenth century'. It was in this context of a weak state and elites that had lost their grip on the societal order that the mafia emerged, filling a power vacuum. As this argument goes, because of the prevailing strength of its 'paternalistic order', the North was conversely saved from the development of mafia structures at that time.

What about Sardinia – an Italian region that apparently shares many of the features of the Italian 'South' (see Clark 1996)? The island is, in this context, a deviant case, not only in relation to Sicily, but also in relation to the northern as well as southern part of the Italian mainland. Although feudalism was abandoned about the same time on Sardinia and Sicily, *banditismo* was not transformed into *mafioso* activity on Sardinia, mainly because there was no critical power vacuum to fill as in Sicily. The Piedmont-based colonial state kept the Spanish landlords under tight control at the same time as it facilitated the establishment of a new land-owning class dependent on, and thus loyal to, the Piedmont regime. Moreover, the landlords on Sardinia were under significantly less challenge by rhizomic forces than on the far more populous Sicily, where a much larger deprived peasantry gave rise to mounting attacks.

As in northern Italy, the peasantry on the Sardinian lowland plains, where the large landlords were concentrated, was to a great extent kept in the fold of a 'paternalistic' order, which was, if required, backed by a highly present colonial state. At the same time, Sardinia differed notably from the North in the existence of large territories beyond the immediate domination of landlords and the overall control of the state. Hence, *banditismo* continued to prevail as a major challenge to the state and the elites, composed predominantly of landlords. But, as I have now explained, the conditions were absent for the formation of mafia practices and structures.

While Sardinian *banditismo* thus remained a force of violence challenging social order as seen from the point of view of the state, the formation of the Sicilian mafia represented a no less challenging rhizomic force. Thus, in both cases, challenging forces exterior to the state have prevailed. But there is a notable contrast between the two islands. The mafia evolved as a force by actively infiltrating the state at its core, creating rhizome-generating spaces

exterior to the state apparatus of capture, yet always within or in the vicinity of state institutions. Hence the mafia's considerable impact on the development of modern Italy. In Sardinia, by contrast, bandits made no such attempt to infiltrate state institutions by secretive intercourse with its agents. Rather, as I shall now discuss, *banditismo* here – and other practices like that of the *faida* challenging the state's insistence of a monopoly of physical violence – have provoked the state to expand very substantially its apparatus of capture; predominantly by a strong presence of police forces all over the island.

Challenging state monopolization of violence: protecting the cultural wealth of *faida*

It is a crucial point that the challenges of the state are culturally anchored in pastoral communities of Sardinia in ways that go significantly beyond 'social protest'. Practices of violence here are closely linked with the symbolism of *onore* (honour) and the cultural construction of manhood, as in many other pastoral communities of the Mediterranean (e.g. Herzfeld 1985). Although the heroization of bandits who were attacking people of prominence and wealth, often attached to the state, finds resonance in a deprived population (the Robin Hood aspect), popular admiration of bandits is mainly conceived in terms of their fearless forcefulness, cleverness and independence. Esteemed above all is their ability to hide and survive in the wilderness for weeks, if not months; in particular in the highly inaccessible *supramonte*. Amongst the people of Barbagia the capacity to abscond from state military police forces, especially, symbolizes the celebrated virtue of being *balente*, which signifies a person's proficiency in standing up, with force, fearlessness and shrewdness, against any danger. Such a person is attributed with *balentia* (see Pigliaru 2000:218ff.) and, in challenging agents of the state, they epitomize the highly appreciated force inherent in Sardinian communities that came home to me as I listened to narratives about their claims to control over the *carabinieri*. An example would be the tale of an outlaw, hiding in the mountains, who came to the village to marry his fiancée in the parish church, an event followed by *pranzo* and *cena* with hundreds of guests – including the head of the local carabinieri.

Balentia might well be seen as a 'key symbol' (Ortner 1973), containing a cluster of codes and values articulated through practices that demonstrate a person's force, bravery, stamina and courageous independence. This is a quality closely associated with the idealizing notion of *noi pastori* ('we pastoralists'), referring approvingly to people who successfully struggle to master a highly competitive, even violent lifeworld in Sardinia's wilderness. To be a pastoralist means to be located in an environment with a constant threat of livestock rustling, and thus the danger of losing the major source of

one's livelihood. At stake is also the pastoralist's reputation as a capable person (*abile*), connoting *balentia*. That is, a man left alone with the herd in the wilderness and successfully warding off livestock rustlers is typically reputed as *balente*. A *pastore* who has raised his reputation as *balente* – for example by successful sheep stealing – is a person who is less vulnerable to being robbed, except by persons of equal strength, courage and cunning.

Practices of sheep stealing make up quite elaborate 'games' within pastoral communities, and might entail violations (*violazioni*) perceived as damaging to a person's and his family's *onore*, calling for retaliation of a kind that sometimes escalates into a major *faida* (vendetta). A *faida* would typically progress, first, by sheep slaughter – a warning ('next time it's you') that might be reinforced by cutting the throat of the other party's horse, only to culminate in murder, often in the form of assassination. This is a practice of violence that is, as Pigliaru (2000:139) has elaborated, regulated by an intricate code, which he transcribed in writing as '*Il Codice della Vendetta Barbaricina*'. This codex frames social dramas that might, with intervals, prevail for decades, involving a 'game' of violence that demonstrates the capacity of its central actors to respond to being offended (*offeso*) by violence in ways that express fearlessness, independence and shrewdness. That is, in practices allowing a man to feature as *balente*. This demanding and indeed dangerous game is followed closely by the local community, which – though always observing the dictum of *omerta*, the oath of silence – tacitly evaluates the performance of those engaged; profoundly activating discursive practices centred in virtues of *balentia*.

From the Italian state-government point of view, the practice of *faida* represents a major challenge. Firstly, of course, because the local communities fiercely resist police involvement and hence contest the judicial authority of the state and its claimed monopoly of the exercise of physical violence. Secondly, the *faida* is seen as the epitome of Sardo primitivism, in particular as agents of the state readily condemn this practice as an indication of a disturbingly low valuation of human life and a disrespect of the rule of law. All the state efforts to counter these challenges by hunting down murderers have largely amplified the virtues of *banditismo*: the capacity of the retaliating parties in a *faida* to escape the *carabinieri* is indeed a major dimension of *balentia*. Conversely, from a local perspective, popular practices of dealing with violence are a question of realizing major indigenous virtues. Murder cannot, according to their value orientation, be dealt with properly by leaving it with the police – arrest, court trials and imprisonment. Rather, the state practices of dealing with it are counterproductive and incompatible with proper practices of re-establishing and enhancing *onore*, because this requires that blood is retaliated with blood within the context of *faida*.

The progressively increasing presence of the *carabinieri* in the mountainous interior of Sardinia in the 1960s and 1970s thus added considerable momentum to the long-term dialectical dynamics of mutual antagonism between the state and the population, and hence to rhizome-generating polarizations between the state and pastoral communities, which remained only partially captured into the interior of the state. The celebration of *banditismo* as a virtue that manifests the strength and capability to stand up against an encroaching and colonizing state could be conceived of as a major counter-hegemonic force. Furthermore, as I have indicated above, these challenges spring from an indigenous socio-cultural dynamics of violence that centre on virtues of *onore* and *balentia*, signifying core elements of the symbolic wealth vested in these communities. The practising of these virtues through *banditismo* and *faida*, as mentioned in the indigenous codex of *Il Codice della Vendetta*, represents a major challenge to the state for the obvious reason that these violent practices are entirely incompatible with the modern state's insistence on a monopoly of violence. During recent decades, considerable counter-forces have been at work, modifying people's acceptance of physical violence as a measure to settle conflicts, creating considerable disagreement about the codification of *balentia*. Nevertheless, according to my records, this virtue readily instigates actions of an anti-state orientation.

In conceiving this codex thus, as a matter of indigenous law incompatible with modern state law, an intriguing contrast emerges with the Tswana in the context of the modern state of Botswana. In Botswana, indigenous ('patrimonial') institutions of jurisprudence were from the outset captured into the modern state, as major instruments of societal control. They have continued to operate largely according to customary principles, at the same time as they are subject to a modern state-controlled customary court of appeal. The process of harmonizing state and 'tribal' jurisdiction was developed within the context of the colonial state and has by and large been continued; indigenous jurisprudence has thus been incorporated in the post-colonial state's administration of justice (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 4). This continuity is important for comprehending the strength and stability of the post-colonial state in Botswana. A massive flow of court cases, initiated at the descent-group level and appealed through the hierarchy of courts of the *merafe*, has contributed enormously to the reproduction of institutions that resolve most conflicts in a peaceful manner in ways that keep vast sections of the population in the societal fold (Gulbrandsen 1996b, 2014:165ff.).

This practice is premised, as among the Sardinians, upon an acute consciousness of the high value of popular engagement in dealing with conflicts. However, while the practices of *faida* are often driven by perpetual retaliations, operating violently in secret dyadic relationships (*omerta*) in

the pursuit of *onore* and a demonstration of *balentia*, the Tswana place tremendous value upon everybody's engagement in the treatment of conflicts and tension amongst people in their public councils (*kgotla*) in the process of reconciling conflicting parties. In Tswana ontology of power, peace and harmony (*kagiso*) are always of prime importance for keeping sociality cool. To avoid heat in all social relations is perceived as imperative, because *kagiso* represents the overarching and the cosmologically determined condition for promoting fertility, health and prosperity (Gulbrandsen 2014:174ff.). In this context, the state prevails as 'super-structural' in Foucault's (1980:122) sense, by capturing into its interior popular institutions of social control as well as the wealth of symbolic authority vested in these institutions (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 4).

It is true that in Sardinia during the interregnum between the withdrawal of the Byzantines and the initiation of Spanish supremacy, the island was divided into four *giudicati* (see above) that were developed largely in order to establish military forces against Arab attacks (see Boscolo 1978:112ff.). This development gave birth to two sets of indigenous Sardinian law codes – *Statuti di Sassari* (1316) and *Carta de Lugo* (1395). But jurisdiction in these cases was exercised through hierarchies of courts, with a collection of villages at the lowest level, in the hand of a ruling class of mighty landlords. It was in no sense popular and integral to society in the manner of the Tswana. Tswana jurisprudence, on the other hand, was based upon the highly inclusive and popular code of *mekgwa le melao* ('custom and law'), which facilitated a tacit and pervasive capture of the population into the structures of the state; whereas Sardinian law codes were both largely framed in the interest of the ruling class and, explains Berger (1986:130), 'primarily concerned with protecting and stimulating grain production.' This means that, during the time of the *giudicati*, there was only limited penetration of the legislation and administration of justice into areas that were predominantly occupied by pastoralists. The *giudicati* did not, therefore, seem to embody such apparatuses of capture as the Tswana kingdoms.

The expansion of the modern state and issues of legitimacy

Banditry in Sardinia, as I have explained, never had the conditions for the development of a mafia like that of Sicily. Neither has banditry given rise to violent political movements against the state, as found in other European 'peripheries', such as the Basque Country and Corsica. In discussing why this has not happened, let me take my point of departure in the encounters I have had with people around the island. In these I have often sensed a highly ambiguous – if not antagonistic – attitude to the Italian nation-state, particularly in comparison with my experience of how readily most

people of Botswana have accepted – even strongly appreciated – the post-colonial state (albeit not always its political leaders). I have frequently found myself participating in conversations, in many different quarters, where strong opinions have been expressed about being exploited by an alien and external power – in some people’s view, even to the extent of considering Sardinia as still being colonized. References are typically made to Italian state appropriation of vast areas for military purposes, including the use of Sardinia as a testing ground for Italy’s NATO allies and the establishment of the largest NATO airport in the Mediterranean. For many years, American nuclear-submarine bases featured as an epitome of external encroachment and domination. The perceived abuse of the island as a dumping ground for dangerous waste, including nuclear waste, symbolizes to virtually everybody with whom I have discussed this matter in Sardinia, the exploitative character of the Italian state (see, for example, Codonesu 2013).

The idea of the Italian state as a dominant and destructive force is sometimes epitomized by Sardinians imagining the Sicilian mafia operating in the disguise of state officials. For example, as one of my acquaintances complained, ‘virtually all the prefects sent from Rome to our island are actually Sicilians...’ Such conspiracies have many expressions, a more recent one referring to the Chinese’s ostensible destructive penetration into the Sardinian economy, which, in popular discourse, involves a plot in which the Italian mafia joins forces with the Chinese mafia. As for the state’s justice, this is not only challenged by highland Sardinians’ rejection of the state monopolization of violence in some contexts. As elsewhere in Italy, the judicial system is perceived to be as infiltrated by personal relations and private interests as political life is in general. Recently, a major conflict built up in Sardinia regarding the installation of windmills for the generation of electric power in areas where they clash seriously with environmental interests. Popular protests levelled against the state were strongly nourished by the fact that the state supported off-island companies that wanted to exploit the island without generating any local benefits; it was also protested that the state had allowed strong mafia interests – allegedly Cosa Nostra – to infiltrate political bodies in the pursuit of reaping grand profits.¹¹

Despite the popular critical views on the Italian state, Sardinia has not, I reiterate, developed the kind of permanent violent political movements that have become prevalent in other European peripheries. There have, however,

11 For example, *L'Espresso*, one of Italy’s two major weekly magazines on political and societal issues, published, as the lead article (6 May 2010), a story about the way the Cosa Nostra is linking up with the state and regional leadership in an attempt to penetrate the emerging sector of green energy.

been a few – unsuccessful – attempts along such lines that illuminate the constraints involved. In the late 1960s, ‘radical Sardinians believed in a guerrilla struggle to earn independence for the island, [coining] the slogan “*oggi banditti domani partisan*” (“today bandits tomorrow resistance fighters”)’ (Schweizer 1988:223). However, this never eventuated. Between 1978 and 1982 Barbagia Rossa operated as a militant popular organization with a strong communist orientation, hostile to the substantial increase in the number of military bases on the island. Many violent attacks were mounted against the military installations, but the organization remained without significant appeal to Sardinians at large. To a considerable extent the members of the Barbagia Rossa, which was linked with the Brigade Rosse on the mainland, were viewed by many people as criminals, because of their violent approach, rather than freedom fighters. After four years, the group was dismantled and its members jailed.

Despite the negative attitudes prevailing in the population towards the Italian state, the large majority of the people have been captured into its order. This means that mobilizations against the Italian state rarely exceed the limits set by state law. Heatherington’s (2010:184ff.) accounts from the typical village of Barbagia *banditismo* – Orgosolo – illuminates how outlaw resistance to the state is currently perceived by quite a number of people as operating detrimentally to their interests. In discussing this community’s attempt to challenge a major state encroachment – the establishment of a National Park on their pastoral commons – this author explains how popular protest involved constructing a ‘moral discourse of embodied connections to land and landscape not only as actual herders but through broadly shared ties of work, food, and history linked to the Commons’ (ibid.:186–7). As part of their attempts to establish authority as the authentic custodians of the commons, the organizers invited many people from different parts of the island to a festival in the honour of a local female icon, signifying their genuine connection to the landscape that was about to be appropriated into the domain of the state. This effort involved the demonstration of virtues that had resonance far beyond the Barbagia, above all that of hospitality.

The endeavour was, however, totally undermined by an ostensibly shocking action exercised by some elements within the community. A wild sheep – the ‘poster-animal’ for the pro-park movements in Sardinia, including the World Wide Fund for Nature – was found slaughtered and hanging at the crossroad leading to the festival, along with red spray-painted threats to politicians of all levels. The action, condemned by many as a disgrace, was attributed to a group naming itself ‘Armed Anti-Park Front’ that had already acknowledged vandalism and threats. It is precisely the tacitly accepted and capricious character of such violence that underscores its rhizomic character.

It is contradicting and undermining of local popular efforts to gain broader support for a challenge to the state in the wider Sardinian context by appealing to virtues that are also held by people beyond the limits of the highlands of Barbagia.

There is a heightened fear amongst villagers in the highlands of perceived malicious and violent practices, including *faida*, that have, as I have explained, ideally been conducted according to the above mentioned '*Il Codice della Vendetta Barbaricina*' in the pursuit of *onore*. The societal transformations over the last few decades have set in motion trends deteriorating the ideals of this *codice*. While *faida* used to be clearly restricted to two distinctive factions within a village, such factions have increasingly become linked to external networks through which foreign killers are recruited. They now operate in non-localized gangs, allegedly sometimes with *mafiosi* connections. These networks, which might include members of feuding families who have migrated out of the village (see Cossu 2007:174), are working in much harsher and more unpredictable ways than before. It is hence not unusual to hear complaints from villagers who say that they feel trapped in dangerous games of organized criminality, characterized by the highly unpredictable exercise of violence. In the view of my interlocutors, this conduct of *faida* conflicts seriously with virtues of *onore* and *balentia* – and hence is sometimes spoken of as *balentia negativa*.

The exercise of the kind of violence with which I have been concerned here has hence become much more unpredictable than before, readily leaving not only the feuding factions but the whole community in anxiety and fear. Many people I have met see this as a corruption of the principles and virtues of *faida* that makes these communities increasingly receptive to the state hegemonic discourse on justice, order and the criminalization of ancient practices of violence that have considerable symbolic value. Popular concern in these communities about this trend finds its expressions in calls to be, as in one community widely reputed for highly violent *faida* (Orune) put it, '*piu umana e piu civile*' ('more human and more civilized') (Contesta 1996:131).

The increasing ambiguity of *banditismo* is manifested, above all, in the linking of persons associated with pastoral communities with networks of trafficking – drugs, prostitutes and weapon – spanning Sardinia and beyond. This development raises great anxiety and fear everywhere, including in Barbagia communities, about the serious directions now taken by violent practices on the island. From the point of view of Sardinian highland villagers, the symbolic wealth vested in *Il Codice della Vendetta Barbaricina* and the esteemed virtues of *banditismo* are hence vulnerable to desecration. Moreover, the distinctiveness of Barbagia *banditismo*, as consisting of locally esteemed practices challenging social order and state jurisdiction, has been more

and more distorted by manifesting – in most people's view – mainstream organized criminality.

The expansion of the modern state as super-structural: 'positive' interventions of the state apparatus of capture

At the same time as people in the highlands have developed an increasingly critical attitude towards violent practices, and a more accepting orientation towards the state exercise of jurisdiction, they have also been captured into the interior of the state by its extensive exercise of positive power, in the Foucauldian sense (1980:121f.). When the Italian state started to penetrate Sardinia in the 1870s, the island was characterized by poor communication that made many communities isolated and the Sardinians divided. The communities themselves were organizationally focused as *famiglia*,¹² a social form founded on the principles, internally, of solidarity and mutual support. Externally, the *famiglia* was linked to individuated networks of friendship (*amicizia*), mediators (*mediatore*) and patron-client relationships. The local communities have, as explained above, generally been described as tense and competitive, and are characterized by families' and individuals' defence of livestock, land and honour (*onore*). Under these circumstances – and in a context of inequality of wealth and thus power – people have sought the protection of patronage. At the arrival of the agents of the state, existing and new networks of patron-client relations have developed and progressively captured people – directly and indirectly – into dependency on the state, which accelerated as the welfare state developed after the Second World War.

From an early stage in the development of the modern state in Italy, explains Pareto (1950), patronage became pervasive in political life. With such a conjuncture of internal and external premises for organizing relations of power on Sardinia, it is no surprise that patron-client ties emerged as the dominant mode of local political organization. Gaps in the system – between village and town, and between villagers and the governing elite – opened up for mediators and patronage (Weingrod 1968:391). The generation of clientelistic networks by state agents was tremendously amplified after the Second World War, when the Democrazia Cristiana (DC – the Christian Democratic Party) was in power for almost 40 years, and in control of the vast resources of an ever expanding welfare state. The intertwining of party and state gave rise to what was known as a *partitocrazia*, by means of which the DC penetrated the state, taking control of a large number of public institutions. Patron-client relations became pervasive at all governmental levels, not only in Sardinia,

12 That 'family' encompassed, at the most, parents and their unmarried children and married sons with their offspring.

but also throughout Italy (Newell 2000:48). Of course, the Catholic Church represented a major and tacit force underpinning this development (see Pollard 2008:157ff.).

While the militant political movement *Barbagia Rossa* has remained with virtually no popular support, Sardinian political parties that have worked peacefully, on constitutional premises, in the pursuit of greater – even, by some, full – independence for the island, have also not been very appealing to the electorate. This reflects the fact that the Sardinian branches of the Italian national parties have been well resourced to expand clientelistic networks that have captured the Sardinians into a perceived dependency on the state. The national political parties have successfully created an image of themselves as indispensable in advocating Sardinian interests in Rome.

The extensive clientelistic networks that have captured much of the population into the structures of the state are, of course, neither formal nor official parts of governmental institutions. They are, in a profound socio-cultural sense, formations vested in the population that both pre-date and go beyond the modern Italian state government, and, crucially, infiltrate this government in ever new ways. I shall return to their consequent ambiguous relationship to the state. In the present context, I want to emphasize that they illuminate the way the state prevails, as already suggested, by virtue of being ‘superstructural in relation to a whole series of existing power networks’ (Foucault 1980:122). This is, as suggested above, in important respects the way in which the colonial state brought itself into control of the peoples of Bechuanaland – by capturing into its interior the structures of a number of Tswana *merafe*. Elsewhere I explain extensively how these ‘patrimonial’ assemblages of power were, by de-colonization, quite smoothly incorporated into Botswana’s modern state formation (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 3–7).

Even more importantly, indigenous relations and institutions in Botswana, as well as clientelistic formations in Italy, have, paradoxically, facilitated another important aspect of modern state formation: the governmentalization of the state in Foucault’s (1978) sense. Governmentalization captures the population into the structures of state domination through subtle and tacit practices, in which the state works on people’s subjectivities in an effort to feature as a positive force in popular imagination, especially through the implementation of welfare programmes. This concept helps us to identify and comprehend processes by which the state expands by intervening as a highly constructive force, with schools, health services, roads and other welfare facilities. Elsewhere (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 7), I have explained – in the case of Botswana – how such interventions generate a register of new desires and dispositions that bring the population into dependency on the modern state, with all its welfare practices and provisions. A similar notion of state

'positive' power obviously pertains to the Italian state's post-Second World War interventions on Sardinia. In combination with the rise of capitalism and the market economy, the governmentalization of the state has in both cases contributed to a tremendous expansion of the interiority of the state.

Development of new spaces for the generation of rhizomic forces

It is an irony that with an expanding interiority of the state, new exteriorities – actual or potential – are developing, as reflected in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of their mutually conditioning existence (see introduction section above). It is true that clientelistic networks have contributed immensely in capturing the population into a kind of dependency on the state that significantly reduces the potential for them to become a challenging force. Nonetheless, the political practices of particularism, the private character of political relations and the harsh and secretive exercise of power in clientelism represent major challenges to the ideals of the modern democratic state – they all contradict virtues of universalism and transparency. These are some of the grey areas in which rhizomic forces thrive, even at the heart of the state. Examples may be found in the representations of Berlusconi's corrupt practices and his connections with mafia forces.

These grey areas are evident at all levels of the Italian government, and so are popular images of rhizomic forces and abuses of power that challenge the ideals of a state that provides welfare and justice for all citizens. In Sardinia, such imaginaries – fictional or real – of abuse of power amongst people in official positions, might well provoke popular reactions in the form of violent attacks on such people by, for example, setting fire to their cars or placing a bomb on the doorsteps of their houses. Because of the clientelistic and hence privatized character of the political field, popular activism in public space is restrained, often compelling people to express their challenges to the state and its agencies in a violent language. In other words, rank and file sections of the population – the vast majority – are readily generating an(other) exteriority to the state, where rhizomic forces thrive. What is more, the secretive character of violent practices is equally pertinent within the political field, and are a major premise for many people's avoidance and even fear of engaging in politics. It seems evident that the perpetuation of violent practices reflects their longstanding genealogies on the island, and the reproduction of the virtues of revenge in many fields of the contemporary society.

The development of exteriorities to the modern state in Botswana, as well as the imaginaries of rhizomic forces there, are very different. Rather than privatized clientelistic networks, indigenous polities in Botswana contain institutionalized hierarchies of authority that have proved to be very instrumental in capturing the population into the predominantly public,

state-centred networks of power (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 4–7). There, modern political practices and governmental institutions ensure the distribution of public resources according to universal principles to a much greater extent than in Italy. Politicians have come to power, particularly during the first independence decades, without extensive corruption, mainly because they were in a position to tap the state treasury through parliamentary-sanctioned programmes, projects and policies of ‘development’ (Gulbrandsen 2014:ch. 3). This represented a major condition, during the formative decades of the post-colonial state in Botswana, for the capture of all the significant elites of the country into the process of state-formation, ensuring the strength of the state and a high degree of stability in the political leadership. There was, however, a turning point in the late 1980s, when a tremendous expansion of urban centres and the non-farming sectors of the economy was in progress. With the resources of the state treasury deriving from diamond mining, ever stronger private interests penetrated the organs of the state, as reflected in an increasing number of corruption scandals (Good 2008).

These developments – the ‘legal’ tapping of generous ‘development’ programmes as well as mounting corrupt practices – brought a number of people rapidly to power and wealth, while the vast majority remained in poverty. As I have explained elsewhere (Gulbrandsen 2003, 2014:ch. 8), this development gave rise to a popular discourse of ‘ritual murder’, in which people of power and wealth – chiefly elite politicians – might be suspected of using the occult in abuses of power. That is, in the popular imaginary, there evolved a space at the heart of the state where people empowered themselves by means of such highly unconstitutional methods as killing a girl to obtain perceived highly potent ‘medicine’. In this imaginary, such people are secretly engaging in violent battles for power and wealth, generating disastrous ‘heat’ that is perceived as destructive to *kagiso* at the state centre, and which is therefore damaging to the entire nation. This case illuminates how the conception of rhizomic forces at the political centre – anchored in indigenous cosmology – has given rise to a subaltern popular discourse that attacks the perceived dangerous and destructive exercise of power amongst people in control of the state.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have been centrally concerned with transmutations of power relations in a long-term perspective. Inspired by Clastres, and by Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of forces working inside and outside the state, I have attempted to demonstrate how differently state forces penetrate populations in contrasting colonial situations and historical contexts. On the one hand, the British colonizers readily captured the Tswana kingdoms into their structures

and made the local institutions instrumental in bringing the population under firm control with a minimal exercise of violence. As these kingdoms themselves embodied state apparatuses of capture, they proved highly useful for implementing principles of indirect rule. This meant that practically all the peoples of the Bechuanaland Protectorate were quite peacefully brought under the control of the colonial state, and remained so for about eighty years.

On the other hand, while the successive colonial states in Sardinia have had few problems in bringing the lowland populations under their control, colonization of the highlands has been met with severe resistance ever since the Phoenicians expanded into the island some 2,600 years ago. This resistance has, to a great extent, been a matter of escaping state control by creating spaces outside the state with considerable potential for generating rhizomic forces that recurrently challenge civil security and state order. These forces reflect a rejection of state's insistence on the monopoly of physical violence. The confrontational relationship between the successive colonizing states and the highlanders finds, as I have discussed, its most vigorous expression in the practices of *banditismo*, which are greatly determined by highlanders' cultural valorization of a distinctive form of honour that finds its most prominent expression in virtues of masculinity and virility (*balentia*).

The Tswana – and peoples they have captured into their socio-political structures – quite readily identified with, and submitted to, the hierarchical and institutionalized order of their kingdoms. Moreover, as I have explained, the Tswana strongly valued non-violent practices of conflict resolution in the pursuit of the highly esteemed value of reconciliation and hence *kagiso*. This involves practices and institutions of jurisprudence that became integral to the colonial state, and then the modern state of Botswana.

Unlike the Tswana, the Sardinian highlanders have no indigenous institutionalized structure beyond the level of *la famiglia* for conflict resolution. This, in combination with a strong orientation towards competitive egalitarianism centred on virtues of *balentia*, readily led to never-ending vendettas – highly esteemed practices of violence that highlanders have fiercely protected against police interference. The state insistence on the monopoly of physical violence has been strongly resisted.

The colonization of the peoples of the Bechuanaland Protectorate resulted in a transmutation of power, in the sense of expanding and strengthening domination of the Tswana kingdoms, in addition to propelling their integration into the interior of the colonial state. By contrast, the transmutations of power caused by the colonizers' intrusions on Sardinia have entailed progressively increasing polarization between state forces and the highland population, and recurrent challenges from the exterior of the state. Only recently has a very different mode of power transmutation been initiated, with the establishment

of the modern welfare state after the Second World War. This was, I have explained, a matter of a governmentalization of the state that in Italy – as well as in Botswana – immensely reinforced the state apparatus of capture.

In Botswana, the institutions of the Tswana kingdoms proved highly conducive to a major transformation in the exercise of power, embedding most of the population in the development of the post-colonial state. In the Italian context, this reinforcement was facilitated by pervasive structures of patronage that proved very instrumental in the state government's penetration of Italian society, including the interior of Sardinia. Nevertheless, in both cases we have also seen how these recent transformations of power relations have given rise to new exteriorities of the state, with rhizome-generating potentialities that encourage people to call for civic order and a state that supports the common good.

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